



It's six o'clock in the morning, our wonderful editor reminded me of my deadline and to meet it before I leave on my first summer holiday in many years. I sit here at ye olde word processor trying to get my mind into gear and around something interesting in the garden. (How's that for an opening sentence Brys?) It has been a wonderful year in our own gardens and it is really hard to know where to start. Yes it has been too dry but I am learning to stop complaining about this and just get on to protecting my plants with mulch. Yes the heat reduced the bloom time of many perennials and the gardens might not have been all that attractive in the high heat and humidity. A few minor problems. We should however look on the bright side of the garden this year. In order to weed, it had to be done very early in the morning before the heat got too bad-the gardens were great in the early morning with the first light of dawn, the birds singing away. (a Cardinal has taken up residence and continually serenades us). The frogs were grateful for any water we put in the garden and what a bumper crop of the little fellows we had this year. I have never seen so many frogs around our place. If there has been a world wide shortage of frogs, I can testify that that particular problem has not affected our farm this year-the shortage is over. I watched one energetic little fellow jump six times after a fly that flew tantalizingly out of his reach, jump number six was satisfyingly successful. The wisteria survived the winter and is starting to cover a garden fence. (Next year I will start propagating it). The corn is high and tasseling out and I hope to beat the racoons to it. There were a lot of racoons around this year (we've lost 60 chicks/layers to the bandits) and my trap has been working overtime trying to reduce their numbers to a dull roar so that we can at least share the sweet corn. On the bright side, I have built two large gardens at the front and side of our place which

should in a few years turn into quite nice gardens. Lots of rock work in one and a slightly Japanese tone to it while the main front garden reminds me of something vaguely French and formal with a touch of the English perennial garden thrown in for good measure. At the risk of sounding a little too philosophical, after not being able to garden at all last summer, I have simply enjoyed the ability to garden this year, to muck around with my flowers and friends and get my dreams underway again. To heck with the heat. Having said that, we did use a soaker hose this summer. We bought one of the kind that simply sweats the water out. No sprays or soakers, this one is made of recycled rubber and is a wonderful garden tool. It's easy on water, does not lose any water to evaporation, and puts the water where you want it. Available at Canadian Tire and with any luck, in other stores. Now if the provincial government would quit horsing around with the tire tax, make sure what was collected on the tax went into recycling efforts instead of general revenues to fund who knows what, we might be able to have other equally successful solutions. Although this was my first political statement in the ten years I have been writing this column, it felt good and I may even try it again. Remember that fall is an excellent time to do some planting. The heat of the summer is still in the soil, this helps roots get off to a good start. All of the fall planting that I have done in the past few years has been very successful and I am starting to like this time of year in the garden. Plants, especially perennials, do get off to a better start in the spring if they are planted in the fall. Divisions of plants such as Daylilies grow much better when divided in the fall rather than in the spring. Put a handful of bone meal around the roots when you bury the roots but do not use any fertilizer with nitrogen in it (the first number on the bag) we do not want any top growth starting out because it will only get winter killed. Trees and shrubs can be moved or planted with equal success. I am told that roses also plant very well now. Having been bitten with the rose "bug", I intend to find out if this is true this fall. I will let you know next spring how it turns out. I should tell you that our roses last year came through

the winter with amazing success with no winter protection at all. Planting the bud union 6" deep seemed to make a big difference. We had good blooms on all plants, even the ones that were destroyed by the bull dozer and back hoe came back and bloomed. We'll see what happens this year.

The other nice thing about fall planting is that it is relaxed. There is no pressure to get the garden going, to clean up the yard, to get the kids ready for summer holidays, to clean out the cottage. It's a relaxed time of year. The leaves are beginning to turn, birds that are still around will share winter with you, the air is cool and fresh-just right for sweating on the end of a shovel or planting hoe. There is time for reflection in the garden, the pace is right for beginning that paradise, the mind's own garden. It is OK to lean on the shovel and just look at the garden, to change the layout or the plant arrangement while things are fresh in your mind. Perhaps the peony would look better next to the daylily, whack-move it. Do try fall planting, you will like it, guaranteed.

The 1992 All America

winners were recently announced and the best thing about them this year is that there were no petunias. A Canna from seed "Tropical Rose" should interest us next year. Salvia coccinea, "Lady in Red" is a hummingbird attractant whose bright red blooms should attract some garden attention. Another verbena has been introduced, "Peaches, and cream" an apricot/salmon blend-if they can only stop it from getting powdery mildew and dying, the breeders will have something. A violet Dianthus "Ideal Violet" is appealing while a white Vinca "Pretty in White" leaves me cold. Two vegetables, a carrot "Thumbelina" dwarf and ball shaped, and a dwarf Dill, "Fernleaf" round out the selections. We have learned over the years that some of these winners turn out to be stalwarts in the garden eg. Marigold Queen Sophia while others are simply best forgotten. (Remember potatoes from seed?) Try them out but not in a big way in the garden. Well Brys, it seems that I have filled up the page and I have only just started on fall gardening. I am going out to the kitchen to get breakfast, a second cup of coffee and then sit in my garden. Enjoying.

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