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April 2005



Growing with Gray's

A Seasonal Gardening Newsletter for the Willamette Valley

Celebrate Our 65th Birthday With Great Deals!

At 65, most people retire. We just started growing!

After 64 years in business, we decided we were ready to start growing some of our own plant material. Why? Although we are very fortunate to have so many talented and wonderful growers in our area, we found that we still wanted more control over crops in some areas of our nursery. And, perhaps more importantly, we discovered that we can offer even better values to our customers by growing some material ourselves. So, last fall we built our first range of commercial greenhouses and our first crops are now available. The most significant are our storefront hanging baskets, which we are offering in 10" size at only \$18.99 and 4" annuals, which we are offering at 89¢ each or \$13.99 per flat. These are not sale prices either, these are our new everyday prices for 2005! So drop by and check it out, you'll find that the great values you've come to expect from Gray's have gotten even better!



Which Is A Better Buy? 89¢ each or \$13.99 a flat? (our 4" annual flats have 16 plants)



What's Inside

"At 65 Most People Retire, We've Just Started Growing"
Introducing our new greenhouses

"Over The Counter"
What the experts at Gray's are seeing in the way of pests, disease and trends.

"Exotic Tropicals Are Back"
We're at it again with great new stuff from Florida

"Earth Friendly Gardening"
New innovations in organic/earth friendly remedies and mediums

"Gray's Plant Picks"
Spotlight on plants from the front & back nursery.

"Member Spotlight"
One member from each store to be submitted by the store manager.

"Events At Gray's"
Great events and clinics for gardeners

"GPG Member Specials"
Special offers for members.



Exotic Tropicals Are Becoming Popular

Although most of our plant material is locally grown, we just couldn't resist bringing in another load of exotic tropicals from Florida this year. We were particularly impressed with the Hibiscus last year the flowers on the designer varieties were out of this world. They're coming back. Also of interest are the Lakeview Jasmine, with their handsome habit and beautifully fragrant and frequent flowers. Like the Hibiscus, the Jasmine love summers on the patio and make superb houseplants during the cold months.

Some other noteworthy varieties are Bird of Paradise and it's cousin, Heliconia. You'll love the Heliconia for it's spectacular and long-lasting blooms that just scream Hawaii! Another favorite is the Angel's Trumpet (brugmansia) with its huge (8-10") trumpet shaped flowers that perfume the night air with their exotic fragrance.

We will have the always popular Gardenia and Mandevilla in specimen sizes as well as numerous indoor foliage plants that do well in a variety of light conditions.

In addition to the many lovely exotics, this shipment will contain wonderful landscape tropicals, such as the flowering bananas and hardy palms, that are hardy enough to live happily in our zone and really add zest to the landscape. We should be receiving the shipment right about the time you're reading this, so stop by and check it out!

Special Offer \$5 Off on any Hibiscus

Members only expires May 15, 2004



Earth Friendly Gardening

The most effective program for
Beautiful Roses is completely organic!

We treat our roses to regular feedings of Soil Soup. This not only improves vigor, but in most cases eliminates fungal disease. To improve the quality of the flowers, we spray with Messenger (which can be added to the compost tea) as soon as buds start to form. If we detect insect problems, we spray with neem oil. Top it off with regular feedings of E.B Stone Organic Rose Food and you will have the most beautiful roses ever with absolutely no toxic chemicals.



Best Kept Secret?

It's still, by far, the two products that we talked about last year. "Messenger" is a protein that really makes a difference in plant performance. We've been using it in the nursery and we continue to be amazed at the results. See the April '04 Growing With Gray's for a more details. The other popular but way under-utilized product is Soil Soup. This compost tea is rich with nutrients that produce very impressive results and have become a part of our regular regimen in the greenhouses and nursery. See member specials for a great offer on Soil Soup.

Did you know that Gray's has the best selection of organic vegetables in our area?

Services At Gray's

- Delivery Happily • Free Gift Wrap •
- Free Advice • Free Potting •
- Free Receipt Archive • Carry Out •
- Free Trunk Liner •

EVENTS AT GRAY'S NEW INTRODUCTION

EARLY SPRING CONTAINERS

Saturday, April 23

10:00 Eugene

1:00 Springfield

Shirley Osuna from Gray's Garden Centers will inspire you with her imaginative ideas for your pots and flower boxes! Free

SHADY LADIES

Saturday, April 30 1:00 Springfield

Nikki Helbig and Eileen Braverman of Gray's Garden Centers will give you tips and ideas for choosing shade-loving shrubs and perennials for those shady places in your garden! Free

SPRING SPECTACULAR PERENNIALS

Saturday, May 7 1:00 Springfield

Local perennial expert Liz Lair will share her secrets, using new perennial varieties, old favorites, and design tips to result in artful combinations for your garden! Free

GO NATIVE!

Saturday, May 14

1:00 Springfield

10:00 Eugene

Want to learn more about the many varieties of Pacific Northwest Native Plants? Expert Evelyn Hess, who has worked many years with the Mount Pisgah Arboretum, will share her knowledge to help you create & plant natives in your own scheme. Free

FUN WITH FABULOUS FERNS

Saturday, May 21

10:00 Eugene

1:00 Springfield

Ferns can be magic in your garden! Nancy Lewis shares secrets for ferns in pots, ferns for sun, ferns for shade and evergreen ferns. Free

GARDEN PARTY HAT CONTEST!

Saturday, May 28 2:00 Springfield

Got imagination?! Both beauty and a sense of humor can be rewarded at Gray's 1st Annual Garden Hat Contest! Join us for a tea party and enter your hat in the contest! The winner will receive a \$25.00 gift certificate at Gray's!

JUST FOR FUN... "Lettuce" Welcome You To Our Garden of Puns

Come and enjoy the array of humorous displays created by the Gray's staff. If you're inclined, you can enter the fray with your own garden related pun. The winner, to be announced Mother's Day, gets a \$25 Gray's gift certificate. Don't rest on your laurels now!

We update our events frequently, so for the most current schedule visit www.graysgardens.com

We Are Excited To Introduce A Wonderful New Landscape Plant Photinia "Pink Marble".

This is a wonderfully entertaining and versatile Photinia. The foliage is extraordinary! A wonderful red and pink turns green with white edges and splashes. Summer new growth takes on a more bronze coloration with pink edges. Mature foliage is green with distinct bright white markings. With its rounded to upright habit, it can be grown as a multi-stem shrub and pruned hard to maintain size. It works superbly alone or in contrast in borders and sheared hedges. Or, you can limb it into a small tree, eventually maturing at about 15' tall by about 10' wide. The cut branches are wonderful in floral arrangements as well. This is a Gray's exclusive available now!

From The Nursery Gray's Plant Picks

Heuchera (hew-kuh-ruh) are a favorite of our staff. Also known as **Coral Bells**, these perennials are prized for their gorgeous foliage and beautiful, dainty flowers that attract hummingbirds. We have varieties that do well in sun and in shade, and many that are evergreen. Who can resist varieties with names like "Marmalade", "Plum Pudding", "Crème Brulee", "Chocolate Veil" and "Lime Rickey"? Heuchera make excellent designer accompaniment for planters. Ask our friendly staff for recommendations!

Five "Must See" Flowering Trees For Small Spaces

These Trees Have Been Chosen By Stuart Leaton, Our Tree And Shrub Buyer, For Their Exceptional Beauty Spring Through Fall.

FOREST PANSY REDBUD grows 15-20' tall and wide. Highly prized for its dark red leaves and delicate magenta rose flowers. New growth is lighter colored with a glossy finish.

SOURWOOD Trees grow slowly to 25' tall and 20' wide. White summer blooms hanging from branch ends are showy against green foliage. Beautiful fall color follows with red, orange and yellow all on the same tree.

RAINDROPS CRABAPPLE is a semi dwarf that reaches 20' with a 15' spread. Golden Raindrops has white flowers with golden yellow fruit. Fine textured leaves turn yellow-orange in fall. Royal Raindrops has bright pinkish-red flowers with red fruit. Foliage is purple in color turning orange-red in fall.

KOUSA DOGWOOD has an upright branching habit growing to 20-25' tall and 10-15' wide. Blossoms have several shades of pinks and whites. The foliage turns red in fall, leaving a red colored berry.

ROYAL BURGUNDY flowering cherry grows to 20' tall and 15' wide with an upright growth habit. Beautiful double magenta-pink flowers cover the branches in spring. Deep purple foliage turns orange-bronze in fall.

What To Do In Your Garden In May

In order to avoid being repetitive, we've added our OVER THE COUNTER feature for the most common garden problems and following are a few spring planting tips. For a our complete What To Do list, please refer to the April '04 issue of our newsletter online at www.graysgardens.com and select Previous Issues.

The Biggies:

- Fertilize roses and control rose diseases such as mildew with new 'Messenger' and soil soup.
- Add compost! This is so important and so under done in our clay type soils. You really can't have too much humus material in your soil.
- It's definitely time to plant! While virtually no two sources agree on an exact date, the average last spring frost in our area generally occurs in early April, so the time is right!

OVER THE COUNTER

In this new feature we share the most common problems that our customers are having and the solutions that our staff recommends.

CRANE FLY We now have both European and American Crane Fly in our area. The early spring weather has caused an abnormally early hatch and started the cycle. If you see a lot of the insects or you find the grubs in your lawn, you really need to treat for them. We recommend a brand new product called "Turf Ranger". This new generation pesticide is Earth Friendly and extremely effective. It is less toxic than Kill-a-Bug II, yet is has a longer residual and greater killing power. Because of the emergence of the American Crane Fly, which reproduces twice per year, we are recommending an application now and again in early fall. Also it's helpful if your neighbors treat so that they don't just continue to migrate back.

CHEWING INSECTS There are a number of insects at work in the garden, making a meal of many favorite plants. Most of these are larvae and can be controlled very effectively with American Thuricide BT. Although this product's name sounds very toxic, it actually is an Earth Friendly natural product that has gained popularity as a low toxicity remedy that is extremely effective.

POWDERY MILDEW (and other fungi) - The best way to prevent powdery mildew is with a regular application of Soil Soup. However, once it is detected, an application of Fertilome Broad Spectrum Fungicide is easy and very effective. If you have fungus and insects, Fertilome Triple Action Plus is a safe, easy one application cure.

APHIDS - You knew they would be on the list! We've been seeing aphids since late March this year and they're going to be tough if you let them get out of control. Probably our two favorites are neem and Fertilome Systemic Insecticide. The systemic can be applied with the first feeding and can be very effective in eliminating the problem from the beginning. In fact, we've had customers stop using it because they don't see any aphids and guess what happens? Ladybugs are helpful if they aren't too bad and of course insecticidal soap is a standard as well.

LAWN WEEDS This is the time of year when seeds start germinating and a lot of people are seeing lawn weeds coming up at an alarming rate. You can gain control with a simple 1 2 punch. First, apply Turf & Ornamental Weed & Grass Stopper by Hi-Yield. This will keep new weeds, crab grass, poa annua and other bothersome weedy grasses from germinating in your lawn. About a week after that, spray the weeds that have sprouted with Fertilome Weed-Out Plus. This product is fantastic at killing a huge range of weeds without harming your grass. With this combination and Gray's Premium Lawn Food, we guarantee that your lawn will look beautiful all summer!

SLUGS - Nothing new about this problem, but there is a new product that "works better than anything I've ever used" according to Sue Spowhen, our Eugene store manager. And that's saying something, because Sue has had the opportunity to try about every product you've ever heard of! She's talking about PEST FIGHTER SNAIL & SLUG mini pellets. It attracts slugs & snails, repels pets, it's safe for use around fruits & vegetables and it's long lasting, remaining effective even after rains and irrigation. It's also economical, a 2.5 lb box covers over 11,000 square feet for under \$10.00!

Great Buys! Check out Specials, Overstocks and Closeouts at www.graysgardens.com

Member Spotlight

Diane Wennstrom

Diane has been the nursery supervisor at the 6th St. Gray's for six years. Using her vast knowledge of plants, Diane buys the beautiful flowers, vegetables, herbs, perennials and hanging baskets that have made her nursery one of the highest volume nurseries on the west coast in sales per square foot. To keep it fun, Diane is also our resident punster.



Nikki Helbig

Nikki is the nursery supervisor and buyer for the Springfield store. Nikki brings her many years of experience from Johnson Brothers as well as Blooming Nursery, a Portland area grower of premium annuals and perennials. While Nikki is very knowledgeable about annuals, she has an affinity for perennials. Nikki is also very well versed on organic gardening.

