

Arrowsmith Greenhouses

Nursery Notes



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"The love of gardening is a seed once sown that never dies." -- Gertrude Jekyll

As I write this it appears this was the winter that wasn't. I am very hesitant to put that in writing as these things always have a way of coming back to bite you. But I am going to risk it anyway. The temperature has barely dipped below 0. We haven't really even had that much rain. What rain we did get was technically in the fall, not winter. Our lack of snow this winter has meant very little snow damage to our conifers and grasses. The spring bulbs are starting to poke out of the ground and spring is just waiting to make her appearance. Our enthusiasm grows with every little flower or bud that makes its appearance. At the nursery this is always a great time for us but also a tricky time as we would love to move everything outdoors but we just never know what the next day will bring for weather. We have many trees and shrubs that are bursting to get out of their winter resting spots. Camellia and Pieris are starting to bloom. Our Rhodos have buds starting to swell, the perennials are being planted. Oh, we can hardly wait to see everyone again.

We are now open
7 days a week 9-5

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Magnolias

Magnificent Magnolias grow so well in our mild west coast climate. From the smaller shrub types to towering 40 foot trees there is a Magnolia for everyone.

The first to bloom in our gardens are usually the *Magnolia stellata* or Star Magnolias. These are usually more shrubby mounded types but can still reach impressive 20 foot heights at maturity. Blooms will often start opening around mid March and as with all spring blooming Magnolias they can be susceptible to late frosts. The most common variety of Star Magnolia is 'Royal Star'. There are hybrid star Magnolias that are commonly available as well. One of the most beautiful is *Magnolia × loebneri* 'Leonard Messel'.



The most popular of all the magnolias are the saucer or *Magnolia x Soulangeana*. With blooms that can reach an impressive 8-10 inches in diameter the *Soulangeana* make a definite impression when in bloom as well as being a very stately tree when not in bloom. Some of the readily available varieties are *Magnolia s.* "San Jose", "Alexandrina", "Lennei" and "Rustica Rubra".

Another popular group of Magnolias are known as the "8 Girls". These are hybrids of *lilliflora* and *stellata*. With blooms later than both *stellata* and *Soulangeana* there is less chance of frost hitting the blossoms. The girls are Ann, Betty, Susan, Jane, Judy, Pinkie, Randy and Ricki and are grow to about 15 ft at maturity.



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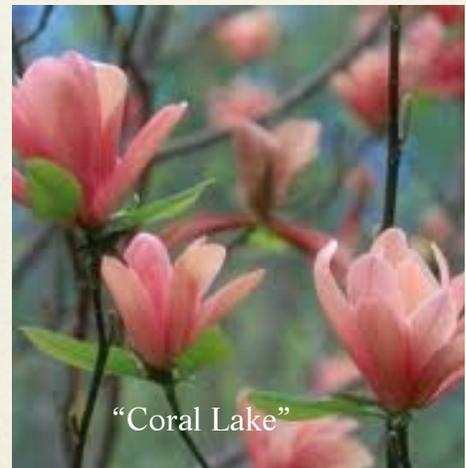
Magnolia sieboldii also known as the Oyama Magnolia is a medium size shrubby tree with very fragrant blossoms. Of course the most fragrant of all magnolias are the southern Magnolias - Magnolia grandiflora. These are evergreen trees with enormous blossoms sometimes reaching 12 inches in diameter when open with a very heady fragrance. While most of the southern magnolias are not hardy to our area there are some hybrids that have been bred to survive to zone 7. One of these is Magnolia

grandiflora "Victoria" This cultivar was originally discovered in Victoria around 1930 and as since become a very reliable tree for colder climates.



Always a popular request for us are yellow Magnolias. The two that are most commonly seen on Vancouver Island are "Butterflies" and "Elizabeth". Both are a creamy yellow and are medium to large growers.

Two new cultivars for us this year are Magnolia "Coral Lake" and Magnolia "Judy Zuk" The latter is a yellow variety with a unique fragrance that is described as smelling like fruit loops while Coral Lake has coral pink flowers.



March-April Plant Profile

Cryptomeria japonica
"Sekkan Sugi"

Also known as a Golden Japanese Cedar, this medium-growing conifer is a perfect plant for creating a focal point in your garden. It is best planted with a dark background, such as a cedar hedge. The bright yellow foliage is most intense in spring with the new flush of growth but it is also wonderfully bright on our dull winter days.



It will grow to about 10 feet high and about 4 - 5 feet wide with most of its growth occurring in its first few years.

The Sekkan Sugi prefers full to part sun with well-drained soil and average watering.



Early Season Bloomers

What's blooming now:

Winter Acconite.



Hacquetia

Ranunculus
"Brazen Hussey"



Helleborus

Cyclamen coum



To Do List

March

- Roses should be pruned by mid month and fruit trees should be done early in the month if not already done.
- This is the ideal time to re mulch your garden beds, before herbaceous perennials start to emerge. Ideal mulches would be fish compost, garden compost or well rotted manure.
- As Spring flowering shrubs finish they can be pruned to shape and control size.
- This is the best time of year to divide perennials. For perennials such as Hosta, Astilbe and many others it is very easy to see the new growth tips which makes it easy to divide.
- Deadhead and feed spring bulbs when they finish flowering.
- Remove any winter mulches that were applied to tender plants.
- Get on top of weeding this month as many perennial weeds have continued to grow over winter and are getting ready to set seed.
- Plant Sweet Pea seeds.
- From March 15 on the early vegetables can be planted such as Spinach, Leaf Lettuce, Peas, and Onion Sets.
- Tomato seeds can be sown indoors from mid March to Mid April to be ready to plant out for June 1.



April

- Summer flowering bulbs such as Dahlias, Gladiolas, Lilies and Allium should be planted this month.
- Shear back winter flowering Heather after flowering is finished.
- Evergreens can be pruned now to control growth. This can also be done in August if your hedges have put on substantial growth in the active growth season. If this is done in August the shrubs will flush out some new growth before winter.
- Stake tall perennials as they start to emerge. Never wait until they need staking as by that time it is too late.
- Continue planting early season vegetables.



○Roses, shrubs and perennials can be fertilized near the beginning of April. Organic fertilizer, well rotted manure or fish compost are the most beneficial fertilizers as their nutrients are used slower and more efficiently than synthetic fertilizer.

Dividing Hosta

Hosta are one of the easiest plants to divide. This can be done at any time of the year but March is the optimal time.

It is best to mark the Hosta you want to divide the summer before but as long as you leave the spent flower stalks on the plant you will be able to locate it without any difficulty.



Once located use a sharp spade or digging fork to dig around the plant until it loosens from the soil. Don't worry about cutting roots as they will regenerate very quickly.

It is not necessary but is helpful to rinse the rootball and crown to see the best place to make your division.



You want to make your cut with at least one growth bud in each division. Using your spade, sharp knife or hori make your cut through the crown of the plant.

Depending on how many plants you want to get out of one clump continue cutting making sure that you have a good amount of root and at least one growth bud per division.



Replant the new plants immediately in the ground or in containers.

