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QUALITY PLANTS & KNOWLEDGEABLE STAFF

## Russell Nursery Newsletter

June 2015

### Summer Class Schedule

**Learn something new this summer.** Classes are free except for the Succulent Workshops and last 1 - 1 1/2 hours. **Please register [by email](#).** (Remember to include your phone number) or by calling 250-656-0384.

**Introduction to Flower Arranging - with Emily Kerfoot.** The class will cover some of the basic techniques of working with fresh flowers and basic design principles. Learn how to use what is seasonally available from your garden. This is a two hour class. **Saturday 13 June at 10:00 AM**

**Pruning of Spring Flowering Shrubs - with Patti Brown.** Not sure what to prune and when?? Patti will discuss and demonstrate the care and pruning of spring blooming shrubs. **Saturday 20 June at 10:00 AM**

**Perennials with Multi-Season Interest - with Ingrid Wood.** Ingrid loves perennials and her enthusiasm is contagious. Learn how to choose perennials that have more than their flowers to recommend them. **Saturday 27 June at 10:00 AM**

**Impressive Permanent Container Plantings - with Lorraine Hamilton.** Lorraine will demonstrate how to use trees, shrubs and perennials to make your containers beautiful year-round. **Sunday 5 July at 10:00 AM**



**Succulent Garden Workshop - with Faye Ford.** Build your own jewel box hanging succulent garden in this popular workshop. Course fee of \$50.00 plus GST, includes cedar frame, soil and plants. **Saturday 11 July at 10:00 AM Monday 13 July 10:00 AM**

### Perennial Plant of the Year

Are you expecting the **Perennial Plant of the Year** to be some flashy new piece of eye candy? Better than that, it's a plant that you can rely upon for many years. Out of a field of 400 or so, one worthy plant is chosen each year by the **Perennial Plant Association**, a nation-wide group of growers, retailers, landscape designers and educators.

**To win this coveted award, a plant must be:**

- \* suitable for a wide range of climate conditions
- \* low maintenance
- \* pest and disease resistant

- \* readily available
- \* able to provide multiple seasons of interest

**And the winner for 2015 is... *Geranium x cantabrigiense* 'Biokovo'**. Hardy geraniums are an underappreciated group of garden stalwarts that are for the most part deer and rabbit resistant, drought tolerant, and reliable. 'Biokovo' is particularly sweet, with its delicate scent and ability to play well with others. At 6-10" in height it makes a great 'front of the border plant' or an attractive ground cover.



*Geranium 'Biokovo'*

**Biokovo's** small flowers are soft white with just a touch of shell pink. It blooms in late spring, with added interest in the fall due to lovely reddish orange leaf colour which persists through the winter, being semi-evergreen. Thriving in full sun to part shade, given good drainage it will happily flourish for many years. Highly recommended!

### Past Winners

The names of [former Perennial Plants of the Year](#) read like a list of Who's Who in horticulture. It's hard to imagine gardens today without the likes of *Polygonatum* 'Variegatum', *Brunnera* 'Jack Frost', *Coreopsis* 'Moonbeam', *Hakonechloa* 'Aureola', *Nepeta* 'Walker's Low' or *Rudbeckia* 'Goldsturm'. It's no coincidence that these and other winners are plants we keep going back to again and again. Tried and true, they are always top performers.

## Sun to Shade and Back Again

Do you have a spot in your garden that is shady all day but gets a blast of afternoon sun? Or one that is sunny for a few hours in the middle of the day and shady the rest of the time? Buildings, trees, fences and shrubbery create ever-changing patterns of light and shadow and it's hard sometimes to choose suitable plants under these conditions. We use terms like part shade and full sun as guides, but what do they actually mean?



*Ligularia, Hostas and Ferns prefer shade but will take a blast of sun.*

**Full sun means sunny all day**, from dawn to dusk or a mainly sunny area where heat builds up. **Sun** can be defined as 6 or more hours of sun per day, including that at mid-day. **Part shade** could be interpreted as morning sun and afternoon shade, dappled shade or offering some protection from the heat of the day. **Bright shade** means good light with little or no direct sun and **full shade** refers to dark areas that never see the sun.

**Quality of light is important** and good light can compensate for lack of sun. The most beneficial sunlight is received between 11am and 2pm and bright filtered light at this time has more value than direct sun in the late afternoon or early morning.

**Plants are adaptable** and Darwin's theory of survival of the fittest is illustrated everywhere in the plant kingdom. Forest floor plants develop large leaves to capitalize on small amounts of available light. Most vines are forest plants stretching to the sun.

Mediterranean plants like rosemary have tiny leaves to reduce moisture loss in the hot sun and desert plants have big fleshy leaves and enormous roots, designed to store food between infrequent rains. Put many plants in less than ideal conditions and they will often change to adapt, sometimes growing larger than normal leaves, sometimes shrinking in to themselves a little.

**Heat and moisture levels** play an important role in the balance of sun and shade and can make the difference between a plant thriving or just surviving. A shade garden won't usually mind a couple of hours of sun if it's not too dry. In fact, many varieties of hosta won't develop their best colour without some sun. Rhodos and hydrangeas are fine in sun if they have enough moisture, but put them up against a hot, south or west facing wall and they will struggle. Clematis varieties like Nelly Moser have better colour given some shade, as will Asiatic lilies, phlox, coneflowers and daylilies.



*Hakonechloa grows in sun or shade and can be used to tie it all together*

**The point is**, some plants are adaptable enough to grow almost anywhere, making them good choices for those "in between" areas. They can be repeated to provide continuity or to unify the garden. The habit and form won't always be the same, and flowering or berries may not be quite as expected, but they will grow.

**Some plants to try in areas that are mostly shade of some degree, but get a blast of hot sun for part of the day:** **Perennials:**

Monkshood, Bergenia, Brunnera, Japanese anemone, Epimedium, Foxgloves, Hellebore 'Honey Hill Joy', many Heucheras, Hostas,

Primulas, Solomon's Seal, Sword ferns. **Grasses:** Carex, Hakonechloa, Northern Sea Oats. **Shrubs:** Azara, Camellias, Fothergilla, many Hydrangeas, Ribes, Pieris, Rhodos.

**Plants for half day sun/half day shade:** **Perennials:** Acanthus, Alchemilla, Astrantia, Calla lilies, Campanula, Daylilies, Euphorbia, Geranium 'Biokovo', Asiatic and Oriental Lilies, Peonies, Rudbeckia, Sedum. **Grasses:** Calamagrostis like 'Karl Foerster' and 'Avalanche' **Shrubs:** Arbutus unedo, Boxwood, Choisya, Cotoneaster, Euonymus, hardy fuchsias, Lonicera nitida, Philadelphus, Portugese laurel, Viburnums.



*Arisaema thunbergii*

## Harkaway Plants Have Arrived!

**Treasures for the plant gourmet.** This year's collection of rare plants from Lyle Cortice at Harkaway Botanicals has arrived. A sampling of the selection: *Arisaema thunbergii* subsp. *urashima*, *Aspidistra ealtior* 'Asahi', *Beesia califolia*, *Calanthe nipponica*, *C. tricarinata* and *C. Kojima* Group, *Polygonatum odoratum* 'Akajiku', *Pteridophyllum reacemosum*. Needless to say, the prices reflect the rarity, but we think that you'll agree, are well worth it to a collector.

## Planting in Awkward Spaces

At this time of year, many of us are trying to squeeze in those last three tomatoes, the cucumber plants our friend gave us, or perhaps we need a privacy planting on the patio, but there really isn't one square inch of space left. What to do?



Enter the fantastic **Grow Bag with Frame**, and hard-to-use areas become prime planting real estate. The bags are made in England, and will last for years with the strong galvanized metal frame and high quality vinyl bag.

The Garland recycled-plastic trays from England are the answer if drainage onto a balcony is an issue. Don't let lack of space deprive you of the pleasures of "growing your own"!



**Between a Rock and a Hard Place** is what I call this awkward little strip of soil between the stucco house and a big chunk of rock. Not enough soil to plant anything, yet prime space in the sun. These cucumber plants will climb the straps of the frame. The flexible bag will accommodate any kind of weird and unyielding surface!



**Tidy, Contained and Productive** for any kind of patio or balcony, the Grow Bag allows a good-sized tomato crop of up to three plants. We have two Sweet 100's and a Juliet thriving in this one bag. Use **MySoil Container Mix** and **Organique All Purpose Fertilizer** for great results!



**The Scent of Sweet Peas** will be wafting from our living screen very soon, with buds about to form. Any kind of vine could be used, from Lotus Vine to Nasturtium to Scarlet Runner Beans. With the warm soil in the Grow Bag, seeding is easy and growth assured.

## The Magical Bean

For the snap and crunch of a perfect green bean, nothing comes close to the bean you grow yourself. Those hollow, stringy supermarket beans should be banned!



*Fortex beans in August.*

**Beans are one of the easiest vegetables to grow**, the perfect crop for a beginner. They even make their own fertilizer! Beans are legumes, and all legumes convert nitrogen found in the air to a usable form, evident by small white nodules on their roots. Legumes have a relationship with Rhizobia bacteria in the soil, which enables the nitrogen-fixing process.

**All they ask is regular moisture, warm sunshine**, and a moderate amount of organic material in the soil. Don't add manure, and don't over fertilize. Excessive nitrogen in the soil will produce a large plant with poor pod set and delayed maturity. A bean crop that has lots of flowers but few pods may have a zinc deficiency, which can be remedied by foliar feeding with liquid seaweed.

Because beans have a relatively light nutrient demand on the soil, crop rotation for fertility needs is less important than for some other crops. They grow happily with other veggies

except for onions, which they dislike.

### Planting:

**Warmth is essential for germination;** cold soil will result in rot and sporadic germination, so wait until at least mid-May if direct-sowing. For this reason, pre-sprouting in a warm room in damp vermiculite has been my habit for both peas and beans, using a well-draining tray and dense sowing of seeds. They root in less than a week, with 100% germination and no critter predation. Harden off, and plant outside when weather permits.



*Runner bean after 1 week!*

### ***Talk about the magic of the bean; look at those roots!***

The vision of a bean seed's emerging root at one end, and a leaf at the other end, is surely one of gardening's wonders, and reason enough to try the vermiculite.

**Beans for Every Garden** Tall, short and in between, there are lots of options. [Read On for Details.](#)



*New from Weeks:  
Pretty Lady Rose*

**Heads Up On Ordering Roses:** There has been great interest in roses the last year or so, with many people rediscovering them or growing them for the first time. It's almost time to place our orders for next year and the catalogues will be arriving soon.


We carry roses from **Weeks**, **PanAmerican** and **David Austin** and if you are interested in pre-ordering for next year [let us know](#) and we will be in touch when the catalogues are here.. (Minimum of 5 per variety, unless it is one that we normally stock).

The best time to plant is early spring when the roses are available bare root. Or, if you prefer an established plant, you can have them potted for pick-up in late May or early June.



**Russell Nursery** is the authorized BC distributor for Hall's English Greenhouses. Available in a variety of sizes and prices. Many of the models are set up at the nursery, so come have a look. [Information](#)

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