

## Lots of Perennials

We have gotten in several shipments of perennials and are still putting out more plants almost every day. This is a good time to come in and look around because a lot of plants are coming into bloom. Everything seems to be a little behind on blooming this year probably because of that cold spell in May. Daylilies are really starting to flower. We have just gotten back in Ruby Stella and Purple D'Oro. They bloom almost as well as Stella D'Oro. They add some nice colors to the everblooming daylies. Some astilbe are still flowering. Balloon flowers are just starting to bloom. A lot of the coneflowers are in flower. Cheyenne Spirit coneflower, which is a mix of many colors, is blooming and there are a bunch of neat colors. We also have Orange Skipper which is a bright tangerine orange, Tomato Soup has red flowers and Cantaloupe is a fragrant double flower the color of ripe cantaloupe.

We have gotten two varieties of geraniums that we have had in the past and a new variety. Rozanne is a spreading variety with two-toned leaves and blue flowers all summer. Max Frei is a dwarf bloody cranesbill geranium that forms a neat mound and has magenta flowers all summer. The new variety is Boom Chocolatta. It has bronze leaves and purple-blue flowers all summer. It has an upright habit to 24".

We have Common Milkweed in 4" and 2 quart pots. We will have orange butterfly weed by the end of the month.

After many years of not being able to find fall blooming anemones, we have two kinds available. Honorine Jobert blooms white and gets 36" and Prince Henry is pink and only grows to 18". They both are a great addition to the fall garden.

The hellebores are ready to go. We have a pink and a purple and a really different yellow and pink. These are the first perennials to bloom in the spring, sometimes starting as early as February. Get them in this year so you can get them in flower next spring. They tolerate both shade and dry soil and are deer resistant. While talking about shade, we have a very good selection of ferns this year. We just got in 5 new varieties in addition to the ones already had. Ferns add a nice softness to a shady garden. We have varieties ranging from 18" to 4'.

We have gotten in both green and variegated liriopse. This is a very versatile plant. It can grow in both sun and shade and will tolerate dryness. It is nice as a single plant or it is also pretty as an edging plant. The lavender blue flowers in midsummer are nice too.

Three varieties of Stokes asters are ready. We have a blue, a white and a purple. They all grow to about 15-18". They have large frilly flower from Late June and throughout the summer. They are very tolerant of heat.

The peony plants are beautiful right now. Get them planted now so you can enjoy flowers next spring.

We also have a good selection of ornamental grasses for both sun and shade. There are sun varieties from 1 foot to 6 feet. They have interesting foliage and most have nice flowers. They are tough, easy to grow plants.

## Vines

There is a beautiful selection of clematis available now. Some are still small but all are growing quickly. We have several new varieties that we have never had before. There are also many other types of vines available. Look around your yard for a place to plant a vine. They can add a lot of interest.

## Recycling Pots

We are still recycling pots but because we are getting too many that we can't use, we are going to limit what we can take. We can only use white hanging baskets. We can't take any flats or cell packs. We can take clay pots but no decorative plastic pots. We can take any pots that you got plants in. Please empty the soil out before you bring the pots. The pots do not have to be washed.

## Designing a Perennial Garden.

Designing a perennial garden can be a challenge. Plants don't always do what you think they will. You got the amount of sun and shade wrong. There are many factors that can keep the garden from doing its best. I'll tell you a few mistakes many people make.

1. Don't prepare the soil. Perennials don't do well in poor soil. If you want them to grow well, get your soil tested. Find out what you need to add, especially lime. Add organic matter to break up clay soil and improve drainage. The old saying is don't plant a \$50 plant in a 50 cent hole.
2. Plant tall plants. I hear all the time that they don't want any plants taller than 18". In a small bed, this may work. But in a large bed, it doesn't. If you have 3 or 4 rows in a bed, your tallest one can't be only 18" tall. This doesn't give you enough difference in height for the bed to look nice. In this situation, your back row should be at least 4 feet or even 5 taller plants. This enables you to make the next row 2-3 feet, the next 12-18 and the front row little low plants.
3. Trying to replace annuals with perennials. Most perennials don't bloom all season. They have specific bloom times. There aren't perennials that grow 8" tall and bloom all summer like annuals. Plant annuals in those small areas where you want a blast of summer color.
4. Planting different flowering times. Most perennials don't flower all summer. This is why it is hard to plant very small beds with perennials. Plants will come into bloom for a time and then go out of flower. You have to have another plant close by that comes into flower then. Look for perennials with longer bloom times but don't ignore really nice plants because they only bloom for a shorter time. Those beautiful perennial borders that you see in magazines are planted like this. A well designed bed can be in flower with just perennials from March to October.

## Herbs and Scented Geraniums

There is still a good selection of herbs and scented geraniums. We even still have basil and parsley. You still have plenty of time to get some planted and get a good harvest from them. Plant a few in pots and put them near your kitchen. They are nice to use when barbequing and they are good with all the fresh produce available now. If you already have some herbs planted and they are growing like crazy in this hot weather, start to preserve them for winter. Bundle them up and hang them to dry or put them in zip bags in the freezer. Keep your herbs well watered and fertilized and they will continue to produce until frost. Keep the flowers trimmed off of your herbs. If they flower, their taste will decrease. The taste will return when new growth happens. That doesn't mean you can't still use them. You may just have to use more.

Scented geraniums are true herbs and can be used in cooking. They are good in cakes, breads and cookies. They can be put in teas, both hot and cold. Try them chopped up in fruit salads or put them in fruit dips. They are also really pretty plants. Plant them in pots and put them around your patio. We still have the citrosa geranium or mosquito plant. We have people buy them every year and swear by their insect repelling properties.

If you like to bring herb plants into the house for the winter, now is a good time to start taking cuttings. Taking them now will give them time to get to a nice size before fall. It is easier to bring smaller plants in than the big old woody ones from the summer. Not only will they grow better, they take up less room. If you have always had trouble growing herbs inside, maybe think about getting grow lights set up before you bring the plants in. Usually lack of light is the main problem.

## To Do List

- Water
- Weed. The more weeds you can get out now and through fall, the less you will have in the spring.
- Keep annuals and perennials dead headed. The more you do this the better chance you have of additional blooms.
- Divide and move perennials. Maybe wait until the temperatures drop a little and we get more rain.
- Watch for insects and diseases and treat as necessary.
- Keep using your herbs and keep the flowers cut off.
- Fertilize everything. Especially your annuals and hanging baskets. This is the time of the year when they decline rapidly if not well cared for. If they are looking yellow and stringy, you are not fertilizing enough.
- Mulch to preserve soil moisture and keep down weeds.
- If you have pulled out early vegetables, start planting things for fall or put a cover crop on the empty space.

## Rosemary

Rosemary is one of the most versatile herbs. It can be used with most meats and with potatoes, vegetables, sauces, baking and beverages. It has a wonderful piney taste. The stems can be used as kebab skewers.

We carry many different kinds of rosemary. They are all interchangeable as far as use goes. They all taste the same. The only differences are growth habit and foliage. Some varieties are creeping. They look nice in hanging baskets or trailing over the edge of pots. The upright types can be planted in pots or in the ground. Most of the rosemary varieties are not really hardy in this area. Arp and Hill Hardy can make it through the winter. I have had both come through outdoors. Rosemary is a little hard to bring through the winter indoors. It likes to be left go a little dry. The surest way to kill it is to over water it. I have been told by a couple people that they mist it with water every couple days.

Outdoors, rosemary likes sun and not really wet soil. Harvest it by cutting the stems as necessary. I like to dry rosemary to preserve it but it can also be frozen.

## Heirloom Tomato Salad

- 2 cups cut –up heirloom or any tomatoes
- 1 cup multicolored cherry tomatoes, halved
- ½ cup sliced red onion

### Dressing

- 3 Tbl. Olive oil
- 2 Tbl. Vinegar
- 2 cups fresh baby spinach
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. fresh basil
- ¼ tsp. fresh oregano
- ¼ tsp. fresh rosemary
- ¼ tsp. fresh thyme
- 3/8 tsp. fresh sage
- 1/8 tsp. pepper

Place tomatoes, spinach and onions in a large bowl. In another bowl, whisk together dressing ingredients; toss with salad. Refrigerate, covered, 2 hours. Serve with a slotted spoon. You can sub dried herbs by cutting amounts by two thirds.

## Gifts

Keep us in mind if you need unique gifts. The recipient doesn't have to be a gardener. We have lots of nice things in the garden shop that are not strictly for gardeners. But if you need something for a gardener, we have great things for them. And don't forget that we have gift certificates in any amount. They can be purchased over the phone and mailed out. Remember that we have a huge selection of fresh greens and a lot of gift and decorations at Christmas.

## Coupon

**25 % off any one perennial**  
Limited to stock on hand. Expires August 9, 2020

## Watering

I talked about watering in the last flyer but with the ongoing heat and dryness, I want to give you a few more ideas. Sprinklers and soaker hoses are still the best way to water beds of plants. This allows you to direct the water to where it is needed. I like the black soaker hoses that allow the water to just seep out. I like the sprinklers that let you adjust the coverage of the sprinkler. This allows for less waste. With either of these, you want to put down about an inch of water at a time. In well prepared soil, this lets the water go fairly deep so that the roots can access it. You can even put these on a timer to kick on whenever you want them to and for as long. Early morning is the best time to run a sprinkler. During the day, too much water evaporates in the air and at night the foliage stays wet longer and can cause disease.

This is a method that I use often. Use containers such as buckets, milk jugs, kitty litter jugs, 2 liter bottles or anything similar. Poke a small hole in the bottom and fill them with water. Place it near the plant and it gradually seeps out and thoroughly waters the plant. I have used the 2 liter bottles for vegetables and perennials. The bigger containers are good around trees and shrubs. You can even put multiple containers around larger plants. With the heat and lack of rain, you may have to start watering trees and shrubs. There is no way to hand water these plants and get the water deep enough. This way you can do this for several days and start to get the water down to where it is needed. If the dryness continues into fall, you will have to water your larger plants to get them through winter. When doing this method, put the containers out to the edge of the foliage. This is where there are roots that can take up water. Putting them near the trunk won't do much good.

## Mulching

This is a good time to mulch if you haven't already. One of mulch's main jobs is to keep soil moisture in. If you are going to mulch, make sure to give the area a thorough soaking. Don't put mulch on dry soil. It will be harder to get the soil wet through the mulch. Put down a good couple inches of mulch. Mulch type is personal preference. I like shredded hardwood mulch or our soil conditioner (I'm still trying to get this back in stock). I like these because they break down and add organic matter to the soil. They also don't have any additives in them. Pine bark is good also. It doesn't break down as fast. It also is just pine bark, nothing else. Plain, undyed cedar or cypress is okay. It doesn't break down much at all. Dyed mulches I don't recommend. Although they say they are vegetable dyes, testing has shown most are chemical dyes. This means that chemicals are getting on you and leaching into the soil. Definitely don't use them around edible plants or where children and pets are. Stone mulches are fine around trees and shrubs. They shouldn't be used around perennials. Rubber mulches shouldn't be used at all. They break down and leach chemicals into the soil.

## Fertilizers

I want to talk about types of fertilizers. There are many different kinds of fertilizers for different needs.

1. Liquid fertilizers. These are any food that is mixed with water. They can be chemical or organic. They are good fertilizers especially for potted plants. They are generally a very good complete food. The biggest drawback is that they are water soluble. This means they can be leached quickly out of the soil with rain or watering. This means that you have to apply them more often. This is usually okay in the spring, but most people lose interest by July and then their plants go downhill fast. I like to use them when I first plant something either in the ground or in a pot. It gives the plant a quick jump start. I also like to use them if a plant is looking bad and needs help.
2. Granular fertilizers. These can range from chemical 5-10-10 foods that is often used on vegetables to more refined fertilizers that are sold for flowers and trees and shrubs to organics. The chemical foods, like 5-10-10, are not really good for your soil and they release so fast that they can burn your plants. The fancier fertilizers are not as likely to burn your plants but they don't help your soil. Organic fertilizers release more slowly and because they are made from previously living matter, like manures, bone meal and kelp, they actually improve the health of your soil by giving the microorganisms in your soil something to feed on. They can also be used in containers. They do have to be applied at least 2 to 3 times a season. We carry a line called Espoma. It is a complete line of organic fertilizers for all plant types including lawns.
3. Slow release fertilizers. These are foods that are released slowly over time. Most last for 3 to 4 months. They come in both chemical (Schultz) or organic (Dynamite). I usually use these on containers and hanging baskets. These plants need a constant supply of food throughout the season to do well. These products supply this without much work on your part. Put it on when you plant them and you are done for the season.

I like organic fertilizers with you are planting in the ground because they improve your soil and are less likely to leach into waterways because they release much more slowly. The plants also can take up most of the food because of the slower release rate. The type of fertilizer used in containers isn't as important for those reasons. It is more important that the plants get a steady supply of food to grow and look their best. What it comes down to, is please fertilize your plants. I have already had people in that say their plants are looking bad. My first question is have you fed them. The answer is always no. Plants need food to grow.

