



SPRING  
2010

# *From the Ground Up*



The world's favorite season is the spring. All things seem possible in May

*-Edwin Way Teale*

## **Save Water. Save Money. Save the Environment. Use a Rain Barrel.**

During the summer months one rain barrel can collect up to 1300 gallons of water. The water is free, saving you money on you monthly bill. It helps reduce the demand on water treatment facilities and it helps protect the environment and conserve a fundamental resource. Most importantly, gardens and lawns respond well to fresh water collected during rainfall because it is soft—free of chlorine, calcium and lime—perfect for keeping plants healthy. It is also warmer than tap water.

Rain barrels are easy to set up and can be placed directly under the downspout. Raising the barrel up 12-16" by using concrete blocks or a wooden stand will make it easier to access the water tap with a hose or watering can. Position the downspout to fit into the mesh opening. Install tap at the base. Ensure the rain barrel is fitted with an overflow or downspout diverter so water can be directed away from the foundation if the barrel overfills.



Rain barrels are fitted with a cover and a screen that prevents debris or mosquitoes from getting into the water. The screen will need to be cleaned regularly to be kept free of leaves and other debris. Check gutters, downspouts and barrel overflows on a regular basis to ensure they are not blocked. In the fall, drain the barrel and store it upside down away from the downspout.

Keep a lid on the rain barrel at all times to keep insects, wildlife and children out. It is a good idea to examine the barrel weekly for mosquito larvae. Adding a tablespoon of olive oil or dish soap once a week will prevent mosquitoes from breeding in the barrel.

# Nuts to you



## American Hazelnut *Corylus americana*



Did you know you could grow your own hazelnuts? The tasty, rich flavour of the nuts is wonderful with chocolates and other sweets and they are good for you!! They are an excellent source of vitamin E, protein and fiber as well as being one of the highest natural sources of antioxidants.

Now you won't get a lot of hazelnuts from just one plant but if you have the space it would be fun to try a couple. Ornamentally speaking, they blend into the landscape with dark green foliage throughout the season. Their serrated pointy leaves turn yellow in fall. The male flowers are catkins, while the female ones are in tiny clusters with red stigmas protruding. They produce brown nuts which ripen in fall in clusters of 2 – 6, each enclosed by a pair of ragged edged bracts. Although hazelnut bushes are considered to be self-pollinating, they will set heavier quantities of fruit with a different variety of the same species growing nearby.

American Hazelnuts are dense multi-stemmed deciduous shrubs with an upright spreading habit of growth. They sucker some and will need to be trimmed back in the spring before leafing out to maintain size. The natural growth habit makes them useful as hedges as well. In a small yard they could be pruned as a small tree. Hardy to zone 3 they like moist soil but will tolerate drought once well established.

Harvest is in September/October. Deer, squirrels, chipmunks, blue jays and other wildlife love them so you will have to pay attention if you don't want to share.



**Once you have harvested the hazelnuts,** lay them out on a newspaper to dry for a few days before roasting. Spread the nuts out evenly in a single layer on a shallow baking sheet and roast in a preheated 350° oven. Roast for 15 minutes, remove the pan and stir the nuts around, working the ones from the outer edge of the pan to the center, and vice-versa. Return to the oven and roast for an additional 15 minutes. Allow them to cool and store roasted nuts in zipper bags. They can be stored in the freezer to keep them fresh. Use a standard nut cracker to break the shells and enjoy the flavor of your own home grown, fresh roasted hazelnuts! Be careful though, once you start eating them, it'll be hard to stop.



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



**Huskers Red Beard-Tongue**  
*Penstemon digitalis* ‘Husker Red’

This vigorous perennial with narrow, red-tinted leaves and clusters of tubular pink flowers will bloom from early to late summer. It is tolerant of high humidity and grows best in full sun to partial shade. It will grow to 30” tall and 12” wide. It is hardy to zone 2.

**Autumn Magic Chokeberry**  
*Aronia melanocarpa* ‘Autumn Magic’

This compact deciduous shrub has glossy dark green oval leaves that turn a lovely shade of red in fall. Its white blooms in the middle of spring give way to an abundance of black berries in the late summer and fall. It adapts to either drought or excessive moisture in the soil. It prefers full sun. It grows to a height of about 4’ and spreads about 3’ wide and is hardy to zone 3.



**Swedish Aspen**  
*Populus tremula* ‘Erecta’

This is a fast growing tree with a tight columnar habit grown as a vertical accent or several in a row as a screen. It has shiny dark green serrated leaves that turn yellow in the fall. It is drought tolerant, prefers full sun and is hardy to zone 3. Average mature height is 35’ with a 7’ spread



# Design Tip:









*Consider form and habit before making the next addition to your garden...*

Plants that have a pleasing outline or interesting shape will still be appreciated in the landscape after they have lost their flowers or shed their leaves. Trees and the larger shrubs can offer a wide range of silhouettes. Youngii Weeping Birch , Royal Beauty Weeping Flowering Crab and Weeping Siberian Larch have gently arching and cascading branches creating a waterfall effect. Pink Spire Flowering Crab, Swedish Columnar Aspen, De Groot Spire Cedar and Skyrocket Juniper are narrow, upright and tightly columnar. Lorbergi Fernleaf Caragana, Cutleaf Smooth Sumac and Amur Maple have limbs that develop into a horizontal line, curving softly towards the tips.

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