



## Russell Nursery Newsletter

August 2015

**What a great summer it's been!** Even with the challenges brought on by the heat the sun lovers among us are very happy. Those who like it a little cooler are looking forward to fall, and everyone welcomed last week's rain. August is when we gardeners can relax and enjoy the fruits of our labours. Most of the summer pruning is done (?), perennials and grasses are at their colourful best and the veggie garden is at peak production. (Note to self: Not quite so many tomatoes next year!)

**The nursery looks its best in August.** We are fully stocked with a great selection of perennials, shrubs and trees and everything looks lush and full. It's a great time to fill in gaps and make plans for new plantings.

We are fortunate to have not one, but two great new additions to our staff. **Charlotte Trim, aka Charlie**, is a recent grad from Camosun College, who's passion for trees knows no bounds. **Mary Englin** is a new arrival to the area, who knows the answer to almost any question about growing vegetables and is quickly learning all about perennials. We hope they are here for a long time to come.

If you haven't been here for a while, come and pay us a visit. We look forward to seeing you.

Please note we will be **CLOSED ON AUGUST 3** for BC Day.



*Witch Hazel -  
Tree Form.*

### 10 Shade Trees for Small Gardens

**Longing for a little shade?** It's too late to plant a tree to sit under this summer, but it's the perfect time to think about the future. If you have a small garden the idea of planting a shade tree might be a little daunting, but shade trees don't have to be towering maples or mighty oaks. There are lots of smaller trees that will fit nicely into a small space to provide a leafy canopy to sit under or to protect shade loving plants. Ideally, trees in small gardens should have one or more ornamental traits such as flowers, berries or fruits, interesting bark and colourful foliage.

**The following are some of our top picks.** They range in height from 12 to 20 feet and in spread from 10 to 20 feet. Big enough to provide some shade, but not be overwhelming.

***Prunus x 'Blireana'* Flowering Plum:** Double pink flowers; coppery foliage.

***Betula nigra 'Fox Valley'* Birch:** Salmon coloured peeling bark; lacy foliage

***Hamamelis 'Arnold Promise'* Witch Hazel:** These are trained onto a single trunk; yellow flowers in winter. Very nice!! Vase-shaped habit.

***Malus 'Royal Raindrops'* Crabapple:** Pink flowers, purple foliage;

bronzy-orange in fall.

***Acer palmatum* 'Osakazuki' Japanese Maple:** Brilliant red fall colour.

***Acer palmatum* 'Bloodgood' Japanese Maple:** Purple foliage; bright fall colour

***Parrotia persica* 'Ruby Vase' Persian Ironwood:** Red new growth; fall colour; peeling bark

***Prunus x* 'SnowGoose' Flowering Cherry:** White flowers; orange in fall

***Sorbus vilmorinii* Mountain Ash:** Delicate foliage; red in fall; rosy pink berries.

***Styrax* 'Emerald Pagoda' Snowbell Tree:** White bell flowers; dark green foliage.

**Come and have a look** at the young trees growing on for fall planting. We can put your name on your favourites and look after them until it's the right time to plant. Usually that's October, which allows them to settle in and take advantage of winter rains while they establish.

For more information on these and other trees please see our online [Tree Catalogue](#)



**'Royal Raindrops'  
Crabapple**

## It's Time to Plant Winter Veggies!

**Winter growing is easy**; the rains take care of watering and weeds seem to surrender temporarily. All you have to do is **get started now**, and enjoy the harvests from fall through next spring.

There is a difference between **Winter Crops** and **Overwintering crops**

**Winter Crops** refer to vegetables **harvested during the fall and winter**. To make the most of them, they need to be full grown by Halloween, as they won't grow after frost starts in November, but *will* start again about mid-February.



***A good supply of Kale!***

**There is still time to seed** Mustards, Asian greens, Cilantro, Corn Salad, Lettuce, Radish and Scallions for fall harvest, but wait until mid to late August to seed Spinach, as it will bolt in the heat..

**It's too late to seed** Kale, Chard, Broccoli, Asparagus, Brussels sprouts, Cabbage and Parsley, but we have starts here ready to plant.

**Overwintering Crops** enter winter as "teenagers" and **won't finish growing until spring**. Plants such as Purple Sprouting Broccoli, Broad Beans (direct seed in October), Garlic (bulbs available in September), and late-planted Spinach fall into this category.

**Important Tips:** **Grow what your family likes**, and remember that you are planting for 5 months of winter; don't skimp on quantities.

**\*Protect all Brassicas** (Asparagus, Cabbage, Broccoli, Kale, Brussels sprouts, Mustards and Asian Greens) with **ProTekNet** to



*White Cabbage Butterfly*

keep the white cabbage butterfly (Imported Cabbageworm) from laying eggs on your crops. These will hatch into a multitude of voracious green caterpillars.

**\*Chard and Spinach are susceptible** to damage from Beet and Spinach Leaf Miner larvae that tunnel between the layers of leaves making them inedible. Cover with **ProTekNet** as soon as possible after germination.

**\*Feed starts with liquid fish, seaweed or vegetable fertilizer** to get them off to a good strong beginning. Don't waste your compost now, save it for spring; the microorganisms that convert its goodness into available plant food are dormant in the winter, and heavy rains will leech nutrients away.

**\*Kale and Purple Sprouting Broccoli are fine out in the harshest weather.** If they freeze, allow them to thaw naturally outside, then pick as usual. Don't pick to thaw indoors. Other leaf crops benefit from some sort of covering that protects from wind, wet and freezing. Use a cloche, row cover, or tunnel. Winter leaf crops will thrive in an unheated greenhouses, except for Kale, which prefers being outside. (Note: Kale and Purple Sprouting Broccoli don't do well in pots)

**\*Are you wondering where on earth you can plant for winter when your garden is still full of summer bounty?** We've had great success with potting up small winter veggie starts into #1 pots to develop large root systems and size up. They are then transplanted into the garden when the summer crops are done. Some seeds, such as Mache or Lettuce can actually be seeded under large squash leaves, which give them protection from the hot sun. Talk about symbiotic gardening!



*Something new:  
Aspabroc aka  
Broccolini*

**\*[Click](#) for the list of winter vegetable starts available for planting now..**

**Happy Growing,** and may your homegrown vegetables keep you and your family well-fed all winter long!



This reusable netting has a mesh small enough to keep out even the carrot rust fly, the smallest pest we have in our area. Allowing light and water to pass through, it can remain over the plants for the entire season, unlike traditional row covers. It even gives a small degree of winter protection from weather.

It's very important to seal down the edges with soil, sticks, or rocks, as the crafty critters will sneak under the edges if they can. The netting is light enough to lie on the plants and will rise as they grow. Make sure that you are using a large enough piece so it can be loose and 'grow' as tall as your crop. It can also be draped over hoops or other support structures. **It is 6 ½ feet wide, and available by the linear foot at Russell Nursery Highly recommended.**

## **Liquid Seaweed. It's a good thing!**

**Annuals, roses and food-producing plants benefit** tremendously from regular applications of liquid seaweed. Even if slow release fertilizers have been used, these fast growing plants will appreciate a seaweed boost.

**Canadian seaweed** contains over 60 minerals and enzymes plus amino acids and essential plant growth hormones. Seaweed based fertilizers are available in granular, liquid and powdered forms that can be dug in, sprayed on or watered in.

### 5 Benefits of Liquid Seaweed:

- Nutrients are in an immediately available form.
- In general plants, flowers and crops become more vigorous and healthier. More fruit will develop, flowers are more numerous and more vivid.
- Plants develop better frost and drought tolerance.
- It promotes strong vigorous root development and stronger plants that have a greater resistance to disease
- It contains starches that act like sponges and help to hold moisture in the ground.



*Grasses & perennials play well together!*

### Grasses in Summer

This long, dry spring and summer has been hard on some garden plants, but many ornamental grasses do not need much water or fussing-over once established and are quite happy with all this sunshine. If they were given a donut of mulch around their bases in spring many grasses probably haven't even noticed the drought.

**August is peak performance time for warm season** grasses like *Miscanthus* (Maiden Grass), *Pennisetum* (Fountain grass), *Panicum* (Switch Grass), *Imperata* (Blood Grass) and *Cortaderia* (Pampas Grass). These grasses are approaching their mature size and will be starting to flower. While flowering blossoms are fading these grasses add a punch of late summer colour, texture and movement to your borders.

**The cool season grasses** that filled out in spring and bloomed earlier are doing their usual summer shut down in this warm, dry weather. Grasses like *Calamagrostis* (Reed Grass), *Deschampsia* (Hair Grass), Fescues, *Helictotrichon* (Blue Oat), *Stipa gigantea* (Needle Grass), *Anemanthele lessoniana* (Pheasant Grass) and *Nasella tenuissima* (Mexican Feather Grass) need moisture and cooler temperatures to actively grow so they can look a little tired in August and will start to shed. Now is the time to rake out their old, dead foliage and tidy up the flowering seed heads.

As high summer turns into autumn, the colours of warm season grasses will intensify and the cool season grasses will refresh when the rain returns. Enjoy.

**Water Watch** The biggest challenge of this summer has been watering. Here in the CRD we are fortunate to have a good water supply, but the Gulf Islands and outlying areas are suffering dire shortages. Conservation is on everyone's mind. Plus, watering is time consuming - after a recent rainy day a lot of people were happy to have the night off from dragging the hose around! It would be good to know where the water should and shouldn't go.

**How can you tell if a plant needs water or not?** Consider the following:

- New plants need the most water as their root balls won't be much bigger than they were at planting time. The smaller the plant, the more often it will need water.
- Established trees and shrubs in good soil don't need daily watering, once or twice a week or less will usually do.
- Drought tolerant and native plants *aren't* drought tolerant until they have established a good root system; more water is needed the first year or two.
- Soils exposed to the sun dry out faster than those in shaded areas.
- Slow, deep watering is always better and water will percolate down further if the soil

- has been loosened.
- Compacted soils shed water rather than absorbing it. Lightly cultivating garden beds will vastly improve water retention.
  - Annual containers need more frequent watering as they mature and fill in.



*A wand with a good shut off makes the job easier*

**A lot can be learned** by a little careful digging around. It's quite shocking how dry it can be a few inches down, even in areas that have been regularly watered. A moisture meter is a very handy tool that can easily identify spots that have been either under-or over watered or are just right.

**Keep an eye on irrigation systems.** Emitters can get plugged or broken. Rabbits chew through micro-drip lines. Plants near sprinkler heads can block spray patterns, creating dry areas. Connections can come loose. Go out and check the system occasionally and make adjustments as needed. Ideally frequency and duration of watering should be adjusted over the growing season as plant needs vary.


## Sad Brown Lawns

If you are looking at your brown lawn and wondering how to get it back in shape, don't despair. **John Close** from [Lush Eco Lawns](#) will be here on **Saturday, Sept. 12 at 10:00** to talk about fall lawn care and how to recover from drought. Space is limited. To reserve a spot **call 250-656-0384** or send us an [EMAIL](#) (Please include your phone number)



**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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