



*Centaurea montana* 'Amethyst Dream'



Wide diversity of hardy plants.  
Design and installation of complete landscape projects.

Spring 2009

Volume 14, Issue 1

# Growin' Newz

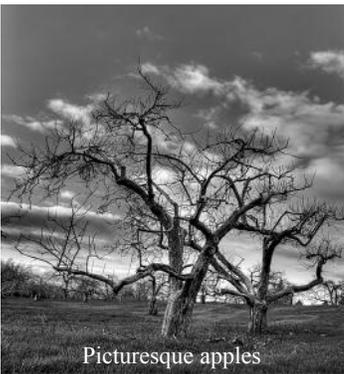
## Edible Landscaping

by Christopher Wilson

**F**ruit plants are at least as beautiful as “ornamentals.” Why not kill two birds with one stone (or feed two birds with one bush) and grow apples, plums and grapes instead of lilacs, deciduous azaleas and clematis. This is not really to say that I don't like

lilacs etc. because in fact I have lots of them and get more every year.

Apple trees are one of the most picturesque



Picturesque apples

woody plants we have going for us up here. Even in the winter, artists study, draw and paint their twisting, knobby branching structure and “Japanese” habit. Apple blossoms are fragrant enough to be used for perfumes and look beautiful in vases.

Crab apples are excellent for making organic juices: high in anti-oxidants and rich in flavor (sugar needs to be added). Also, they are the foremost flowering tree used on streets, yards and farms. The fragrant flowers smell like spring and come in white, pink and deep pink or rose red—we could have crab apple festivals in our villages here like the cherry blossom festivals they have in Japan. This past summer, I made gallons of crabapple juice from different varieties to see which were the best tasting. I think ‘Dolgo’ makes the most delicious juice—it has a spicy flavor as if it contained some cinnamon. It can also be used as a



Dolgo fruit

pollinator for apple trees, so long as its bloom time overlaps that of the apple trees you want to pollinate. For use, the bigger the fruit the better (harvesting is faster and easier). I also use the flowers for arranging and the fruits are attractive to look at and good food for birds.

Shad or Amelanchier is widely used in the nursery trade as a native ornamental flowering tree and shrub—the delicate white flowers grace our early spring woods. Also they are good tasting and attract birds (almost too well). There are many varieties grown in Canada for their fruit. Most of these are selections of the Saskatoon or *Amelanchier alnifolia* which is a tall bush. Several varieties are available at the Norwich Farmers' Market.

Plums, pears and pie cherries also have gorgeous snow white flowers—at slightly different times than the apple. All of these fruits are suitable for orchards and ornamental use as an apple tree might be. Relatively easy to grow and with dozens of varieties to choose from, these make for an easy inclusion to your edible landscape.

Many fruiting bushes are quite beautiful and could be planted instead of purely ornamental plants and especially in place of privets, yews and arborvitae.

Currants have attractive small greenish yellowish flowers which I have used in church altar arrangements. The fruit of this plant is a particular favorite of mine, both red and black. Red currant jelly is my wife's favorite for using with beef.

Black currant (cassis) is my favorite. It makes a

particularly flavorful jelly, jam or juice (mysteriously rich and musky) ...but beware, it is not for the faint hearted. Being very high in antioxidants, it is used commonly in Europe to help cure illness.

Elderberries have beautiful white flowers which I have used in floral arrangements. They are a native plant that is very fast growing and adaptable to most locations. The fruit are so profuse as to



Elderberry fruit

weigh the bush down. If you don't pick the fruit early enough, you may lose them to cedar waxwings.

Raspberries make lovely edible hedges and black raspberry canes are of an almost opalescent glaucous lavender in the winter. Raspberries have just about the best taste of any fruit hardy in our zone. Blackberries have beautiful white flowers like small roses and glossy burgundy colored fall foliage—I use the flowers and leaves as cuts. It is one of the few fruits that one cannot overeat and one of the most prolific. The summer before last the extra fruit all over the ground under the bushes made the ground appear to be paved with asphalt.

Blueberries are being widely used as native ornamental/edible shrubbery. The fall color (yellow, orange, scarlet and crimson) is wonderful and the glossy

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## 2009 Perennial Plant of the Year



The **Perennial Plant Association** is pleased to announce this year's choice for PERENNIAL PLANT OF THE YEAR, selected by PPA members all across North America. The 2009 winner is ***Hakonechloa macra 'Aureola'***.

Also known as Golden Hakone Grass or Japanese Woodland Grass, this was selected in Japan many years ago from a species that grows wild on Honshu Island. How and when it arrived here in North America is not certain but it appears to have been first introduced in Japan in or around the 1930s.

There are several selections of Japanese Forest Grass, and all of them grow best in moist, humus-rich but well-drained soil. They dislike wet and soggy soils, heavy clay soils or overly dry conditions as might be found under large and thirsty maple or evergreen trees unless watered faithfully. This long-season ornamental grass may be used as a groundcover, a border-front specimen, in a mass planting or in a patio container. It offers vivid highlights in shaded areas or in evening gardens. This grass is also noted for its movement in breezes, providing a cascading or undulating motion.

- **Hardiness:** USDA Zones 5 to 9 (survival in Zone 4 appears possible in regions with reliable winter snow cover).
- **Mature size:** 12 to 18 inches tall (30 to 45cm) and 18 to 24 inches wide (45 to 60cm).
- **Light exposure:** Partial shade is best in warm-summer regions. Direct sun is tolerated in cool-summer regions such as the Pacific Northwest. Also suitable for a morning sun/afternoon shade placement.
- **Soil:** Prefers a moist, humus-rich but well-drained soil. Dislikes dry shade.
- **Maintenance:** the dried and dead stems and leaves should be pruned back to the ground in late winter or early spring before new growth resumes. This spreads slowly by stolons but so slowly that it is not a threat to other companions. After a number of years it may be increased by lifting and dividing in spring. Watering regularly is advised, especially when grown under thirsty trees, in the rain shadow of buildings or in containers.
- **Uses:** Japanese Woodland Grass can be a bright and colorful focal point in a shady area. The colorful golden and green-striped leaves make it a fantastic companion to Hostas, especially selections with a golden edge or a bluish cast. It also looks smashing with ferns or any purple or dark-leaved plant such as Coral Bells or Bugbane. As a container plant, Japanese Woodland Grass adds a lot of charm to any pot when the foliage cascades gracefully over the sides like a waterfall. It is gorgeous as an edging plant where the leaves will cascade towards a path. Excellent for providing a somewhat tropical effect and especially suitable in an Asian-style design.
- **Unique Qualities:** the narrow leaves are striped lengthwise with green and bright golden yellow. Plants have a mounding form and distinctive cascading habit like a waterfall, but without looking floppy. In the cooler days of autumn the golden foliage becomes tinged with shades of pink and red. Small sprays of tiny, delicate flower spikes appear in late summer and fall. In late autumn the stems and leaves become a buff or straw color and remain attractive until covered by snow.



-- adapted from the Perennial Plant Association



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## PLANTING TREES CORRECTLY

Dr. Leonard Perry, Extension Professor  
University of Vermont

Yes, there are right and wrong ways to plant a tree. By following correct planting practices, you can ensure trees will avoid a slow decline and possible death from several causes.

Choose the right tree for the right site, not just a tree you like. This means it is cold hardy in your area. It also means it is adaptable to your soils and site. A sugar maple near pavement and buildings may dry out with leaves turning brown, or show salt injury if near roads. A pine tree will grow poorly on a heavy clay soil.

Choose a healthy tree. This is one that has a good amount of roots in proportion to the tops. Beware of trees that have been recently dug from the wild with little or no preparation prior to digging. Obviously check for signs of leaf injury from pests or diseases, or trunk damage from mishandling.

When digging the planting hole, measure the width of the root mass (root ball) and remove sod in an area three to five times the diameter of the root ball. Loosen this soil to a depth of about a foot with a spading fork or similar tool. Then dig a hole in the center of this area about a foot wider than the root ball.

Planting depth is one of most important factors in planting. Planting a tree too deep can kill it. Figure the depth to plant by pulling any soil away from the trunk. What you are looking for is the root collar or root flare-- the bulge just above the root system where the roots begin to branch away from the trunk. This root flare should be just above the soil surface, the base of the root flare at the soil surface. This often may not be the top of the root ball, hence the need to make sure. Measure from the base of the root ball to the base of the root flare. This is the depth to plant. Don't dig the hole deeper as some instructions in the past or older books may indicate. Either the tree will be too deep to start, or if you backfill with soil the tree will settle lower and end up too deep.

This issue of planting depth is so important, and such a cause of tree death nationally, that an industry group has been formed to re-research this and to promote proper planting. They suggest looking at the structural roots as even better than looking at the root flare, as sometimes this can be mistaken for a graft union-- the point at which two different trees are spliced together.

Structural roots are the large woody roots from which all the finer roots branch. Measured about four inches from the trunk, these should be no more than three inches deep. You can find these by probing with a long thin object. Many nursery trees have few structural roots, and these may be much deeper than three inches in the root ball. Absence of a root flare near the soil surface is a sign the structural roots are too deep and need to be planted nearer to the surface.

Another misconception from the past is that you should amend the backfill soil. This promotes roots staying in the better environment you've created in the planting hole. This in turn promotes girdling roots. The recommendation now is not to amend the backfill soil, choosing the right tree for the right soil instead. Amend only if the soil is very poor, such as severely disturbed soils with rubble from construction. If you have removed soil from the trunk base to expose the root flare, this trunk tissue may be more susceptible to cold or sun injury. If such is the case, replace with a mulch but do not mulch too deep. This is another cause of tree injury, and is often referred to as "volcano mulching" from its appearance. If you haven't excavated near the trunk, keep mulch away from it. Only mulch about two inches deep, uniformly around the planting area.

When planting, you may create a shallow basin away from the trunk to hold water, and water well. Keep the tree watered well for the first season if there isn't sufficient rain. It is better to water deeply but less often, such as once a week.

Other practices to follow for a healthy tree:

- \*Don't fertilize at planting time.
- \*Prune only injured branches. Don't paint tree wounds.
- \*Remove any tree wrap or tape around trunks. This only should be used for protection in transit.
- \*Don't stake trees unless necessary in very windy areas, or to prevent vandalism. If you do stake, use sturdy stakes and attach the tree with wide strapping or tree roping. Normal twine can cut into the tree bark.



Blueberry fruit

(Continued from page 1)

leaves are an asset even when green—they also are great at attracting birds. We

have a whole group of shorter-growing blueberries— cultivars developed to be suitable for low foundation plantings such as 'Northsky,' 'Northcountry,' 'Top Hat,' and 'Chippewa.'

The grape is one of the oldest fruits to be cultivated and makes a wonderful vine for the arbor, trellis or porch. Not only are grapes handsome but also easy to grow, have fragrant flowers, and are prolific bearers of excellent, usable fruit. Grape growing is the largest industry in the world. There are more than 60 species and 8000 varieties and they can all be used to make juice and/or wine.

There are several varieties that are excellent choices for our more severe winter weather they include:

'Beta,' 'Worden,' 'King of the North,' 'Valiant,' 'Frontenac Gris,' 'St. Croix' and 'Kay Gray.'

Rhubarb is beautiful— also it happens to be one of my favorite "fruits." The huge, showy, glossy leaves are a wonderful backdrop for flowers or make a wonderful sculptural statement in their own right. Their spectacular bloom stalks make a fantastic accent.

Some of my favorite trees and best

friends are nuts. Black walnuts are delicious (if hard to crack). Many varieties are hardy in warmer microclimates in the upper valley and the hardest should work anywhere around here.

Butternuts, our only native nut tree, are also wonderful and tasty but are suffering a decline due to disease. Both of these trees produce very distinctive and desirable wood.

The American chestnut could make a comeback up here—it's hardy enough, having been a native species, and hopefully new, resistant strains will soon be available. The chestnut was a major forest tree



American Chestnut

for much of the US (a major timber and food plant) before the chestnut blight wiped it out in the 1930s.

Shagbark hickory is native to western Vermont and perfectly hardy around here. It is another good tree for both the wood and nut. Hazelberts or Filazels are hybrids of our somewhat small native American hazelnuts and the larger commercial European filbert, yielding a plant hardy enough to make it with fairly good sized nuts.

This year, I am experimenting with Sea Buckthorn (*Hippophae*), Goumi (*Eleagnus*) and in the future, want to

get some cultivated varieties of our black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*). All these shrubs are used in Europe for fruit and grow in cold climates. CAW

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**FUN FRUIT FACTS...**

- ⇒ Blueberries can help relieve both diarrhea and constipation.
- ⇒ Archaeologists have found evidence that humans have enjoyed eating apples since at least 6500 B.C.
- ⇒ Raspberries are one of the better fruits for diabetics, because their sugar content is released very slowly into the blood.
- ⇒ Scientists have found that black elderberry extract has the ability to ward off flu infections quickly.
- ⇒ Pears are good sources of the B-complex vitamins and also contain vitamin C.
- ⇒ The apple variety 'Red Delicious' is the most widely grown apple in the U.S.
- ⇒ The anti-oxidants in raspberries may help Alzheimer's Disease and Parkinson's Disease.
- ⇒ Blueberries were not cultivated until the beginning of the 20th century, becoming commercially available in 1916.

**www.ecbrownsnursery.com**



**Daffodil Walk**

**May 3, 2009**

**4:00 pm**

**At Chris & Dana Wilson's house in West Newbury, VT**

**Everyone welcome call 802-785-2167 for details**



**Lilac Walk**

**May 31, 2009**

**4:00 pm**

**At Chris & Dana Wilson's house in West Newbury, VT**

**Everyone welcome call 802-785-2167 for details**

## Sheet Mulching is...

...a layered mulch system. It is a simple and underutilized technique for optimizing the benefits of mulch and Nurturing the soil.

Sheet mulching can be used either in establishing landscape, or to enrich existing plantings. In both cases, mulch is applied to bare soil or on top of cut or flattened weeds.

Trees, shrubs, herbaceous perennials and annuals are planted through the mulch, or a small area is left open to accommodate established plants.

Sheet mulch can:

- Suppress weed growth
  - Reduce labor and maintenance costs: weeds are composted in place
  - Improve nutrient and water retention in the soil
  - Encourage favorable soil microbial activity and worms
  - Enhance soil structure
- Improve plant vigor and health, often leading to improved resistance to pests and diseases.

**Step 1: Prepare the site.** Knock down or mow existing vegetation so that it lies flat. Remove only woody or bulky plant material. The organic matter left will decay and add nutrients to the soil. Add fertilizers and amendments to this layer if a soil analysis indicates the need. Optional: "jump start" the decay of weeds and grass by adding compost or manure at the rate of about 50 lbs/100 square feet. Soak with water to start the natural process of decomposition. It is much easier to soak the ground now, before the remaining layers of mulch are applied.

**Step 2: Plant 5 gallon and larger plants.**

**Step 3: Add a weed barrier.** The next layer is an organic weed barrier that breaks down with time. It is essential that the

barrier be permeable to water and air. Do not use plastic. Recycled cardboard, a thick layer of newspaper, or old carpets of natural fiber work well. Many paper companies offer recycled cardboard or paper in rolls of varying widths. Two or three layers may be required to achieve an adequate thickness. But if the weed barrier is applied too thickly, the soil can become anaerobic. Overlap pieces 6-8 inches to completely cover the ground without any breaks, except where there are established plants you want to save. Leave a generous opening for air circulation around the root crown. Wet down the cardboard or paper barrier to keep it in place.

**Step 4: Layer compost and mulch.** The top layer mimics the newly fallen organic matter of the forest. Good materials for this layer include chipped plant debris, tree pruning debris, leaves or straw. They must be free of weed seeds. Well decomposed, weed-free compost is also a good material but it should be spread directly over the weed barrier and covered with bulkier materials such as chipped tree pruning, to optimize weed control. In total, the compost/mulch layer should be 2-5 inches deep. Many materials suitable for the top layer often have an attractive appearance, making sheet mulch a versatile practice.

**Step 5: Plant.** Punch a hole in the cardboard and place plants in the soil under the sheet mulch. Smaller plants can often be planted right into the mulch/compost layer. Add a small amount of compost around the root-ball if compost has not been included in the top layer.

In most cases, the benefits of sheet mulching outweigh the costs. However, take care to prevent these potential problems:

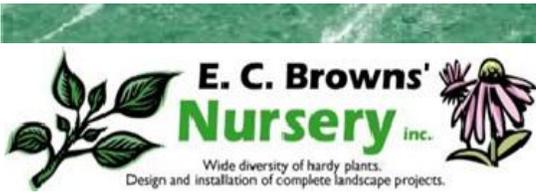
- As with any mulch, Avoid piling materials up against the trunks or stems of plants to prevent disease.
- Especially during the dry season, small seedlings will need protection from snails and slugs that will seek cover under the mulch.
- Protect young trees from rodents with physical guards.



Starting this spring, we (I) will be attempting to implement a Point of Sale system at our nursery. So far it's going over like pretty on a pig, but hopefully when it is in place and working correctly, we will be better able to serve you.

We know you will be patient (while we're trying to charge you \$1,500,000.00 for 2 perennials) with us and we are grateful for it ...and, we appreciate your loyalty and support to us over the last 40 years. kpb





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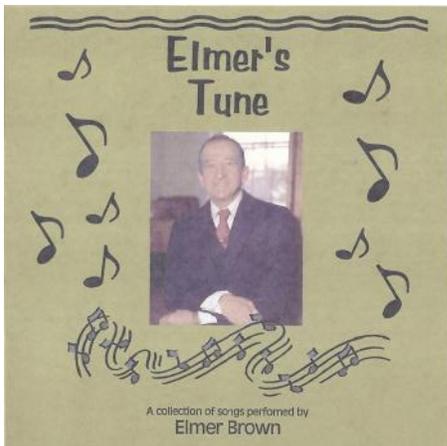
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**The reviews are in...**

“...the absolute best collection of music since The Beatles *White Album*” Rolling Moss Magazine

“Frank Sinatra can’t hold a tune with this guy...Elmer is a crooner in his own class” Dillboard.com

“I’ve heard a lot of excellent music in my day and this “takes the cake!” Magnificent! Superb! Incredible! Beuno! Placido Flamingo

Hear Elmer Brown as he sings *a capella* such favorites as, *The Woodpecker Song*, *Chickaree Chick*, and *Mares Eat Oats* along with the spiritual classics like *How Great Thou Art*, *In the Garden* and *Let There Be Peace On Earth*.

Copies are flying off the shelves so hurry in and get one soon. Destined to become a collector’s item. Not sold in stores or on TV.

# NEW PLANTS FOR 2009



Hydrangea 'Hayes Starburst'



Hydrangea 'Twist and Shout'



Vaccinium 'Ben Lear'

## Woody Plants

**Abelia mosanensis**- Fragrant Abelia  
**Apple 'Everfresh Gala'**- Everfresh SD Gala  
**Apple 'Everfresh Red McIntosh'**- Everfresh SD McIntosh Apple  
**Apple 'Spartan'**- Spartan SD Apple  
**Azalea 'Ribbon Candy'**- Ribbon Candy Azalea  
**Azalea 'Sparkler'**- Sparkler Azalea  
**Buxus 'Beaver Creek'**- Beaver Creek Boxwood  
**Cornus racemosa 'Huron'**- Huron Grey Dogwood  
**Cornus racemosa 'Snow Mantle'**- Snow Mantle Grey Dogwood  
**Cornus stolonifera 'Ruby'**- Ruby Red Twig Dogwood  
**Corylus x 'Casina'**- Casina Hazelnut  
**Corylus x 'Hall's Giant'**- Hall's Giant Hazelnut  
**Fothergilla gardenii 'Beaver Creek'**- Beaver Creek Dwf. Fothergilla  
**Fothergilla gardenii 'Suzanne'**- Suzanne Dwarf Fothergilla  
**Gaylussacia dumosa**- Wisconsin Huckleberry  
**Hydrangea arb. rad. 'Hayes Starburst'**- Hayes Starburst Hydrangea  
**Hydrangea paniculata 'Big Ben'**- Big Ben Hydrangea  
**Hydrangea anomala pet. 'Firefly'**- Firefly Var. Climbing Hydrangea  
**Hydrangea mac. 'Twist and Shout'**- Twist & Shout Hydrangea  
**Hydrangea paniculata 'Dolly'**- Dolly Hydrangea  
**Ilex verticillata 'Scarlet O'Hara'**- Scarlet O'hara Winterberry  
**Ilex verticillata 'Shortcake'**- Shortcake Winterberry  
**Ilex verticillata 'Tiasquam'**-Tiasquam Winterberry  
**Juglans nigra (extra hardy)**- Extra Hardy Strain Black Walnut  
**Ledum groenlandicum**- Labrador Tea  
**Malus 'Cranberry Lace'**-Cranberry Lace Crabapple  
**Malus 'Rejoice'**- Rejoice Crabapple  
**Malus floribunda 'Rosea'**- Pink Japanese Crabapple  
**Picea pungens glauca 'Thume'**- Thume Dwarf Blue Spruce  
**Prunus 'Jan'**- Jan Bushcherry  
**Prunus 'Joel'**- Joel Bushcherry  
**Prunus 'Joy'**- Joy Bushcherry  
**Prunus tomentosa**- Nanking Cherry  
**Rhododendron 'Pohjola's Daughter'**- Pohjola's Daughter Rhodo.  
**Ribes 'Titania'**- Titania Currant  
**Rosa 'Winter Sunset'**- Winter Sunset Hardy Rose  
**Sambucus nigra**- Black Elderberry  
**Spiraea japonica 'Beaver Creek Pride'**- Beaver Creek Pride Spiraea  
**Spiraea japonica 'Golden Thumbellina'**-Golden Thumbellina Spiraea  
**Spiraea japonica 'Royal Knight'**- Royal Knight Spiraea  
**Spiraea japonica 'Double Play Artist'**- Double Play Artist Spiraea  
**Spiraea japonica 'Double Play Gold'**-Double Play Gold Spiraea  
**Spiraea x bumalda 'Golden Sunrise'**- Golden Sunrise Spiraea  
**Strawberry 'Allstar'**- Allstar Strawberry  
**Strawberry 'Earliglow'**-Earliglow Strawberry  
**Strawberry 'Seascape'**- Seascape Strawberry

**Tamarix r. 'Pink Cascade'**- Pink Cascade Tamarisk  
**Vaccinium macrocarpon 'Ben Lear'**- Ben Lear American Cranberry  
**Vaccinium macrocarpon 'WSU'**- WSU American Cranberry  
**Viburnum cassinoides 'Endeavor'**- Endeavor Witherod  
**Viburnum dentatum 'Black Forest'**- Black Forest Arrowwood  
**Viburnum dentatum 'Little Joe'**-Little Joe Arrowwood  
**Viburnum dentatum 'Red Feather'**- Red Feather Arrowwood  
**Viburnum nudum 'Winterthur'**- Winterthur Viburnum  
**Vitis 'King of Hearts'**- King of Hearts Grape  
**Vitis 'Louise Swenson'**- Louise Swenson Grape

## Perennial Plants

**Achillea 'Strawberry Seduction'**- Strawberry Seduction Yarrow  
**Achillea 'Sunny Seduction'**- Sunny Seduction Yarrow  
**Astrantia major 'Snowstar'**- Snowstar Masterwort  
**Centaurea montana 'Amethyst Dream'**- Amethyst Dream Mt. Bluet  
**Dianthus 'Neon Star'**- Neon Star Pink  
**Geranium sanguineum 'Elke'**- Elke Cranesbill  
**Iris pumila 'Yankee Skipper'**- Yankee Skipper Dwarf Iris  
**Paeonia 'Coral Supreme'**-Coral Supreme Peony  
**Paeonia 'Coral Charm'**- Coral Charm Peony  
**Phlox paniculata 'Red Super'**- Red Super Garden Phlox  
**Phlox subulata 'Millstream Daphne'**- Pink Creeping Phlox  
**Sedum 'Citrus Twist'**- Citrus Twist Sedum  
**Sidalcea x 'Candygirl'**- Candy Girl Prairie Mallow  
**Stachys monierii 'Hummelo'**- Wood Betony  
**Thymus cit. aureus 'Golden Lemon'**- Golden Variegated Thyme



Paeonia 'Coral Supreme'