

are especially useful for training over rocks and other obstacles where there is nowhere to actually plant anything.

**Beware:** While vigorous spreaders may seem like just the thing, in the long run plants that spread moderately are easier to manage. Be careful with plants that may escape into the wild. Think ivy.

Here is a short list of some popular options you might consider using to cover some bare patches in your garden. Although they are categorized as sun or shade many will take some of each, making them even more useful. Those with an asterisk (\*) are drought tolerant.

#### For Shade:

*Low:* Ajuga, Asarum, Cotula, Baby's Tears, Pachysandra, \*Periwinkle, Violas

*Medium:* \*Carex varieties, Ferns, \*Epimedium, \*Euphorbia robbiae, \*Geranium macrorrhizum,

\*Hellebores, Hosta varieties, Lily-of-the-valley, \*Liriope, Sweet Woodruff

*Tall:* Lonicera 'May Green', \*Mahonia, \*Salal, Sarcococca, Skimmia, \*Sword Ferns,

#### For Sun:

*Low:* \*Armeria, Blue star Creeper, Corsican Mint, \*Cinquefoil, \*Erigeron, \*Hernaria, Laurentia, \*Rock Rose, \*Rubus 'Emerald Carpet', \*Sedums, \*Thymes, Waldesteinia

*Medium:* \*Ceanothus Pt. Reyes, \*Dianthus, \*Dune Grass, \*Euphorbia, Forsythia 'Gold Tide', \*Hardy geraniums, \*Hypericum, \*Lamb's Ears, \*Lavenders, Liriope, \*Nepeta, \*Stipa,

*Tall:* Cistus, Junipers, Spiraea,

#### For Seaside Sites:

Ajuga, \*Armeria, \*Blue Fescue, \*Candytuft, \*Cotoneaster, \*Daylilies, \*Heathers, Hostas, Liriope, Peonies, \*Potentillas, Roses, \*Sedums.

Questions, comments, suggestions, feedback? We'd love to hear from you!

Our address is: Russell Nursery, 1370 Wain Rd. North Saanich, B.C. V8L 5V1

Our phone number is (250) 656-0384 or you can email us at russellnursery@telus.net

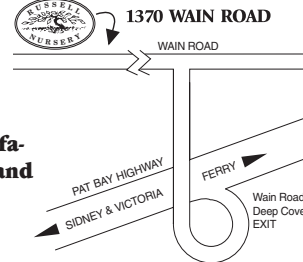
## Russell Nursery in North Saanich

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Russell Nursery  
1370 Wain Road  
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# Fall 2008 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, 4th October at 10:00 a.m.
- **Bark, Berries and other Beauties for Winter Interest** - with Sandra Cranz. Saturday, 11th October at 10:00 a.m.
- **Putting your Garden to Bed for Winter** - with Stephan Cranz. Saturday, 18th October at 10:00 a.m.
- **Pruning Japanese Maples** - with Brian Russell. Saturday, 25th October or Sunday, 26th 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 1st, 8th and 15th at 10:00 a.m. or at 12:00 noon.

Please note: we will be offering wreath making classes in December and the schedule will be sent out by email in late November. If we don't have an email address for you, please advise, and we will send you the schedule once it is finalized. We can be reached at russellnursery@telus.net

## Trees for Smaller Gardens

- by Brian Russell

When gardeners see them at the nursery in their little pots, it's hard to imagine what young plants will amount to one day. Most of us have been surprised at how quickly some plantings have out-grown their homes. This can happen with trees too, but on a much larger scale, so it is very important to choose trees that have a mature size that is in keeping with the scale of your garden. You'll find below a few trees that are, at maturity, smaller, narrower or more compact, than many of their cousins — and have strong ornamental features as well. All are for sun or mostly sun locations.

**Paper Bark Maple** (*Acer griseum*) has it all: cinnamon coloured peeling bark, compact habit, attractive foliage and lovely orange-red fall colour. This slow-growing tree matures at around 25 feet, although older specimens can be a little bigger. They are well used as specimen trees, but are also easy to tuck into almost any shrub border. Plant in well-drained soil.

**Magnolia 'Daybreak'** - Magnolias are



generally as wide as they are high, but 'Daybreak' is an exception. It has a compact and rather columnar habit, at maturity reaching about 18 feet tall by only 8 feet wide. The flowers on this tree are spectacular: large, fragrant, pure translucent pink. This formal looking tree would be good in side yards, or planted strategically to provide screening.

**Fox Valley River Birch** - (*Betula nigra* 'Fox Valley') Visitors to the nursery may have

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noticed the planting of Heritage Birch, with their attractive, salmony coloured peeling bark. The 'Fox Valley' birch is identical to the Heritage Birch in every way, except for its size. At maturity you can expect a tree in the 15-20' range in height by 15-20' spread. They can be trained to a single stem, but prefer to grow multi-stemmed, making them a fast growing screening or accent tree. As a bonus, they are the best tree we offer for wet spots, but will grow happily in any average garden soil.

**Villemorin Mtn. Ash** (*Sorbus villemorinii*)



is a handsome tree, a full step down in size from other Mountain Ashes. Its mature size is 15-18' high by 15' wide. The leaves are much smaller and more finely textured than usual, have

an interesting smoky, green-grey luster and great fall colour. Unless there is another of the same nearby, it will be fruitless, making it safe to plant by walkways, patios or driveways.

**'New World' Red Maple** (*Acer rubrum* 'New World') is a brand new tree that we are carrying for the first time. It caught our eye as it was well reviewed last year, and is quite a bit smaller and more compact than other Red Maples, maturing at around 30-35' tall and

up to 20' wide. It turns bright orange-red in fall. It would be well used as a specimen or shade tree, providing the shape and illusion of a large, stately landscape tree, but on a much smaller scale.



**Bulbs are in now** - we have a good selection. Plant now for explosions of spring colour.

## Overwintering Tender Perennials

- by *Faye Ford & Laurie Acheson*



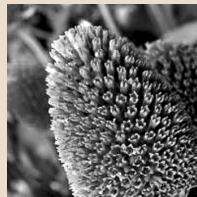
For those of us who like to flirt with zonal denial, success or failure usually depends on drainage, cutting back or not, and protection from the elements. Remember that winter wet kills far more plants than cold does and that tender plants in the ground have a better chance of survival than those in pots - unless you are able to move the pots to a protected area.

The simplest method is to leave plants in the ground, allow foliage to die back, and cover with a blanket of conifer boughs or branches.

## Seedheads for an Autumn and Winter Wonderland

I am always enchanted by the beauty of autumn and winter seasons in our gardens and as a gardener and photographer I notice and admire the littlest things. Lately, I am obsessed by seedheads. Nothing else adds such personality to the garden in the fall and winter when everything seems to be static and dormant.

Try to be bold and dare to leave some flowers or grasses uncut (less work for you!) as a surprise during those dull winter days. Grasses are particularly effective when not "put to bed" for the winter, especially when combined with late flowering perennials. For example, *Calamagrostis* 'Karl Foerster' looks amazing with *Acanthus mollis*, *Eryngium* spp. and *Panicum virgatum*.



Popular *Sedums* spp. look gorgeous with *Pennisetums*, *Eryngiums* and *Monarda*. Leave *Asters* and *Echinaceas* uncut for winter and

plant some smaller *Miscanthus* like 'Little Kitten' or 'Adagio' among them to make a display for the fall/winter wonderland.

Seedheads of *Phlomis russeliana*, tall *Alliums*, *Melianthus*, *Cynara*, and *Monarda* all look almost 'cosmic' and most unusual, especially when planted en masse with grasses like *Stipas* and *Panicums*.

Some seedheads are real oddities. *Cardiocrinum* seedheads reach up to 7-8 feet! *Arums* (perfect to add some interest for shady gardens),

*Echinops*, *Iris foetidissima* (has splendid colour), *Gunnera* and *Verbascum* could all be 'conversation pieces' in your garden.

And don't forget: seeds and berries left untouched for the winter feed "the littlest birds (who) sing the prettiest songs".

- By *Katja Martinelli*

The ground must be well drained. Do not cut stems down, as they offer some protection to the crown, provide winter interest, and remind you in the spring that there is a plant under there. Plants in this category include *Melianthus* major, *Agapanthus*, and *Salvia patens*.

Even *Cannas* can be left in the ground if your garden is sheltered and very well drained. But if it's not, they and other tuberous lovelies such as *Begonias* should be cut back and lifted, potted in dry soil and stored in a frost free shed or garage. Mist lightly if the tuber appears to be shriveling. In spring, pot them up, move into the light, water lightly, and wait for some green growth to show before giving them a dilute mixture of fertilizer.

Overwinter patio trees such as *Tibouchina*, *Lantana*, *Heliotrope*, tender *Fuchsias*, and

non-hardy *Geraniums* such as ivy, scented, and *Vancouver Centennial* by cutting back stems by one third to one half. Protect roots from frost by storing them in a shed, porch, unheated greenhouse or garage, with good natural light and ventilation. Again, keep plants dry with barely enough water to prevent desiccation.

Tender succulents such as *Echeveria* lack the anti-freeze salts in their tissues that their hardy friends the *Sedums* and *Sempervivums* enjoy. *Echeverias* planted in the ground appreciate being lifted and stored in pots or shallow trays and kept dry until spring when they can be watered and fed to get them going again. You will be amazed at how quickly they respond!

Now, as for the lovely, tender, deer proof *Agastache* 'Apricot Sprite' that I bought this year, I'll let you know in the spring....

## Multi-tasking Ground Covers

- by *Susan Tice*

Well-used ground covers can fill many roles; they really are the 'all-rounders' of the garden. They can accent landscape features, fix problem spots, crowd out weeds, control erosion, reduce maintenance and water usage, soften hard edges and fill in under trees, shrubs and perennials. They can be like little jewels tucked in under other plants. They can also replace turf grass in areas that are difficult to mow such as under trees or on rough ground, slopes and ditches. You could even replace your whole lawn with ground covers.

Ground covers add texture and colour to a garden, whether it be a ground-hugging blanket of thymes or a mass planting of shrubs. Anyone who has driven by Mattick's Farm in the spring may recall the stunning mass of *Spiraea* 'Magic Carpet' under the trees near the entrance.

Almost any low to medium growing plants with a spreading habit can be used as ground cover, but scale is important. The smaller the space, the smaller the plants should be. Large spaces can handle plants that grow taller and wider. When combining ground covers, be sure they are similar in size and vigour, so that one doesn't over-run the others.

When choosing ground covers, the key to

success is, as always, to pick plants that will thrive under the conditions of the site. Prepare the planting area as well as you can and keep the area watered until the plants are established. If the site is difficult to water, planting in the late fall will give the plants a chance to establish before next summer's heat.

Many plants will spread indefinitely and knowing how they spread is useful when deciding what to plant. Plants with deep wide spreading rhizomes should be used with care as they are very difficult to control. On the other hand they can be very useful in dry areas or to control erosion on a bank. Rhizomes can run on the surface or underground and will produce roots along their length as they grow. They can creep along slowly like *Epimediums* or gallop like *St. John's Wort*.



Plants like *Ajuga*, *Fragaria* and *Sedums* spread by surface runners that root as they go. Clumping plants like ornamental grasses and *Hostas* combined with low creeping plants like thymes and *Cotula* (brass buttons) to fill in empty spaces look great and won't get away from you.

Vines can be used to great effect as they will grow flat if they aren't supported. Climbing *Hydrangea*, *Virginia Creeper* and *Star Jasmine*