

Summer 2013

Compliments
of:



From the Ground Up



Gardening is cheaper than therapy
...and you get tomatoes!



The Rhubarb is ready!

Rhubarb is a cool season perennial plant that is very winter hardy and resistant to drought. For those of us who have bought older homes, we often find we have inherited one of these beauties with the yard. They are easy to care for and don't require much attention at all. A little compost worked carefully around the crown in the spring and water every now and then in a dry spell will keep them happy. Every 4-5 years, the plants would benefit from being divided. This will keep them producing nice thick stems.

If you want to plant a new rhubarb plant, prepare the soil by adding large amounts of organic matter. Plant in early spring, as soon as the frost is out of the ground. It is best to use a division rather than plant from seed. Spread the roots out evenly and fill the hole with soil/compost mixture. Fertilizing the first year is not recommended but in subsequent years, carefully work in compost to the top 2 inches of soil.

To harvest rhubarb, cut the stalks at the soil line or simply pull them out individually. Do not harvest more than two-thirds of the stalks at any one time. Harvest is usually from late May to end of July. After July it is best to allow the plants to build up food reserves for the root and crown for next years' production. Pull off the flower stalks as they appear to prolong the production period.

Once you have harvested the rhubarb, trim off the leaves and use the stalks for all kinds of tasty dishes. My favourite recipe for rhubarb is **Rhubarb Lemonade**. It's a zesty refreshing drink perfect for summer. Here it is for you to try:

| | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 2 cups chopped rhubarb | ¾ cup granulated sugar |
| 2 tsp. grated lemon rind | ¾ cup water |
| ½ cup lemon juice (approx. 3 lemons) | 2 cups ice cubes |
| lemon slices | |

In a large saucepan, stir together rhubarb, sugar, ¾ cup water and lemon rind. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, stirring, until sugar is dissolved and rhubarb breaks up. This is usually takes about 10 minutes.

Remove from heat. Stir in lemon juice. Strain through cheesecloth-lined sieve, pressing out liquid. Let syrup cool. (This can be stored in the refrigerator in an airtight container for up to a week. I often freeze some at this point for future use)

In a serving pitcher, mix syrup with 5 cups water. Stir in ice to chill. Garnish with lemon slices.



* Rhubarb leaves contain a toxic substance so do not consume them. They can be safely composted however, as long as you are not inclined to snack on your compost. *



Spotlight On:

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

Moonshine Yarrow *Achillea 'Moonshine'*

Moonshine Yarrow has fernlike silvery green foliage and stunning flat-topped yellow flowers blooming at the ends of the stems from late spring to late summer. Its flowers are excellent as cuts in a vase. It is good for attracting bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. It self-seeds freely and tends to spread. Hardy to zone 2, this perennial should be grown in full sun and well-drained soil. It will grow about 18-24" tall and wide.



Calgary Carpet Juniper *Juniperus sabina 'Calgary Carpet'*

This extremely hardy evergreen shrub has soft green foliage and a low spreading growth habit with dense, layered, scale-like leaves. It is a nice foundation plant or useful in mass plantings. It will tolerate hot, dry locations. Hardy to zone 3, it will grow 12-18" tall and spread 4-5' wide.



Amur Cherry *Prunus maackii*

This small to medium sized upright tree has deep coppery-orange bark that curls as it peels off providing an interesting year round accent to any landscape. It has showy panicles of fragrant white flowers in mid-spring. Foliage is green through the season turning yellow in autumn. It prefers to grow in moist well-drained soil but will not tolerate water-logged clay soils. It will grow to a height of 25' and a width of 16' and is hardy to zone 2.



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GARDEN JARGON:

Garden terminology can be a bit confusing. Here are some definitions of a few commonly used terms.

HEEL IN: I know -- it sounds like puppy training, not planting! When you use it in gardening, it means the process of keeping bareroot plants that you haven't yet set into the ground healthy by unwrapping the plant, finding a shaded, sheltered garden spot (free of wind, foot traffic, etc.) and digging a shallow hole. Set the roots of the plant into the hole horizontally, so that the plant is lying on the ground with its roots covered in soil. Water it well, and make sure the soil around the roots stays moist. The plant can live "heeled in" for several weeks, until you can put it into its permanent garden home!

BAREROOT: Bareroot refers to plants that are dug out of the soil when they're dormant. Instead of being shipped in a pot with soil, their soil is removed and they're sent just as they are. This is the best way for many perennials, shrubs, and trees to make the transition from the growing field into your garden. They are planted in early spring or mid- to late fall, so that they have a chance to get their root systems going without also having to keep top-growth (leaves, flowers, fruit, etc.) healthy. When you receive a bareroot, remove all the packing material, soak the plant in water for an hour or two if it looks dry, trim away any broken roots and branches, and plant it!

HARDY: In gardening terms, a plant is hardy if it can thrive in a certain climate -- survive the cold winter and/or the hot summer. The Canadian hardiness zones are designed around this idea; any plant that's hardy in your zone should be able to grow in your garden and generally survive the winter. Of course, you can often cheat the hardiness zone by growing plants in containers and bringing them indoors for winter or digging them up in fall before first hard frost and storing them in the appropriate way for that specific plant.

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