

April 2009 NEWSLETTER

Spring is in the air! We are finally cutting ventilation/sun holes in our cold-frame plastic. This is the first newsletter that I have written in quite some time. Deb has been filling in for me quite successfully as we have been short handed this past year. We now have a lot of new employees and hope to keep them busy all year.

We always look forward to spring and what it brings. This year promises to be a banner shopping experience at the nursery because we are introducing a very large number of new plants. Annuals, perennials, shrubs and trees will all have substantial variety increases. Our shrub selection will be extremely well rounded. The following is only a small selection of shrubs that will become available at the store over the course of the coming year. As of April, 20th we are initiating orders of house plants for the first time in several years. Give us your wish list and we will try to find them.

Aucuba 'Rozanne': Dwarf dark green selection that produces a substantial quantity of fruit. Does not require a male as the flowers are perfect. Three by three feet in size.

Pieris 'Cavatine': Very dwarf form of *Pieris* ...should get two feet high and wide.

Cedrus libanii 'Pendula': These are gorgeous weeping evergreens. We have not carried them in a number of years. They will be available in the fall in three gallon containers.

Cephalataxus 'Duke Gardens': This is an outstanding needled evergreen for sun or part shade. We will have this plant available in 2, 3, 5 and 7gallon sizes over the course of the spring and summer.

Cephalataxus 'Brooklyn Botanic Gardens' and 'Prostrata': These varieties make excellent ground covers. They take part shade or full sun.

Chamaecyparis varieties available again: 'Meroke', 'Nana Lutea', 'Nana' and a few other choice varieties.

Cryptomeria japonica varieties: 'Globosa Nana' and 'Gyrokuryu' ...these two varieties are somewhat dwarf in stature. Nana should max out around six feet in height and Gyrokuryu should get about twelve to fourteen feet high with an eight-foot spread.

Cryptomeria, 'Radicans': a tall cultivar of Japanese Cedar for screening.

Erica carnea: Heaths provided some much needed color at the store this winter. We are going to have at least four different cultivars available by this fall. The few we have left at the store started blooming in late December and are still showing color in March. We left one sitting outside the cold-frame greenhouse in a two-gallon pot and it made it through the winter.

Osmanthus fortuneii 'Fruitlandii': This plant makes a beautiful screen in full or part shade. It blooms in mid to late fall and smells heavenly. The spread is generally six to seven feet with a height of twelve to fourteen feet.

Lorapetalum chinense 'Carolina Moonlight': Green foliage tinged in copper and white blooms make this a beautiful plant. It also gets about 6 feet tall

Lorapetalum, 'Daruma': This is a dwarf plant attaining a height of three and a half feet. It shows good cold tolerance, good purple foliage color and nice pink blooms

Leucothoe X Leprechaun or 'Taylor's Treasure': This is a patented form of Leucothoe that makes an outstanding four foot high shrub for shade or part shade. The new growth is lovely with copper colored new foliage. It blooms white.

Hamamelis X intermedia : We are carrying witchazel trees again for the first time in six years. The good news is people came in this winter and saw/smelled them in bloom! We will have three gallon and seven gallon trees available by June.

Tree roses: Our standard and patio tree roses are at the store now. They should be ready for sale by late April. Speaking of roses...L. A. Reynolds Garden Showcase in Winston-Salem carries a lot of rose cultivars. If we do not have a rose you are after, give them a call at 945-3776.

In perennials this year we have three new ferns including Jumbo a very large Ostrich fern, new double blooming columbine, new colors in lenten roses, white blooming gaura and a host of other perennials to choose from. Rozanne, a blue hardy Geranium was a season long bloomer last year so we brought her back.

In annuals we are featuring eight new geraniums (Pelargoniums), three new sun coleus, two really compact forms of sweet potato vines, a new fern, several new supertunias and new scaveola (fan flowers). We had fan flowers in the Kernersville, N.C. Biscuitville Restaurant bed last year and they were gorgeous. They stood up to the heat and no water situation perfectly.

The last five years we have seen resurgence in vegetable gardening. Because of the increased demand, we decided to increase our offerings of tomatoes and peppers once more. When the final 'tally' is in we should have close to one hundred varieties of peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers and squash available. Last year we decided to have information hand out sheets on our tomatoes and peppers. This year we are translating those sheets into other languages. One more note on the tomatoes; we are not doing a lot of heirloom varieties just yet. People lost a lot of them to diseases the last two years and got discouraged. Debbie also has fresh cilantro, basil, curly leafed parsley and regular parsley available now. This summer we may try something fun with the veggies. Stay tuned for more information.

Watering requirements: We are getting rainfall but do not let your guard down when planting new material this year. Follow our planting guide recommendations that you get when you buy plants from us.

GOT WEEDS? This spring is shaping up as a banner year for weeds. We have not seen this much chickweed, henbit, red sorrel etc. in years. The ample rainfall of the last two months coupled with spring fertilization has sent weeds into overdrive. If you have questions on weeds give us a call or e-mail us at sedgegardennurse@BellSouth.net . We can give you do-it-yourself recommendations for weed control or you can let us give you a quote on doing the work. We are insured, licensed and have the proper

equipment to get the work accomplished safely and hopefully in a timely manner. I say hopefully in a timely manner because this spring has been a real challenge for spraying lawns. We have had a lot of windy, wet and generally overcast weather. These are not the correct conditions to spray in. We can also do deep root feeding of trees and shrubs as well as granular applications.

Koi and other fish have arrived at the store as of March 18th. We also carry a few chemicals and food for the critters.

We have lawn maintenance schedules, pruning guides for the different types of hydrangeas, vegetable guides and other informative information available at our store. The cost.....they are free. Just use them wisely.

Looking for someone to build a really beautiful fire-pit or outdoor living area? Marco Rodriguez has been building walls, patios and the like for 9 years now. His phone number is 336-995-2684.

We also want to mention water cistern systems. These are for people really wanting to save water. It is on our links page.

Fertilizer News: If you haven't noticed changes yet you will when you purchase fertilizers this year. Fertilizer prices have been up and down dramatically. The state is also taking a hard look at phosphate (P) percentages in the fertilizer analyses we use. There has been quite a bit of abuse by everyone when it comes to fertilizers. It is true that many areas of North Carolina are deficient in phosphorous and you may need to apply some, especially in newly worked soil areas. You can get soil analysis done by the state of N.C. (still free!) and get a good fertilizer recommendation from them. Once you apply the fertilizer and get the phosphorous levels corrected you should be able to cut back or cut out completely on the (P). Even our highly recommended Hollytone is now a 4-3-4 formulation. The old analysis was 4-6-4. The formula is nitrogen-phosphorous-potassium. Because of the toll we have been putting on our streams, rivers and wetlands with fertilizers, nature is having trouble keeping her balance. We do not see the damage in the Piedmont as much as they are seeing it in the eastern parts of the state. Farms and residential use of fertilizers are allowing certain forms of plants to easily choke waterways down east. Eventually, all aquatic life forms will be impacted. We are going to be cutting back on the fertilizer we apply to lawns each year in an attempt to lessen our impact on the environment. We are going to revise our lawn maintenance sheets to reflect these changes. Do you know how many pounds of nitrogen, for example, that you are putting on your lawn each year? Recommendations run from 2 to 4 pounds per thousand square feet of lawn. Deb and I do not apply more than one to one and a half pounds of nitrogen per thousand square feet and our lawn looks great. We mulch mow it and we have added a lot of worms to our lawn. The lawn gets mowed at four inches or higher and

we do not water it. If it works for us it should work for you. We also keep the Ph of the soil around 6.5 so the fertilizer we do put down is truly working for us.

We know you have heard too much about the economy already. Here is our solution to the problem. This will not solve the financial side!

Plant a garden to grow your own vegetables and cut flowers. It may not save you a ton of money but working in the garden will take your mind off the vexing stuff and the exercise will do wonders for your body. Be sure to include children in the process.

Help your neighbor plant a garden! Take your tiller over and offer to till his spot up. Try sharing plants with neighbors when you have too many. If you have a truck go to the town of Kernersville, N.C. and get a load of their compost for your garden and the neighbors. It is good stuff and will greatly improve your garden. And, it is cheaper than the bagged stuff most places sell. Did I write that? If you only need a bag or two, get it from us. Seriously, quite a few municipalities offer compost at great prices.

Plant trees around your house to cool it down. Keep them a safe distance from your house and your neighbors. Get recommendations on tree sizes from reputable nursery people. This really will save money in cooling costs and does not require a fortune to implement.

Do not laugh at this one. Have you considered keeping bees? (The neighbors are going to love this one). Bees actually make good neighbors and they do wonders for our plants. The plus side is all that delicious honey. Talk with local beekeepers and get involved.

Put up birdhouses. Birds are wonderful to watch, especially when they are raising their families in the spring. Wrights Bird Center in Winston-Salem 765-7823 has a great selection of houses. We carry bluebird houses at our store.

Relax with a good garden magazine or book.

Build a cold frame to start plants in. All you need is a southern exposure and a plan. They are available on-line. You can have fresh greens literally all winter. If you build a cold frame you might as well build a compost bin while you are at it. If you are really ambitious, build a small greenhouse!

Instead of going on a week long vacation, check out Old Salem, Reynolda Gardens, Tanglewood or the vineyards in our great state. Take a long, hard look at the plants and how they are being utilized.

We are pleased to have a tremendous number of new friends/clients coming into the store this spring. It is a good sign for the economy because people are putting stock into something they can see, smell, touch and even eat! I have stayed in this business for over three decades because I love what I am doing. Sometimes we make money and sometimes we just eke by. That my friends, is truly loving what you do.

Have a good spring and keep on planting for the future!

Sincerely,

Michael and Debbie Garner