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Ninebark Flowers



Peeling Ninebark branches

Greetings!

The 2010 gardening season was off to an early start with work beginning in late March. April flew by, filled with garden clean-ups and then May proved to bring the cold that April never saw. Now, June has been bringing us the rain we missed in April and May. What strange and unpredictable weather to be working in!

This early warm weather and recent abundance of rain has done wonders for gardens. As I write this, the bulbs have all faded and Lupines, Roses, and Peonies are stealing the show. This is about 2

weeks ahead of schedule for this time of year.

The weeds also love the weather; we've been spending lots of time waging the war against them. One ally in this battle is **Mulch**. When spread after a careful weeding, it helps suppress additional weeds and makes those do manage to come out a lot easier to remove.

We use shredded pine bark as our mulch of choice. The natural brown colour is attractive; it also traps in moisture and reduces the need for extra watering. Also,

mulch breaks down over time, adding valuable organic material to your soil.

Please contact us if you would like an estimate for mulching your gardens.

A special thank-you to clients who referred us to their friends and neighbours. This is especially appreciated, as we always welcome new clients.

Till next time,
Annabel Por

Featured Plant: Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*)

Ninebark is a native shrub in the rose family. Growing about 2m tall and wide, its late spring flowers closely resemble Spirea's.

The flowers, give way to clusters of seeds in inflated pods which persist into the winter. The bark peels in long strips, which along with the seeds, add great year-round interest.

In nature, Ninebark is found growing along riverbanks, lakeshores and thickets from the Great Lakes up to James Bay.

In gardens, the shrub is trouble free. It attracts pollinators and birds, but not pests, has a naturally arching shape when left to grow without pruning, and can tolerate dry soils in sun or part shade.

Ninebark also has a number of varieties offering the same advantages as the species, with the addition of colourful foliage. Diablo for instance has deep red/purple leaves, while Golden is yellow/green.

Overall, Ninebarks are adaptable, versatile and low maintenance shrubs for the garden.

What's New

Welcome Jeff! Many of you have already had the opportunity to meet Jeff Brydges, the newest addition to the EarthFire Gardening team.

Having recently moved to Mount Forest from Orangeville, he's been

busy setting up his own gardens as well as helping maintain others',

Jeff is a meticulous weeder and has a great attitude. He's been a fantastic help since the start of the season.

Behind the scenes - Catch a glimpse of works in progress on our new **Facebook** page. You can access it from www.earthfiregardening.ca or search for it on Facebook.

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



Eastern Redbud in flower



Flowering Dogwood

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

Congrats to Christine Orr and Maurice Brubacher who each won a perennial by correctly recognising the Marsh Marigold in the spring newsletter?

Ontario's Native Plants

In the last issue we learned about the benefits of using plants native to Ontario (those that occurred here prior to the arrival of European settlers). Ontario can be divided into 4 main forest regions, each characterised by its own native plants.

The **Deciduous** or **Carolinian Forest** extends up from Essex county along Lake Erie to just east of Toronto, and reaches north to below Grand Bend and Kitchener. With the longest growing season of the province, this is the richest region, but also the smallest and the most threatened.

Trees native to the Carolinian zone include

the Eastern Redbud tree, Tulip Tree and Flowering Dogwood. Wildflowers native to the Carolinian zone include Virginia Bluebells, Spring Beauty and Prickly Pear Cactus, among others.

The **Mixed** or **Deciduous-Evergreen Forest** extends from Wawa eastward to Quebec and down to the Carolinian zone. Here, Eastern White Pine and Cedar, Sugar Maple and American Mountain Ash are native.

The **Boreal Region** extends north up to the **Tundra** which is the area along Hudson Bay. Native Boreal trees include Jack Pine, Tamarack and White Birch, while trees from the Tundra include Black

and White Spruce and Willows.

The Wellington/Grey area is located within the mixed forest region which marks the transition zone between the deciduous and boreal forests. Here, we're able to grow plants from across most of the province. Carolinian forest plants are often highly sought after and while they're accustomed to warmer conditions than ours, they make beautiful additions to the garden. They're also reminders of the great diversity that must be preserved in the province's southernmost forest region.

Information was taken from Lorraine Johnson's *The New Ontario Naturalised Garden*, a highly recommended book.

Guess the Plant Contest – Win a Perennial!



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

Winner will receive a **free perennial** for their garden.

Clue: visit us on Facebook.