


**Summer 2016**


# From the Ground Up ↑

## Growing Canna Lilies

Canna lilies are low maintenance and easy to grow. Both foliage and flowers are brightly coloured providing long lasting interest in the garden. Flowers are red, orange or yellow. Foliage colour varies from green to purple to bronze or variegated.



In our region, they are grown as annuals, most often in pots although they could be added to a mixed border. They like heat so perform best in full sun. They also like moist conditions and should not be allowed to dry out. They would be an interesting addition to a bog garden.

Cannas require monthly fertilizer with a higher phosphate content for continuous bloom.

If planted in a bed, the rhizomes would need to be lifted and stored for the winter. This is done by digging the plant out after frost has blackened the leaves. Shake of the excess soil and store the rhizomes in peat moss. Do not add water or you will promote rotting. Store them in a cool place (50° F or 10° C)



They can also be overwintered in pots in the house and allowed to grow throughout the winter season. In spring, they can be moved back outdoors. The plant could be re-potted or divided at this time if necessary.



## Ivory Pillar Tree Lilac

Japanese Tree Lilacs are chosen for their smaller size in the modern urban landscape. This cultivar has cherry-like bark and glossy green foliage. Its stunning white blooms appear in June. Its pyramidal canopy matures to a height of approximately 20 feet and a spread of about 15 feet.



### Watering Tip for Pots:

If you have neglected your plant pots too long and they have dried out, do not let your guilty feelings cause you to over-water. Not only will your plants have to manage drought stress they will also have to cope with nearly drowning! To re-hydrate an overly dry pot, place the pot in a wide, deep saucer that's filled with lukewarm water for about 30 minutes. When the soil surface darkens, the soil is saturated. Remove the pot from the water, allowing any excess to properly drain.

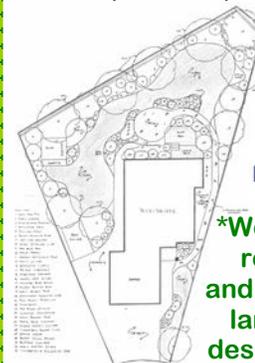

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**\*We offer both residential and commercial landscaping design services**



**Lemony Lace Elderberry** is a colourful, irregularly shaped mound with deeply cut yellow-green foliage. White flowers in spring develop into bright red berries as the season progresses. It prefers part sun and moderate moisture. Growing 4-5' tall and wide it is a wonderful addition to a mixed border. It would look sensational paired with Black Lace Elder or one of the purple ninebarks.



## Hand-Held Pruners



Pruners come in a range of sizes, shapes and distinguishing features. Deciding which to use is based on the task at hand. There are three types: anvil, curved bypass or straight bypass. Most are designed to cut through stems 3/4 inch or 2 cm in diameter or smaller. For branches thicker than this, long handled loppers or a pruning saw is more suitable.

Anvil pruners are for removing dead wood. Their cutting action tends to crush twigs and branches and using them on live wood could create wounds which provide opportunities for disease to arise.

Straight blade bypass pruners are suitable for light pruning tasks such as deadheading spent blooms, cutting flowers, shaping perennials and vines and harvesting vegetables and herbs.

Curved bypass pruners, often referred to as secateurs, are the most versatile. A wide sharp-edged blade slides past a blunt thinner blade. Bypass secateurs make a close clean cut that is less likely to leave a stub.

Different models have different features that could be useful. Some models have rotating handles that roll inward as your fingers close over the handles to bring the blades together. This reduces stress from repetitive squeezing action. Another option is an angled cutting head with a slanted blade that allows a straight line extension of the arm, meaning that you're working from a neutral position. Top quality forged steel blades stay sharp longer and resist warping. Non stick coating on the blades helps make cuts easier as the blades stay cleaner resisting sap build-up. Some brands have replaceable parts such as springs and blades. Replacing the damaged part is more cost effective than replacing the whole pruner.

A tool that fits your hand well is also important. When you are holding the pruners fully open in the palm of your hand you should still have control of both handles. Check if you can reach the clasp and lock the pruners with one hand. If not, using them will cause too much strain to your joints. A smaller model is necessary.

A good selection of hand-held pruners is available at Unique Garden Centre.

## How to Prune a Hedge

A hedge should always be wider at the base than at the top no matter what kind of shrubs form the hedge. This is so the top will not shade the sides and sunlight will reach the hedge from top to bottom.

To revitalize and increase the size and density of a hedge, prune in early spring before bud break. Cut branches back by no more than one quarter of their length. Let it grow for about six weeks, then shape to establish the wider base and narrower top form. Give the hedge another light shaping before August 15..

To reduce the size of the hedge, cut back all of the new growth and some of the older wood in late spring or early summer. Keep the shape narrow at the top and broad at the base as you work. Older stems and branches on vigorous shrubs such as cotoneaster, alpine currant or spirea can be pruned up to one half their lengths. Slower growing coniferous shrubs should be reduced by no more than one quarter of their length. Wait until early summer to begin shaping the hedge again. It will likely take more than one season for the hedge to re-grow into the desired shape.

Once the preferred shape and size is attained, maintenance pruning in late spring should be limited to removing dead twigs and branches and minimal shaping to maintain form with another light trim before August 15.

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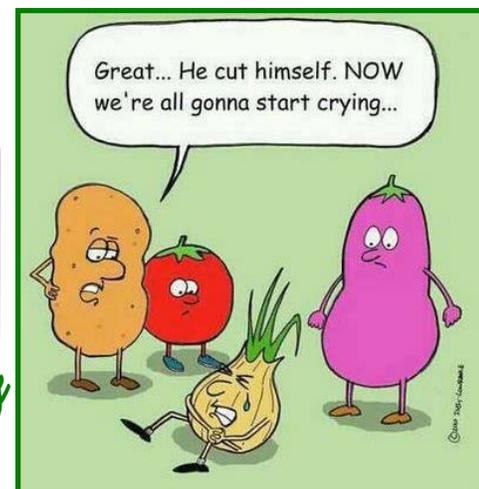
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If space allows, plant a cutting garden, dedicated to growing flowers for the house and to give away. If you focus on annuals for this you will have a clean slate every year and the opportunity to try many different plants.

It doesn't take too much room to grow ample flowers as long as you choose the right plants and organize the space. Even a bed 10' x 5' in area will produce quite a few blooms.

Most flowering annuals require full sun to grow straight strong stems and produce plentiful blooms. A well-drained, nutrient-rich soil is necessary. Arrange the bed so it is in an area that can be easily amended with compost every spring or fall. Make sure the garden hose will reach the area. Soil in raised beds warms up more quickly in spring.

Concentrate on a few combinations of color each year to avoid clashing hues by the end of the season. This is prettier in the garden, and also makes designing floral arrangements easy. Next year you can enjoy different flowers.

Plant in short rows to make it easy to weed and water. Site taller plants on the north side of the bed so they don't shade smaller ones. Stake tall flowers as soon as plants are 6" tall. As they grow, tie them to the stakes farther up. Bushier plants may need 2-3 sturdy stakes or use tomato cages. Young plants should be fed with a dose of transplanter solution when they are moved into a bed. Fertilize direct sown seedlings when they are about 4" tall. Give everything another shot of fertilizer midway through the season. Soaker hoses laid on top of the soil are a great way to water the plants because they deliver the water to the roots. Weeding will be a weekly chore unless you mulch the area but young small weeds are easy to remove from well-cultivated soil. If using mulch, be careful it is not piled against plant stems where it could induce diseases and rot.

Cut stems in early morning before the heat of the day. Take a bucket of cool water along to immerse the stems as you pick. Cut to just above a side branch. It will grow and produce flowers in a few days. Re-cut stems just before arranging in a vase filled with water and floral food. Remove leaves from the portion of the stem that will be in the water. Use clean vases and change the water every few days. Place your arrangement out of direct sunlight. Branches, ornamental grasses and vines and berries are a great addition to a bouquet.

Zinnias and dahlias are great as cut flowers. Other annuals that work well are African marigolds, ageratum, bachelor button, calendula, celosia, China aster, cleome, nasturtium, cosmos, globe amaranth, gloriosa daisies, love-lies-bleeding, salvia, snapdragons, strawflowers, sweetpeas and sunflowers. Calla lilies and gladioli work well too.

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