

Spring 2013

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# From the Ground Up

## 2013 Perennial Plant of the Year

For 2013, the Perennial Plant Association has selected.....

### ***Polygonatum odoratum*** **'Variegatum'**

otherwise known as Variegated Solomon's Seal.

This perennial has greenish-white flowers in late spring and variegated foliage throughout the growing season which turns yellow in the fall. This classic beauty grows in part to full shade and is a great companion to hostas, ferns and astilbes.

Plant it close to a pathway to enjoy its sweet fragrance as you walk by.



Photos by Steven Still  
/Perennial Plant Association

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## Spotlight On:

Information on a different tree, shrub and perennial in each edition of "From the Ground Up"



### Silver Variegated Sweet Iris *Iris pallida* 'Argentea Variegata'

This hardy perennial forms a low clump of sword shaped leaves with silvery-white and green stripes running vertically. Its fragrant lavender-coloured flowers, which appear in early summer, have a scent reminiscent of grape jelly or vanilla. This plant prefers full sun and well-drained soil. Height: 20-24" Spread: 12-18" Zone 3

### Dwarf Yellow Broom *Genista lydia*

This fine textured shrub produces showy bright yellow flowers from late spring to early summer when it is a highlight in the garden. Its light green foliage spreads slowly appearing to flow around rocks and over ledges. It prefers sunny sites and well drained soil. Height: 18" Spread: 24-30" Zone 3



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### Dakota Pinnacle Birch *Betula platyphylla* 'Dakota Pinnacle'

The most striking feature of this Birch tree is its tightly columnar growth habit. Its bark matures from grayish-orange at 3 years old to nearly white at maturity. The small dark green leaves turn yellow in the fall. Its spire shape and dense foliage make it a strong vertical accent in small gardens. This tree grows well in full sun to part shade and is adaptable to heat and drought. Height: 25' Spread: 10' Zone 3



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**\*We offer both residential and commercial landscaping design services**



Rabbits may be cute and fuzzy but they can be the bane of a gardener's existence. Booming bunny populations mean there is more demand for food supply and our lawns and gardens make a wonderful buffet. Rabbits can often be seen early in the morning and at dusk foraging for food. They like vegetables and grass the best but hungry bunnies will eat just about anything green.

## Close the Bunny Buffet

There are a couple ways to keep rabbits from gaining the upper hand in the garden. The most effective method is a barrier such as a 2-3 foot high chicken wire fence around the garden. Green plastic coated wire will last longer and blend in better than standard non-galvanized steel wire. It is not the most attractive but you may get away with it around the vegetable patch where they are likely to do the most damage.

Another method is using rabbit repellents. These are products applied to plants that make them distasteful to the rabbits. Capsaicin (hot pepper), naphthalene (moth balls), ammonium soaps, and blood meal are the most commonly used ingredients. They need to be re-applied frequently as the plant grows, or after a rainfall or sprinkler irrigation washes off the repellent. Repellents should not be applied to the edible (to us) parts of the plant.

You could let the grass grow a bit longer and let the rabbits feed on it or provide a couple small patches of clover. If you give them their favorite lunch maybe they will leave your treasures alone.

There are few truly rabbit proof plants. If the rabbit population is high and food is scarce, many plants will be on the menu. Some plants will be eaten when young but avoided once mature. There are some plants rabbits will avoid if there are alternative food sources. Some to try are: Allium, Astilbe, Baptisia (Baptisia australis), Bee-balm (Monarda), Catmint (Nepeta), Daffodil (Narcissus), Daylily (Hemerocallis), Foxglove (Digitalis), Fritallaria, Iris, Lamb's Ears (Stachys byzantina), Peony (Paeonia), Salvia, Veronica (Veronica spicata), Yarrow (achillea)

Many people enjoy sharing their landscape with our animal friends. It is wise to strike a balance with nature in your landscape. The right combination of fencing, repellents, and deterrent plants can effectively reduce damage to landscape and garden plants.

## GARDEN JARGON: ▣ Garden terminology can be a bit confusing. Here are some definitions of a few commonly used terms.

**ANNUAL:** In gardening, an annual refers to a plant grown outdoors in spring and summer, flowering in its first year and surviving just for one growing season.

**PERENNIAL:** A perennial is a plant that lives for more than two years and is often used to describe only herbaceous perennials. More correctly, woody plants like shrubs and trees are also perennials.



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Ask any gardening questions to  
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