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and Fertilizers*
Tomato Picks for 2001

BayScaping with BaySafe Products

Preserving the Chesapeake: Behnke Nurseries partners with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay to promote native plants.

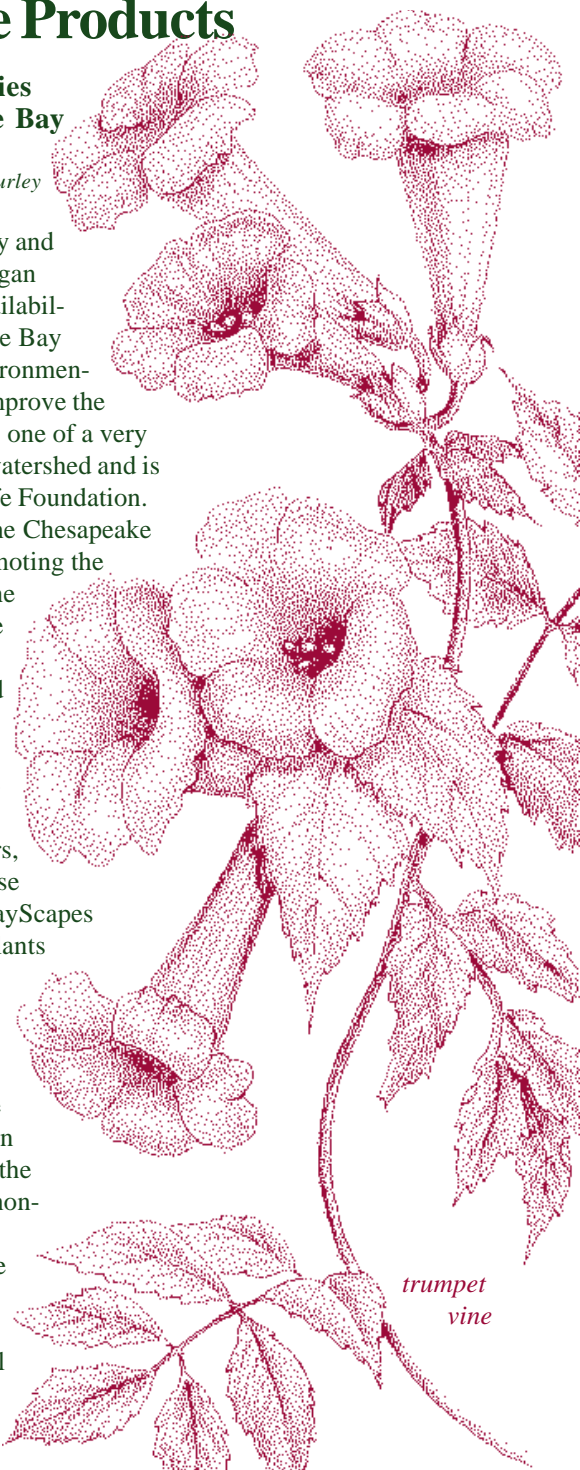
— by Susan Richards and Larry Hurley

During Fall 2000, the Behnke Nurseries Company and the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (ACB) began working together on a project to promote the availability and use of native landscape plants in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The ACB is a well respected, non-profit environmental organization that has been working for 30 years to improve the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay. The partnership is one of a very limited number developed by the ACB within the Bay watershed and is supported by a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

As an organization dedicated to the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers, the ACB has a strong interest in promoting the use of native plants. These plants are well adapted to the environmental conditions of the Bay region and provide essential habitat and food for wildlife. When established, they may require less supplemental watering and fertilizing than more exotic ornamentals. They are also adapted to surviving attacks of natively occurring diseases and insects and may thrive with fewer applications of pesticides. These attributes will result in reduced pollutants washing into our local streams, rivers, and ultimately, the Chesapeake Bay. Promotion of the use of native plants is only one component of the ACB's BayScapes program. The program promotes the use of beneficial plants and environmentally sound landscaping techniques through a variety of written materials and workshop curricula.

Even botanical experts disagree on a formal definition of a native plant. For the purpose of this project we chose to define a native plant as a plant species found in this region at the time Christopher Columbus arrived in the western hemisphere. The ACB also recommends many non-native species in the BayScapes program if they have few maintenance requirements and are *not* invasive. The thrust of this partnership, however, is to give greater attention to mid-Atlantic native plants. The plants (and products) for this program sold at Behnke Nurseries will bear the name BaySafe®.

Continued on Page 2



*trumpet
vine*



The Behnke GardeNews

is published 6 times per year:
Winter, Early Spring, Spring,
Summer, Fall and Holiday.

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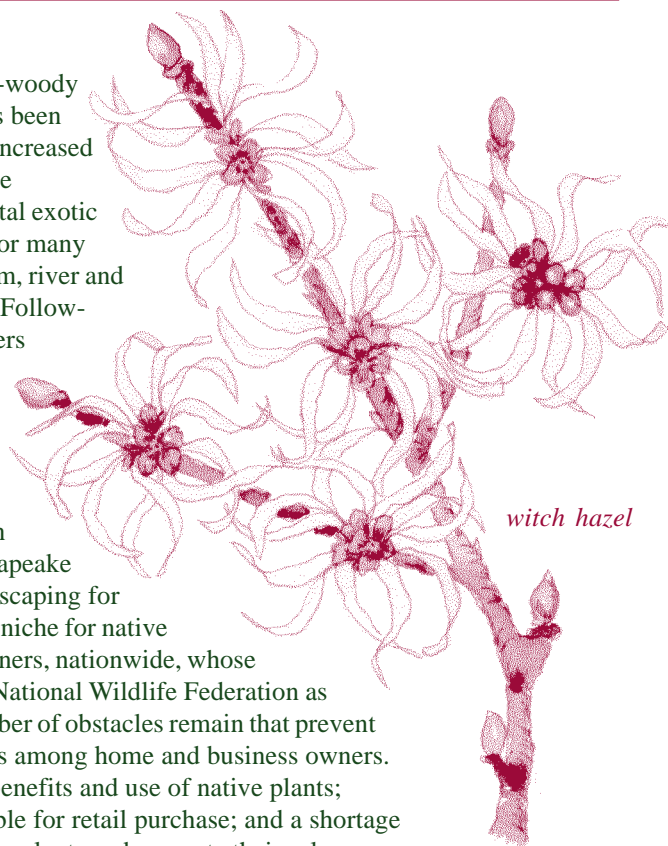
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BayScaping, from Page 1

Acres of native trees, shrubs, and non-woody vegetation in the Chesapeake Bay region has been declining rapidly in recent years because of increased urban development, suburban sprawl, and the continuing advance of invasive and detrimental exotic plant species. The result is a loss of habitat for many wildlife and fish species, and decline of stream, river and Bay water quality throughout the watershed. Following 1999's severe regional drought, landowners are also looking for hardy, drought-tolerant species that require little watering. Many native plants fill this bill.

The opportunity for home and business owners to restore wildlife habitat through planting native species of nursery stock is an early but critical stage in improving the Chesapeake Bay watershed. An increased interest in landscaping for wildlife has already begun to create a market niche for native plants. An example is the 23,000 property owners, nationwide, whose home landscapes have been certified by the National Wildlife Federation as official "Backyard Wildlife Habitats." A number of obstacles remain that prevent wider acceptance and use of beneficial plants among home and business owners. They include lack of information about the benefits and use of native plants; shortage of "landscape quality" stock available for retail purchase; and a shortage of retailers willing to consistently stock native plants and promote their sale.

The intent of the partnership program between Behnke's and the ACB is to change this situation. The program will be a concerted effort to offer Behnke customers the opportunity to help restore our ecosystem by reintroducing native plants to their home landscapes. Our horticulturists will aid customers in selecting natives with the help of unique demonstration gardens at each store, and a logo denoting native varieties will appear on native plant stock. In order to help customers select the appropriate native plants, Behnke staff will receive training on care and maintenance of many native species. Additionally, informational brochures and workshops on topics related to native plants and low-input gardening will be available to customers at Behnke Nurseries beginning in early spring. And finally, every issue of *GardeNews* in 2001 will devote space to educating readers on all aspects of BaySafe® gardening. □



Familiar Native Plants

You may be surprised to recognize many favorite and familiar plants on the list of Maryland natives. Here are just a few from our list of hundreds of species. More information will follow in future issues of *GardeNews*.

Dogwood (*Cornus florida*)

Sweetbay Magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*)

Fringetree (*Chionanthus virginicus*)

Trumpet Vine (*Campsis radicans*)

Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*)

River Birch (*Betula nigra*)

Sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*)

American Holly (*Ilex opaca*)

Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)

Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*)

Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)

Hardy Hibiscus (*Hibiscus moscheutos*)

Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*)

Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*)

Growing Begonias Indoors

— by Carol Allen, Indoor Plant Specialist

The bright flowers and amazingly colored leaves of the plants that our grandmothers loved are causing new excitement with today's indoor gardeners. Thanks to new enthusiasm by plant breeders, the begonia family now boasts 900 species and over 10,000 horticultural varieties or cultivars. Their "painted leaves" come in an astonishing array of colors — including bright olive, rich red, silver, chocolate, vivid pink, tawny orange and almost-white. This would be enough for many people to want to grow them indoors to brighten an otherwise dreary winter, but they have another outstanding attribute as well — they're tough! Growing them is a breeze — just give them an east-facing window or a shaded, west-facing window where the temperatures will not go below 65 degrees. Begonias disdain pampering, preferring to be allowed to go dry rather than be overwatered. (Begonias have been known to revive from a full wilt!)

There are several forms of begonias that are currently available:

Cane begonias, better known as "angel wing," can be found in the summer months as outdoor hanging baskets. They are popular for their long, graceful leaves and colorful flowers in shades of white, pink, red and orange.

Begonia semperflorens, better known as "wax begonia," has an abundance of dainty flowers in shades of pink, red or white. These begonias are more tolerant of sun and are frequently used as bedding plants or for color in a hanging basket or windowbox. As the term *sempreflorens* implies (see page 7), you can expect them to flower throughout the summer.

Rhizomatous begonias are typified by the old-fashioned "iron cross" begonias. These plants will send down roots along their stems, making them easy to propagate by cuttings. Breeders are developing newer and flashier hybrids of this old favorite.

Rex begonias are the queens of color. The striking foliage is complex in pattern, texture and color, and includes deep, intense greens edged with bright reds and sparkled with silver. They can be trickier than most other begonias — try to maintain them at an evenly warm temperature, let the soil dry slightly between waterings and increase the humidity, if possible.

Summer-blooming **tuberous begonias** will fill a patio container with large flowers (up to four inches across) in shades of red, pink, yellow, orange, white and bi-colors. Their green leaves are the perfect backdrop to set off their showy flowers. Tuberous begonias like to go dormant in the winter. Store the tubers in dry vermiculite or peat and pot them up again in the spring.

Join us in the month of January when we'll feature many types of begonias in our greenhouses. Plan to attend our free classes on growing orchids, begonias and other houseplants and dish gardens in January and February. (See box at right).

Also, check out our comprehensive Spring Seminar Schedule (see pages 4-5) for more informative presentations on both indoor and outdoor gardening. Visit our web site, www.behnkes.com, for photos of some of the newer, more dramatic cultivars of begonias. □



rex begonia

Indoor Plant Events

Plan to attend Behnke's free informational classes and clinics to learn more about indoor plant gardening. All events are free, though space is limited. Please arrive early to reserve a seat.

ORCHID CLINIC

Bring up to three orchids for orchid expert Carol Allen to diagnose and/or repot. (There is a nominal fee for repotting.) Carol will work with you one-on-one as time permits. Spectators welcome!

Beltsville: Fri, 1/12/01 9am-Noon; 1-3 PM
Sat, 2/24/01 9am-Noon; 1-3 PM
Sat, 3/17/01 9am-Noon; 1-3 PM

AFRICAN VIOLETS

Learn the basics of caring for these diminutive delights, and enjoy blooms nearly year round.

Beltsville Sat, 1/13/01 10 AM

DISH GARDENS

Gardening on a small scale can provide big pleasure. Pick up tips and tricks from those in the know.

Beltsville Sat, 1/13/01 1 PM

BEGONIAS

Discover the indoor branch of this fascinating family of easy-to-grow, flowering and foliage plants.

Beltsville Sat, 1/20/01 10 AM

FRAGRANT INDOOR PLANTS

Fill your home with intoxicating scents from nature, even during the bleak days of winter.

Beltsville Sat, 1/27/01 10 AM

ORCHID CULTURE

Two sessions provide an introduction to basic orchid culture and potting techniques. **Please phone the appropriate location to reserve a seat.** (Phone numbers are along the bottom page margin.)

Largo Sun, 1/28/01
Potomac Sat, 2/3/01 or Sat, 2/10/01
Beltsville Sun, 2/4/01

On each class date, two sessions will be presented. You may attend one or both:

10-11:30 AM Growing Orchids Indoors
1-2:30 PM Repotting Class
(limited to 15 attendees)



Behnke's Free C

February 10 through April 7, 2001, in Beltsv

1. HOUSEPLANT ADVICE PANEL

Saturday, 2/10/01, 10AM

Our specialists will answer your questions on indoor gardening. An easy-to-follow demonstration on creating lovely gift baskets with indoor plants will be included in this informative session.

2. MANAGING PESTS IN THE HOME LANDSCAPE: ROSES AND BEYOND

Saturday, 2/10/01, 1PM

Scott Aker, U.S. National Arboretum

Learn basic earth-friendly pest management concepts and get some special help with rose problems. Find out how careful monitoring and a variety of control options can help you keep pest damage to a minimum in your garden.

3. GROWING ORCHIDS IN YOUR HOME

Sunday, 2/11/01, 1PM

Carol Allen, Behnke Nurseries

Our nationally-known orchid expert will introduce a wide variety of orchids for in-home gardeners and share secrets to success with these beautiful yet surprisingly easy to grow exotic plants.

4. BASIC GARDENING 101

Saturday, 2/17/01, 10AM

Brenda Skarphol, Green Spring Gardens Park

A primer for the beginning gardener. Brenda will introduce you to the language and practices of growing plants with her characteristic clarity and humor.

This topic will be addressed by another expert on 3/24/01, as listed below.

5. INTRODUCING LIGHT INTO THE GARDEN

Saturday, 2/17/01, 1PM

Paul Eddleston, Illuminata

Creative solutions in landscape lighting design can make the garden a joy to experience even after the sun goes down. An experienced professional in horticultural lighting will spark your imagination and discuss practical aspects of garden lighting.

6. GARDENING WITH SENIORS IN MIND

Sunday, 2/18/01, 1PM

Lana Dreyfuss, American Horticulture Therapy Assoc.

The golden years can be a great time to create golden gardens. Learn helpful tips on how to change your gardening style. We will look at what works, and how you can adapt using helpful tools and design styles, so that all the benefits of gardening shine through.

7. WHY BAYSCAPE?

Saturday, 2/24/01, 10AM

Rebecca Wertime, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay

Protecting the Chesapeake watershed by planting native trees, shrubs and perennials is something we can all do to preserve wildlife habitats, water quality and an environmentally sound future for generations to come. Join us as we launch Behnke's Native Plant Program in partnership with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay.

8. GARDENING WITH OUR NATIVE PERENNIALS

Saturday, 2/24/01, 1PM

Dale

Hendricks, North Creek Nursery

Whether you have a moist, streamside garden or a dry meadow or anything in between, there are Maryland native plants to create a pleasing, colorful and beneficial display while preserving the natural balance of our ecosystem. Join Dale as he showcases the wealth of native perennials that can beautify our gardens.

9. MARYLAND'S NATIVE TREES AND SHRUBS IN OUR GARDENS

Sunday, 2/25/01, 1PM

Jim Plyler, Natural Landscapes

Planting a landscape with native trees and shrubs is an investment in the long-term health and natural habitat of our region as well as the beauty of your little bit of the much larger Chesapeake Bay watershed. Join us as we trace a native landscaping project from its planting through its beautiful and beneficial ten-year development.

10. VEGETABLES: ASPARAGUS TO ZUCCHINI

Saturday, 3/3/01

Cindy Brown, Green Spring Gardens Park

The weather in the metropolitan D.C. area favors a long growing season and fresh vegetables can be plucked from the garden year round. Slide lecture will include planting schedules, selection, growing tips and suggestions to make your vegetable garden beautiful enough for your front yard.

10am: Cool Season Crops

1pm: Warm Season Crops

Bring your lunch and stay for the whole alphabet of delicious vegetables.

11. PLANTS FOR DIFFICULT PLACES

Sunday, 3/04/01, 1PM

Randy Best, Behnke Nurseries

Choosing the right plant is often the key to resolving our most difficult gardening challenges. Join Randy as he discusses many "right plants" for a variety of tough gardening situations from soggy swales to dry shade.

12. BASIC LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Saturday, 3/10/01, 10AM

Joan Honeyman,

Jordan Honeyman

Landscape Architecture

Learn how to compose a simple landscape design.

Discussion will cover analyzing the natural conditions

and looking at aesthetic considerations such as overall site organization and circulation. Practical examples through slides will be presented and a question and answer period will address specific questions.

This topic will be addressed by another expert on 3/17. Also, you will enjoy "Basic Landscape Plants" on 4/01. Both seminars are listed below.

13. FUSION GARDEN: AN AMERICAN FARMHOUSE

Saturday, 3/10/01, 1pm

Dave Culp, Sunny Border Nursery

Bringing back European-selected, American natives, incorporating Dutch and German styles and translating European ecological style, Dave Culp has designed a regionally appropriate fusion garden for his Pennsylvania farmhouse.



Gardening Seminars

ille. Space is limited, please register by phone: 301-937-1100

14. HERBS! HERBS! HERBS!

Sunday, 3/11/01, 1PM

Maria Price, Willow Oak Herb Farm

A local herb expert shares her passion for herbs as well as practical information on how to grow them, how to preserve them, their healing properties, and how to use them in cooking and decorating your home. Maria will bring one of her favorite herb recipes for everyone to taste.

15. BASIC LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Saturday, 3/17/01, 10AM

Steven Mott, Behnke Nurseries

Learn how to compose a simple landscape design. Discussion will cover analyzing the natural conditions of a site, looking at aesthetic considerations such as site organization and circulation. Follow along as the plan develops in a step by step illustration of the process.

For more landscape design information see "Basic Landscape Plants" listed below.

16. CARING FOR THE MATURE LANDSCAPE

Saturday, 3/17/01, 1PM

Gwen Stauffer, Hillwood Museum & Garden

Well-established landscapes impart beauty and character to our homes. As these landscapes mature, they require special care to keep them healthy and attractive. Learn how to assess the condition of your mature garden or landscape and what techniques will maintain its health and beauty.

17. VINES AND GROUNDCOVERS

Sunday, 3/18/01, 1PM

Diane Lewis, Brookside Gardens

Vines that climb and tumble over fence and arbor add lush foliage and brilliant flowers to the garden while groundcovers bring color and texture to the horizontal plane. Join us as we explore these two important plant groups and learn how they enhance our gardens.

18. NATURAL WATER GARDENS

Saturday, 3/24/01, 10AM

John Magee, Second Nature

A tumbling waterfall or a sparkling forest pool can be the inspiration for introducing water into our landscapes. Join a design professional as he traces the construction process for creating a natural water feature. Plus...learn how to create a bog garden and fill it with unusual and colorful plants that love to get their feet wet.

19. BASIC GARDENING 101

Saturday, 3/24/01, 1PM

Gene Sumi, Behnke Nurseries

A primer for the beginning gardener full of practical information on everything from soil amendments to scientific names. Gene will clarify confusing terms and explain methods used in all types of gardening to get the novice gardener growing.

20. COLORFUL MIXED BORDERS

Sunday, 3/25/01, 1PM

André Viette, André Viette Farm & Nursery

The art of the mixed border is one that is learned through many years of designing with annuals and perennials. Join us as we learn from André's extensive experience and are charmed by his wit and enthusiasm.

21. COLOR ECHOES IN THE GARDEN

Saturday, 3/31/01, 10AM

Pamela Harper, Gardener and Author

A noted garden writer shares her expertise in the art of combining colors in harmonizing groups that blend seamlessly to create beautiful gardens. Join us as we learn from an expert in the field of perennial gardening.

22. THE 12-MONTH CONTAINER GARDEN

Saturday, 3/31/01, 1PM

Eric Morrison, Container Gardening Specialist

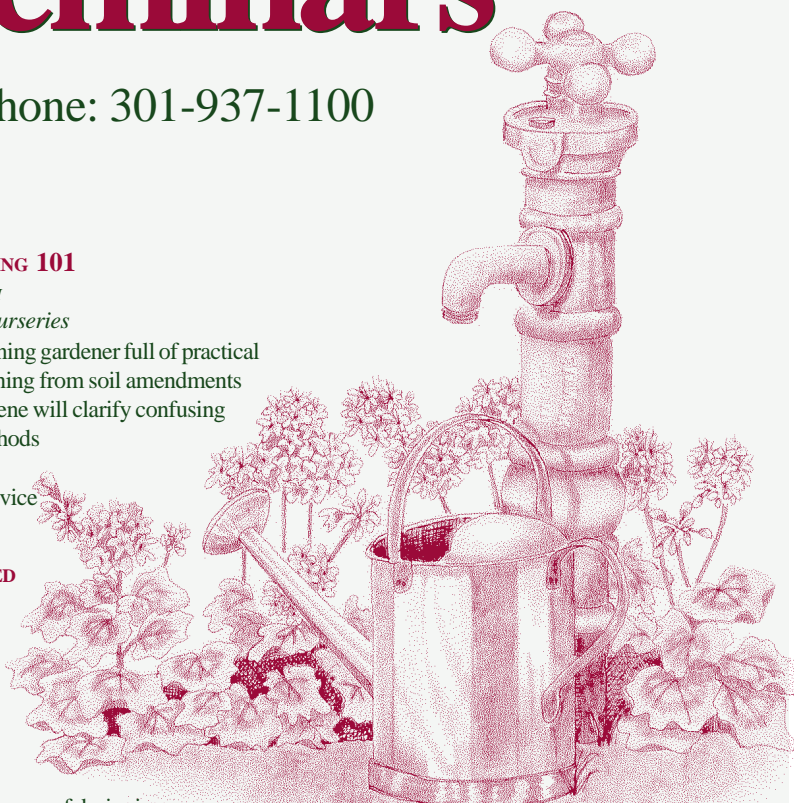
Establishing a basic container garden that can be adapted to the changing seasons is easy and fun. Eric will discuss containers, soils, plants, techniques and a timetable for keeping the container garden fresh and appealing year round.

23. BASIC LANDSCAPE PLANTS 101

Sunday, 4/01/01, 1PM

Chris Upton, Behnke Nurseries

Chris, our Design Consultant, will discuss many plant groups and their uses in the landscape. A basic understanding of these is valuable when choosing plants to use in your garden. Whether you need a windbreak, hedge or flowering border the right plants can be found for the job.



24. GROWING GRAPES FOR WINE

Saturday, 4/07/01, 10AM

Lewis Parker, Willowcroft Farm Vineyard

The owner and winemaker of Loudoun County's most awarded winery will give insight into growing grapes for home winemaking. The talk will concentrate on site selection, varieties to grow or avoid, pruning principles, and care of vines during growing season. A general discussion of making wine from the grapes will be included.

25. 2001: A SAGE ODYSSEY

Saturday, 4/07/01, 1PM

Susan Belsinger, Food Writer and Gardener

Herb of the Year, Salvia, comes in many guises — from bold, colorful ornamentals to flavorful culinary herbs. With a brief slide presentation, Susan will discuss the *culinary* sages from common to fruit-scented. Learn which sages are best with different foods and how to use their flavors in your kitchen. Susan will prepare and share a few of her favorite sweet and savory sage dishes.

We regret that our Assembly Room is not yet accessible to handicapped persons. We will, however, try to accommodate anyone in need of assistance.

Latin In Your Garden

— by Jim Dronenburg, Perennial Plant Specialist

I know it's happened. You've come to Behnke's looking for a specific plant and when you ask for it our eyes go unfocused for a second and we say, "Rambling thingummy. Right this way please."

Why do we do that? Well, if you go to the store looking for 'Granny Smith' apples, you aren't going to want peaches. You aren't going to want 'Delicious' — hey they're *apples* aren't they? No, you want one *specific thing*, and nothing else. Just so, the Latin language is used to identify each specific plant. Most nurseries, including Behnke's, are organized around plants' Latin names — and there are some easy rules that will let you deal with it comfortably.

But why the Latin at all? Didn't you ask for exactly what you wanted? Yes, you did, but English names, "common names," can often refer to two or more plants. "Rose" can mean anything in the genus *Rosa*, from a one-foot-high ground cover to something that will cheerfully overgrow an entire tree, and "Rose of Sharon" and "Lenten Rose" are not roses at all. "Lily", as a common name, is attached to calla, canna, true lilies, daylilies...need I go on? And that's just in English, my own native language. If, say, a Korean man comes to me and asks for "Toraji" — what does he mean? But if he were to ask for *Platycodon*, I know. The Latin name is the same, no matter what the plant is called in your own language. I can understand — and help—anyone in the world who uses Latin, and they can understand me. (We will both think the other has a barbarous accent, but hey, that's life.)

The "Latin," or more accurately, scientific name for a plant is: *Genus/specific epithet*/'Cultivar Name'. Which is, General group of plants/Actual one kind of plant/ 'Selected individual from species'. For example, *Cercis canadensis* 'Forest Pansy' is: All Redbuds/American redbud/'This one is special (it happened to be selected for its purple young leaves)'.

Sometimes a genus has a real Latin name — one used for hundreds of years, back to Rome itself. For instance, *Malus* (genus name for apples and crabapple) is the actual Latin word for "apple." This is especially true of things existing in Europe before the systemization in the 1700's of botanical Latin, by Charles Linne, or Linnaeus. But *Franklinia*, for example, was named in honor of Benjamin Franklin; it was a genus totally new to science at the time. Other genus names are from the Greek language, and still others may have a medieval origin.

The specific epithet denotes a species within a genus, distinctively different from other species in that genus. A specific epithet can be either descriptive or named for a person or place. Descriptive could be a color, like *rubra* (red); *fulva* (tawny); *flava* (yellow). It could describe the plant's habit, like *procumbens* (creeping); *repens* (trailing); *pendula* (hanging down). A specific epithet can also be two Latin words run together, such as *grandiflora*/large flowers; *septem-loba* (having seven lobes on a leaf); *centi-folia* (a hundred "leaves" —which means having scads of petals per



flower). Place names are just that — the name of a country or region with a Latin ending tacked on: *canadensis* (Canada), *virginiana* (Virginia), *japonica* (Japan), *chinensis* or *sinensis* (China) *novae-angliae* (New England); *occidentalis* (Western). A species can be named for a person: Hanson's lily, for example, is *Lilium hansonii*.

When the hybridizers get involved, you will often see things like "*Helleborus x orientalis*". This means that what you have is a hybrid between two or more *Hellebores*, not a pure species; it is of mixed origin, predominantly the species *orientalis*, or resembling that parent most. Or, as in hollies, you will see "*Ilex x meserveae*" — these hybrids are named after Kathleen Meserve, the lady who bred them. In rare cases you will see "x" before the genus; this means that what you have is a hybrid between two genera. (Yes, Virginia, it can be done with some plants. Do not try this at home with your cat and goldfish.) Sometimes, after the variety name, you will see the words *clone*, *strain*, *hybrids*. Clone is one plant, all of these have been propagated from cuttings, graftings or division, and are 100% alike — they are the same plant. *Strain* means a group of plants that are selected for similarity to each other or to a predefined set of characteristics, out of the same hybrid origin — usually from seeds from the same cross. *Hybrid* means that you have similar but not necessarily identical seed crosses made, and no pre-selection among the seedlings has necessarily been done.

One other thing to remember, and then you've got most of it. English pronouns have three sexes; I can talk about *him*, about *her*, or about *it*. In Latin, a noun has a gender too, and an adjective describing that noun has to match it in gender. A genus name is a noun. A specific epithet, when it's an adjective, has to agree with the noun. In Latin, this is done by changing the end letters of the word. So when you look at a plant's scientific name, discard the last letters on a specific epithet and look for the stem of the word. For instance, "parv-" means small, whether it's *parvus* (m), *parva* (f), or *parvum* (n).

For more information, as well as a thorough list of scientific plant terms translated into English, consult our free handout, **The Language of Horticulture**, available at Behnke Nurseries. □

Where Does Landscaping Begin?

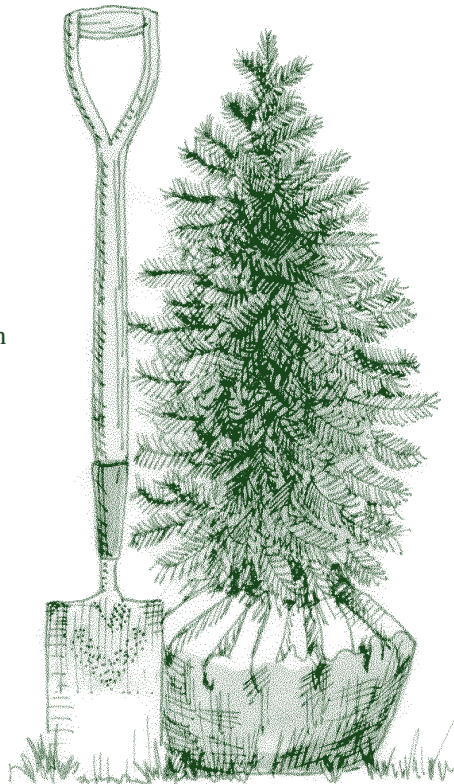
All good landscaping begins with the down-and-dirty—the soil. Soil quality affects almost everything that makes up your landscaping—trees, decorative shrubbery, annuals, perennials, flowering vines, lawns and ground covers. The ideal soil would be loose enough to poke with a finger, yet would hold water like a sponge. But few of us are lucky enough to have this in our existing landscapes.

Good quality topsoil encourages a healthy vegetative cover in your landscape that will help to prevent soil erosion. This vegetation will, in turn, help to maintain proper soil pH and fertility levels. In order to do a good job of improving the quality of your soil, you need to first determine soil pH and fertility. The pH measures acidity/alkalinity levels, and fertility describes the presence of nutrients and minerals in the soil; together they tell you what plants your soil can realistically support. These can be determined by analyzing soil samples from different locations throughout your garden.

To test your soil, you can purchase a soil test kit (available at Behnke's and better garden centers) or you can have a detailed analysis done by contacting the University of Maryland Home and Garden Information Center and asking about their soil testing services. (Phone: 1-800-342-2507 or Internet: www.agnr.umd.edu/users/hgic, click on "publications") They'll send you a kit and detailed directions for taking a meaningful soil sample. You can also request an analysis of organic content and "mechanical breakdown" (for sand, silt and clay percentages.) You'll mail your samples to their lab, and they'll send you complete results as well as recommendations for improving your soil, if necessary.

Ideal soil contains organic matter that will supply nutrients, retain moisture and help to maintain soil temperatures appropriate for plant growth. Some common organic additives are composted leaves and grass clippings, composted kitchen vegetative waste, leaf mold, manure, peat moss and even composted sawdust. Lime or iron sulphate may be used to adjust soil pH. These amendments can be worked into the soil prior to the establishment of a new landscape, or worked around established plants.

We suggest that you obtain your mulch and soil amendments in the early spring, so that you will be ready for serious planting when the weather permits. And, to help you plan this spring we are offering an **Early-Order Program**, January 1 through March 15, planned around organically-based soil amendments and other landscaping basics. We want to encourage you to think about and order your soil amendments in early January and February, when you have time to plan your gardening. You can pick up your order whenever you're ready, or arrange to have it delivered. When you order early, we both will benefit: you'll get a 15% discount, and we'll be able to plan our deliveries for optimum effectiveness. When you get ready to dig your beds in late spring, you'll already have everything you need close at hand. Check out our website for details on this program, and to order on-line if you desire (www.behnke.com). Or call the Beltsville store at 301-937-1100 for more information and a complete list of products. □



Meet: Steve Marks

Steve is a familiar face to Behnke Nurseries customers in Beltsville. As one of our Customer Service Representatives, he recommends both basic and complex solutions to the gardening problems our customers bring him on a daily basis. His technical knowledge of plant pests and diseases and his ability to clearly communicate gardening techniques to both first-time and experienced gardeners are valued by customers and staff alike.

Steve was born in Bethesda, graduated from High Point High School, and attended Prince George's Community College and the University of Maryland. After fifteen years of management in the hospitality industry, he decided to make a career change in 1997, when he joined Behnke's Customer Service Department. He has exercised his love of learning in taking many of the Career Development Courses that Behnke's offers, and is now a Certified Professional Horticulturist with an in-depth knowledge of both plants and gardening.

Steve's hobbies include landscaping his home, traveling, photography and writing. His poetry has earned him a both a listing in the Who's Who of American Poetry and a Golden Poet Award. He is a licensed Baptist minister as well! □

Get Ready for Spring!

Gardening is both science and art, combining new discoveries with traditions that have been handed down from master gardeners to novices for generations. One can leap forward by learning from those who are more familiar with the challenges encountered travelling various gardening paths. Join our gardening experts, Gene Sumi and Chris Upton, for these informal talks about some aspects of gardening that may still be mysterious to you. Your questions will be addressed after each session.

Talks will be held on Saturdays at Beltsville, in our spacious indoor plant showroom. For your convenience, we have scheduled these talks between our Gardening Seminars (see pages 4-5) at noon on the following Saturdays:

STARTING SEEDS

Feb 24 Noon Get an early start on planting your spring garden. Enjoy a wide variety of flowers, herbs and vegetables by starting your own plants from seeds. Gene will discuss potting mixes, containers, seed treatments, lighting requirements and timing for a variety of different seeds. Bring your questions!

WINTER PRUNING

March 3 Noon Early March is the time to prune many of your garden plants. Gene will discuss and demonstrate how to successfully and skillfully prune your shrubs, berries and small trees to encourage abundant flowering and to achieve a pleasing shape.

PRE-EMERGENT WEED KILLERS

March 10 Noon Stay ahead of weeds by applying products that prevent weed seeds from starting in the soil. Late winter is the time to apply pre-emergent weed-killers, when the weed seeds are softening and preparing to germinate. Also, learn which controls will work best on insects and weed pests in your garden. These products are applied just once, yet keep your lawn nearly insect free through the growing season.

PREPARING YOUR GARDEN FOR SPRING

March 17 Noon Mid-March is the time to treat your peonies, roses, irises and other dormant plants to prevent wintering-over disease spores and insects from damaging your plants. Gene will discuss various controls and how they work on specific pests.

SOIL AMENDMENTS

March 24 Noon Learn to greatly improve your garden soil with soil amendments. Chris will help you determine your soil's needs, identify various products and their function in the soil, and outline basic soil preparation. He will also cover the correct planting methods for a variety of garden plants.



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