

Summer 2007


From the Ground Up ↑

BEST GARDEN TOOLS

Laughter

**When a gauzy, purple butterfly,
Softly tilts a golden flower,
It's cool wings ease the summer flame
As laughter soothes a troubled hour.**

-Courtney E Cottam



Inside the garden shed lie the secrets to a beautiful garden: the right tools. When buying tools, buy the best quality you can. They are an investment that yields beautiful dividends over time.

Here are 10 tools every gardener should own:

- A trowel: From container gardening to large beds, a trowel will help get your plants into the soil. The strongest trowels are made of steel and the lightest are cast aluminum. Every gardener should have one.
- A watering can: Whether for spot watering wilting plants or fertilizing annuals, a watering can is essential. Those with longer spouts are generally more balanced.
- A spade: Breaking ground is the most basic act in the garden so a sharp spade is imperative. It is also useful for planting larger perennials.
- A fork: You need a heavy duty fork to dig and divide perennials and to harvest root vegetables. Stainless steel blades are the strongest.
- A hoe: Keeping weeds at bay is the purpose of this long-handled tool.
- Pruners: Keep overgrown shrubs and trees under control with a good pair of by-pass pruners.
- Wheelbarrow or garden cart: Available in all different sizes, a wheelbarrow or cart is indispensable for hauling soil, compost, plants, tools.... Anything you need to garden!
- Gloves: Unless you want your hobby under your nails, get a good pair of gloves. Leather holds up the best. I have a cotton pair with a rubberized palm that I like also.
- A hose: This is the fastest way to get water from the source to your garden.
- An edger: This moon-shape hand tool slices into the ground to create a clean sharp edge between flower beds and lawn for a nice finishing touch.

Spotlight On

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



BIGLEAF LIGULARIA
Ligularia dentata ‘Othello’

This robust perennial has large kidney-shaped leaves that are dark purplish green in colour, and clusters of yellow daisy-like flowers with brown centres that bloom most of the summer. It is a great waterside plant and will grow in full sun to partial shade. Hardy to zone 4, it grows to a height and spread of about 3 feet.

DIABOLO NINEBARK
Physocarpus opulifolius ‘Diabolo’

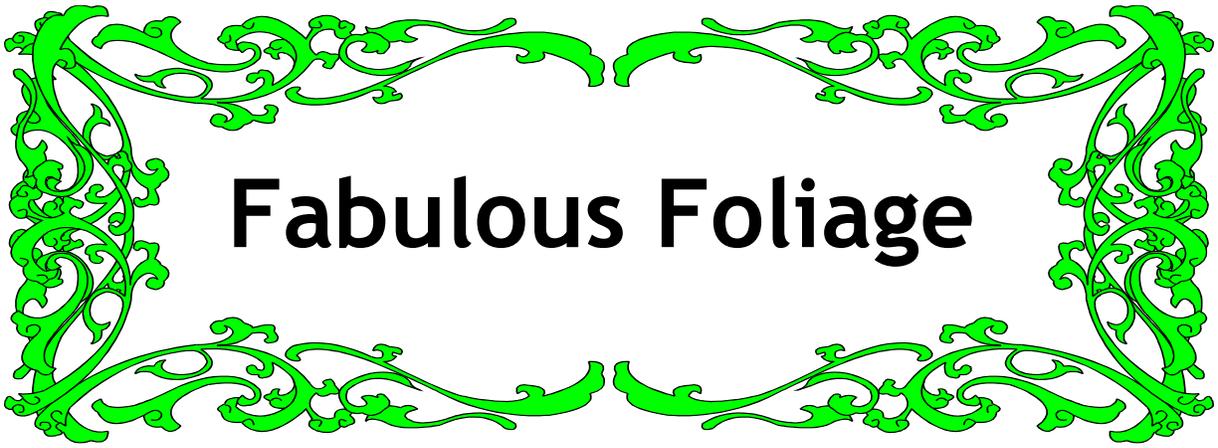
This low growing shrub has reddish-purple leaves all summer turning yellowish-bronze in autumn. It has white flower clusters in late spring. Peeling bark provides unique winter interest. This extremely hardy shrub prefers full sun and grows to a height and spread of 5 feet.



DROPMORE LINDEN
Tilia flavescens “Dropmore”

This upright deciduous tree has a dense, compact crown and is fairly fast growing. Fragrant, hanging clusters of ivory coloured blooms appear in summer. Lindens make great shade trees, are tidy, virtually pest-free and need little maintenance. Like most trees, they prefer full sun. They grow to a height of 33 feet and the canopy spreads 23 feet in width.





Fabulous Foliage

HOSTAS

The hosta is a popular perennial whose foliage is far more interesting than its flowers. Originating in China and Japan, hostas have been in North American gardens for the past 200 years and only a few species were known. However, within the last 50 years or so interest in these perennial blossomed (pardon the pun) and now there are more than 4000 cultivars. They are striped, streaked, speckled, puckered, ruffled, dainty or bold. Some have leaves the size of a fingernail and others with leaves 20 inches across.

One large hosta can be the centerpiece of a shade garden. Smaller hostas filling in underneath larger plants help unify the garden. Newly planted hostas need a few years to develop their characteristic colouring and mature form.

Variegated plants show their colours from the start, but big-leaf hostas or hostas with wavy, puckered or cupped leaves will not look their best until they are four years old.

Hostas are extremely hardy and will survive winter temperatures of -40. Most hostas do best in bright but indirect light in loamy, well-drained soil. When shoots emerge each spring, they like a little bit of balanced fertilizer sprinkled around them.



Dividing Hostas

Dig up and divide hostas any time during the growing season although spring is best when new growth is emerging. Cut clumps with a sharp knife and keep new divisions moist while they settle in.

Companion Plantings

Keep your hostas company with other shade loving perennials such as astilbe, ferns, bleeding hearts, & coral bells. Annual impatiens planted here and there would add a bright splash of colour. Viburnums and hydrangeas look good as background shrubs for hostas and add year round structure to the garden.



A Word to the Wise on Watering

- Add drought tolerant plants such as herbs, ornamental grasses, and native meadow plants.
- Site plants in conditions that meet their habitat needs. Shade plants in darker corners and sun-loving in sunnier areas.
- Group plants with similar watering needs together.
- Make a doughnut ring around thirsty plants. Create a circular moat around plants that need regular watering, this will direct water straight to the root.
- Apply a layer of organic material after the soil has warmed in spring and when plants are above ground level. Also lay mulch after the ground freezes in the winter.
- Irrigate on windless days. Water the soil instead of the plant's foliage. Also using a watering can or a soaker hose is much more efficient than a sprinkler.
- Irrigate only when plants are showing signs of stress, ie. drooping leaves, and when there is no rain in the forecast.
- Add compost to your soil regularly to improve texture, keep moisture in and add nutrients.
- Use rainwater to water plants, it's free, the perfect temperature and chlorine-free!

SLIPPERY SLUGS



Slugs like foliage plants and hostas are one of their favourites. Eliminating them is impossible but you can keep them at bay. Big hostas with thick leaves are less susceptible to slug damage. Keep your hostas healthy. Over fertilization makes them weak and spindly and therefore more vulnerable to slug damage. Try mulching your hostas with pine needles which is least attractive to slugs than bark or compost. Slugs go out at night. Crash their after dark party with a flashlight and a bucket of salt water. Pick the slugs off the plants and drop them in the pail. Beer traps are also effective. Set containers in beds with rims at soil level; add beer. Empty the containers every morning. Use a solution of 15% non foaming ammonia and 85% water and spray it on the slugs. Commercial slug baits are available but many are toxic to pets and wildlife. Look for an organic bait which will control slugs but won't harm birds or pets. Come in and talk to the staff at Unique Garden Centre about the choices available.

Brought to you by



 <p>Unique Florists We have your flowers for any occasion!!</p>  <p>467 Broad St. N. Regina, SK. S4R 2X8 789-1010 Fax: (306) 545-4345</p> <p>Sherwood Co-op (Rochdale) 777-0183</p> <p>Marketplace Co-op (Quance St.) 777-0182 www.uniqueflorist.ca</p>	 <p>Unique Garden Centre</p> <p>132 Broad St. N. 777-0190 www.uniquegardencentre.com</p>  <p>*Open 7 days a week now until season close!</p> <p>*Ask any garden questions to the horticulturalists we have on staff</p>
	 <p>Unique Landscapes</p> <p>467 Broad St. N. 777-0186 Fax: (306) 545-4345 Email: uniquegroup@sasktel.net</p>  <p>*We offer both commercial and residential landscaping services!</p>