

Looking For A B&B?

Many of our customers who drive a distance to visit us like to stay overnight in order to check out other attractions in the area, including antique shops, golf courses, and Historic Princeton, with its lovely homes, the Lovejoy Homestead, the Bureau County Historical Museum, and the Red Covered Bridge. A great store to check out in downtown Princeton is Hoffman's Patterns of the Past, which is an outstanding gift shop as well as a source of china to match

that special pattern, for which you are missing a couple of pieces.

Let us recommend a special treat: Chestnut Street Inn, in the small village of Sheffield, Illinois, just 15 minutes west of Princeton on Routes 6 and 34. This classic country inn, built in 1854 and operated by innkeepers Jeff and Monika Sudakov, is inviting, serene, sophisticated and lavishly elegant. And the food! Monika is an outstanding chef. Indulge in an exquisite full break-

fast in the formal dining room or on the sunlit patio. And for the discriminating palate, join them for a gourmet four course, fixed price dinner, available nightly (especially Friday and Saturday nights) by reservation only.

For more information about Chestnut Street Inn, see their website, www.chestnut-inn.com, or call them at 800 537-1304.

Annuals (continued from page 1)

your house. Our potting soil, which we use for perennials, will be fine for larger pots. For smaller pots, we'll have some bagged potting soil containing peat and perlite. We'll have someone at the wagon to give advice and help, or even plant containers for you, and we'll have handouts with some ideas.

We'll have lots of hanging baskets. Many of the hanging baskets can be dropped into a nice piece of pottery, so that there is not even any potting to do. One customer mentioned that he fills up the space in a large pot with empty milk jugs, and then places a hanging basket in the top.

New Plant Stakes

Those of you who like to mark your plants with the metal stakes that we sell have undoubtedly found that the life of those plant labels is limited because the wire stakes that go into the ground start to deteriorate in a couple of years. Thanks to the efforts of our friend, Chub Harper, we learned that the lifetime of the metal markers can be extended for many years by using stainless steel wire stakes. We found a company to make them for us. We are using them ourselves on all new plantings, and offering them to our customers, as well. They are more than twice the price of the regular stakes, but they really do hold up.

We also found that the name on the plates will last for years and years if you use a laser jet printer (not a deskjet), and print on a clear Avery label, which is then applied to the metal plate. This not only lasts for years, but looks great, compared to hand lettered labels.



Celebrating Our 20th Year

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Annuals At Hornbaker Gardens!

Yes, we are still "The Princeton Perennial People". We have not changed our focus. But in order to be more of a full service garden center, we have decided to carry annuals. Our supply will be coming from an outstanding grower, and we will tend to have larger, huskier plants than most other places offer. We hope that you will be as excited about our quality and selection of annuals as we and our employees already are.

This year, we won't have a special hoop house for the annuals. If we get some cold weather, we'll just have to run them into a hoop house or building for the night. So we will start out with our first shipment coming in the last week in April. That first shipment will be heavy on pansies and other annuals that can handle the cold well. Before Mother's Day, we will be loading up on all kinds of annuals.

Having all of this gorgeous pottery around is what got us wishing we had

annuals. Of course, there are many wonderful perennials that go well in containers, including hostas, heucheras, and grasses. But for long term color in a container, you need annuals. We are finding that you can make some sensational containers mixing annuals and perennials together.

This process will evolve over time, but our plan is to have a potting wagon set up on the concrete pad where our mulch and potting soil is stored, so that customers can pot up containers right here, and take the finished product home with them. Make the mess here instead of at

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Open House and Hosta Walk

Although this is our twentieth year in business, we will be holding our nineteenth annual Open House and Hosta Walk on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, June 8, 9 and 10. (We were strictly wholesale the first year.) The hostas should be looking their best at that time. Refreshments will be served, and drawings for prizes will be held each day. We will also have a selection of specially priced plants, including a good selection of hostas. Since we are celebrating our twentieth year in business, we will try to make this Open House a really good one, so come prepared to be pleased.

Peak Bloom Seasons: The peak of iris bloom is usually the last two weeks of May, although the weather can affect bloom season significantly. The shorter, early bloomers generally start blooming by the first of May.

Daylilies have an extended bloom season, but the peak season for us generally starts just after the 4th of July, and runs for the next three weeks. Some ornamental **grasses** plume out as early as July or August, but most, including the spectacular *Miscanthus* varieties, plume out in September and early October.

RETAIL HOURS

We are open April 10 through October 10. Hours will be 8:00 to 5:00, Monday through Saturday. We will be closed on Sundays, as well as on July 4 and Labor Day, September 4.

GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE



We accept

22937 1140 N. Ave.,
Princeton, Illinois 61356
HORNBAKER GARDENS

Website Offers Online Ordering

Our website, www.hornbakergardens.com, has been getting a makeover during the winter. Although the new version may not be up by the time this newsletter gets to you, we hope to have it in place soon. Online ordering of hostas, irises and daylilies will be available.

Our goal is still to be an outstanding, regional garden center with the finest display gardens in the Midwest. We know

that our customers will learn the most by coming here to see the display gardens and seek our advice. The online ordering will simply make it easier for those who live a great distance away to share in the fun. So please tell your friends and relatives who can't get here themselves that it is easy to get our hostas, irises and daylilies online.

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What's New

Perennial of the Year: The Perennial Plant Association has named *Dianthus* 'Firewitch' as the 2006 Perennial of the Year. 'Firewitch' is the type of *Dianthus* that is better known as pinks or cheddar pinks. It forms a low growing mat of bluish foliage, and is covered in late spring with hot magenta pink, very fragrant flowers. Spent flowers should be cut back to promote rebloom later. 'Firewitch' is excellent as a border edger, as a rock garden plant, planted in wall crevices, or as a ground cover on a sunny slope.

Hosta of the Year: The American Hosta Growers Association has named 'Stained Glass' as the 2006 Hosta of the Year. This medium-large hosta has bright gold, rounded leaves with green margins that streak into the interior. 'Stained Glass' is a sport of the popular 'Guacamole', the 2002 Hosta of the Year. It exhibits the same fast growth rate, but differs in that it displays its variegation earlier in the spring, and maintains its bright yellow centers throughout the season. Prominent veins in the leaves give it a "stained glass window" effect. Large, fragrant, near-white flowers perfume the garden in August.

A complete list of all of our new plants is posted on our website, www.hornbakergardens.com. Here are a few of the exciting new plants for this year:

Annuals and Herbs: Since all of the annuals are new for us, suffice it to say that we will have a wide range of annuals and herbs and hanging baskets.

Hostas: 'Deja Blu' is a very unusual sport of 'Blue Boy'. It has blue-green foliage, edged in yellow, with a cream lightning bolt that dances between the center of the leaf and the margin. 'Eye Declare' is a sport of 'Sea Fire', which is the brightest yellow hosta there is in the spring. 'Eye Declare' has the same bright yellow, but with a dark green margin. 'T. Rex' is a gargantuan-sized green hosta. We can hardly wait to have one in the ground for a few years to see how large this monster is going to

be. 'Kiwi Full Monty', from New Zealand, is a really nice looking clump, similar to 'Striptease' (last year's Hosta of the Year), but smaller and blue, instead of green.

Daylilies: Ellison's recent introductions should be a very popular attraction. See the article elsewhere in this newsletter. We have several other new varieties, as well. 'Sir Modred' is one of the best dark-colored daylilies available. The black-red flowers have a yellow throat, and are touted as sunfast and fragrant. 'Vanilla Candy' has creamy white flowers with a maroon red eye and matching picotee, and is another in the popular "candy" series by Stamile. 'Summer Dragon' exhibits showy, long-lasting, yellow flowers with a red eye.

Irises: New offerings include 'Gnus Flash', a very unusual flower with silver tan standards with grape streaks, and grape purple falls, covered with silver streaks. 'Princess Caroline de Monaco' is a lovely light blue self with large, ruffled petals and sharply contrasting, bright tangerine-orange beards. 'Jurassic Park' has canary yellow, broadly ruffled standards, which look striking against blended purple falls with silver beards.

Perennials: If you want a truly hardy garden mum, try *Dendranthema*. They bloom in October, and are so tough that they will still be blooming into November. Two new varieties are 'Rhumba', a coral-red flower that lightens to coral-peach, and 'Samba', which has rose pink flowers with yellow centers. Pinch these plants back in spring and summer, just like regular mums, to make the plants full and lower growing. You will be rewarded with an abundance of late flowers and a plant that will come back next spring.

The rage of new *Echinacea* (Coneflowers) continues. Besides the orange varieties that were new last year, we have 'Twilight', a vibrant rose-red with a deep red cone; 'Harvest Moon', with earthy gold, overlapping

petals that result in a nice, full flower; 'Hope', a soft pink, fragrant flower that helps raise money for breast cancer research.

The *Heucheras* (Coral Bells) just keep on coming. What great plants! They go great with hostas in partial shade, providing color all season with outstanding foliage. And they go great in containers, mixed in with just about anything else. We are in love with 'Peach Flambe', with bright peach-colored leaves in spring and summer, turning to plum in winter; and 'Sparkling Burgundy', with bright burgundy foliage that absolutely glows.

New peonies include 'Little Red Gem', a cute red single on a 20-inch plant. If you have never grown single peonies, you might want to give them a try. The single flowers don't catch the rainwater and fall to the ground the way that some of the fuller doubles do.

Grasses: *Calamagrostis* 'Eldorado' is a new gold variegated form of the popular 'Karl Foerster', growing 4' tall with stiffly erect plumes in summer. *Miscanthus* 'Gold Bar' is a dwarf Zebra Grass only 16-20" tall. It is reported to have double the variegated yellow banding of 'Little Zebra'.

Trees and Shrubs: Finally, there is a truly dwarf blue spruce, *Picea* 'Sester Dwarf', the perfect diminutive form, with stunning blue color and slow growth rate, and no pruning required to maintain its shape. Another good dwarf is *Tsuga* 'Bennett', a dwarf, spreading hemlock with arching branches, making a graceful plant for foundation plantings or shrub borders in part shade.

Maackia amurensis (Amur Maackia) is an excellent small tree, 20-30' tall, with white flower clusters in mid-summer. The bark exfoliates as the tree ages. We'll also have a named variety called 'Starburst'.

Three new pink-flowering Magnolias are 'Jane', which grows to 10'; 'Leonard Messel', up to 20'; and 'Galaxy', up to 25-30' tall. 'Merrill' is a white Magnolia that grows to 25'. Nothing quite announces early spring like a Magnolia.

Creating Outdoor Garden Rooms

By Jeff Bergfeld

"I need a landscape plan but don't know where to start." This is a common comment new clients share with me. How to design a new landscape "like you see in the magazines" can be an overwhelming task for many homeowners, no matter the size of the property. I'd like to share one aspect of how I typically approach residential landscape design in hopes that it might help you.

While I know that many of Hornbaker Gardens' customers are avid gardeners and simply enjoy the plants and getting their hands dirty, there is another compelling reason to invest more in your landscape.

"Spending 5 percent of the total value of your home on landscaping, and doing it wisely, you can add 15 percent or more to the value of your home." - Smart Money Magazine, March 2003.

"As an investment, landscaping can increase the value of your property by as much as 20 percent—if it is done well." - This Old House Magazine April 2003

The key words in both quotes are "wisely" and "done well". One can spend a lot of money on landscape and plants but unless you have a landscape master plan, you may not be getting the most from your investment.

When I first arrive at a client's property, I do not immediately begin "designing" the landscape in my head because I do not yet know enough about the site or the client. Rather, I begin assessing the "lay of the land": lot size, topography, existing landscape and trees, the context of the neighborhood or setting and the architectural style of the home. I then ask the client questions about their property and how they use or want to use the garden/property; how do they use the existing patio or yard, what garden style(s) do they enjoy, do they have any magazine clippings or books as ideas, do they do their own landscape maintenance, do they have children or dogs, etc.

Only after listening to the client's needs and wants, do I begin designing the landscape. But I do not attempt to tackle the entire yard at once. The key

is to breakdown the property into manageable pieces: garden rooms. An analogy would be that when an architect designs a home, he doesn't design four walls and roof; he designs rooms to meet the needs of the client. The same can be done with your landscape.

Think of your front yard, side yards, and back yard as rooms that you enter from and exit into the street, the house and adjoining garden rooms. And within these garden rooms, there might be smaller sub-rooms; e.g. your family room's window seat where you curl up with a book. The garden sub-room might be an entertainment terrace off the back of the house that transitions to the larger backyard, a small, welcoming seating area near the front door or a secluded hot-tub garden off the master bedroom.

The idea of defining garden rooms and their sub-rooms should take into account:

Structure – Your landscape has order and your garden rooms are designed to fit the style, space or privacy you are trying to achieve.

Scale – A garden room's scale or dimension should fit the dimension of the most prominent feature on the property: your home. The architectural dimension and context of your home will help dictate the proper size and shape of your outdoor rooms.

Flexibility – The garden rooms and their sub-rooms can be installed in phases without compromising the overall landscape master plan or your budget.

Variety – Different garden styles can

be achieved seamlessly and different exposures or micro-climates can also be addressed.

Maintenance – Design and select plants so that your valuable maintenance time and resources are spent wisely and not spread thinly over the entire property.

Space – Most importantly, garden rooms can provide you and your family with additional living space, outdoors, and get you into and enjoying your landscape investment.

We thank Jeff for volunteering to write this article, and look forward to more input from him. We have recommended Jeff to many customers and are getting lots of positive feedback.

Jeff Bergfeld, principal of Bergfeld Landscape Architecture Studio, is a landscape architect with over 17 years of experience in designing residential and commercial landscape designs. As a design-only practice, Jeff has the freedom to design what he feels best suits the home, the property's environment and, of course, the client's needs. Unlike a contractor, he is not limited to designing what his landscape crews are best at building or what product, plant or hardscape item has the highest profit margin. Therefore, whether you are installing the design yourself or asking Jeff to assist you with hiring a contractor to install the final product, you know you are getting an unbiased, garden savvy design. Please feel free to contact Jeff at 815-303-3996 (cell), 309-364-3071 (office) or info@bergfeldstudio.com, or visit his website, www.bergfeldstudio.com.

Bob Ellison's Daylilies

Bob Ellison is a well-known daylily hybridizer from Rockford, Illinois. He has created some outstanding introductions, many with heavy ruffling and "bubbling" on the edges. He does a lot of hybridizing and grows a lot of daylilies in a fairly small space.

In order to have enough space to continue hybridizing, a process that involves trialing thousands of seedlings to select the few that are outstanding, he has to keep moving out his previous hybrids, even though they are fairly recent introductions. Bob has the plants, and we have the space, so last fall he brought down around 20 varieties of recent introductions (several registered in 2005) and we lined them out in our daylily field.

We are very pleased with our relationship with Bob, and are thrilled to be offering these hybrids. Quantities are limited. After all, they have not existed for long. Descriptions are available on our website, and they will be blooming here in July.