



Mary's Plant Farm & Landscaping

Spring 2018

'In the time of apple blossoms, when the happy blue bird sings.' J. Cutler

This is the first winter, I've not walked into the garden to look at the plants. The drizzling gray days and -14 degree weather chilled my old bones. Seeing the plants along the east side of the house, on a sheltered raised bed that blocked the north wind, was depressing. The hellebore that were usually sending up huge fat buds to bloom in January were frozen brown blobs. The many different ivies that I cut all winter for greenery in my bouquets were a brown mass by mid-January too. I've seen brief cold snaps not affect them, but even my gold and green leaved Aucuba japonica shrub is brown to the ground. I can only hope that the roots are viable, as I didn't take any cuttings. It was grown from cuttings given to me by a Cincinnati friend. Thanks Kaye. I've often grown them in our Zone 6, but I also had one taken out by the blizzard of 1978. Gardeners always "push the envelope", as the saying goes. Another shrub I've proven hardy to our Zone 6 is Vitex agnes. We use them in many of our landscape designs, and have made them available in the nursery since we opened 42 years ago. Customers always comment on the beautiful blue trusses of bloom in August, and since they are larger balled and burlapped sizes they are truly hardy in our winters.

I often drink my tea sitting at the dining room window watching the many birds that come to the feeders. We are raising what seems to be flocks of cardinals, as I watch them feed their many young in the summer. With the big blue jays and five varieties of woodpeckers, plus all the other species it is quite a colorful site. One surprise this year was the large horned owl that Sherri and Mandi saw this past fall when they were checking the nursery frames. It was walking in the lawn going towards the barn, but it had a wing hanging down and didn't fly. They didn't approach it since it looked injured and didn't want to come into contact with its talons or beak. About ten days later I was at the window at dusk watching the cardinals that eat late, and I noticed one of the big wooden posts behind the north border looked a foot and half taller than the others. When I picked up my binoculars I saw it was the owl and what I thought were cats ears sticking up were the tufts on his head. One early morning a week later I was going out the sidewalk and I passed the large evergreen Thujaopsis and heard the flapping of wings as the owl flew up out of the shrub, went between the lilac and hemlock and was gone. I'll admit it was a fright, but we are so glad that he is making his home here and is well. I'm looking forward to having a bluebird family near the herb garden where a good friend made and installed a bluebird house for me this past month.

It's depressing listening to the weather, but as a gardener I'm always hopeful. As I write, there have been a couple of really warm days, and I see snowdrops and many different colors of snow crocus that have seeded throughout the gardens. It is almost time to take my thermos of tea and head for the greenhouse where the girls will join me in potting all the plants needed to fill up the nursery frames. I do believe in climate change as I see spring taking longer and longer to get here and then we have a freeze on Mother's Day as we did last year. It is just what we have to deal with when you garden.

I was pleased to read the article by Dr. Alan Armitage on gomphrena (globe amaranth), and what a wonderful plant it is. I've planted and pushed it for years, as there is no other annual that will grow in hot, dry conditions, with masses of flowers in seven gorgeous colors, making a neat 24" to 30" bush, lasting for months because it is a dried flower. I plant them in rows for cut bouquets, use them in the gardens for a glorious show in summer and fall, and can even use them in mix containers for a hot location that I don't need to water often.

Remember it is always and changing picture in my gardens. I plant for 12 months of bloom and color and enjoy every season. In early February Sherri cut me a huge bouquet of different witch hazel (Hamamelis) branches in different colors. They filled the entire house with fragrance. These can be planted in full sun or shade and can be kept in a shrub size or let go and become small trees for the landscape. I'm looking forward to seeing the spring bulbs and hellebore in March and seeing the eighteen different deciduous magnolias that will start blooming in April and continue through May. My five varieties of southern magnolia (Magnolia grandiflora) will bloom in July with their fragrant white flowers that are the size of dessert plates. I look for the peonies that bloom in April and May, beginning with the hybrids, then tree peonies and on and on. So many different varieties that people tag in the field for us to dig for them in the fall. I am always pleased to hear how other people love them in their gardens. June is for my masses of roses, many that are old favorites that I have grown and propagated for years, to make them available for my customer's gardens. What will happen to these old and hard to find varieties if I don't keep them going. They would be lost for future gardens. July and August are the months for true lilies and daylilies (Hemerocallis), and you know how much I love them. There is never enough time on summer days for me to walk and look at all the beautiful varieties I have collected. I love it when customers call me over to tell them the variety and that they want to have a collection of daylilies for their gardens. Nothing is more carefree than daylilies. September and October's fall blooming bulbs of colchicum, sternbergia and hardy cyclamen are a delight to see and the viburnums full of their masses of berries in blues, purples, pinks, yellows, and reds not only give us beautiful fall

color, but are food for the birds. I haven't even mentioned the flowering trees and shrubs and thousands of other plants that I have enjoyed as they make their show. Someday when I slow down I'll have to make a list.

I have to write of a pet peeve I have with the brand Proven Winners. They are touting a *new* bush clematis. It doesn't seem to be any different that the Clematis integrifolia I've been growing and selling for years. As a gardener, be careful you really look at some of the so called new items, and see if they are really worth the price. My experience is, many are the same as we have all been growing for years, and they are just branded for marketing purposes.

In mid-November I received many calls from folks who were wanting to plant bulbs. I believe bulbs should be planted as soon as they become available in September and October. Many bulbs that are still around in November and been on a shelf, could be dried out. Remember to walk the gardens and look at the bulb book in the sales barn to make a list of the bulbs you would like to plant in your gardens this fall. You can pre-order by June 15th and receive a 5% discount on your order. Our bulbs are #1 grade and are ordered direct from growers in Holland. We usually have them available by the first or second week of September. Many times customers will say they are tired by September or October, but you cannot have beautiful blooming bulbs in the garden if you don't plant them in the fall. Believe me, it is a quick job once you start.

In closing I can't help but admit we were pleased to see we again made the December *Cincinnati Magazines* 'The Best Things in the Cincinnati Area'. Thank you all who have been our customers and friends these past 42 years. We look forward to another season of growing.

Happy Gardening,

Mary

Events & Seminars:

Sunday, April 29th 1:30 pm 'Wildflower Talk & Tour' : A comprehensive class on native wildflowers. Not only spring blooming varieties but summer ones also. Then join Mary, in a walk through the woodland to view the extensive wildflower collection Class \$10.00 with reservation.

Sunday, May 6th 1:30 pm 'Container Gardens: Design & Planting' : Bring a container or tufa trough or purchase one at the nursery and learn how to design and plant an attractive combination pot of annuals, perennials or succulents. Fee \$10.00 for instruction and soil mix. Bonus 10% off all plants purchased to fill container during class. Reservations please.

Sat. May 12 & Sun. May 13 'Mothers Day Weekend Mini Tea' : Reservation accepted for Tea and Scones served in the garden. 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm \$10.00 per person with reservation, limited seating.

May 20th 1:30 pm 'Seminar: Easy to Grow and Unusual Trees for the Landscape': Looking for a new tree or a replacement for the dead ash? There are so many options. Learn about native varieties, shade, small ornamental and flowering tree options that are disease resistant and tolerant of Ohio weather and soil conditions. \$10.00 per person, with reservation.

Sun. July 15th & July 29th 2:00 pm and Thurs. July 19th & July 26, 1:30 pm 'High Tea in the Garden' : Enjoy a four-course high tea served in the garden. An afternoon of delight for your senses. Reservations only with pre paid fee \$30.00 per person

Sunday, August 12th 12:00 to 5:00 pm 'Art in the Garden': Enjoy a walk through three acres of gardens viewing fine art in many different mediums by local artists, including living art with plants. Chat with the artists and enjoy a glass of wine and light refreshments while you relax at a bench or table in the garden. Guided garden tours at 1:30 and 4:00 pm. Art, plants and refreshments available for purchase. Cash and checks accepted by vendors, limited acceptance of credit cards due to the venue. \$8.00 per person

Saturday, September 8th, 1:30 pm 'Gardening for Cocktails': Learn and get ideas of what herbs and flowers to easily grow to use in fresh new cocktails. Sample a flight of these refreshing cocktails along with light refreshments. Recipes and instruction included. \$25.00 per person with reservation.

Saturday, Oct. 6th 10:00 am 'Class: Making a Hyper Tufa Trough': materials and instruction are included to make a 12" x 18" trough, your choice of mold shape. Pre-paid fee: \$35.00 per person with reservation

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PLEASE NOTE OUR HOURS AS THEY HAVE CHANGED

2018 Spring Hours (April 3 to May 31): Tues. – Sat. 9:30 to 5:30 Sunday Noon to 5:00 Closed Monday

Summer/Fall Hours (June 1 to Oct. 27) Tues – Sat. 9:30 to 4:30 Closed Sunday & Monday

Special Closed Dates: July 3 & 4, and August 14 through 18



Mary's Plant Farm 'Not Newsletter'

Spring 2018

Someone asked why I call this "Not Newsletter". I really hadn't thought of it in a long time, so for others who may wonder here is how it began. For close to 40 years Mom has written the newsletter about her garden, her thoughts and experiences with plants. My part is to let you know about the nursery inventory and what new and interesting plants we will offer this season. So here goes!

Let's start with roses and the addition of a dwarf everblooming rugosa, Moje Hammarberg. It is own root stock and looks like our beloved Magnifica, but only 3' tall. Everyone asks for a beautiful and FRAGRANT yellow blend, so we have a few Edith's Darling from the Downton Abbey Series of roses. The old fashioned semi-quartered bloom clusters repeat all summer. Mary continues to propagate the Buck roses, so check out the additions to the inventory this year.

We always have a great selection of shrubs, but we have room for a new *Itea* v. 'Merlot'. This native dwarf variety is a nice addition for late summer bloom and red fall color. *Aesculus* p. 'Roger's' (bottlebrush buckeye) has been in the field for a number of years. But I finally have enough inventory to offer it. Its claim to fame is the extra tall 15" white bloom spikes. *Deutzia* are a favorite in our gardens, but many are large shrubs for the border. *Deutzia* g. 'Yuki Cherry Blossom' is a dwarf variety like *D. g.* 'Nikko', but in pink. It is just so delicate and beautiful and will accept sun or shade locations. For late summer/fall bloom, try the *Lespedeza* varieties and remember we also offer the hard to find white *L. thunbergi* 'Alba'.

Redbuds have long been one of Mary's favorites, so we have added a number to our collection making it a total of 15 varieties this season. We have a few more of the new tri-color foliated *Cercis* c. 'Carolina Sweetheart', as they sold out so quickly last season. We also have *Cercis* c. 'Little Woody' a true dwarf variety that only reaches 6' tall at old age and is narrow. Great for close to the house or in a small garden. Another weeping variety to fit into the smaller garden is the weeping variety *C. c.* 'Alley Cat', with variegated foliage. Everyone asked about the gold/orange foliage of our *Cercis* c. 'Rising Sun', weeping white blooming *C. c.* 'Vanilla Twist', and the huge double pink blooming *C. c.* 'Pom Pom'. We have a limited number of all of these.

Now to dogwoods. We list 21 varieties and these new ones are outstanding, either in bloom and/or the addition of variegated foliage. *Cornus* k. 'Pam's Mountain Bouquet' is new and unusual as the petals are fused and makes a square white bloom. Crazy! For tight spaces use the *C. k.* weeping varieties that are lovely for early summer bloom. There are a few pink blooming kousa (Japanese) dogwoods, but *C. k.* 'Scarlet Spire' is the darkest pink/red hybridized to date. For the best foliage variegation nothing is better than *C. k.* 'Summer Gold', *C. k.* 'Limon Ripple' and our old favorite *C. k.* 'Wolf Eyes' as these hold the color in sun or shade.

Here are a few new (or newly available) trees. *Nyssa* x. 'Zydeco Twist' that has twisted branches and beautiful red fall color, as seen in Mary's garden and always creates interest. *Quercus robur* 'Variegata' is a green and white foliated oak. *Magnolia* x *Wiesneri* is a deciduous tree with fragrant white blooms and red stamens. *Hydrangea* pan. 'Vanilla Strawberry' is in tree form at 6' max., with dark pink summer blooms.

We continue to stock a great selection of native trees such as; Persimmon, American hornbeam, Black Gum (*Nyssa*), Yellow wood (*Cladrastis Lutea*), Paw Paw, Sassafras, Sourwood (*Oxydendrum*), Ohio buckeye, Red Horse Chestnut (*Aeculus Pavia*), Sweet Bay Magnolia, American Beech and many others. All of these trees and others will be discussed and viewed during the Tree Seminar on May 20th, for those who need a new tree or information as to what is an option for plantings around the landscape.

I haven't got space to list the hundreds of perennials, herbs, succulents, wildflowers and unusual annuals that are available. View them in the gardens and then choose them from the nursery frames, ready to bloom in your landscape.

Remember, if there is a plant or tree that you are interested in and I don't have it, let me know. Many times I can order it for you and have it for spring or fall planting. Our space is limited and I can't keep everything in stock. Also remember that Mary's gardens are open for group talk and tours with reservation.

Hope to see you at Mary's this season.