



Spring 2006

Compliments of
Unique Garden Centre

From the Ground Up ↑

GETTING TO KNOW US

KENDALL

EMPLOYEE OF THE SEASON

This is Kendall's sixth season as a "Tree and Shrub Lady" at Unique Garden Centre. Kendall has a Prairie Horticulture Worker Certificate and years of gardening experience in Regina, Victoria and Hawaii. Kendall loves helping customers select the perfect trees and shrubs for their yards. She very much enjoys discussing design choices that reflect customers' personal garden styles. One of Kendall's favorite challenges is diagnosing bug and disease problems. Bring a sample from your suffering plant. She'll do her best to identify the problem and find a solution.

Children love their own play area! They especially enjoy a play house or even a tree house. Having their own space in the garden allows them their own area for rough and tumble play. This will help your space in the rest of the yard stay looking beautiful.



*Gardening
requires a lot
of water most
of it in the
form of
perspiration*

TIPS FOR HAPPY GARDENERS

It's that time of year again, when we want to get outside to our backyard and play in the garden. It should be a pleasure not a chore but sometimes it seems like an endless job. Here are a few ways to make the job easier.

1. Get the right tools. A good sharp spade and an iron rake for leveling soil will make your task easier. Gloves, clippers and knee pads help too.
2. Follow the instructions. Plants bought at the garden centre include labels with advice on where to plant for proper sun and how to space them to accommodate them for their mature size.
3. Start small. A smaller bed or two requires less seeding and weeding. The impact can be far greater with a neat and tidy garden than a large overgrown one.
4. Properly prepare your soil. Mix in generous amounts of compost. Add triple mix, a blend of soil, loam and manure, which is readily available at your local nursery.
5. Use native plants. They are generally hardier and more resistant than their exotic cousins. Limit the number of marginally hardy plants so if we have a bad winter, there won't be so much to replace in the spring.
6. Mulch, mulch, mulch! A three to four inch layer of mulch laid on a good quality landscape fabric locks in moisture and moderates soil temperature. This makes for happy plants.

Let's get out there and get our hands dirty!





OXYGENATORS FOR THE POND

A water feature in the garden is an irresistible attraction adding elements of sound and reflection to the landscape. Creating a water garden means building a little ecosystem that depends on the interrelationships of the plants and animals that live there for its stability.

A naturally balanced pool requires oxygen to sustain its inhabitants. You could use a bubbler (a mechanical pump) to provide this oxygen, but a combination of submerged and floating water plants is far better at releasing oxygen into the water. Every garden needs a balance of floating and submerged plants.

Floaters vary according to planting depth and how much surface area of water they need. Roughly half a pond's surface should be covered with plants. Floaters move about on the pond's surface wherever the breeze takes them. Their roots dangle in the water. They provide shade and protection for fish. Some of these plants are Water Lettuce, Water Hyacinth, and Duckweed.

Submerged oxygenating plants also keep water clear. They control algae naturally, provide a spawning place for fish and provide shelter for baby fish. These plants are placed in pots right at the bottom of the pool. Two examples of submerged oxygenators are Water Crowfoot and Curly Pond Weed.

Another great addition to the pond is Hornwort, a submerged free floater. It grows in masses, has finely dissected leaves and tiny flowers.

Developing a pond takes a little patience, but start right and let nature find the balance. Established water features require surprisingly little care.

Peonies in Bloom

Peonies are ideal plants for our prairie gardens because they are readily available, easy to grow and very hardy (many to Zone 2). Most of them have very fragrant flowers and they are very long lived.

Although considered a tried and true perennial, sometimes a peony will refuse to bloom. The Canadian Peony Society provided this checklist of some possible causes and cures.

- They are planted too deeply. If the eyes are more than 5 cm underground, lift and replant
- Too young or moved too often. Leave the plant in the same spot for at least 5 years to allow it to develop.
- Undernourished. If buds form but won't develop, top-dress with compost away from crown of plant.
- Over-Fertilized. If your plants have deep green foliage, but no buds form, water thoroughly to wash away excess nitrogen.
- Too much shade. If your plants are tall and spindly, replant to a sunnier spot.
- Not enough moisture. Make sure to water well to the bottom of the roots.
- Too much competition. Replant your peonies outside their neighbours' root zones.
- Root system undermined by gophers or moles. Install a wire mesh barrier around the bed.
- Buds develop but fail to open. Your plant may be waterlogged or damaged by frost, disease or drought

Peonies only bloom once a year, in early summer. However, there are newer cultivars becoming more readily available all the time. By using different varieties, you can extend the enjoyment of peonies in blooms for up to six weeks.

Come into Unique Garden Centre and see what is available and hardy in our area.

Spotlight On

Our “Spotlight On” page provides information on a different tree, shrub and perennial in each addition of “From the Ground Up”



2006 PERENNIAL OF THE YEAR DIANTHUS “FIREWITCH”

Dianthus gratianopolitanus “feuerhexe”

This sun loving perennial blooms in late spring and again in the fall if spent blooms are cut back. It likes full sun and well drained soil. It has a lingering fragrance that can be enjoyed if placed near a path where passers by brush it on their way by. Dianthus can be used as a border edger, rock garden plant or ground cover. Its height and width is 12 inches.

WENTWORTH CRANBERRY

Viburnum trilobum

This attractive compact shrub grows to 8 ½ to 12 feet tall and wide. It blooms with white flower clusters in spring, followed by bunches of bright red berries. The leaves of the cranberry are shiny dark green and shaped somewhat like maple leaves. This variety has consistent, superior red fall colour. Plant your cranberry in sun to partial shade. Every few years remove the oldest stems to encourage new growth. The fruit of most cranberries is great for making jams and jellies.



YOUNG’S WEEPING BIRCH

Betula pendula “Youngii”

This tree has a distinct weeping form with no central leader. It can be easily pruned into the desired size and shape. As it matures its white bark peels away from the trunk. Birch trees are moisture loving and, even when established should be watered regularly, especially during heat waves. The roots are sensitive to high soil temperatures so keep the roots shaded with lower growing plants or mulch. Its mature size is 16 feet tall and 13 feet wide.

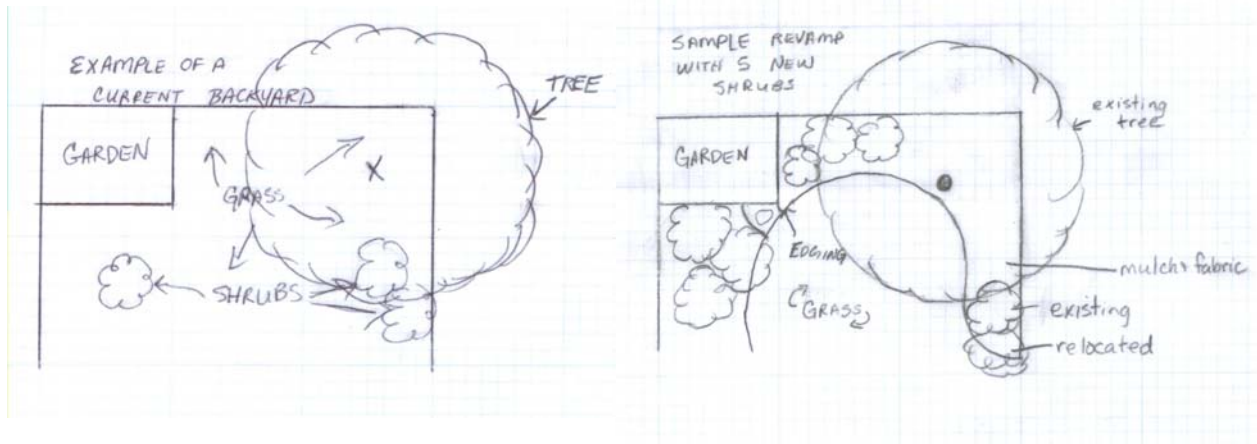


LANDSCAPE DESIGN TIP



The most common concern of my clients is that their yard be lower maintenance. Everyone's lives are go go go and something has to give and it is usually the yard. But it doesn't have to be. You can have a gorgeous yard that is a lot easier care than a mundane yard. The secret is in the layout. A long time ago a very smart man told me "My lawn mower does not have reverse!", meaning that if he has to back up, the design is not right. So the spring design tip is to take a look at your yard and with the help of a garden hose to lay out for a visual prop, connect areas to remove corners. Now push your lawn mower along this new path to ensure that the curve is not too tight, if it is stretch out the curve further. To reduce maintenance further use (1) landscape edger, (2) paving stones on the planting bed side of the edger and (3) lay the paving stones side by side instead of end to end. You will never regret the extra work of installation because of the reduced maintenance of the yard not to mention the improved look!

Have a great Summer 2006!
Marilyn



Every garden is unique with a multitude of choices of soils, plants and themes. Finding your garden theme is as easy as seeing what brings a smile to your face.

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