



Anemone blanda

# Petite Gardenscapes

Sensible designs for the weekend gardener

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## Special Interest Articles:

- New plants for 2009
- Fancy Fritillarias
- Dealing with Creeping Charlie

## Other Articles:

- See which plants have joined the Invasive Plant List for Wisconsin
- Plant disorder of the month
- Bulb of the month
- Zone Hardiness map

Questions or comment? Contact Pat at [pbaganz@voyager.net](mailto:pbaganz@voyager.net) or 262-353-6555

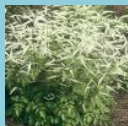
## Try these new plants on for size

If you're looking for new plants this year, give these a try. You can get more information by going to the website listed below the photo.

P=perennial, Sb= shrub.

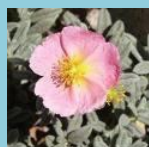
S= Sun, Sh= Shade

**Aruncus dioicus 'Misty Lace'** (P) z 4, pSh



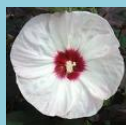
[www.wintergreenhouse.com](http://www.wintergreenhouse.com)

**Helianthemum 'Wisley Pink'** (P) z4 S



[www.plantsafari.com](http://www.plantsafari.com)

**Hibiscus 'Crown Jewel' and 'Plum Crazy'** (P) z4 S



[www.phoenixperennials.com](http://www.phoenixperennials.com)



[www.northcreeknurseries.com](http://www.northcreeknurseries.com)

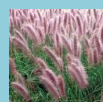
**Malva 'Sweet Sixteen'** (P)

Z 5, S



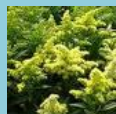
[www.sugarcreekgardens.com](http://www.sugarcreekgardens.com)

**Pennisetum 'Red Head'** (P grass) z 4 S



[www.homedepot.com](http://www.homedepot.com)

**Solidago 'Little Lemon'** (P) z5, S



[www.soonerplantfarm.com](http://www.soonerplantfarm.com)

**Nepeta 'Joanna Reed'** (P) z5, S



[www.featureblogs.chicagotribune](http://www.featureblogs.chicagotribune)

**Aronia melanocarpa 'Iriquois Beauty'** Sb z 5 S



[www.chicagolandgrows.org](http://www.chicagolandgrows.org)

**Diervilla 'Summer Stars'** (Sb) z5, S



[www.chicagolandgrows.org](http://www.chicagolandgrows.org)

**Kerria japonica 'Golden Guinea'** Sb z 5 S-pSh



[www.acornfarms.com](http://www.acornfarms.com)

**Stephanandra incisa 'Crispa'** (Sb) z 5, S-pSh



[www.arborea.se](http://www.arborea.se)

Try one of these exciting varieties in your perennial beds and borders this year.



## Fancy Fritillarias by Ozaukee Gardener Elizabeth O'Connell

One of the most spectacular bulbs to flower in Wisconsin gardens is the Crown Imperial (*Fritillaria imperialis*). Its blossoms tower over the other spring flowers but you don't see them very often in local gardens. Okay, the choice of orange or yellow flowers wasn't my favorite, but add deer resistance to their virtues and I decided one autumn that I'd pick up a few bulbs and pop them in the garden.

Books describe the scent of the Crown Imperial flowers as "foxy" which didn't mean much to me although I guessed it implied many found their scent unappealing but that's a very individual judgment. Our hawthorn tree's blossoms are listed as unpleasant and we find them inoffensive so this wasn't a deterrent for me. The yard is large, too, so planting the bulbs the recommended 30 feet from the house wasn't a problem either.

I headed home from the garden center with three of the large bulbs. I didn't have time to plant them the day I purchased them so I put them in the garage, right near the door so I'd remember to get them in the garden at the first opportunity. Then I started dinner, putting gardening on the back

burner so to speak.

Between one thing and another, the bulbs sat in the garage for a few days and probably would have been out there longer if my husband hadn't burst into the kitchen in a panic one evening. "Stay out of the garage," he warned me. "We have a skunk out there somewhere and I don't want you to spook it and get sprayed."

Since our dogs have had some intimate experience with skunks I was sure I didn't want to get sprayed. But how the heck had a skunk managed to get into the garage? We don't leave the door open since the local chipmunks seem determined to set up house indoors if we do. Slowly it dawned on me - the odor was coming from the Crown Imperial bulbs. Sure enough, a whiff from the bag of bulbs confirmed that the "foxy" scent discussed in the bulb books was a polite way to say "skunk stink" - and it wasn't just the flowers that had it. I hauled the bulbs out to the garden and planted them by flashlight. The family breathed a sigh of relief and stood down from skunk alert status.

Once in the ground I forgot all about the Crown Imperials. I only realized the bulbs had survived their hasty burial when I saw their tall

stems starting to climb above the daffodil shoots the next spring.

Breezes waft through every garden, however, so once the flowers opened it was hard to miss the Crown Imperials even when they weren't in view. From 30 feet away the faint aroma of "Eau d'Skunk" reached the garden path and the wind could spread it even farther. It dissipated as the blooms matured but it was unmistakable when they first opened.

Two of those original bulbs still send up their tall spires and the Crown Imperial's perfume has become just another sign of spring. If I ever remembered to think about it during the bustle of our fall garden clean-up I'd move them farther from the house - they're so tall they'd still be easy to spot. But the Crown Imperials die back like other spring bulbs and by autumn they've disappeared from the garden and the gardener's mind.

Despite their drawbacks, Crown Imperials create a spectacular spring display. Deer resistant, non-invasive, outstanding flowers - it's a winning combination. Just remember to plant them upwind and far from your doorstep. Then your family won't think the skunks are preparing to invade.

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*"Books describe the scent of the Crown Imperial flowers as 'foxy' ..."*—Elizabeth O'Connell



[www.keith-allen.co.uk](http://www.keith-allen.co.uk)



## Beating Creeping Charlie



Creeping Charlie's distinctive leaves make it easy to identify in your yard.

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*"I finally won it (the battle), and so can you"*

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As we venture outside to rake away the mess from last year, our nemesis Creeping Charley will be rearing its ugly head in its plan to take over all your lawn.

A little background: Creeping Charlie (AKA Ground Ivy) is *Glechonia hederacea*, a member of the mint family. It grows in shade and part shade, and takes over your lawn by smothering the vegetation (grass or plants). It sends its little tendrils out over the grass and its rhizomatic roots spread like wildfire as well. Not only does it reproduce by seeds, but little rootlets form at the junction of its nodes. It was brought here as a groundcover and herbal remedy by

Europeans, but it quickly became a pest, although amazingly some folks are rather sentimental about it! What to do about this pest?

\* As always, creating a healthier alternative is best: fertilizing your lawn and over-seeding in the fall to thicken the grass up will fight Charlie. But what about getting the upper hand so your grass can stay healthy enough to fight? After losing the battle for 15 years, I've finally won it, and so can you.

\* Some folks have tried 20 Mule Team Borax, but the boron in it can damage your grass. Boron was in common use before synthetic herbicides were

developed. An interesting article by Iowa State gives more information at [www.ipm.iastate.edu](http://www.ipm.iastate.edu)

\* Glyphosate, which is a broad spectrum, non-specific herbicide (which means it will kill green stuff in its path) found in products like RoundUp, affects native plants as well, so consider carefully when thinking about using it.

\* The miracle treatment for me is **Ferti-lome Weed Free Zone**, an herbicide with 2, 4-D in it. Apply in spring after flowering (April through May). I finally won, because the recommended dose wasn't working. However, a **triple dose** finally beat Charlie and eradicated it on my lawn.

## Getting rid of soft scale

This month's plant disorder is for your indoor plants again—no matter what we want to see outside, we just have to wait til it's warmer outdoors.!

**Soft Scale** (*Coccus hesperidum*) is a pesky little critter that affects ivy, bay, ficus, and schefflera plants, to name a few. Greenhousees and conservatories provide a nice environment for them to prosper and procreate.

\* They secrete a shell-like covering to protect themselves and then lay

their eggs, which hide under the parents.



[www.forestryimages.org](http://www.forestryimages.org)

\* They harm your plant by sucking your plant's sap, which weakens it, stunts and yellows the leaves and makes the plant susceptible to other diseases and pests.

\* How do you know if your plants have Soft Scale?

Look for the sticky honeydew on the lower leaves and even on your floor. A bad infestation may even show you sooty mold. One source's recommendation to rid your plants of scale insects is to introduce parasitic wasps, their natural enemy. However, indoors, your best choice is to spray your plants with a Diazinon product (Ortho makes **Diazinon Plus** Insect Spray). It's harmful to fish and birds, so I usually haul the plant into the shower and drench it and the soil with the spray

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*"The honeydew on the lower leaves and floor around your plant are your tipoff to **Soft Scale**"*

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In order to kill their offspring, spray again a few weeks later. Your shefflera will thank you from the bottom of its leafy little heart for ridding them of this month's plant disorder:

