

Annuals, Vegetables and Hanging Baskets

There is still a great selection of all of these. If you've gotten a late start this year or you want to plant a few more things, we have lots of them. There is still time to plant vegetables and get a good harvest.

Perennials

We've got a great selection of perennials and are putting out more varieties regularly. Stop in and see what new kinds we have for this season. Come in throughout the summer to see what has come in to bloom. Definitely come in when you need something in bloom at a specific in your garden. We will be happy to help you find a few plants or to fill a new garden.

Choosing Perennials

I hear on a regular basis when I suggest a plant "I don't know what that is, so I don't want it." That kind of mentality takes the fun out of perennial gardening! One of the most enjoyable parts of gardening is trying new plants. If you already have a bunch of something, why plant more of it. The best gardens have a large variety of plants. This ensures a nice succession of bloom throughout the season. Look for early and late flowering plants to extend the flowering time of your garden. Most of my customers come in and buy whatever catches their fancy. They take it home and plant it somewhere. Some of the best gardens are really not planned at all.

A lot of customers don't want anything taller than 18" in their garden. Take a walk on the wild side and plant tall things. Try planting perennials that 4 feet or even taller. This makes it easy to plant three or four rows of plants. The 18" plants may be your shortest row.

People also only want perennials that bloom all summer. These are called annuals. Very few perennials bloom all summer. It's tough to plant a garden with just these plants. Part of the fun of perennial gardening is mixing plants so you always something in bloom.

Shade Perennials

We have lots of perennials that like shady areas. We have dozens of varieties of astilbes. They range from under a foot tall to ones that get to 4 feet. They flower in white pink and red. Astilbes have bloom times from June through August so by planting several varieties, you can have them in flower through the summer. We have a nice selection of hostas. We have some nice new kinds that will be available in a couple weeks. There are lots of ferns ready right now and a few others coming on in the near future. There are also many other shade plants. Shade gardens can be really beautiful. They just aren't as bright and colorful as a sun garden.

Coupon

25% off any one Perennial

Limited to stock on hand
Expires June 25, 2023

Lavender

Many people lost their lavender this year due to the wet, warm winter. The older the plants were, the more likely they were to die. Lavender needs two things to do well – full sun and well-drained soil. They don't do well if their roots stay wet. Plant them on a slope, behind a wall with good drainage or in beds that soil has been amended well with organic matter. They will not do well in clay soil. But they very tolerant of hot, dry locations.

Over the years, we have chosen the 5 varieties that seem to do the best in this area. The English lavenders are smaller plants with smaller flowers. Hidcote gets to about 15-18 inches and forms a tight mound. It has dark purple flowers. Munstead gets about the same height but slightly wider and the flowers are lighter purple.

French lavenders are taller with larger leaves and flowers. Grosso, Provence and Sensational are all French lavenders. They all grow to 24-30 inches tall and 18 or so inches wide. Their flowers are a dark blue. Grosso seems to be the hardiest of the lavenders. It makes it through winter best.

All lavenders are evergreen shrubs. The leaves and the flowers are both very fragrant. Both can be used in crafts, potpourri and bath products. Cooking is generally done with the flowers. Lavender is very versatile in cooking. It can be used in baked goods, jellies and jams, poultry, custards, potato and pasta salads.

Lavender retains its scent indefinitely. So if you have old lavender that you have dried, it's more than likely still good.

Harvest the flowers of lavender or trim off the old flowers as soon as they are done blooming. Cut them off an inch or two down into the foliage. By trimming them this way, there is a chance they will come back into bloom again.

Fruits and Vegetables

We have really beautiful fruits and vegetables. There are thornless blackberries, red, black and gold raspberries. We have 3 varieties of seedless grape – Himrod, Canadice and Concord. There are blueberries and Goji berries. The rhubarb is especially nice. We have both green and purple asparagus. Now is a good time to plant all of these.

Dead-heading

Don't forget to keep the dead flowers trimmed off your perennials and annuals. Not only does it keep your plants looking nicer, The annuals will continue to bloom better and the perennials may come back into flower. Also keep the flowers trimmed off of your herbs. They keep a better flavor if they don't come into bloom.

Facebook

If you would like to follow us on Facebook, we are going to post things like plants that are in bloom, new varieties, new things in the garden shop or just interesting information.

Herbs & Scented Geraniums

There is still a good selection of herbs and scented geraniums available. You have plenty of time to get a good harvest off of herbs. Plant some in pots near your kitchen so they are easily accessible when you need them. If you've never grown herbs before, start with whatever herbs you use on a regular basis. Then add a couple of different ones. Once you start cooking with fresh herbs, you'll never want to go back to dried.

Scented geraniums are an interesting group of herbs. They have nice foliage, some in different colors like blue or bright green. Others have unique markings on the leaves. They all get pretty flowers in white, pink or red. They can range in height from 12" to 4'. They make a nice addition to mixed annual or herb pots or just planted by themselves. I like to put several different varieties in a large pot. With each of them having their own unique look, they make an interesting combo.

Their scents range from orange and lemon to rose, nutmeg and apricot and peppermint and chocolate mint. The citrosa scented geranium is the one called the Mosquito plant. It's supposed to keep bugs away outdoors.

They take full sun to part shade. They are tender plants so need to be brought indoors in the winter or just treated like an annual.

The lemon, rose and lemon-rose varieties are the ones most commonly used in cooking. All the types are edible. They are used in baked goods, custards, jellies and jams and beverages.

Herbed Cake

You can put herbs in any kind of cake, cupcakes, biscuits, muffins or cookies. I decided to put this in because cakes made with herbs make great strawberry short cake.

Basil, scented geraniums, lemon verbena or lemon balm, mint, sage, lavender or rosemary are all good choices for in cakes and cookies. Basil, thyme and sage are especially good in biscuits and cornbread. Anywhere from a few tablespoons to a half cup of chopped fresh herbs can be added to the batter. It's up to your taste and the size of what you're making. 2 tablespoons of crushed lavender flowers is usually a good amount. You can also add smaller amounts to the icing if you'd like to flavor it also. There are lots of recipes using herbs in baking but this will give you a starting place.

Labeling Gardens

It's always a good idea to label both perennial and herb gardens. The perennial gardens so that you know what you have and herb gardens so you don't eat something you shouldn't. We have nice metal markers that are inexpensive and last forever. When you write on them with a special pencil, the writing becomes fairly permanent. It is easily removed with steel wool or sandpaper. We carry beautiful clay herb markers if you want something nicer in your herb garden.

Houseplants

The next couple months are a good time to work on your houseplants whether you have them inside or outdoors. Fertilize them with either a slow release food or give them some liquid fertilizer every couple weeks. Watch them for insects and spray them with insecticidal soap as necessary. This is also when you should repot houseplants. By doing it now, you give them time to recover from the shock of repotting and give the roots a chance to grow into the new soil. Only go up one pot size when repotting plants. So this means if it is in a 10 inch pot, only go up to a 12". Always use a good soil-less mix. Loosen up the roots or if they are really thickly wrapped, cut some of them off. This can also be done if you have a really large plant that can't be moved to a larger pot. Cut off an inch or two of the roots around the outside of the root ball and the same off the bottom. This will allow you to keep the plant healthy without moving it to a bigger pot.

Soil

Most gardeners stick plants in the ground without giving any thought to the soil they are planting them in. Since that is what those plants will be growing in, often times for years, it really makes sense to know what's going on with it. The best way to achieve this is with a soil test. They are available at the Extension office on Donohoe Rd. You can also go to www.agsci.psu.edu and go to Soil Fertility Submission Forms and download them. The cost is \$10 and it is worth every penny. You should do a test for each crop you are growing. Like one for lawns, one for vegetables or one for perennials.

If you don't want to do a test, at a minimum you should apply lime. This is probably the most neglected thing in gardening. Doing a test will tell you exactly how much lime you need. Our soils tend to be acidic so most everyone needs to add lime. If you just want to apply lime, applying 50 pounds per 1000 sqft. to everything but evergreens is a good start. This probably isn't enough but at least it's something.

Fertilizing

The second most neglected thing in gardening is fertilizing. The amount of people who are surprised they need to feed their plants astounds me. They are the same people that can't understand why their vegetables aren't producing and their annuals look like heck by July. You have to feed your plants. They can't get it anywhere else. All plants including trees, shrubs, perennials and fruits should be fed every year. Annuals, vegetables and herbs need fed throughout the season. Liquid food is good but you have to do it every 2 weeks all summer. Granular organic food needs to be applied a couple times a year. Slow release food (my personal favorite especially for containers) only needs to be put on at planting. It lasts the whole season. You can feed however you want. Please just fertilize your plants.

To-Do List

- Weed. The more you weed the less there are to reseed.
- Keep annuals and perennials dead-headed so they can possibly rebloom.
- Divide and move perennials as long as they aren't in bloom.
- Watch for diseases and insects and treat as necessary.
- Keep flowers cut off your herbs and start freezing and drying extra herbs.
- Fertilize everything.
- Mulch everything to preserve soil moisture and keep down weeds.
- Water as necessary.
- Prune flowering shrubs as they finish blooming.
- Label perennial and herb gardens.

Preen

Weeding is a never ending job. Try some natural Preen. It is corn gluten meal which stops germinating weeds from forming roots. It is safe for pets and people and can be used around all plants including edible ones. Don't confuse it with regular Preen which is a chemical. It can't be used around edible plants and is not safe for pets or people. It also stops some perennials from spreading.

Thoroughly weed a section of your garden and then apply The Preen immediately. Put the mulch over it. If your bed is already mulched, put the Preen on the mulch. Apply it every month for best results. You will start to notice a big difference in the amount of weeds you have.

Animal Repellants

We are getting hit hard by the deer this year. If you are having the same problem, start using repellants. We are using Liquid Fence which seems to be helping. We also have Deer Scram which some of our customers swear by. Repels All lists about every mammal there is, so you could give it a try. Shake Away Fox Urine Granules seem to work for groundhogs.

Recycling Pots

We are still happy to take old pots but we have to limit what we accept. We can only take white hanging baskets. We don't take back cell packs. Flats are also something we don't accept. We can take regular pots and clay pots but no decorative pots. All pots must be emptied of soil.

Bearded Iris

Cut the foliage of bearded iris back to 3 or 4 inches. They will put on new leaves and look nicer for the rest of the season.

Cilantro and Dill

If you like to have cilantro and dill weed available for use all summer, you need to buy seed and sow new crops of them every couple weeks in the summer. Both of these herbs tend to go to flower very quickly. They can be sowed in pots and they germinate very fast.

Dogs

We love to meet your dogs and certainly don't mind them wandering around with you. But please let us know before you take them out of the car so we can put our dogs in the house.

While you're here, take a look at our Pet Corner. There are lots of things for your dogs and cats and lots for pet parents.

Landscape Consultations

I am scheduling consultations right now. I come to your house and you can ask me anything about your landscape and gardens. The cost is \$50 for an hour. I usually do them in the evenings during the week. Give me a call to schedule one. 724 836-2255

Talks for any Groups

I am also scheduling talks for any kind of club for the Fall and Winter and even into next year. Give me a call and we can discuss the many topics that I have available.

Downsizing your Garden

A lot of the consultations I am doing are older gardeners who have come to realize that they can't do everything anymore. While it is hard to give up on some of your gardening, it becomes a necessity. If you have come to this point, take a serious look around your yard. What is most important? The plantings across the front of your house should stay but do the ones along the side need to. The gardens around your patio or deck may need to remain but does the perennial garden out in the yard need to stay. You need to look at each area and make a decision. How much can you physically maintain? Start getting rid of beds a little at a time while you still can. Maybe go to more container or raised bed gardening. It makes for less bending over and less maintenance.

Planning ahead for next spring

If you need a quantity of annuals, vegetables or herbs for next spring, you can order them now while it is still fresh in your mind. This way you can be sure to get everything you need.

Watering

It's really dry right now. Hopefully we should start getting some rain soon. Everyone is watering but most are not watering correctly. Going out and waving a hose over your plants is not watering, it's cleaning the dust off the leaves. You are maybe wetting the soil down an inch at best. The best way to water is slow and deep. The best way to do this is with a sprinkler or soaker hose. You should ideally put down an inch of water once or twice a week depending on the weather. You will probably end up using less water in the end. If you have trees or shrubs that need water, take a milk jug, bucket or similar container and poke a hole in the bottom of it. Fill it with water and it will slowly seep out deeply watering the plant. Always water at the outer edge of the foliage, not directly next to the trunk.

Mulching

Mulching sort of goes with watering. Although most people think of mulch to keep down weeds, it also helps retain soil moisture. A good layer of mulch will help reduce moisture loss from the soil. This is why everything should be mulched. Trees, shrubs, perennials, annuals and even herbs can be mulched with a decorative bark mulch. Vegetables can be mulched with grass clippings with no chemicals or straw. Some people use mushroom manure and then till it in come fall.

Organic Pest and Disease Controls

We have a large selection of organic products. Always use the least toxic solution to the problem. It's safe for you, your pets and the environment.

We will be closed July 3rd and 4th. Our regular hours are:
Tues. – Sat. 10-6 Sunday 11-4 Closed Monday