

IN THIS ISSUE...  
Plant Picks, Baby Vegetables, No Fuss Trees & Shrubs more!



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FOR CANADIAN CLIMATES

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Checkered lily

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### GARDENING INFORMATION FOR CANADIAN CLIMATES





## From the Editor



Hello Saskatoon! Welcome to *The Gardener* — if you haven't heard of us before, we are a Canadian-based gardening magazine specializing in what we can

grow in our climate—published right here in Saskatoon.

We began as the *Saskatchewan Gardener*, became *The Gardener for the Prairies* and have recently expanded our reach into other regions of Canada. We have never lost our focus on providing information and inspiration to the unique challenges faced by gardeners in Zones 2 and 3 (and pushing those zones for adventurous gardeners willing to take risks).

Inside, you'll find features that we cover in every issue—the popular Ask Us column, practical how-to articles, landscape design advice and deep dives into annuals, perennials, trees, shrubs and edibles. Many of our regular contributors are gardening experts here in Saskatoon, including several who work in the University of Saskatchewan's highly regarded horticultural program. Our horticultural editor is a graduate of that program and works as a landscape architect here in the city.

We hope you enjoy this complimentary issue. It includes previously published gardening articles and a special focus on Saskatoon. We feature a local garden for inspiration and cover some of our favourite flowers, shrubs and vegetables. Get ready to grow cosmos, plant some coral bells (heuchera), set yourself up to harvest beautiful baby vegetables or plan stunning spring containers.

Getting your hands in the soil is good for the body and soul. If you're not a gardener already, maybe we'll inspire you to give it a try. If you are a gardener, you'll find helpful information and tips in our pages. Consider subscribing—you'll enjoy four issues per year, delivered to your door.

Let us know what you think! We always love to hear from our readers.

Happy spring planting!

Noelle Chorney,  
Managing Editor

## Letters

Dear Friends,

**In the Fall edition of 2018 (page 41) a definition by Ralph Waldo Emerson is very interesting: "a plant whose virtues have not been discovered yet."**

**This is the case with milkweed (*Asclepias*). My father did not like this plant with the seeds in the silk, that the wind spread everywhere. He named it "petits cochons" or "little beast."**

**Wow, it is the "Soyer du Quebec", the silk of Quebec. It is currently being grown in Quebec for many important properties: for new materials for clothing, acoustics, absorption of toxins and water repellence. Maybe someone from Quebec would be interested in writing on this subject.**

**Bye! I very much like *The Gardener* magazine.**

**Fernande G. - Trois-Rivières, QC**

Dear Fernande,

Thank you so much for the information on milkweed. It is exciting that plants that have long been valued by Indigenous people and that are ecologically important are now being cultivated for their valuable properties. Sometimes, it takes Western society a while to come around, but this gives me hope that we can get to a place where everyone can benefit.

Noelle Chorney, *Managing Editor*

Dear Ms. Chorney,

**First, thank you for an informative, interesting magazine. The Fall 2018 issue has been especially enjoyable. I do have one (small) request though. While reading "Ask Us", "Plums" and "Coreopsis", I found myself feeling badly in need of some mention of hardiness zones. I know these are not absolute or perfect, but living in the North Peace, they are better than nothing as an aid to selecting perennials with a better chance of survival here.**

**I also wanted to offer a brief comment on highbush cranberries (*Viburnum trilobum* var. *americanum*) as a shade shrub. The native shrub here grows only 2-3 ft. tall and is not terribly "bushy," but it does turn a lovely crimson in the fall. It also "gases off" once the fall weather is cool enough, the leaves emitting a strong cranberry scent in the evenings. I realize that not everyone is into scents, but for myself, the scent of highbush cranberries along our evening walk (me and the dog) is the high point of late summer and fall evenings.**

**I also concede that cooking highbush cranberry fruit is rather akin to stewing old wool socks! But the complex flavour of the resulting jelly is well worth that minor inconvenience.**

**Laura L., Charlie Lake, BC**

Dear Laura,

Thank you for sharing your story and your request for more information on zones. The plums that we featured were developed as part of the University of Saskatchewan Fruit Program, so they are generally hardy to Zone 2. Our subscribers come from areas that range from Zone 1 thru 9 and we generally try to focus on plants that will work in most areas of the country, but we also recognize that despite this, our readers in Zones 1-2 are gardening in particularly challenging climates and will find some of the plants difficult to grow. We will do our best to include hardiness information where we can.

**Re: Edible Prunus in your winter 2018-19 Edition**

**I am the 'Evans' of the Evans Cherry in the article on 'Edible Prunus' written by Lisa Taylor. The article on the Prunus species is well written and informative on diseases and pests.**

**In the information on chokecherries she states that "none of the choke cherries currently on the market are resistant to black knot." I have, in my garden, four choke cherry cultivars, Lee Red and Lee Black, bred by the late Lloyd Lee at Camp Creek, North of Barrhead, Alberta that are both excellent berry producers and totally resistant to black knot. I have Boughen Gold which develops the odd knot or so and the Goetz Choke Cherry favoured for jelly making, which again is highly resistant to the black knot disease.**

**The black knot epidemic showed up in my garden in 2010 and wiped out around 50 or so wild choke cherry shrubs of various sizes and my entire collection of 20 Mayday trees (*Prunus padus commutata*), both Ethyl, a rose-pink type, and the more common whites. Additionally, I have in my garden a wild choke cherry, presumably a variant of *P. virginiana*, that is highly resistant to black knot. Just the odd small knot shows up on some of the nine, ten to twelve-foot trunks on this wild shrub.**

**Anyone wanting some budwood to try their hand at tissue culturing is welcome, which I can mail if you provide me a stamped and addressed envelope. I do have some suckers from Lee Red and Lee Black potted up or growing freely in the garden around my well established, black knot free choke cherries.**

**Dr. Ieuan Evans**

**Editor's Note:** On the following page we've printed Dr. Evan's letter regarding the Evan's Cherry article that was published in the winter 2019 edition of *The Gardener*.

### Evans Cherry

I was flattered to see the 'Evans cherry' on the front cover of *The Gardener*. It's the cherry I rescued from oblivion in 1976 in Sherwood Park, Alberta.

I was Alberta Agriculture's Provincial Plant Pathologist when I travelled to Horse Hill, Alberta, midway between Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan visited, in late July. In response to an enquiry about phenomenal cherry trees growing in the area, I was shown an orchard of Evans cherries owned by Mrs. Bogward, a lady well into her seventies. Mrs. Bogward told me that if I wanted to save these cherry trees, I should dig up the rooted suckers immediately. She said her land had been acquired to build a federal prison, and work was set to commence the following year.

That fall, I dug up many suckers and planted them at my garden in Sherwood Park as well as on a friend's farm at Tofield, Alberta. Between 1978 and 1980, I moved to Vegreville and then back to Edmonton in 1981. In the meantime, the Evans cherry had multiplied and suckered tenfold, particularly at the Tofield farm location.

In the fall of 1981, I dug up some 15 one-foot Evans cherry suckers from Tofield and planted them as a hedge around my garden. By 1986, they were six to eight feet tall and producing the first real crop of cherries. In the succeeding years, I had endless visits from horticulturists marvelling at the huge crops of cherries. I gave away rooted cherry suckers every fall as fast as I could produce them. I also specifically targeted good friends in the rugby community and institutions such as Olds College, Alberta's Crop Diversification Centre and the CDC North, Government House in Calgary, the University of Alberta and every Italian gardener in Edmonton.

In 1990, I wrote an article for *The Prairie Gardener* entitled "Cherries for the Prairies." At that time, Dr. Kris Pruski, a tissue culture specialist at CDC North, named the cherry the Evans cherry. Meanwhile, he had several individuals tissue culturing the Evans cherry, including Arden Delidais from DNA Gardens at Elnora, Alberta. Arden raised several thousand cherry seedlings from tissue culture, which we bought and marketed through T & T Gardens in Winnipeg. From that year on, Evans cherry tissue culture production exploded Canada-wide.

I tried growing hundreds of cherries from the Evans cherry seed, but none of the seedlings produced much in the way of cherries. In a CBC French documentary, an eight-year-old Evans cherry tree was recorded from flowering to

ripening to harvest. This tree, some eight feet tall and wide, produced a recorded (and remarkable!) 450 pounds of ripe red cherries. The average yield of the commercial Montmorency sour cherries grown in the US (Michigan and Wisconsin) averages only 50 pounds per tree. By comparison, the cultivars Meteor and North Star did very poorly in my garden, producing only a few pounds of berries on eight-year-old trees.

I have no explanation for the phenomenal yield of the Evans cherry—it seems to produce just about two cherries for every leaf in some seasons. The cherry is certainly Zone 3 hardy, but good cherry crops have been grown in the Zone 2 Northwestern Peace River Region and the Northeastern Fort McMurray Region of Alberta. Commercial pick your own Evans cherry orchards now range from Prince George, BC to Winnipeg. At present, this cherry is available across Canada and most, if not all, of the northern United States. Across North America, cherry tree numbers are suspected to be in the many millions.

Where did this cherry tree come from? It's a frequently asked question. Mrs. Bogward said the original Evans cherry tree was given to her parents by the "English" in 1923. At the time of my visit, the original tree, with a very rotten trunk, was still alive with a few green leafed branches.

Over time, I found out that the cherry tree very likely came from coastal Alaska. Sour cherry trees grow wild along the Alaskan coast, especially near Skagway and Haines City. Haines City runs an annual cherry festival. In the 1920s, the Alaskan government gave away thousands of cherry trees (seedlings) to new settlers coming into Alaska. Not many miles away from the Alaska border in the Yukon Territory, the Canadian government had an agricultural research station at Haines Junction. It is likely Haines Junction personnel brought cherry trees to the Edmonton area, where they had agricultural research plots near the present CDC North research station, which is near Horse Hill.

Remember, the Alaska coast was originally colonized by Russian settlers from western Russia and Siberia. These colonists likely brought the cherry trees to the Alaskan coast, where only the hardiest of cherries would have survived. As a final footnote, many Evans cherries have found their way back to orchardists in Alaska.

— by Dr. Ieuan Evans



# SPROUTS

The latest information and products for Gardeners in Canadian climates.

## Bors and Sawatzky awarded A.P. Stevenson Commemorative Award

By Sara Williams

The Manitoba Horticultural Association announced a joint presentation of the 2019 A.P. Stevenson Commemorative Award for conspicuous achievement in the field of horticulture to Dr. Bob Bors and Rick Sawatzky of the University of Saskatchewan. Dr. Bors and Mr. Sawatzky, who retired in 2018, have managed the U of S Fruit Development Program for years. Their work has resulted in the introduction of two apple cultivars, five sour cherry cultivars and 10 haskap cultivars, as well as development work on pears and sea buckthorn.



Rick Sawatzky



Dr. Bob Bors

Saskatchewan in 1999, his excitement about the potential of the sour cherry selections led to his development of tissue culture propagation protocols and the introduction of the Romance series of cherries. His persistence in promoting these hardy cherries through talks and demonstrations has paid off, and they are now widely grown by home gardeners and fruit growers across Canada.

In 1997, Rick ordered four cultivars of haskaps (known then as honeyberries) from Oregon. These four cultivars were selected from material collected in Russian botanical gardens. In 2000,

Bob tasted fruit from these bushes on a plot tour and became excited about their potential. A short time later, he met Dr. Maxine Thompson, who was breeding haskaps at the University of Oregon. They embarked on a program to breed and select cultivars of this new fruit and have developed a world-renowned collection of genetic material and selections. These highly superior selections are becoming widely grown. In addition to breeding sour cherries and haskaps, work continues on developing and introducing apples and pears.

The collaboration between Rick Sawatzky and Dr. Bob Bors has brought new high quality fruit cultivars to home gardeners and fruit producers. The impact of their work will continue well into the future.

## Perennial of the Year 2019

### Stachys monieri 'Hummelo'

The Perennial Plant Association's 2019 perennial of the year is not to be confused with its Stachys relative, Lamb's-Ears. This clump forming perennial sends up spikes that blossom into spears of lavender flowers in early summer. The flowers attract pollinators. An excellent addition to containers or sunny garden borders, easy to propagate and hardy to Zone 4.



photo courtesy perennialresource.com

## Herb of the Year 2019

### Anise hyssop (Agastache spp.)

Each year, the International Herb Association (iherb.org) celebrates an herb—anise hyssop is the 2019 selection. The plant does well in the garden as a short-lived hardy perennial. It's ornamental, attractive to pollinators and an excellent licorice flavoured addition to teas, desserts and edible garnishes.



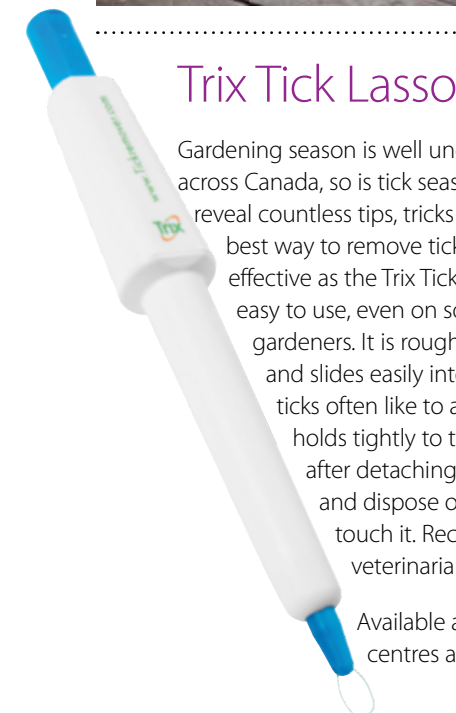
photo courtesy perennialresource.com

## National Garden Bureau's 2019 "Year of the..." Choices

- ANNUAL: Snapdragon
- PERENNIAL: Salvia nemerosa
- BULB: Dahlia
- EDIBLE: Pumpkin



Images courtesy National Garden Bureau



## Trix Tick Lasso

Gardening season is well underway and, for some of us across Canada, so is tick season. A quick online search will reveal countless tips, tricks and old wives' tales on the best way to remove ticks, but few are as easy, safe or effective as the Trix Tick Lasso. The lasso is fast and easy to use, even on squirmy kids, pets or squeamish gardeners. It is roughly the size and shape of a pen, and slides easily into nooks and crannies (where ticks often like to attach). The looped lasso end holds tightly to the tick's mouth parts, even after detaching, allowing you to remove and dispose of the tick without having to touch it. Recommended by gardeners and veterinarians.

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**Q:** We have a large poplar in our backyard. It's a beautiful tree and provides much needed shade for our deck and the roof of our house, cutting our air conditioning costs through the summer. It's planted about five feet from the fence line on the south side of our property. The house next door was sold two years ago, and now our new neighbours are complaining that they can't grow anything or even cultivate the soil in their yard because it's full of tree roots and poplar suckers.

We've never had problems with suckering in our yard, and our lawn and flower beds are doing well, though we don't have anything planted directly under the tree. Other than cutting down the tree, which we are not willing to do, is there anything that can be done to address our neighbour's complaints and concerns?

– David, Saskatoon, SK

**A:** It is an unfortunate truth of suburban life that poplar trees simply do not make good neighbours, a fact all too often ignored by homeowners looking for quick shade or garden centres looking for a quick dollar.

I am not speaking out of some deep-rooted, anti-poplar prejudice. In their place, a farmstead, acreage or other large-scale property, poplars are both attractive and

useful. But for the average 50 x 100 foot (or smaller) suburban lot, they are simply too large, too short-lived and too troublesome. Their roots are very shallow and invasive, as your neighbours have certainly discovered, and when disturbed (as by someone trying to carve a vegetable garden or planting bed through them) tend to sucker wildly.

Female seedlings or clones such as 'Walker' produce great drifts of fluffy seeds in July, which clog ponds, screens and air intakes on air conditioning units. By tree standards, their lives are brief: 40 to 60 years depending on growing conditions. Towards the end of their lifespan, they are readily damaged by summer storms. A large limb from a mature poplar can cut quite a swathe when it comes down. It is usually at this point that the homeowner decides that, for safety's sake, the tree has to be removed. They are then appalled by the discovery that the job, depending on the size of the tree and its proximity to buildings, may cost upwards of a thousand dollars or more.

In spite of this, I understand your unwillingness to remove a valuable source of summer shade, but retaining both the tree and your neighbours' goodwill is not going to be inexpensive or easy. One possible solution is to have a trencher come in and dig a narrow trench between the two properties, cutting the tree roots that extend into your neighbours' lot. The trench need only be a couple of inches wide, but should be about 4 feet deep. It must be kept open if the problem is not to recur, which may require the installation of some sort of permanent, root-proof barrier. The trenching company should be able to advise you on this.

A root pruning of this nature will weaken the tree and stimulate a great deal of suckering in both yards. The suckers can be controlled with applications of a glyphosate-based herbicide or with a dandelion killer such as Killlex. Herbicides applied to suckers on your side of the trench, however, could be translocated back to the parent tree, further weakening it. You may prefer to just snip them off at ground level with a pair of sharp pruning shears. Your neighbours will be left with the problem of digging and removing existing tree roots from their yard, but as long as the trench is maintained, it should prevent any future incursions.

**Q:** This spring, I impulsively purchased a nameless, red-leafed Japanese maple that I found at one of the local big box stores. I transplanted it into a larger container and placed it inside my screened porch, where it looked very lovely and exotic, and seemed to be doing well. However, towards the end of June, I noticed that some of the red leaves were turning green. It still looks completely healthy, but eventually, all the foliage shifted from red to green.

Any idea what might be causing this, or if there's any way to restore the red coloration? Also, while I'd originally planned to treat this as a disposable plant, it's so pretty (even green) I think I might try to overwinter it indoors. Can this be done, and what would be the best way to go about it?

– Sandy, Saskatoon, SK

**A:** Japanese maples are one of the species that make me most regret living in Zone 3, so I can readily understand succumbing to such an impulse. I've resisted the temptation so far, only because I'm cheap, the plants are usually quite expensive, and I doubt I could provide the conditions needed to have a reasonable shot at overwintering one.

Japanese maples have been cultivated for centuries, starting in their native Japan, then spreading through much of the temperate world. There are hundreds of named cultivars and hybrids, and without knowing exactly which one you're growing, it's difficult to pinpoint the probable cause of the colour change. Some red-leafed selections will turn green with too much direct sunlight, particularly during periods of prolonged high temperatures. These conditions can also contribute to the development of tip burn on the leaves. Other red cultivars (or sometimes even the same red cultivars) will revert to green when grown in too much shade.

You could try shifting the position of your Japanese maple so that it gets more or less sunlight than it currently receives, and see if that has any effect on the foliage colour.

Many Japanese maples are grown as grafted plants. A selection with a particularly desirable foliage type or growth habit will be grafted onto a hardier, more vigorous rootstock to promote better growth. Red-

leafed cultivars will generally be grafted onto a green-leafed rootstock. Occasionally, particularly if the top growth is weak, damaged or dead, the plant may regrow from the rootstock, which of course will produce green leaves. However, this is unlikely the case here, as it's the existing foliage turning green, not new growth from the base of the tree.

The most likely cause of the colour change is simple genetics. The majority of the red-leafed cultivars emerge red in the spring, shift to green through the summer, then change back to red (usually a different shade from spring) in autumn. A few, highly prized red cultivars will retain their colour throughout the growing season, given suitable conditions, but these are the exception.

Your plant is probably doing exactly what it's supposed to do and is perfectly healthy. It is generally recommended, though, that you avoid fertilizing Japanese maples in early spring, particularly with fertilizers high in nitrogen, as these promote rapid vegetative growth and may speed the transition from red to green.

As for overwintering your maple, that's something of a gamble. Apparently, it can be done, particularly if you have access to an unheated basement room or well insulated garage. Japanese maples require a dormant period, so you can't just haul them into your centrally heated home in full leaf and expect them to survive. Leave them outdoors in fall to be exposed to light frost, allowing the leaves to drop naturally, then bring them indoors before the soil freezes.

A root cellar with a consistent temperature around 5 to 10°C provides an ideal environment for overwintering dormant trees and shrubs: cool, dark and reasonably humid. Regrettably, root cellars are no longer standard equipment in the average family home, but an insulated garage could work as long as the temperature stays above -10°C. That is the minimum temperature a Japanese maple's roots can tolerate without injury.

You can try wrapping some insulation around the pot for added protection. Highly motivated gardeners even go so far as to build a frame around the tree, covering both plant and container with burlap or insulating wrap. Water the pot thoroughly after moving the plant indoors, but subsequently, water sparingly and only if the soil feels dry.

If you're lucky, you'll see new leaves start to emerge as spring approaches. At this point, you'll want to move the plant into the light and resume normal watering and fertilizing. If the weather is mild, it can be placed in a sheltered, shaded location, but be prepared to move it back inside if temperatures plummet. Once the risk of frost has passed, and it's had time to acclimate to outdoor conditions, the tree can be moved to its summer home.

Depending on its growth rate, your tree may require transplanting to a larger pot, which is best done in early spring before it's fully leafed out. Obviously, the larger the container, the greater the difficulty involved in moving it back indoors. That's why slow-growing, dwarf cultivars like 'Crimson Queen,' 'Orion' or 'Red Pygmy' are best suited to container culture. You may be able to reduce the size of the tree to a certain extent with judicious pruning and shaping.

Once the plant has matured, annual root pruning can also be beneficial. The simplest method involves running a sharp, narrow spade or long knife around the perimeter of the root ball, about 2.5 centimetres (1 in.) from the edge of the pot and all the way to the bottom. Alternately, lift the root ball from the container in early spring prior to leaf emergence. Take a 7–10 cm (3–4 in.) slice from the bottom of the root mass, then remove several 5–7 cm (2–3 in.) wedges from the sides of the root ball. Return the plant to the container (or a larger one, if warranted) and add additional soil as needed.





# CONTAINER PLANTING FOR ALL SEASONS

A cool season container grouping

By Sarah Story

SEASONAL CONTAINERS CAN EXPRESS A MOOD USING COLOUR, TEXTURE AND STYLE, WITHOUT THE COMMITMENT THAT LARGER LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS DEMAND OF YOU. CONTAINERS ARE A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT COLOUR TRENDS. THIS YEAR, MANY OF MY CONTAINERS WERE ORANGE—NEXT YEAR THEY WILL BE WHITE! HERE ARE SOME TIPS ON USING CONTAINER PLANTINGS TO EXPRESS YOUR PERSONAL TASTES.

## “Thriller, filler, spiller”

Using this design strategy, the elements of a successful container planting are a signature plant (thriller), a plant (or group of plants) to fill the spaces around the signature plant (filler) and a trailing plant to cascade over the edge of the container (spiller).

The centrepiece is the thriller. Choose something striking that has some architectural interest, something with large bold leaves and arching stems, for example, or a particularly unique texture or form. Suggestions include cordyline, phormium or canna lily, all of which are easy to look after. I love canna lily as it has a tropical look to it, especially the blooms, which are always stunning. Canna lilies are also available in different foliage colours and venation.

Want a unique flowering centrepiece? Consider a tall, trellised mandevilla. No dead-heading required, thrives in hot weather and available in pink, white or red, plus it's very showy and low maintenance.

I try to select centrepiece plants that will last through two seasons. An evergreen topiary twist (juniper, cypress) can work for summer as well as winter. Fountain grass always looks good for summer but is stunning through the fall as well.

Proportion is the key, especially for the thriller! When deciding on which plants to use, consider the size of your pot, and choose a centrepiece that is at least two thirds the height of the container. Anything smaller and the dramatic effect will be lessened.

Filler plants surround the thriller and give the container planting substance. They play an important supporting role to the thriller as focal point, while at the same time offering their own unique features. They should provide contrast to the thriller, but not enough to detract from it.



Canna, begonia, creeping jenny



Variegated canna lily



Phormium thriller with yellow and purple fillers and spillers





A group of canna lilies as a focal point in smaller planter



Purple corydalis and potato vine



Spiral trimmed juniper



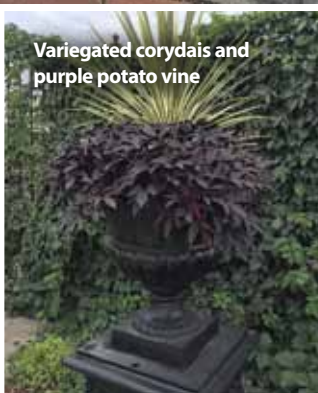
Big bluestem in autumn colour



Purple fountain grass



Group of seasonal containers



Variegated corydalis and purple potato vine



Yellow twig dogwood stems



Coleus



Canna, potato vine, creeping jenny & million bells



Variegated canna lily



Coleus



Canna, coleus and phormium



Purple kale



Winter greens and twigs

Fillers should have some characteristics related to the thriller, to add continuity to the planting. A red flowered begonia filler, for example, highlights the red tones of a purple cordyline or phormium thriller. Coleus is a great filler plant. It comes in so many foliage colours that you can always find one that coordinates with other plants.

For a fall container that really stands out, fall-blooming chrysanthemum can't be beat. Replace tired summer fillers with a chrysanthemum in full bloom to refresh the planting and extend its season.

Spiller plants trail over the edge of the container. They create movement and flow by appearing to pour out of the container, and they soften the planting by hiding the hard container rim.

Potato vine is one of my favourite spillers. It can be pinched back to cause branching and create a fuller cascade, or left to grow into long, trailing stems reaching down the sides of tall containers. It comes in shades of yellow, green and purple, as well as various textures.

Creeping jenny is another great spiller, especially when you're looking for a fine textured plant. English ivy is a classic looking plant that can be dug up in the fall and brought indoors for the winter. Oregano makes a beautiful spiller, especially for smaller containers—and you can use the leaves in the kitchen when stems are pinched back.

**Containers for all seasons**

Containers are not just for summer! An empty pot is a missed creative gardening opportunity. Take advantage of seasonal changes to highlight different characteristics.

By autumn, container plantings can start to look tired and worn out. Replace tired fillers in late summer with autumn bloomers or plants with colourful foliage. Ornamental kale and coleus add fantastic autumn colour, and ornamental grasses often turn colour in autumn to add late-season interest. Pansies and other cool-season annuals can be used for autumn flowers, not just for spring!





Banana plant



Winter twigs and pansies



Paper birch stems and red osier dogwood



Chrysanthemums, coleus, kale



Winter foliage and twigs

SASKATCHEWAN HORTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION 2019 BUS TOUR

**Batoche, Seager Wheeler, Little Manitou, Quill Lakes and Fishing Lake**

**JULY 14, 15, 16**

Explore the site of the North West Rebellion, visit the farm of the "Wheat King of the Prairies", and learn about Saskatchewan basin lakes. Meet gardeners, artists, seed growers, plant breeders, & wildlife biologists.

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Batoche National Historic Site
- Seager Wheeler Maple Grove Farm
- Spirit of Manitou Studio Tour
- Little Manitou, Quill Lakes, Fishing Lake
- Elfros Icelandic Pioneer Memorial
- Kuroki Japanese Garden
- St. Peter's Cathedral and Abbey
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Winter containers can be just as stunning, and designed to last all winter long. The landscape is full of plants with fall and winter interest—find inspiration from the natural landscape. You won't be able to use tender annuals or even most perennials in winter containers, but cut branches will hold their colour and seasonal interest whatever the temperature. Plants with winter fruit, such as rose hips, mountain-ash berries, white snowberry, pinecones and seedpods from various perennials will add colour and texture to a winter arrangement.

Fresh cut branches, scavenged from the landscape or bought from a supplier, can be used as beautiful accents or features. Hardy red osier and yellow twig dogwoods may be easy to find in the landscape. Some willows have particularly bright young twigs too (and may even leaf out in the spring!).

Non-hardy branches are available at garden centres and craft stores. Flame willow, curly willow, cardinal dogwood and others have bright coloured, interesting branches. Cool winter temperatures will keep coloured stems looking fresh, glossy and bright, but when temperatures warm, they will start to dry out and lose their colour and luster.

Use fresh evergreen boughs, available at local garden centres or from your yard or Christmas tree. I love to use Colorado blue spruce boughs; the blue-silver needles contrast nicely with yellow stem dogwood. Magnolia branches, with their wide, glossy green with copper undersides, offer a different shape and texture from standard evergreens. Preserved eucalyptus, vibrant and available in a variety of colours, provides a nice textural contrast to strong upright branches.

Branches are heavy and need to be secured to endure the winter months. A large bamboo stake at the centre of your container, pounded into the frozen media, can be used to anchor branches. Fasten branches with zip ties, wire or sinamay ribbon (wide, ornamental ribbon) to ensure they stay where you want them. Or use dry floral foam as a base, and arrange stems and evergreen boughs.

Additional holiday picks from the florist or dollar store can add a hint of festive sparkle, but use sparingly! Sometimes less is more.

*Sarah Story is a graduate of the U of S School of Horticulture and operates Sarah Story Fine Gardening in Saskatoon.*



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# Cosmos

By William Hrycan

When my four-year-old picked up a packet of seeds last spring and asked if we could grow the “pretty pink flowers,” I couldn’t say no. Cosmos were some of the first annuals I grew as a child, and I’ve always been drawn to them. But when we went to pick the best cultivar for our garden, we were faced with a problem—we wanted to grow them all... so we did.

In the end, my daughter had 14 packets of cosmos in her hands. She was thrilled, and I was starting to worry about garden space. We grew tall cosmos and short ones, single flowers and semi-doubles, and cosmos in all shades of pink, yellow and orange. By the time summer rolled around, our garden was a riot of glorious colour.

## How to grow cosmos

Cosmos are one of the easiest annuals to grow, and they grow fast, which makes them perfect for new gardeners, busy gardeners and gardening with children.

**‘Bright Lights’** They are drought tolerant, reliable bloomers in a wide range of conditions and seem to thrive on neglect. That’s probably why they do so well in my garden, where there is little pampering to be found. They grow equally well in my sandy garden soil at home, in the heavy clay at my community garden and in the potting soil I use in containers. While they thrive in full sun, they also seem to tolerate partial shade with only a little reduction in flowering.

Garden centres carry bedding packs of cosmos and usually have a selection of popular varieties. If your garden centre doesn’t carry the varieties you’re looking for, they’re also easy to start from seed. They can be slow to bloom if direct seeded in the spring, so for early season blooming, start them indoors, about six weeks before the last frost.

I start my cosmos in a 72-cell plug liner. I have tried liners with 128 cells, but the smaller plugs cause the plants to grow tall and spindly. The small cells also dry out quickly when the plants get larger. Cover seeds very lightly and keep moist. Seedlings will start to germinate in three to five days.



‘Sensation’ Mix



‘Rubenza’



‘Cosmic Mix’



‘Sweet Kisses’



Transplant your cosmos after all danger of frost is passed. Space them 20–45 cm (8–18 in.) apart, depending on cultivar size. The smaller sulphur cosmos can be planted 20–25 cm (8–10 in.) apart. Larger varieties like ‘Rubenza,’ ‘Seashells,’ the Sensation series and other full-sized cosmos may need staking in windy locations. Sulphur cosmos and shorter varieties will not need staking. Don’t fertilize, as cosmos seem to produce more flowers in soils that are lean rather than rich.

Cosmos will keep blooming until frost, but regular deadheading or harvesting of blossoms as cut flowers will keep flower production stronger.

### Types of cosmos

There are two types of commonly grown cosmos: garden cosmos (*Cosmos bipinnatus*) and sulphur cosmos (*C. sulphureus*).

Garden cosmos are what most people recognize as cosmos. The flowers are large and daisy-like, typically in white and shades of pink. The foliage is bright green and ferny, and plants have an airy texture that looks beautiful even when plants are not in bloom. Garden cosmos range in size from 45 cm to 1.5 m (18 in. to 5 ft.) tall.

Sulphur cosmos look nothing like garden cosmos. They are smaller plants, with tidy, compact forms that don’t grow much larger than 30 cm (12 in.) tall and wide. Flowers in shades of yellow, orange and rusty reds look less like daisies and more like French marigolds. The foliage is still ferny, but not as finely textured, and the leaves are a darker green.

### Garden cosmos (*C. bipinnatus*)

The Sensation cosmos have been around for a long time, and remain popular for a reason. Sensation cosmos produce large white, pink, rose and carmine red flowers on long, strong stems. Once blooming starts in mid summer, it continues well into autumn. The plants reach 120 cm (4 ft.) tall and form beautiful bushy plants, particularly if pinched back early in the season. Sensation is usually sold as a mix, but individual colours are also available.

The ‘Candy Stripe’ cultivar is a Sensation-type cosmos, but the large flowers are a beautiful blend of white and rose. Each petal appears to be painted with a single brush stroke of deep rose, and no two flowers are the same. It doesn’t bloom as heavily as other Sensation cosmos, but its colour makes it a superior cut flower.

The popular Sonata series is a standard you’ll find at most garden centres. Flowers are similar to Sensation in size and colour (except the pink ones, which are pink with a rose blush in the centre), but the plants are much smaller, growing only to about 60 cm (2 ft.). Their tidy, compact forms make them better for smaller beds, and they resist flopping over. Like Sensation, Sonata cosmos are often available as a mix, but are commonly sold as single colours too.

The Sea Shells mix is not the strongest bloomer, at least not in my garden, but its unique flowers certainly make it worth growing. Instead of flat, daisy-like petals, the outer ring is fluted, rolled up like little seashells. The mix comes with white, pink and rose flowers, and the plants are large, reaching 120 cm (4 ft.) tall.

‘Sweet Kisses’ is by far my favourite pink cosmos. If you’re looking only for a pink cosmos, this is the one you want. A winner of the Fleuroselect Novelty Award in 2016, ‘Sweet Kisses’ flowers are generally

pink, but range from nearly pure white with a light pink blush, to nearly pure rose with thin white highlights. Every flower is completely different, and all appear to be hand-painted. The flowers are also semi-double—they have a large, outer ring of daisy-like petals as well as a ring of smaller frilly petals that give the flowers an interesting texture.

‘Sweet Kisses’ grows to 90 cm (3 ft.) and doesn’t need staking. Blooms appear earlier and production is heavier than many other cultivars.

The Cosimo series is another winner in my garden. Cosimo ‘Red White’ is consistently the first to bloom. The flowers are an intense blend of deep rose and white, and like ‘Sweet Kisses,’ every flower is a little different. The petal ends also look like they’ve been sheared off with pinking shears. Other colours in the series include ‘Pink-White,’ a blend of white, pale pink and pink picotee (coloured tips), ‘Purple-Red’ and ‘Collarete,’ a semi-double pink and white blend. Cosimo cosmos are all dwarf, growing only 45 cm (18 in.) tall, and perfectly suited for smaller spaces.

I’m a sucker for unusual and novelty flowers, and my favourite cosmos, ‘Xanthos,’ fits the bill. It is the first garden cosmos to produce a unique butter-yellow flower, and the most beautiful cosmos I’ve ever grown.

Not only does it stand out because of its unusual colour, it’s also one of the strongest performers in my garden. It is one of the earliest to bloom, second only to the Cosimo series, and despite my lackadaisical deadheading, remained covered in flowers all summer and autumn. Plants are dwarf and compact, forming tidy mounds about 45–60 cm (18–24 in.) tall. ‘Xanthos’ was the winner of a Fleuroselect Gold Medal in 2016.

‘Rubenza’ is another of my favourites, because it stands out from all others in colour and performance. ‘Rubenza’ produces the darkest red/wine coloured blossoms of any cosmos I’ve seen. After opening, they slowly fade to dusty rose, so plants quickly become an interesting collection of colours and shades. Flowers are produced very early (similar to ‘Xanthos’) and all season long without deadheading. The plants reach 90 cm (3 ft.) tall, giving them a full-sized appearance, but without the floppy nature of taller varieties.

‘Rubenza’ looks amazing in contrast with the pale yellow ‘Xanthos.’ It’s too bad the plants are not more similar in height; growing them interplanted with each other would be an interesting mix.

### Sulphur cosmos (*C. sulphureus*)

If you’re looking for something smaller and less pink, but just as reliable and easy to grow, consider the sulphur cosmos in their warm yellow and orange tones.

Bright Lights is a particularly beautiful series of sulphur cosmos. Its semi-double flowers are large and produced on longer stems than other sulphur cosmos, making them the most suited as a cut flower. Flowers are produced in shades of yellow, golden orange and scarlet orange. If deadheaded, they’ll keep appearing from early summer through to frost.

The plants are compact, growing to only 30–34 cm (12–14 in.) tall and wide. The flowers are held above the canopy on thin stems and, at first glance, appear to float above the plant. Because of this, the flowers capture light in a unique way, almost seeming to glow.





Cosmic Mix is similar in colour to Bright Lights, but the plants are more compact. The flowers are held closer to the foliage, so they don't have the same airy appearance of Bright Lights. But, because of the more compact form, plants can be completely covered in blossoms, giving them a brighter, more intense visual punch.

Cosmic Mix is available as a mix of colours or as single colours. Cosmic 'Red,' 'Yellow' and 'Orange' were winners of the All-America Selections Flower Award in 2000.

My favourite sulphur cosmos is 'Limara Lemon.' It's the smallest cosmos I've grown, with compact plants forming tidy mounds only 30 cm (12 in.) tall and wide. It's also the earliest—by early summer, plants are completely covered in clear lemon-yellow, semi-double flowers.

'Limara Lemon' flowers are smaller than other sulphur cosmos, at only about 2.5 cm (1 in.) diameter, but they're produced in mass all season, even if not deadheaded. The plants never stop looking amazing. I planted 'Limara Lemon' in partial shade last year, and it still outperformed my other sulphur cosmos planted in full sun.

### My cosmos wish list

Although I've grown many cosmos, both last season and in past years, there are many I haven't yet tried that are on my wish list for future seasons.

I haven't grown any truly double cosmos, and the Double Click series is one I'd like to try. Plants are large (120 cm/4 ft.) or larger and apparently covered in huge frilly flowers on long stems.

The Pop Socks series also looks interesting. Flowers can be single, semi-double and fully double, but even the double ones retain a strong outer ring of daisy-like petals, resembling pincushion flowers (*Scabiosa*). It's available in single colours or the standard white/pink/rose mix similar to other garden cosmos.

'Sunset Yellow' is another light yellow garden cosmos, similar to 'Xanthos,' but on plants that grow 75 cm (2.5 ft.) tall. These would look stunning interplanted with Sonata 'White' or, for a more intense contrast, with 'Rubenza.'

The most intriguing cosmos on my hit list is chocolate cosmos (*Cosmos atrosanguineus*). The cultivar 'Choca Mocha' produces velvety dark red (almost black) flowers. It's apparently perennial, but only hardy to Zones 9-10, so it needs to be brought in at the end of each season. It's also not available by seed and needs to be purchased as a bedding plant. The 'Black Magic' cultivar has a similar dark colour, but a range of single and semi-double flowers—and it's available by seed. The recent 2016 introduction is being touted as a breakthrough in cosmos breeding, and is making chocolate cosmos more accessible for gardeners. I can't wait to look for seeds this spring.

### Designing with cosmos

I love to see garden cosmos planted in drifts across the landscape, creating billowy masses of white and pink. The large flowers have a strong presence in the garden and make a bold statement. Because of their size and rapid growth, garden cosmos also stand their ground in the perennial or mixed bed, adding valuable late-summer colour after

many perennials are finished for the season. Their floppy, informal form looks fantastic in free-flowing, carefree gardens, like a cottage garden, woodland garden or wild-flower meadow.

The shorter sulphur cosmos are best used at the front of beds or borders. They also make great mass plantings, particularly the multi-hued mixes like Cosmic Mix. Their tidy forms are better suited for smaller beds and more formal gardens than the larger, floppy garden cosmos.

Both types of cosmos do well in containers. Sulphur cosmos make great filler plants in larger containers or as features in smaller pots. I include single plants in small containers in my herb garden to dress up the space. Taller varieties of garden cosmos make splashy features in container plantings. They can become a little leggy in a container, so be sure to pinch back when plants are 30–45 cm (12–18 in.) to encourage bushier growth. Plant bushy fillers at their base to hide the bare legs.

Garden cosmos are very productive as a cut flower. The flowers don't last quite a week once harvested, but the plants will keep producing as long as you keep cutting, so you'll never be without. For the longest vase life, harvest flowers just prior to buds opening up and use a floral preservative.

All cosmos (except for the fully double ones) produce loads of pollen and nectar, providing food for bees, butterflies and other pollinators. Many also have a sweet scent, especially when planted in large numbers, so plant them near walkways, patios or other entertaining spaces where they can be appreciated.

In the world of easy-to-grow annuals, cosmos can't be beat. Although I might not recommend growing 14 cultivars in one season, I do recommend giving this old-fashioned plant a chance in your garden.

*William Hrycan is The Gardener's horticultural editor and a frequent contributor. He's also a landscape architect, photographer, devoted dad and self-confessed gardening addict who gardens wherever and whenever he can.*



## HowTo By William Hrycan

# PRUNE AND TRAIN TOMATOES

**There are many ways to prune and support your tomatoes. So many ways, in fact, that most tomato-growing gardeners develop a preferred method determined as much by personal preference and whatever materials they happen to have on hand as by science. Whatever your method, follow these guidelines to get the most out of your tomato plants this year.**

### Determinate vs. indeterminate

If you're growing determinate tomatoes (tomato plants that grow into a bush), pruning is not required and supporting is simple. Sturdy tomato cages, installed immediately after planting to avoid damaging the plant, usually provide enough support.

Since determinate tomatoes grow to a set size and will only produce a finite amount of fruit, pruning any branches or fruit clusters will reduce yields. By mid-August, however, flower clusters that haven't yet set fruit will not have time to mature. Remove these clusters so the plant's energy is directed towards maturing the existing fruit.

Indeterminate tomatoes are large, rambling plants with long vines that roam across the garden. They also produce side branches at every leaf node. Allowing these branches to grow results in a multi-branched vine that will be slow to set fruit. If you want to encourage production, remove side branches as they appear. When they're small, you can snap them off at the base with your fingers. If they're longer than 20–30 cm (8–12 in.), remove them with a knife or pruner to avoid damaging the main stem.

*Supporting your indeterminate tomato plants will reduce the space they occupy, keep the fruit off the ground (where it's more likely to rot or be eaten by slugs and rodents) and make harvesting easier.*

Indeterminate tomatoes can be supported on a trellis, wire or string mesh, or even on strong strings tied to a structure (like a pole bean). My preferred method is to use a single stake.

### MATERIALS LIST

- Stakes (wooden, metal, bamboo)—at least 2 metres (6 ft.) long
- Heavy hammer
- Twine, nylon straps or hook & loop fastener strips
- Sharp pruners or knife

### Steps

Immediately after planting, pound a long stake into the ground at least 30 cm (12 in.) deep; deeper if your soil is sandy or very loose.

When your tomato plant reaches 30 cm (12 in.) high, use the twine, nylon or hook & loop strips to loosely tie the stem to the stake. Keep ties loose to prevent damage to the shoot and allow for growth. I like to use hook & loop because I can easily adjust how tight the ties are as the stems grow thicker.

As your plants grow, prune often and fervently! Indeterminate plants grow upwards quickly, but also produce side branches at an amazing speed. I allow the first (lowest) side branch to grow into a second stem (which results in a two-stem plant) but remove all other side branches.

Train the single (or double) stem up the stake. For every 20 cm (8 in.) of growth (or more frequently, if needed), loosely tie stems to the stake. Adjust or loosen ties as stems thicken, if needed.

About three weeks before the first frost, trim off the top off the plant immediately above the top-most cluster of fruit. Flower clusters that haven't set fruit won't mature before cool weather sets in, and topping the plant directs energy to developing fruit rather than plant growth.

Tall indeterminate plants with heavy fruit do best supported on stakes or trellises.

Velcro ties can be loosened or relocated as stems grow.

A sturdy steel cage can support large tomato plants.

Snap off small shoots between leaf and stem on indeterminate plants.



# NO-FUSS

# TREES & SHRUBS

Text by Alan Weninger  
 Photos by Alan Weninger and William Hrycan

Taking care of a collection of trees and shrubs brings into focus those plants that add to my to-do list. Suckering sumacs, crabapple branches drooping to face level, lilacs reseeding everywhere—not all plants are agreeable when it comes to garden maintenance. But the arboretum where I work also has plants that are easy to get along with, asking no more of me than the occasional removal of dead branches.



Swiss stone pine (*Pinus cembra*)



Black chokeberry flowers (*Aronia melanocarpa*)



Native willow flowers (*Salix discolor*)



Muckle plum flowers (*Prunus x nigrella* 'Muckle')



Subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*)

When I pass the black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*) for example, I simply nod approvingly at its tidy form, its black berry clusters and its deep green glossy leaves. In eight years of walk-pasts, it has never been on the to-do list.

Pruning is often the main activity in urban tree maintenance. Branches typically get in the way of people and buildings. Trees that naturally grow in a columnar habit require less trimming than those with spreading branches. Swiss stone pine (*Pinus cembra*) and subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*) are examples of coniferous trees more intent on growing up than out, requiring minimal pruning throughout their lifetime. Both have deep green, vigorous foliage and develop a noble form as they mature. If lower branches require removal, pine and

fir will not re-sprout from the cut areas, so pruning has a longer lasting effect. Firs offer an added benefit: when their cones are ripe, instead of falling intact they disintegrate from the treetops, disappearing into the mulch or lawn.

Coniferous trees and shrubs have a low maintenance advantage as they do not drop leaves in the fall. The small needles that do fall collect under the tree, where they can be used as natural mulch. In Patterson Garden Arboretum, the dense carpets of needles and small cones under the pine, spruce, fir, larch and cedar trees are the most weed-free of all the planted areas.

Many of the columnar cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) cultivars give years of maintenance-free culture. This species has been through a





Columnar cedars (*Thuja occidentalis*) in Patterson Arboretum with *Populus canadensis* 'Serotina de Selys' (the tall tree) in background.



Globe caragana (*Caragana frutex* 'Globosa')



Distinctive leaves of globe caragana (*Caragana frutex* 'Globosa')

long selection process, so there are many upright, hardy, dense forms available. The cultivars 'Masonic,' 'Emerald Green,' 'Holmstrup' and 'Brandon' are doing well in Patterson Arboretum. Unlike pine, cedars will regrow from cut branch ends, but this can be an advantage when they're used as shaped shrubs. No matter how extreme the branch removal on a cedar tree, all pruning cuts are forgiven with new evergreen growth.

Many Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*) cultivars are available in upright forms. These typically have a blue-green colour that distinguishes them from cedars. The natural tree forms of junipers and cedars are also relatively easy to maintain, although wider-growing than most cultivars.

Deciduous trees are also available in easy-care, upright forms. Poplars are generally high maintenance trees due to their large spreading form and brittle branches. A notable exception is *Populus x canadensis* 'Serotina de Selys,' which has relatively short vertical branches growing off the main trunk. The specimen in Patterson Arboretum has been thriving for nearly 50 years and has a commanding presence in the collection. On a windy day, the leaves will ripple in waves across the dense crown of the tree.

'Sutherland' caragana is a selection of common caragana (*Caragana arborescens* 'Sutherland') that grows with upright branches. The form makes its shiny, green-coppery bark more noticeable. Unlike the species, which can become invasive, this selection does not produce seeds. 'Sutherland' caragana grows to several metres in height and has had a solid presence in prairie landscaping over the years, never overused and quietly proving its worth.

Globe caragana (*Caragana frutex* 'Globosa') is also easy to get along with, due to its slow growth and small, compact form. Compact shrub forms will need less attention than those that quickly sprawl into places where they are not wanted. Globe

caragana grows to about one metre in height, is noticeably bright green in the spring and has interesting palmate leaves. All caragana species and cultivars have relatively small leaves that do not require raking in the fall.

Downy arrowwood (*Viburnum rafinesquianum*) is a compact deciduous shrub with small toothed leaves and reddish autumn foliage. The species is native to eastern Canada as far west as Manitoba. It will grow in shady locations and rarely needs to be pruned or tended in any way. It has white flower clusters and fruit that mature from green to red and black.

Similar in form but growing slightly larger is the 'Muckle' plum (*Prunus x nigrella* 'Muckle'), which bursts into bloom with abundant and distinctively coloured pink-mauve flowers in the spring. Despite the name, the 'Muckle' plum does not produce fruit; it is a sterile hybrid between Canada plum (*Prunus nigra*) and Russian almond (*Prunus tenella*). Nanking cherry (*Prunus tomentosa*) is a similar shrub that produces fruit after flowering. It likes a sunny spot but is easy to grow and adaptable.

Plants that do not produce fruit or seed, or those that do not reseed readily, can save yard maintenance time. Crabapple trees in the arboretum re-seed predictably, with seedlings appearing in thick carpets under the parent trees and in smaller numbers virtually everywhere else. Elms (yes, even the beloved American elm) and many lilacs will form thousands of seedlings in the arboretum under favourable conditions.

Larger fruit can create extra work if it appears in unpicked overabundance. Again, crabapples can be very messy when their fruit drops, and if it doesn't drop readily the weight of it can cause branches to sag and break. Many cultivated plants did not evolve to carry the extra burden of oversized or overabundant fruit; therefore extra pruning will be necessary. Small fruit, such as the berries of the black chokeberry mentioned earlier, is easier to deal with as it quickly disappears into lawns, soil or birds.

Roses are always on the arboretum to-do list. Each new season produces an abundance of dead twigs, the removal of which is complicated by sharp prickles. A possible exception is the rugosa or Japanese rose (*Rosa rugosa*). It is sturdy and hardy, with abundant flowers and large glossy hips. Rugosa rose grows steadily into a dense bush of a few metres in height. It also lacks the annoying sucker shoots produced by some roses.

Suckering plants, those that produce new plants from root shoots, will never be on the easy-care list, unless confined by buildings or cement. They are best suited to wild or informal areas where they compete with other plants. Smooth sumac (*Rhus glabra*), devil's walking-stick (*Aralia spinosa*), aspens (*Populus* spp.), sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*) and many cherries and plums (*Prunus* spp.) fit into this category. Grafted plants may also produce basal shoots as

the rootstock tries to outgrow its graft; these reappear and need to be removed each year.

Some poplars and tree-size willows have an unusual maintenance issue that appears every time the wind blows, as branches litter the ground around the tree. In nature, this is a method of reproduction since the easily-rooting branches may find their way to a moist riverbank. Native shrub willows, such as yellow willow (*Salix lutea*), beaked willow (*Salix bebbiana*) and meadow willow (*Salix petiolaris*) do not have this shedding habit, and are easy to grow in sunny locations. All of these willows grow into neat, dense, colourful shrubs, making it all the more surprising that these native species are rarely planted in landscape situations.

Personally, I think an arboretum or home landscape with only the easy-care trees and shrubs would seem a bit empty—gone would be the crabapple, rose, elm, sumac, cherry, plum, lilac, poplar, willow and dogwood. So as we choose our slender, dense, non-fruiting, non-suckering, tidy cultivated species and set to rest in our backyards, let's hope our neighbours are throwing caution to the wind in their tree selection.

Perhaps the best solution is to seek diversity in planting, leaning a little to the low-maintenance side. With trees and shrubs like black chokeberry, 'Muckle' plum and subalpine fir in the mix, things are bound to go smoothly.

*Alan Weninger is a gardener and arborist with the Horticulture Field Lab at the University of Saskatchewan and the caretaker of Patterson Garden Arboretum.*



'Hansa' rugosa rose (*Rosa rugosa* 'Hansa')



Nanking cherry fruit (*Prunus tomentosa*)



# A GROWING APPETITE FOR SMALLER CULTIVARS

# BABY VEGETABLES

I was looking through my seed catalogues the other day and couldn't help but notice a growing emphasis on baby or miniature vegetables. Why, I wondered, do people want smaller sized vegetables?

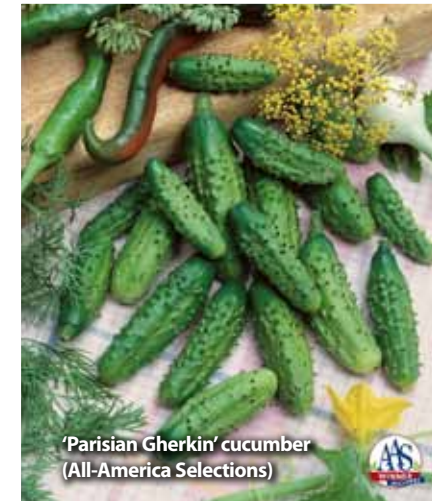
By Jackie Bantle



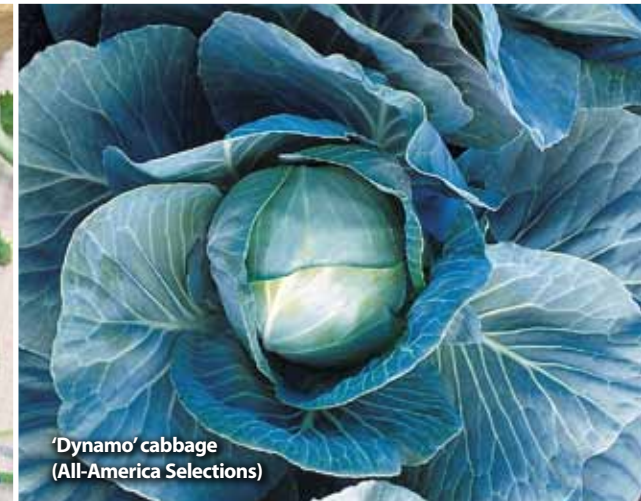
'Thumbelina' carrot  
(All-America Selections)



'Fairy Tale' eggplant  
(All-America Selections)



'Parisian Gherkin' cucumber  
(All-America Selections)



'Dynamo' cabbage  
(All-America Selections)



'Atlas' carrot



'Butterscotch' squash  
(All-America Selections)

Is it easier to eat the recommended five to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables a day if they are smaller? Are we so busy that we no longer have time to cut vegetables into bite-sized chunks, but would rather grow vegetables that can be readily popped, whole, in our mouth? And then I wondered, what if we demanded our meat in smaller sizes—cows just big enough to make a single hamburger? Okay, I admit I'm ranting (a little) and probably over-analyzing. Maybe people just want baby vegetables because they are fun and cute. And if baby vegetables encourage people to eat more vegetables, well, THAT would be a good thing.

Baby or miniature vegetables can be categorized into two groups: those that are harvested when immature (and thus smaller in size) and those that are naturally smaller in size, even when mature. While some vegetables lend themselves to being harvested as “baby” vegetables (not yet mature) without compromising taste or quality, others do not. In many cases, the best way to get smaller sized veggies is to select baby or miniature cultivars.

Picking bush and pole beans before they are mature, for example, will compromise quality. Instead, choose the smaller French filet beans, which have excellent flavour and texture. Pods are much thinner at maturity and usually shorter than regular bush and pole bean types. 'Delinel' (green) and 'Soleil' (yellow) are both recommended for their quality and yields.

Beets, cauliflower, potatoes and zucchini can be harvested as baby vegetables before reaching mature size. Beets that mature later in the season might have a slightly distorted root shape when picked as a miniature. 'Baby' is a recently released beet cultivar that can be picked as a baby without compromising its shape.

You will not compromise on taste by picking a zucchini as a baby vegetable, but some regular sized cultivars can be rather thin when harvested early. 'Bush Baby' zucchini is a new variety bred to be picked as a baby. The fruit, though shorter in length, has good sized girth.

Cauliflower heads can be harvested at any time during the growing season. Avoid using later maturing cultivars for picking as baby heads, as these large plants tend to take up excess space in the garden. Earlier maturing cauliflower tends to be a smaller plant. 'Igloo' is a newer cauliflower cultivar recommended for early harvest of smaller heads: head size peaks at 7–10 cm (3–4 in.) diameter.

Who can resist the taste of freshly harvested baby potatoes, roasted with butter and dill, early in the summer? Happily, any potato cultivar can be

harvested as a baby. The key is that the tops are green, healthy and growing with great gusto. Consequently, the skin of the underground potato tuber is fresh and soft. Potato tubers left in the ground for several days after the tops have been removed or died (due to a fall frost, for example) “set” their skin, meaning the skin becomes slightly thicker and does not rub off easily. Only potato tubers that have their skin “set” can be stored long term. Several potato varieties have been bred to remain small throughout the growing season, but also to set their skin in the fall. Usually more



oblong in shape, these varieties are often called ‘fingerling’ potatoes. Examples include ‘Banana,’ ‘French Fingerling,’ ‘Linzer Delikatess’ and ‘Pink Fir Apple’. Miniature round potatoes that remain baby size through the growing season include ‘Baby Boomer’ (white skin), ‘Baby Belle’ (red skin) and ‘Piccolo’ (white skin).

Carrots can be harvested earlier in the season as a baby vegetable. Be aware, however, that some cultivars may be bitter, tough or bland when harvested immature. Avoid growing Imperator types (long carrots that come to a point on the end) for harvest as baby carrots. The shorter Danvers (with a pointy root tip) or round-tipped nantes types are better choices as baby carrots. ‘Adelaide’ (nantes type) is a true baby carrot that is ready to pick at eight cm (3 in.) long. ‘Atlas’ is a small round carrot recommended for shallow soils and early harvest. ‘Caracas,’ an early chantenay type, matures at 8–10 cm (3–4 in.) long and has good flavour as a baby carrot.

Cucumbers are similar to carrots in that some cultivars, especially slicing types, can be bitter or bland if harvested before full maturity. Grow pickling types for small cucumbers or try some of the new snack-type cultivars on the market. ‘Baby’ is recommended as a small early cucumber ready to pick only two months after seeding. ‘Iznik’ is a spineless, seedless snack cucumber with excellent flavour when 8–10 cm (3–4 in.) long. ‘Unistars’ (similar in size and appearance as ‘Iznik’) is recommended for growing in a greenhouse or hoop house rather than directly outdoors.



‘Gold Nugget’ tomato

‘Fairy Tale’ eggplant  
(All-America Selections)

Spinach, salad mixes and Asian green mixes are leafy vegetables that can be harvested as soon as the leaves are big enough to cut. Flavour is not compromised by early harvest. In fact, in some cases the small leaves are more tender, sweet and flavourful.

‘Little Gem’ lettuce cultivars are just the right size to provide a salad for one or two people. One of my favourite little romaine lettuce variety is ‘Little Gem Pearl,’ a small, flattened head of romaine lettuce

about 15–20 cm (6–8 in.) in diameter. Other recommended baby lettuce cultivars include ‘Rhazes’ (red leaf baby romaine), ‘Bambi’ (green leaf baby romaine), ‘Breen’ (compact mini red romaine), ‘Dragoon’ (compact mini green romaine), ‘Truchas’ (mini red romaine), ‘Cegolaine’ (red/green ‘Little Gem’ type), ‘Rosaine’ (dark red ‘Little Gem’ type with mini heads), ‘Spretnak’ (‘Little Gem’ type with good disease resistance).

“Baby” vegetables can sometimes appear on a plant after the main crop has been harvested. For example, after the main head of a broccoli plant is harvested, side shoots will emerge that are perfect bite-size broccolis—and have the same flavour and healthfulness as the main broccoli head. These side shoots can be harvested for weeks after the main head has been removed. New broccoli cultivars are being bred to produce only miniature heads, such as ‘Atlantis’ and ‘Happy Rich’ (slightly sweeter than ‘Atlantis’).

Corn is an interesting crop to grow as a miniature vegetable. An heirloom corn cultivar called ‘Golden Midget Sweet’ claims to be a miniature cultivar, with plants only growing about 90–120 cm (3–4 ft.) high with “exceptionally tender and sweet” cobs about 7–10 cm (3–4 in.) long. While I don’t have experience growing this cultivar, I am somewhat doubtful about the claims of exceptional tenderness and sweetness, since most older corn cultivars have excellent flavour but are lacking in sweetness and tenderness. Then again, you know what they say about making assumptions.

Typical miniature corn is the type you see used in Asian cooking: small immature cobs with undeveloped kernels. Almost any variety of field, sugar enhanced or supersweet corn will successfully provide baby corn cobs. Sweeter corn cultivars, however, do not produce sweeter baby corn. The key to successfully harvesting these miniature cobs is timing—harvest baby corn ears before pollination. This takes some practice. Monitor the growth of your corn plants carefully. As soon as silks are visible, you know your baby corn cobs will be ready to harvest in a day or two. They are best when about 5–10 cm (2–4 in.) long; any longer and the texture will be tougher. Not all cobs on one plant will be

ready to harvest at the same time. Harvest can be spread over a week or even a month for the same cultivar and a few plants.

### Patio-sized plants

In the past, it seemed that growing vegetables was a competition where bigger was always better. More recently, backyard gardeners have been demanding vegetable cultivars that will grow in a small area or patio container. These demands have led to increased breeding efforts and the development of vegetable varieties that are more adaptable to smaller growing spaces. These vegetable cultivars result in baby or miniature vegetables that remain small throughout the growing season.

**Cantaloupe:** ‘Tasty Bites’ (personal size cantaloupe that matures relatively early)

**Cabbage:** ‘Dynamo’ or ‘Gonzales’ (8–12 cm/3–5 in. diameter)

**Eggplant:** ‘Calliope’ (small white and purple variegated fruit can be harvested at 5 cm/2 in. or mature size of 9 cm/3.5 in.), ‘Fairy Tale’ (purple and white, mature when only 5–8 cm/2–3 in. long), ‘Gretel’ (solid white mini eggplant) or ‘Hansel’ (purple eggplant can be harvested at 6–8 cm/2–3 in. or longer)

**Leek:** ‘King Richard’ (early variety, planted close together and harvested when finger size)

**Pepper:** ‘Lunchbox’ (green to red, yellow or orange mature bell peppers are miniature size, sweet and flavourful), ‘Cupid’ (early, sweet mini bell pepper that ripens to red), ‘Eros’ (mini golden bell type, 5 cm/2 in. diameter)

**Tomato:** any of the cherry types. The plants might be large but fruit will be small. ‘Sweet 100,’ ‘Sweet Million,’ ‘Tumbling Tom,’ ‘Tiny Tim,’ ‘Totem’ or ‘Lunch Box’

**Turnip:** ‘Hakurei’ (early white turnip harvested when root is only 5 cm/2 in. round. Perhaps this cultivar will size up before the root maggots invade?)

**Watermelon:** ‘Little Baby Flower’ (only 10 cm/4 in. round when ripe), ‘New Yellow Baby’ (yellow fleshed watermelon ripens early with juicy texture and sweet flavour)

**Winter Squash:** ‘Angel Hair’ (personal size spaghetti squash only 0.5–1 kg/1–2 lbs.), ‘Butterscotch’ (butternut type also 0.5–1 kg/1–2 lbs., small plants/vines), ‘Gold Nugget’ (personal size orange/pink hubbard squash weighing 0.5–1 kg/1–2 lbs.), ‘Shokichi Green’ (single serving mini kabocha squash)

Being able to walk past a hanging basket of cherry tomatoes and pop a few in my mouth on my way to weed the garden, having a fresh supply of home-grown baby spinach, seeing children picking a baby carrot as a snack on the way to a friend’s house—these are just a few of the delights of growing baby vegetables.

Whether you want to make vegetable eating more fun for your children or you’re just tired of composting large heads of cabbage because you can’t eat it all, baby vegetables offer tasty options. Many seed company catalogues have special sections devoted to smaller vegetables, and new cultivars are always being developed. It’s not too early to start planning for spring!

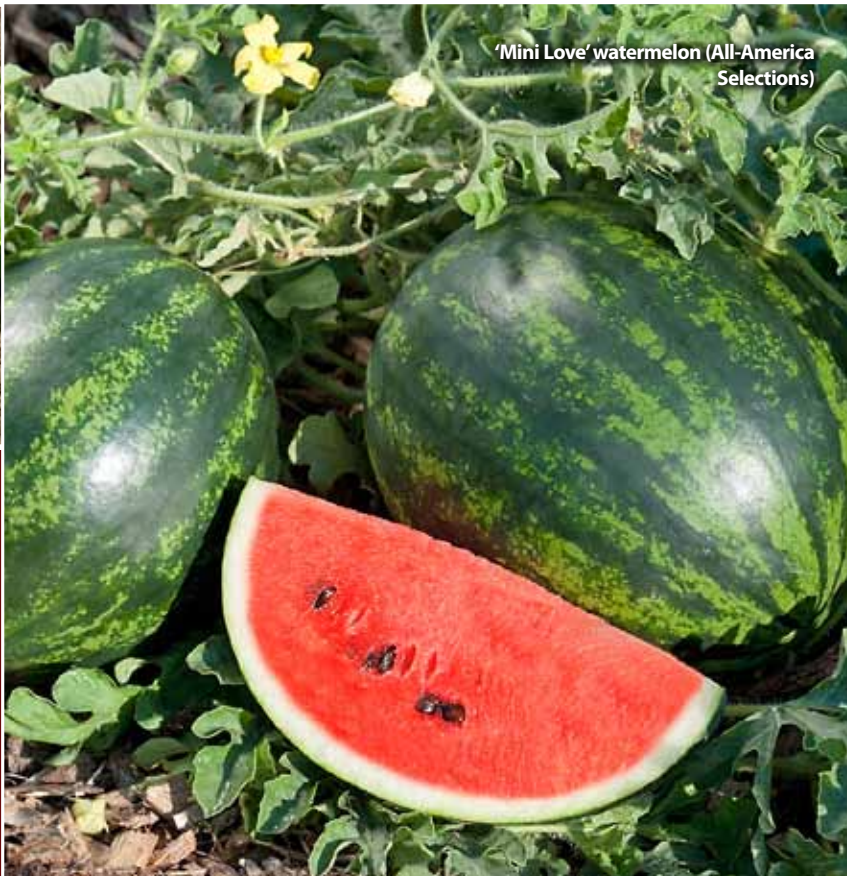
*Jackie Bantle is a horticulturist living in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.*

‘Gretel’ eggplant  
(All-America Selections)

‘Pretty N Sweet’ pepper (All-America Selections)



‘Bambi’ lettuce (Dwight Sipler)



‘Mini Love’ watermelon (All-America Selections)

### Tips for growing baby veggies

Most baby vegetable cultivars (that is, bred to be a small size at maturity) are probably also small plants, so spacing between plants within a row can be reduced compared to regular sized cultivars.

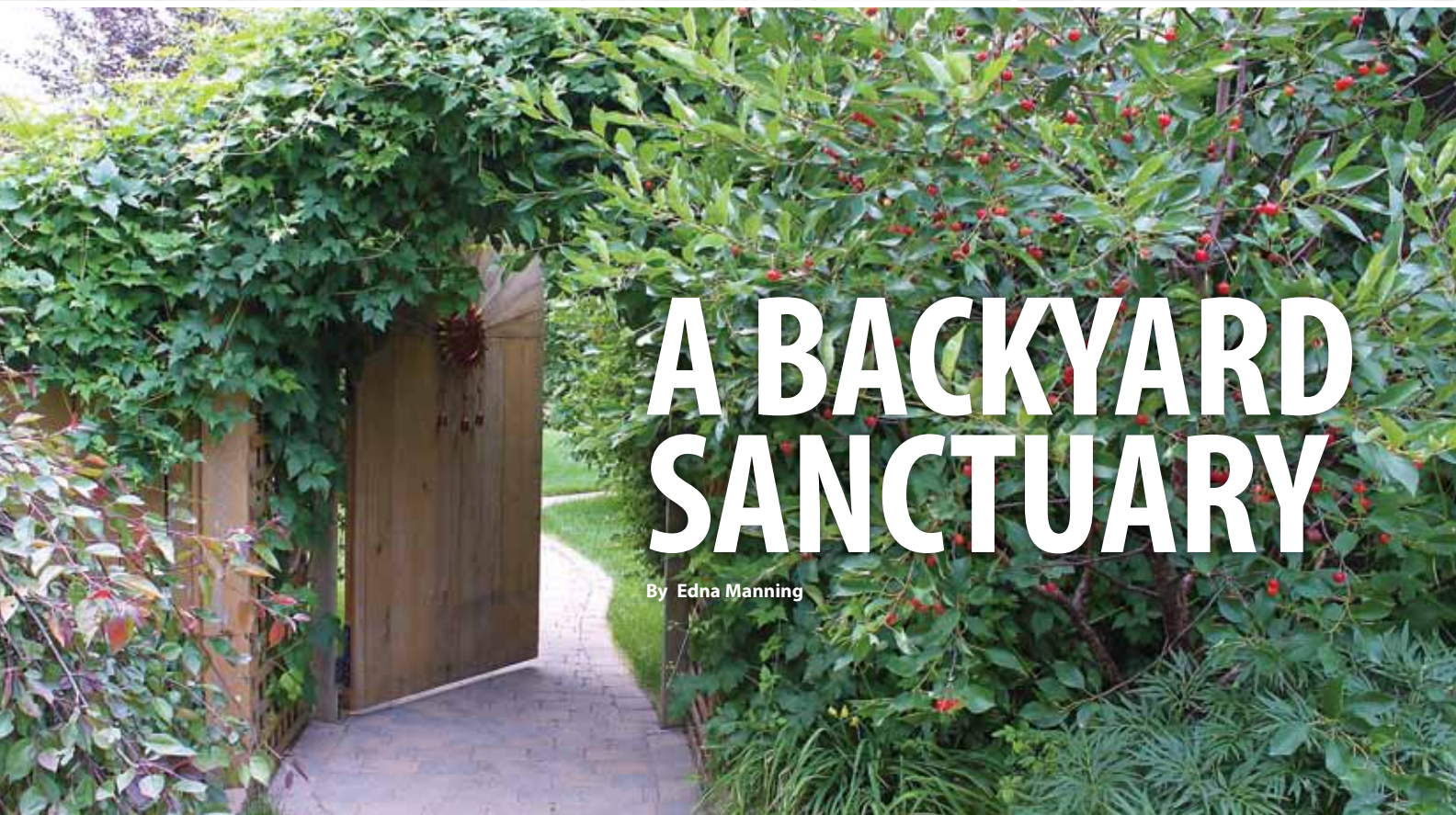
Baby vegetable cultivars typically mature earlier in the growing season, making them a great choice for gardeners who have challenges getting their vegetables to mature before fall frost. ‘Baby Pam’ pumpkin is recommended for its earliness and small plant size, but also for its fruit—excellent for making pies and small jack-o-lanterns!

Because baby vegetable cultivars mature faster, they can also over-mature more quickly than standard cultivars. Bolting, splitting or compromised flavour and texture can be an issue. Harvest your baby vegetables in a timely manner.

The shorter growing season allows successive plantings of baby vegetables, so you can harvest baby vegetables throughout the growing season.

Baby vegetables fit into tiny hands! Encourage children to grow their own baby vegetables by giving them a pot or plot of garden and making them responsible for seeding, harvesting and, of course, eating their home-grown veggies.





# A BACKYARD SANCTUARY

By Edna Manning

**A**lex and Lois Hertzum-Larsen's yard is a quiet, peaceful refuge. It is also a testament to their passion for gardening, the culmination of vision and planning, of design savvy, attention to detail, commitment to an ongoing endeavour and the pure enjoyment of work.



Lois' love of gardening began as a youngster tending the garden on the family farm. That love would be nurtured over the years as she became a Master Gardener and Master Composter, one of the first graduates from a nearby university's horticultural extension program. Now retired from a career in health care, Lois continues to work with many community gardens as a volunteer and a facilitator.

Alex grew up in a small city, where he frequently hired himself out as a gardener's helper. These experiences set the stage for his dedication to community involvement and kindled his interest in landscape design and development. Alex retired in 2009 after a long career with Canada Post. He currently volunteers with several community organizations and fund-raising projects.

When the couple purchased their property in 2003, the plan was to have both house and yard fit the neighbourhood. They decided on a modern Victorian style home. The vision for the yard was for it to complement the style of their home. It had to be appealing from the street, with a curved front walkway to encourage visitors to explore.

"I wanted pleasing curves, inviting seating areas, private little rooms where you could sit and feel all that surrounds you; a romantic place that made people feel comfortable and relaxed," Lois says.

Never afraid to try something new, Alex eagerly tackled the design and construction of the house, deck and verandah. Next, he and Lois turned their attention to the yard. "Alex and I work well together," Lois says. "He loves the hardscaping. I know the plants and the look I want to create with colours, variegation and textures."

The trees were the first plantings to go in. Because trees help determine the overall character of a yard, they were careful in their







selections. Lois likes trees and shrubs with attractive bark, for winter interest when the leaves are gone. They also wanted trees and plants that would attract birds, bees and butterflies. Some of their tree choices, like the Schubert chokecherries, hold their fruit well into the winter, providing food and shelter for the birds. The Schubert is also one of Alex's favourites because of the unique colour of the leaves, which change from green to purple.

Because of Lois' involvement with the University of Saskatchewan's fruit program, a variety of apple trees, haskap bushes, sour cherries, plums, currants, grapes, hazelnuts and kiwi vines, along with lilacs, spruce, and Arctic willows became part of the foundational plantings. "I wanted our children to be able to enjoy plenty of fresh, healthy fruit;

plus, I do a lot of home preserves. I believe it is a dying art," adds Lois.

One of Lois' goals is to have constant colour throughout the yard, even in the winter. "My yard is like a canvas—it is constantly evolving. I believe you have to grow with your yard. I'm always discovering new plants and generating new ideas. It's a labour of love," she says.

With clever use of colour, texture and design, as well as an ability to create ambiance in the yard, the couple has built a sanctuary they love to share with others.

*Edna Manning is a freelance writer who grew up on a small farm, where she learned to love all aspects of country living—including the life-long learning involved in rural gardening.*

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## PLANT PICKS

# 2019

### ANNUALS



#### 'FloriGlory' Diana' Mexican Heather

*Cuphea* hyb. 'FloriGlory' Diana'  
**Hardiness:** annual

'FloriGlory' Diana' is a 2018 AAS Ornamental Vegetative Winner. This compact 25–30 cm (10–12 in.) mounding plant has shiny dark green leaves and long lasting, striking magenta flowers. No deadheading is required for continual bloom throughout the growing season. 'FloriGlory' Diana' prefers full sun, will tolerate dry conditions and works well in pots or as a border plant in a flower bed. It was a star performer in the University of Saskatchewan's All-America Selections flower bed in 2018.

Jackie Bantle, horticulturist,  
greenhouse manager



Courtesy Jackie Bantle

### PERENNIALS

#### 'Volcano' Hardy Gladiolus

*Gladiolus nanus* 'Volcano'  
**Hardiness:** Zone 4

I was totally taken with this glad. It was the colour—bright pink with fuchsia and white highlights—that caused me



#### Popcorn Cassia

*Senna didymobotrya*  
**Hardiness:** annual

It's not the flowers that give this plant its unusual name but the dark-green, exotic looking leaves, which emit the unmistakable scent of warm buttered popcorn when bruised. Popcorn cassia's tall flower spikes filled with bright yellow flowers open from the bottom up. The dark buds above the open flowers add strong contrast. In warmer areas (Zone 10 and warmer) where it is a perennial, popcorn cassia reaches small tree proportions. In much of Canada, where it is a fast growing annual, it only grows to about 45 cm (18 in.) tall. Start early indoors, and pinch to encourage bushier growth.

William Hrycan,  
Horticultural Editor,  
*The Gardener*

to turn my head and take another look as I strolled the grounds of the Hampton Court Palace Flower Show in 2018. They don't grow as high as regular glads, only about 30 to 45 cm (12–18 in.), but their large flowers are a delight in the early summer garden. These hardy gladioli need full sun and rich soil but are otherwise low maintenance plants. Hummingbirds love them and they make great cut flowers.

Donna Dawson,  
owner [www.gardeningtours.com](http://www.gardeningtours.com)

#### Alpine Skullcap

*Scutellaria alpina*

**Hardiness:** Zone 4



Alpine skullcap is a unique plant with beautiful lavender coloured blossoms from late June to September. This small plant grows to about 15 cm (6 in.) high, making it is an excellent choice for small spaces and rock gardens. It grows from a taproot that sends out mint-like stems in a rosette pattern about 30 cm (12 in.) around the root. It does well in alkaline, well drained soils, in full or part shade. *Scutellaria* is drought tolerant and should not be over watered. It may self seed if not mulched. I have only needed to divide it once in about ten years.

Bernadette Vangool,  
Saskatchewan Perennial Society



#### Solitary Clematis

*Clematis integrifolia*

**Hardiness:** Zone 2

I planted *Clematis integrifolia* about ten years ago, but it was unruly as a ground cover and not a very exciting plant. Several years ago, I decided to prop it up with a simple peony ring, installed about 12 cm (5 in.) above ground. The clematis now grows through the grate and forms a beautiful clump. Deadheading throughout the summer results in blooms from June to September, and it's become a showstopper in my garden. Solitary clematis is drought tolerant and requires well drained soil and a sunny location.

Bernadette Vangool,  
Saskatchewan Perennial Society



### EDIBLES

#### 'Green Dragon' Cucumber

*Cucumis sativus* 'Green Dragon'  
**Hardiness:** annual

My new favourite slicing cucumber is 'Green Dragon.' These large, glossy, dark green cucumbers are best picked at 28 cm (11 in.) long. Even if allowed to grow larger, the fruit remains sweet and crisp, the seeds small and the skin never becomes bitter. The fruit is bumpy, with small white spines that rub off easily. Cucumbers grown on the ground bend and curl (which adds to their character), but trellis-grown fruit are straight. 'Green Dragon' is self-pollinating, so you don't need other cucumbers nearby. Cucumbers start ripening only 50 days after transplanting and plants continue to produce until heavy frost, so this is a great cucumber for any home gardener, particularly those with a short season.

William Hrycan,  
Horticultural Editor,  
*The Gardener*



## 'Algonquin' Pumpkin

*Cucurbita pepo* 'Algonquin'  
**Hardiness:** annual

These are not your average pumpkins! The native North American heirloom variety 'Algonquin' was likely originally grown by the Abenaki people in the New England area. It is part of a group of so-called "long pie pumpkins," named for their interesting elongated shape. Large vining plants produce a large quantity of small, 1.4 to 2.3 kg (3-5 lb.) fruit that can be easily mistaken for zucchini—until they ripen to a brilliant orange. 'Algonquin' are fun and easy to grow, and they do indeed make amazing pies!

Sheryl Normandeau,  
 Master Gardener,  
[www.floweryprose.com](http://www.floweryprose.com)



Courtesy Sheryl Normandeau

## 'Frontier' Yellow Storage Onion

*Allium cepa* 'Frontier'  
**Hardiness:** annual

'Frontier' is a beautiful yellow onion with medium to large bulbs, dark golden-yellow skin and a nice flavour. The bulbs are very uniform and have small necks, making this an excellent onion for winter storage. 'Frontier' matures relatively early at 98 day after transplanting, making it great for gardeners in all areas, but I usually start as transplants.

Lisa Taylor, BiodiverCity Farm



## 'North Georgia Candy Roaster' Winter Squash

*Cucurbita maxima* 'North Georgia Candy Roaster'  
**Hardiness:** annual

'North Georgia Candy Roaster' is a productive heirloom variety that produces large, unique looking banana-shaped squash 3.5 to 4.5 kg (8-15 lbs). Fruit ripens 95 days after transplanting, making this a good winter squash for shorter seasons. Its smooth orange flesh has a fantastic flavour when roasted, stuffed or made into pie. Fruit stores well but doesn't last as long as thicker skinned varieties. Plants are large and vining, so give them room to spread.

Lisa Taylor,  
 BiodiverCity Farm



## TREES/SHRUBS

### My Monet Weigela

*Weigela florida* 'Verweig'  
**Hardiness:** Zone 3

Though weigela is often grown for its stunning late-spring flowers, My Monet is a beautiful plant grown primarily for its unusual variegated leaves. The leaves are dark green and cream, with pink highlights when grown in full sun. Like other weigela, it also flowers in late spring with pink, trumpet-shaped blossoms. Plants are mounded and only grow to about 30 cm (12 in.) tall and 45 cm (18 in.) wide. Use it as a feature in a small area or rockery, or plant it en masse as a spectacular ground cover.

William Hrycan,  
 Horticultural Editor,  
*The Gardener*



### Red Oak

*Quercus rubra*  
**Hardiness:** Zone 3a

Red oaks are long-lived, tough and great looking large trees. They have open and spreading canopies, casting a dappled shade beneath. Leaves are deeply lobed, as is typical with oak trees, but lobe tips are acutely pointed, giving this tree a sharp texture in the landscape. The glossy green leaves turn rusty-red to scarlet in autumn. Red oak is easy to grow in well-drained, slightly acidic soils and fertile soils. Does best in a sheltered spot in cooler zones.

Mark Cullen, gardener,  
 author, broadcaster,  
[www.markcullen.com](http://www.markcullen.com)



Richard Webb, Bugwood.org



Courtesy Bob Bors

### 'Limelight' Hydrangea

*Hydrangea paniculata* 'Limelight'  
**Hardiness:** Zone 3

A client once told me she loved 'Limelight' hydrangeas. I'd seen only nursery specimens at that point and had been underwhelmed. I thought differently after seeing a whole hedge of them blooming magnificently beside a parking lot.

'Limelight' hydrangea prefers full sun and blooms late July to frost. Sumptuous, cone-shaped panicles start out lime-green, brighten to creamy white and eventually turn soft pink at season's end. In colder climes where winter dieback is to the ground, 'Limelight' grows approximately one metre (3 ft.) tall and wide. Where there is no dieback it reaches about two metres (6 ft.).

Sue Gaviller, landscape designer,  
 instructor, speaker and blogger  
[notanothergardeningblog.com](http://notanothergardeningblog.com)



### 'Boreal Blizzard' Haskap

*Lonicera caerulea* 'Boreal Blizzard'  
**Hardiness:** Zone 2

'Boreal Blizzard' is an extremely productive haskap with very sweet fruit and some of the largest berries available. 'Boreal Blizzard' is a later blooming haskap, meaning berries are usually ripe

early to mid-July, extending the season from other earlier haskaps. The shrub has a strong, upright growth habit up to 1.5 m (5 ft.) tall and wide. I think it's a great choice for backyard gardeners as the fruit is delicious, fresh or frozen, and easy to pick

because the berries are so large. To get good pollination, plant 'Boreal Blizzard' next to 'Boreal Beast' haskap.

Lisa Taylor,  
 University of Saskatchewan Fruit  
 Breeding Program





**ALL-AMERICA SELECTIONS 2019**



**Viking™ XL 'Red on Chocolate Begonia'**

*Begonia x hybrida* 'Red on Chocolate'  
**National Flower Winner**

A brand new begonia with large, uniquely coloured dark leaves. The deep bronze/brown foliage colour remains sharp and intense throughout the season, no matter where plants are located; north, south, east or west. The colour tones shine through to give a stunning garden appearance. Covered with vibrant red flowers, these large but compact plants retain their shape well and do not become rangy. Extra-large mounded plants reach up to 75 cm (30 in.) and are perfect in both landscapes and large containers.

**'Big Duck Gold' F1 Marigold**

*Tagetes erecta* 'Big Duck Gold'  
**National Flower Winner**

There's a new marigold in the pond. 'Big Duck Gold' sports very large golden-yellow flowers, which continue blooming throughout the season. These marigolds begin the season by putting energy into establishing a solid, healthy plant with clean, deep-green foliage. When it starts blooming, watch out—full, plump blooms 15 cm (3 in.) wide top 37 cm (15 in.) tall plants, and continue blooming through the end of the season. You'll want to use these marigolds everywhere, in beds, containers and landscapes as mini hedges, back of the border plants or even filler in new perennial beds.



**'Baby Rose' Nasturtium**

*Tropaeolum minus* 'Baby Rose'  
**Regional Flower Winner (Northeast, Heartland, Mountain/Southwest)**

The last nasturtium AAS Winner was back in the 1930s, so it's time for another winner. Introducing 'Baby Rose', a wonderful rose-coloured nasturtium perfect for today's gardens. Petite-flowered with healthy, dark foliage, this mounding variety grows to 30 cm (12 in.), making it ideal for containers and small space gardens. The compact habit means less "flower flopping" with blooms remaining upright throughout the season. The rose colour is uncommon in nasturtiums and contrasts beautifully with the dark-green foliage. Bonus—both the leaves and flowers are edible!

**'Just Sweet' F1 Pepper**

*Capsicum annuum* 'Just Sweet'  
**National Edible/Vegetable Winner**

This unique snacking pepper has four lobes, just like a larger bell pepper, only smaller. The 8 cm (3 in.) fruits are deliciously sweet, with nice thick walls. The plants are vigorous growers, reaching up to one metre tall and 37 cm wide (36 in. by 15 in.), but they don't need staking because they've been bred to have a strong bushy habit. Peppers mature 75 days from transplanting. 'Just Sweet' peppers are exceptionally bright and shiny, with a vivid yellow colour and a flavour described as sweet with aromatic accents. A great lunchbox item for kids.



**'Red Torch' F1 Tomato**

*Solanum lycopersicum* 'Red Torch'  
**National Edible/Vegetable Winner**

'Red Torch' is a red and gold striped oblong tomato with 4 cm (1.5 in.) long fruits. This hybrid is a very prolific early-season producer. The combination of excellent flavour, great texture and high yields make it a great choice in the trendy niche market of striped tomatoes. Plants have been bred with excellent tolerance to environmental stresses like heat and harsh growing conditions. Fruits are borne on indeterminate vines that grow to 1.5 metres (5 ft.) tall and ripen 60–70 days from transplanting.



**Petunia Wave® 'Carmine Velour' F1**

*Petunia x hybrida* 'Carmine Velour'  
**National Flower Winner**

The newest colour of the popular Wave® petunias was one of the highest scoring plants in 2018 trials. Large 5 cm (2 in.) flowers literally cover these easy-care spreading plants. They rarely need deadheading because new blooms continuously pop-up and cover the spent blooms. Plants only grow to 15 cm (6 in.) tall but spread up one metre (3 ft.) in all directions to cover the ground. 'Carmine Velour' is an excellent landscape performer and does equally well in containers and hanging baskets as in the landscape.

**'Fire Fly' F1 Tomato**

*Solanum lycopersicum* 'Fire Fly'  
**National Edible/Vegetable Winner**

Similar to the Goldilocks story, this adorable newcomer is not as small as a currant tomato and not as large as a cherry tomato, but "just right" in between. The round, super sweet, pale white to pale yellow fruit is less than 2.5 cm (1 in.) in size. Delicate, translucent skins offer a mild acid flavour that enhances the sweet taste. These small juicy fruits explode with flavour, perfect for snacking and in salads. The indeterminate plants must be staked or caged as they grow to 1.5 metres (5 ft.). Fruit matures 80 days after transplanting, so be sure to start this one early and plant in a warm, sunny spot.





# The Gaudy but Beautiful Colours of *Heuchera*

By Jackie Bantle

Colourful plant foliage is always welcome in a flower garden. But while some gardeners have welcomed the vibrant palette of the new generation of heuchera cultivars, others are dismissing the colourful foliage as downright gaudy.



Heuchera is a member of the Saxifragaceae family. The genus name *Heuchera* (purple) honors Heinrich von Heucher, an 18th century Austrian physician and botanist who specialized in medicinal plants. More than 35 different species of heuchera can be found in North America's natural areas. Common names include coral bells and alumroot. Coral bell refers to the shape of the tiny flowers found in racemes above the mound of foliage; alumroot refers to the medicinal properties of the root. For centuries, North American healers used alumroot to calm inflammation, heal the digestive system and treat diarrhea.

Native heuchera have been discovered in a wide range of habitats: woodlands on the east and west coast of the United States, mountainside crevices and prairie regions as far north as southern Canada. The plants themselves grow as mounded clumps of leaves with woody rhizomes. On most cultivars, foliage ranges from 20–30 cm (8–12 in.) high to 30–60 cm (12–24 in.) wide.

## Flowers attract pollinators

Heuchera flowers are borne on stalks, which can vary in height from a few inches to two feet, such as the 60 cm (24 in.) stalks of 'Amethyst Myst'. Flowers are small but can be colourful and may be petal-less. Flower colour also varies from white to greenish white, pink, scarlet and red, depending on the cultivar.

Flowers attract hummingbirds, butterflies and bees. Flowering begins in early summer and continues until early fall. Continuous flowering is encouraged by dead heading. Both heuchera flowers and foliage are used in cut flower arrangements; the flowers last about a week in arrangements, while the foliage can last up to one month.

## Breeding for foliage colour

Heuchera are easy to grow foliage plants. Heart-shaped, boldly-veined, ruffled or

straight leaves are the main feature. The palmate-lobed leaves on long petioles are typically hairy, although some of the new cultivars have minimal or no leaf hairs.

Native heuchera leaves are green-hued. Species crossings in the 19th century produced hybrids that were known for their floral rather than foliage interest. In the 20th century, however, many American breeders worked on the genus (notably Charles Oliver and Dan Heims), producing a variety of foliage colours. Hybrids so far are derived primarily from *Heuchera americana*, *H. micrantha* (ruffle-edged leaves), *H. maxima*, *H. sanguinea* (drought tolerant) and *H. villosa*. In the last 20 years, heuchera cultivars released from breeding programs have boasted a wide range of foliage colours—silvery-gray, lime green, bright yellow, purple, red, orange and dark purple to black.

## Tips for growing

Heuchera prefers fertile, well-drained soil. Poor soil should be amended with organic matter before planting. As the organic matter decays, not only will food be provided for the plant, but air pockets will develop within the soil, allowing oxygen into the roots.

Heuchera benefits from regular watering; too much irrigation, however, will encourage fungal diseases, so avoid heavy, wet soils. Also, while a wide range of soils are tolerated, heuchera prefers soils that are slightly acidic (pH 6 to 6.5).

Often found in woodlands, heuchera will grow in partial shade to full sun. A general rule of thumb is that the darker the purple coloration, the more sun exposure heuchera will tolerate. Amber and gold leafed cultivars are much less sun tolerant than purple cultivars. Check the label for specific sun exposure instructions for the cultivars you are growing.

Species heuchera can be started from seed. The seed requires light to germinate, so do not cover seed. Hybrids must be propagated by cloning. For hardy perennial heuchera, divide plants in autumn. Perennial heuchera can be divided every three to four years: if a plant's crown is losing vigour, transplant into a new location.

When planting heuchera, dig a planting hole twice as wide and deep as the rootball and partially fill with loosened soil. This loose soil will help the root system expand. Gently massage the root ball. Plant so the crown sits just slightly above the soil line (burying the crown will encourage disease, contributing to crown rot). Allow enough room around the plant for air to circulate; this will reduce the incidence of botrytis and other fungus. A layer of mulch can be added at the base of the plant to prevent weeds and retain moisture.

Water-in heuchera transplants with 10-52-10 soluble fertilizer, mixed according to label directions. This higher phosphorous rating encourages root growth.

Mulching around the plant also helps protect the shallow roots from excessive heat. These shallow roots tend to heave upwards from the soil in winter. In the fall, gardeners in cooler climates must mulch the entire

1. 'Ginger Peach'
2. Mix of heuchera
3. 'Red Lightning'
4. 'Palace Purple' (perennialresource.com)
5. 'You're So Vein' (perennialresource.com)







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plant after the ground freezes to prevent heaving and subsequent root exposure. Cover a “slightly heaved” plant with loose soil. Do not bury the crown, but if the crown pushes too far out of the soil, completely dig out and replant the perennial with its crown just slightly above soil level.

**Grow as perennials or annuals**

Heuchera are versatile plants that will thrive in full sun to partial shade, depending on the cultivar. The low mounding growth habit make them ideal plants for rock gardens, flower bed borders, groundcovers and mass plantings. The colourful foliage of newer heuchera cultivars make them desirable as an accent or specimen plant in containers or woodland gardens.

Coral bells are generally hardy in Zones 4 to 9, but many gardening zones in Canada fall outside this range. Several cultivars recommended for our cooler Zones 2 to 3 include:

**‘Arctic Mist’** – gray-green leaves with red bell-shaped flowers that bloom in June and July. Recommended for partial shade. Height approximately 35 cm (14 in.) at maturity with a spread of 45 cm (18 in.).

- 6. ‘Southern Comfort’ (Bailey Nursery)
- 7. ‘Berry Smoothie’ Courtesy of photographer Doreen Wynja© for Monrovia
- 8. ‘Marmalade’ Courtesy of photographer Doreen Wynja© for Monrovia
- 9. ‘Silver Gumdrop’ (perennialresource.com)
- 10. ‘Electric Lime’ and ‘Black Taffeta’
- 11. ‘Electric Lime’ Courtesy of Monrovia
- 12. ‘Marmalade’ Courtesy of photographer Doreen Wynja© for Monrovia
- 13. ‘Berry Smoothie’

**‘Black Sea’** – dark purple to blackish leaves with cream flowers. Recommended for full sun. Height is 40 cm (16 in.) with vigorous foliage that spreads up to 60 cm (24 in.).

**‘Brandon Pink’** – deep green leaves with tall stalks of dark pink flowers. Bred in Manitoba and recommended for partial shade. Height is 45–60 cm (18–24 in.) with a spread of 30–45 cm (12–18 in.).

Although the selection of hardy perennial cultivars is somewhat limited, cool climate gardeners can use heuchera cultivars as annual plants. As annuals, heuchera transplants will quickly grow to a good size and produce flowers in our relatively short gardening season. The brilliant foliage of the new lines will showcase an annual or perennial bed and make your container plantings the envy of other gardeners.

Heuchera blends well with other perennial and annual plants. Hosta, dicentra, helleborus and astilbe are shade-loving perennials that complement heuchera. In sunny locations, ornamental grasses and lamium make excellent companion plants.

A container with a centerpiece of green and white variegated carex, outlined with alternating ‘Black Taffeta’ heuchera and ‘Sweet Caroline Light Green’ sweet potato vine makes a stunning container on any patio. In a larger pot or small bed, ‘Electric Lime’ heuchera surrounding the dark purple pennisetum ‘Princess Caroline’ provides an exceptional focal point in a landscape design.

**Heuchera series**

Heuchera breeders have developed different collections. The City™ series consists of compact plants bred to produce flowers that bloom all summer long, including ‘Gotham,’ ‘Havana,’ ‘Milan,’ ‘Paris,’ ‘Rio,’ ‘Shanghai,’ ‘Tokyo’ and ‘Vienna.’

The Crisp™ series have leaves with wavy margins and are slightly more hardy due to using *H. micrantha* in the crosses. ‘Apple,’ ‘Blackberry,’ ‘Peach’ and ‘Pear’ Crisp are among the cultivars belonging to this series.

The Little Cutie™ series is a collection of compact, vigorous heuchera in a variety of colours. These plants have an ever blooming habit and are just the right size for mixed containers and miniature gardens. ‘Blondie in Lime,’ ‘Blondie,’ ‘Coco,’ ‘Frost,’ ‘Ginger Snap,’ ‘Peppermint,’ ‘Sugar Berry’ and ‘Sweet Tart’ are some of the plants in this series.

The Marmalade™ series is known for rippling leaf margins and showy foliage. These cultivars only bloom once and the flowers are not significant. Marmalade™ series heuchera are larger than other cultivars and as annuals, fill in containers and beds quickly. Examples include ‘Berry Marmalade,’ ‘Ginger Peach,’ ‘Lime Marmalade’ and ‘Marmalade.’

The Ruffle™ series includes large-leaved plants with highly ruffled margins. These hybrid cultivars have been bred with *H. villosa*, making them more tolerant of heat and humidity. Plants are large and leaves are big. These cultivars only bloom in spring. ‘Chocolate Ruffles,’ ‘Lime Ruffles’ and ‘Midnight Ruffles’ belong to this series.

The Soda™ series have showy flowers due to *H. sanguinea* and *H. cylindrical* in their breeding. Plant size is excellent for container growing. Leaf and flower colour resemble the soda after which they are named, such as the dark red foliage and flowers of ‘Cherry Cola,’ the amber flowers and foliage of ‘Ginger Ale,’ the light purple leaves and flowers of ‘Grape Soda’ and the brownish-red foliage and flowers of ‘Rootbeer.’

*H. villosa* cultivars perform best in hot, humid conditions. They reach their prime during the hot weather of summer and fall. The plants have larger leaves and growth habits, and come in a wide range of colours. Cultivars include ‘Autumn Leaves,’ ‘Berry Smoothie,’ ‘Black Taffeta,’ ‘Cajun Fire,’ ‘Champagne,’ ‘Creole Nights,’ ‘Delta Dawn,’ ‘Electric Lime,’ ‘Fire Alarm,’ ‘Galaxy,’ ‘Georgia Plum,’ ‘Midnight Bayou,’ ‘Red Lightning,’ ‘Southern Comfort’ and ‘Spellbound.’

Heuchera is one of the most underused plants in cooler climate gardens. There are many cultivars to choose from—more than I can list in this article, with new ones being released every year. Whether you grow it as a perennial or an annual, now is a great time to add a splash of colour (gaudy or beautiful) to your garden with heuchera.

*Jackie Bantle is a horticulturist who manages the Agricultural Greenhouses at the University of Saskatchewan.*

- 14. ‘Georgia Peach’ (perennialresource.com)
- 15. ‘Havana’
- 16. ‘Autumn Leaves’
- 17. ‘Georgia Peach’ Courtesy of photographer Doreen Wynja© for Monrovia



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This 'n' That

# Black KNOT

By Kyla Ledingham

Black knot (of cherry) is a common fungal disease of plants in the *Prunus* genus of the Rosaceae (rose) family. Native stands of pin cherry and chokecherry often carry infection, which spreads to commercial and ornamental plantings. This includes high value production plants, such as cherries, apricots and plums, as well as important ornamental plants, such as mayday and chokecherry.

The disease is characterized by oblong black knots, generally encompassing twigs and smaller branches, although infection of the main leaders and trunks can occur. These black knots are quite distinct and easy to identify—they look like something gross. But they are not that gross thing, they are a different kind of gross thing.

The fungus, *Apiosporina morbosa*, releases spores after periods of warm, wet weather. It is mainly spread by rain or wind but can also be spread by animals and insects. Generally, an infected tree will begin to show swelling of new growth at the site of infection in the first year, followed by greenish tinged oblong knots that become the recognizable woody black knots by the fall of the second year of infection. Some plum trees will develop the woody black knots within the first year of infection.

Once established, the knots will continue to grow and release spores each spring. As infection worsens, the growth beyond the knot will become stunted and eventually dieback will occur. If the infection enters the main leaders or trunk, the tree will not survive.

Some fungicides are registered for treatment of black knot; because of their cost, they are generally only used for high value commercial plantings. For the average homeowner, the best control option is physical removal of infected materials.

Removal should occur during the dormant season: late fall through early spring. At this time, lack of leaf cover makes the swelling and knots easier to see and reduces

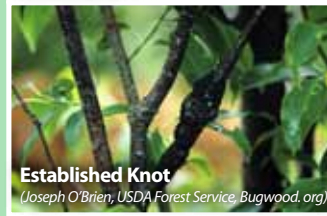
the chance of further disease spread. Cuts should be made at least 15–20 cm (6–8 in.) below visible signs of infection. This should ensure removal of all internal growth. If the location of the knot prevents this, cut back to healthy tissue, a minimum of one cm (half an inch) past the visible knot.



**Established Knot**  
(Mike Schomaker, Colorado State Forest Service, Bugwood.org)



**First year of infection**  
(Kyla Ledingham)



**Established Knot**  
(Joseph O'Brien, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org)

**Established knot**  
(Robert A. Anderson, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org)

Cutting blades should be disinfected after each cut to prevent spread of disease. Diseased wood can release spores for up to four months after removal, so it's very important to destroy the wood or remove it from site.

When dealing with highly infectious disease, remember the three Bs: bag it, burn it or bury it. If pruning during the dormant season, bagging is not necessary; however, if removal is done during the growing season, bagging an infected knot before removal can greatly reduce spread of disease.

Black knot can spread very rapidly through an area, so all vulnerable tree species should be monitored for signs of infection. If you notice it in the area you're landscaping, it's best to avoid susceptible trees. If you already have a susceptible or infected tree, monitor your tree and use responsible maintenance practices.



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# Feature Perennial

Text and photos by William Hrycan

## CHECKERED LILY

### Plant at a glance

Botanical name: *Fritillaria meleagris*

Hardiness: Zone 2

Plant type: herbaceous perennial/spring bulb

Size: 20 to 30 cm (8 to 12 in.) tall

Bloom season: mid-spring

Flowers: light and dark purple checked petals

Maintenance: low

Checkered lily, sometimes called checkered fritillary or snakes-head lily, is an uncommon spring-flowering perennial bulb. Its pendulous flowers have a unique dark and light purple checked pattern that stands out in the spring garden. The foliage is grassy and not particularly noticeable, allowing it to blend into the background of other plants. A white variety (var. *alba*) is also available, but the white petals lack the characteristic checkered pattern.

These spring-flowering bulbs are happiest in a woodland setting where they receive dappled sun, although full sun is okay as long as the soil remains moist. The plants are native to moist floodplains, so they require rich, moisture-holding soils. Best to plant in sheltered areas that collect plenty of snow, or provide winter protection in cooler areas for maximum winter survival.

Checkered fritillary goes dormant in early summer, making room for other plants in the bed. The foliage will yellow and fade away, so interplant with other perennials or annuals that will hide the leaves until they disappear. Deadhead to prevent self-sowing (if you don't want the plant to spread), but otherwise the plant is undemanding.

To propagate, divide dense clumps or lift bulbs when dormant (late summer). Separate bulblets from the larger parent bulbs and replant 5–8 cm (2–3 in.) deep. You can also collect seed for sharing. In warmer areas, checkered lily can be aggressive, easily and quickly self-sowing around the garden, but in cooler areas the plants migrate around enough to make an attractive show without becoming a nuisance.

Checkered lily naturalizes well in perennial beds or unmown grassy wildflower areas and will fill small nooks and crannies in a rockery or alpine garden. It is also an interesting addition where other spring bulbs are blooming to extend the spring show and add an unusual colour contrast.

Available through most mail-order nurseries and bulb companies, but also easy to start your own by collecting seed.



  
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