

## Nursery News

- **Our fall hours:** open daily from 9-5 except holidays. We'll be open until Christmas for Christmas trees and Wreaths. Please note we will be closed for Thanksgiving Day and Remembrance Day.
- This will be the **last issue of "Gardening News" for the year**, though we'll still have another email bulletin on fall pruning and maintenance. The next email bulletin will be in November and will also have information on the Wreath Making classes. Do we have your current email address? If we don't, please let us know how to contact you by sending a quick note to [russellnursery@telus.net](mailto:russellnursery@telus.net)
- **Bulbs are in now.** Plant now for explosions of spring colour.
- Do you know anyone who is **interested in making a career in horticulture?** Victoria's own **Horticulture Centre of the Pacific** (the HCP) is now taking applications for

next year's session, which begins in February. Their accredited program lasts ten months and every year turns out 15 to 20 very well qualified graduates. HCP grads find work in many different areas: gardening and landscape maintenance, garden design, nurseries, parks boards, etc. We have hired quite a few of their grads over the years. For further information, call Sandra Lindsay at the HCP at 479-3210 or check out their website: [www.hcp.bc.ca](http://www.hcp.bc.ca)

- **We are keen to get our plant pots back.** We are pleased to take the one gallon size black pots and bigger, and are especially grateful for the larger size containers for big shrubs or trees.
- **Questions, comments, suggestions, feedback?** We'd love to hear from you. Our address is: Russell Nursery, 1370 Wain Rd. North Saanich, BC V8L 5V1 or our phone number is 656-0384 or we can be reached by email at [russellnursery@telus.net](mailto:russellnursery@telus.net)

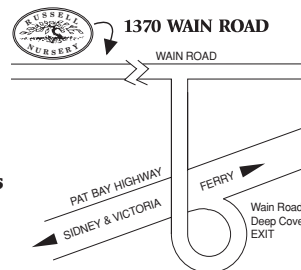
## Russell Nursery in North Saanich

- Trees • Shrubs • Perennials • Pottery
- Seasonal Annuals and Herbs

**Unusual and hard-to-find plants along with all the old favourites for your garden. Specializing in trees, shrubs and perennials. Wide Selection of Japanese Maples.**

1370 Wain Road, North Saanich – Phone 656-0384

Regular hours open daily 9-5:00 except some holidays



Russell Nursery  
1370 Wain Road  
North Saanich, BC V8L 5V1



# Fall 2003 GARDENING NEWS

## Gardening Class Schedule

Russell Nursery is pleased to offer another round of gardening seminars in October and November. The classes are free except for the fall pruning workshops. The classes last about an hour. Class size is limited: **please call to reserve a space at 656-0384.** The nursery is located at **1370 Wain Rd. in North Saanich.** Limit of two classes per person.

- **Planting for Fall Interest** – with Diane Pierce. Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> October at 10:00 a.m.
- **Using Native Plants in your Landscape** – with Lynne Irons. Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October at 10:00 a.m.
- **Basic Garden Design** – with Alison Sproule. Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> October at 10:00 a.m.
- **Putting your Garden to Bed** – with Stephan Cranz. Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> October at 10:00 a.m.
- **Pruning Japanese Maples** – with Brian Russell. Sunday, 26 October at 10:00 a.m.
- **Dormant Season Pruning of Trees and Shrubs** – The fall pruning workshops are taught in small groups by professional Arborists. There will be a \$10.00 fee per person to help defray costs. Enrolment is limited. The same class is given on three different Saturdays: November 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.

## Five Fall Favourites

- by Lynne Irons

The riot of summer colour may be at its end but that's no reason to think we have to give up completely on colour until spring. Consider the following possibilities:-

*Arbutus unedo* (Strawberry Tree) - there aren't many plants in our climate that bloom in the fall but *Arbutus unedo* is one of them. Creamy-white or pale pink bell-shaped flowers adorn this large shrub that has glossy green leaves and peeling bark. It's a miniature cousin of our native *Arbutus menziesii* and appreciates the same conditions of sun and excellent drainage. The clusters of orange-red fruit (each individual fruit about the size of a cherry) also ripen in the fall, from the previous season's flowers.

*Callicarpa bodinieri* 'Profusion' (Beautyberry) - comes to life in the fall when the dark green leaves begin to take on purplish hues and the berries ripen to a violet-purple colour. The variety 'Profusion' has especially abundant fruit, even on young plants, and there may be clusters of 30-40 small berries which will linger on the bare branches into winter. With erect, loose growth habit this potentially 2m high shrub is best in full sun.

*Euonymus alatus* 'Compactus' (Winged Euonymus) - the transformation from the dark green leaves of summer to the vivid red leaves of fall is quite amazing - this shrub positively glows! At 1.5m - 2.5m height the compact form is generally more useful than the species, which can be almost twice that height. It's not fussy about soil and will grow in sun or part shade.

GARDENING NEWS comes to you courtesy of  
**Russell Nursery in North Saanich**

1370 Wain Road, N. Saanich 656-0384  
Regular hours – open daily, 9-5

*Nandina domestica* (Heavenly Bamboo) - truly a plant for all seasons but puts on a fall display of sprays of small orange-red berries whilst some of the evergreen leaves take on reddish tones. Don't be alarmed by the common name - *Nandina* is not related to the true Bamboos! *Nandina domestica* has a graceful upright form and can reach heights of 2m - 2.5 m but there are also smaller varieties. An ability to grow in sun or shade, in the ground or in containers, makes it a good candidate for almost any site.

*Vaccinium corymbosum* (Blueberry) - most people plant Blueberries for their fruit but they have the added benefit of being handsome ornamental shrubs. The fall display involves leaves turning shades of yellow, bronze and red. The twiggy, multi-stemmed form of the plant makes it well worth incorporating into a shrub border or mixed planting, instead of merely in the kitchen garden. The *Vacciniums* all like the acid soils we have around here and Blueberries do best in sunny spots with plenty of water.

## GARDEN SMARTIFACT



### Tumultuous Mulching - by Brian Russell

In this very publication, at least once a year, we extol the virtues of mulching. And it's true, proper mulching should be part of your overall maintenance plan. But at what point can it become too much of a good thing? It can certainly be too much if you mulch with too heavy a hand and start raising the soil level around the trunks of trees and shrubs. Every year in our customers' properties I see examples of this, often with trees and for some reason especially with *Rhododendrons*. Sometimes a veritable volcano of mulch has been piled up against the trunk, though thankfully this is not so common. Please bear in mind one important part of plant physiology: the crown of the plant is the part that begins just above the roots. The crown is always meant to stay high and dry - building up mulch (over-mulching) around the trunk keeps that area moist and provides a breeding ground for pathogens that can cause a condition known as "crown rot". It doesn't happen with every plant, but once rot set in it begins to slowly girdle the trunk and damages the vascular system of the plant, interfering with the movement of water and nutrients, and can eventually lead to plant death. Early symptoms of plant stress caused by this are yellowing leaves, branch dieback and early leaf fall.

How, then to do we avoid this? By not piling any mulch at all against the trunk, ever! When next you mulch put down no more than 2 to 3 inches and gradually taper off the mulch so that by the time you get close to the trunk of the plant you have feathered it down to nothing. What kind of mulch you use will determine how often you have to apply. On the South Island, many people use ground fir/hemlock bark. This mulch is rather slower to break down than most, and may only have to be applied every second year. If you are using compost, leaf mould or well rotted manure then they will pretty much have bio-degraded within a year. As a matter of interest, peat moss should never be used as a mulch. Once dry, it forms an impermeable crust that repels water like a duck's back. Fresh grass clippings can work the same way - best compost them first as they are an excellent source of nitrogen for your compost heap.

Used properly, mulching is one of the healthiest things that gardeners can do for their plants. It insulates the root zone, keeps down the weeds, provides some nutrients and promotes root growth. If you apply a heavy application of mulch too close to the trunk, however, you could literally be killing your plants with kindness.

## Choosing and Growing Japanese Maples

- by Susan Tice

To many people, the term Japanese Maple brings to mind a small weeping plant of shrub-like proportions. In fact, it is a collective term used to describe a large group of small trees native to Japan and includes many species, the most common being *Acer palmatum* and *Acer japonicum*. Japanese Maples (JMs) have been known and admired in Japan for some 1500 years and intensely cultivated for 300. There are over 250 known cultivars, although many are not widely available. The variation of size, colour and leaf shape is such that it would be hard to find another group of plants so versatile and useful in garden design.

When choosing a JM the first thing to consider is size and form. There are two basic forms: upright and weeping, (also known as dissectums). Some of the upright cultivars mature at about 20 to 30 feet in 50 years while others mature at 15 feet or less. Upright types can be broad & spreading, vase-shaped or even weeping. Most dissectums mature at 2 to 6 feet, but some very old specimens can grow to 9 or 10 feet. Generally they are wider than tall and need space to develop their best form. Site and soil will dictate the ultimate size although pruning and training can be used to control growth and shape. Given good conditions, young trees grow quickly and will gain ??? to ??? of their full size in the first 10 to 20 years. A little strategic staking can help dissectums get taller faster.

The next decision is foliage colour. Many JMs go through two or more colour changes over the year, and they can show a rainbow of soft and bright tones, but summer colour is commonly either red or green. Red is bold and becomes a focal point, an accent that adds life to a planting. Green is more retiring and adds elegance and form to the scene, ready to shine in the fall and spring. Fall colour runs the gamut from gold to orange to bright day-glo red - sometimes all on the same tree!

JMs are not fussy and are quite adaptable to a wide range of conditions, but they do have some specific requirements. First and foremost they must have good drainage. The root system is shallow and fibrous and planting in wet soils is fatal. A loose soil with a medium amount of organic matter is ideal. In heavy soils it is best to plant in a shallow hole with the crown slightly above grade. Soil can then be mounded up to assure good coverage, but be sure not to pile it up against the trunk. The root flare, the point where the roots branch out from the trunk, should just be visible. Sandy soils should have lots of organic matter dug in before planting.

Sun or shade, that is the question. Green and red types with larger foliage will happily grow in sun and they can look stunning if planted so that they are backlit by the sun. Some after-

noon shade will prevent sunburn in very hot weather. The dissectums, both red & green, are better with protection from the hottest sun and from wind, but will not colour well in fall without direct sun for at least part of the day. Yellow and variegated leaf forms are best in light shade.

Proper watering is important. Too much water can do more damage than not enough. An established tree doesn't need any more water than anything else in the garden does. Avoid extremes of wet to dry to wet by regular, moderate watering. Even a limited supply of water is fine, as long as it is consistent. A layer of mulch helps conserve moisture and keep the roots cool.

Hard pruning to shape and control size, is best done in the winter. Regular pruning isn't really necessary, but JMs can get very dense and a little thinning can keep them open and shapely. Summer is a good time to remove any dead twiggy growth from the centre of the tree, when it is easy to tell what's alive and what's not.

Whatever the form, a well-grown Japanese Maple is sure to be a highlight in any garden and will only get better with time.

