

GARDENWORKS™

# GARDENNOTES™

Issue #65 • Early Spring 2004 • An Information Newsletter For Valued Customers

## In this Issue...

spring soil preparation  
trees for small gardens  
miniature conifers  
tillandsias  
new perennials  
and more!

## Anticipating Spring

Early morning songbirds and March blossoms build our anticipation of spring, as empty pots beckon and the garden entreats us to renew our affections!



We have everything to make your garden work.  
We take pride in the quality plants and products we sell.  
GARDENWORKS guarantees success in your garden.

• visit us online at [www.gardenworks.ca](http://www.gardenworks.ca) •



# Dear Gardeners

A LETTER FROM JOHN

## Planning

Another new year is upon us and by now, many of those well-intentioned resolutions have been broken or ignored. The new gardening year hasn't yet begun, so we can still make some resolutions to improve the bounty or

beauty of our gardens this summer. It all starts with planning, the focus of this edition of our newsletter. More than anything, a great garden requires a great foundation!

Once again, we cannot stress too much the importance of two key practices in the garden:

- **A healthy soil with lots of organic matter provides the base for plant health despite the weather or pests.**
- **Always select the right plant for the right place.**

You will find a number of tips on these important points in the newsletter articles, and if you visit our website – [www.gardenworks.ca](http://www.gardenworks.ca) – you will find a schedule of garden planning and preparation clinics that are being held in many of our stores in early March. Our website also lists other in-store clinics as well as community events of interest to local gardeners.

Two garden trends will continue in our stores this spring season. You will once again see a wide selection of new cultivars – both annuals and perennials – that local growers have been able to bring to our market. Let us know if there are plants that you have read about and are interested in obtaining, as it sometimes takes a while to locate the “hot” new plants. Secondly, with continuing concern over the use of cosmetic yard and garden care products, you will find a greater selection of natural and organic products. You will also find that our staff have an increased sense of understanding and proper use of these products to ensure their effectiveness.

**Good luck in your garden** and we hope to see you in our stores very soon!

John Zaplatynsky,  
President, GARDENWORKS



## Spring Garden Planning Event

We Make

Garden Preparation  
as Easy as... **123**

**MARCH 13 - 14**

In every store we're ready for spring – beautiful spring blooming plants, garden preparation supplies and lots of friendly knowledgeable advice from our staff, our suppliers and local garden clubs. Check our website for details.



### GARDENWORKS Privacy Policy

At GARDENWORKS we respect all our customers and their privacy. We want to assure our newsletter subscribers that we do not allow other companies or organizations access to our mailing list and will not do this in the future.

We have added to our mailing list in some of our stores, through our point of sale system, and this information is also maintained in a confidential manner.

New privacy legislation requires that we obtain your permission to maintain these lists and determine whether or not you would like to receive information from GARDENWORKS on an ongoing basis. You will be asked to confirm this information in the very near future.

For further information please contact me at [jzaplatynsky@gardenworks.ca](mailto:jzaplatynsky@gardenworks.ca)  
John



## Early Spring Garden Agenda

By **Debbie Hamilton**, **GARDENWORKS** Burnaby

a good time to take the blades into your local hardware store and get them sharpened. If you need new gardening tools, be sure to visit one of our nine **GARDENWORKS** locations. **We have a great selection of tools for your garden projects.** Remember that the garden will look better and your work will be easier if you have well-maintained tools to do the job.

Now you need a plan. In order to train for the 10K I have a schedule that I follow. Although gardening need not be this rigid, it is always good to have a plan and follow it a little at a time so that it doesn't seem like such a chore. Remember that any time you can get outside and enjoy the fresh air the job that needs to be done will seem effortless.

**Raking leaves would be high on my priority list.** If they are in garden beds, you can chop them up with your hoe or spade and dig them into the soil – they make great compost. Make sure to rake them up off the lawn. A dense covering of decaying leaves can leave yellow spots on the lawn as well as be a host for disease and insects.

**Weed, weed, weed.** Get out there and weed your garden beds. Getting a head start on the weeds can be a lifesaver later on. At this time of the year the soil is moist, which makes pulling weeds easy and effortless. You can use fancy tools to weed (and they are terrific, especially if you have back problems or other muscle injuries) and occasionally it is necessary to use chemicals, but if you are able, pulling weeds by hand, in my opinion, is always most effective.

Now that your tools are all clean and sharpened, take a look at some of your trees and shrubs. At this time of year **prune out any dead, damaged or diseased branches.** Prune roses between the end of February and early March.

**Don't forget about the compost bin.** This

**By the time you read this issue of the Garden Agenda, I will be halfway into my training for a 10K run. That's right – a 10K run! I can hardly believe it myself! One of my New Year's resolutions was to get into better shape by eating better, exercising more and giving myself a challenge by proving that I can do something I have never done before. And you're thinking, well that's great, but what does this have to do with gardening? Everything!**

When I started running last summer I realized quickly that you need proper gear, such as wicking shirts, shorts, socks and most importantly proper running shoes. In the garden **it's very important to make sure that all your tools are in proper working order.** Check out your shovels, spades, half moons, hoes and rakes. Scrub off all the dirt and rust (an S.O.S pad works great for this). Wash them down and rub a bit of motor oil on them to prevent rusting. Check out your hand pruners, loppers, pruning saws and electric shears. **Clean all the dirt and rust off but most importantly, check to make sure the blades are sharp.** There is nothing worse than trying to cut branches with a dull blade. It is not only bad for the plant but dangerous to you as well.

Speaking of blades, don't forget to check out your lawn mower. Now is

## Garden Agenda Continued

is the time of year I take all the compost I have made for the year and distribute it over the garden beds. Just dig it in alongside your perennials or shrubs. It will improve the soil structure as well as add nutrients that may have been depleted throughout the winter months. **Wash out the compost bin thoroughly with the hose** and then you are ready to start composting again. For more information on preparing the soil for spring, check out Dr. Alan Reid's article "Spring Soil Preparation."

One of the most important things – and one that I have become passionate about since I started running — is good nutrition. A body cannot maintain and endure strenuous physical activity if it is not properly taken care of. Even if I wasn't training for a run, one of the keys to living a long, healthy life is giving your body the proper nutrition it needs. The principle is the same with your garden.

If you are starting a new lawn you will need to use **GARDENWORKS** Turf Starter fertilizer 15-30-10 to help promote a healthy root system. Or if your lawn is already established, apply a slow-release fertilizer, such as **GARDENWORKS** Premium 14-4-8 Lawn Food, to encourage lush, green growth as well as a healthy root system. **The key to a healthy root system is proper feeding and watering.** A healthy root system, whether it is a lawn or a plant, will endure drought, varying temperatures, and disease and insect damage much better than a weak plant.

**Don't forget to apply dolomite lime to your lawn a week prior to fertilizing if you have a moss problem.** Lime helps to counteract acidic soil, raising the pH of your soil so that plants like grass are happy and plants like moss are not. Lime will also increase the efficiency of the fertilizers you apply.

**If you are creating a new vegetable bed or a new garden bed, it is always a good idea to add some **GARDENWORKS** Bone Meal into the soil.** This adds phosphorus which aids in the development of healthy plant roots. Our **GARDENWORKS** stores have a good selection of fertilizers to meet all the nutritional needs of your plants.

Lastly, the thing I love best about both running and gardening is that they get me outside. They are good for body, mind and soul. If you follow these tips to get your garden started for spring, you will be well on your way to finishing ahead of the game and starting on a brand new garden. See you at the finish line, and have a great time in your garden!



## Customer Appreciation Days

On the third Thursday of each month we hold a Customer Appreciation Day, offering 15% off everything in the store (excluding Dept. 56 Collectibles).

Upcoming Customer Appreciation dates include **March 18**, and **April 15**.

## GARDENWORKS March Clinics

Due to limited space our complete listing of clinics, hands-on workshops and children's workshops will be posted on our website. For details on the clinics below or other clinics not listed here, pick up a listing from your local **GARDENWORKS** store or visit us at [www.gardenworks.ca](http://www.gardenworks.ca).

### BLINKINSOP

Sunday, March 7, at 11 a.m.

- **Crash Course on Care & Pruning of Roses**

Saturday, March 13, at 11 a.m.

- **Pruning Fruit Trees and Small Fruits**

Saturday, March 20, at 11 a.m.

- **Perennials**

Saturday, March 27, at 11 a.m.

- **How to Attract Mason Bees to Your Garden & Keep Them There!**

### MISSION

Saturday, March 6, at 2 p.m.

- **Starting Seeds Indoors**

Saturday, March 13, at 11 a.m.

- **The Gentle Pollinators - Mason Bees**

Sunday, March 14, at 2 p.m.

- **The Manageable Lawn**

Saturday, March 20, at 11 a.m.

- **Perennial Favourites**

Sunday, March 21, at 2 p.m.

- **Spring Ahead - Vegetable gardening made easy**

Saturday, March 27, at 11 a.m.

- **Spring Containers - Perennial plants**

### OCEAN PARK

Sunday, March 7, at 1 p.m.

- **Pruning Trees & Shrubs**

Saturday, March 13

- 11 a.m. • **Spring Lawn Care**

- 1 p.m. • **Garden Design**

Sunday, March 14

- 1 p.m. • **Preparing Your Vegetable Garden**

- 3 p.m. • **Rose Care & Pruning**

Saturday, March 20, at 1 p.m.

- **What's New in Perennials**

# Spring Soil Preparation

**No matter how well you plan or how good the quality of your plants are, you will not succeed without a good foundation and a good home for roots: a well-prepared soil.**

**It is important to become familiar with the texture of your soil**, which is established by the amounts of clay, silt or sand particles that exist in the soil. Clay is on one end of the spectrum. It can hold water and nutrients sufficiently, but it's tough for the roots to grow through.

**The ideal soil for gardening is loam**, which has the best proportions of silt, clay and sand. If you squeeze it lightly, it should hold its shape. **Most plants prefer neutral soil**, which allows plants to successfully draw nutrients from the soil. Acidic soil is more common in areas with heavy rainfall like the Pacific Northwest. Alkaline soil is more common in drier areas. If your soil is only slightly alkaline, it will still be productive for many common plants.

**Most soil will benefit from additives**, which can improve drainage, retain moisture, provide aeration, and supply organic matter. Organic matter, the decaying of once living plants and animals, is fundamental to the fertility of your soil. **The goal is to create a balanced soil that allows easy penetration by roots, air and water.**

To break up heavy soils, Keefer's West Coast Energizer or Growell Soil Plus contains a unique blend of composted mushroom manure, peat moss, kelp and bonemeal. This well-balanced combination enhances the bacterial action in heavy soil and loosens the soil to allow air, water

and root penetration. You may want to add a small amount of fir bark as well, if the area is really heavy. For soils that need moderate conditioning, we recommend using 1/3 soil amendment to 2/3 native soils. To provide a boost to existing beds, apply a 2-inch (5-cm) layer of amendment and cultivate to about 6 inches (15 cm).

These amendments improve aeration and drainage by acting as wedges between particles and particle aggregates. In sandy soil, they help hold the water and nutrients. **When organic matter decomposes, nutrients are released, adding to the fertility of the soil.** The nitrogen that is released is converted to a form readily available for plant growth.

To further enrich your soil, we carry **GARDENWORKS** Mushroom or Steer Manure, Top Soil, Planter Box Mixes, Sea Soil, Bell's Soil Booster, Sunshine Peat Moss, lime and other quality soil amendment products.

**Think of feeding your soil rather than adding more.** A healthy soil is like yoghurt – it will contain a rich blend of micro-organisms, mineral and vegetable matter that provides a solid basis for a great season.

**For specific soil-related questions or concerns, please contact the gardening experts at GARDENWORKS.** We have great advice and carry an abundance of soil products to help you have success in your garden.

By: Dr. Alan Reid, Garden Supplies Manager, GARDENWORKS Burnaby



## Tending Tillandsias

By Joanne E. Betzler, C.H.T.  
GARDENWORKS Burnaby

tubular (mainly violet blue with some specimens having pink, white or yellow) and are often highly scented.

Fresh air, good light and lots of humidity are key ingredients. Good air movement is essential to replicate the cool humidity of an open rain forest and your tillandsia will enjoy the fresh outdoor air in warm spring and summer days, but be sure to bring it inside before cool autumn weather sets in. Adequate water is critical in order for tillandsia to thrive indoors. Misting is beneficial, but totally submerging the plant for a few hours or overnight about once every two weeks will make up for any shortfall in moisture due to low humidity.

Spring and summer are good seasons to fertilize as well. Nitrogen is important to tillandsias and a weak solution (1/4 strength) of GARDENWORKS 30-10-10 every time you mist will work; failing that, biannual submerging of the entire plant in a full-strength solution will do the trick. Strong natural light in an east, west, or south exposure or a grow light placed 6 – 12 inches (15 – 30 cm) overhead will provide the light critical to success of your tillandsia.

You will find tillandsias mounted on assorted material, such as rocks, wood, or pottery, or you can purchase them loose to place as you wish in your home. Keep in mind, if you choose to create your own bit of botanical art, use low-temperature hot glue and daub it on the mounting base before attaching the tillandsia in order to reduce the heat applied directly to the plant.

Growing a tillandsia at home is not intimidating and is well worth the little bit of effort required.

**Fascinating and intriguing are apt descriptions of the robust little air plant, *Tillandsia*.** An epiphyte or tree dweller by nature, it exists solely on moisture and nutrients available in the air and uses its wiry roots only to cling to its host. Of the bromeliad family and native throughout Central and South America, these tough specimens ranges in size from Spanish moss at 1 – 1 ½ inches (3 – 4 cm) to *T. grandis*, over 16 feet (5 meters) in bloom.

Several varieties have been successfully adapted for domestic culture and can be found at GARDENWORKS year-round. Three of the most familiar are *T. flabellata*, *T. tenuifolia* and *T. ionantha*. Flowers are



## It's New, Unusual & Some Are Rare!

By Dion Litavniks, Nursery Manager, GARDENWORKS Blenkinsop

**How exciting to have a new line of plants available to the gardening community.** This year we will be carrying a selection of dwarf and miniature conifers. What could be better in this age of container gardening, trough gardens, rock gardens and the newest rage, railway gardens. The plants will be sold in 4-inch containers with a large, information-filled label. Some of the really rare varieties will be sold in gallon pots.

The conifers classed as dwarf grow from 1 to 6 inches (2.5 to 15 cm) per year, and

miniatures grow less than 1 inch (2.5 cm) per year. Just think, you can have a perfectly columnar, steel blue *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* 'Ellwood's Pillar' that when fully mature is only 4 feet (1.2 m) tall. You can have a complete conifer garden in a 2-foot (60 cm) container. You can put other interesting plants with them, like black mondo grass with a *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Gold Fern'. The grass will form a striking evergreen black mound with the ferny gold foliage of the conifer. An added bonus is that it will thrive in shade, and the foliage gets a blue tinge in the winter. Plant some crocus or other small bulbs, maybe add a trailing plant like *Selaginella*, and finish up with a small concrete Buddha.

When planting these tiny treasures, you must ensure they have well-drained soil. So use a planter box mix with at least 25% more perlite added. Remember, when growing permanent plants in a container they need lots of organic nutrients available to them for the coming years. Using compost, composted manure or sea soil in the mix will ensure success. Don't forget the bonemeal for healthy root growth.

The plants should be in stock by mid-March, but phone ahead and we can give you a call when they arrive. Here at the Blenkinsop store we're going to have a fairly extensive selection, so I hope to see you this spring.



x *Heucherella* 'Sunspot'

## Heucheraholic?

The last couple of years it has become increasingly popular to collect a single group or genus of plants.

Fuchsias, geraniums, hostas and daylilies have long been favourites for collecting, but I have somehow, quite unwittingly (but perhaps not unwillingly), become a collector of fancy-leaved *Heuchera*, (cousins of the old-fashioned coral-bells) as well as of the closely related *Heucherella* (hybrids of *Heuchera* and *Tiarella*). Breeders have been introducing nifty cultivars of this hardy perennial for the last 5 years, and just when I was ready to say “enough is enough” a new wave of selections have been introduced that are unique – I guess I am hooked! Here are 3 of the outstanding new cultivars to watch for this year:

***Heuchera* 'Obsidian'** – most *Heuchera* are grown primarily for their foliage. This one has shiny, deep black leaves that contrast exceptionally well with plants with golden foliage.

**x *Heucherella* 'Sunspot'** – This should look great planted in combination with 'Obsidian', as it features bright golden foliage with a splash of scarlet in the centre of each leaf. 'Sunspot' also produces dainty pink blossoms in May and June.

***Heuchera* 'Lime Rickey'** – the leaves are lime green and ruffled, with a slightly frosted appearance. 'Lime Rickey' would be a fabulous addition to a “green only” (dare I say monochromatic?) garden planted along with a selection of ferns and hostas.

For more images and information on growing *Heuchera* and *Heucherella*, visit our website at [www.gardenworks.ca](http://www.gardenworks.ca)



*Acer shirasawanum* 'Autumn Moon'

## Trees for Small Gardens

Our West Coast landscape has its fair share of trees, including towering evergreens and majestic deciduous trees, which seem to fuel our desire to plant trees closer to home, in our own yards. Choosing a tree that is appropriate can be a bit of a challenge, as many homes do not have room for the large trees most often planted in parks and other public landscapes.

Our nursery experts got together to create a “Top Ten” list of trees ideal for small gardens. We agreed that an ideal tree should grow no more than about 25 feet (8 m) high, with a spread no more than 12 to 15 feet (4 to 5 m), and be pest and disease resistant. We recognized the value of blossoms, showy fall foliage colours and an attractive winter silhouette. Seems like a “tall” order, but there are so many lovely trees that our most difficult task was to agree on a “short” list of trees!

- 1. *Stewartia pseudocamellia*** (Japanese stewartia) A moderate growth rate, summer blossoms, great fall colour, and interesting bark patterns make it a fabulous choice!
- 2. *Styrax japonicum*** (Japanese snowbell) Slow growing, with lovely, white, bell-shaped blossoms appearing in June. Fall colours are yellow or red.
- 3. *Magnolia grandiflora* 'Little Gem'** (Little Gem evergreen magnolia) The sweetly fragrant summer blossoms on this broad-leaved evergreen tree are exquisite!
- 4. *Acer circinatum*** (vine maple) The perfect choice for a shady spot, or as part of a “native” garden planting. Fall colour can be magnificent.
- 5. *Acer* species and hybrids** (Japanese maples) It is nearly impossible to recommend just one cultivar. Pest resistant, with superb fall colours, there are so many to choose from!
- 6. *Cornus kousa*** (kousa dogwood) Our nursery staff recommend several cultivars, including 'Satomi' and 'Wolf Eyes'.
- 7. *Magnolia* species and hybrids** (flowering magnolias) The best varieties are those that are trained to a single trunk, with room below the canopy. 'Galaxy', *M. sieboldii* and 'Yellow Bird' are among our favourites.
- 8. *Trachycarpus fortunei*** (windmill palm) A hardy palm that thrives on the coast. Create a tropical feel in your garden, around your hot tub or on the patio.
- 9. *Acer griseum*** (paperbark maple) Brilliant red fall colour and attractive peeling bark are among its highlights.
- 10. *Acer platanoides* 'Crimson Sentry'** (Crimson Sentry maple) An excellent Norway maple cultivar with a narrow, dense canopy. Leaves are deep purple all season.

For more detailed information on trees for small gardens, refer to our website at [www.gardenworks.ca](http://www.gardenworks.ca).

These two articles by Scott Pearce, GARDENWORKS Merchandise Manager

# Community Events

Due to limited space we are not able to publish the full listing of events. For a detailed listing, pick up a copy at your local GARDENWORKS, or visit our website at [www.gardenworks.ca](http://www.gardenworks.ca). The full listing is posted on our home page under the GARDENNEWS column.

## Mainland

### North Shore Flower & Garden Show

600 Queens Road, North Vancouver. Guest speakers include Roy Jonsson, Roberta Ward (GARDENWORKS Capilano), Barb Lunter and Rob Welsh (Capilano College – Horticulture).

- Saturday, March 27, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Sunday, March 28, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Plant Sale & Flower Show** Peace Arch Rhododendron Society. At Elgin Hall, 14250 Crescent Road, Surrey. Offering many unique species & hybrids, perennials, fuchsia, kalmias, rhododendrons and azaleas.

For information, call 604-541-6330.

- Saturday, April 3, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Spring Garden Show** The White Rock and District Garden Club. At Semiamoo Mall, 152<sup>nd</sup> Street & 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue. For information call Agnes at 604-531-1847.

- Saturday, April 17, during store hours

### Pacific Northwest Plant Sale

UBC Botanical Garden, 6804 Southwest Marine Drive, Vancouver. Native plants available. Speakers and demonstrations about native plants. Free tours of the garden's native plant section. For information visit [www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org](http://www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org) or call: 604-822-3928

- Saturday, April 17, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Primrose Show & Sale** B.C. Primula Group. At The Floral Hall, VanDusen Botanical Garden, 5257 Oak St., Vancouver.

- Saturday, April 10. *Sale 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., show noon to 5 p.m.*
- Sunday, April 11. *Show & sale 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.*

### UBC Botanical Garden's Annual

**Perennial Sale** At 6804 Southwest Marine Drive, Vancouver. For information call: 604-822-3928 or visit [www.ubc.botanicalgarden.org](http://www.ubc.botanicalgarden.org).

- Sunday, May 9, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

## Island

### Annual Spring Flower Show

The Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society. At Cadboro Bay United Church Hall, 2625 Arbutus Road. Admission is by donation.

- Friday, April 16, 1 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- Saturday, April 17, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Plant sale on April 17 at 11 a.m.

It's free to place your gardening event in our listing. Send us the information by fax (604-299-4403) or e-mail ([editor@gardenworks.ca](mailto:editor@gardenworks.ca)). We announce the events we feel most widely interest our readers. Deadline dates are January 5 for March edition, March 1 for April edition, May 1 for June edition and August 1 for September edition.



## GARDENWORKS Nine great locations serving you in B.C.

### BURNABY - HEAD OFFICE

6250 Lougheed Highway  
Burnaby V5B 2Z9  
(604)299-0621

### MISSION

32270 Lougheed Highway  
Mission V2V 1A4  
(604)826-9112

### SOUTH SURREY OCEAN PARK

2124 - 128th Street  
Surrey V4A 3V6  
(604)535-8853

### SAANICH

4290 Blenkinsop Road  
Victoria V8X 2C4  
(250)721-2140

### OAK BAY

1916 Oak Bay Avenue  
Victoria V8R 1C7  
(250)595-4200

### COLWOOD

1859 Island Highway  
Colwood V8B 1J3  
(250)478-2078

### NORTH VANCOUVER EDGEMONT

3147 Woodbine Drive  
North Vancouver V7R 2S3  
(604)980-6340

### NORTH VANCOUVER CAPILANO


705 West 3rd Street  
North Vancouver V7M 3E3  
(604)988-8082

### VANCOUVER

8697 Granville Street  
Vancouver V6P 5A3  
(604)266-9313

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