

THE NATURAL GARDENER NEWSLETTER

It's time to put one of the wettest March's we've ever had behind us and get reacquainted with our gardens. I don't know about you but I really need to get my hands back into the soil, move plants to better spots, clean up the winter damage and find room for the new plants I have to have for my little garden.

April is a busy month in the garden and that is reflected in this issue of the newsletter. I will be talking about Nematodes, the Plant of the Month, April classes, Garden Tours and highlighting a few more of the special plants coming to the nursery this spring.

I have two special treats for you as well. The first treat is that through the kind generosity of **Holey Soles Shoes** we are having a contest. I am going to ask you to identify a beneficial insect and all the correct answers will be put into a draw for Holey Soles new **Getaway** collection. There will be more details later on in the newsletter. The second treat is that this April is The Natural Gardeners 4th Anniversary! So, of course we have to have a celebration. See the end of the newsletter for all the details.

With all that there is to do in the garden right now I know it's hard to take the time to read through the newsletter but I hope you can take a moment and see what's happening here at The Natural Gardener.

Enjoy!

Bob



Primula marginata "Mauve Mist"

This is a lovely, easy to grow primula that does well in a part shade area of a rock garden. It is one of a selection of primulas here at The Natural Gardener.

GARDEN TOURS

The Darts Hill Garden Park Tour

On a sunny, cool March 31 morning I took a group of 15 plant fanatics to the Darts Hill Garden Park. It is located in South Surrey at 16th avenue and 170th street and is only open for pre-booked, conducted tours. The tours are available Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

It was a perfect day for the tour and it was with much anticipation that we all arrived at Darts Hill at 11:00am for the start of our two hour tour. We were split up into two groups and taken by two very knowledgeable guides on a walk through 7 acres of fascinating and unusual plants. This is a very old garden, first started by the Darts in 1943 so you can imagine what it was like wandering amongst rhododendrons that were over 50 years old, seeing trees that had had time to reach their mature size and discovering plants we had never seen before. The magnolias are just coming into bloom now and there were some truly beautiful ones blooming in the garden. We also saw some very unusual primulas and hellebores that Mrs. Darts had started from seeds she had sent to her from seed collectors all over the world.

It was an inspiring treat to tour through this garden and I highly recommend you try and visit Darts Hill Garden Park this season.



The Natural Gardener Plant Lovers Society
Esther Palivoda, Dave Sproule, Jean Sproule, Catherine Gourley, Mairona Liston, Susan Koelink,
Carol Correl, Lorna Gentry, Ron Palivoda, Marilou Carrilo, Beverly Berger, Pat Tuckey,
Barbara Fousek, Marion Porath, Varlene Macleod

Our next tour is to Victoria to explore two very different gardens, The Robin Hopper Garden in Metchosin and the Abkhazi Garden in Victoria. We will be going on this tour on Sunday, April 29th and there are still two spots available. If you are interested call or e-mail me at The Natural Gardener for all the details. You can also check out the details on our website in the March 2007 newsletter. I hope you can make it.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Cypripedium calceolus – This is a stunning hardy ground orchid that isn't quite as hard to grow in your garden as you might think. The trick, as with all plants when you come to think of it, is to provide it with the environment that it needs to grow and prosper. *Cypripedium calceolus* occur naturally in cool, temperate forests and forest edges, and the key to success is to reproduce that environment. Provide your cypripedium with cool roots and moist soil. They don't do as well in acidic soil so the addition of some crushed oyster shell to the soil is beneficial. It also doesn't like to be planted too deeply. Cypripediums are also quite sensitive to fertilizers so only use an organic fertilizer when feeding your plants. Once they are established it doesn't take long to get a good sized clump and before you know it you will be giving them away to friends. It really is a beautiful orchid that is well worth growing.

Light: Shade to part sun. A spot where it can get morning sun and afternoon shade is ideal
Soil: Moist, well drained, slightly alkaline. The addition of crushed oyster shell is a good idea
Height: 2 – 2 1/2 feet
Width: 1 foot



AND STILL MORE NEW PLANTS

Dicliptera suberecta – A lovely plant from Uruguay with its grey, felted foliage and clusters of tubular, orange flowers. It loves the sun and once established is quite drought tolerant. As an added bonus the hummingbirds love this plant.

Light: Full sun
Soil: Well drained
Height: 20"
Spread: 3'



Mukdenia rossii “Crimson Fans” - 'Crimson Fans' has maple-like leaves which emerge a mid green then age to a bronze green and are finally splashed with bright red by summer. The foliage then remains red summer through fall, making this a wonderful ground cover and accent plant.



Light: Part shade to full sun
Soil: Moist, well drained
Height: 1 foot
Spread: indefinite

Daphne x burkwoodii “Briggs Moonlight”

- A rarely encountered hardy Daphne whose linear, semi-evergreen leaves exhibit a prominent creamy-yellow central zone enclosed within a neat green margin. Clusters of sweetly fragrant pale pink flowers appear in early summer. Prefers a lightly shaded location and like all Daphne, requires a well-drained soil. A stand out plant in the garden.

Light: Part shade, morning sun is best
Soil: Moist, well drained
Height: 3'
Spread: 2'



Leycesteria Formosa – Himalayan Honeysuckle

- Leycesteria formosa really draws in the wildlife. The hummingbirds go wild over it and animals and birds eat the berries. If the temperature dips below (-10°C), stems are likely to be killed to the ground. Leycesteria is a fast grower and will quickly spring back to original height during the growing season. Good mulch is necessary to protect roots from cold temperatures. The flowers on Leycesteria are quite unusual and very beautiful.

Light: Part shade to full sun
Soil: Moist, well drained
Height: 5-6 feet
Width: 2 feet



APRIL GARDENING TO DO LIST

- Prune winter-flowering shrubs and vines after bloom
- Plant summer- and fall-flowering bulbs
- Spray for peach leaf curl, peach leaf blight, and canker
- Plant permanent ground covers
- Plant ornamental grasses
- Plant bare-root and container roses
- Plant or transplant warm-season annuals
- Plant fruit trees
- Feed houseplants that are growing or blooming
- Plant perennials
- Plant ornamental and evergreen trees, shrubs, and vines
- Prune spring-flowering or tender shrubs and vines after blooming
- Plant vegetable seedlings
- Plant balled-and-burlapped and container fruit trees
- Apply a mulch of compost, mushroom manure or steer manure to your garden beds
- Deadhead your daffodils. Don't tie up the leaves, let them go brown naturally
- Divide summer blooming perennials such as Hostas, Daylilies and phlox
- Plant or repair lawns
- Aerate your lawn
- Over seed any thin or bare patches of lawn
- Stay on top of the weeding. If you do it now you won't have to do it later
- Check your roses for aphids. If there are any squish them or apply Safers Insecticidal Soap. Doing this now means relatively aphid free roses later
- Clean out your pond and plant new perennial water plants
- Start feeding your fish once the water temperature reaches 10 C.

There's lots to do but isn't it wonderful to be back out in the garden helping your plants grow and thrive.

CLASSES

There are two classes this month The Herb Container Class and the Organic Vegetable Gardening Class. The Herb Container Class has proven very popular and is now full but there is still room for the Organic Vegetable Gardening Class. It should be a fun and informative class, I hope you can make it.

Planting an Herb Container - Wednesday, April 18, 2007

Instructor: **Bob Tuckey**, owner of The Natural Gardener

- With their flavours, textures, culinary and medicinal uses herbs are more popular than ever. Bob will give an overview of the many types of herbs, including some of the more interesting varieties, that are available and their cultural requirements when growing them in a container. Then we will put together an herb pot for you to take home. Bring a 10" – 12" container, your gloves and secateurs.

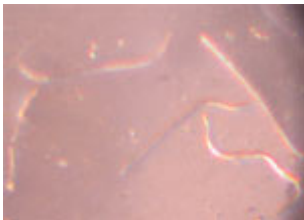
Cost: \$30.00 **Class starts at 7pm at The Natural Gardener Garden Store.**

Root Vine Weevil and Beneficial Nematodes.

I'm sure you have all noticed those strange notches on the leaves of your rhododendrons and pieris japonicas. They are not very attractive and can seriously damage the leaves if it is not stopped. Those notches are created by a beetle called the Root Vine Weevil. It feeds at night and hides out during the day. Its larvae are found in the soil around the base of the plants the adults are feeding on. The larvae feed on the roots of the plants.

The beneficial nematodes *Heterorhabditis* & *Steinernema kraussei* are one of the best ways to control root vine weevil. What the nematodes do is attack the larvae of the weevil and kill them thus preventing them from becoming adults. It is a very effective, safe, non-toxic way of controlling this annoying pest. The *Heterorhabditis* nematode also attacks cutworms and the larvae of the newly introduced Chafer Beetle.

The *Steinernema* nematode can be used when the soil temperature is only 5 C and the *Heterorhabditis* is used when the soil warms up to 10 C. Right now The Natural Gardener has the *Steinernema* nematodes in stock and they are great for getting the root vine weevil grubs while they are still young. We will be carrying the *Heterorhabditis* nematodes starting in May. If you would like to apply nematodes to your garden this year The Natural Gardener is the place to come to.



Nematodes



Root Vine Weevil



Root Vine Weevil larvae

BENEFICIAL INSECT CONTEST

If you know what the beneficial insect is below please fill out the ballot that you will find as an attachment to the e-mail you received the newsletter in and drop it by The Natural Gardener. Ballots will also be available at The Natural Gardener Garden Store. All correct answers will be entered in a draw to win a **Getaway Package** from **Holey Soles** featuring a pair of **Getaway shoes, cap and bag**. Only one entry per person please. The draw will be held at The Natural Gardener Anniversary Open House on Sunday, April 22.

Who is this mysterious creature? If you know please fill out a ballot and drop it off at The Natural Gardener.



Who am I ???

The Holey Soles Getaway Package



THE NATURAL GARDENER 4th ANNIVERSARY OPEN HOUSE

Yes, it's true. The Natural Gardener turns 4 this month. To celebrate and to thank all you wonderful customers, we are having our much anticipated Open House. We wouldn't be here if it wasn't for all your support over the last four years so we hope you can make it and help us celebrate. There will be lots of great company, fantastic food, wonderful wine and a special little gift for everyone.

Date: Sunday, April 22, 2006
Time: 5:00pm to 9:00pm
Place: 4376 West 10th Avenue

Catering provided by Crown Street Catering.

Please RSVP by Wednesday, April 18, 2007

Have fun out in your garden this month and remember that all the hard work you do now will be rewarded with beauty, peace and tranquility later on this season.

Happy Gardening!!

Bob



Peony "Bowl of Beauty"