



Notes from

# HORNBAKER GARDENS

*"The Princeton Perennial People"*

22937 1140 N. Ave., Princeton, Illinois 61356

NEWSLETTER No. 12

(815) 659-3282

SEPT. 2000

## Glorious Grasses

As you have probably noticed, we have shifted our focus in the fall from garden mums to ornamental grasses. The grasses may not be as colorful as mums, but they are hardier, they can have a sensational impact from summer right through fall and winter, and they are not being sold at every grocery store and discount store in the country.

Grasses are becoming more popular all the time, so you are seeing them more in mixed gardens, in special gardens or groupings devoted to grasses, or planted as single specimen clumps. However, to really educate yourself as to the beauty of grasses and the wide range of varieties available, might we be so bold as to suggest a visit to our display gardens this fall? A couple of display beds that we planted four or five years ago have turned into something quite spectacular.

Last fall, we planted a "Tickle Garden", a concept that we unashamedly borrowed (stole) from Bill Brincka, whose lovely garden we visited several years ago. In the Tickle Garden, the clumps are planted several feet apart so that, when the clumps are mature, the arching blades of grass will tickle the garden visitors as they stroll between the clumps. Children, especially, will undoubtedly get a kick out of this garden. And the wide spacing allows the viewer to get a good, unobstructed view of each specimen. The clumps have put on remarkable growth in only one year, and will be doing some serious tickling in just another year.

We carry 60 different varieties of grasses. The most

popular group belongs to the Miscanthus family, of which we sell some 20 varieties. The Miscanthus varieties provide lush green or variegated foliage throughout the growing season, some turning a gorgeous red in the fall, and generally plume out anywhere from early September to mid-October, depending on the variety. The plumes are shiny and silvery, with a red or pink tinge, as they emerge. Then they fluff out with a white or beige hue, and eventually turn a darker beige color as they lose the fluffiness, but retain their flut-

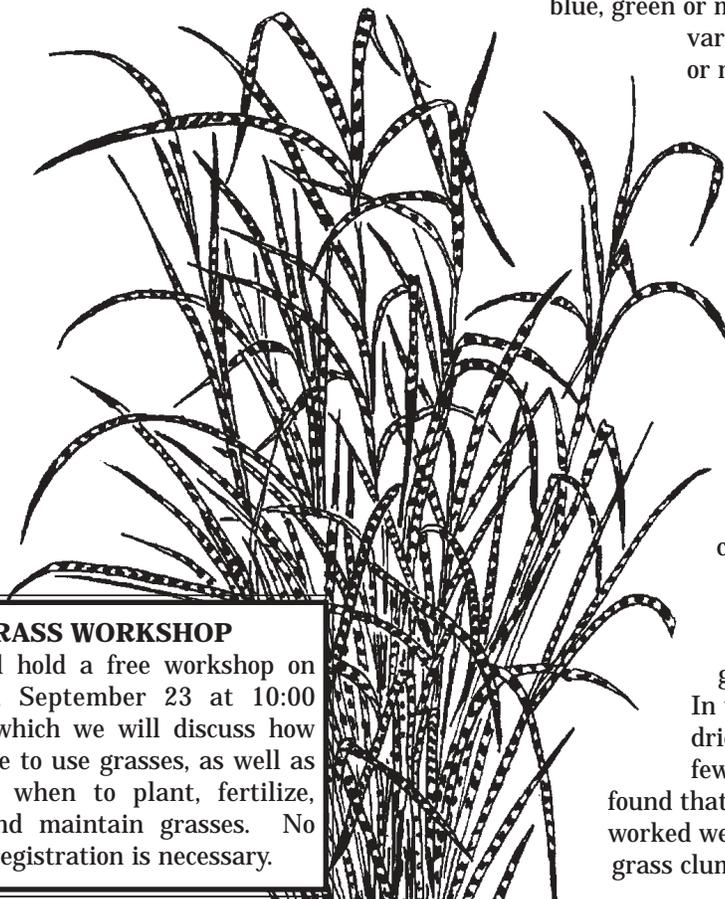
**OPEN THROUGH  
OCTOBER 15**  
Because of our focus on grasses, we will stay open a little later than usual this fall. Regular hours will continue through October 15, Monday through Saturday 8:00-5:00, and Sundays 12:00-5:00.  
We will be **closed** Labor Day, Monday, Sept. 4.

tery presence all winter. Varieties range from 3 feet to 8 feet tall.

The Panicum varieties are also very popular, and very hardy. Foliage is blue, green or maroon, with most varieties developing red or maroon tips in the fall.

The seed heads are not as showy as the Miscanthus plumes, but still make excellent dried bouquets all by themselves and good fillers when combined with flowers or other dried grasses. Most Panicum varieties grow to 4 feet, but a new variety called 'Dallas Blues' grows to 7 feet.

Mulch around your newly planted grasses for the winter. In the spring, cut the dried foliage back to a few inches of stubble. We found that power hedge clippers worked well for cutting back grass clumps this spring.



### GRASS WORKSHOP

We will hold a free workshop on Saturday, September 23 at 10:00 a.m., in which we will discuss how and where to use grasses, as well as how and when to plant, fertilize, divide, and maintain grasses. No advance registration is necessary.

# Fall Gardening Tips

For the most part, we leave our garden clean-up until spring, rather than doing it in the fall. Perhaps cleaning up plant debris would help control any diseases or pests that might over-winter in the debris, but that may be balanced out by the extra winter protection that is provided by the old foliage and the snow that it helps catch and hold in the garden. What really tips the scales in favor of spring clean-up is that it is just plain easier. In the fall or early winter, you have to get down on your hands and knees and take a pair of pruners to the foliage to remove it. By spring, most of the foliage has become detached from the plant and has disintegrated and decomposed, so that what little is left is easily removed by hand.

**Mulching** is beneficial all year long. It helps control weeds, holds moisture in, and adds organic matter to the soil as it decomposes. In the winter, mulch provides a protective blanket for the plants' roots. Fall is a good time to apply mulch since you don't have to worry about hurting the spent foliage. Mulch can be in the form of compost, bark, shredded hardwood, grass clippings, or other organic matter. Our favorite mulch for perennials is pine bark (actually, a blend of pine bark and composted pine bark), which we sell in bags or in bulk. It lasts longer than compost, but holds its dark color well, rather than turning gray as the hardwood mulches tend to do. Remember, you are mulching the roots of the plants, not the tops, so be careful not to smother the plant by covering it up. For those tender perennials that need a little more protection, use a light, loose material, such as straw or pine boughs, to cover them.

**Trees and shrubs:** Fall is a great time to plant trees and shrubs. Most container grown plants get fairly root-bound, so be sure to loosen the roots on the bottom and sides of the root mass in order to get the roots to take off into your soil, rather than continue to circle within the existing root mass. Water the plants

in well, and continue to water them every few days until the ground freezes up. It is essential that trees and shrubs, especially those that are newly planted, have adequate moisture going into winter. Conifers, especially, are in danger of drying out over winter. Again, a mulch will help hold in moisture.

**Pruning flowering shrubs:** Any pruning of flowering shrubs should generally be put off until just after they are done flowering next spring or summer. Pruning them in the fall or winter will not only result in removing much of the flowering wood, but will destroy the gracefulness of the arching branches on shrubs such as Forsythia and Spirea.

**Iris:** Borers can over-winter in debris around your irises, so it is good to remove dead iris foliage and other debris around your irises in late fall or early winter. If you have noticed a borer problem this year, be ready for them next spring. Spray in late April and again in early May with Cygon 2E. It is not a pleasant chemical, so be careful and follow label directions.

**Daylilies** are relatively trouble-free. Old foliage can be removed in late fall or early spring. Dividing can be done anytime during the growing season, but in order not to disturb the blooming, it is best done in early spring or sometime after they are done blooming. We do most of our dividing of daylilies in August or early September.

**Hostas** are also easy. Remove old foliage in late fall or early spring. If you have planted a young, prized, hosta late in the fall, you might want to protect it from heaving. Bob Olson, former president of the American Hosta Society, says he fills a plastic garbage bag with dry leaves and ties it off. After the ground freezes, he places the bag of leaves directly on top of his expensive new hosta. In early April, after the worst of winter, he simply removes the bag, and has no mess to clean up. Dividing hostas is best done in the spring when their noses are just starting to poke out of the ground, or in the fall, in which case the foliage can simply be cut off.

**Buddleia (Butterfly Bush)** is a tender, woody perennial. Do not prune it in the fall. For some reason, it seems to over-winter better if left unpruned. Apply a protective mulch, such as straw,

in late fall. In late spring, prune away the old wood, leaving 8-10 inches of stubs. In most cases, new growth comes up from the roots, but some growth may come from the stubs. If no growth comes from the stubs, they can be pruned away later.

**Peonies** are best divided in the fall. Just barely cover the buds with soil. Remove the spent foliage of established peonies in the fall. Fungus has become more of a problem with peonies in the last few years, so fall clean-up is a good sanitary measure.

**Mums:** We advise leaving the tops on mums for winter protection. An extra protective mulch such as straw or dried grass clippings would also help. Do not uncover too early in the spring. They often succumb to a late spring freeze.

## Bulbs for Spring Bloom

We should receive our supply of 10,000 bulbs from Holland around September 1. We buy in top quality bulbs in a wide selection. Besides the usual tulips, daffodils, and hyacinths, try some of the smaller bulbs, such as scilla, muscari, anemone, and allium. We will also have the large allium (*Allium giganteum*) and surprise lilies (*Lycoris squamigera*).

## Mums Still Available

Yes, we still grow several hundred mums for you to choose from. They are grown in the pot, which is embedded in the field, just as we have grown them in the past.

## Pro Gro Fertilizer

In our spring newsletter, we mentioned Pro Gro, the organic fertilizer that we use on everything we grow out here, including perennials, hostas, daylilies, irises, trees and shrubs, and even the lawn. It is a blend of eleven organic ingredients and minerals, including rock phosphate, oyster meal, kelp meal and greensand. Because it is slow acting and long lasting, we recommend using it whenever you set out new plants, even in the fall. Lots of our customers are using this fertilizer now. Try it and see why.

# Fall Specials

HORNBAKER GARDENS

*Potted daylilies and liliium —*

**50% off**

*Trees and Shrubs —*

**25% off**

*Peonies —* **50% off**

## Perennials

(including aquatic plants; not including hostas or grasses):

— those that were \$6.99

**now \$5.99**

■ buy 10 or more for **\$4.99** each

■ buy 20 or more for **\$4.49** each

— those that were \$7.99

**now \$5.99**

— those that were \$9.99

**now \$7.99**

*Caladium —*

**50% off**

*Buddleia*

(Butterfly Bush) —

**50% off**

*Mexican pottery  
and chimneys —*

**25% off**

*Large aluminum pots*

(Greek motif) —

**25% off**

*Japanese granite*

(lanterns, etc.) —

**10% off**

*Van Bloem time release*

*perennial fertilizer*

(was \$5.99) **now \$3.99**

✂  
*clip  
& save*

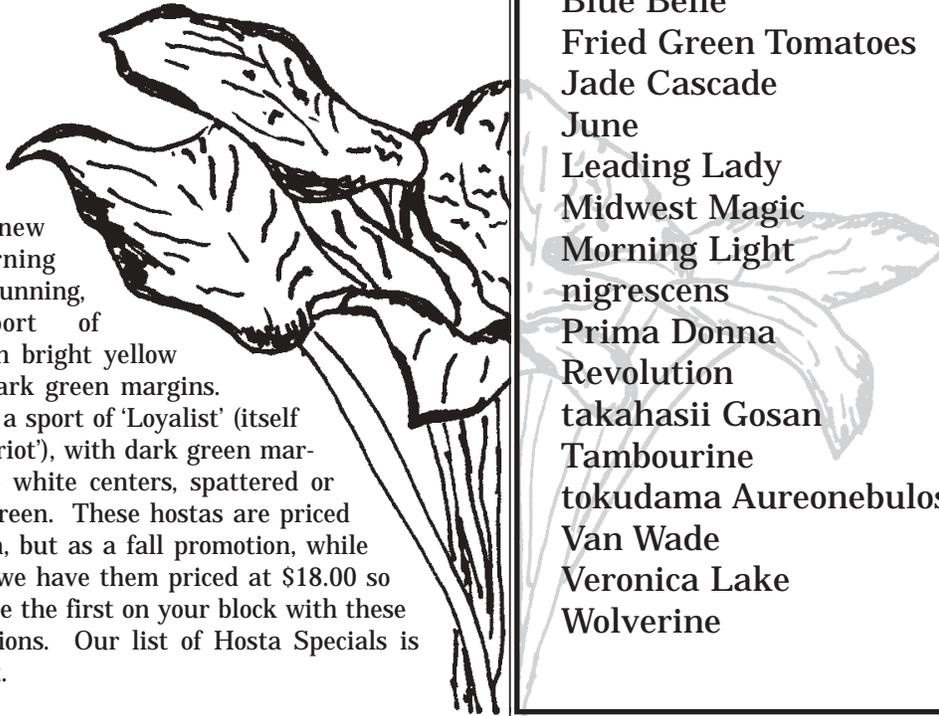


**HORNBAKER GARDENS**  
**COUPON**  
**25% off** of any one gift item from inside the retail gift shop

Good for  
Expires October 16, 2000

# New Hostas

We just got our hands on a couple of excellent new hostas. 'Morning Light' is a stunning, reversed sport of 'Twilight', with bright yellow centers and dark green margins. 'Revolution' is a sport of 'Loyalist' (itself a sport of 'Patriot'), with dark green margins and pure white centers, spattered or flecked with green. These hostas are priced at \$25.00 each, but as a fall promotion, while supplies last, we have them priced at \$18.00 so that you can be the first on your block with these new introductions. Our list of Hosta Specials is shown at right.



## Hosta Specials

	Was	Now
Big Daddy	15.00	10.00
Blue Belle	10.00	7.00
Fried Green Tomatoes	15.00	10.00
Jade Cascade	20.00	15.00
June	18.00	15.00
Leading Lady	25.00	18.00
Midwest Magic	12.00	8.00
Morning Light	25.00	18.00
nigrescens	15.00	10.00
Prima Donna	35.00	20.00
Revolution	25.00	18.00
takahasii Gosan	8.00	5.00
Tambourine	12.00	8.00
tokudama Aureonebulosa	15.00	10.00
Van Wade	15.00	10.00
Veronica Lake	12.00	8.00
Wolverine	20.00	15.00

## HORNBAKER GARDENS

22937 1140 N. Ave.,  
Princeton, Illinois 61356

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U.S. POSTAGE  
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PRINCETON, IL  
PERMIT NO. 325

We accept



### EASIEST DIRECTIONS TO HORNBAKER GARDENS:

From the intersection of I-180 and Rt. 26 (5 miles SE of Princeton), go toward Princeton on Rt. 26 about 1/4 mile and take the first left. Go 2 miles to the top of the steep hill.

