



SPRING 2010

Green Words

THE NEWSLETTER OF TREE • TURF • SOIL • LAND • FOREST



There are sure signs of spring as I write

this: the days are decidedly longer, the sap buckets are filling, the coffee table is covered with seed catalogs and gardening books, and my wife is snowshoeing around the yard deciding where to plant a few more trees in May.

She's been inspired by our feature on flowering trees, and I know better than to try and interfere with the plan-making of a self-proclaimed gardening addict. I've learned that I enjoy the seasonal project dreaming just as much as she does, even if all of our plans never materialize. In an effort to support our local communities we want to help with public space beautification projects this year as well—see page 3 for details.

In an uncertain world we at Chippers continue to keep our attention on the basics, doing what we love to do everyday. Our guideposts have been our values of Hard Work, Integrity, Perseverance, Responsibility and Humor. They have served us well, as we hope to do for you.

—Will Russell

Stars for All Seasons: Our Favorite Flowering Trees

Cal Felicetti, ASCA Member Consulting Arborist

Mundy Wilson, Business & Marketing Manager, Garden Consultant

Is there anything quite like the beauty of flowering trees after a long, colorless winter and bland mud season? Even as professional arborists we are always inspired by the rainbow of blooms that bring our landscape to life beginning in April and often extending into the early summer. And many of these same specimens that astound our senses early on continue to be the stars of the garden throughout the seasons, offering attractive leaf shapes, striking woody structures, flashy fall color and colorful berries.

All of our recommendations offer exceptional beauty, are considered large deciduous shrubs or small trees, are relatively insect and disease resistant, and most offer food or habitat for wildlife. Not all of our choices in this article are considered 'native' but none of them are considered 'invasive.' Please visit *The Nature Conservancy* at www.nature.org for more information on these topics.

"He that plants trees loves others beside himself."

—THOMAS FULLER

American Yellowwood *Cladrastis kentukea*

It takes a long time for this tree to bloom, but once it does, wow! Glorious Wisteria-like fragrant white blooms put on a show in June, sometimes yearly but most often every two

to three years. The bark is smooth and silvery and the leaves turn yellow in the fall, similar to American Beech *Fagus grandifolia*. Grows 35-50' high, with 30-50' spread, in full sun.

Cornelian Cherry *Cornus mas* Move over forsythia! Clusters of fluffy yellow flowers dot this early bloomer that brighten the last days of mud season. Provides true year-round interest with wonderful fall color, bright red fruits adored by wildlife (and by humans for jelly-making!), and mottled exfoliating bark on mature specimens. Grows 10-15' high, with 8-12' spread, in sun or partial shade.

Eastern Redbud *Cercis canadensis* We love and recommend this tree but it is only borderline hardy in our growing zone so plant it in a very protected spot in your landscape. By choosing a northern seed source winter hardiness is improved, and the gorgeous rose-pink flowers that appear in May last up to three weeks. Grows to 25' high, with 8-12' spread, in sun or partial shade.

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Did You Know?

Fruit bearing trees often self prune after pollination or in times of drought, resulting in normal and commonly known 'fruit drop.'



FEATURED POET:

Sara Teasdale



How many million Aprils came before I ever knew how white a cherry bough could be, a bed of squills, how blue

And many a dancing April when life is done with me, will lift the blue flame of the flower and the white flame of the tree

Oh burn me with your beauty then, oh hurt me tree and flower, lest in the end death try to take even this glistening hour...

— from *Blue Squills*, 1920

Flowering Crabapple *Malus sp.* Choose a disease resistant variety with a mature shape and size that fits your space for the spectacular impact of this tree in the landscape. The breadth and depth of variety available in our area is magnificent with hundreds of specimen choices. One of our favorites is 'Prairiefire,' with purplish-red flowers that blaze in the sunshine and provide excellent red-purple berries for wildlife in the fall. This variety grows 15-20' high with a round shape. All crabapples require full sun to thrive and benefit greatly from occasional pruning.

Flowering Dogwood *Cornus florida* Native in the southern parts of our region, this tree is extremely attractive in May with its large, white flower bracts, and again in the fall with burgundy foliage. Many birds love it for shelter and nesting, and thrushes in particular thrive on the bright red berries that appear in the fall. Border-line hardy in our area, the best bet is to only buy trees propagated from northern stock and plant where sheltered from winter winds. Grows 15-20' high, with 10-15' spread, in full or partial sun.

Fringe Tree *Chionanthus virginicus* Technically a shrub but becomes more tree-like with age. One of the last spring trees to flower with unique, tassle-like, feathery white, sweet-smelling flowers in June. Lovely planted in groves. Produces blue fruits adored by wildlife. Grows 10-15' high, with 8-12' spread, in sun or partial shade.

Japanese Pagodatree, Chinese Scholartree *Sophora japonica* Fine-leaved specimen with white, fragrant blooms that appear in August when very few other trees or shrubs are in flower. Plant in a protected area to the east of a building for best results. Grows 35-50' high, with 25-35' spread, in full sun.

Kousa Dogwood *Cornus kousa* Similar to Flowering Dogwood *Cornus florida* in growth habit but a little more cold hardy. Flowers in June for up to a month with cream-colored bracts that turn pinkish after a few weeks. Looks great all year and wildlife loves the red fruits that appear in fall. Grows up to 20' high, with 10-15' spread, in sun or partial shade.

Star Magnolia *Magnolia stellata* Afford this tree some protection from northern winter winds and it will reward you with 3-4" diameter white flowers in May. *Magnolia loebneri* 'Dr.Merrill' is an excellent alternative to the Star in more exposed conditions. The oval to rounded shape makes it an excellent specimen tree with attractive gray bark. Grows 12-15' high, with 10-12' spread, in sun or partial shade.

Washington Hawthorne *Crataegus phaenopyrum* Hawthorne varieties number in the thousands, but this is one of the best for wide seasonal interest. Fragrant white flowers in May give way to deep red leaves in the fall, and orange-red fruit follows in the winter. This tree has 2" thorns, making an excellent specimen for hedgerows and wildlife habitat. Grows 20-25' high, with 10-20' spread, in full sun.

Contact us if you need more information or help with planting this spring:
askthearborist@chippersinc.com

Sources: *Landscape Plants for Vermont* by UVM Extension; *Forever Green: The Dartmouth College Campus An Arboretum of Northern Trees* by Mollie K. Hughes; *University of Connecticut Plant Database* www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/index.html

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NOTES FROM MR. GRASS: *Customer Forum*

Q: What is thatch?

Thatch is defined as living and non-living “stuff” lying between the upper turf blades and the soil. A thatch layer between 0-1/2" is considered healthy but one approaching 1" or greater resists water absorption like a dry sponge. Excessive thatch also encourages many types of insects and disease issues. Aeration is a simple, yet effective annual process to reduce thatch in a healthy lawn.

Q: What is the difference between core aeration and dethatching?

Commercial grade aerators physically remove plugs from your lawn and improve water, moisture, and nutrient absorption into the soil, while enhancing root growth and thatch decomposition. Dethatching machines slice the lawn creating large volumes of plant debris and can often cause extensive damage if not used properly. Aeration is recommended on all lawns on a yearly basis while dethatching is only left to the most mature, thick lawns with a thatch near 1" as a renovating process.

Q: What is the advantage of using high calcium lime on my lawn versus what I see at the store?

High calcium lime provides an essential micronutrient to help reduce soil compaction, enhance bacteria growth for improved organic matter, and improve resistance to insect and disease damage. High calcium lime can be applied at one quarter the rate of standard lime and changes the soil pH in weeks—not months!

Q: Why do I need to cut my lawn so high? Three inches seems really long!

The shorter your grass, the hotter the soil becomes, encouraging not only weeds like crabgrass but insects such as grubs. Short turf reduces the ability of grass to capture sunlight that in turn leads to thinning and browning in the summer due to heat stress.

[Please email your turf related questions to: mrgrass@chippersinc.com]

Love the Online Life?

We have lots of options this year for staying in touch with us electronically. Check out all our online resources:

WEBSITE: What we do and how we do it at www.chippersinc.com.

BLOG: Seasonal tips, advice and your questions answered about green care at www.thisoldyard.net.

FACEBOOK PAGE: Become a fan of Chippers Inc. by logging into your Facebook account and searching for us, or click on the badge at our website.

EMAIL NEWSLETTER: Our Green Care Tips is sent out monthly with timely tips, offers and advice. Visit the ‘Register for Email Tips’ page of our website or email marketing@chippersinc.com with your full name to sign up for this method of communication that saves our printed resources. You can opt out at any time and we never, ever share your information with anyone else, ever. PDFs of GreenWords newsletters are also available at our website.

However you choose to stay in touch, we always look forward to hearing from you!

Find a Need, Plant a Seed

Our 2010 Community Beautification Initiative

We believe in contributing to the communities that sustain us. Although we always sponsor and donate to many local causes and charities throughout the region, this year we also want to make a direct contribution to the beautification of our community spaces with the actual professional green care services we provide: tree, turf, soil, land and forest. Projects can range from tree planting to natural turf enhancement, from pruning and cabling to field mowing.

Project requests for up to a day's worth of gratis Chippers work should be submitted in writing by May 1, 2010 to:

Mundy Wilson
Business & Marketing Manager,
Chippers Inc.,
1241 Pomfret Road
Woodstock, VT 05091

or via email:

contactus@chippersinc.com

*–Please put ‘Plant A Seed’
in the subject line of your email.*

Suggested projects should fall within a 10 mile radius of each of these towns:

Meredith, New London and Lebanon, New Hampshire, and Woodstock, Vermont; all requests must be for properties within the public domain; and all requests should fall within the scope of services we provide. Please be as specific as possible in your proposal.

Visit our website www.chippersinc.com for ideas about what we actually do before you make your request, please!

Accepted projects will be notified by June 1, 2010.



Spring Check List

- Visit local home and garden shows
- Order next year's firewood
- Call for free estimate for Natural Turf Care
- Plan to protect trees from any pending construction
- Prune shrubs
- Have trees professionally inspected
- Test soil
- Remove protective mulch
- Turn over gardens and add compost
- Sharpen mower blades
- Fertilize trees & lawns
- Divide summer & fall blooming perennials
- Be on the watch for tent caterpillar webs
- Mow lawns 3" high & leave clippings – Call for more information

OUR SPRING EVENTS

HomeLife Show for the Upper Valley
 Friday, March 26 2-9pm,
 Saturday March 27 10am-9pm,
 Sunday March 28 10am-4pm

Lakeside Living Expo for the Lakes Region

Friday, July 16 12-8pm,
 Saturday, July 17 10am-8pm,
 Sunday, July 20 10am-4pm

Visit us at either of these events and enter our drawing for \$1000 worth of Chippers' services at your property!

*“My lilac trees are old and tall:
 I cannot reach their bloom at all.
 They send their perfume over trees
 and roof and streets, to find the bees.”*

—LOUISE DRISCOLL (1857-1957)
from My Garden Is a Pleasant Place



Enhancing Your Outdoor Living Spaces

Woodstock, VT 05091

1241 Pomfret Road

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