



Clematis 'Sugar Candy'

THE E. C. BROWNS'
NURSERY, INC.

Spring 2003

Volume 8, Issue 1

Growin' Newz

Oaks are among the best trees one can grow here in northern New England. Majestic and stately, they tend to be very long lived and disease resistant, and provide excellent fall color, and abundant winter interest (including persistent foliage in many cases). Durable and strong, the wood from most oaks makes wonderful firewood and fine furniture. Bearing familiar acorns, with their bowl-like caps, oaks provide economically important food for wildlife and (delightfully edible ?) nuts for man. Generally classified into two groups, the Red Oak Group (deeper, redder colored wood, leaves, bristly with veins that protrude right through their tips) and White Oak Group (lighter, whiter wood, leaf margins that are always rounded), oaks provide us with many of the attributes we consider when planting a shade or ornamental tree in our landscape.

Red Oak Group:

Red Oak, *Quercus rubra*, is our native oak. It is the fastest growing (Dirr gives 2 feet per year) and the most easily transplanted of all our northern oaks. It becomes a spectacular shade tree, over time, with a very dense rounded



Red Oak fall color

canopy, often with strong twisting branches. Usually in the fall its dark green, lustrous leaves change to a bright or russet red color although sometimes manage only to transform to a yellowish brown. Certain autumns

the red hues seem better than usual; last fall was one of those. Red Oaks perform well in most of our native soils, especially those that are deep and well drained, and they are very resistant to pests and disease.

Pin Oak, *Quercus palustris*, is America's number one oak- even listed as America's foremost shade tree by a 1989 survey of the magazine *American Nurseryman*. It is easy to transplant and like most natives of wetter sites, it can withstand the soil compaction one gets in urban areas. It is also neatly pyramidal, regular and somewhat narrow making it good as a street tree. Its lower branches are pendulous; the middle are horizontal; and the upper branches are upright making it easily recognizable in the landscape.



Pin Oak habit

Northern Pin Oak, *Quercus ellipsoidalis*, is another native of the upper Midwest- found in areas with -40° F winter temperatures. It's hardier than regular pin oak and doesn't get chlorosis (yellowing of the leaves which *Quercus palustris* gets) and has excellent true red fall color.

White oak Group:

White Oak, *Quercus alba* is native to the Connecticut River valley in our area. There are some nice stands of them in Hanover, N.H. and Newbury, VT. This species has a particularly interesting irregular branching habit

and a particularly good winter aspect. The trunks are more grey than other oaks and the leaves persist longer on the trees, turning a pinkish-brown color that makes them easy to recognize in the late fall and winter at a glance. They are slower growing and more difficult to transplant than red or pin oaks making them less as popular as a nursery tree. The white oak, native from Maine to Florida, tends to vary some in its hardiness so we are trying to propagate them from acorns collected around here rather than buying them from an unknown seed source that could compromise its hardiness.

Bur Oak or Mossy Cup Oak, *Quercus macrocarpa*, is a nursery favorite among the oaks. The branching habit is extremely wide and picturesque—the branchlets and twigs are often winged with cork (which is believed to save them from prairie fires in the upper mid west where the species is centered). The bark often develops deep ridges and furrows, dark grey to grey-brown in color, making it easy to identify. There are some native disjunct populations of them in Vermont and Maine. The acorns are the largest of our North



Bur oak acorn

American oaks' and have an interesting, fringed cap or cup (involucre). They seem to grow faster and transplant better than reputed...but give

(Continued on page 5)

B

lueberries are perhaps our most popular shrub at the nursery. Having beautiful delicate white flowers in the spring, copious amounts of scrumptious blue berries in the late summer and finishing off with a spectacular display of bright orange-to-red foliage in the fall, it's easy to understand why.

Over the years, *Vaccinium corymbosum*, the northern high-bush blueberry and the native low-bush blueberry, *Vaccinium angustifolium*, have been hybridized and cultivated to produce dozens of different varieties. Each different variety was selected for its unique qualities of hardiness, fruit size, taste or plant size.

A hundred years ago, they were not cultivated at all—in fact people thought they couldn't grow in cultivation. They had to be collected from the wild, and they were. In the pine barrens of southern New Jersey, the local "Pineys" would often set aside some time in July to gather these native fruit and they usually knew where to find the good ones.

Dr. Frederick V. Coville of the USDA started studying wild blueberries in 1908, first locating superior wild plants in New Hampshire. Then



High bush blueberry fall color

in 1911, a Quaker farmer and largely self-taught scientist, Elizabeth Coleman White, read Coville's USDA pamphlet entitled, "Experiments in Blueberry Culture." She invited him to continue his research on blueberries at Whites-

Blueberries

Crosses of these original fruit were later selected and others carried this research forward.

bog, in New Lisbon, N.J., where she helped run her family's cranberry business (at the time the biggest cranberry plantation in the U.S.). They could grow the blueberries on higher ground where cranberries did poorly, and if it panned out (which it did), they would harvest blueberries in July and August, which wouldn't overlap with the cranberry harvest later in the fall. The White family

would pay \$50 per year for labor and Elizabeth White would help; the Whites would have the profit from the fruit. Coville accepted this offer. Elizabeth White offered from one to three dollars a plant in 1914 for superior wild blueberries, or huckleberries, as they were called. People interested in collecting large fruited native blueberries could get a kit that contained: 1. a bottle with a preservative called formalin, 2. a gauge with holes to measure the diameter of the fruit (\$1.00 per bush for the smallest, then \$1.50, \$2.00, and \$3.00 for a bush where you could fill a bottle with berries that were that diameter or bigger), and 3. Elizabeth White's labels to mark the bush for later digging. Then they would fill the bottle with the biggest fruit and label the plant. Miss White, or "Miss Lizzie" as she was known, would then pay them for their help in digging and transplanting the blueberries to her farm and further, name the variety after the finder. Only berries 5/8" or bigger were sought. Jim Adams found 'Adams,' Ralph Harding found 'Harding,' Theodore Dunphy found 'Dunphy,' Sam Lemon found 'Sam' and Rube Leek found 'Rubel.'

By 1927, they had six varieties; Rubel, Harding, Sam, Grover, Adams and Dunphy. The 60-acre crop was about 64,000 quarts, worth about \$20,000.00.

This season we will carry about 10 different varieties (Blueray, Bluejay, Bluecrop, Jersey, Patriot, Northland, Chippewa, Northblue, Northcountry, Polaris and St. Cloud) of the hardiest and tastiest blueberries available for this climate.



High bush blueberry in fruit

The University of Vermont Extension berry

specialist writes that blueberries are higher in anti-oxidants than any other fruit or vegetable which means they could help combat cancer and slow the aging process. Also there is evidence of blueberries fighting urinary tract infections and heart disease, and they help night vision (see www.uvm.edu).

Blueberries are shallow-rooted, with lots of small, fibrous roots which lack root hairs. Thus, they need plenty of moisture yet need to be well drained. Sandy, very acid soil with 3-4" of mulch on top would be ideal. They tend to do best and be most productive



'Patriot' Blueberry

in full sun; however, they are still extremely ornamental in a bit of shade. With regular pruning and fertilizing you can have healthy and productive bushes... so that you can prepare and bring blueberry pies to your favorite local nursery people!

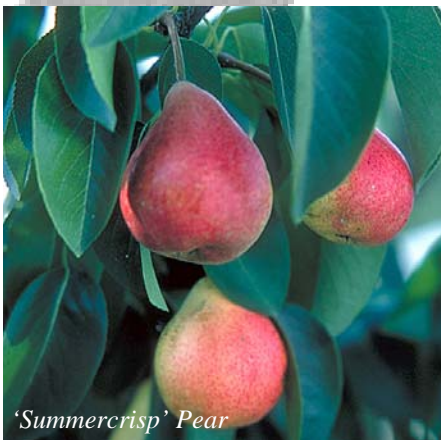
Hardy Pears

Last year was a good year for pears in Vermont. It seems to me they tolerate and even like more drought than other fruits. Mine were appetizing and blemish free. My 'Ure,' 'Summcrisp,' and 'Nova' bore appetizing and blemish-free fruit.

Besides the tasty crop, the trees are very ornamental with myriads of snow-white flowers and glossy, deep emerald green foliage. Being more upright than apples they can fit into smaller spots. Two different varieties are generally needed for cross pollination.

The following hardy pears, which we carry, that tend to survive this far north usually are smaller, don't keep as well, and have a distinct taste different from most common pears:

'Summer Crisp' are very early with a thin, reddish skin which is stripey, and taste good. Summer-ripening pears are a plus because they bear before the



'Summercrisp' Pear

apples and ripen well before frost. Later varieties don't do it soon enough for us here. 'Summercrisp' is the hardiest pear at the University of Minnesota Research Center, resists fire blight and bears every year. It can be stored for 2 months (like all pears, it should be harvested before dead ripe and then allowed to ripen).

'Ure' are quite small— 2". Given their size and rock-like hardness, my first reaction was to laugh; however, when they ripened properly, they were

delicious with a different texture and flavor from any other pear I've ever



'Ure' Pear

tasted. They were quite juicy and a little tart. The trees were packed with fruit— I couldn't use it all— and they are particularly vigorous and grow wider than most other pears. 'Ure' was developed in 1978 at the Morden Research Station in Manitoba, Canada.

'Clapp's Favorite,' listed as zone 5, does very well for us. It produces many, many pears which need to be thinned for the best quality. It was raised by Thaddeus Clapp of Dorchester, MA, and first mentioned in 1860.

'Luscious,' developed in Brookings, S.D., in 1973, tastes like a very intense, crispier 'Bartlett.' It produces medium-



'Luscious' Pear

sized fruit in late September and is somewhat resistant to fire blight. Like

'Gourmet,' it is pollen-sterile, meaning it cannot be used to pollinate another variety.

'Parker' is an open pollinated seedling of Manchurian pear from Excelsior, Minn. The large, roundish fruit mature in mid-August.

'Patten' was developed by C.G. Patten of Charles City, IA, and ripens mid September. It is large in size and is a particularly good dessert pear.



'Patten' Pear

'Golden Spice' is of unknown parentage from Excelsior, Minn. in 1949. The fruit is small, tart, spicy and is borne in midseason.

'Gourmet' was introduced by two men from Brookings, S.D. in 1988. It's exceedingly cold-hardy, medium-sized juicy and sweet, with a crisp texture.

'Bartlett,' the most popular pear in the U.S., can bear excellent fruit in this area but is not quite as reliably hardy. A true multi-purpose pear, it has buttery, juicy highly flavored flesh with a very thin golden yellow skin. Bears at a young age.

Pears need to be planted within 100 feet of each other to cross pollinate successfully. Try to avoid planting them in low areas where standing water or late frosts could occur. Generally, the fruits need to be thinned well before harvest and should be picked before they fully mature allowing them finish ripening inside in a sunny window.



ecbrownsnursery.com is a Reality!

It took longer than anticipated and generated more than a few headaches, but as we draw nearer to the 22nd century we have launched a website. Thanks, in no small terms, to Dirk Ussler of Site-by-Site Internet Design in Fairlee, VT, we have created a site that we expect to become more expansive and informative in the near future. ecbrownsnursery.com will, hopefully, help bridge some information gaps between us and the general public and allow us better to serve everyone. We have no intentions, at this time, to do any e-commerce...our sales will continue to originate strictly at our present physical location. Take a peek.... and who knows, maybe there will be something waiting there for YOU!

LONG BLOOMING COREOPSIS

IF YOU WANT SPECTACULAR COLOR IN YOUR GARDEN FOR MOST OF THE SUMMER AND DISLIKE FUSSING WITH ANNUALS, HERE IS YOUR ANSWER:



Coreopsis rosea 'Sweet Dreams'

Height: 15-22" Zones: 4-9 sun

The flowers have a raspberry-red center that fades into soft pinkish-white petals. A real knock-out that keeps blooming all summer long! Thread-like leaves with a nice upright habit.



Coreopsis verticillata 'Moonbeam'

Height: 15-24" Zones: 4-9 sun

A perennial masterpiece! Cool lemon-yellow flowers, from June through October, atop a soft needle-like of foliage. Easy to grow and maintain. 1992 Perennial Plant Association Plant of the Year.



Coreopsis x 'Limerock Ruby'

Height: 18-22" Zones: 4-9 sun

A wonderful new Coreopsis that every plant fancier should have! Abundant, daisy-like, ruby-red flowers with yellow centers. They will bloom all summer. Found by Maria Ann Faria of Limerock Plant Farm in Lincoln, RI.



Coreopsis rosea 'American Dream'

Height: 18-24" Zones: 4-9 sun

A new, medium pink, daisy-like flower that bloom for most of the summer. A darker pink than the species and a much more vigorous grower. It has been grown by the Dutch for several years and was the 1993 Plant of the Year in the Netherlands.



A view from the top as work goes on...

Growin' Newz

is a publication of
The E. C. Browns' Nursery

Head Writer:

Chris Wilson

Chief Editor & Publisher:

Kevin Brown

Prufreader

Dana Wilson

Our Motto: "We have no motto"

...putting together the Growin' Newz.



Lilac Corner

Banner of Lenin

The Russian lilac, 'Znamya Lenina', (Banner of Lenin), finally bloomed for us in 2002 and we saw mature specimens at Highland Park in Rochester, N.Y. Sure enough, it is an outstanding lilac and is now my favorite lilac. It does look as if red-violet banners are in your garden. Dan Cohen of Dooryard Lilacs in Craftsbury Common, VT, said it is his showiest lilac and Frank Moro with Select Plus Nursery in Mascouche, Quebec, told me last summer it is his favorite dark purple lilac. It has single large purple-red florets showing cherry



Syringa 'Znamya Lenina'

shades, with purple-lilac on petals' reverse. Developed by Leonid Kolesnikov in 1963, it is a cross of two different hybrids of 'Congo,' a single red flowering lilac. It's fair to say that his lilacs are the best new lilacs we have, available since the break-up of the U.S.S.R. and the end of the "Cold War." The blue 'Nadezhda' (Hope), the pale, pale pink 'Krasavitsa Moskv'y' (Beauty of Moscow) are also excellent and we expect the white 'Sovetskaya Arktika' (Soviet Arctic) to be as wonderful (hopefully it will bloom for us this year).



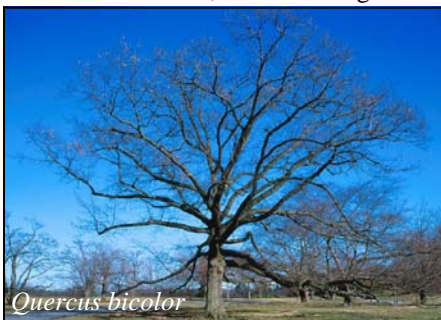
Syringa 'Sovetskaya Arktika'

All are invited to a
Lilac Walk & Tea
Sunday, June 1st
4:00 pm
 at Chris & Dana Wilson's
 In West Newbury, VT
 RSVP

(Continued from page 1)

them plenty of room to grow, they will get large!

Swamp White Oak, *Quercus bicolor*, is another beautiful, native North American majestic tree—the national champion being 120' x 92'. Like other members of the white oak group, it has rounded leaf lobes, which distinguishes



Quercus bicolor

it from the red oak group with sharp, pointed lobes. The tree will have a

stiffly pyramidal habit when young, becoming broadly rounded at maturity. There are some beautiful specimens in Hanover. They seem, to us, to be fairly easily handled and transplanted. They do well in soils that are moist, with low pH (acid). Swamp white oaks are also identified by exfoliating bark on twigs and long-stalked acorns.

English Oak, *Quercus robur*, is not commonly grown around here—we are not sure why. It is hardy to zone 4 and has attractive, glossy, blue-green leathery leaves. It has a broad, rounded habit (40-60' high) with strong prominent trunks that provide an elegant architectural appearance. English oaks tend to favor soils that have a high pH and may not lend itself to many of our soils without proper soil correction. A variety of English Oak called 'Fastigiata'



Quercus robur acorn

is commonly used for its tall slender habit that is well suited to smaller more confined spaces.

Heritage Oak, *Quercus x macdanielli* 'Clemons', is a hybrid of Bur and English oak. It has shiny, dark-green, and mildew resistant foliage. It maintains a central leader and grows a dense, uniform, pyramidal crown. It will grow to 60-80' in height and 30-40' in spread. This hybrid shows outstanding promise as a beautiful specimen tree for the front lawn.



3782 Route 113

P.O. Box 237

Thetford Center, VT 05075

Presort Standard
Auto
U.S. Postage PAID
Thetford Center, VT
Permit #9

Return Service Requested

Phone: (802) 785-2167

Fax: (802) 785-2602

Email: kevin.p.brown@valley.net

info@ecbrownsnursery.com

Mon.-Sat. 8:00 am to 5:30 pm
