

Arrowsmith Greenhouses *Nursery Notes*



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"Winter is on my head, but eternal spring is in my heart." Victor Hugo

As the year ticks over to 2012 the forecasted La Nina winter has not yet materialized. It has been a warmer, drier than usual November - December. This is a great time of year to take a close look at your garden. This is when the bones of the garden are exposed and sometimes we like what we see and other times not so much. It is the time to evaluate what may need to be added or removed this spring. No matter what your conclusions take time to enjoy your garden in its winter slumber.

Here at the Nursery we are looking at what was popular last year and looking ahead to all the juicy, wonderful selections that we will be offering this spring. We are very much like the plants we sell in that we are resting and getting ready to burst forth with renewed energy with our season opening in late February. We look forward to seeing all our gardening friends for another season very soon. In the meantime enjoy our winter Newsletter.

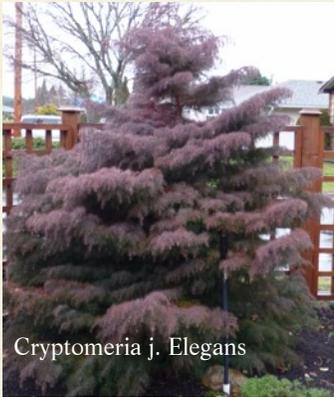


The Nursery will
Reopen in Late
February
Watch for our email
notification



Plants for Winter Interest

There are a wide variety of great winter interest plants from Conifers to Perennials. From flowers to amazing foliage colour this doesn't have to be a season of drab. Some of the most colourful plants at this time of year are conifers. Of the conifers the genus *Cryptomeria* has many offerings. One of the



Cryptomeria j. Elegans

most stunning is *Cryptomeria japonica* 'Elegans'. This very soft looking pyramid shaped tree is a mid green in summer but turns a magnificent bronze in winter. This lovely tree can grow to 25 feet or more over 30 years but most top out at about 15 feet over that time. Another smaller *Cryptomeria* with lovely winter bronzing is *Cryptomeria japonica* 'Vilmoriana'. This dwarf conifer tops out at about 1 meter high and wide. *Cryptomeria japonica* Sekkan-Sugi is a real show stopper with yellow foliage that turns almost white in winter. Deciduous trees and shrubs also have many great winter interest varieties.



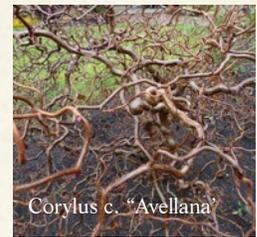
Cryptomeria j. Sekkan Sugi

Acer griseum "Paperbark Maple" is a wonderful small tree (to about 25') for all seasons but is most noticeable in winter when its branches are bare and its red peeling bark is most exposed. *Corylus avellana* 'Contorta' "Harry Lauders Walking Stick" is definitely at its best in winter without its leaves. The shrubby dogwoods



Acer griseum

such as *Cornus alba* 'Elegantissima' "Red Twig Dogwood" or *Cornus* 'Midwinter Fire' are beautiful in winter as long as they are pruned to the ground early each spring. This ensures fresh growth each year which is the most colorful. *Viburnum bodnatense* 'Pink Dawn' starts to flower just as the calendar ticks over the New year. The clear pink flowers would seem more appropriate in May but are welcome in January to give us that brief glimpse into what is ahead. No article on winter plants would be complete without speaking of *Hamamelis* "Witch Hazel". These workhorses of the garden have bloom times that range from the



Corylus c. "Avellana"

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Winter Gardening Events

February 4, 2012 - Qualicum Beach Seedy Saturday - Qualicum Beach Civic Centre 10:00 - 3:30

February 14, 2012 - QB Garden Club meeting - QB Civic Centre - Guest Speaker - Harry Sumner on Pruning

March 13, 2012 - QB Garden Club meeting - QB Civic Centre - Guest Speaker - Bernie Dinter on Xeriscaping

January - February Plant Profile

Cyclamen coum

So you want flowers in your garden in the winter. Try adding some of these delicate little al-pines to your beds. Not only do they have beautiful flowers but their foliage is intricate and detailed. Undemanding and easy to grow. They do their best planted under deciduous trees or shrubs so they are exposed to winter light but shaded in the heat of summer. They require moist loamy soil and benefit from the annual leaf



drop the deciduous plants provide. Just keep in mind that an inch or two of leaf mulch is plenty. Too much and you may bury them too deep. These plants will be completely dormant by the end of May so

caution should be taken when planting annuals in the area so as not to damage the cyclamen corm.



The most noteworthy thing about gardeners is that they are always optimistic, always enterprising, and never satisfied. They always look forward to doing something better than they have ever done before.

- Vita Sackville-West, 1892 - 1962

Winter Pruning

There are a number of shrubs that benefit from winter pruning. Most of these tend to be summer interest shrubs. Shrubs such as Cotinus, Cornus, Buddleia, and Hardy Fuchsias benefit from a very hard prune around the end of February. This encourages straight new growth without the woody look these can get without pruning. In the case of the Cornus the winter foliage is much more colourful with the new growth that is encouraged by pruning.



Any spring flowering shrubs

should not be pruned until flowering is finished. Caution should also be taken when pruning trees. If you

prune to late in the winter the sap is already flowing and profuse bleeding may occur especially in the case of Japanese Maples and birches. If in doubt make small cuts and watch for a day or so to make sure there is no bleeding. Of course roses and fruit trees should be pruned in late winter as well as summer flowering Clematis. Spring and fall Clematis do not have to be pruned but can be trimmed to control growth.



January - February To Do List

January

- Perennials that have been left through the fall and are not looking their best anymore can be cut back. This includes grasses that may be starting to collapse.
- It is not too late to plant bulbs that you purchased in fall but have not planted.
- When it looks like we have a couple of dry days coming up that are not too cold (above 0) you should apply a dormant



oil spray. This can be applied to fruit trees, roses and any other deciduous shrubs that you have had pest problems with. Ideally the spray should be applied 2 or 3 times at 2 week intervals.



○ Stay on top of weeding. When the soil is wet it is very easy to weed some of those nasty invaders. Many of these weeds are winter annuals and grow very actively through the winter. So if you stay on top of them now it will make the job a lot easier through spring and summer.

○ Sit back, read a book and enjoy your garden from the comfort of your home.

February

- Continue with Dormant sprays as above.
- Prune back deciduous shrubs that you want to encourage straight new growth on. Some examples would be Cotinus and, Cornus shrubs.
- Near the end of the month you can prune Roses depending on the weather. If it is not too cold you can prune them completely. If it unseasonably cold then it is advisable to only take out the dead and crossing branches and finish pruning in March.
- If you have overwintered Begonia bulbs they can be started in a greenhouse or indoors in a bright window.
- Sweet pea seeds can be sown.
- Lift and divide perennials that have become overcrowded or to increase your supply.
- Add mulch to garden beds. This is the easiest time of year to do this as so many plants are dormant.
- Prune fruit trees.



beginning of December to late February. Some are more fragrant than others, such as *Hamamelis mollis* and *Hamamelis x intermedia* 'Arnolds Promise'. Some have brilliant fall colour such as *Hamamelis x intermedia* 'Diane'. These are large spreading shrubs so if you are gardening on a small scale you may have to limit to one, but all are worth finding a spot for.



Hamamelis 'Diane'

Winter interest perennials are plentiful as well. Probably the best known are the Hellebores. From *Helleborus niger* "The Christmas Rose" that blooms the beginning of December to February to the *Helleborus* hybrids (Lentin Rose) which bloom from January to March. These hardy perennials offer colour all winter long. There are so many different hybrids available now offering vibrant pinks and purples to stunning double whites. Most Hellebores are best planted in mass plantings for the full effect. All of the previous years foliage should be cut back prior to bloom to best expose the colour. Another very colourful perennial is *Sedum* 'Angelina'.

This one comes with a warning that it can be a bit of a thug but if you have some space it is a lovely bright yellow that almost looks like it has a light shining on it even on the dullest days. A good choice for the shade garden is *Arum italicum*, commonly known as Lords and Ladies. The foliage pokes out in December, has insignificant flowers in March followed by bright red berries on 5" stems.

Winter does not need to be a season of dormancy and un-interest in the garden. There are many reasons to get out and wander your garden even on the dullest winter days.



Arum italicum

