

Early Iris Season?



'Dusky Challenger'

Given the heat that we had in April, we expect the iris season to run early this year. The last half of May is typically the peak of the season, so the middle two weeks of May will probably be the peak of the season this year. A lot depends on how much heat we get in the next ten days or so. Several of the early, short, SDB's were blooming by April 20, which is a week earlier than usual. We will update the progress of the iris bloom on the message scrolling across the top of our website's home page.

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 31.

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.

Open House June 10, 11 and 12

Our twenty-third annual Open House and Hosta Walk will be held on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, June 10, 11 and 12. The hostas should be looking great 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. Look for specials on some of our Shop items. You never know what we might decide to feature. The Open House specials list will be available on our website by June 9th.

A Choice Dwarf Bald Cypress

A couple of years ago, we had a handful of a new dwarf Bald Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) called 'Peve Minaret'. Fortunately, I managed to save one for ourselves and get it planted so that we could test it out, which doesn't always happen with some of the new trees or shrubs that we get in small numbers. 'Peve Minaret' has performed beautifully and appears to be as hardy as a regular Bald Cypress. Last year, we couldn't get our hands on a supply, but this year we have a good supply in two sizes.

It is an upright dwarf, growing slowly and topping out around 8'. Although it is a conifer, it is deciduous. The short needles turn orange in the fall before falling. The shaggy bark of the Bald Cypress is of interest all winter long. The new growth in spring is soft, making this little gem downright huggable. The needles never turn prickly, so it remains a huggable friend all summer.

Use 'Peve Minaret' wherever you want a controlled vertical accent, such as at the corner of the house or between windows. It is not a big space taker, so it fits in well in the mixed border with perennials and smaller shrubs. Plant in full sun to part shade. Provide ample water during the first year or two. Mulching helps hold moisture in.



T. 'Peve Minaret'



'Daub's Frosted' Juniper

Pizzazz On A Standard

In our last newsletter, I mentioned that we had some 'Daub's Frosted' Junipers on a standard coming in this spring. But I just have to rave a bit more, as well as provide you with a picture. They just came off the truck yesterday, and they really are sharp.

We've always been a fan of this low growing Juniper, with its short blue-green needles tipped with bright yellow frosting. When I toured some nurseries in Oregon last fall, I saw this plant grafted on a standard, and just had to have a few. They are stunners, grafted on a thick, sturdy trunk. We only have five, so if we manage to get one planted, that leaves four for the rest of you to fight over.

Controlling Iris Borer

We try to use organic methods and controls as much as possible, but we haven't found a great organic control for iris borers yet. And it is possible that this advice is already too late for you this year. But since you may be thinking about irises this time of year, perhaps now is a good time to talk about controlling borers.

What is probably the best control for iris borers is a chemical called imidacloprid, often listed under the brand name of Merit. It is a systemic insecticide that may come in liquid or granular form. We prefer to use granular. It needs to be applied early in the season, like late March or early April, since it takes a week or more for the iris plants to take up the chemical into their systems. Then, when the borers hatch, crawl up the leaves and chew an entry into the leaves, they are killed by the systemic chemical. The imidacloprid stays in the plant for the whole growing season, so one application does the job. An application now may still be effective. I just don't know. But it is probably most effective early, when the borers are tiny.

Hot Hostas



H. 'Eye Declare'

Two hostas that seem to be in everyone's cart this spring are 'Eye Declare' and 'Blue Ivory'. They are among the most eye-catching hostas out there. 'Eye Declare' is a dark green margined sport of 'Sea Fire', one of the brightest yellow hostas in spring. A group of brightly colored 'Eye Declare' hostas on the bench can't help but grab your attention. 'Blue Ivory' is a sport of 'Halcyon', as is this year's Hosta of the Year, 'First Frost'. 'Blue Ivory' has the same wonderful frosty blue color of its parent, but with very wide, very white margins.

Part of the reason for these hostas being so hot this year is that we have had them for three years now, so our stock has sized up nicely. It's one thing to be told that a young hosta is going to be wonderful, but it's another thing to see it for yourself.



H. 'Blue Ivory'

Retail Hours

From April 10 through October 10, we are open Monday through Saturday, 8:00 to 5:00. We will be open on Memorial Day, Monday, May 31. We are closed on Sundays, as well as on July 4, and Labor Day, September 6.