

# Barkley Farms Nurseries

Growers of Perennials and Grasses



SPRING 2017

## From The Editor

Rules??? As I was helping a customer with a landscape design, she asked about the "rules" to follow while selecting plants to buy and plant.

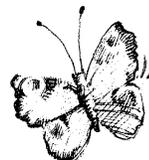
I was quick to respond that there are no rules as that is part of the fun and challenge to gardening. Not everything is set in stone; plants can look different from year to year and even from flower bed to flower bed. As a gardener, it's important to try plants, to eliminate plants, to try new plants, to experiment with plant combinations, to change the lay-out of the plant beds, to add whimsy to the garden, etc. Gardening is the one discipline where plagiarizing is not only ok, but encouraged. That is the whole purpose behind the display gardens here at Barkley Farms.

I try to tell my students that I am a plant whisperer and communicate with plants. That might be stretching it a bit---but I want them to be challenged to really take a close look at perennials, shrubbery, annuals, and all other plant types and think

about their forms, texture, color, bloom cycles, etc. to discover and appreciate how each is unique with a distinct personality. As my students are finding out, studying plants is addictive. As our customers, we hope you catch some of our enthusiasm about gardening and plants.

Please note the change of date for our Perennial Garden Party this year. Due to a family event, we are moving our Party one week earlier. We hope you will plan on joining us the Saturday of Memorial Week-end. The gardens should be looking good, despite this crazy weather!

--- Keep planting perennials!!, *Dyke*



## Retail Hours:

### Spring

Mon. - Friday  
9 am - 5 pm

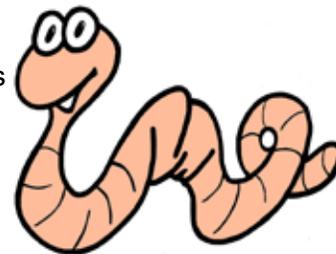
Saturday  
9 am - 4 pm

Sunday  
12 pm - 4pm  
(Illinois Time)

## Worm Castings Reminder

This is just a reminder to you that we offer bags of Worm Castings from our own worms here at the nursery. And just what are Worm Castings, you might ask! Worm Castings are an organic form of fertilizer produced from

various species of worms. Also known as vermicast, worm castings manure is essentially worm waste, otherwise known as worm poo. As these worms eat through compost their waste creates an optimal soil enricher. Worm castings are the richest natural fertilizer known to humans. That's right: as little as a tablespoon of pure worm castings provides enough organic plant nutrients to feed a 6" potted plant for more than 2 months. Worm castings stimulate plant growth more than any other natural product on the market. Unlike animal manure and artificial fertilizers it is absorbed easily and immediately by plants, and best of all there is no smell. But worm castings don't only stimulate plant growth; they also enhance the ability of your soil to retain water (because of its texture) and it even inhibits root diseases such as root rot. Ask us about it when you are at the nursery.



MARK YOUR CALENDER

BARKLEY FARMS 21<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL  
PERENNIAL GARDEN PARTY

SATURDAY, MAY 27<sup>TH</sup>, 2017

LECTURES - GARDEN TOURS - DISPLAYS

PLAN ON JOINING US!

[www.barkleyfarms.com](http://www.barkleyfarms.com)

## PERENNIAL PLANT OF THE YEAR 2017

With all the “buzz” about bees and butterflies, why not celebrate an excellent plant known for its ability to support insects and birds and serve as the primary caterpillar food for a beloved North American native butterfly? The Perennial Plant Assoc. is proud to announce *Asclepias tuberosa* as its 2017 Perennial Plant of the Year.



Commonly known as **butterfly weed**, this long-lived and striking perennial is native to the continental United States. With vibrant orange/red/yellow flowers that seem to jump out, butterfly weed is a great addition to a sunny garden with average to dry soils. As the common name suggests, these plants are butterfly magnets. Butterfly weed is hardy to zones 4–9 and reaches 2 to 3ft. high with about a 2 ft. spread. Don't cut back in late fall; rather wait until early spring and be patient since butterfly weed is slow to emerge in the spring. Since *Asclepias tuberosa* is a native prairie plant, it is quite comfortable in native planting areas, but it is also finding its way into more formal to semi-formal urban gardens. Plant in large masses for an unrivaled display of



eye-popping orange flower color. Many bees, wasps, ants, butterflies and beetles visit butterfly weed as well as hummingbirds.

All members of the milkweed family serve as larval food for the Monarch butterfly. Let them munch on your butterfly weed and you will be rewarded with these “flowers of the air”.

## FROM THE HEAD GARDENER

I just lost 4 treasured friends a couple of weeks ago. I knew it was going to happen, and I thought I was prepared for the loss, but now it seems so empty without them. I'm talking about 4 mature spruce trees, of course, who suffered from the harsh drought about 4 years ago, and then never recovered, but became susceptible to disease and insects. As they began to look less and less attractive, and dead brown branches became much more prevalent than those with green needles, the decision to give up the fight was made. Every time a look out the window I see the tremendous holes left by their demise. While a loss of this magnitude can be overwhelming for a garden, it does, at the same time, challenge the gardener to come up with new design possibilities.

Gardening, after all, has been dubbed the slowest of the performing arts, and just when you think your gardening project is coming to its greatest visual performance, a tree gets hammered by a wind storm, a perennial doesn't flourish leaving a gaping hole in the middle of your flower bed, or a hail storm in spring shreds all the leaves and blooms when at their very peak of perfection. It's

necessary to realize that making a garden isn't like buying a new throw rug for your home, but rather like stitching a few glimmering threads of your own into nature's rich tapestry. And let's face it; poring over garden design pictures and new plant advertisements is great for stirring the creative juices. A new art project in the garden is beginning to take shape and I'm ready to get to work!

Look for me in the Garden, *Diana*

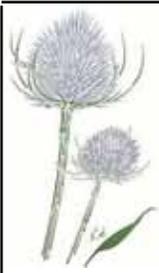


## House Finch

House Finches are common to see in large numbers as they are quite social. There are many types of finches, but the House Finch is one of the more attractive. These

birds are mainly permanent residents, spending their winters in the same locations and not migrating. They primarily eat grains, seeds and berries, being voracious consumers of weed seeds such as nettle and dandelion, and are frequent visitors to feeders throughout the year, particularly if stocked with sunflower seeds. The nest is built by the female, sometimes in as little as two days. It is well made of twigs and debris, forming a cup shape. Eggs are laid from February through August, two or more broods per year with 2 to 6 eggs per brood. The eggs are pale bluish-green with few black spots and a smooth, somewhat glossy surface. The female incubates the eggs for 12 to 14 days and the young leave the nest about 11 to 19 days after hatching.





**Fact:** Hundreds of years ago, when Vikings invaded Scotland, they were slowed by patches of wild thistle, allowing the Scots time to escape. Because of this, the wild thistle was named Scotland's national flower.

## SANCTUARY GARDEN

These can be turbulent and trying times for a lot of us and sometimes it is great to have a garden in which to retreat and get away from all the assaults on our senses. So what about creating a sanctuary garden just for you? A sanctuary does not involve a huge investment of time nor a great deal of space. The object is to create an oasis where your spirit can flourish and stress is released. Plan with maintenance in mind and be realistic as to time and effort you are willing to commit. For creating a sacred space here are a few ideas:

1. Add a focal point to the garden. This can be any object that has person resonance such as a statue, wind chime, or gazing ball.
2. Create a water feature, such as a small fountain to bring sound and energy for relaxation and respite.
3. Select some plants to attract butterflies as they are ancient symbols of the soul.
4. Add a bench for moments of quiet contemplation.
5. Plant for tranquility; try to select plants of soft colors to create an oasis of calm in a busy world.



## GARDENING RESOLUTIONS

Every spring typically brings about resolutions for gardeners to get it right this year! All gardeners, no matter their level of expertise, mentally make these resolutions to make their gardens better, and they usually promise to do better planning, better record-keeping, etc. Putting lots of pressure on themselves, and their gardens!

Following are resolutions we would like to make for our gardening friends:

1. **I will not blame myself for gardening failures.** Oftentimes, Mother Nature is not our friend when it comes to gardening. Or life gets in the way. We do not want you to despair! Simply try again and learn from experience.
2. **I will not be afraid to ask questions.** How else can you learn? Take advantage of our experience and let us give you the best advice we can from the information you share with us.
3. **I will try something new.** This is kind of a no-brainer, right? Have you ever met a gardener who didn't want the newest of the new, for bragging rights if nothing else?
4. **I will share my passion.** We've done and seen studies that show many of today's gardeners got their start by learning from someone else, usually a parent or grandparent. Can you be that mentor?
5. **I will embrace nature and garden for the birds, the bees and the butterflies, (and the bats, too!).** One of the most enjoyable benefits of having a garden is being able to enjoy the beautiful creatures who visit it. So plan your flowers and other plantings with that in mind then sit back and enjoy the show.



***Let's go garden!!***

PERENNIAL CORNER

**Pocahontas Beard's Tongue**

*Penstemon digitalis 'Pocahontas'*

This stunning new Penstemon will have the ladies stopping in their tracks. The irresistible combination of burgundy red new foliage in spring and lavender/pink flowers starting the beginning of June will have them talking. And if they don't take them all home the hummingbirds will come visit too. The clumping plants reach about 36" tall and have red stems which after flowering hold on and stay red until fall, providing a third season of interest. Plant in moist to well-drained soil in full sun. Their hardiness zone is 4-9 and don't forget this Penstemon is a US native, attracting both birds and butterflies.



**Blue Bird Songbird Columbine**

*Aquilegia hybrid Songbird 'Bluebird'*

This columbine is one of the most showy of all columbines. It is very unique in that the flowers face skyward atop strong stems. The large-spurred blooms are 3" across and a blue/white bi-color. Plants reach a height of 12 to 18 inches with the same in



width. These lovely plants of blue/green foliage bloom in April to May. They are attractive to butterflies and hummingbirds, but not attractive to

deer and rabbits. Cut some of the blooms and enjoy indoors.

**Old Fashioned Bleeding Hearts**

*Dicentra spectabilis*

This well-known perennial was a favorite of our grandmothers. It was named for its beloved dangling heart-shaped flowers and is one of the first perennials to bloom in spring. The heart-shaped flowers are borne on arching stems among bluish green foliage. The blooms may be a bright rose colored pink to rosy/pink which is said to give a romantic quality, or the rarer white Bleeding Heart (Alba Dicentra) is considered a symbol of purity and innocence. These magnificent plants are quite easy to grow, as long as shady, woodland conditions are provided. The plants reach a height of 24 to 36 inches with a width of 24 to 30 inches. True timeless classics, this plant inspires nostalgia whenever it is noticed!



**Let Them Eat Cake!**

In April, May and June we get really hungry here at the nursery, and none of us have time to bake. We're willing to trade food for flowers. We will gladly issue you a \$10



redeemable-anytime coupon for one of the following: a cake, a pie, 3 dozen cookies, or a coffee cake. Additionally, food that is actually healthful and non-fattening will be accepted if it doesn't require heat or cold to keep it that way and if it doesn't contain kumquats or peas. Finger food would be helpful. Please note that we are really fond of homemade goodies, so we're requesting no store-bought items! We can't tell you how much joy this concept has brought our employees even though we've warned them that it will require a severe withdrawal come July.



## ANNUALS TO DAZZLE

### Let's Talk About PETUNIAS

It's no wonder petunias continue to rank among the most popular flowering annuals. They are bright and lively, bloom from spring until frost, and scent the air with lovely fragrance. Best of all, they are amazingly easy to grow, both in the garden and in containers.

Petunias are fail proof favorites for gardeners everywhere. They are vigorous growers and prolific bloomers. All the varieties of petunias here at Barkley Farms are self-pinching and self-deadheading, which means all you have to do is keep them watered. Below are some of our new varieties we have for this year. But be ready to be over-whelmed as the selection of colors, sizes and combinations of colors is amazing!

And remember, all petunias will be attractive to butterflies and hummingbirds, so plant profusely!

**Supertunia Mini Silver**---these petunias are very strong trailing, with very little height. They will function as 'spillers' in containers, but are also good as front-of-the-bed plants for landscapes.

If your goal is to have plants that will be as long as possible Supertunia Mini is the best choice. The blooms are small, about 1 1/2" but profuse. Blooms are white in color, but with deep purple veining and centers. This is an award winning plant!



**Petunia 'Suncatcher Plum Burst'**---The large blooms of this petunia are a deep plum color veined in deep purple. This is a compact trailer that is perfect for containers or hanging baskets. The plants are 8 to 12 inches tall with a width of 20 to 24 inches. Picture this combined



with the Mini Silver petunia shown above!

**Petunia 'Daybreak Charm'**--The vibrant sunshine yellow and watermelon pink flowers are eye-catching and unique. The small to medium size flowers have a sunshine yellow center and a hot pink exterior. Plants grow to a height of 8 to 12 inches and attain a width of up to 24 inches. Who can be unhappy with this petunia blooming outside their window?



## ANTS IN YOUR PLANTS

- Makes your skin crawl, huh? Well, there are
- 2 sides to every story. Maybe these bugs
- just need a better publicist.
- Ants are one of those insects that go
- both ways; pest or predator, depending on
- your point of view. Some ants are highly
- beneficial predators of plant pests while
- others like to party at your picnic. They don't
- call them social insects for nothing.
- Ants belong to the Hymenoptera family
- along with bees and wasps. Like bees they
- form an organized colony with specific
- divisions of labor. There are queens, infertile
- wingless female workers and some winged
- reproductives. These are both male and
- female; potential queens that go on mating
- flights.
- Some ants feed off the
- 'honeydew' produced
- by aphids and
- whiteflies, and actually
- "tend" these pests like
- livestock. This can
- interfere with the job of beneficial insects
- like lacewings and ladybugs, leading to plant
- problems. A few species do direct damage
- cutting leaves or boring tunnels.
- Ants should be left alone unless they are
- causing a problem. Eradicating native ant
- colonies can actually cause re-colonization
- by non-native species; fire ants in some
- areas being the worst case scenario.
- Commercially prepared ant baits are
- effective in controlling ant problems. These
- stomach poisons contain boric acid with a
- jelly type lure.
- In the garden ants are closely associated
- with peonies. Some people won't grow
- peonies as a result. I could never deprive
- myself of those billowing blooms. Ants do
- no harm to actual flowers. They feed on the
- sugary exudates from the peony bud while
- protecting it from other pests, a symbiotic
- relationship not always appreciated by
- everyone.
- Understanding ant behavior, I know that
- the lone ant wandering lost from the vase of
- peonies by my laptop won't bring his friends.
- As with life so it goes with gardening;
- sometimes you just have to look the other
- way.



By: Rhonda Fleming Hayes

## TREES AND SHRUBS TO PLANT THIS SPRING

### Snow Fountain Weeping Cherry *Prunus hybrid 'Snofozam'*

Weeping branches are covered in spring with a fountain of snow-white flowers, made even more dramatic in contrast to the stunning mahogany-red bark of the cherry trunk. A beautiful and hardy small garden specimen tree, only growing to 15 foot tall and with a spread of approx. 8 foot. As a weeping tree, its cascading branches dip all the way to the ground, giving the appearance of a white or snow fountain when covered with pure white flowers in early spring. Ornamental red berries in summer are non-toxic. The dark green leaves (to 3 ¼" long) turn attractive shades of gold and orange in autumn. This is a truly outstanding specimen tree that will enhance your garden for many years.



### Pocahontas Early Flowering Lilac

*Syringa X hyacithaflora 'Pocahontas'*

'Pocahontas' Lilac is

an exceptional tall accent shrub featuring upright panicles of deliciously fragrant bluish-purple flowers in early spring on an upright growing shrub. It is truly memorable in bloom! The showy panicles of blooms emerge in early spring from distinctive burgundy flower buds. The flowers are excellent for cutting. It has bluish-green foliage throughout the season, and the heart-shaped leaves turn an outstanding deep purple in the fall. Pocahontas Lilac will grow to about 12 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 9 feet. Grow it in full sunlight and it will be very adaptable to both dry and moist locations. Just remember to give it plenty of room for growth when planting.

### Northern Red Oak Tree

*Quercus rubra*

Northern red oak is native to the Midwest and is one of the faster growing oaks for the home landscape. The leaves are handsome throughout the year, emerging pinkish-red, turning lustrous dark green in summer, and changing to russet-red to bright red in autumn. Northern Red Oak withstands pollution and lacks a tap root making it a good substitute for Pin Oak in this area. It would be a perfect shade tree for your yard. There's nothing quite as peaceful as whiling away a few hot summer hours under the cool shade of an Oak tree, and the Northern Red Oak would be a perfect choice for doing

just that. Imagine sitting under your Red Oak. Tilt your head back to view the straight and true trunk that grows to a height of up to 75 feet or more. See how the branches reach toward the sky in a spreading form that creates a pleasing rounded crown. Notice the dark green leaves as the gently rustle in the breeze, their 8 inch, wide-lobed surface filtering the sunlight



above you. In the autumn you'll still enjoy sitting under your Red Oak amid the deep reds and yellows of its fall foliage. If you sit very still, you'll even share in the excitement of the neighborhood squirrels and other wild life that come to collect the 1 inch acorns your Red Oak generously produces for them!



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