



# Bear Creek Press

*'Winging into Spring'*

Volume 10, Issue 1

March 2011

## What's New at the Bear

There are so many new activities at the nursery this spring that we will waste most of this newsletter talking about them. You could save some precious time by skipping this column altogether and rushing down to the Bear to see for yourself.

**New Greenhouse.** Every two or three years, we feel inclined to build a greenhouse whether we need to or not. This new house we needed. Dedicated to plants that provide food (it has been nicknamed the "Edibles House") this new hut will house any greenery that can be eaten. Imagine finding all the herbs, vegetables, raspberries, strawberries, figs and mint in one location. Dusty was accidentally locked in the new greenhouse for three weeks and came out healthier and stronger than ever.

**Organic Vegetables.** Speaking of food, there is no healthier food than organically grown food. So for the first time this spring, all vegetables we sell are going to be grown in our own homemade compost with no chemical fertilizers. This carefully prepared compost packs a nutritional punch and will provide all the necessary nourishment for the young plants. All lettuce, spinach, broccoli, chard, asparagus, peppers, tomatoes, and other vegetables will now be grown organically. And, yes, these well-tended, healthy, carefully grown plants will cost the same as last year- nursery grown plants at farmers market prices.

**Bagged Mulch.** Speaking of bagged products, we are now bagging the mulch at the Bear. Easier to handle and not as heavy as the commercial variety, our bagged mulch will match the color of the bulk mulch. Bark mulch is the best mulch for your landscape projects and is now available in an economic, easy-to-use, bagged form. And since it is less expensive to do it ourselves, we can pass the savings on to you. Easier to handle, fresher, cleaner, lighter and less expensive- how can you resist?

**New Pottery.** Speaking of resisting, how can you resist looking at all the new pottery? There are new birdbaths (including a nifty hanging birdbath), new sizes and shapes of pots and new colors to choose from. Did you know that square pots are becoming more popular? (if they aren't, they should be). There are also new display areas, artfully arranged by Lori, showing many combinations of pots, colors and mixes of ceramic and concrete pots.

**New Hypertufa.** Speaking of concrete, lightweight Hypertufa pots are sturdy, weather resistant and have an earthy feel that stands alone or mixes with glazed pottery. Our Hypertufa pots are made by hand at the nursery, so are guaranteed to be sturdy and last a lifetime. This year, there are many new shapes and sizes of pots, new fountains and some large containers. If you didn't think there was such a concept as rugged elegance, come check out the new Hypertufa containers. These pots are suitable for any of your favorite plants.

**New Plants.** Speaking of plants, betcha you were wondering if we would *ever* talk about new plants. With a brand new greenhouse, you can be certain there will be lots of new greenery to fill the empty shelves. Since there is no such thing as empty shelving at the Bear, there must be lots of new plants. Aside from the aforementioned edibles, (Raspberries! Blackberries! Figs! Blueberries! Golden Creeping Thyme!) there are lots of unusual annuals, unparalleled perennials, vivacious vines, unique shrubs and extraordinary groundcovers.

Here are just a few: a fuzzy leaved yellow flowering salvia that is as cute as a lamb. A new annual salvia is blue and is suspected to be taking steroids (it denies it, of course). There is a butterfly bush that has red flowers and another butterfly bush that grows only two to three feet tall. There is a native vine that is evergreen to at least 10 degrees below zero, flowers and is well behaved. There are annuals Tina picked out that are surprises to all of us. There are new shade loving groundcovers, some with fuzzy leaves and some with shiny leaves. There is a hardy black veined banana and some other really cool tropicals. There are new heat and drought tolerant plants such as a pink Agastache and a red salvia that thrived in Texas last summer. (Can you think of any place hotter and dryer than Texas last summer?) There are new double flowering versions of our favorite zinnias. There is the darkest red geranium available. For you coneflower lovers there are two new choices; one is called Pow Wow Wild Berry. And then there is Joey, a plant that was described as cotton candy on a stick. There are more shade perennials, deer resistant plants and shrubs and, well, too many to talk about here. Stay tuned for the facts and figures in the next issue.

## Thank You

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the beginning of Bear Creek Nursery. It has been twenty years since the start of a backyard business known as The Little Greenhouse. One would think the champagne corks would be popping and we would be sore from all the back-slapping.

In truth, it is gratitude we feel. We owe our debt of thanks to you, dear readers and fair gardeners. It is your love of gardening, your interest in the landscape and your desire for our help that keeps us going.

Your support is both humbling and awe inspiring. We thank you with all of our hearts for your constant support and look forward to continuing to help you and your gardens look their best.

We also owe a sincere Thank You to all the folks who are part of the nursery. Their years of dedication to the health of the plants and to sharing their knowledge with so many gardeners over the years is what makes Bear Creek special. Many thanks go to Sally and BJ, Carl and Lori, Dusty and Sam and to the many good folks who have spent time helping at the nursery thru the years. You people are terrific!

With sincere gratitude,  
Gordon and Tina

## Arthur C. Powell

March 29, 1920-  
January 14, 2011

Suddenly, like the petals of a spent rose blossom falling, my father passed away in January. If you ever wondered about the guiding force behind our nursery, you need look no further than my parents.

For over sixty five years they have built, planted, nurtured, harvested and entertained plants, family and friends in their gardens. After retiring, they chose a terrace level apartment in the retirement community in which they lived. For eighteen years they have cultivated a garden that is still a joy to the entire community. With a little help, Mom will carry on this tradition.

The desire to grow, to improve and share the world of plants was generated and enriched in my parents' carefully groomed yard.

We will miss Dad dearly, but at the same time, realize that he is still here- in every greenhouse, in every plant and in every thought. Thanks, Dad, for all you have given us.

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## So Long, Evil Winter

It seems it would not be too presumptuous for me to speak for all of us in saying "thank goodness winter is over!" Living in the Ozarks is an invitation to enjoy endlessly fluctuating weather. In the nursery business, we tend to refer to it as the tease & freeze cycle- two days of glorious sunny, balmy weather followed by plummeting temperatures, rain, sleet and snow carried in on mind-numbing wind. It's as if some cynical person in northern Canada has a dial they spin on a whim. Then our sensitive patterns are affected by someone in Texas who sneezes (ahh, a 60 degree pea planting day) or a fellow in South Dakota who bends over to tie his shoe (another week of cold wind and a foot of snow).

By the time you are reading this we hope winter is thinking of

ending. That you are watching the onions sprout and the early perennials green up. That you are dusting off the garden tools. That you are emptying the winter storage area typically known as a wheelbarrow. That you are ready to enjoy more regular glorious sunny days. And that you are willing to spend some of those glorious days visiting the Bear, sharing your stories and queries. We look forward to another great growing season.

## The Gift of Dirt

Tina gave me a thoughtful set of books this winter. They came together in one box (no waster of wrapping paper she) and burst out like informational gold on an obscure and misunderstood aspect of gardening.

The subject of all five books starts at the ground level and goes down. Life under our feet is the most

neglected part of our garden knowledge. My guess was she was also tired of tomatoes- books, that is, not the vegetable. *Roots, Dirt, Compost, Teaming with Microbes* and *Secrets to Great Soil* are the abbreviated titles. As you may have noticed, there is nothing about the green parts of plants in these subjects. One knows one is a complete dirtbag when considering the thrill of reading these books, one after another, without delay.

They have been scattered around the house like our dog's toys and like those toys, are used and set down over and over. A couple are on the end table, one at bedside and another in the dining room. They have managed to become part of winter's life. As the soil bacterium hibernates and the fall compost mellows, by the warmth of the hearth we try to learn about the mysteries below.

**March Hours: Monday ~ Saturday, 9 to 5. Open 7 days a week in April.**

## GoGrow Compost

You may have noticed piles of hay, manure, leaves, grass clippings, nursery discards, old soil and a few disobedient houseplants lying around the yard last fall. Vigilantly layered, often turned and carefully monitored, these raw ingredients have been composted into the best soil ever seen in the Ozarks. OK, we may be exaggerating a little. Even our lawyers are concerned about mislabeling such a fine product, but we think this is the real thing. Soft and crumbly, our compost was heated to over 150 degrees to kill out the weed seeds and then simmered all winter to improve the microbe content. It is now ready for your garden. Tina, who is our marketing department, came up with the nifty name 'GoGrow Compost'. For the first time, this ideal garden amendment is now available in bulk, by the yard or in easy-to-handle bags. Your garden will love it.

## March is Garden Club Month

Garden Clubs  
Master Gardeners  
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Botanical Societies

**15% OFF**

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*Now through March 31, 2011*



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