

Nursery News

• **Bulbs are in now.** Lots of new varieties and some interesting pre-packaged combinations this year. Plant now for explosive displays of spring colour.

• **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** on Monday, Oct. 9th and **Remembrance Day,** Saturday 11th November.

• **A few housekeeping changes** at Russell Nursery lately. There is a **new display area to showcase the many varieties of Hydrangea we grow** (at least 25 varieties, at last count), with colour pictures of nearly every variety, most of which are propagated and grown right here at the nursery. **Also, we have opened a new large area this fall to our customers where they can select trees.** Our trees are now in two locations at the nursery. There are so many of them now, we had to expand.

• The **Master Gardeners**, whose mission in this life is to answer all your gardening questions, will be **holding their last Q&A clinics this fall** on Saturday, October 7th and again on October 14th, from 12 noon to 3:00 p.m. Questions about plants or garden design? They are here to help.

• **A warm welcome to Louise Boutin, Kim Cross and Catherine McLeod,** who have joined us this fall.

• This will be the **last issue of "Gardening News" for the year,** but we'll send out an email bulletin in November with maintenance tips and the schedule for the **Wreath Making Classes.** If we don't have your current email address, please let us know how to contact you by sending a quick note to russellnursery@telus.net

• **Questions, comments, suggestions, feedback?** We love to hear from you. Our address is: Russell Nursery, 1370 Wain Rd. North Saanich, B.C. V8L 5V1 Our phone number is 656-0384 or email us at russellnursery@telus.net

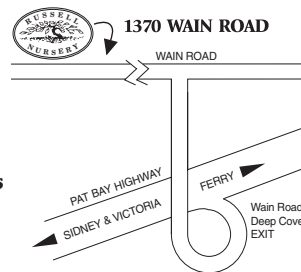
Russell Nursery in North Saanich

- 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 2006 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.

Bulb Basics - with Louise Boutin. Saturday 7 October at 10:00 a.m.

Using Native Plants in the Landscape - with Lynne Irons. Saturday, 14th October at 10:00 a.m.

Colour in the Winter Garden - with Alison Sproule. Saturday, October 21st at 10:00 a.m.

Putting your Garden to Bed for Winter - with Stephan Cranz. Saturday, 28th October at 10:00 a.m.

Pruning Japanese Maples - with Brian Russell. Sunday 12th and 19th November 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 4th, 18th and 25th at 10:00 a.m. or at 12:00 noon.

It's Bulb Time - by Louise Boutin

I love September... it's finally time to get bulbs! Summer plantings provide immediate satisfaction in the garden, while bulbs, planted on faith, are capsules of future beauty. Many of us tend to fall victim to our own excitement at this time of year, stocking up on wonderful, intriguing varieties of bulbs and only then asking ourselves, "now what will I do with these?"

Bulbs are not trees - they cannot provide structure to your garden. Rather, flowering bulbs provide seasonal highlights to existing garden features. Most early bulbs flower when we're stuck indoors looking out, so take a look out your windows and see where a bit of colour will brighten the view. Consider how you view the different areas of your garden. Areas viewed from afar and those viewed in passing (e.g. out the window of a car) are suited to loose drifts of large, bold and bright flowers. These are good areas for naturalizing big daffodils, crocus, or similar bulbs that expand and fill in over time. Areas viewed more intimately (by the front door, or immediately out the kitchen window) are where a more orchestrated display of bulbs shows best. Aim for staggered bloom times of companion bulbs to extend the enjoyment of these special areas.

Other spots to consider for bulbs:

- Woodland edges, the base of hedges and trees, entries and transitions. These are the areas that most benefit from a seasonal lift in the dreary days of spring. You might try snowdrops, early species narcissus or windflowers in these areas.
- Garden edges, terrace cracks and pockets along the beds near your house will benefit from drifts of lower bulbs such as crocus and species tulips.
- Entry areas often work with medium-height bulbs such as muscari and the Greigii tulips.
- Perennial borders can handle the visual impact of the more dazzling tulips, or De Caen anemones.
- Mass plantings of ornamental grasses show off the Dr.

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

Seuss-like alliums to best advantage (the grasses can fill in below the blooms, masking where allium provides little show with its leaves).

- The modernist garden is best highlighted with large geometric plantings of bulbs creating a coloured carpet effect.

A few specimen bulbs are so spectacular in foliage and bloom that they can stand alone as an ephemeral garden feature unto themselves. The kaufmanniana tulip 'Hearts Delight' is one such show-stopper. The new hyacinth introductions such as 'Odysseus' and 'Peter Stuyvesant' also have exceptional form.

With our mild winters, bulbs can provide an exceptional display in planters. Bringing the fine details of flowers such as the Muscari 'Armeniacum' or the new Fritillaria 'Michailowsky' up to eye level allows them to best be viewed and appreciated. Consider filling your window boxes with bulbs of a more compact scale; treasures that would be lost in larger or more distant garden areas.

Colours are personal, and we all have our favourites. Consider when to let loose with colour and when to employ subtler effects. After a long dreary period of soft grey winter light, the earliest bulbs should provide an explosion - a riot - of colour. Later in the

spring, bulbs have to share the stage as they compete with (and need to compliment) other flowering plants that come into bloom.

Nearly 400 years ago Holland experienced the height of 'bulb mania'. At that time, the selling price of one bulb of the 'Viceroy' tulip (white streaked with bluish pink) was 2 loads of wheat, 4 loads of rye, 8 fat pigs, 12 fat sheep, 2 hogsheads of wine, 4 barrels of beer, 2 barrels of butter, 1000 pounds of cheese, 1 complete bed, 1 suit of clothes and 1 silver beaker!



Today, over 3000 named varieties of tulip exist, with more exciting introductions every year. This year the beautiful creamy mandarin-red tulip 'Tennessee' will be in demand and a lot less expensive!

I can't wait for the new tulip 'Wendy Love' that combines a furled pink with primrose yellow edges. Variegated tulips continue to be popular, with the gorgeous 'Monsella' (a double early yellow with red banding) leading the parade.

Experiment! With so many wondrous bulbs available, it is hard to go very wrong. A little forethought, however, will help you find the right spot in your garden where bulbs can best shine in the early days of spring.

-Louise will be teaching a class on using bulbs this fall. See Class schedule for details.

GARDEN DESIGN SMARTIFACT - by Susan Tice



There are so many variables in gardening that it's hard to get a garden right the first time. Increase the odds of success by considering the following:

1. Have a vision... Don't spend a cent until you have a good idea what you want the garden to look like. If you need to clarify your ideas, consult a professional designer. A simple consultation may be all you need to get started and the cost, less than you might think, will be money well spent.
2. Get the fixed elements in place first. Decks, patios, fences etc. should be installed before the plants go in.
3. Good soil equals great plants. Start with top quality soil and don't skimp.
4. Right plant, right place. You've heard it before, like a broken record, but it's always worth saying again. All plants are native to somewhere and are genetically programmed to thrive in their own environment. The closer the garden conditions are to that environment the better they'll grow.
5. Size matters. The space allocated to large, vigorous plants should be roughly the same as their mature size. It's all very well to think they can be kept pruned but as they become established pruning serves only to encourage them.
6. Trees are the most substantial elements, and the hardest to change if they are not right. Think long term and consider things like views, power lines and septic fields when shopping for trees. Mature size and scale are important. Resist the temptation to plant the biggest tree

Two New Trees for Victoria Gardens - by Brian Russell

'**Fox Valley' River Birch** (*Betula nigra* 'Fox Valley') Visitors to the nursery often remark on the group of 'Heritage' River Birch along the fence, with their peeling, salmon-coloured bark. These large, fast growing trees are spectacular but not easy to site in smaller gardens. The new 'Fox Valley' River Birch, a dwarf cousin, is a different story. Growing typically to 10 or 12 feet high with a similar spread, this variety displays attractive, creamy-coloured peeling bark and the easygoing habits of its larger relative.



River Birches are good candidates for our climate. They adapt well to heavy clay soils and will tolerate poor drainage, including periods of standing water in winter. They prefer moist, acidic, fertile soils, but will tolerate drier soils and are happy in full sun or part shade. They are extremely resistant to the bronze birch borer, an insect that is damaging other birch trees in Southern B.C. River Birch also has good resistance to leaf spot diseases. It is at its best when planted in small groups in lawns or shrub borders, or in damp areas along a pond or streamside or in low spots. To provide contrast to its medium-green leaves, this tree could be planted with a dark foliage or shady background.

A r b u t u s
'**Marina**' Our native arbutus is a common sight on Vancouver Island, but sadly the species seems to be in decline. The last couple of years we have been growing a new variety of arbutus - *Arbutus* x 'Marina', which is healthy and very vigor-



ous. We believe that it will prove to be a good garden alternative to the native form.

This is a medium sized tree, growing about 30 to 40 feet tall with a broad dense crown and similar spread. The upright branches are covered with a smooth cinnamon-coloured bark which peels in late summer, much like our native arbutus. The dark green leathery leaves are 4-5 inches long with flushes of bronze-coloured new growth from spring through summer which add interest and lighten the look of the tree.

Clusters of urn-shaped pink flowers are produced off and on through the year with peaks in spring and fall. (They are in flower now at the nursery.) The fruits that follow appear in spring and fall in such a way that the younger yellow fruit are visible while mature red fruits are still on the tree. The fruit is also edible with a flavor that reminds some people of a mixture of kiwi fruit and strawberry, but, like the fruit of the common strawberry tree, *Arbutus unedo*, the texture is gritty.

'Marina' is a valuable landscape plant in that it is less prone to disease and gives the same look as the native Arbutus, but on a smaller scale. Also, 'Marina' is a much easier tree to grow in gardens as it is more tolerant of watering. It is however, very drought tolerant once established. Plant in full sun in well drained soil. Use as a specimen tree or in shrub borders. It would be a welcome addition in native (or near-native) gardens, especially where our native Arbutus would prove too large.

-Thinking about a tree this fall? This is when we have our best selection of the year, and it's the best time of the year to plant them as well.

you can find to block out the neighbour's deck/ windows/ RV unless you have room for the really big tree it will become at maturity.

7. Don't buy 'orphans'. Plants should relate to one another somehow and smaller plants should be planted in multiples. Single trees and large shrubs and perennials can provide structure and focal points. Small plants look lonely and unbalanced by themselves. The smaller the plants, the more there should be of them.
8. Pick what you like and repeat it. It's alright to have lots of different plants, even in a small garden, but there needs to be a common thread to pull it all together. It could be a colour or a shape or a particular plant or type of plant that is a recurring theme.
9. Have patience. Plants grow. It's hard to overcome the need to see all the space filled, but if the garden looks full the day it is planted, it's guaranteed you'll be redoing it in a couple of years time.
10. Ask us! We're here to help.