



Spring 2010 Newsletter

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Feedback requested

Please send:

*suggestions on topics
you'd like to see in this
newsletter

*comments about our
services

*ideas for
improvements

*testimonials to publish
on the website and use
as references

Your comments are
greatly appreciated!

Greetings!

With spring in the air, it's time to start thinking of our gardens. While they're currently blanketed by snow, its melting fast and it will soon be time to get ready for the season ahead.

We are currently accepting new **garden maintenance** clients. When you sign up for this service we will look after your garden beds, shrubs, and small trees from spring through to fall so that you can enjoy all the benefits of your property without any of the work!

The first visit will be a

spring clean-up to start the season off right with edging, pruning, tidying and fertilizing. Following visits, (usually every two weeks throughout the summer) will keep your gardens looking their best with more weeding, pruning and edging, plus dead-heading, preventative maintenance, staking, dividing, and general garden upkeep.

The season ends off with a **fall clean-up** to protect plants and to prepare the garden beds for the winter.

Each maintenance plan will be catered specifically to your garden's needs.

For those not already signed up for this service please contact me for more information and to arrange an estimate.

I hope this newsletter wets your appetite for the upcoming season!

Looking forward to working in your gardens again,

Annabel Por

What's New With EarthFire Gardening?

Our **website** is up and running and people are commenting on how great it looks! See it for yourself at www.earthfiregardening.ca.

While you're there, be sure to subscribe to the **electronic mailing list** in order to automatically receive this newsletter delivered straight to your

Inbox, and to help cut down on mailing and paper costs.

Also, visit the **photo gallery** featuring before and after shots from our first 2 years, and be sure to check back often to see all of the **seasonal gardening tips**.

Besides the great look and content, the website is now powered by **green energy!**

The power it takes to run the servers (which host the website) is put back into the grid with power from renewable wind and water sources. We're glad to be able to do our share to help the planet!



Wild Blue Indigo Flowers



A Wild Blue Indigo plant

Photos courtesy Missouri Botanical Garden Plant Finder
<http://www.mobot.org/gardening/plantfinder.alpha.asp>

If you like this newsletter,
send it to a friend!

Featured Plant - Wild Blue Indigo (*Baptisia australis*)

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Wild Blue Indigo was chosen by the Perennial Plant Association as the 2010 Perennial of the Year. Like all winners, this *Baptisia* is drought tolerant once established and considered low maintenance.

Wild Blue Indigo has a long flowering period in late spring with spikes of

purple pea-like flowers rising above pale blue/green clover-like foliage. The flowers give way to inflated seed pods that persist well into the winter, making Wild Blue Indigo a multi-seasonal plant.

Reaching 3-5 feet at maturity, these large bushy perennial forms a

shrub-like clump of stems. It has a long tap root that fixes nitrogen from the soil. It is native to the Prairies of Eastern North America.

When grown in full sun in well drained soil and given occasional deep waterings, Wild Blue Indigo can be a long-lived addition to your garden.

What are Native Plants?

Native plants are considered to have occurred naturally in an area prior to the arrival of European settlers.

We often hear about plants native to Canada, or to Ontario, but we have to realize that plants are native to ecological communities, and not to political areas! While a plant may be native to Ontario it will not be naturally occurring across the entire province. The native Ontario tree Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), for example, is considered to have

occurred naturally only in the very southern tip of Ontario, in the Carolinian region. So, it is not native to the boreal forest region of Ontario!

Knowing the community a native plant comes from is an important part of making it flourish in your garden. And the effort is well worth it since there are many advantages to gardening with native plants:

-They are low maintenance, requiring little watering and fertilizing and pest

control.

-Attract pollinators such as birds, bees and butterflies.

-Provide food sources and habitat for wildlife.

-Contribute to biodiversity by perpetuating the genes of plants that are losing their natural habitats.

-They are fun and beautiful!

In the next issue: Natives from each of Ontario's Forest regions.

Guess the Plant Contest – Win a Perennial!



Be the first to correctly identify this plant by sending its common or scientific name to info@earthfiregardening.ca.

Winner will receive a **free Native perennial** planted in their garden.

Clue: A sight to look forward to this spring!