

# Arrowsmith Greenhouses

## Nursery Notes



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“In spring, at the end of the day you should smell like dirt.” Margaret Atwood

As the days are getting longer and the temperatures are warming up this is a special time of year for gardeners. Every day brings new discoveries in our gardens. It may be just a particularly nice clump of bulbs or a tree that is blooming better than it ever has before. But sometimes something just doesn't live up to our expectations. Take time to revel in the successes and don't beat yourself up over the disappointments. If something is not performing try moving it. If it has already been moved and still not doing it for you - don't waste any more time on it. There are just too many wonderful plants out there waiting to be discovered. This is the time of year for renewal. Try something new. The nursery is brimming with great plants. We now have annuals in ready for your planters or beds. The hanging baskets are ready to go. Our perennials are looking great and we have a large selection of trees and shrubs in stock.



We would like to share some of your garden successes with our newsletter readers. Send us your photos with brief descriptions and we will try and include them in upcoming newsletters. Send them to [dgoodfellow@telus.net](mailto:dgoodfellow@telus.net)



## In This Issue

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## Ferns The Quintessential West Coast Plant

Take a walk through any forest on the west coast and the second thing you see after the towering trees are the ferns. Our native ferns blanket the forest like a big down comforter. They provide the backdrop to our lush picture postcard scenery. The good news is that they perform just as well in our gardens. From evergreen to deciduous there are dozens of varieties to choose from. There are ferns that only grow a couple of inches high to towering giants that can reach 6 feet or more. Even though ferns do not produce flowers they provide interest in their beautiful and diverse foliage.

Most ferns love our acidic soil and thrive with very little extra attention. There are a couple of exceptions to this - the *Asplenium* ferns being one. The most common of these for our area are Hart's Tongue Ferns. These require an alkaline soil and therefore need to have lime added to the soil on a yearly basis. The rest of the ferns that you would consider growing here only require a yearly mulch of leaf mould or fish compost to supply all their nutrient requirements.

Evergreen varieties are not true evergreens as the foliage that remains all winter starts to die down when the new fronds emerge in spring but because there is foliage all year they are considered evergreen. It is recommended that the previous year's foliage be cut back just as the new fronds start to emerge in spring as the previous year's growth can look untidy as it starts to die down.

Here are some of the best varieties to consider for your gardens:

*Adiantum pedatum* - Common Maidenhair Fern - This beautiful deciduous west coast native can grow to 3 feet high and wide.

*Adiantum venustum* - Himalayan Maidenhair Fern - This low growing evergreen beauty will reach about 5 inches high and spreads to about 3 - 4 feet.



*Asplenium scolopendrium* - Hart's Tongue Fern - An evergreen lime lover that will grow to about 2 feet.



*Athyrium nipponicum* - Japanese Painted Fern - There are several varieties of this deciduous fern available such as Ursula's Red and Ghost. Both have the purple margins with grey foliage. This fern should be protected from direct sun as the leaves will burn out.



*Blechnum spicant* - Deer Fern - One of our native evergreen ferns. Frond height reaches 2.5ft before spreading out.



*Dryopteris felix mas 'Cristata'* - The King Male Fern - Very handsome evergreen with crested tips. This fern will grow to 3 feet high and wide.

*Osmunda regalis* - Royal Fern - A deciduous water lover that will grow to 3 - 4 feet. This fern can be submerged in water but can also tolerate average garden soil.



*Polystichum setiferum* - Soft Shield Fern - The polystichum family is a large group of mostly evergreen ferns. The soft shield fern or aka the Alaska Fern can grow to 2 - 3 feet high with lovely mid green foliage. It is also sometimes referred to as a mother fern as tiny fernlets will grow on the fronds.



This is just a small sampling of some of the great garden ferns we carry. There is a fern that will fit almost any garden situation and are well worth considering in your landscape. Ferns make great companion plants for large bold plants such as hosta as their soft foliage softens and compliments their look. Give them a try you won't be disappointed.

## Our Dwindling Bees

There has been a lot of publicity lately about our bee populations dropping to dangerously low levels. Bees are an integral part of putting food on our tables. Without bees to pollinate we would be hard pressed to keep fresh fruit and veggies in our diets. One third of all our crops are pollinated by bees. There are several factors that are contributing to the decline of honeybees from colony collapse to mite infestations to insecticide use. We can all, in our small ways, try and turn this around. As gardeners we can start by planting flowers that attract bees. Here is a list of plants that you may consider growing to increase the foraging habitat of our local bees.

### Shrubs:

Arbutus unedo (Strawberry Tree), Berberis thunbergia, Buddleja davidi (Butterfly Bush), Calluna vulgaris (Winter Heather), Caryopteris, Chaenomeles Japonica (Quince), Cornus mas, Cotoneaster, Erica (Summer Heather), Fuchsia magellanica (Hardy Fuchsia), Hydrangea, Kalmia latifolia (Mountain Laurel),  
Potentilla, Mahonia aquifolium (Oregon Grape), Pieris japonica, Ribes sanguinum (Flowering Currant), Rose, Sarcococca, Tamarix, Viburnum tinus, Weigela



### Perennials:

Achillea, Aconitum, Actaea, Agastache, Anemone, Aquilegia (Columbine), Arabis, Aruncus (Goatsbeard), Aster, Aubretia, Doronicum, Euphorbia, Geranium (Hardy Geranium), Helleborus, Pulmonaria, Campanula, Centaurea (Coneflower), Coreopsis, Crambe, Dianthus, Dictamnus (Gas Plant), Echinacea, Echinops, Eryngium, Eupatorium, Gaillardia, Geum, Helenium, Helianthus, Iberis (Candytuft), Leucanthemum, Malva, Monarda, Nepata, Perovskia, Persicaria, Polemonium, Rudbeckia, Salvia, Scabiosa, Sedum, Sidalcea, Solidago, Veronica.



### Annuals:

Ageratum, Calendula, Centaurea, Cerinthe major, Cosmos, Helianthus (Sunflowers), Heliotrope, Alyssum, Nicotiana, Poppy, Marigolds, Zinnia.

## May - June Plant Profile

*Daphne transatlantica* 'Eternal Fragrance'

This great little introduction from the UK is a lovely small shrub with a sweet lemony fragrance. This shrub will only reach about 3 ft high and wide. In spring there is a profusion of



bloom followed by a short break and then it blooms again until frost.

Plant this *Daphne* in full sun and once this shrub is established it is drought tolerant.

As far as soil is

concerned it will tolerate either acid or alkaline.

There is little to no pruning required for this shrub as it will maintain a dense compact habit.



Clip a small branch and bring it indoors. The fragrance is wonderful and will sweeten your entire room.

"The philosopher who said that work well done never needs doing over never weeded a garden."

- Ray D. Everson

## Roses

A rose is a rose is a rose is a rose, until you try and buy one!

**Hybrid Tea** - These roses are large upright growers. The flowers are single blooms on long stems making them the best choice for cut flowers. Hybrid Teas are almost always grafted.

**Grandiflora** - Large growing shrubs with hybrid tea type flowers. The main difference is the flowers are clustered on long stems rather than singular. The flower clusters have long stems as well, making them a good choice for flower arranging. Usually grafted.

**Floribunda** - Smaller flowers than hybrid teas or grandifloras. The flower clusters are on short stems. Long flowering and continuous bloomers. Most are grafted but many are now being done on their own root stock.

**Climber** - Climbing roses are not true climbers but produce very long branches that require anchoring. The flowers are produced along the length of the stem. Many climbers are June blooming but there are now many repeat climbers as well.

**Rambler** - Very large climbers with large masses of small flowers. Very profuse bloomers but not repeaters. Will often climb without support along fences or into trees.

**Shrub** - A term that has been used to classify many roses that don't fit into any other category. They are usually crosses between wild roses and newer cultivars. Often large and usually profuse bloomers. Generally felt to be the roses that require less maintenance. Quite often on their own root stock. Within this category many are now regrouped into groundcover, rugosa, pavement among others.

## May - June To Do List

### May

- All the cool season vegetables should be planted by the first week of May. This includes lettuce, peas, onions, carrots, spinach, radishes and beans.
- Hanging Baskets can be left out as soon as the night time temperatures are not dropping below 5 degrees.
- Containers with annuals should be planted up early in May.
- Stake tall perennials early in the month - before they need staking.
- Feed spring bulbs as the flowers finish to encourage good bloom for next year. Fertilize with a high middle number fertilizer - 6-8-6 or a sprinkling of organic mix.
- Dahlias and Cannas should be planted out early in May.
- Be on the lookout for aphids and rub them off or use an insecticidal soap - especially watch the roses and honeysuckle.
- Prune flowering shrubs as they finish flowering such as Forsythia, Sarcococca, Osmanthus etc.
- Fertilize Rhododendrons after they finish blooming.
- Stay on top of the weeding. This is the most prolific time of year for some of our most bothersome weeds like snapweed and chickweed.
- Annuals can be planted out around the May long weekend. Still be careful with the tender ones such as Impatiens.
- Fertilize Shrubs and Trees. Once a year is usually all that is needed.



### June

- Plant out tender vegetables now such as tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, and basil.
- Cut back early perennials that have finished blooming to encourage a second bloom.
- Early in June a second application of lawn fertilizer can be applied. Make sure to use a fertilizer with only slow release nitrogen.
- If your clumps of Bearded Iris are getting to large now is the time to dig and divide them. Being careful to replant the rhizomes at soil level.
- Deadhead roses as they finish blooming to encourage more bloom.
- Deadhead and fertilize hanging baskets. A weekly 1/2 strength 15-30-15 is recommended.
- Make sure that newly planted trees and shrubs are well watered.
- Take some time this month to sit back and enjoy your garden.

