

GARDENING LETTERS

by Doug Green

July has to be one of my favourite months, this is the month that my all time favourite flowers bloom in all their multi-hued glory. I am of course referring to the Hemerocallis family or Daylilies. We have just over 200 different colours of Hemerocallis and even those who do not really like them admit that they make a good colour display in the nursery. I will be moving as many as I can this summer to display beds beside the greenhouses so that you can drive by and enjoy them as well. On a sadder note, some of you may recall me mentioning my Arundo donax, (the giant reed plant), It appears as I write that this zone 7 plant has finally gone to the great compost heap in the sky. I was fun growing this semi-tropical plant while it lasted.

I do repeat here that stretching the boundaries of plants is great fun on a limited basis and one should not be really intimidated because some expert says you can't grow that here. (even if it is me). I'm sure you all know the definition of expert- 'ex' is Latin for 'out of'; and 'spurt' is a 'small drip'.

Moving right along. I have had a lot of folks ask about shade plants for the garden this spring and I thought that I should focus on a few of the better ones in this edition of the Lantern.

The queen of the shade plants is the Hosta. While possessing lily-like flowers, most Hosta are grown for their foliage. Growing quite comfortably in most soils, even under such acid plants as pine and oak, they make deep shade beds stand right out with their coloured foliage. The common Hosta fortunei is seen in many gardens with its green leaf striped or variegated with white. (Hosta fortunei, variety Medio variegata). This is a fast growing Hosta which contributes to its ease of propagation and quite low price. On the other end of the scale is the Hosta tokudama variety Aureo nebulosa. This is a slow growing Japanese hosta with a blue green, ribbed huge leaf which stands out in any garden. The two most loved Hosta include Hosta sieboldiana variety Elegans, a blue green leaved Hosta and its offspring, Hosta sieboldiana variety Frances Williams a blue green leaved variety with yellow gold variegation.

As far as I am concerned, these plants lend a sense of class to most shade gardens. If you want to see these plants in action, we are establishing our Hosta stock plant beds this summer in our shade nursery and you can see them all growing to maturity by



WATCH THE WATER!

Two tricks for the kitchen: Place a pan under the faucet in the sink to catch the water when people run water for a drink. Also, save the water when you wash and prepare vegetables and fruits for table use, canning or freezing. I dump it into a sprinkling can, and when the can is full I take it outdoors to use on the garden, trees or flowerbeds.

When crops like squash or cukes are planted in a circle or hill, put a stick in the middle and leave it there. Later on, you'll know where to water the main roots among the vines. (Marilyn Ringleb, Waverly, Iowa)

next spring. (if you can't wait, give me a call and arrange to drop in to see them this summer in their temporary homes)

Bleeding hearts are another super shade plant. Most of you know about the old fashioned Bleeding heart (Dicentra spectabilis) but did you know about the white variety? Not only are there these two varieties but the breeders have given us the short Bleeding Heart (Dicentra eximia) which blooms most of the summer. At our nursery, we grow three varieties of these short versions, the pink, the red, and the white. So you have a choice of 5 varieties of Bleeding heart to put into your shade garden.

Many greenhouses will sell the shade loving Lobelia cardinalis. This red flowering native loves the damp, shady spots which kill other plants. Other Lobelias include the Lobelia siphilitica which has two varieties a white and a blue. Both good shade plants, they really like that shady damp spot.

I could go on and on about these shade lovers including such plants as Ajuga, English violets, Brunnera, Alchemilla, Astilbe, Galium, Cimicifuga simplex and racemosa, not to slight the ferns and shrubs for shade such as Coral berries (both tall and short) but I think that I've used up my space for this month.

There is no lack of good plants for the shade, just look a little further than the ordinary.

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