

Spring 2017

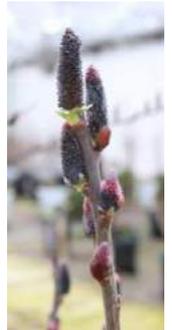


From the Ground Up ↑



Black Cat Pussy Willow *Salix chaenomeloides* 'Black Cat'

Black Cat is an early spring bloomer. Its purplish grey catkins grow vertically on the stalks from top to bottom. Pussy Willow stems are excellent for cutting and can be used for beautiful center pieces and other home décor purposes. Black Cat flowers off its old wood so pruning after blooming is advised. This will do best in full sun and as with most willows, Black Cat is very wet tolerant and fast growing. Mature height and spread is 8-12 feet.



Golden Treasure Dwarf Birch *Betula x plettkei*

Golden Treasure is an exceptionally cold-tolerant dwarf birch. New growth appears in sunset hues of yellow, red, and orange. Cheerful chartreuse foliage carries the plant through the entire season. Allow to grow naturally where its attractive, fan-like habit can be enjoyed, or prune into a low hedge. This is an interesting and unique addition to any landscape. It matures 2-4 feet tall and 2-3 feet wide.



Bloomerang Pink Perfume Dwarf Lilac *Syringa x 'Bloomerang'*

The Bloomerang series is a remarkable new reblooming lilac with a heavy spring bloom and strong rebloom from mid-summer until frost. This latest addition to the Bloomerang series has the same multi-season flower show, only this time in pink. The fragrant blooms will delight gardeners in spring, then again from midsummer to fall. It matures to a height and width of 4-5 feet.



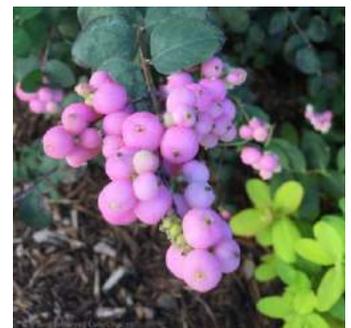
Tiny Wine Gold Ninebark *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Tiny Wine Gold'

Tiny Wine Gold offers brilliant yellow new growth, small refined foliage, and dozens of clusters of white-pink flowers in late spring. It is a colourful easy care choice for perennial gardens, foundation plantings, and other landscape features. Ninebarks are native to North America and are disease resistant. Left unpruned, they naturally take on a graceful arching habit. If you would like to prune your plant, do it after it flowers. Plant in full sun. Water well the first season or two. Once established they are quite drought tolerant. This cultivar is a bit smaller than your average ninebark at 3-4 feet tall and wide.



Proud Berry Coralberry *Symphoricarpos x doorenbosii* 'Kordes'

This coralberry makes it easy to fill your landscape with these unique pink berries. They are guaranteed to turn heads! Cute, rounded bluish-green leaves look handsome all season, then, in late summer, bell-shaped flowers appear. As the season changes to autumn, the flowers develop into large dark pink berries and the colour intensifies as the weather cools. As pretty as it is, this North American native is also amazingly tough, effortlessly fending off deer, cold weather and problem soils. The fruit is not edible, but may be eaten by birds in mid to late winter. This plant makes an excellent cut flower for fall arrangements with graceful berry-laden branches lasting up to 3 weeks in a floral arrangement. It is useful in mass plantings or short hedges where it takes well to pruning. It blooms and fruits on first year wood. It grows easily in average, well drained soil in full sun to partial shade. Mature height and spread is 4-6 feet.



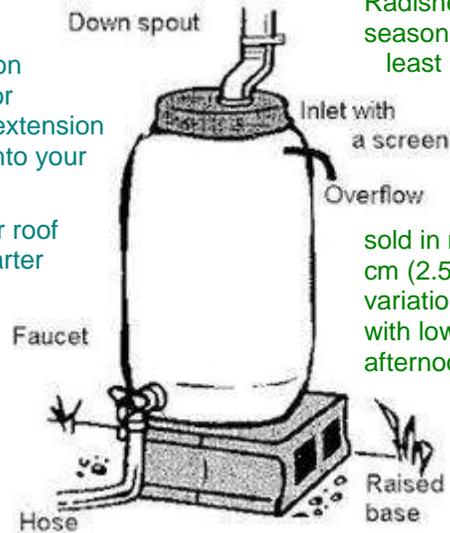
Why Plants Love Rainwater

You can water from the tap all you want, but you've probably noticed that plants look happiest after a good rain. It's not your imagination! Rainwater is often charged with nitrogen from the air, and it's soft and not leaf chillingly cold. The plants can tell the humidity of the air and are ready for the moisture. Ground water tends to be hard, containing high levels of calcium or magnesium carbonate, chlorine if you are on city water. None of this is particularly to the liking of plants, although better a less than perfect drink than no drink at all.

Collecting rain water is easy these days. Modern barrels come with a shut-off valve and a hose connection so you can fill your watering can for easy hand watering. Add a hose extension and you can let this water dribble into your garden.

You can collect rainwater from your roof and even a modest rainfall of a quarter of an inch (6mm) collected from 1000 square feet (93 sq m) of roof yields 150 gallons (680 liters).

If possible, locate your rain barrel where it will be shaded to protect it from the sun. And don't be stingy. Use the water until its gone, then you will have all fresh water the next time it rains.



Soil Temperature and Vegetables

One of the most neglected tools for vegetable gardens is a soil thermometer. Soil temperature is a much better measure of when to plant than air temperature or the calendar. Planting when soil is too cool can cause seeds to rot and transplants refuse to grow.

A number of vegetables can germinate and grow at cool temperatures. For example, peas will germinate and grow well at a soil temperature of 4 C (40 F). Though lettuce, parsnips, and spinach can sprout at a soil temperature of 1.6 C (35 F), they prefer at least 7 C (45 F) for best germination and growth. Radishes also do well at a soil temperature of 7 C (45 F). Warm season crops such as tomatoes, sweet corn and beans prefer at least 15.5 (55 F) for germination (or transplanting) but others such as peppers, cucumbers, melons, and sweet potatoes need it even warmer, about 15.5 (60 F).

Taking soil temperature accurately is a bit of a science. First use a metal soil thermometer, which is sold in many garden and hardware stores. Take temperature 6 cm (2.5 inches) deep in mid morning (10-11 am) Temperature variations throughout the day and night affect soil temperature, with lowest readings after dawn and warmest around mid-afternoon. The late morning reading gives a good average temperature. If taking the soil temperature at this time is not practical, take a reading before you leave for work, and a second in the afternoon and use the average. Also be sure to get a consistent reading for 4-5 days in a row before planting and make sure a cold snap is not predicted.

Fertilizing Spring Flowering Bulbs

The best time to fertilize spring flowering bulbs is when foliage emerges in the spring rather than at flowering. Roots are more active when the foliage first pokes through the ground. Fertilizer applied at bloom is wasted. Fertilize with a complete fertilizer 10-10-10 or equivalent bulb fertilizer at the rate of 2.5 lbs per 100 square feet (about one rounded teaspoon per square foot)

It is important to leave the foliage until it dies naturally. The plant needs the green leaves to manufacture food that is stored in the bulb for next year's use.

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

-Edwin Way Teale

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dazzling dahlias

6 to get you started

On the Canadian prairies, dahlias are grown from small brown tubers planted in the spring. These colourful spiky flowers generally bloom from midsummer to first frost, when many other plants are past there best. They range in colour and size from the giant 10" dinner plate blooms to the 2" lollipop style pompoms. Many varieties grow 4-5' tall, while others are in the 24" range. Wait until all danger of spring frost is past before planting. Dahlias will struggle in cold ground. Soil temperatures should reach 15° C (60° F) before planting. Dahlias can be started indoors 4 weeks before the last frost, if desired. Select a planting site with full sun. Dahlias grow more blooms with 6-8 hours of direct sunlight. Morning sun is best. Choose a location with a bit of protection from the wind. They thrive in rich, well-drained soil, so adding compost at planting time is advised. Tall, large-flowered cultivars will require support. Place stakes (5-6'tall) around plants at planting time and tie stems to them as the plants grow. Dahlias start blooming about 8 weeks after planting, starting in mid-July. There's no need to water the soil until the dahlia plants appear; in fact over-watering can cause the tubers to rot. After dahlias are established, provide a deep watering 2-3 times a week for at least 30 minutes with a sprinkler. Dahlias benefit from a low nitrogen liquid fertilizer, similar to what you would use for vegetable such as a 5-10-10 or 10-20-20. Fertilize after sprouting and then every 3-4 weeks from mid summer to early autumn. Like many large flower hybrid plants, the big dahlias may need extra attention before or after a rain, when open blossoms fill up with water or take a beating from the wind. Bedding dahlias need no staking or disbudding. Simply pinch out the growing point to encourage bushiness, and deadhead as the flowers fade. Pinch the centre shoot just above the third set of leaves. For the taller dahlias, moderately pinch, disbranch, and disbud and deadhead to produce a showy display for 3 months or more. Dahlia foliage blackens with the first frost. After a frost which will help the tuber go dormant, foliage should be cut back to 2-4" above the ground, and lifting and separating tubers should be completed. Gently shake the soil off the tubers. Cut rotten bits off the clump and leave upside down to dry naturally. Pack in a loose fluffy material such as vermiculite dry sand or Styrofoam peanuts. Store in a well ventilated frost free place. Temperatures of 1.5-10° C (35-50° F) are acceptable. Take out the tubers in spring, separate them from the parent clump and replant. If this all seems like too much bother or you do not have the right storage place, skip the digging and storing and just start over by buying new tubers in the spring. One thing is certain: once you start growing them you will want to keep it up to enjoy these beauties every summer.



Arabian Nights Dahlia
4" flowers
24" height



Labyrinth Dahlia
9-11" flowers
24-36" height



Firebird Dahlia
10" flowers
40" height



Nadia Ruth Fringe Dahlia
6" flowers
40" height



Double Jill Pom Pom Dahlia
6" flowers
40" height



City of Alkamaar Dahlia
10" flowers
24" height



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