



www.hornbakergardens.com  
 email: mail@hornbakergardens.com  
 22937 1140 N. Ave., Princeton, Illinois 61356  
 (815) 659-3282

## Open Sundays And Evenings!

So many customers have asked us to be open on Sundays and evenings that we have decided to be more accommodating, at least for the first three months of the season. So, from April 10 (a Sunday) through July 10 (also a Sunday) of this year, we will be open Monday through Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Sunday 12:00 to 5:00. Then, from July 11 through October 10,

we will go back to our regular hours of Monday through Saturday 8:00 to 5:00. The evening hours should make it easier for local folks to get out here, and the Sunday hours will especially help those coming from a distance. However, we will be closed Easter Sunday, April 24. We will also be closed on Monday, July 4, and Labor Day, Monday, September 5.



Photo by Melanie Blandford.

## 2011 Perennial Of The Year: Amsonia Hubrichtii

*Amsonia hubrichtii* is the Perennial Plant Association's 2011 Perennial Plant of the Year. Pronounced am-SO-nee-ah hew-BRIK-tee-eye, this sturdy plant is better known as Arkansas blue star. Light blue flowers in spring are followed by a marvelous display of billowy, ferny foliage in summer. The foliage turns a showy golden yellow in fall, making for a colorful autumn display that is second to none among herbaceous perennials. Although named for its spring flowers, the fall display is probably why gardeners like this plant the most. It goes great with some of the fall show-offs like *Echinacea*, *Sambucus* 'Black Lace', and ornamental grasses.

Blue star is best grown in full sun, where, once established, it is a drought tolerant plant. It is adaptive to various soils and diseases are rare. Hardy to Zone 4, this Perennial of the Year is a tough, hardy plant that will give you years of performance in the garden.

## Expansion Of Annuals

Our Annual House has been bursting at the seams and overflowing into the parking area for a couple of years. So last fall we disassembled House A, the large hoop house right behind the Annual House, and reassembled it, with improvements, in order to triple the space we can use for annuals.

The Michigan grower from whom we get our annuals specializes in trays of larger, huskier plants, which will outgrow the smaller plants usually sold in trays. We'll also have an expanded selection of **fruits** and **vegetables** this year, along with a lot more **succulents**, which have really become popular. As long as you are already here for our perennials, you might as well consider us as your source for outstanding annuals.

## Open House And Hosta Walk

Our annual Open House and Hosta Walk will be held on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 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.

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 around July 1 and runs for the next three weeks. Some ornamental grasses plume out as early as July or August, while most of the spectacular *Miscanthus* varieties plume out in September and early October.

# What's New at Hornbaker Gardens

We have posted a more complete list of new plants for 2011 on our website. Click on "New Plants" to see that list. Here are some that we look forward to seeing:

**Hostas:** We have over 40 new hostas this year. Once a hostaholic, always a hostaholic. Last year's Hosta of the Year, the excellent 'First Frost', has sported an even showier version called 'Autumn Frost' (\$18). It has the same frosty blue color, but with extra wide yellow margins that lighten to creamy white later in the season. Another good medium sized hosta is 'Georgia Sweetheart' (\$18), a showy sport of 'American Sweetheart'. The centers of the foliage on 'Georgia Sweetheart' start gold and turn to cream, with beautifully contrasting, dark green margins. Also of medium size is 'Temptation' (\$20), a stunning, white centered sport of 'Elegans', with blue margins.

People are always looking for big blue hostas. Many already have a 'Blue Angel', and they are looking for something new. We have two new, large blue ones for you this year. 'Yankee Blue' (\$15) is a large, vigorous blue hosta, forming a full, symmetrical, wide mound of elongated, wedge-shaped leaves. Its waxy coating holds the blue coloring well into the season. Even larger is 'Millenium' (\$18), a monster of a mound of rounded, dark blue leaves.

Our other new extra-large hosta is 'Devil's Advocate' (\$25), a huge sport of 'Blue Angel'. It is a somewhat subtly variegated hosta that is blue, with green margins that lighten to apple green. Like its parent, it has heavy substance and is a great grower.



Hosta 'Curly Fries'

New small hostas include 'Curly Fries' (\$25), a most unusual hosta with very wavy, heavily subtended, narrow, yellow leaves, giving it a spidery appearance. And be sure to check out 'Lakeside Paisley Print' (\$18), a stunning small hosta with wide, wavy green margins and narrow, creamy white markings in the center, which shoot out in a feathery pattern. This, also, is a small hosta with good substance.

There are several good, new gold hostas, including 'City Lights' (\$18), a large hosta with brilliant gold color; 'Bumblebee' (\$18), a medium-large beauty of rich gold, heavily corrugated foliage; 'Sun Shower' (\$25), the eye-catching centerpiece of Bob Solberg's Longiana program; and 'Herbal Tea' (\$15), a nicely cupped, bright gold hosta.

**Daylilies:** 'Super Honor' (Dove 1986) has very large, purple flowers that are very fragrant and nicely ruffled, along with a pronounced lemon-lime throat. Three new daylilies are touted as being everblooming or reblooming. 'Apricot Sparkles' is



Daylily 'Earlybird Cardinal'

an everblooming dwarf variety that blooms very early and reblooms until frost, with deep apricot, ruffled flowers. 'Earlybird Cardinal' (Apps) is a watermelon red with piecrust edges that blooms early and reblooms until frost. 'Wild and Wonderful' (Stamile 2002) has very large, spider blooms that are salmon pink with a red chevron, and is said to rebloom.

We also went up to Bob Ellison's place last summer and loaded up our large van with a bunch of clumps of new varieties, some of which are Bob's hybrids, and several of some other well-known hybridizers. We have lined them out in the field. Most will probably not be in great enough supply to start selling this year, but you might want to walk the field this summer to see some of the new stuff coming down the pipe.

**Perennials:** Again this year, we will have around 75 new perennials. We are quite excited to have found a couple of sources of Martagon Lilies. Customers are always asking about the beautiful clump that we have growing out near the parking lot. We acquired that several years ago from a tissue culture lab. The plants were quite small, and took around three years to grow into a mature clump. Because of that time lag, the lab quit producing them, and we sold off all that we had. But now we have found some mature bulbs, which we potted up last fall. They are not cheap, at \$29.99, but they are very hardy and form a good sized clump as they mature and multiply. Martagon Lilies have recurved blooms that dangle on tall stems. They do best in some part shade, and make wonderful, contrasting additions to shade gardens featuring large hosta clumps. We have an unnamed purple variety and a white variety ('Album'), both of which may get up to 5' tall, and a maroon variety called 'Cabernet', which is said to get around 3' tall. These are sure to be real conversation pieces in your gardens.

*Amsonia hubrichtii* is the 2011 Perennial of the Year, but you might want to also look at *Amsonia* 'Blue Ice', which is a more compact version of Blue Star, at 12-16 inches. There is also a more compact version of *Baptisia*, last year's Perennial of the Year, called 'Starlite Prairieblues', standing 3' tall, sporting periwinkle blue with butter cream keels.

*Echinaceas* continue to be hot, and we have eleven new varieties! I won't bother to list them all here, but, needless to say, there are several in the orange, peach and yellow color ranges. Check out the complete New Plants list for descriptions.

Hybridizers of *Helleborus* have been very busy the past few years. New varieties just keep coming out. Better known as Lenten Rose, this group of plants is among the first to bloom in

## What's New

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Hydrangea 'Bella Anna'

the spring in the shade garden. All of the four new ones that we have this year grow 18-22" tall and are hardy to Zone 4. The names 'Grape Galaxy', 'Ice Follies', 'Pink Parachutes' and 'Red Racer' pretty well tell you the colors of the flowers on each.

A new variety of the old fashioned Bleeding Heart, *Dicentra spectabilis* 'Valentine', is described as being really red, rather than the rosy pink of the standard variety. Likewise, a new Fernleaf Bleeding Heart, *Dicentra* 'Burning Hearts' is touted as having valentine red, heart shaped flowers.

**Trees and Shrubs:** There is a lot of excitement about the pink forms of *Hydrangea arborescens*. Described as the pink forms of the well-known, white-flowered 'Annabelle', both 'Incredibelle Spirit' and 'Bella Anna' are receiving quite a bit of press in gardening magazines, articles, and advertisement. Those in the know seem to favor 'Bella Anna', the hybrid from Michael Dirr, generally considered to be the expert in the country on trees and shrubs. It is hitting the market a year later than 'Invincibelle Spirit', but is considered to have better pink color. We'll have some in for Mother's Day weekend, and will get a larger shipment in around the first of June.

Another new hydrangea is *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Great Star', a unique and unusual variety from France. Its white, wavy, star-shaped florets start blooming in mid-summer and continue until frost. It grows up to 6' tall and is hardy to Zone 4.

A couple of new, very hardy shrubs for sun sound interesting. *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Little Devil' is a smaller form of burgundy-foliaged Ninebark, growing 3-4' tall, with pinkish white flowers in June and interesting, exfoliating bark in winter. *Spirea x vanhouttei* 'Firegold' is a variety of Bridal

Wreath from Quebec with the same white flowers, but with bright lemon-lime foliage.

If you are looking for a yellow evergreen to brighten up the landscape, check out three new forms of Arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*) that we will have on hand this year. 'Fire Chief' has reddish new growth which turns yellow. 'Rheingold' has intense, orange-yellow color in spring and summer, turning copper-orange in winter, and takes well to regular shearing. Both grow 3-5' tall. 'Yellow Ribbon' is a taller, narrow variety with yellow new growth in spring, growing 5-10' tall and 2-3' wide.

Dragon's Eye Pine (*Pinus densiflora* 'Oculis-draconis') is a tree that is green in spring, but explodes into gorgeous variegation in the middle of summer and holds the variegation well into winter. The variegation seems to intensify as the tree ages. One that we planted around four years ago has always been nice as it variegated, but was absolutely stunning last year. Everyone wanted to know what that tree up on the corner was. We have 10 nice B&B Dragon's Eye Pines coming in this year. It's not on our new plants list because we have carried it in the past, but always in a smaller size. These B&B trees should be outstanding.

We're trying out a handful of new Japanese Maples (*Acer palmatum*) this year. For more in the way of descriptions, see our list, but if names like 'Orange Dream', 'Rhode Island Red', and 'Sango Kaku' sound interesting to you, get here early because supplies are very limited. Our trees and shrubs will be coming in during the week of April 10.

**B&B Trees:** Although we generally have a few balled and burlaped trees on hand, we usually prefer containerized trees because they are easier to hold and care for into the summer and fall. However, some deals are just too good to pass up. Because of the economy in general, and the housing slump in particular, some of the wholesale nurseries have offered discounts on some very nice B&B trees. So we'll have a larger inventory of B&B trees this spring, but they are priced to sell. Come help yourselves. We do offer delivery and planting services locally. Here is a list of those trees.

| Qty. | Tree  | Price  |
|------|---|--------|
| 6    | Acer rubrum 'Sun Valley'—2" cal.                  | 199.99 |
| 6    | Acer palmatum 'Bloodgood'—M-S—4'                  | 199.99 |
| 3    | Acer palmatum dissectum 'Orangeola'—M-S—3'        | 199.99 |
| 2    | Acer pseudoplatanus 'Eskimo Sunset'—5'            | 199.99 |
| 5    | Acer triflorum—8'                                 | 279.99 |
| 5    | Amelanchier grand. 'Autumn Brilliance'—1.75" cal. | 224.99 |
| 3    | Fagus sylvatica 'Asplenifolia'—6'                 | 299.99 |
| 2    | Fagus sylvatica 'Purple Fountain'—7'              | 249.99 |
| 3    | Ginkgo biloba 'Autumn Gold'—6'                    | 199.99 |
| 2    | Larix kaempferi 'Diana'—6'                        | 199.99 |
| 10   | Pinus densiflora 'Oculis-draconis'—5'             | 224.99 |

# “Gardening Together” Workshops

We're all in this gardening thing together, and learning from one another as we go. What's wonderful is that there is always more to learn. This year, we are hosting a series of workshops that we call “Gardening Together”. Below is a list of the workshops with dates and brief descriptions. More detailed descriptions are available on our website. Most of the workshops are available twice, on Thursday evenings, and again on the Saturdays that follow. We hope that this will provide better opportunities for you to make it to the workshops. We'll try to keep the workshops short and to the point, but you may want to bring along lawn chairs. All of the workshops are free.

**Dividing Perennials:** Thursday, April 21, at 6:00 p.m., and Saturday, April 23, at 10:00 a.m.—Rich will discuss and demonstrate when and how to divide a variety of perennials, including hostas, daylilies and grasses.

**Kids Photography by Nicole Isaacson:** Saturday, April 30, 9:00 a.m. to noon—Actually, this is not really a workshop. Professional photographer, Nicole Isaacson (who, by the way, did a great job at Sara's and Mike's wedding out here), will be here to take pictures of your children. The idea is to get a great picture to give to Mom on Mother's Day. So think ahead, Dad and grandparents, and Moms too, of course. No sitting fee will be charged. Nicole will snap some pics of your child or children, in a garden setting or sitting on the giant granite turtle, for example, and you can take a look at the pics right on her camera and decide if you want to purchase any. If you do, she will have them ready, or shipped to you, by Mother's Day. A 4x6 will be \$10.00, a 5x7 will be \$20.00, and an 8x10 will be \$32.00. Photos can then be picked up at Nicole's studio in Princeton later the following week, or can be shipped for a small fee.

**Great Combo Containers:** Thursday, April, 28, at 6:00 p.m., and Saturday, April 30, at 10:00 a.m.—Molly (Hornbaker) Blogg and Mary Scanland will show you how to create a great combination container. Then, if you wish, they and the rest of the staff will help you create one of your own. Bring your own container or purchase one here, and we'll help you get creative.

**Kids' Containers for Mother's Day:** Thursday, May 5, at 6:00 p.m., and Saturday, May 7, at 10:00 a.m.—Here's a chance for the kids to come get their hands dirty and create something pretty for Mom, right before Mother's Day. We'll give them some ideas, and then help them, as needed, to get something potted up for Mom. They can bring their own container, and we will try to have a good selection of inexpensive containers available here. Cookies and lemonade will follow.

**Herbs for Cooking, Beverages and Potpourri:**

Thursday, May 12, at 6:00 p.m., and Saturday, May 14, at 1:30 p.m.—Charon Freeberg (our Lady of the Annual House) will share her experience with using herbs, not only in the kitchen, but in some very interesting potpourri containers.

**Kathy O'Malley on Color in the Garden without Flowers:** Saturday, May 14, at 10:00 a.m.—Former WGN radio personality (of Kathy and Judy fame), avid gardener, and our friend, Kathy O'Malley, will share some ideas on having color in the garden using foliage. Kathy's a knowledgeable and experienced gardener, and is always fun to listen to.

**Pondless Waterfall Installation:** Thursday, May 19, at 6:00 p.m., and Saturday, May 21, at 10:00 a.m.—David Hornbaker will show you how easy it is to install a pondless waterfall. If you like to do it yourself, this workshop will help you tremendously. See for yourself what it looks like down under.

**Bubbler**

**Installation:** Thursday, May 26, at 6:00 p.m., and Saturday, May 28, at 10:00 a.m.—Just about any piece of pottery or other container can be turned into an attractive, bubbling water feature. David Hornbaker will show you how.



**Cut Flower**

**Arranging:** Thursday, Pebble Pot Bubbler June 2, at 6:00 p.m., and Saturday, June 4, at 10:00 a.m.—Learn the basics of flower arranging from our own David, who is always bringing fresh arrangements into the house. Also, learn what to plant in order to have the flowers you want in early June. After the workshop, we will have a supply of fresh-cut material and some inexpensive florist vases on hand for 20 people to make small arrangements to take home. Please call ahead to reserve a spot for that portion of the workshop.

**Pruning Perennials with Jane Morris:** Thursday, June 9, at 6:00 p.m., and Saturday, June 11, at 10:00—Jane Morris, our head gardener for the last 12 years, says that early June is the ideal time to take out the pruners to pinch and cut back perennials to control height and shape and make for sturdier, more floriferous plants, thus preventing sprawling plants and the need to stake. Jane has done wonders for our gardens, and she can help you do the same for yours.

# JANE MORRIS—“The Garden Governess”

Jane Morris, our head gardener for the last 12 years has decided to move on, and we will miss her greatly. She has done a wonderful job creating and maintaining the gardens out here.

Jane has started her own business, The Gardening Governess, offering onsite, hands-on instruction in garden maintenance or renovation to both novice and experienced gardeners. She has seen a need for these services as people have stopped to ask questions while she was working in our gardens.

Her philosophy is that a good garden

becomes a great garden when well maintained. It is beautiful the entire year, not just for a season or two while in bloom. Understanding how and when to perform various gardening tasks will save a gardener both time and money.

Jane will go to your property with her gardening tools and determine what maintenance is needed at that time. She will teach you how to best perform various timely gardening tasks, and will advise you on adding, eliminating, or moving plants to enhance your gardens.

Her services are available three

ways: a one-time visit; a season long contract with 3 or more visits; or as group lessons with 3 or more gardeners, meeting at each person's garden for at least one session, with all participating in learning gardening skills.

You can come get a sample of Jane's helpful advice at the workshops she is giving here on Pruning Perennials, June 9 and 11. See the “Gardening Together” Workshop article in this newsletter.

Contact Jane by phone at 815 866-8165, or by email at [grdnlvr@hotmail.com](mailto:grdnlvr@hotmail.com) for more information.

## ‘Praying Hands’ Is Hosta Of The Year

The American Hosta Growers Association has named ‘Praying Hands’ as the 2011 Hosta of the Year. We have been growing this wonderful hosta for several years, and it is definitely one of the most unique and unusual hostas on the market today.

‘Praying Hands’ is an upright grower with narrow, tightly folded leaves that resemble hands folded in prayer. Leaves are a rich, dark green with thin gold margins, and are heavily rippled. Lavender flowers are held nicely above the foliage in late summer.

Place this hosta in a special spot in your shade garden—along a path or near a bench where you like to sit and have a morning cup of coffee. It is a medium-small to medium sized hosta. Although it is a slow grower as a young plant, we have been growing the plants we offer for over two years, so they have chunked out nicely and have an excellent root system.



Hosta ‘Praying Hands’

### **Here is a list of the Hostas of the Year since the program began in 1996:**

|      |                    |      |                   |
|------|--------------------|------|-------------------|
| 1996 | ‘So Sweet’         | 2004 | ‘Sum & Substance’ |
| 1997 | ‘Patriot’          | 2005 | ‘Striptease’      |
| 1998 | ‘Fragrant Bouquet’ | 2006 | ‘Stained Glass’   |
| 1999 | ‘Paul’s Glory’     | 2007 | ‘Paradigm’        |
| 2000 | ‘Sagae’            | 2008 | ‘Blue Mouse Ears’ |
| 2001 | ‘June’             | 2009 | ‘Earth Angel’     |
| 2002 | ‘Guacamole’        | 2010 | ‘First Frost’     |
| 2003 | ‘Regal Splendor’   |      |                   |

## “Refreshing” The Website

This is a reminder that, to make sure you are seeing the latest changes that we have made to our website, [www.hornbakergardens.com](http://www.hornbakergardens.com), you may want to refresh the site. We have learned that, with some computers, it is important to hit the “refresh” button occasionally when you go to sites that you have visited before. Your computer may be remembering the way the site was the last time that you visited, and puts up an image of the way the site was, rather than the way the site is now.