



Notes from

HORNBAKER GARDENS

"The Princeton Perennial People"

22937 1140 N. Ave., Princeton, Illinois 61356

NEWSLETTER No. 30

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MAY 2005

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Peak Iris Bloom Coming Soon

The weather has kept us guessing about the iris season this year. Early warm weather indicated an early season. Then, a string of very cold weather seemed to hold everything back. Now, it would appear that we are right on track for a normal peak bloom time falling during the last half of May, into the first few days of June. Some warm weather could bring things on very quickly.

As of May 9, most of the Standard Dwarf Bearded varieties are nearly done blooming, and many of the Border Bearded and Intermediate Bearded varieties are starting to bloom. The Tall Bearded won't be far behind.

Ray is back! Many of you iris fans

will recall that my mom and dad, Nancy and Ray Hornbaker, used to come up from Florida and virtually run the iris business for us for several seasons in a row, starting in 1990, when we first acquired the irises. Mom died suddenly in October of 2003, and we all miss her very much, and fondly remember her years as "The Iris Lady". Dad is in good health, given his 88 years, and called the other day to say that he would like to come up for a while during iris season. So if you are here anytime from May 23 through May 28, Dad is apt to be hanging out in the Iris Building. Stop in and have a laugh with him.

Please note that we will be closed on

Sundays, even during the peak of the iris season. However, we will be open on Memorial Day, Monday, May 30.

For those of you who have never purchased irises from us, a short explanation is in order. We take orders for the irises here in the spring. Customers walk through the field during bloom time and select the varieties they wish to order. The orders are placed and paid for now, and we dig the orders in July, usually a few days after July 4. We can ship the iris rhizomes to you, or you can pick them up. Most of our customers pick up their orders in July so that they can see the daylily field blooming at that time.

Pottery Alley Is A Popular Place

Eleven pallets of pottery came off the truck about ten days ago. We had not yet decided exactly where to put it all. We decided that, for the time being, we would put them in the space behind the mulch pile. After we unloaded the pallets and placed all of the pottery along both sides of the long, narrow space, we liked the looks of it, and named it "Pottery Alley". The amount of pottery filled the space well, and the colors really show up in the sunlight.

Pottery Alley has proven to be a popular place. There seems to be a size, shape, color, and price to please just about everyone. Get here quick

while the selection is still good. Customers have been most impressed with the uniqueness and reasonable prices of these works of art.

We have a selection of bamboo fountain kits that will turn some of the low, wide pots into outstanding water features for garden, porch, patio, or home. In the rush of spring activity, we have been so busy that we haven't even unpacked any of it yet, let alone get some fountains set up. We will try

to do so in the next few days.



Pottery Alley

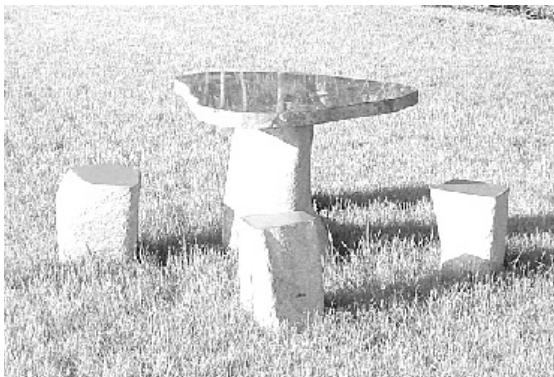
RETAIL HOURS

We are open Monday through Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. We are closed on Sundays. We will be open on Memorial Day, Monday, May 30, which should be a great day for the irises.

Open House Is Worth The Trip

Our eighteenth annual Open House and Hosta Walk will be held on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, June 9, 10, and 11. Refreshments will be served, and drawings for prizes will be held each day.

We hold this event on the second weekend of June each year because,



Enjoy a picnic at the new stone table, overlooking the Hosta Ravine.

by then, the hostas have fully opened up (and outgrown any frost damage, this year), and the gardens should be looking great.

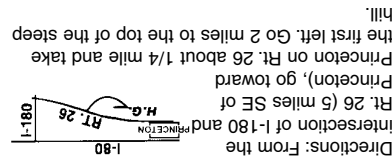
But just to make sure that your trip is worthwhile, we do run some very good specials for those three days. We will have a list of perennials, hostas, trees and shrubs, and some gift items that will have special, Open House prices. We never seem to get this list completed until just before the Open House, but we will get it posted on our website as soon as we have it ready.

So pack a picnic lunch, arrange to bring some friends, or meet them here, and come enjoy the gardens. Ozzie looks forward to seeing you again.

Tulip Tips

Our Dutch bulb supplier says, to get tulips to do well again next year, deadhead the flowers, and leave the foliage on the plants after they are done blooming. The foliage is helping to provide strength for next year's bloom. Once the foliage turns yellow or brown, you will be able to pull it off. As soon as the bloom is done, fertilize every two weeks with a liquid fertilizer until the foliage yellows. Drench the ground well with the liquid fertilizer so that it gets down deep to the bulbs. A granular fertilizer just won't get deep enough.

Daffodil foliage can be cut back by a third if you want to tidy things up a bit, but leave the rest of the foliage on until it yellows and pulls away. You should get several years of bloom from daffodils without doing anything special, but some liquid fertilizer would help them, as well. The foliage on the smaller bulbs, such as Scilla, fades out fairly quickly and can be pulled away soon.



GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE



We accept

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