

# Arrowsmith Greenhouses

## *Nursery Notes*



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2880 Alberni Highway,  
Qualicum Beach B.C.,  
V9K 1Y3  
Tel 250-752-1592 Fax  
250-752-2497  
Arrowsmithgreenhouses@shaw.ca  
Website  
arrowsmithgreenhouses.ca



The color of springtime is in the flowers; the color of winter is in the imagination. ~Terri Guillemets

Well another year is upon us and one of the gardening trends for 2013 is “Bliss in the Garden”. What is Bliss in the Garden? I imagine it is different things to different people but for the true gardener Bliss in the Garden may mean exhaustion at the end of a full day in the garden when the weather has cooperated, your weeding is all done and the bed you have worked so hard on looks fantastic. Bliss might also be picking fresh veggies that you have grown to make a great dinner. It could also be something as simple as spreading your own compost around your garden. Or it could be that someone else does your grunt work and your bliss is sitting with a cold drink just taking it all in. Whatever it means to you we hope that you will find it this year and that we can help you achieve it. So Happy New Year and here’s to finding “Bliss” in your garden in 2013.

The nursery will reopen  
Monday, February 18

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## Caring for Rhododendrons

As we look toward spring it may be time to take a look at your Rhodos. A well looked after Rhodo is a huge asset to the garden. A straggly, weak, sparse blooming Rhodo is not. A common misconception with Rhodos is that they cannot be pruned. Indiscriminate pruning is definitely not advised but if you follow a few rules your Rhodos will look great year after year. When pruning Rhodos it is best to take a 3 year approach to it. Remember that anything you prune will not bloom for one year as all flower buds are produced on previous years growth. Start by pruning out weak or damaged branches, taking them out with clean cuts right at the main branch or near the crown of the plant. If you have branches with few leaves right near the end of the branch they can be taken back to an outward facing leaf node about 1/3 down the branch. Be careful only to take back no more than 1/3 of



these branches in one year. If the entire plant is in poor shape they can be sheered right off and most will regenerate in 2 to 3 years. If the plant has gotten to this point there are usually other factors at play. Generally a very gangly plant is not getting enough light, moisture, nutrients, or all of the above. In this case refer to the old motto a happy Rhodo is a moved Rhodo.

Moving Rhodos is not a daunting task. In fact they are one of the easiest plants to move because of their compact, pancake root systems. They should be moved when dormant, with November to February being the preferable months. When digging the plant make clean, deep cuts around the plant at the drip line. As you move around the plant it will usually start lifting up quite easily. Even a large mature Rhodo will only have a root system at most about 10" thick. When moving the Rhodo make sure that you replant it with the crown above ground level. If you bury a Rhodo crown it will not bloom very well.

Fertilizing Rhodos is a very important for maintaining their vigour. They only need to be fertilized 2 times a year. The rule of thumb is to fertilize just as the buds begin to swell, and then about 1 month after they finish blooming. Rhodos also benefit from a

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top dressing of compost, manure or sea soil (just be careful not to mound the dressing up the stem). This provides not only a bit of nutrient but helps to hold moisture around the roots. If you find your Rhodos looking a bit yellow especially along the leaf veins they could be lacking in magnesium and an application of epsom salts sprinkled around the drip line should correct this.

Deadheading Rhodos will not only keep them looking tidy but will also encourage new growth because the plant will not be putting energy into producing seed. When dead-heading it is best to do it with bare hands (even though it is a sticky job) as it is very easy to break off the growth nodes along with the dead flowers. Do this with a quick snap being very careful to break the dead flower off as close to the bottom of the spent flower as possible.

Once again this year we have a great selection of Rhodos. Our selection is always best in March as the good ones always get scooped up fast. This year we have a few new selections to add to our inventory:

“Karen Triplett”



“Melrose Flash”



“Very Berry”



“Rabatz”



Vertigo

Purple Fountain Grass



## January - February Plant Profile

### Bergenia

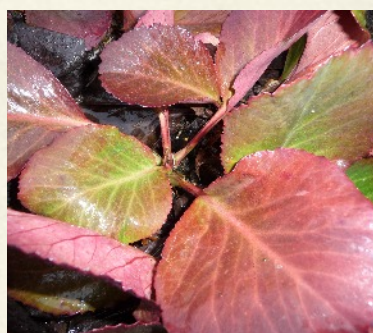
With such an unflattering common name of Pig-squeek no one would blame you for overlooking Bergenia for your garden. In recent years there has been a huge increase in new Bergenia varieties. There are now variegated varieties as well as some with beautiful blooms. One of our favourites is Bergenia 'Pink Dragonfly'. This variety has slender leaves with dark pink flowers. It is



"Pink Dragonfly"

not an aggressive spreader as are some of the older varieties. These plants do not require a lot of special care and will thrive in part shade to full sun. With their thick waxy foliage they can store water so do

not need much supplemental watering. The winter foliage on many of the varieties is a beautiful deep maroon. The ever-green nature of this plant gives it multi season interest which is so important in many of our smaller



"Solar Flare"

gardens. Bergenia is also an extremely easy plant to divide if you want to spread it around your garden. A quick plunge of the shovel and you have new plants.

## What's New For 2013

This year we have some exciting new plants in the Nursery. Here are a few to tempt you:

Buddleia 'Tutti Frutti' and 'Blue Chip'

Disanthus cercidifolius "Redbud Hazel"

Magnolia 'Coral Lake'

Magnolia 'Judy Zuk'

Acer circinatum 'Pacific Purple'



Magnolia "Coral Lake"

6 New Fig Varieties

Gardenia japonica 'Klein's Hardy'

New Varieties of Mini Dwarf Conifers

New Acer Varieties:



Acer p. "Amber Ghost"

Acer japonica:  
Attaryi,  
Oregon Fern,  
Amber Ghost,  
Grandma Ghost,  
Kinishi,  
Orange Dream,  
Red Spider,  
Hubbs Red Willow



## To Do List

### January

- Dormant Oil should be applied to fruit trees and roses. Apply it on a clear day when the temperatures are above zero. Repeat the spray 2 more times at 2 week intervals.
- This is a great time of year to apply mulch as it is easier to do while the herbaceous plants are dormant. Sea Soil, Compost or Manure are all good choices.
- Continue planting spring flowering bulbs if you have not already done so.
- Cut back grasses and other perennials that are not looking their best anymore.
- If possible get out and weed your borders as the weeds come easily at this time of year and you will prevent some of the pesky self seeders from continuing to grow and self seed through the winter.



### February

- Prune back Cornus, and Cotinus shrubs to encourage bright, colorful new growth for the coming year.
- Begonia bulbs should be started this month.
- Start seeds that require more time before planting out such as Impatiens, Dahlias, Rhodochiton, Nicotiana to name a few.
- Prune fruit trees
- Lift and divide perennials that have become overcrowded.
- Sweet Pea seeds can be sown this month.
- Lime can be applied to the lawn this month.





## Camellias

Our west coast gardens are the envy of our neighbours to the east for many reasons but one of the foremost is our ability to grow wonderful broadleaf evergreens. Arguably one of the most regal of all the broadleaf evergreens is the Camellia. The most popular is the Camellia japonica however the Camellia sasanqua is also a great choice. Camellia japonica has larger leaves and is noted for having larger, showier flowers. The sasanqua varieties are fall to winter blooming with smaller leaves and flowers but beautiful in their delicacy. Camellias require the same conditions as Rhodos but need more direct sunlight than Rhodos. They do benefit from being planted with some shelter of a tree canopy to protect them from late winter and spring frosts which can wreak havoc on the blossoms. Moist, well drained humus soil on the acidic side is ideal. Here are some of the varieties we will be carrying this spring:



J. "April Blush"



J "April Snow"



J. "Crimson Candles"



J. "Jury's Yellow"



J. "Nicky Crisp"



J. "Pink Icicle"



S. "Apple Blossom"



S. "Setsugekka"