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Northwest Native Plant Journal

A Monthly Web Magazine

Pay it forward!

Taking cuttings, collecting seeds,
and other acts of random kindness

Published by Wallace W Hansen Northwest Native Plant Nursery & Gardens

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As holiday time draws
nigh, we offer some sug-
gestions for a different
viewpoint than the 'tradi-
tional' shopping and
spending and competing
with neighbors for the
flashiest decorations.

About this Journal

This Journal was created under the direction of Wally Hansen – a dedicated Grower, Aficionado and Passionate Lover of Northwest Native Plants.

This Journal is not 'commercial.' Our goals are:

- A —** To generate interest, even passion, concerning the magnificent Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest.
- B —** To help you create your own Native Plant Gardens, large or small, for home or work.
- C —** To help you propagate and “grow on” those species that interest you the most.
- D —** To inform both Home Gardeners and interested Professionals of many disciplines concerning trends and news items from my little corner of the world.
- E —** To help the reader enjoy native plants more by understanding the historical and cultural role of native plants (i.e.–use by Native Americans, Pioneers, Early Botanists, etc.).

Western Wallflower
Photo by JoAnn Onstott



Writers wanted: If you have expertise for any species of Northwest plants and wish to write an article for pay for publication in this Journal, please contact Wally via e-mail at nwplants@gmail.com Some articles (and pics) might deal with propagation, culture, diseases, restoration, reclamation, fertilizers, etc.



On the Cover

Vine Maple (*Acer circinatum*)

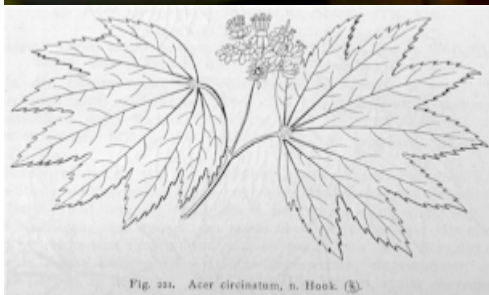


Photo by JoAnn Onstott

A beautiful small deciduous tree, essential for native gardens. In the wild, it is found as an under story plant to tall evergreens, from southern BC to northern California and east to the Cascades. Vine Maple is hardy in USDA zones 7-8.

This elegant tree grows quickly to 10-15' with multiple trunks and spreads to 20' widths, much like a vine.

Brilliant red and orange colors signal the arrival of autumn, while showy white flowers appear in early spring.

Every bit as decorative as Japanese maples, these trees have an added bonus of providing local wildlife with food.

Vine maples like moisture but will tolerate summer drought once established. They will not thrive in intense heat.



To Do List

Caring for your NW Native Plant Garden

Finish Fall Cleanup

Leaves and branches and other plant droppings are nearing the end of their autumn cycle. Leaves are wonderful mulch, especially if they are small. Branches can be used as kindling if you have a fireplace. Cones and other types of seeds might be decorative in the landscape. An overall philosophy: Keep after wayward pieces that have come to visit your yard. Accept those that you like, remove those you do not.

New Idea for a small area of your yard: A Meditation Room

Fall gardening need not be all work. It is an excellent time to make some design changes. When the branches are bare, it's a perfect opportunity to design and create a small quiet space in the yard for escaping the chores, taking a short break or just being in the garden. Here's how:

Trim out any greenery that is imposing on your new room but leave enough so you have a private spot.

Find something to sit on--maybe a bench, maybe a twig chair, maybe some big rocks--something natural and comfortable on which to park yourself. (Note: This is not the place for a fancy bench painted white and decorated with flowers and bees and butterflies! Compose a space or two or more where you can place items that give your heart a tug or bring a peaceful mind.

Wind chimes that play a small tune when breezes blow through bring musical sounds of whimsy that blend well with those of nature--bird song, leaves rustling. Tonal variety can be achieved with tinkling glass, strips of brass or pieces of bamboo, each has a distinctive sound that together create a small garden symphony.

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There are as many different styles of meditation gardens as there are meditating gardeners. What is important is to make it your own. A gate with an oval opening is very traditional in styles of the orient.

To Do List, continued

A small fountain can be within your grotto or on the path that approaches. You can rinse your hands or listen to the unique music of your rainfall. Pay attention to the sounds. Rearrange pieces if needed until you find the one that takes you to a forest glen.

Test the space. Stay a few minutes and see how you feel. Add or remove objects one at a time until you find the space that is purely yours.



Circular shapes are often used in gardens of serenity. A half moon gate intrigues good energy to come inside and visit the garden. An area of smooth pebbles raked into traditional forms such as circles follow the soft ripples in a quiet pond.

A tall urn nestled among shrubs and flowers can host a lotus plant, a fountain or simply still water for meditative reflection.



The circular fence around this garden gives gentle approach as one follows the path to the opening.



Mystery plant puzzle



This photo was sent to us by a friendlygardener who regularly reads our NW Native Plant Journals.

It was taken here in the Pacific Northwest in Portland, Oregon.

It may be native to the region, or it may have been imported to the area or it may be a hybridized species. Can you give us the correct botanical name?

Test your native plant knowledge--identify this northwest native tree. The reward is simple but very satisfying: You will be included in our list of Official Plant Detectives.

Send me an email
(NativePlantLady@nwplants.com)
with the correct botanical
name of this plant.

Good luck!

**P.S. Do you have a plant
you'd like to identify?
Email it to us and we'll
show it here on our
mystery plant puzzle
page.**

Official Plant Detectives*

Jerry Murray
Sabrina Kis
Carol Hiler
Mike Burns



Sparky's Corner

A special message from our frisky contributor



Hmmm....I have a mystery.

I went to sleep last night and it was autumn with sweetly scented bronzy oak leaves drifting down as the big old Garry Oak (*Quercus garryana*) where I made my nest gently dropped them from her branches.

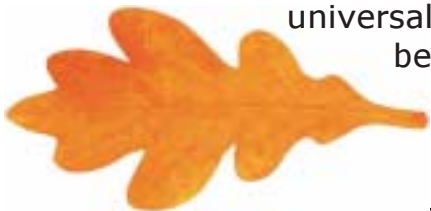
But now I'm awake and shivering! Brrrrr!!!! It is cold!

And I can't see right through the air anymore. I remember looking at the twinkling stars as I was drifting off and trying to figure out how they do that, the twinkling I mean.

Now I can't even see into the sky! I don't know if the stars are out or if the cold silver moon is still up and I'm positive the sun is gone for sure. If it were in the sky we could at least see beyond our oak's branches. This sky is what they call fog I think.

I just asked one of my pals who is sharing my nest if he could see the moon or the sun from the other side of the nest and guess what--we could see my breath right there in front of us!

We squirmed down into the nest a little deeper and practiced talking so we could see our breaths. I think we're making fog when we do that. Sort of little personal fogs. My mom over in the next oak tree says she cannot see our fogs so that's a good sign they are personal ones and not universal. She also said to pipe down or we'll wake up the whole neighborhood. Oops--sorry! I better move over beside my bud and talk more quietly. We can make whispering fogs!

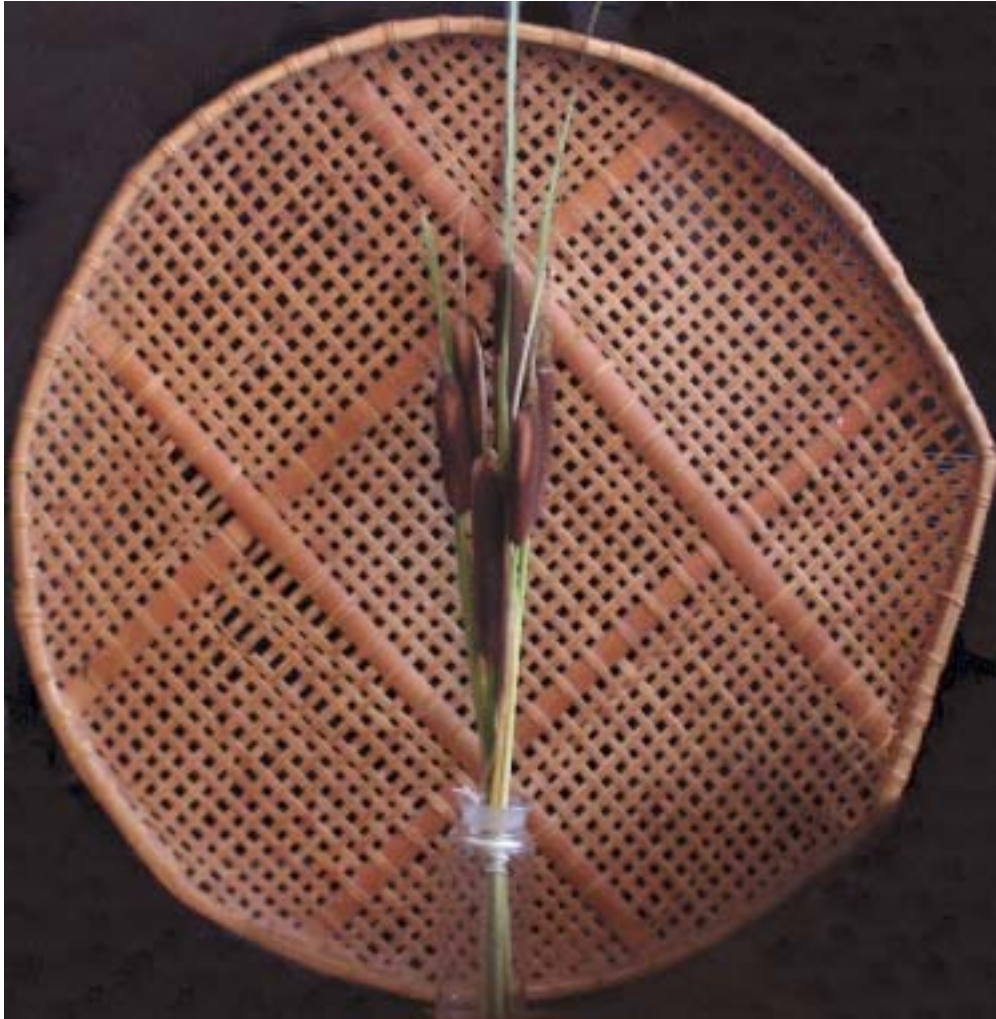


(Whisper fogs are fun! Try it--quietly!)

Your friend,
Sparky



Thanksgiving



A poem by Edgar Guest

Gettin' together to smile an' rejoice,
An' eatin' an' laughin' with folks of your choice;
An' kissin' the girls an' declarin' that they
Are growin' more beautiful day after day;
Chattin' an' braggin' a bit with the men,
Buildin' the old family circle again;
Livin' the wholesome an' old-fashioned cheer,
Just for awhile at the end of the year.

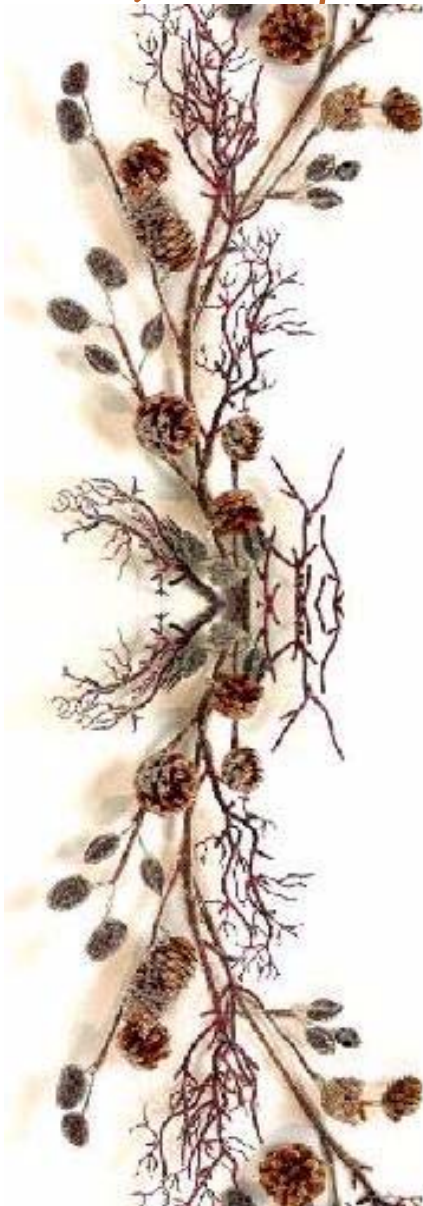
Greetings fly fast as we crowd through the door
And under the old roof we gather once more
Just as we did when the youngsters were small;
Mother's a little bit grayer, that's all.
Father's a little bit older, but still
Ready to romp an' to laugh with a will.
Here we are back at the table again
Tellin' our stories as women an' men.

Common Cattail
(*Typha latifolia*)
Photo by Jennifer Rehm

Cattails, sometimes thought of as a nuisance along lake margins, provide important habitat for many species of wildlife and birds. Redwing blackbirds and many ducks and geese nest in them, and some animals such as muskrats, eat them. Even upland songbirds will use fluff from the flowers to line their nests.

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Thanksgiving, continued



Bowed are our heads for a moment in prayer;
Oh, but we're grateful an' glad to be there.
Home from the east land an' home from the west,
Home with the folks that are dearest an' best.
Out of the sham of the cities afar
We've come for a time to be just what we are.
Here we can talk of ourselves an' be frank,
Forgettin' position an' station an' rank.

Give me the end of the year an' its fun
When most of the plannin' an' toilin' is done;
Bring all the wanderers home to the nest,
Let me sit down with the ones I love best,
Hear the old voices still ringin' with song,
See the old faces unblemished by wrong,
See the old table with all of its chairs
An' I'll put soul in my Thanksgivin' prayers.

Edgar Guest



Edgar Guest was born in Birmingham, England, on August 20, 1881, to Edwin and Julia Wayne Guest.

From 1931 to 1942, Guest broadcast a weekly program on NBC radio. In 1951, "A Guest in Your Home" appeared on NBC TV.

Guest has been called "the poet of the people." He considered himself "a newspaper man who wrote verses."

Of his poem he said, "I take simple everyday things that happen to me and I figure it happens to a lot of other people and I make simple rhymes out of them." Edgar Guest died on August 5, 1959.



Paying it forward

A life lesson learned from a movie

The movie, Pay it Forward, was released in 2000. starring Kevin Spacey, Helen Hunt and Haley Joel Osment. The movie carried this tag line:

Like some other kids, 12-year-old Trevor McKinney believed in the goodness of human nature. Like many other kids, he was determined to change the world for the better. Unlike most other kids, he succeeded.

The movie ranked well by viewers and carried a PG-13 advisory. But the message this film gave loud and clear is simple: Positive actions don't begin and end--they spread and grow across any and all barriers and even the smallest act can have gigantic effects.

The holiday season in our country and in many others it begins with a day set aside to gather with friends and family to share a meal and to consider the ways we have been blessed. I think that, at some point during Thanksgiving day as we have a cuppa or take a break to catch some fresh air, we should meander through our garden and about the yard and appreciate all the plants who live there. We could take note of which perennial plants could be divided, which shrubs and trees could benefit from a harvest of cuttings, and also note which seem to be persnickety about cuttings and might be good candidates to try air layering.

The next day or the next, instead of rising before dawn and wading into the throng of bargain seekers, we could pull on our wellies, line our wheel barrow with a small tarp and collect the tools--a shovel, a planting fork, a long sharp butcher knife, some clippers, a bucket and some empty flower pots. Thus prepared, we move forth on our quest for plants to share with friends and neighbors.



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Paying it forward, continued

Put the divisions on the tarp in the barrow, put the cuttings in the bucket and wheel over to a potting bench or table or patio, wherever you do your garden work. This is a good time to take a break if you've a mind to rest. Go indoors for a few minutes, take another inventory of the yard or grab something to mark the plantings with.

Back at the workbench once more, pot up the divided perennials, prepare a propagation flat and dip the stem of cuttings in some rooting hormone and slip them in the flat, give all a gentle watering and then devise a shelter to protect the babies while they are growing their roots and learning to live in their temporary quarters.

Visit them every day to see if they're in need of water or looking the worse for wear from too much nature or have been sat on by the neighbors cat. You must care for the nursery you've created while the newborn plants are becoming established.

When it comes time for the giving of gifts, begin passing along these treasures from your garden to those who will enjoy them. Include a nicely printed note describing care of the plant and any anecdotes that occurred with the plant. I printed this little true story about the huckleberry starts I gave to friends one year:

I bought a native huckleberry plant and my grandson helped me plant it. We did a right proper job of it and decided it was such a fine plant it needed a name. Robert thought we should name it "Robert" because he liked it, he said. Next spring he asked if he might water the plant and, of course, I agreed. I gave him a small pitcher for the job and watched out the kitchen window as he respectfully walked on the stones we laid for a path to "Robert." Then he was talking to the plant and finally poured the pitcherful of water on the ground around Robert's main stem.

Coming back indoors I asked him if all went well, He said it did. The peculiar look on his face prompted me to ask what else may have happened. He hesitated so I assured him it was not required that he answer me, that he could keep this a secret if he so desired. In the end, he elected to tell me he had said a little prayer of thanks for this beautiful plant, then he told the plant how beautiful it was and promised to eat all the blueberries that were produced.

As time wore on, Robert the plant thrived and Robert the boy filled his promise every year. That first year the pickings were slim but Robert (my grandson) brought in his handful of berries and asked me to share them with him. They tasted better than any I ever had.

It is the extra touches that make the simple gift of a plant start from your own shrubs something to remember. And it shows the recipient that you care about them.

Personalize your plants. Give them names. Decorate them gently. A dear friend of mine puts tiny silver bells on her special plants.



Kinds of plants to propagate

Perennials - Plants that die down each winter and return in the spring from the roots. With some perennials, only the top dies back and the basal rosette remains. New plants can be started from seed or by cutting the root ball into 3-4 divisions. These divisions grow into mature plants the first year. Seedlings will grow into a small plant the first year and begin blooming the following spring or summer.

Biennials - These plants are often mistaken for perennials but their growth cycle is very different from their perennial cousins. The first year, a biennial plant will make a rosette of leaves close to the soil surface. The second year, they will send up stems with flowers which are followed by seeds and then the original plant usually dies. The seeds germinate over the winter and in spring a new leafy rosette appears. Biennials are not propagated by division but most have viable seeds that readily start. The young plants can be dug up and potted for sharing.

Shrubs - It is common to think of strong plants with woody growth and multiple stems as shrubs if at maturity they reach 13 feet or so. Their stems are 1 - 3 inches in diameter. The stems may grow along the ground or stand erect. They may retain their leaves all year (evergreens) or drop them in the fall (deciduous). Shrubs are good candidates for cuttings and some have seeds that can be planted though they take much longer to mature.

Trees - Trees are usually taller and wider than shrubs. Most trees have one central trunk and begin sending out branches when they are around 5 feet or so tall. Their trunks are of larger diameter than shrubs and grow much taller. The Giant Sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) are known to reach over 300 feet tall and 25 feet in circumference. As with shrubs, trees can be reproduced by seed or cuttings and some do well with air-layering.



From top: Bunchberry (*Cornus unalaschensis*), Evening Primrose (*Oenothera elata* ssp. *hirsutissima*),
Serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*) and Garry Oak (*Quercus garryana* var. *garryana*)

Photos by JoAnn Onstott



The art of division

Perennial magic tricks

Plants in the perennial class are at the peak of their life cycle at 3-4 years. As the root mass stretches out, the center is crowded so much they begin to lose their zest for life. The outer edges get the best of everything--sun, moisture, nutrients. It is a very strong visual indicator that the plant is in distress and it is ready to be divided.



Selection

When the first signs of central decline appear, it is time to divide and move the offspring to a new location or into a pot for sharing. If the plant is mostly dead, chop off any pieces that show life and put the rest in the compost. If the plant's own growth is the cause of the problem, division is the answer. However, it may also be an indication that another plant is crowding it out or it may be disease or infestation of some pest.

Where to start division

Figure the drip line and start a trench around the whole plant. You'll hit some roots here but most will be OK. Second, cut at an angle below the root ball. Shovel clear underneath at several points. Then put the shovel as far under as possible and push down the shovel handle to lever the plant loose. For plants with monstrous root balls, after cutting the first ditch put the shovel blade straight down mid-clump 2-3 times to cut wedges. Loosen each wedge. I much prefer a digging fork than a shovel for this kind of work.

Picking the season

Technically, dividing can be done any time as long you do enough pampering afterwards. Fall is usually best because nature will do much of the after care and the plants will have several months to adjust before they are expected to put forth flowers or fruit or whatever their attractive aspect may be.

Fireweed (*Chamerion angustifolium* var. *canescens*) This perennial will grow easily from seed. Include some wood ash in the planting area. Photo by JoAnn Onstott

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The art of division, continued



Swordleaf Rush (*Juncus ensifolius*)
Photo by JoAnn Onstott

Keeping plants on hold

You can hold plants for a time as long as the roots are kept moist and safe from trampling. If they look pretty ragged when you go to plant, plop them in a bucket of water for an hour or so. They'll probably perk back up.

Replanting the original location

Put some good composted earth back down where you dug up the plant. Settle in the piece you intend to keep growing there (or the replacement plant) and fill the hole to the original level. Take care not to leave air space among the roots, water well, put on the mulch and water again.

What to do with 'runs'

Each plant should divide into 4 or more sections. Any parts that do not look healthy or are not generously endowed with roots, put in the compost bin.

Planting the keepers

If you plan to share the new plants, put them into gallon sized pots and plant them well. Add drainage in the form of broken pots, styrofoam pieces, rocks. Put in some compost, gentle in the plant and fill with care to eliminate air pockets. Water thoroughly, let drain and place in the nursery. If you are keeping the plants, dig holes at least twice the size of the root ball and spread out the roots over a mound of soil before filling with compost and dirt. Water well, of course.



Douglas Aster
(*Symphyotrichum subspicatum*)
Photo by JoAnn Onstott

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The art of division, continued



Let the roots be your guide

When you dig up a perennial, you will see that it fits into one of five basic root types: roots that form clumps or offsets, surface roots, underground running roots, taproots, or woody roots. How you proceed depends on what root type your plant has.

Offsets

To divide a plant whose roots form offsets (small plants growing at the base of a larger one), snap the connection between any of the sections to obtain a piece with ample roots and three or more growing points (or “eyes”). Some denser clumps may have to be cut apart.

Plants that form offsets include asters (*Aster* spp. and cvs., USDA Hardiness Zones 4–8), coneflowers (*Echinacea purpurea* and cvs., Z 3–9), hostas (*Hosta* spp. and cvs., Z 3–8), tickseeds (*Coreopsis* spp. and cvs., Z 4–9).

Surface roots

Some perennials have roots that run on or just below the surface of the soil. They form new crowns and roots when they reach open spaces or make contact with the soil. If you cut between any of the stems as you would cut a piece of sod from a lawn, you will have a division with its own stems and roots.

Plants with surface roots include bee balms (*Monarda* spp. and cvs., Z 4–9), black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia* spp. and cvs., Z 3–9), creeping sedums (*Sedum* spp. and cvs., Z 3–9), creeping speedwells (*Veronica* spp. and cvs., Z 3–8).



Wild Ginger
(*Asarum caudatum*)

This delightful ground cover is easy to propagate by division of the rhizomes that form a dense mat close to the surface of the soil.

Photo by JoAnn Onstott

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The art of division, continued

Taproots

Plants that have taproots can be divided by using a sharp knife to slice down the length of the root. Every piece that has at least one eye, some of the taproot, and a few side roots is a viable division. Examples: balloon flowers (*Platycodon grandiflorus* and cvs., Z 4–9), butterfly weeds (*Asclepias tuberosa* and cvs., Z 4–9), cushion spurge (*Euphorbia polychroma* and cvs., Z 4–9), Oriental poppies (*Papaver orientale* and cvs., Z 4–9).

Underground running roots

Underground running roots can develop suckers as they grow beyond the shade of the mother clump. These suckers can be cut away from the main plant, or you can dig up the main plant and cut away any piece with an eye or sucker already forming. Examples: hardy geraniums (*Geranium* spp. and cvs., Z 4–9), Japanese anemones (*Anemone × hybrida* cvs., Z 4–8), ostrich fern (*Matteuccia pennsylvanica*, Z 3–8), plume poppies (*Macleaya* spp. and cvs., Z 4–9).

Woody roots

Woody perennials often form roots when stems rest on the ground or are buried by gradually accumulating mulch. Make a new plant by simply cutting between the rooted stem and the mother plant. Examples: candytufts (*Iberis* spp. and cvs., Z 5–9), euonymus (*Euonymus* spp. and cvs., Z 4–9), lavenders (*Lavandula* spp. and cvs., Z 5–10), sages (*Salvia* spp. and cvs., Z 5–10).

Lilies are very easy to divide but a different method is used than non-bulb perennials. Carefully dig the lily making sure to get the entire bulb and roots. Gently pull off the little bulblets attached to the mother bulb. Plant them in a cuttings flat or in pots. This method will give a new plant the following year though it will likely take up to 5 years to bloom.

Chocolate Lily (*Fritillaria affinis*)
Photo by JoAnn Onstott



Inspiration for this article came from a piece written by Janet Macunovich for Fine Gardening Magazine



Timing and technique

Timing is important

by Todd Meier

When dividing perennials, timing and technique are important. And while many perennials can be divided in either early spring or early fall, some are very picky. The optimal time to divide specific perennials is denoted by (S) for spring and (F) for early fall. A single asterisk indicates that division should take place after the plant flowers. Two asterisks mean that protective gloves should be worn when dividing the plant, since its sap may irritate skin.

NOTE: There are non-native flowers in this list, it is not restricted to natives only.

Divide these plants by hand

Blanket flowers (*Gaillardia* spp.) S/F
Bleeding hearts (*Dicentra* spp.) S*
Bugleweed (*Ajuga reptans*) S/F
Columbines (*Aquilegia* spp.) S/F
Coral bells (*Heuchera* spp.) S/F
Cranesbills (*Geranium* spp.) S/F
Creeping Jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*) S/F
Deadnettle (*Lamium maculatum*) S/F
Epimediums (*Epimedium* spp.) S*/F
Foam flower (*Tiarella cordifolia*) S/F
Forget-me-not (*Myosotis sylvatica*) S*/F
Hellebores (*Helleborus* spp.) S*/F
Jacob's ladder (*Polemonium caeruleum*) S/F
Lady's mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*) S/F

Bleeding Heart (*Dicentra formosa*)
Photos by JoAnn Onstott



Lamb's ears (*Stachys byzantina*) S/F
Moss pink (*Phlox subulata*) F
Primroses (*Primula* spp.) S*
Pulmonarias (*Pulmonaria* spp.) S*/F
Pussytoes (*Antennaria dioica*) S/F
Sea thrift (*Armeria maritima*) S/F
Speedwell (*Veronica spicata*) S/F
Spurge (*Euphorbia myrsinites*) S/F**
Stonecrop (*Sedum spectabile*) S/F
Sweet woodruff (*Galium odoratum*) F
Violets, pansies (*Viola* spp.) S/F
Wormwood (*Artemisia ludoviciana*) S/F
Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) S/F

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Timing and technique, continued

Divide these plants with a spade or pitchfork

African lilies (*Agapanthus* cvs.) S/F
Anemone (*Anemone* × *hybrida*) S
Asters (*Aster* spp.) S
Bee balm (*Monarda didyma*) S/F
Bellflowers (*Campanula* spp.) S/F
Big bluestem grass (*Andropogon gerardii*)
Black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia* spp.) S/F
Blood grass (*Imperata cylindrica*) S/F
Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) S/F
Catmint (*Nepeta* × *faassenii*) S/F
Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) S/F
Daisy (*Leucanthemum* × *superbum*) S/F
Daylilies (*Hemerocallis* spp.) S/F
Forest grass (*Habenochloa macrochaeta*) S/F
Fountain grass
(*Pennisetum alopecuroides*) S/F
Garden phlox (*Phlox paniculata*) S/F
Gaura (*Gaura lindheimeri*) S/F
Goldenrods (*Solidago* spp.) S/F
Gunnera (*Gunnera manicata*) S/F



Hostas (*Hosta* spp.) S/F
Japanese painted fern
(*Athyrium niponicum* 'Pictum') S/F
Jerusalem sage (*Phlomis russeliana*) S/F
Lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*)
Ligularia (*Ligularia dentata*) S/F
Masterwort (*Astrantia major*) S/F
Monkshood (*Aconitum napellus*) S
Penstemons (*Penstemon* spp.) S/F
Perennial sage (*Salvia* × *superba*) S*/F
Pinks (*Dianthus plumarius*) S/F
Poppies (*Papaver* spp.) F
Red hot poker (*Kniphofia* spp.) S/F
Sedge (*Carex morrowii*) S/F
Siberian iris (*Iris sibirica*) F
Silver grasses (*Miscanthus* spp.) S/F
Snakeroot (*Cimicifuga racemosa*) S/F
Switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*) S/F
Tickseed (*Coreopsis verticillata*) S/F
Turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*) S/F
Yarrow (*Achillea filipendulina*) S/F

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Timing and technique, continued

Cut up rhizomes and tubers with a knife

Arum (*Arum italicum*) F
Bergenia (*Bergenia cordifolia*) S/F
Caladiums (*Caladium* spp.) S
Calla lily (*Zantedeschia aethiopica*) S
Cannas (*Canna* spp.) S
Corydalis (*Corydalis lutea*) S/F
Dahlias (*Dahlia* cvs.) S
Elephant ears (*Alocasia* spp.) S
Irises (*Iris* spp.) F
Lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*) S/F
Lily-of-the-valley
(*Convallaria majalis*) S/F
Rhubarb (*Rheum palmatum*) S
Rodgersia (*Rodgersia pinnata*) S/F
Spurge (*Euphorbia griffithii*) S/F**
Wild ginger (*Asarum europaeum*) S



In background, Lady Fern
(*Athyrium filix-femina*)
Photo by JoAnn Onstott

Slice apart woody crowns with a handsaw

Amsonias (*Amsonia* spp.) S/F
Astilbes (*Astilbe* spp.) S/F
Bear's breeches (*Acanthus spinosus*) S/F
Doll's eyes (*Actaea pachypoda*) S
Foxtail lilies (*Eremurus* spp.) F
Gayfeather (*Liatris spicata*) S/F
Goatsbeard (*Aruncus dioicus*) S/F
Joe Pye weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*) S/F
Lilyturf (*Liriope spicata*) S/F
Male fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*) S/F
Meadowsweets (*Filipendula* spp.) S/F
Peonies (*Paeonia* cvs.) F
Solomon's seal
(*Polygonatum odoratum*) S/F
Wild indigo (*Baptisia australis*) S*/F

⇒ More ⇒

Timing and technique, continued

These perennials are best not divided

Alyssums (*Alyssum* spp.)
Candytuft (*Iberis sempervirens*)
Carnation (*Dianthus caryophyllus*)
Delphinium (*Delphinium* × *elatum*)
Euphorbia (*Euphorbia characias* ssp. *wulfenii*)
Foxgloves (*Digitalis* spp.)
Garden sage (*Salvia officinalis*)
Geraniums (*Pelargonium* spp.)
Lavender cotton (*Santolina chamaecyparissus*)
Lavenders (*Lavandula* spp.)
Rose campion (*Lychnis coronaria*)
Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)
Russian sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*)
Sea hollies (*Eryngium* spp.)
Silvermound (*Artemisia schmidtiana*)
Sweet pea (*Lathyrus latifolius*)
Trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*)



Western Trillium
(*Trillium ovatum*)
Photos by JoAnn Onstott

See the complete article by Todd Meier in Fine Gardening's website at www.finegardening.com/how-to/articles/dividing-perennials-tools-techniques-timing.aspx



Propagating by cuttings

Now is a good time to take hardwood cuttings

Taking cuttings of shrubs and trees is one of the most simple and easy ways to propagate them. They should be taken when the plants are not actively growing.

Here are the basic instructions for taking cuttings:

1. Cuttings from deciduous plants can be taken as soon as the leaves have fallen. Wait a little longer for evergreen cuttings.
2. Clean your knife or clippers with a 10% bleach solution to prevent spreading any disease among the plants. (This is 1 part bleach to 9 parts water.) Dip the tools in this solution after each plant.
3. Pick nice looking healthy branches from the middle of the plant or near the ground because they usually root better. The cutting should be at least as big around as a pencil and have several leaves.
4. If you're not going to prepare them right away, put them in a plastic bag or a bucket with a little water. They want to be cool and moist and out of sunlight.



(Left) Wounding an evergreen hardwood cutting to create a fresh area open to rooting hormone and moisture.

(Right) Prepared hardwood cuttings. The lower leaves are removed, the remaining leaves are clipped so the young plant won't be overwhelmed with heavy foliage to support and can, then, concentrate on growing roots.



⇒ More ⇒

Propagating by cuttings, continued

Here's how to plant the cuttings:

1. With your clean tools, cut the branches into pieces with at least two sets of leaves. Cut at an angle.
2. Remove the leaves or needles at the root end, leaving around 2-3 sets of leaves or needles on each cutting.
3. Dip the root end into rooting hormone.
4. Poke a hole in the planting medium, place the cutting in the hole and then snuggle the medium up to the cutting. You can just put the cuttings in the medium without making the hole first but you will lose medium each time.
5. Cover the rooting flat or pots with clear plastic. Keep an eye on them, check each day. When you see new sprouts starting, remove the plastic and move the flat to a protected area where it will receive dappled light.
6. Water when needed and wait.
7. When the cuttings have roots (give them a gentle tug--if they resist, it's roots!).

Do proper maintenance until the plants want bigger pots or the weather is soft enough to plant them out.



Successful cuttings ready to plant out! The roots are developing well and these new plants are ready to graduate to a real pot or protected space in the landscape.

Photo at right from Propagating deciduous and evergreen shrubs, trees, and vines with stem cuttings by F.E. Larsen, Professor of Horticulture and W. E. Guse, Teaching Assistant in Horticulture. University of Washington website, <http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/pnwO152/pnwO152.html>

This article is highly recommended and explains everything you need to know about taking cuttings.



Air layering: a high-tech trick

One easy lesson to successful air layering

Giant Arborvitae (*Thuja plicata*)
Top--mature trees at Reed College in Portland. Bottom--Fresh leaves photo by JoAnn Onstott

Introduction

Air layering is the process of removing a large branch or section of the trunk of a tree to create another tree. Before the branch is removed it is girdled, protected with peat moss or other media and the girdled section is allowed to root. After rooting the branch is removed from the tree. This is a very common practice in bonsai as well as regular gardening. Knowing how a tree forms roots at an air layer site provides powerful information for not only understanding the process, but also a vehicle for answering your own questions and solving your own problems in air layering.

Transport of Food, Water, and Nutrients

Under the bark of trees is a layer of cells called the phloem, then a layer called the xylem that transports water and mineral nutrients from the roots and soil up to the leafy parts of the tree. Beneath the xylem is another xylem layer called the secondary xylem. These xylem layers are thicker and deeper into the wood of the tree than the phloem layer. On top of these layers just under the bark is a layer of actively dividing cells called the cambium.

The Air Layering Process

In the process of aird layering, the bark, the cambium, and the phloem layer are removed by cutting away about a 1 inch wide ring of these tissues from around the circumference of the shoot. The xylem layers are left intact. This is known as girdling. On the newly bared layer, some trees benefit from a dusting of rooting hormone. This is not necessary for many trees. Wet sphagnum moss (or another moisture retentive soil) is then bunched around and over this girdled site and covered with plastic and sealed.



Air layering: a high-tech trick, continued

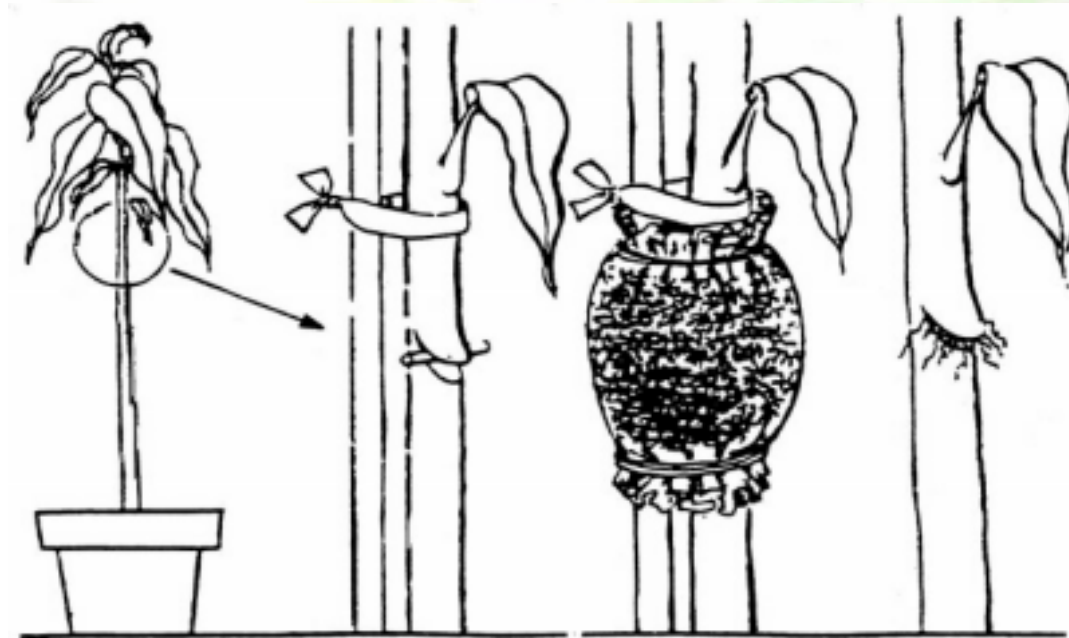
What Happens at the Air Layer Site

Removing the bark, cambium, and phloem (but not the xylem) prevents carbohydrates and photosynthates from flowing down the trunk past the girdling but allows water and mineral nutrients to flow upward to the leaves. This keeps the leafy portions of the shoot from drying out and maintains them with an adequate supply of nutrients.

Removing the actively growing cambium layer prevents the wound from healing over so the carbohydrates and photosynthates collect right there at the girdling site. The excess carbohydrates and photosynthates, plus the water collected in the sphagnum moss, causes buds in the area to grow into roots. When there are enough roots to sustain the shoot independently, we cut off the shoot and plant or pot.

The Difference Between Air Layers and Cuttings

Cuttings only work well with small and thin shoots because the flow of water is insufficient for larger branches. Airlayering solves this problem and allows the creation of new plants from very large parts of trees.



In this drawing, the stem of the plant is not girdled. Instead a flap is cut on the stem at an upward angle and a toothpick or other small object is placed in the cut to keep it from closing. Then the cut area is treated the same way as girdling.

Based on an article by Andy Walsh with introduction by Brent Walston. See the Evergreen Gardenworks website at www.evergreengardenworks.com/



Ways to share plants

After you have gifted plant starts and seeds to everyone you know and you still have some left, what's next?

The following article was written by Helen Kirkup, Master Gardener and developer of The Garden Management System, gardening software to help you grow your garden. Founded in 1985, the website for HMK Consultants is a wealth of general gardening knowledge. See the website at www.hmk.on.ca/index.html. Thank you, Helen, for allowing us permission to include this article in this month's journal.

When you want to increase the variety of plants in your garden - indoors or out - it can get very expensive to buy live plants. Collecting seeds and taking plant cuttings are a couple of alternatives to consider.

Start a Seed Exchange

1. In the spring, ask your friends, neighbours and workmates if they'd be interested in participating in a seed exchange. Do take care not to violate propagation restrictions or import/export laws. Some of the benefits you could list would be:
 - Try new plants with no initial cost
 - Know where the plants came from, so that you can ask questions later
 - Be sure that plants shown as good for your zone, really are good for your zone
2. Send out an email to those who want to participate, describing how to gather seeds for sharing.
3. Send out reminders periodically throughout the summer and fall about the seeds that may be ready to gather.
4. Gather seeds, clean and store until ready to package.
5. Request that everyone send you a list of seeds they have available. Ask that they include the common name, botanical name if available, and a SMALL image if available. Also ask for colour and approximate size of plant. Advise that their email addresses will be included for the other participants to order seeds.

Native Grasses such as the one in the background here are generally easy to gather, do not require any laboratory specific storage and they tend to grow well with minimal care.

⇒ More ⇒

Ways to share plants, continued

6. Gather all submissions into a list and email to everyone, including SMALL pictures and email addresses of those with seeds OR make a web page showing all and have the email link to the web page.

7. Participants can email each other and share as they wish - your job is done.

Some seeds that work well for this are tickseed, black-eyed susan, gaillardia, california poppy, lamb's ears, shasta daisy and columbine.



Start a Plant Cutting Exchange

A plant cutting exchange works best with people in the same general location, so that they can easily get together in person. Much like a seed exchange, this activity will help you increase your plant variety without exhausting your budget. Here's how it could work for you.

1. Ask your friends, neighbours or other soccer parents if they'd be interested in participating in a cutting exchange. Do take care not to violate propagation restrictions.
2. Send out an email to those who want to participate, asking them to list what plants they have that they would be willing to take cuttings from.
3. Compile a list of plants available and email addresses
4. Send out or hand-deliver the list of plants and email addresses to all participants.
5. Let the participants arrange for their plant cuttings or arrange a date, perhaps six weeks hence, for the in-person cutting exchange.

Some common plants that grow well from cuttings include spider plant, lipstick plant, blood leaf, swedish ivy and pothos.

Deer Fern (*Blechnum spicant*)
Photo by JoAnn Onstott

[⇒ More ⇒](#)

Ways to share plants, continued

How to Gather Seeds

Gathering seeds can be done throughout the growing season in your garden. The timing will differ depending on the plants you have, but these general guidelines will help.

1. Once the flowers have dropped, you usually have a choice to either let the seeds ripen or to cut off the spent bloom. Be aware that leaving the seeds to ripen may result in less blooms for the remainder of the season. One way to get around this is to choose a couple of plants in the back of a bed, for example, and use these for seed gathering. In this way, the front plants continue to bloom to their full potential.
2. Where possible, let seeds mature to the point where they fall from the seed head when tapped. Some seeds do not drop in this way, but usually they won't spoil if you leave them too long.
3. Use secateurs or other sharp cutting tools, and drop entire seed head plus stalk into a suitably sized bin. I prefer a small pail. Cutting the stem at the same time reduces clean-up tasks later.
4. Trim all stems, leaves and other rubbish from the seed heads.
5. Place a piece of clean white paper on the table in front of you.



Western Redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*)

Such a beautiful shrub, found in dry, sunny areas along the Pacific Coast and inward to Utah.

Photo by JoAnn Onstott

[⇒ More ⇒](#)

Ways to share plants, continued

6. One at a time, remove the seed heads from the bin and open them over the paper, to release the seeds inside.
7. You will likely notice some chaff from the seed head drops onto the paper with the seeds. Carefully separate the seeds from all other plant material, and keep only the seeds.
8. Using the paper as a funnel, slide the seeds into a paper envelope of any type. Do not seal, yet.
9. Note on the envelope the type of seed and when gathered.
10. Store away from sunlight, in cool location.



11. Leave for 2 weeks, to thoroughly dry out, then seal envelopes.

If you have interest in sharing plants beyond preparing them for gifts, read Jon Hetman, Development Manager's article, [Sharing Plants Among Friends](http://www.arboretum.harvard.edu/aboutus/silva/fall_2009/plant_sale.pdf). It's on the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University's website www.arboretum.harvard.edu/aboutus/silva/fall_2009/plant_sale.pdf. Here is an excerpt from that article:

The Arnold Arboretum has grown, studied, and distributed Metasequoia glyptostroboides (dawn redwood) since its discovery in China in the 1940s. Notable for its buttressed trunk, exfoliating bark, and deciduous foliage, dawn redwood is one of the exceptional plants on offer at the 2009 Plant Sale.

Though we've missed the plant sale by a large margin (it was held in September) Jon's article on sharing plants is very relevant to our topic here. 'Paying it forward' through the exchange of seeds and cuttings is a most respectable goal and teaching others about the use of Northwest Native Plants in their gardens will undoubtedly give joy to all who are touched in this way.

This photo of the Dawn Redwood appears in Mr. Hetman's article



This & That

A few notes from Jennifer

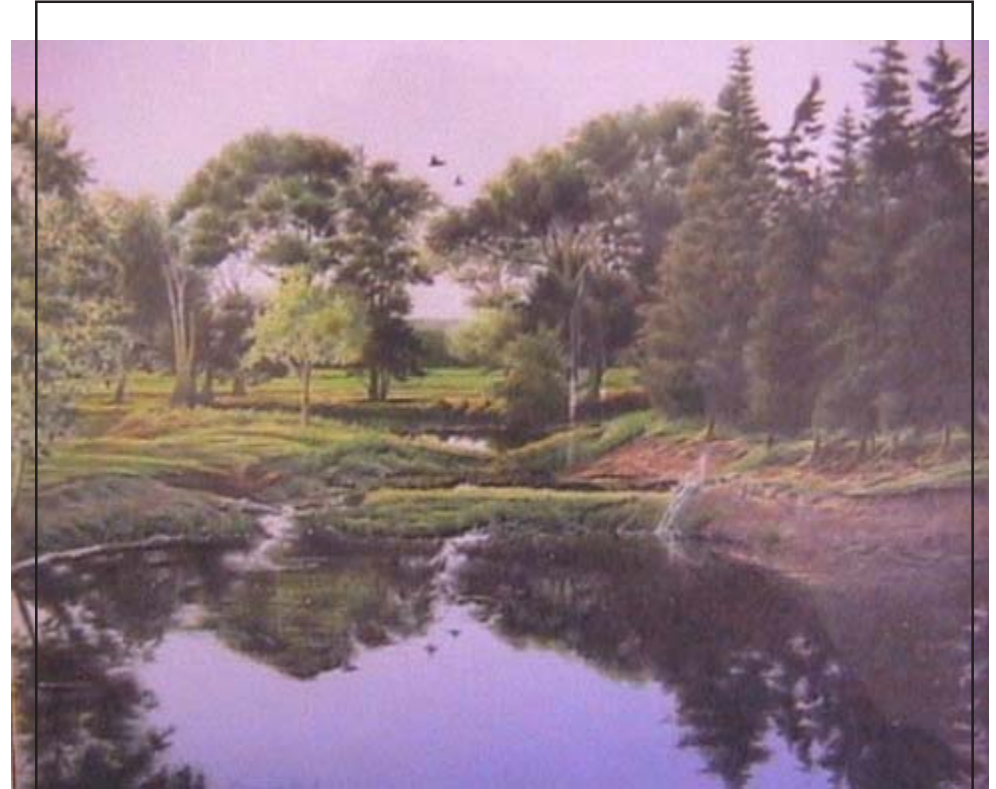
My garden has done well this year despite the gross injustice I've done for it. The front yard has not yet seen the addition of a single native plant beyond those I planted years ago. The vine maple still gives me a wide spectrum of colors outside the bathroom window. The big old maple is almost positively dead. The hawthorn still throws out new shoots around the birdbath I deposited on the stump. I think the birds like them.

The yellow butterflies still come to visit but for the life of me I can't say why. After early spring there is not one flower out back except the plum, cherry and pear trees when they bloom. I don't pick the fruit. It gets tremendously ripe and falls to the ground where squirrels and probably other wild things enjoy it. The cherries have never been sprayed and they are very wormy. The birds think that's the epitome of an appetizer.

Fortunately, Jack has lost his taste for the plums. I don't see how he could know that eating those seeds almost killed him that summer. Well, for sure he knows he almost met his maker but I don't think he is able to figure out what did it. Neither he nor Jody have eaten a single plum--I say this with confidence because I watched their every move while the plums were spread all over the yard.

Don't get me wrong, Jack is one smart cookie but figuring out the cause and effect of that adventure is frankly unbelievable.

I'll leave these ponderings until spring when my time will be my own and I'll embrace that magic word: 'retirement.'



Peaceful Pond
by Mi'kmaq artist Leonard Paul

Until next time,
Jennifer



Useful Plant Databases on the Web

Here is a good collection of web data bases and other gardening topics that will be useful to professional growers and all native plant gardeners. This list began from a flyer Lawyer Nursery published in 2002 grew from there. I wish to thank them for this public service.



A private garden in the Willamette Valley. The Lewisia has the well-constructed drainage it requires in the small gravel ground cover. The moss-covered rocks protect the grandly flowering lewisia from overly exuberant dogs and children.

Photo by Jennifer Rehm

American Bonsai Society

www.absbonsai.org/

The bonsai organization for North America, including Mexico, the United States, and Canada.

Birdchick

www.birdchick.com/

Hundreds of photos of birds, bees, butterflies and other friendlies. Sharon Stiteler shares the joys of birding as well as insights on rabbits.

CalPhotos

<http://elib.cs.berkeley.edu/photos/>

Over 33,000 plant images from the University of California, Berkley

Cornell University online grafting course

<http://instruct1.cit.cornell.edu/courses/hort494/graftage/hort494.index.html>

A distance learning approach from The Department of Floriculture and Ornamental Horticulture College of Agriculture & Life Sciences at Cornell University Kenneth W. Mudge, Associate Professor of Horticulture

Fire effects on plant species

www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/

USDA, Forest Service site summarizes and synthesizes research about living organisms in the United States—their biology, ecology, and relationship to fire.

⇒ More ⇒

Useful Plant Databases on the Web, continued

Flora of North America Web Site

<http://hua.huh.harvard.edu/FNA/>

Taxonomic relationships, distributions, morphological characteristics of all plants native and naturalized found in North America.

Forest Types of the United States

<http://forestry.about.com/library/tree/bltypdex.htm>

Maps of the most common forest types.

Growit.com Rooting Database

www.growit.com/Know/Rooting.htm

"Extensive information on rooting cuttings of woody plants, organized by botanical name. Developed for commercial growers."

ModernBackyard

www.modernbackyard.com

Landscape architecture provides exceptional, affordable landscape design online.

The Native Plant Network

<http://nativeplants.for.uidaho.edu/network/>

Information on how to propagate native plants of North America.

Noxious Weed Control

www.oregon.gov/ODA/PLANT/WEEDS/statelist2.shtml

Search function, can be shown in text only

Portland Bureau of Environmental Services

www.portlandonline.com/bes/index.cfm?c=29323

Information about caring for our earth. Download their Native Plant Poster, plant list and brochure on removing invasive plants.



This Blueblossom (*Ceanothus thrysiflorus*) in a landscape setting. The brilliant blue flowers and glossy evergreen leaves of the Blueblossom are a fine background for the rose garden in this private garden.
Photo by JoAnn Onstott

⇒ More ⇒

Useful Plant Databases on the Web, continued

River Corridor and Wetland Restoration

www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/restore/
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) site

Soil Science Society of America

www.soils.org/
Website for soil science professionals. Offers information and links.

Starflower Foundation

www.wnps.org/landscaping/herbarium/#starflower
Founded in 1996 by Ann Lennart to assist with creation, rehabilitation, and stewardship of Pacific Northwest native plant communities in the Washington area.

USDA PLANTS Database

<http://plants.usda.gov/>
Searchable for common or botanical name, shows origin, range and status

Washington Native Plant Society

<http://www.wnps.org/>
Appreciate, conserve and study our native plants and habitats

Wildflower Trails of the San Francisco Bay Area

www.westernwildflower.com/
Excellent photography and trail guides.

Woody Plant Seed Manual

www.nsl.fs.fed.us/wpsm/
Manual by the US Forest Service covering seed biology, genetic improvement of forest trees, seed testing, certification of tree seeds and other woody plant materials, and nursery practices.

Homegrown Garden Bench



Plant willow branches around and through a bench structure. Water well and wait.



Enjoy!

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Paper Birch

Golden leaves drift down to cover the
ground below: Nature's Mulch.

Photo by JoAnn Onstott

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This delightful, peaceful Native Plant Nursery/Garden is located about five miles East of Salem, Oregon, on five acres of Doug Firs, Cedar, Pine, and ancient Garry Oaks. This central Willamette Valley location is an easy drive from anywhere in the Northwest. If you are interested in Natives, a tour of the Nursery/Gardens is well worthwhile (improve your plant identification skills). My nursery and gardens have often been referred to as an “Arboretum” of plants of the Pacific Northwest. You will be inspired and encouraged in your own gardening.

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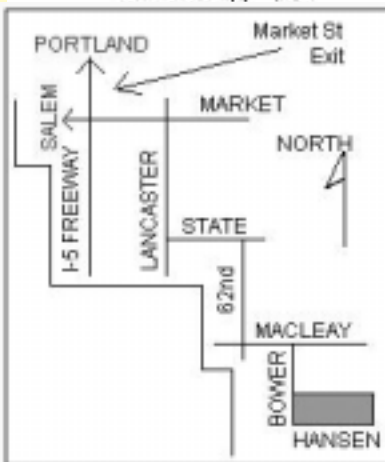
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