



Bear Creek Press

'Spring Everlasting'

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What's New at the Bear

It's amusing to think some folks assume we take winters off. I just tell them we jet off to Aruba during cold season. After all, since we are a nursery, there is nothing to do, right? The truth is more like this: we are planning and seeding and cleaning and transplanting and potting and ordering and pruning and building and... well, you get the idea. After a mercifully mild winter it seems we were able to get more done over winter than during the busy spring season. Here are some enticing tidbits to look forward to at the Bear this year.

Baker Creek Seeds

One of the finest heirloom seed companies in America is just up the road. In southeastern Missouri, Baker Creek Seeds has compiled a large and diverse selection of rare and "old timey" seeds. Their beautiful catalog deserves to be on a coffee table and is a meander back thru ages of home collected and traded garden seed. If you love studying the history of herbs and vegetables while tasting these goods through eye-popping photographs, you will enjoy their catalog. In the meantime, stop by and pick up some seeds in a new display at the Bear.

More Vegetables

Have you tried a Speckled Romaine? How about a Red Head Butter Lettuce? These are eye candy in the garden, creating a dab of color in a sea of green. My mom used to grow them in the front flower bed, admonishing us to pick just one leaf from each head to retain the balance of the lettuce display. We are also trying a few new tomatoes and peppers like Big Jim, Goliath and Habanero (for you heat seekers). It's never too late to plan your vegetable garden or to fit in another plant or two.

Potting Soil in Bags

We were never completely satisfied with commercially bagged potting soil. One seemed to have too much peat, another was half pine chips. We are convinced that one nationally available and heavily advertised brand added fungus gnat eggs to every batch. The only solution, of course, was to make our own. This carefully blended mix uses some of our homemade GoGrow Compost to make a soft, porous, potting soil. The plants at the nursery are pretty excited with the new mix. If you're still not certain, ask the ferns how they like it. Available in two sizes: Regular and "I don't need that much, thank you."

Milorganite

One pre-bagged product we do favor has been available for a long time. This safe, organic fertilizer and soil conditioner is a by-product of the Milwaukee brewing process. We decided to start carrying it last summer after some advice from a gardening friend. He recommended Milorganite for gardeners who have trouble with deer. Oh, of course, that's all of you. He has used it as a repellent by spreading it around trees, shrubs and his lawn. Who knew a product that was good for your landscape also helps repel deer? We can't vouch for his results yet but it is worth a try, isn't it?

Pine Bark Mulch

For those of you who grow evergreens, hollies, azaleas or blueberries, we now carry pine bark mulch. This finely ground mulch will enhance the look of a landscape bed as it improves and acidifies the soil. Available in bulk and in bags, this new mulch smells like a pine forest and looks good enough to sprinkle on ice cream.

Sorry, Nothing to Complain About

This space is usually reserved for whining about the cold and ice of the previous winter. With the last few winters there has been plenty to whine about.

This winter was, well, *different*. After week after week of nearly perfect temperatures, pleasant outdoor days and garden-turning and pea planting warmth, this winter has left us with nothing to complain about. Ok, so we can let out a little whimper about the wind and its constantly confused choice of directions. This being the Ozarks, we are used to small flying objects passing by horizontally.

We are grateful for a spring that started in December and look forward to a long and glorious planting season. We know you are, too and look forward to seeing you at the nursery this spring.

At The Bear This Spring

Hypertufa & Bamboo Fountains

Coco Fiber Liner

Bamboo Gloves

BCN Panda Caps

New & Unusual Seeds

GoGrow Compost

More Organic Options

Rice Pots

Cypress Trellis

Gardening Tools

Armadillo Repellent

Systemic Japanese Beetle Control

Superthrive

Hanging Birdbaths

Sun Stixs

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What's New, Continued

Soil Shed

The largest and most useful improvement at the Bear this winter is the new soil shed. We are unusually excited about a new structure that doesn't even contain plants. What it will contain is sifted (no more lumps!) covered (no more wet soil!) and consistently clean soil mixes. With bins for garden soil, GoGrow compost and potting soil as well as a bagging station for all our products, the Soil Shed is where you will find Dusty preparing the goods to make your garden better.

New Plants

I usually tear out half the pages of the new plant catalogs before giving them to Tina, but this year I forgot. The result is boxes and boxes of colorful new perennials this year. Potted up by Sally and Carl, this array of new perennials is the best plant expansion to be seen

at the Bear in a long time.

New salvia, new sedum, new candyfuff, new geums, new bleeding hearts, new perennials everywhere! Add in a few new lettuce varieties, a new herb or two, new peppers & tomatoes and lots of new annuals and you have a spring collection that even the most jaded Bear-watcher will enjoy. With their happy roots in new potting soil, this year we will have the healthiest, hardiest selection of garden-ready plants ever!

A new batch of Compost

Each year we mix a new batch of ingredients in August, carefully blending nitrogen rich material with dry carbons. After a slow cooking to 160 degrees, many turnings and a two month simmer to improve microbe content, the compost is ready. Three words describe this year's batch. Best. Compost. Ever. GoGrow Compost is a soft blend of completely cooked organic material

that will enhance and amend your garden or vegetable soil. Dusty planted a cherry tomato in compost last year that grew to the size of a tree and produced about six hundred tomatoes per hour. Try some this spring and make your already happy plants even happier.

And lastly but certainly not leastly

Occasionally insistent, a tad bit whiny but overall quite shy, our new nursery cat, Ellie, keeps herself content by mostly laying around. Often seen as a lump of fur amongst the flats of annuals in the greenhouse, Ellie makes herself at home primarily by ignoring all human elements. Treating any friendly overtone as an insult, she will mostly show you her tail in retreat. Only Tina, whose lap is highly desirable, has broken Ellie's code of bashfulness. Feel free to greet our new greenhouse cat, just don't expect anything in return.

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

Plant Police Strike Again

Once again the plant police have struck again. Occasionally a botanical name is a reasonable, easy to pronounce word that seems to be chosen for its ability to be pronounced by English speaking persons. Consider for a moment, perhaps, Hosta or Dianthus or Sedum, plant names we have grown up with and that can actually be spoken by the average individual. Imagine our surprise, then, when we found out that some sedums (just some!) will now be known as *Hylotelephium*s. Evidently, some of those fun loving botanists were staying up to late while cheating at Scrabble. Gardeners may slowly accept the new name but for a while at the Bear, at least, you can just ask for sedum.

March is Garden Club Month

Garden Clubs
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