



Garden Cherub

Spring 2010

Volume Two

Petite Gardenscapes

Sensible designs for the weekend gardener

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Port Washington
Garden Club Plant Sale
May 29
Visit
www.portgardenclub.org
for details

As always, plants listed are claimed to be hardy to zone 5. If you're not sure what your hardiness zone is, there's a link to Wisconsin Hardiness zones on my website www.petitegardenscapes.com

Proven Natives

Chicago Botanic Gardens runs trials of perennials, shrubs, vines and trees to identify superior plants for the Upper Midwest. A few notables are listed below. To view a PDF download of plant evaluation notes, go to www.chicagobotanic.org/plantevaluation/

For sunny sites:

Achillea 'Pretty Belinda' Yarrow
27" x 20" Doesn't flop or spread!!



whiteflowerfarm.com

Agastache foeniculum 'Golden Jubilee' Hyssop

3' X same' Chartreuse leaves, lavender foliage
Prolific "seeder" but easy to control



whiteflowerfarm.com

Baptisia x bicolor 'Starlite' and 'Midnight' Prairieblues False Indigo

Shades of periwinkle or deep blue flowers for the middle or back border. Baptisia doesn't like to be moved once established.



lucspennialworld.com



Echinacea purpurea 'Pica Bella'

Large purple flowers June-September, 30" x 30" bushy and robust.



vasteplant.be

Schizachyrium scoparium 'Carousel' Little Bluestem

Blue-green leaves w/ pink streaks, fall color a mix of pink, copper, and mahogany; compact habit; 30" x 30" drought tolerant



schuylercountyillinois.com

For shade:

Athyrium filix-femina 'Victoriae' Lady Fern

Fine textured leaves, vase shaped habit
22" x 36"



soulesgarden.com

Geranium maculatum 'Elizabeth Ann' Spotted Cranesbill

Lavender pink blooms, coffee-cola color early leaves 30" x 30"



www.plantipp.eu



Fragrant Annuals

Do you like your annuals fragrant and lush? Here are a few to try out, if you haven't already:

(FS= Full Sun PSh= Part Shade)

'Fragrant Delight' Heliotrope

FS-PSh 12-18" X same



finegardening.com

Chocolate Cosmos

FS-PSh 1-3' x same (Need 6-8 for sensory impact)



wholeblossoms.com

'Fragrant Cloud' Nicotiana

FS-PSh 5' x 2'



seedsforyourgarden.co.uk

Snail Vine

FS 15' vine



forums.gardenweb.com

For information on purchase and/or culture, contact me at pbaganz@yahoo.com

Veggie Tales

Now is the time to plant your cool-weather spring vegetables, and **carrots** are one of the vegetables that want to be started when the ground stays moist. Taking around 20 days to germinate, they can also withstand light frost, so mid-April is a good starting time.



To get them off to a great start, be sure that the soil is dug deep enough to loosen the soil. Compost is almost always necessary for amending our horrible clay soil (Eastern Wisconsin, anyway- you western area folks are fortunate to have sandier loams.)

Now, carrots get planted near the surface, so here's a tip from Fine Gardening for easier planting: Dampen a thin cotton string, and drag it through a bowl of small seeds. Then lay the string in the small furrow you have dug for the carrots, and cover with peat moss or sifted compost to keep the seeds moist for germination.

Another tip advises to plant **radish seeds** 6 inches to either side of the carrot row. You will know where your carrot seedlings are, but the radishes won't shade or disturb the carrots.





Conifers for Shade

Have you been wondering what attractive, relatively low maintenance shrubs you could try in your shady areas? All five of these evergreens are happy in a partly shaded part of your yard. The first three are also **dwarfs** in that they are slow-growing and only add a couple of inches a year to their height. As most of these prefer well-drained soil, adding **organic amendments** to our clay soil will make these guys happier.



singletree.com

Chamacyparis obtusa

'Nana lutea' Golden Dwarf Hinoki Cypress.

Delicate gold-tipped foliage and twisted branches.
Zones 5-9 3-5' x same/grows 1" per year
Deer candy



finegardening

Sciadopitys verticillata 'Joe Kozey' Japanese

Umbrella Pine has rubberlike needles and intense yellow color in the shade. Zones 4-8 Tops out at 6' x 3', but grows only 4-6 inches each year. Usually not deer food.



heronswood.com

Tsuga canadensis Gentsch White Hemlock

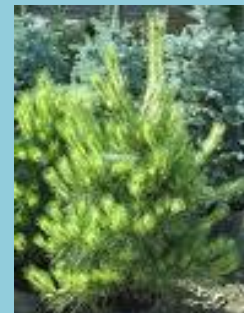
Needles at the branch tips are silver white, giving the look of being snow-covered.

Gentsch White Hemlock is easily grown in average, well-drained soil. Part shade to full shade. Prefers cool, moist conditions. Intolerant of drought, especially when young. Needs protection from strong winds. Zones 3-7 3-4' x same. Grows 1-3" per year Deer candy at times.



stonewall nursery

Abies koreana 'Silberlocke' is a compact fir that makes it a good fit for a smaller garden. The silvery backside of the needles gives an icy sheen that really lights up the shade. Prefers well-drained soil Zones 5-9 Eventually can get to 20' x same, but adds only 6" per year. Not deer candy.



millernursery.com

Pinus densiflora 'Oculus-draconis' 'Dragon's Eye'

Pine has a dark green "eye" that comes from the center of variegated green and yellow needles. Ideal conditions for this tree are filtered shade and moist, well-drained soil. Can be pruned to shape. Deer usually avoid pines. Z 4-7

15-20' x same but only grows 4-6" per year



Tips and Techniques

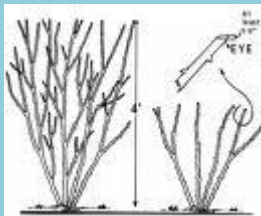
Pruning to Node

When you read “*prune back to just above the node*” you may be unsure of where to prune- simply, a node is where a leaf emerges from a stem. If it’s pre-leaf, as in early spring or late winter, look for a leaf scar, the place where leaves were once attached. Then make a cut just above that place (as indicated by pointer.)



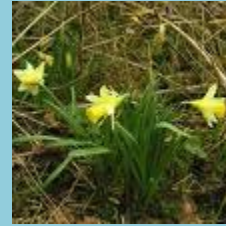
Pruning Shrub roses

If you are going to cut shrub roses back, do it before new growth begins in spring. Cut back to a bud that is facing where you want new growth to go.



www.rose-gardening-made-easy.com/pruning-shrub

And always remove old, diseased and damaged canes. In our zone 5, a light shearing after the rose blooms may get a second flush of flowers.



Hiding Daffodil Foliage

Daffodils are wonderful spring blooms, but their dying foliage is just plain ugly. It’s necessary to leave the foliage to make food for next year’s blooms, but who wants to look at yellowing leaves? Two solutions are to:

1) plant daffodil bulbs in the fall behind leafy plants like hostas which will put forth leaves in Spring just in time to shield the dying leaves from view.

2) Plant lusty annuals in front of the daffodils, and voila! leaves gone (ok, hidden) And finally, let the leaves get yellow, limp and dried out before GENTLY pulling out of the ground. That goes for tulip foliage as well, but that never seems to look quite as horrible as daffodil leaves.

Slug Control

Having been one of those gardeners who has given slugs beer and collects their pathetic drowned carcasses for burial, I’ve read a lot on slug control, especially around hostas.

One of the easiest and effective control methods appears to be spraying around the emerging hosta foliage with a mix **of 3 oz. ammonia to 16 oz. water**, soaking the ground. The general consensus is that it kills slugs and their babies which have been laid in the hosta crowns.

Current lore suggests reapplying about two weeks later. So far, most who try this method report no damage to the hosta leaves, although some rinse the leaves off one hour after the ammonia treatment.



Garden Art

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Garden Art

Mossy Clay Pot

- To grow moss on clay pots,
 Soak the container in water.
-  Then, in a blender, blend 1 part moss, 1 part sugar and 3 parts beer.
-  Paint the damp pots with the mixture. A foam brush works best.
-  The hard part is next: store in a cool and moist place to allow the moss to grow.
-  Finally, plant the pot with shade-loving annuals or perennials.



nestnestnest@blogspot.com

Green Roof Bird House

One of the cutest and “green”-est bird houses is offered through Kinsman Gardens, but looks as though it’d be easy enough to build. (see photo at right) It’s a simple bird house made of weather-resistant cedar, 5 ½ “x 5 ½ x 12” tall, but the roof is 10” wide by 9” front to back, overlapping the house by a margin. The roof tray is 1¼ “ deep. Soak the wood well with water, then fill with potting soil and plant with succulents such as Hens and Chicks and sedums. Grass seed works as well; in a shady location plant with moss. If this sounds attractive, but too much work, go to www.kinsmangarden.com and look for green roof birdhouse, item # GRBH. The cost is \$39.95



Aged Marble Art

Do you want one of those marble cherubs or other expensive-looking pieces for your garden? One way to have the “antique” look is to buy cheap concrete statues, paint with a watered-down white or cream latex paint and before the paint is entirely dry, rub potting soil into the creases and folds to create that aged look. Sponge a little more watered-down paint over the dirt, and it will eventually grow mossy. Rub some of the drying paint off lightly for that worn-way-by-weather look.

Or... you can forget to bring it in for the winter, and moss will begin to grow on it, achieving the same look. I call it “the accidental artist approach”.





Spring Prep

By Elizabeth O'Connell *Ozaukee Gardener*

Your garden may just be coming back to life but there are already a few things you can do to make your summer chores easier.

This is a great time to sharpen and clean your garden tools. If you don't know how or don't want to take the time to hone the blades on your loppers and hand pruners, take them to a hardware store or garden center with a sharpening service. Sharp blades require less effort to use and make clean cuts that won't damage stems and branches.

If you're prone to aches and pains from age, joint damage or repetitive motion injuries, think ahead. Now is the time to purchase kneelers and find new tools that are designed to make digging and weeding easier. 'Miracle Gloves,' for example, are designed to support and warm arthritic hands.



Bionic Women's gloves
at amazon.com

Add-on handles are also available to help make digging and lifting tools you already own easier on your back and knees.



Once these indoor jobs are done, head outside and admire those first daffodils and snow drops. Then take a moment to mark their location.

Spring bulbs are easy to overlook once their foliage disappears and it's a rare gardener who doesn't manage to dig up a few favorites when tucking in new plants in June or July. A short bamboo stake makes an unobtrusive marker.

If you have a collection of bulbs or ephemeral spring wildflowers, color code the bamboo with dabs of paint or nail polish so you can tell what's growing where (be sure to make a record of the code). A second stake can be used to indicate clumps that need to be divided in the autumn.

If the stakes don't suit your aesthetics, small, flat stones can be used. Record the plant's name on the stone with indelible marker. Be careful, however, not to move them around when weeding or planting this summer.

Indelible markers are also recommended to record the color or name on daylily and iris plants. Write the color on one of the leaves when it's in flower so you have a record when you later divide them. Write on the bottom of the leaf and use a broad tip so you don't emboss the leaf but ink it.

I use appropriately colored ribbons to mark the color of plants I'll divide in autumn. Yarn also works well. Whichever method you choose, be sure you don't clip the markers off during the growing season. They won't tell you anything in the compost bin.



Containers for the Smaller Scale Garden by Elizabeth O'Connell, Ozaukee Gardener

These days even gardeners confined to the decks and patios of condos and apartments have opportunities to indulge their green thumbs. Container plantings can transform even the smallest space into a garden.

Everyone is familiar with the traditional pot of geraniums sitting beside the front door. In cities all over the country these little spots of color indicate a gardener is in residence. But today there are new plants and a variety of containers for those without a yard who'd still like a garden.

Many home centers now carry large selection (up to 24-inch diameter) of lightweight planters in a variety of finishes. These are great improvements on the plastic pots of the past. They not only look stylish but won't crack as clay pots may if you have to leave them outdoors during the winter. Many have insulated walls (to protect roots from variations in heat and cold) and even water reservoirs to make plant maintenance easy.

Just as the pots have improved, so have the plants available to container gardeners. The variety of flowering plants at garden centers has exploded so flowering maples (abutilons), exotic salvias or even Japanese maples may replace the geraniums at the front door.

Gardeners interested in home growing will also find a vast array of edibles for their containers. It's easy to find starter pots of herbs like rosemary, chives, parsley and basil at big box stores as well as garden centers.

The horticultural industry has also developed many smaller varieties of vegetables for container gardens. Egg plants, cucumbers, peppers, and tomatoes all thrive in containers. A cherry tomato, 'Tumbling Tom,' has been developed for hanging pots with fruiting stems only 24 inches long.

Even perennials like hostas or hardy herbs like chives and sage will survive the winter in pots if you can store them in an unheated garage. Keep the pot in a place you'll see it and place a piece of solid insulation under it to keep the pot off the concrete. The soil shouldn't be allowed to dry out so much that it pulls away from the sides of the pots so you'll have to water a few times over the cold months. A top dressing of snow is ideal. It won't need much - a little every 4 to 6 weeks is enough.

If fruit is more your thing, there are now dozens of miniature trees and shrubs that will thrive for years in containers if they're given proper care. All that's needed in Wisconsin is garage space and some winter moisture. Miniature nectarines, peaches, apples, and several varieties of figs do well in large pots although you'll need a dolly or wheeled base to move them in and out of storage. Small fruiting shrubs like blueberries also thrive. If tropics are more to your taste, exotics like star fruit, citrus, and guavas are happy to spend winters indoors if their pots are placed in a bright, sunny location.

Apartment or condo living doesn't have to mean the end of gardening. Today there are lots of easy plants that will thrive in small spaces - and let your green thumb keep on growing.

Themed Herb Gardens

Do you love to **barbecue**? Cooking **Mexican** foods? How about making **teas or infusions**?

If so, then you need specific herbs and we all know fresh are the best.

If you're short on sunny space, growing herbs in containers is your answer.



home.howstuffworks.com

Into cooking **Italian like Lydia**? You'll want basil, oregano, parsley, rosemary, fennel, chives, thyme and sage.

For more information on the **Infusion** herb combinations, **Mexican Fiesta**, **Tea Time**, **Barbecue Rub**, or the **Grilling and Roasting Guy** Herb garden, contact me for the planting information:

pbaganz@yahoo.com