



# Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society

## Perennial Notes

February 2009

### WHPS COMING EVENTS!

All regular meetings are 6:30 social time, 7:00 p.m. program at Olbrich Gardens Commons, 3330 Atwood Avenue, Madison, unless otherwise noted.

**February 13, 14, 15, 2009 WPT Garden Expo.** Take a big leap toward spring by attending the Garden Expo! Stop by the WHPS booth (#107) to sign up for our drawing and enjoy photos from member gardens. WHPS is also sponsoring a seminar at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, February 14. Ed Lyon, WHPS board member and Director of Allen Centennial Gardens will present *How to Build or Improve a Successful Shade Garden*, which will be filled with excellent information, good advice and great pictures!

**Wednesday, February 18, 2009.** One of the most highly respected nurserymen in our area, Roy Diblik, co-owner Northwind Perennial Farm, Springfield, WI, will bring his distinctive perspective and philosophy on the need for plant communities. Roy will focus on plants that grow in regular soil, suggest plantings that are compatible in water and sun requirements, and he will show dozens of plant schemes divided into categories (calm, fresh, elegant and friendly). The title says it all: *Roy Diblik's Small Perennial Gardens, The "Know Maintenance" Approach* ("...a cookbook approach to solving the garden recipe problem.").

**Wednesday, March 18, 2009, speaker Dr. Darrel Apps,** one of the most highly recognized daylily breeders. Called "Dr. Daylily" by *The New York Times*, App's love affair with daylilies began 57 years ago, and his Woodside Nursery was one of the largest on the East coast (sold in 2007), with 14 acres in South Jersey producing more than 400,000 plants annually, including 300 hybrids that he produced from two distinct varieties. Ten of his hybrids have been patented, and he produced a line of everblooming daylilies marketed under the Happy Ever Appster® brand. These plants all descended from his famous 'Happy Returns', and extended the color range of rebloomers beyond 'Stella de Oro'. It is likely that many appear in local gardens, including 'Apricot Sparkles', 'Big Time Happy', 'Just Plum Happy', 'Red Hot Returns' and 'Sunset Returns', just to name a few. Join us for this exploration of all things daylily.

**Wednesday, April 15, 2009, A Passion for Hosta,** Timothy Blumentritt is co-owner of Shades of Green (shadesofgreenusa.com) in La Crosse, Wisconsin. Shades of Green specializes in hostas, with an astounding array of specimens and plants for sale. Hostas are offered through mail order, or retailed at Family Tree Floral in West Salem, which features over 325 varieties for sale and approximately 500 varieties in the display gardens. Plants sold from the nursery are soil grown and hand-dug so that they adapt quickly to

garden soils. You may think you know the genus Hosta, but we invite you to join us as Tim shares his passion and expertise on this ubiquitous and reliable mainstay to every perennial garden.

**Saturday, May 16, 2009, WHPS Plant Sale,** 9:00-Noon, Middleton Cross Plains District Gym. Great buys on perennials, shrubs and trees, all grown and dug from member gardens. Shop early for best selection. See elsewhere in this newsletter for opportunities to volunteer for this event.

Saturday, May 30, 2009 "*Plant Buying Spree*" at *Klehm's Song Sparrow Farm* is scheduled for 9:00 to 10:30 am. A map will be included in the next newsletter.



### WHPS Trips 2009

The WHPS Trip Committee is in the process of making arrangements for the following trips this year. All of the trips will include a combination of public and private gardens, with the promise of a nursery visit (or two). Members will receive complete information in future mailings.

Mark your calendars now and keep your eye out for registration information soon.

**Woodstock, Illinois—One-day trip—June 13**

**Michigan—Five-day trip—July 29-August 2**

**Iowa—Two-day trip—October 3-4**

### WHPS Tours of Member Gardens 2009

This year WHPS will tour member gardens on May 20 and June 3 of this year.

Look for a complete list of gardens, information and directions in the next newsletter.



The next newsletter in early April will include our big list of area plant sales and garden tours. If you know of any you think we should list, send the info to Stephanie O'Neal at sone2@aol.com.

## Artful Living: Planting near black walnuts isn't necessarily nuts

by Linda Brazill

The following article originally appeared in *The Capital Times* September 16, 2008.

The last thing I hear falling asleep at this time of year—and the first sound I notice waking up—is the sharp plunk of black walnuts, still in the hull, falling from the trees. When they hit the roof, it's like the crack of a ball meeting a bat. They look like lime green golf balls and do about as much damage to large-leaved plants.

Walnut hulls piling up in a garden are more than a nuisance, however. For me, they were the wake-up call alerting me to the presence of black walnut trees in my neighbors' yards. Black walnut trees pose a critical problem for gardeners because the tree produces a chemical known as juglone that is highly toxic to many other plants. As far back as the Romans, author and naturalist Pliny noted the poisoning effect of walnut trees on plants.

The toxin occurs in the leaves, bark and wood of walnuts but is most concentrated in the roots. But here's the rub: the toxic zone of a mature walnut tree occurs "on average in a 50- to 60-foot radius of the trunk, but can be up to 80 feet," according to the Ohio State University Extension. And that zone gets bigger every year as the tree grows.

Yet the news about black walnuts isn't entirely dire. While university extension departments like those at Ohio and Michigan State offer lists online of plants that won't grow or may be seriously compromised by their proximity to black walnuts, they also list perennials, vegetables, trees and shrubs that will grow under the trees. They note their findings "are based upon observations and not from clinical tests."

That's a critical point. For example, both universities say crabapples and lily species—especially Asian hybrids—won't grow within 50 feet of the drip line (the edge of the tree canopy) of a walnut. But in our yard, we had a crabapple tree that thrived near a black walnut for almost 50 years, and I've had no problems with my lilies.

It seems that personal observation and experimentation, then, are the keys to success when gardening under black walnuts.

Black Earth gardener Jeannette Golden, who's been gardening under black walnuts for a dozen years, said almost everything she's tried has grown well.

"Toxicity to other shade plants is overrated, based on my own experience," she said. "The majority of the shade in my shade garden is produced by two large black walnut trees, one of which is the most wide spreading walnut tree I've ever seen." Her shade garden also includes a mature, healthy Norway spruce at the drip line of one of the walnuts as well two old weeping willows and a mature American elm.

Since shrubs and trees are more expensive, Golden didn't want to experiment with those, so she focused on planting perennials first. Some literature suggests that well-drained soil can counteract, to some degree, the toxic effects of walnuts. So Golden initially built up the soil under the trees by lightly mounding it in the planting area. Golden points out

that she has "very rich soil—they don't call it Black Earth for nothing!"

Many gardeners with black walnuts simply rely on that old standby, Hostas, which grow just about anywhere and are almost impossible to kill. Not Golden; among the non-native perennials that she has grown successfully are assorted cultivars of Astilbe, Epidendrum, Lamium and Pulmonaria. Equally successful have been spring bulbs like snowdrops, daffodils and tulips.

Likewise, an amazing variety of bulbs, perennials and woodies are flourishing along with native species like bloodroot, Trilliums and Labrador violet. When she began this garden, Golden said she made a general assumption that most native plants would grow without problems since they are often growing in the wild under an assortment of trees, including walnuts.

"Every bulb I've ever tried has thrived," Golden said.

She eventually took the plunge and added woodies (trees and shrubs) though there have been some problems.

"The only plants I've ever had to take out because they wilted were *Rhamnus* 'Fine Line', a tree peony, and an herbaceous peony that did well for a couple of years and then declined," Golden said. She also points out that herbaceous peonies are often listed as being tolerant. Golden has two healthy herbaceous peonies about 10 feet from the drip line, but notes "the only one I tried directly under the tree declined." I have peonies in my garden that are about six feet from the drip line that are also doing fine.

She also has two Amelanchiers (serviceberry trees) that have been in the ground for a couple of years. Both are the variety 'Autumn Brilliance'. One is doing well, Golden says, but the other looks bad, so she's going to keep her eye on them. I've lost two 'Autumn Brilliance'—with a third on its last legs—because I planted them without being aware of the neighboring black walnuts.

I kept replanting and might never have made the connection without all the walnut hulls finally pointing the way.

As for Golden, she admits that, "Frankly the only reason I actually don't like gardening under black walnuts is that I get sick of picking up millions of walnuts every fall." And she says that considering "the loud sound they make as they fall onto the ground, I figure I'll probably be killed someday by one falling on my head."

But, judging by Golden's experience, her plants should be fine.

Check out her plant list (see page 3).

Visit my blog at:  
[http://eachlittleworld.typepad.com/each\\_little\\_world/](http://eachlittleworld.typepad.com/each_little_world/)

Email: [lbrazill@gmail.com](mailto:lbrazill@gmail.com)

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# Jeannette Golden's Plant List

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By Linda Brazill, 9/18/08

The following article originally appeared in *The Capital Times* September 16, 2008.

The following list includes the majority of bulbs, shrubs, trees and perennials growing directly under black walnut trees—and doing well—in Jeanette Golden's garden. Common names are in parentheses after botanical name. An asterisk means the plant is also growing in proximity to black walnuts in my garden and doing well.

## **BULBS:**

Allium (flowering onion)  
Anemone blanda (Grecian windflower)  
Daffodil  
Eranthis (winter Aconite)  
Fritillaria (checkered lily, guinea flower)  
Galanthus (snowdrop)  
Hyacinth  
Muscari (grape hyacinth)  
Tulip

## **PERENNIALS:**

\*Actaea rubra  
*Ajuga reptans* 'Burgandy glow' and 'Mini crisp red' (carpet bugle)  
Aralia racemosa (spikenard)  
Arisaema triphyllum (Jack-in-the-pulpit)  
\*Asarum canadense, *Asarum europaeum* (wild ginger, European ginger)  
Aster divaricatus (wood aster)  
Astilbe cultivars (false spirea)  
\**Brunnera* 'Jack Frost' (Anchusa)  
\*Carex cultivars (sedges)  
Cassia hebecarpa (wild senna)  
Caulophyllum thalictroides (blue cohosh)  
Chasmanthium latifolium (grass: northern sea oats)  
\**Cimicifuga racemosa*, *Cimicifuga ramosa* 'Brunette' (fairy candles)  
*Corydalis lutea*, *Corydalis* 'x dufu temple', *Corydalis ochroleuca*,  
*Deschampsia caespitosa* (tufted hair grass)  
\**Dicentra spectabilis*, *Dicentra* 'King of Hearts' (bleeding heart)  
*Disporum flavum* (fairy bells)  
*Epimedium alpinum*-*Rubrum*, *Epimedium versicolor* 'Sulphureum' (barrenwort)  
\**Euphorbia dulcis* 'Chameleon', *Euphorbia epithymoides* 'First Blush' (spurge)  
\*Ferns: *Adiantum pedatum*, *Athyrium* 'Ghost' and others,

*Dryopteris* species and cultivars, *Osmunda claytoniana*,  
*Onoclea sensibilis*  
\**Geranium macrorrhizum*, *Geranium maculatum* (cranesbill)  
*Hakonechloa macra* (Japanese forest grass)  
*Helenium* 'Lorraine Sunshine' (Helen's flower)  
*Hemerocallis* cultivars (daylily)  
\**Heuchera* cultivars (coral bells)  
\**Hosta* cultivars  
*Iris cristata* (crested iris)  
\**Lamium* cultivars  
\**Lilium martagon* cultivars  
*Lobelia* cultivars (cardinal flower)  
*Lysimachia nummularia* 'Aurea' (creeping moneywort)  
*Myosotis scorpioides* (forget-me-not)  
*Persicaria* 'Painter's Palette'  
*Phlox divaricata*, *Phlox stolonifera*  
*Polygonatum commutatum*, *Polygonatum humile*,  
*Polygonatum odoratum*-*Variagatum* (Solomon's seal)  
\**Primula* species and cultivars (primrose)  
\**Pulmonaria* cultivars (lungwort)  
\**Sanguinaria Canadensis* (bloodroot)  
*Smilacina racemosa* (Solomon's plume)  
\**Stylophorum diphyllum* (golden poppy)  
\**Tiarella* 'Running Tapestry' (foamflower)  
*Thalictrum dioicum* (meadow rue)  
\**Tradescantia* 'Sweet Kate' (spiderwort)  
*Trillium grandiflorum*, *Trillium luteum*, *Trillium recurvatum*  
*Uvularia grandiflora* (merrybells)  
\**Viola labradorica* (Labrador violet)

## **WOODY PLANTS:**

\**Acer* 'White Tigress' (maple)  
*Catalpa* 'Aurea' (Indian bean tree)  
*Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Silver Lode' (false cypress)  
*Cornus alternifolia* 'Argentea' and 'Golden Shadows' (Pagoda dogwood)  
*Forsythia* 'Kumson'  
*Philadelphus coronaries* (morck orange)  
*Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Center Glow' (ninebark)  
*Robinia pseudoaccacia* 'Frisia' (black locust)  
*Salix* 'Hakuro nishiki' (willow)  
*Syringa vulgaris* (lilac; doesn't bloom much due to too much shade, but is otherwise healthy).  
\**Tsuga Canadensis* (Canadian hemlock; lots of cultivars)  
*Viburnum dentatum* (arrowwood viburnum)

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## WHPS Donates

Each year the WHPS Board of Directors meets in the fall to decide how to distribute income generated by the Annual Plants sale. At the Annual Meeting in December the Board recommended the following donations: Olbrich Gardens—\$2,000; Longenecker Endowment Fund—\$1,000; Rotary Gardens—\$1,000; Allen Centennial Gardens—\$1,000; HospiceCare Gardens—\$500.

Mark your calendar now for Saturday, May 16. Shopping the WHPS Plant Sale is not only fun and beneficial for your garden, it also helps provide funding for these and other local garden resources.

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## Pruner Maintenance Party

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I was recently invited to a hand pruner maintenance party.



The hostess made sure we had screwdrivers, wrenches, sharpening stones, cleaning supplies, various lubricants, and, most importantly, a knowledgeable person to talk to us about our pruners and both demonstrate and help us take care of them.

On January 16, about 10 of us gathered around a table at Betsy True's house while Paul Fahrni talked to us about needed supplies, demonstrated on his own pruners, and then came around and helped each of us.

We all had Felco hand pruners, which we disassembled, cleaned, sharpened, lubricated, and reassembled. For disassembling, we used screwdrivers and wrenches – learning that the most important thing is to remember how they went together. One person had two pruners, and she left one assembled so we could look at it when reassembling, which proved invaluable.

We used “Goop Hand Cleaner” and fine steel wool to clean all parts of the pruners. After rinsing and drying all parts, we then sharpened the blades on sharpening stones (whetstones), which can be moistened with water or oil. The beveled edge is rubbed along the stone, following the edge line, until desired sharpness. The backside of the beveled edge is rubbed a couple times to get rid of burs. We then lubricated with white lithium grease – rubbing a light layer over everything but the handles and blades. Household oil or 30 weight oil could also be used, but Paul feels the white lithium grease lasts longer.

Then came the reassembling, and it was good to have a number of people for help and moral support. Certainly the best part of the day was having a cleaned, sharpened, lubricated pruner at the end. But, for me, almost as good was knowing that I wasn't the only one who wasn't maintaining my pruners properly. I had thought that every other gardener knew all this and conscientiously cared for their tools and I was the only ignorant, lazy gardener who didn't.

So find a group of people and have your own party. It's worthwhile and fun!

—Jane LaFlash

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### Milwaukee Art Museum ART IN BLOOM April 2-5, 2009

Plan ahead and enjoy Milwaukee Art Museum at its blooming best! Stunning flower arrangements by designers from local garden clubs and professional florists will be interpreting works of art throughout the permanent collection—a most delicious juxtaposition.

Windover Hall will be decked out in a tulip extravaganza to accompany the Feature Exhibition on Dutch artist Jan Levens (1607-1674), a contemporary of Rembrandt. A bouquet of reknown speakers will accompany the designs, with educational and entertaining lectures, demonstrations and intimate workshops. Garden-related boutiques, small-scale sculptures, original works of art and scrumptious food from the Café Calatrava will tempt you to spend the entire day.

General Museum admission required. Reservations to hear specific speakers should be made well in advance.

For more information, please call (414) 224-3200. To book a tour call (414) 224-3842, or check out the Web site at [www.mam.org](http://www.mam.org) for special events and the complete speaker program.

This is a vital friend-raiser for the Museum and its Garden Club, so members of the Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society are especially welcome.

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### Member gardens on display at Member Potpourri!

In addition to the Annual Meeting and Seed Exchange in December, members were treated to some great photos of member gardens, and we were also treated to photos from gardens in South Africa and Mexico. What better way to spend a cold December evening?

Special thanks to the following members who presented at the meeting.

Norma Briggs  
Karen and Phil Crawford  
Rita Dupuis  
Jeannette Golden  
Frank Greer (also presenting photos  
from Keith Anderson)  
Jill Hynum  
Stephanie O'Neal  
Bob Shaw

This is always a fun meeting to attend and participate in. As you take pictures of your garden throughout the coming season, take a moment to set aside a photo now and then and plan to present them at this year's Member Potpourri!

## Host a plant dig for the plant sale?

Are there plants in your garden that you know will have to be divided this year? If you are going to have enough plants to divide in the spring to create six or more flats, think about hosting a dig in April and donating plants to the WHPS Plant Sale. We can provide volunteers, pots, potting soil and plant markers for your dig, turning an all-day job (or more) into a 2-3 hour fun project.

If you would like to host a dig, contact Dig Coordinator Bill Hoernke at 608-873-4994, [bhoernke@chorus.net](mailto:bhoernke@chorus.net).

And if you are a member with an uncommon or unusual plant in your garden, won't you consider dividing it this spring and contributing one or two pots to the plant sale?

If you would like to volunteer to work a plant dig, there will be sign-up sheets at the next few WHPS meetings for volunteers to sign up for helping at the digs, working the day before the Sale (setup day) and the day of the sale. Or you can contact Stephanie O'Neal at [sone2@aol.com](mailto:sone2@aol.com) to volunteer for the plant sale.

## Volutella Blight Damage to Boxwoods

In my garden, 'Green Mound' and 'Green Velvet' boxwoods have developed scattered dead branches. With close inspection, the branches appear to be girdled, so that the bark is peeled away from the wood.

I have observed these same symptoms at the Longenecker Horticultural Gardens, at the Chicago Botanic Garden and at the Bickelhaupt Arboretum.

On a visit to the Bickelhaupt Arboretum, I was joined by Dr. Jeff Iles, Dept. of Horticulture, Iowa State University. He took specimens back to the diagnostic lab at Iowa State University. Their diagnosis: Volutella Blight that causes leaf cast and twig blight.

"Volutella Blight spreads rapidly in moist weather in summer, attacking healthy twigs when humidity is high. To control, clean accumulated leaves and other debris from interior of bushes and prune off all infected twigs or remove infected plants. If there are signs of disease, follow cleaning with lime sulfur spray."

I have not observed Volutella Blight on the more winter hardy Korean box (*Buxus microphylla* var. *insularis*).

—Ed Hasselkus

## 2009 Perennial Plant of the Year *Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola'

Reprinted from Web site of Perennial Plant Association <http://www.perennialplant.org>

The Perennial Plant Association has awarded the title of Perennial Plant of the Year® to *Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola'. This ornamental grass is a member of the Poaceae family. The species is native to Honshu Island, Japan. The genus derives its name from Hakon, a region in Japan, and chloa, the Greek word for grass. Individual blades are 1/2" wide and bright yellow color with very thin green stripes. In the cooler days of autumn the golden foliage becomes tinged with shades of pink and red. *Hakonechloa* is used mainly for its golden foliage, although it does produce tiny, inconspicuous flower spikes from late summer through mid autumn.

- Hardiness – USDA Zones 5-8
- Size – 12-18 inches tall, 18-24 inches wide
- Light – Partial shade is optimum in hot climates, more sun is suitable in cooler areas
- Soil – Prefers moist, humus-rich, well-drained soil
- Uses – This long-season ornamental grass may be used as a ground cover, a border-front specimen, a mass planting, or in a patio container.
- Unique Qualities – The plant offers vivid highlights in shaded areas or in evening gardens. This grass is also noted for its movement in breezes, offering a cascading or an undulating behavior.



The Perennial Plant of the Year Program promotes the use of perennials. Four perennials are selected by the Perennial Plant of the Year Committee from an extensive list of nominations made earlier by PPA members. Each year members cast their vote for one of the four selected plants with the following attributes:

- Suitable for a wide range of climate types
- Low maintenance
- Easily propagated - easily comes true from seed or vegetative propagation
- Exhibits multiple seasonal interest

For a complete historical list of Perennial Plants of the Year, see back page

**Perennial Plant of the Year**

an historical list

- 2009 *Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola'
- 2008 *Geranium* 'Rozanne'
- 2007 *Nepeta* 'Walker's Low'
- 2006 *Dianthus gratianopolitanus* 'Feuerhexe'
- 2005 *Helleborus xhybridus*
- 2004 *Athyrium niponicum* 'Pictum'
- 2003 *Leucanthemum* 'Becky'
- 2002 *Phlox* 'David'
- 2001 *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'
- 2000 *Scabiosa columbaria* 'Butterfly Blue'
- 1999 *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldsturm'
- 1998 *Echinacea purpurea* 'Magnus'
- 1997 *Salvia* 'Mainacht' (May Nigh)
- 1996 *Penstemon digitalis* 'Husker Red'
- 1995 *Perovskia atriplicifolia*
- 1994 *Astilbe* 'Sprite'
- 1993 *Veronica* 'Sunny Border Blue'
- 1992 *Coreopsis verticillata* 'Moonbeam'
- 1991 *Heuchera micrantha* 'Palace Purple'
- 1990 *Phlox stolonifera*

For more information on the plants listed above,  
go to <http://www.perennialplant.org/PPYIndex.asp>

**Late winter—time to think about pruning**

As you look out the window at your garden's shrubs and trees in the winter landscape, it's a good time to start thinking about late winter pruning.

The end of February and early March is a great time to really see the structure of your woody plants, make sure limbs are not broken or crossing or rubbing against one another, and determine which old branches should be cut back. And while you're at it, bring in a few flowering branches inside to add some early spring to the house.

Time to get out the pruners and loppers and get gardening!

**HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP?**

If your membership is up for renewal in 2008 your received a dues renewal notice in early January. Please return your dues payment, along with the membership form, by no later than March 31, 2008. Don't forget to include your email address, since we send out meeting reminders regularly via email.

Members who have already paid their dues for 2008 did not receive a notice. You can tell which year your dues are paid through by looking at the mailing label below. It will say "PD (year)."

**WHPS Web site:** [www.madison.com/communities/wisconsinhardyplantsociety/](http://www.madison.com/communities/wisconsinhardyplantsociety/)

*Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society*



**February 2008 Newsletter**

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**Do you have a question about your membership?** Contact Jane LaFlash at [whps05@yahoo.com](mailto:whps05@yahoo.com), 608-243-1208.