

Summer 2008

From the Ground Up ↑



“Flowers seem intended for the solace
Of ordinary humanity.”

—Philosopher John Ruskin



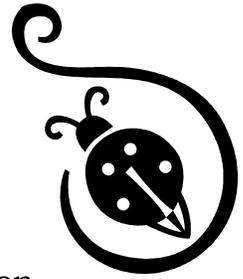
PERENNIALS FOR LONG SEASON INTEREST...

You might be feeling overwhelmed these days by the enormous selection of perennials, and it can be a challenge to choose the best for your particular design. Arming yourself with one of the many excellent Prairie related reference books is a good place to start: *Perennial Favourites* by Lois Hole, *Perennials for the Prairies* by E.W. Toop & S. Williams, *101 Best Plants For The Prairies* by L Leatherbarrow & L Reynolds. Late July and August is the right time to make notes of those perennials that still look good in your own yard, in the neighbourhood, in public parks & on garden tours. These are excellent candidates for the backbone choices amongst your perennials. Very few perennials will bloom all season, so the out-of-bloom foliage effect really is as important as attractive flowers. Here is a starting list of perennials with long season interest: Moonshine Yarrow, Brunette Bugbane, Magnus Coneflower, Goblin Gaillardia, Patriot Hosta, Stella de Oro Daylily, Purple Palace Coral Bells, Dropmore Blue Catmint, Goldstrum Rudbeckia, Angelina or Matrona or Autumn Joy Sedum, May Night Salvia, Royal Candles Veronica, & King of Hearts Dwarf Bleeding Heart.





GROWING NATIVE PLANTS...



Whether you want your garden to be a shady woodland retreat, a sunny meadow of swaying grasses and wildflowers, or a calming pond, the principles of native plant gardening are the same. The key is that your source of inspiration for the garden is nature: you're working with her, using plants that would grow naturally in your area, recycling nutrients in the soil by composting, conserving moisture by mulching, grouping plants with similar needs together, and using a wide variety of species. For those gardeners wishing to try using more native plants here is a short list of items with good availability ...



Trees & Shrubs: Green Ash, Trembling Aspen, Pincherry, Bur Oak, Silver Buffaloberry, Saskatoon, Red Osier Dogwood, Beaked Hazelnut, Spreading Juniper (*J. horizontalis*), & Snowberry.



Perennials: Prairie Crocus (*Anemone patens*), Pussy Toes (*Antennaria*), Blanketflower (*Gaillardia aristata*), Blue Flax (*Linum perenne*), Little Bluestem Grass (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), Heavy Metal Switch Grass (*Panicum virgatum*), Black Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), Goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*) & Yellow Prairie Coneflower (*Ratiba columnifera*).

Quick Fact: Composting

Compost is one of nature's best mulches and soil amendments, and is a popular alternative to commercial fertilizers. Best of all, compost is cheap and environmentally friendly (by composting we cut down on pollution and waste). You can make it without spending a cent, since it usually consists of old leaves, grass trimmings, and household scraps. Using compost improves soil structure, texture, and aeration and increases the soil's water-holding capacity. Compost loosens clay soils and helps sandy soils retain water. Adding compost improves soil fertility and stimulates healthy root development in plants.



Need More Facts? Visit <http://www.compostguide.com/>



Spotlight On

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



Scabiosa 'Butterfly Blue' *Blue Pinchusion Flower*

Chosen 2000 Perennial of the Year.

It's a popular perennial that features narrow leaves, soft blue flowers on narrow stems and continuous blooms throughout the summer. Makes a splendid accent flower in the garden and attracts butterflies. Scabiosa love full sunlight and grow to 1.5' tall and 1.5' wide. The plant is classified as a zone 4 perennial but if well established it has no problem returning the following year.

Gold Coast Juniper *Juniperus chinensis 'Aurea'*

A must have in any shrub garden, for it's beautiful golden colour and graceful branching. It's a moderate growing shrub that stays fairly compact. The golden foliage stays throughout the entire year and deepens in the winter. It makes for an interesting showpiece and can't be missed. The Gold Coast grows about 2' tall and 5' wide. It prefers a spot with full sun to partial shade. Best of all it's zoned for area 3.



Manchurian Ash 'Mancana' *Fraxinus mandshurica*

This particular ash tree makes an excellent feature tree. It has a dense and compact growth habit, it grows anywhere between 40 and 50 feet tall and 30 to 45 feet wide. It features darker foliage than most ash trees and attractive lance shaped leaves. The Mancana grows at a medium growth rate preferring full sun in an open area and tolerates an average to moist soil condition. It has a long lifespan and is hardy to zone 3.





PESTICIDE PHYTOTOXICITY

Phytotoxicity is plant damage that is caused by the application of pesticides. Damage can occur in several ways:

1. Plant 'burn'- may appear at the tips or leaf edges as spots, or the entire leaf may be burned.
2. Chlorosis- tip or edge yellowing or bleached, or general yellowing of the entire leaf.
3. Abnormal growth- excessive growth, or stunting or distortion or reduction in the number of flowers, fruits or leaves.

New growth is more likely to show spray damage, although any part of the plant may be affected. Chemicals used in the soil are more likely to show damage on old leaves.

Here are some guidelines to help reduce phytotoxicity:

1. Don't apply pesticides to stressed plants, especially those drought or wind stressed. Don't spray when sunny and/or over 25C.
2. Always mix or use pesticides as the label recommends.
3. Never mix different products together unless the labels state it is safe to do so.
4. Use different sprayers for herbicides and pesticides.



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