



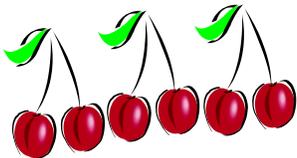
Spring 2007



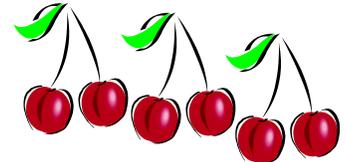
Compliments of

Unique Garden Centre

From the Ground Up



At long last, what we all have been waiting for
PRAIRIE CHERRIES



Zone 2 Hardy.

The University of Saskatchewan, after more than 65 years in the breeding, has now released a series of Prairie Cherries. These are bush fruit with dwarf stature- a mature height of about 8 feet. Fruit holds well on the bush – doesn't drop. It will wait, while getting sweeter and sweeter. When very ripe, just give the branches about five shakes to remove all the fruit. High yielding! Mature trees produce from 10 to 15 kilos of fruit per bush. Size of quarters! Dark red fruit high in sugar. As much or more sugar than Bing cherries! Plants are self-fertile and one can expect the first harvest within 3 years of planting. We expect limited availability this year, arriving late June. Call and ask about...

Crimson Passion. Juliet and Romeo Cherries!



Introduced in 1988 in Europe, Walker's Low Catmint has become increasingly popular with each passing year due to its lovely blue-violet flowers and its long bloom time, attractive grey-green foliage, ease of propagation, lack of pest or disease problems, and low maintenance requirements.

Grown and loved by many of our staff, hardy to zone 3b, maturing 24-30" tall and wide it prefers full sun, a well-drained soil, and is quite drought tolerant once established. It is a wonderful companion plant for early and late blooming plants. Great for perennial borders, but can be used in herb gardens, rock gardens,



Catmint 'Walker's Low'
Announced as the
2007 Perennial Plant of the Year
by the Perennial Plant Association.

as a ground cover, and as a container plant. Walker's Low will bloom continuously throughout the season if properly pruned. Great for attracting bees, butterflies and other pollinating insects, but is deer and rabbit resistant. Leaves release a wonderful aroma when crushed.

Plants chosen to be the Perennial Plant of The Year must have the following attributes:

- * Suitable for a wide range of climate types
- * Low maintenance
- * Easily propagated - easily comes true from seed or vegetative propagation
- * Exhibits multiple seasonal interest

For more information, visit their website www.perennialplant.org

Spotlight On



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



ASTILBE *Astilbe x hybrida*

The fern like foliage and the showy plume flowers of the Astilbe make them a favorite summer flowering perennial. The flower plumes appear in June and into July. Astilbes come in a variety of colours ranging from pink, white, red and purple. Even when they are not in bloom, the foliage stays attractive throughout the summer. Astilbes prefer light to partial shade and well-drained soil that is kept moist. They will not tolerate dry soil. There are many different varieties but the most common types range from 12-36 inches in height and 12-24 inches in width.

“TIGER EYES” SUMAC *Rhus typhina* ‘Bailtiger’

This new cultivar of Staghorn Sumac offers a long season of interest to the landscape with its deeply cut and brightly coloured leaves on purple branches. It is bright yellow throughout the summer and turns brilliant orange in the fall. It is not as large nor does it sucker as much as the normal green varieties. Plant this shrub in full sun to partial shade in well- drained soil. It tolerates poor soil quite well and thrives in clay. It is also drought tolerant once it is established. Tiger Eyes Sumac is an upright rounded shrub that grows to a height and width of 6-8 feet.



IVORY SILK JAPANESE TREE LILAC *Syringa reticulata* ‘Ivory Silk’

This small ornamental tree has an upright oval shape with dark green foliage. Its large creamy white flower clusters appear in early summer. The smooth bark is dark gray-brown to purplish in colour and is quite attractive. This tree prefers well-drained soil and is moderately drought tolerant once established. It grows to a mature height of 25 feet and spread of 15 feet.



Soil isn't just the ground beneath your feet, it's a living community.

Inside are microorganisms, nutrients, minerals, water and oxygen, all contributing to healthy plant growth. The nature of your soil dictates the size, shape and quality of the root system. A problem soil can be so dense it chokes off the roots and prevents them from spreading deep into the ground. Every soil on Earth is made up of billions of tiny particles. Particle size dictates how your soil behaves. It also relates to fertility, which is how well the soil supports plants.

Clay soils have the smallest particles that hold together in a tight mass. If your soil sticks to your shovel, or if it becomes rock hard and refuses to absorb water when dry, you've got mostly clay soil. Clay can be very fertile but really hard for roots to penetrate.



Sandy soils have the largest particles that barely hold together at all. If water endlessly disappears into your soil, or if it is very easy to dig when wet or dry, you've got mostly sand. Sand tends to be of low fertility, and offers little resistance to spreading roots. Most soils are a mixture of particles with the dominant size being its type.

Loam is a general word for near-perfect soil that has lots of organic matter, enough sand to be easy to dig in, but sufficient clay to provide fertility and solid anchorage for plants.

To evaluate drainage conditions, dig a test hole 2 feet deep, fill the hole with water. If it drains away in an hour you have great drainage. If it takes a day you have slow drainage. If it sits overnight or longer, you have poor drainage. If you have poor drainage, add more humus and try the drainage test again.

A fertile soil is one that makes plants grow and improves resistance to pests and disease. Most soils are not naturally fertile, but they can be improved to make plants perform well. Fertile soils are dark in color because they contain a lot of organic matter, which is the decomposing remains of plants. When fully decomposed it becomes humus, a form that plants can use. Examples of humus are compost, composted steer manure, ground peat and leaf mould. Adding lots of humus is like sending your soil to a health spa.

You can add humus to your soil any time you wish. Large quantities of humus help cure heavy clay soils and fast draining sand. It also adds micro-organisms and minerals to build up weak soils. Just remember that it doesn't last forever, so plan on adding humus every year or so, just to be sure.

You can add humus in various ways:

- * Work it into the soil in the bottom of your planting hole and mix with the excavated soil as you pack it around the root ball.
- * Improve the soil over an entire planting area by spading or rototilling it in 6" to 24" deep.
- * Spread it over the surface of the soil around older plants that can use a fertility boost.



“Gardening and laughing are two of the best things in life you can do to promote good health and a sense of well being. “

David Hobson

Composting

The benefits of composting are:

- Reduce waste sent to landfill.
- Reduce greenhouse gases.
- Reuse organic materials.
- Recycle natural nutrients.
- Improve soil without chemicals.
- Produce rich humus for plants.
- Save money on chemical fertilizers.

The humus you produce can be:

- Used as a lawn dressing.
- Dug into your garden in the fall or spring.
- Added to houseplants.
- Used as a potting and seed starting mix.



Soil Testing

Were your flowers and vegetables as lush and healthy as you'd hoped last year?

If not, consider testing your soil for its texture, nutrient content and pH (whether it's alkaline or acidic) to determine if it needs amending. Some experts recommend checking soil every three to five years, since rainfall and plants deplete it.

Contact ALS Laboratory Group, Saskatoon at 1-800-668-9878 (www.alsenviro.com) for more information about the Lawn & Garden Soil Test Packages which they offer. Costs will range from \$32 to \$72 and provide detailed information on your soil quality and recommendations for improvement.

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