



QUALITY PLANTS &
KNOWLEDGEABLE STAFF

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Nursery News/September 2021

COVID Protocols: Masks Indoors & Physical Distancing Outdoors Please



We're falling for fall! Autumn is the best time for planting trees, shrubs, perennials, and of course bulbs - especially after some much needed rain. It's also the time to harvest the abundance of veggies we've been cultivating all summer long (and stretching our creativity to the max to figure out what to do with all those zucchini!).

We are looking forward to our Fall Sale and to re-acquainting with you. The nursery is full to overflowing and it's a great time to find some goodies to tweak and tune-up your plantings.

Autumn is a fabulous season in the garden. We hope that you enjoy the colours and scents of fall as much as we do. If you don't have a Katsura tree in your yard, come by the nursery to have a sniff of one of ours. Katsuras exude a delicious scent of brown sugar as their leaves change colour. Intoxicating!

Laurel & Sue

Russell Nursery's

Fall Sale

September 24 to October 3

**Regular opening hours in effect: 9-4:30
daily except Mondays when we are closed.**

**Featuring 20-25% off all plants and pots.
PLUS a special 40% off clearance section.**



Also, some great buys in giftware and decor.

Fall-Planted Bulbs for Spring-Sprouted Flowers

by Christine



Bulbs. How should a gardener use them? As annuals? For naturalizing? Perennializing? Or making lasagne? Are they easy for beginners or challenging enough to be for seasoned gardeners only?

The answer to all these questions is an enthusiastic YES.

But it depends of course. On what does it depend? On the aims and predilections of each individual gardener and the nature of the bulbs chosen.

Some gardeners choose to treat bulbs as **annuals**. Big, strikingly-coloured tulips or daffodils get planted ever so tightly into pots so that they put on a dazzling spring show. Many find that though the bulbs live on after the first year, the subsequent shows are lacklustre and disappointing. If you are the kind of gardener that wants a pretty much guaranteed splurge of spring colour, you might not bother re-using potted bulbs as they can be tricky to resurrect. Into the compost they go after flowering, freeing up the pot for new summer plants and the fun of choosing a new batch of bulbs the following autumn.

Other gardeners use bulbs for **naturalizing** and/or **perennializing**. And while we're at it, what is the difference between naturalizing and perennializing anyway?

Naturalizing occurs when a plant that sprouted from a bulb produces readily germinating seed. The seeds drop and/or are spread by birds or wind (or gardeners). The seeds germinate and new plants are formed near and far from the original bulb that was planted. Gardeners wanting to encourage a meadow for instance are using bulbs like Snowdrops and Muscari to naturalize.

Perennializing occurs when planted bulbs form little bulbils that eventually mature into bulbs. Single bulbs gradually expand into a clump on the spot (like other perennials) rather than spreading further afield. Darwin hybrid tulips and hybrid daffodils are good perennializers.

The line between naturalizing and perennializing bulbs is a bit hazy. While all bulbs form bulbils, some take forever to produce mature bulbs and some seeds germinate more readily than others. As far as I can tell, the distinction is convenient not scientific and gets used more to describe bulbs that will (or will not) spread quickly (or annoyingly).

Bulbs generally do not go well with cheese and tomato sauce (onions excepted). Using bulbs in lasagne refers to '**lasagne planting**' not the hearty Italian culinary delight. By layering potted bulbs on top of one another gardeners can extend the bloom period significantly.

To build a lasagne bulb planting in a large pot, or in the garden, fill the bottom of

the pot, or planting hole, with 5 cm or so of nice rich compost. Generally speaking, **place the largest bulbs first** (closest to the bottom) with a little space between the bulbs. **Add another layer of compost** and **set the next layer of bulbs**. **Repeat** until your 5, or so, varieties of bulbs have been planted. **Top it all off** with another thick layer of **compost**. Planting bulbs too shallowly is a common cause of bulb failure. And finally, sit back and **wait until spring** (that is the hard part!).



When choosing bulbs for a lasagne planting keep in mind the labelled bloom times (choose early-, middle-, and late-bloomers) and a variety of colours so that you can enjoy an interesting, changing palette over a long period of time.

Bulbs are generally pretty easy. Just put them in a pot or in the ground and then forget about them until they begin to burst forth. It does not get easier or more satisfying than that! A trickier bulb use is forcing which gives colour-craving, sick-of-winter gardeners an even earlier blast of bulb beauty. Did you know that you can use alcohol when forcing bulbs to keep flower stems short and upright instead of tall and floppy? Did you also know that if you use 99% alcohol instead of 70% (or even a shot of vodka or gin) that the roots of your forced bulbs will blacken, rot, and become smelly? Sigh. That's the voice of experience speaking. I won't do that again.

Bulbs are multi-purpose garden gems and Russell Nursery is currently fully stocked with an alluring array of bulbs (and that's just the boxes/bags of bulbs ... wait until you get them in your garden!).

Meet the Staff

Introducing Jon

How long have you worked at the nursery?

Off and on for 4 years and full-time for about a year and a half.

Why did you get into horticulture?

I have always had an interest in plants because I have loved spending time outdoors camping and hiking since I was a child. Subsequently, my interest grew as I got older. It probably had something to do with living on my own and having my own space. That is when I began to experiment with growing food and amateur design, basically wanting to make my yard look nice and eat fresh vegetables. However, I would say most importantly, I got into horticulture because of my partner Nicole, who works at Russell Nursery as well. Her studies and projects at the Pacific Horticulture College inspired me, I often helped her with clients in their garden, and she is how I started helping out at the nursery with tree planting a few years ago. Through those experiences, I discovered that I really enjoyed the work and learning about all aspects of horticulture.



When someone visits the nursery, they are likely to find me ...

You will likely find me in the perennial section in front of the shop or around the wrap.

What are your top three favourite plants and why?

- 1.) My favorite perennial flower right now is **Gaura 'Belleza White'**. It has great branching that can have a grass like effect that moves with the wind. The flowers bloom up the branches and start in the summer and continue into the fall, so it is a long bloom time. Furthermore, it is quite drought resistant and looks good even during the hottest summer days.
- 2.) My favorite native perennial is **Asplenium trichomanes**. It is a miniature evergreen fern that has really nice long, slender fronds with black stems and rounded, bright green leaflets. I love it not only because it is evergreen and looks great, but it is also really tough. It can take part to deep dry shade, but it could take a bit of morning sun as well.
- 3.) I chose a shrub for my final fave. It is **Hypericum x inodorum 'Magical Midnight Glow'**. It is a semi-

evergreen upright shrub that grows two to three feet wide. I love it because of its yellow star-shaped flowers that bloom late summer into fall, and those flowers then turn into crimson berries. They really look great contrasting with the red stems and deep blue-green leaves that also take on some fall colour. They are a shrub that have year round interest that are also drought and deer resistant as well!



Introducing Patty

How long have you worked at the nursery?

5 years

Why did you get into horticulture?

I spent 20 years in silviculture (re-forestation) and I have always enjoyed working outdoors and hard physical work. Horticulture seemed like the logical next step.

When someone visits the nursery, they are likely to find me ...

In tree and shrub sales helping customers select the right plant for the right place. Or, in the the back, pruning and training trees. Or, hanging out in pots whenever possible.

What are your top three favourite plants and why?

Acer griseum – I love it for its winter interest. That peeling bark glows in the low winter light.

Luma 'Gangleam gold' – It's a variegated evergreen shrub with a dark red stem and white flowers/buds. The best thing is that the flower buds look like pearls and last for a long time.

Echinacea 'Cheyenne spirit' – I have a sea of them in my back yard that I enjoy very much.

Introducing Vicki

How long have you worked at the nursery?

3 wonderful years, best life choice ever!

Why did you get into horticulture?

My parents were avid gardeners and could grow anything. Our family's gardens were a constant source of conversation and pride. For as long as I can remember I dreamt of working in a garden nursery.

Having a very challenging property, I knew I needed to gain more knowledge as I began to build the garden of my dreams. This led me to the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific's Master Gardener Program. When I was offered an opportunity to join the team at Russell Nursery, I jumped at the chance and now I'm in my "Happy Place".

When someone visits the nursery, they are likely to find me ...

This time of year, you will find me busy receiving and sorting our amazing selection of beautiful Fall Bulbs.

The rest of the season you will find me everywhere I'm needed. I love this as I am continually learning! Also, anywhere you see a dog, you will find me close by with a treat in my pocket.

What are your top three favourite plants and why?

Arbutus unedo 'Compacta' – Fantastic shrub, so very versatile, great in containers, evergreen, offering year-round interest with white urn-shaped flowers in the spring and marble-sized coloured berries of orange, red and yellow. Bonus, the hummingbirds love it too!

***Alstroemeria* (Peruvian Lily)** – I absolutely love Alstros, they bloom from late spring into the fall and make fabulous long lasting cut flowers, a welcome addition to any perennial garden. A trick I learned from one of our customers is to pull them, not cut them when deadheading, as this encourages healthier, longer stems and new growth.

Japanese Maples – Oh my gosh, too many choices, I can't have too many in my garden! I would have to say among my favourites is the Viridis waterfall maple as it gracefully cascades over my water feature.



Introducing Laurel

How long have you worked at the nursery?

15 years,



Why did you get into horticulture?

Some of my earliest childhood memories are of my parents working in their garden and I have always been curious about plants. As a young adult I started out in Environmental Technology but found I was drawn to botany and taxonomy which eventually led me to enroll in the Landscape Horticulture program at the HCP. I felt as though I'd finally found my place and my people and I've never looked back!

When someone visits the nursery, they are likely to find me ...

Despite my short legs, I have a reputation for moving across the nursery *fast*. I like to see what's happening in every nook and cranny. Along the way you may find me chatting with customers, staff, or suppliers.

What are your top three favourite plants

and why?

This question is so hard! I love Japanese maples and right now my favourite is '**Tsukasa Silhouette**'. It's great for a narrow spot and seems to have fared better than other varieties in the heat we experienced this summer. **Hakonechloa macra** softens shady corners and thrives in containers and has a more subtle appearance than the variegated types. And I'm a huge fan of **dwarf Pines** for many reasons. They are heat, drought, and seaside tolerant, look super in a pot and moisture that collects on their needles provides water for insects. There are so many interesting varieties to choose from with different forms, colours, and textures (*we just got in some really cool ones, by the way!*). What's not to love?

Where Do Trees Come From?

Once upon a time, at a plant nursery close to home, a delivery of baby trees arrived cold, shivering, and bound tightly together. Tenderly, they were separated by a dedicated company of green-thumbed wizards. The bare-naked roots were bathed, trimmed, and settled into large vessels filled with potting mix. Then they were sprinkled with charmed turquoise and white beads and left out for the sun and rain to work their magic. When they grew into sturdy young trees they were adopted and embraced by a host of admiring gardening acolytes who gave them pride of place where they lived happily ever after. **The End.**

Okay, all joking and fairy tales aside, where do our trees come from?



The first step is ordering, which starts in June, with an eye to delivery the following March. We begin with our "tried and true" favourites, trees that we know do well here and then search out a few new types to try. The trees come from various growers, some local and some in Oregon.

Unfortunately, we don't always receive everything that we order. There can be many reasons for this including crop failure, shortages, and transport problems. COVID has also caused myriad issues in the supply chain. It's an especially good day when our US trees are finally here!

As a matter of fact, not fiction, trees arrive in the nursery as dormant bare root sticks tied together in bundles (see photo). It is possible for gardeners to purchase bare root trees, but there is only a narrow window between arrival and potting up. Most people prefer to choose their trees when they are leafed out

and actively growing. They look much more promising!

Staff (green-thumbed wizards all) carefully separate the roots after soaking and give them a trim (see photo). Each tree is carefully potted, always ensuring that there are no air pockets and that the trees are planted with the root flare at the soil surface, no deeper (so, so, so important for tree health). The magic turquoise beads are grains of Pro-Hort 20-10-10, a slow-release fertilizer that we use on pretty much everything in a 1 gallon pot or larger.

Young trees need formative pruning so that they grow into sturdy, healthy mature trees. What is meant by formative pruning? It refers to the process of shaping a tree when it is young to create the right trunk height and to encourage balanced new growth and well-spaced branching.

Once pruned and potted, the trees are loaded onto the tractor and moved to our "tree lines", those mostly out-of-bounds areas where trees are hooked up to wires so they don't fall over and to irrigation so they don't get thirsty. Young trees are monitored as they grow and undergo further pruning (or slug-baiting, fertilizing, etc.) as needed.



Trees are ready for sale once they have well developed roots (see photo), good top growth and strong trunks. Some trees tend to root out quickly while others are slow. Birches, for instance, may well be ready for sale mere months after potting in March but Parrotias may take another whole year to root fully. Sometimes trees are ready, but we hold them back anyway. Robinias, for instance, have the unfortunate habit of dropping all their leaves the moment their roots are disturbed. They recover, but it's quite alarming, so they aren't allowed to leave here until fall. Everyone expects leaves to fall off in September/October but not in July/August!

Once the trees are ready, they are tagged and moved into the sales area, but even though they are fully rooted and looking great by mid-summer, it's usually too hot and dry for planting. We encourage people to come in over the summer to choose and tag their trees. Then we hold and look

after them until better planting weather in fall.

Come fall, and once our sale is over, we start contacting people to arrange pick up or delivery. Our truck is usually very full and is quite a sight as it heads down the road taking our much loved trees to their new homes!

And Once A Tree is Planted ...

Remember that newly planted trees take at least two years to establish. During that time they are sensitive to environmental stresses, nutrient deficiencies and pest infestations. Keep a close eye on them! Be patient. It is often the third or fourth year after planting before good growth starts, especially if conditions are less than ideal.

So, don't fret if you don't see much growth early on. Remember that your newly planted tree will have a root system not much bigger than the pot it arrived in. Even with plenty of water, a new tree may become drought-stressed because it simply doesn't have a big enough root system to draw up the moisture needed to sustain itself properly. That will lessen over time as the roots push further out into the soil.

Mulching is one of the most beneficial things you can do to keep your trees healthy. A two- to four- inch deep layer of leaves or composted chips or bark is ideal. The mulched area around a young tree should be about three- to four-feet wide, which is also enough to protect your young tree from damage from lawnmowers and string trimmers. Take care that the mulch is not too close to the trunk by leaving a gap of six- to eight-inches or so around the base of the tree.

Damage from roving deer can permanently injure young trees. In the fall, the bucks like to use small diameter trees as scratching posts and can strip the bark or even snap the tree in half!. Protect trunks with a tree guard or fence.

Is your new tree struggling? If you think you've done everything right, and have waited patiently for some healthy growth, but your tree is struggling, please contact us! We are always here to help, and sometimes early intervention can save the day, and the tree.

Everyone here at Russell Nursery hopes that you and your new tree will live happily ever after!

