



Bear Creek Press

'Learning Flower Power'

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What's New at the Bear

We can hardly contain our excitement about all the spring news at the Bear. New website, new pottery, new signage, new cat, new plants... whoa, wait a minute, did you say new cat? Let's start at the beginning.

Cricket, the adolescent feline that has graced us with his presence, was born under the back porch. As all abandoned, hungry and rescued cats, Cricket is endlessly thankful and has shown his appreciation by keeping our laps warm. He outgrew the house but found a happy home at the nursery where he has proven his constant desire to be friendly. It turns out he hasn't met a gardener that he doesn't like.

Meanwhile, Mark, the I.T. guru, was converting pages of information into bytes of information and in the process created the www.bearcreeknursery.net website. You will be impressed by what he did with 92 shoeboxes full of scraps of paper covered with indecipherable scribble. Now you can go to one place to find out what plants are available at the nursery, read all the old newsletters, look for a deer resistant plant, see what products are in stock, find descriptions of organic amendments and drop us a line or sign up for online news and specials. Thanks, Mark, for a brilliant job and website.

Meanwhile, Tina has been pasted to her laptop and waving her magic wand (at the same time) conjuring up a cauldron full of new plant signs. By painstakingly stirring the pot of plant photos, cultural information, botanical and common names, she has carefully cooked up a signage system that is both simple to use and full of facts. Growing advice, deer resistance, size and color and gardening ideas are just a taste of this chunky stew.

Meanwhile, Sally, Billie Jo and Carl have been transplanting hundreds of perennials, annuals, grasses, herbs, vegetables and agastaches for your gardens. There are a mess of new varieties and dozens of old favorites. Look for more choices of tomatoes and peppers, too. Stay tuned to the website for descriptions of new plants at the Bear.

And finally there are lots of new products and pottery. Anne has brought out more organic amendments from Nitron for all those victory gardens. There is new glazed pottery from Malaysia, a charming and elegant assortment of porcelain Ikebana vases, and lots of hypertufa pots in mixed sizes and colors. The popular Liquid Fence repellent is now available in a concentrate.

Oops, out of room - see you soon at the Bear!

Bear Creek Press Online

We would love to send every newsletter to every person on the mailing list. Due to ever increasing publishing and mailing costs we've only been able to send it to those who live around Eureka Springs & Holiday Island area. If you haven't seen the newsletter lately and would like to see what you have missed, please go to www.bearcreeknursery.net to sign up to receive future newsletters, announcements and specials as well as check out all of the previous issues.

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Storm Update

Here we are, once again sitting inside huddled by the fire, listening to the howling gusts and concerned about falling temperatures. This is normal except for the disconcerting detail that it is now April, the hopefully-no-more-winter-storms month. Oh well, just wait a minute or two and it will be spring again.

We will remember this winter as the year Mother Nature handed out warm and cold fronts like candy. This winter featured the introduction of the Insta-storm: after a day of gusty and chilly build up, an actual storm rages, subsides and then the sun comes out. All of this occurs in a space of about 32 minutes.

The one exception, of course, was the Ice Storm. We don't even need to assign a date to it, everyone will remember. Mostly we will remember sitting in the silent dark listening to the sounds of trees becoming smaller. It was such a thorough storm, after the fog let up the next morning, even the icicles had icicles.

So now it is time to forget the winter, plan the vegetable garden, think about replacing a tree or two, empower your garden with flowers and head down to your friendly neighborhood garden center.

A Few New Choices

Matchless Cuphea
Trailing White Bacopa
Ragin' Cajun Ruellia
Very Frilly Coleus
Variegated Salvia
Red Shield Hibiscus
Obsession Verbena
Purple Ribbon Lavender
Dwarf Hybrid Penstemon
Arizona Sun Gaillardia
Red Rooster Sedge
Raspberry Splash Lungwort
Golden Sunrise Hellebore
Melting Fire Heuchera
Branford Rambler Painted Fern
Harvest Moon Echinacea
First Blush Euphorbia
Bonfire Euphorbia
Sunrise Sunset Rose
Sweet Stevia

Thinking Ahead in Indigo

The Perennial Plant Association has named its perennial plant of the year for 2010. The False Blue Indigo (*Baptisia australis*) is the happy recipient although calls to *Baptisia's* corporate headquarters were not returned, so we can only speculate on the true reaction to this honor.

The U.S. native is an ironclad plant, appearing on the rockiest roadsides and offering its oversize blue pea-like flowers for our enjoyment. A little pampering will coax the maximum from this showy perennial- a well tended specimen can reach three to four feet tall with an equal size spread.

Plant this long lasting perennial now to enjoy the steadily

increasing presence in your garden each year and to enjoy its stunning flower spikes in 2010.



Growing Coleus from Seed

Of all the various chores around the house and greenhouse, planting seeds is one of the most rewarding. The idea of initiating the growth in one of nature's tiny miracles (a speck of conveniently packaged, genetically encoded matter complete with a life sustaining food packet) can be quite exciting for someone who is a dirt nerd.

As a family activity, planting seeds rates fairly low on the home entertainment index. In

terms of personal satisfaction, however, this is a pleasant task that results in food, flowers and foliage.

All of this is especially true of tiny coleus seed. A slow starter, coleus takes a while to develop into the plant that is known for trademark colorful leaves. The results of growing self collected coleus seed are also unpredictable. It seems the coleus plant enjoys mixing it up, genetically speaking.

The unusual colors and forms of coleus at the nursery are culmination of a few years of our own experiments. Most are seed-derived mutations of more common coleus available from growers. We have grown on some of the more attractive (and a few less attractive) forms to create a unique collection you won't see anywhere else.

Spring Hours: Monday ~ Saturday, 9 to 5. Sunday 11-4.

A Word about the Economy

So the economy is tanking, food is more expensive, jobs are scarce and everyone is worried. This is the normal state of affairs in the Ozarks, so another downturn shouldn't scare us too much. The nursery business as a rule features an economic crisis every five or six weeks. Each winter offers the monetary warmth and security of a stock market crash.

In response, Bear Creek Nursery has done its best to keep the cost of plants and materials the same as last year. There are a number of items which we have actually reduced prices (Mexican Sage and Sedum lovers take note). As we continue to grow and propagate more and more plants in our facilities, we are able to offer better, happier and hardier plants than ever before.

Take a look at the new website

www.bearcreeknursery.net

Garden News
Nursery Specials
Plant Lists
Newsletters
Deer Resistant Plants
Butterfly Gardening
New Products
Lots of Photos



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