

# Barkley Farms Nurseries

## Growers of Perennials and Grasses



SPRING 2011



### From The Editor

Spring, what a time of the year. Everything is coming out of winter dormancy and peeking its head up. Every year is different, exciting and challenging at the same time. As I was walking the gardens I noticed something right away, someone had been in my yard with pruners! I don't mean a simple cut, there were cut shrubs all over the place. It almost looked like we had a visit from Edward Scissorhands. Many of you know my slightly biased opinion when it comes to manicured evergreens. Some of the spireas had been cut down from 3 1/2' to 6 inches tall. Of course not all had been cut to the same height, and a few were even left with cute little top knots. What's the problem?-- those cute little bunny rabbits. Those fuzzy little guys that bop along the garden during the daytime looking so adorable (perhaps looking for places to hide eggs) must do a jekyll and hyde routine at night. If you remember back to all the snow which had a nice hard crust of ice and which lasted for days, this created the conditions for rabbits to feed on the shrubs in your yard. Many branches have clean cuts while others have the bark scraped off the trunk. If I could only find a way to keep them eating what I wanted them to! It's like working with two year olds, "eat the bluegrass not the flowers." The only benefit is that I can see lots of 'organic' fertilizer left behind.

Keep planting perennials,

*Dyke*

PS. For those of you feeding those little ones from your vegetable patches, just look at what happened to the guy on the right and his cute little bunny rabbits!!!



### Retail Hours:

#### Spring

Mon. - Friday  
9 am - 5 pm

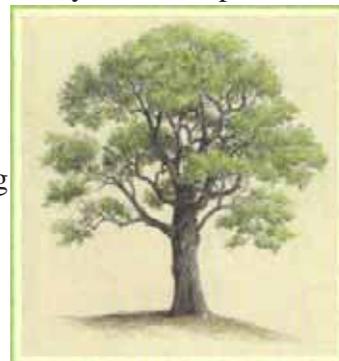
Saturday  
9 am - 4 pm

Sunday  
12 pm - 4pm  
(Illinois Time)

### TREES

Spring is prime tree-planting time, and we have some advice before you select the trees you want to plant.

Before making any decisions, we suggest you take a drive, maybe with a camera, scoping out your area looking for tree planting mistakes. Mistakes can sometimes be aesthetic horrors, such as big shade



trees cut in an L-shape so they fit under power lines---or at other places you may see gaffs that lead to the eventual death of the tree. All of these mistakes mean money and effort lost. So when you buy a tree, think carefully before you buy and get help and suggestions from your nurseryman. Be prepared for that conversation, by having pictures of the sight you wish to plant the tree. Take into consideration not only the growing conditions within that sight, but what is within the perimeter of that tree when it reaches its maturity. Let your nurseryman know if you are visualizing an ornamental tree, a shade tree, or a particular season you want to play up interest.

MARK YOUR CALENDER

BARKLEY FARMS 15TH ANNUAL  
PERENNIAL GARDEN PARTY

SATURDAY, JUNE 4TH, 2011

LECTURES - GARDEN TOURS - DISPLAYS

PLAN ON JOINING US!

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

## Red-winged Blackbird

The Red-winged Blackbird is one of the most abundant birds across North America and one of the most boldly colored. Here in the northern parts of the United States, their early arrival and tumbling song are happy indications of the return of spring. The male Red-winged Blackbirds are hard to mistake. They're an even glossy black with red-and-yellow shoulder badges. During mating seasons, the territorial males flare these red "epaulets" almost as headlights when coming for a landing. Females are crisply streaked and dark brownish overall, paler on the breast and often show a whitish eyebrow. The males do everything they can to get noticed, sitting on high perches and belting out their *conk-la-ree!* song all day long. Females stay lower, skulking through vegetation for food and quietly weaving together their remarkable nests. You'll find their nests in virtually every wet, brushy or marshy area. Both sexes produce a *check-check-check* call while flying in flocks overhead or when their nests are approached too closely.



Males are first to return to breeding areas in spring, usually soon after ice and snow have left, and claim territories for potential nesting sites. Females arrive about a week later, and get to work building nests of mainly leaves and stems woven into upright vegetation. They lay three to four eggs which are greenish-blue and scrawled with blacks and browns. The eggs hatch in 11 to 13 days.



"It's spring fever. That is what the name of it is. And when you've got it, you want--oh, you don't quite know what it is you do

want, but it just fairly makes your heart ache, you want it so!"

-Mark Twain



### Reader's Suggestions:

We liked this suggestion sent to us very much and decided to pass it on to you. Margaret has a technique her grandmother taught her years ago to keep slimy green algae from growing in her birdbath. She starts with a clean birdbath and fills it with fresh water. Then Margaret binds six to eight stems of lavender flowers together with a daylily leaf and lays the bundle in the water. One bundle of lavender will keep the water algae-free for two to three weeks. During hot weather, she replaces the bundles more frequently. The chemical released by the lavender won't kill algae already growing, but it does prevent new growth from starting.

Thank you for this tidbit, Margaret.

## FROM THE HEAD GARDENER

By now I'm sure you've repeatedly flipped through all the garden magazines and catalogs, slowly sauntered through a garden show or two and even attended a gardening seminar somewhere. So now it's time to put your dreams and plans for this year's gardening into reality. In between the cleaning, pruning, and dividing, take some time to visit your favorite garden center to absorb the essence of spring and keep the dream growing. At the garden center in spring, the place which seems to draw the most attention is the annual area. The reason for this is that this is the area with the most blooms and the most color--- just what all gardeners crave. It's also pretty early to be planting yet, so here's what I do to keep my enthusiasm from waning as I wait for the soil to heat up and the threat of frost to be over. I

go ahead and do a container for the back door---the entrance I go in and out of repeatedly throughout the day. I select a container that can be easily moved inside if frost threatens and then put back outside when the sun warms up the day. That way I have a great symbol of encroaching warm summer days. I ignore all the rules for planting for future mature growth and fill that container to the brim. That's because I want it to look glorious from the very beginning. Annuals will keep growing, yes, but I'm not willing to wait until mid summer for the container to look full and lush. I want that lush look from the very beginning. I can always cut the plants back later on if they begin to look cramped or a particular plant seems to outgrow the others. I love the mixing and matching of colors and textures in my miniature gardening plot which is how I think of container gardening.

When I was having a conversation with some gardening friends the other day, they asked what would be my most important gardening tips. After a little reflection I would have to say;

If it doesn't work, it doesn't stay. Be ruthless with plants and be willing to experiment.

Develop an eye for scale. Work out the height and scale of a plant and where you need to add taller or shorter plants. Plants all the same size in a bed make for a boring garden.

Texture is probably the most important criteria for planting. Think about the combinations of flower and foliage textures, interspersing them with grasses. Worry about the color of the blooms as the least important criteria.

Mulch, mulch, mulch. It saves the your back, it saves the plants, and it ultimately saves the pocketbook.

Look for me in the Garden, *Diana*



## PERENNIAL CORNER

Below is a list of perennials which have been around for some time but have only increased in their value as beloved garden plants for both old and new gardeners. There has been a push within the last few years within the gardening industry to introduce more and more new plants onto the market. The outcome of this drive is that many of these plants were rushed onto the market without giving a long and thorough enough trial. Often plants are introduced through the media which growers find out about at the same time as the public. Because of this many inferior, insufficiently distinct and non-garden-worthy plants have been offered to gardeners who have unwittingly ended up with poor results. For this reason we try to make a point of recommending that gardeners give serious consideration to using what we consider among the most garden-worthy perennials and grasses for the core of their plantings. Seek the advice of your nurseryman, and get his recommendation when making plant selections. We don't always carry a new plant that has been given much media hype because we have serious doubts about that plant's performance. Ask us if you have questions or are considering purchasing a plant you have seen pictured in a gardening ad or article.

### Hyssop, *Agastache rupestris*

Amid the silver gray, sweetly fragrant foliage of Hyssop are flower spikes of bright orange blossoms irresistible to hummingbirds and butterflies that last all summer into fall...who could ask for more in a perennial? This perennial loves hot dry summers and tolerates poor



soils, and grows 18 to 24 inches. Plant where its fruity-minty fragrance can be enjoyed when brushed against. It is also deer resistant.

### Salvia 'May Night', *Salvia 'Mainacht'*

The Perennial Sages are invaluable for their rich display of spiky flowers in the early summer. The deep purple flower spikes of Salvia 'May Night' soar 6-8 in. above the attractive blue-gray foliage on the upright mounding perennial. The blooms are attractive to hummingbirds and butterflies and last for several weeks. The plants are drought tolerant, once established, and can be cut back hard after blooming to rejuvenate the foliage and encourage a second blooming period. Plant in full sun and plants will grow 18 to 24 inches. The lightly scented foliage is resistant to both deer and rabbits. This perennial was the Perennial Plant of the Year in 1997.

## 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.



### Bleeding Hearts, *Dicentra spectabilis*

This is an excellent perennial for the shade garden with very attractive light green, fern like foliage. The blooms, borne on arching flower stems above the foliage, range in color from either rose pink, red or white petals. As the common name suggest, bleeding hearts bear heart-shaped flowers from which a little "drop of blood" dangles at the bottom. This old-fashioned plant can be used as a spring-blooming specimen plant or works well when planted among hostas and other spring blooming perennials which will camouflage their dormant



foliage after the blooms fade. Grows 24 to 30 inches and needs well-drained, organically rich soil in part shade to full shade.

### 'Luxuriant' Bleeding Heart, *Dicentra formosa*

This is a fernleaf type Bleeding Heart with blue green foliage and ever blooming all summer raspberry colored flowers. It starts blooming in late spring and continues until October with intense fluorescent red heart-shaped flowers held above the foliage. An absolutely hardy perennial this Bleeding Heart tolerates sun better than the old-fashioned variety and should be planted in partial shade. It grows 12 to 15 inches high and is also very attractive to hummingbirds.

**2011 Perennial Plant of the Year --  
Amsonia hubrichtii**

**- Thread-leaf Blue Star**

*A Perennial for the Seasons*

This all-season perennial has blue star-shaped flowers in spring and light green foliage all summer. The foliage turns a beautiful golden-yellow in fall. The foliage is finer than a feather duster and leaves reach 3 inches long. The amsonia plant grows 36" tall and 36" wide in a mounded form. From late spring to early summer, 2 to 3" wide clusters of small, light blue, star-shaped flowers are borne above the ferny foliage. Amsonia hubrichtii grows best in full sun and partial shade and once well established will be drought tolerant and can withstand a season of neglect. The foliage and stems contain a milky sap, which seems to make the plant unappealing to deer. Although the delicate light blue spring flowers are the inspiration for its common name, the autumn color of the feathery leaves is a major reason that gardeners grow it. The stunning pale pumpkin color of the foliage creates an excellent combination with purple coneflower, gayfeather, and ornamental grasses.

**Trees to Know**

*Acer saccharum 'Fall Fiesta'*

**Fall Fiesta Sugar Maple** is a fully shaped tree with symmetrical branching. It reaches a mature height of 50 to 75 feet with a 40 to 50 foot spread. The deep green glossy 6 inch leaves give way to the most brilliant reds and oranges of any of the Sugar Maples in fall. Fall Fiesta is extremely hardy to -40 degrees Fahrenheit so is suited to harsh winters. It also exhibits good tolerance to summer heat and drought. This rapid growing Sugar Maple should be considered for use as a large shade or ornamental tree.



**Kousa Dogwood *Cornus kousa***



This is a very disease resistant dogwood with delicate white blooms in the spring. The foliage turns a pretty purple in the fall. The Kousa Dogwood is a good choice for a foundation planting. A beautiful,

carefree flowering tree that provides visual interest year-round. White springtime blooms and red berries last for months, followed by striking red and purple hues just in time for the autumn season. Even in winter, the eye-catching bark and form of the Kousa bring a unique beauty to your landscape. Distinctive vase-shape makes this tree ideal for border and foundation planting, though it can stand alone as a showpiece tree with ease. Kousa dogwoods attracts wildlife of all sorts, and provides a safe haven for birds in the winter time! Its small frame makes it ideal for tight areas, especially for under power lines! The shallow root system of the Kousa makes it a perfect tree to plant near homes without fear of the roots damaging any structures. Unlike regular Dogwood Trees, the White Kousa is cold hardy and resistant to a multitude of pests and disease.

*Hamamelis vernalis*

**Vernal Witchhazel** is a great small tree to consider if you crave some winter color in your landscape as it gives you incredible, fluorescent yellow color during the winter... a time when all your neighbors' landscapes are looking dull. This fantastic small tree looks great in beds, borders or your garden. It begins to flower in late winter, when little else is blooming around your neighborhood. This colorful tree typically grows 6-10 feet tall with a somewhat larger spread and produces clusters of fragrant, yellow blooms that have a reddish center. The leaves turn a lovely golden yellow in autumn. When colder days arrive, the petals will gracefully curl up to protect them from winter damage. Your Witchhazel performs well in both full sun and full shade. It is quite adaptable, preferring to grow in average to wet conditions, and will even tolerate some standing water. Witchhazels are very adaptable to a variety of soil types, and are even tolerant of urban pollution.

**BEST BUDS BY SWISS**



**Flower Quiz**

Match the flower names to the descriptions:

1. A country with plenty of automobiles
2. A British term for 'mother'
3. Groups of sheep (homonym)
4. The colored part of the eye
5. Got up
6. A gilded bar
7. A dapper king of the jungle
8. A wild creature's gauntlet
9. A woman's footwear
10. A nickname for dad
11. A canines's tree
12. State of Affairs (homonym)
13. Dawn Splendor
14. Eight ounces of creamy spread



## Exciting Annuals

### Annual Zinnias

Did you know that for decades zinnias have been the flowering annual of choice for spreading glorious colors throughout the garden as well as for cutting to bring indoors? This year the National Garden Bureau, Inc has named this year as the "Year of the Zinnia." Zinnias come in an amazing array of colors---most are solid, but some are bicolored with a contrasting color at the tip of each petal. Height is an important consideration when planning a garden and so a few dwarf plants which grow to only 10 to 18 inches have been introduced in the last few years. Another important factor is that these new varieties are resistant to both powdery mildew and bacterial leaf spot diseases.



**Zinnia Profusion** with a height of 10" to 12" and a spread of 12" to 18" is available in the following colors:

- 'Profusion Cherry' has blooms of bright cherry-red
- 'Profusion Fire' has blooms of hot scarlet to orange

**Zinnia Zahara** is another dwarf variety growing 12" to 18" and with larger blooms than Profusion varieties.

- 'Zahara Coral Rose' has blooms of lovely vibrant rose
- 'Zahara Starlight Rose' has bi-colored blooms of creamy white and a bright splash of rose in the center
- 'Zahara Yellow' has large fully double blooms of clear yellow.

## Barkley Farm's Pot Parties

Our Pot Parties have become quite the sensation and just keep growing in popularity. If you haven't attended, make it a point to sign up immediately as dates rapidly become full. During these evenings, we open up our potting shed and invite you to plant containers, patio pots, planter boxes, etc. You're welcome to bring your own containers, or select from our growing assortment of pots. Our staff will work with you on selecting just the right plants. This is a fun, hands-on evening event, where you'll be able to walk our greenhouses selecting plants as you go, arranging for color, texture and interest, with a finished masterpiece to take home. The high quality potting soil we use here at the nursery will be available to you at a nominal cost and you'll leave all the mess behind for us to clean up!!! Best of all we set out a great selection of wines, cheeses and other snacks to enjoy throughout the evening along with lots of conversation and laughter.

~Call the nursery soon with a reservation, as space is limited.

### Potting Party Dates:

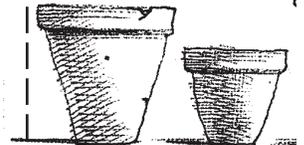
5:30 p.m. (Illinois time)

Tuesday, April 26th

Friday, April 29th

Monday, May 2nd

Thursday, May 5th



Use both these Zinnia dwarf varieties in sunny foundation plantings, in cut-flower gardens and as edging in front of border shrubs and evergreens. Because of their size they can also be used in container combinations and window boxes. Plant in full sun and watch for the butterflies which will be attracted to their blooms all summer long.

"In the spring I have counted one hundred and thirty-six different kinds of weather inside of four and twenty hours." ~Mark Twain



"I love spring anywhere, but if I could choose would always greet it in a garden." ~Ruth Stout



"The first of April is the day we remember what we are the other 364 days of the year." ~Mark Twain

### answers to flower quiz:

- |              |                   |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 1. Carnation | 8. Foxglove       |
| 2. Mum       | 9. Lady's slipper |
| 3. Phlox     | 10. Poppy.        |
| 4. Iris      | 11. Dogwood       |
| 5. A rose    | 12. Statice       |
| 6. Goldenrod | 13. Morning Glory |
| 7. Dandelion | 14. Buttercup     |



## BARKLEY FARMS NURSERIES

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### GREAT REASONS TO PLANT TREES:

**Trees conserve energy in the summer and save you money.** Properly planted trees can cut your air conditioning costs by 15-35%.



**Trees help clear the air.** Trees produce the oxygen we breathe, and reduce air pollution by lowering air temperature, through respiration, and by retaining particulates.

**Trees bring songbirds close by.** Birdsong will fill the air as trees provide nesting sites, food, and cover for countless species.

**Trees around your home can increase its value by up to 15% or more.** Studies of comparable houses with and without trees place a markedly higher value on those whose yards are sheltered by trees.

**Trees help clean our rivers and streams.** Trees hold the soil in place and reduce polluted runoff into our waterways. Trees conserve energy in the winter. Trees can slow cold winter winds and can cut your heating costs 10-20%.

**Trees fight global warming.** As they grow, trees remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, the major contributor to global warming. Trees planted near our homes and in our communities moderate temperatures and reduce the need for air conditioning and heating produced by burning fossil fuels, a major source of excess CO<sub>2</sub>. Trees near our homes both remove CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere and conserve energy to fight global warming.



*Mark Your Calendar!*  
10<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Barkley Farms'  
**Ornamental Grass Blast**  
Saturday,  
September 10th, 2011



Join us as we celebrate the coming of fall in the garden. Tours of the display beds will be conducted. See how the plants have changed over the growing season.