



## Help Wanted

Every year we have employees that return because they love the work. Unfortunately, though there are those that cannot return because they have found other employment during the off season, or they have moved. If you like working with people, are friendly, honest, like plants and can follow directions closely, we would like to talk with you. The work is somewhat physical, the hours are flexible, and our customers are almost all very friendly. We are hiring both full time and part time personnel. Those wishing to apply call 218 384-4732 for an application that we can mail or e-mail, or even better, stop in at The Green House in Carlton.

## Miniature or Fairy Gardens

Much of the charm of this type of gardening is not only the plants, but also the accessories that can be incorporated. This activity is extremely popular because much creativity can be expressed in a small space. Seeming to be a cross between doll houses and bonsai, the possibilities are endless. We have a nice selection of plant material to work with. The accessories include miniature furniture, fencing, stepping stones, lights, arbors, houses, garden tools, figures, toadstools, animals and mail boxes. Some of the little houses that we have are produced by local crafters. The Green House has plants, accessories and classes to help our customers with this activity.

### Next Issue:

- Fruit Trees & Small Fruits
- More Terms Explained
- Container Gardening
- What's new for 2014



## What's New at The Green House?

Each and every year is different from the last. This season we will be at some of the same locations as last year and some are different. Much of our business is conducted through our satellite outlets and our customers appreciate that they have the ability to find our product at local outlets. Most all of these are at sites on property owned by other businesses. With that having been said, we will be in Cloquet at McDonald Rental on Highway 33S again and in Superior at Mid Town Shopping Plaza on Tower Ave. Our store site that for years was in Duluth Lakeside at Super America on E. Superior St. and 54th Ave. is not available to us this spring. Similarly, the store site for years at Highway 53 and Midway Rd. near Pike Lake will also not be available this spring. We have appreciated our very loyal customers at these sites but we hope you will find us at our new locations. New locations will be in East Duluth Lakeside at Super One, 60th & E. Superior Street, and in Aitkin at 320 2nd Street NE.

Last year we opened a location in McGregor and it was very well received. This past fall and winter we have been building a new permanent location. We are excited about the large, bright retail area that has room for upcoming demonstrations and classes. It is at 9 Country House La., just off Highway 210, in McGregor. Customers there will be able to look forward to an even larger selection of plant material, gardening tools, garden and lawn fertilizer, and other items associated with a full service garden center.

For years we have been having classes on planting patio planters and the event continues. In Carlton, at The Green House, 210 6th St., we have scheduled classes once again in April. The schedule is as follows:

- Wednesday, April 16, 6-8 PM, Straw Bale Gardening, an interesting newer gardening concept, Jim Fahrenholz, Instructor
- Monday, April 21, 6-8 PM, Wednesday through Friday, April 23-25, 6-8 PM, Saturday, April 26, 9-11 AM and 1-3 PM. All of these classes will be instructed by Jim Fahrenholz of The Green House

- Tuesday, April 22, 10-Noon and 6-8 PM, Miniature or Fairy Garden classes, Jan Siedlecki of the Green House, Instructor
- Thursday, April 24, 10-Noon, Sara Omberg of the Green House, Instructor
- Wednesday, April 30, 6-8 PM, General Gardening class, Jim Fahrenholz, Instructor. See the Cloquet Lumber Log for details, Enroll with Cloquet Community Education at 879-1261 for this one.

All of these classes have a limited enrollment, so interested persons must sign up in advance with Carlton Community Ed by calling 384-4464. There is an enrollment fee of \$10.00 per person. Containers to be planted are most often brought in by participants, but containers can be purchased on site. Planters of minimum size of 12", are planted by participants, with advice from the staff, with materials used being paid for at the end of the class. Planters will then be left at The Green House, grown there until they are picked up by their owners, no later than Saturday, May 17. Participants are able to plant as many as they wish, but because of the number of participants becoming so large, it is necessary that only 5 planters per person can be left on site at no charge, the excess having an additional fee of \$5.00 per unit.

McGregor will be also be having Miniature or Fairy Garden classes on Saturday May 3, from 10-Noon and 1-3 PM, with Gayle Almquist, store manager, as the instructor. Contact The Green House in McGregor at 218 768-4463 after April 1 to enroll in this class that has an \$8.00 enrollment fee. As a side note, we will be having demonstrations on planting miniature gardens and patio planters at the Grand Opening and Open House for the McGregor store on Saturday, April 12 from 9AM to 4PM. Enroll by calling Carlton Community Ed. One more class is scheduled. A general gardening class is scheduled for April 30 at The Green House in Carlton, sponsored by Cloquet Community Ed. This class instructed by Jim Fahrenholz will cover a large gamut of gardening topics and will have time to field specific questions at the end of the class.

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## What's Inside

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## The Green House News

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## Tomatoes

Undoubtedly, the most common vegetable grown by the average gardener is the tomato. If a person has a opportunity to grow just one plant, it is invariably, a tomato. So here is a little information about tomatoes that will help. Originally thought to be poisonous because it is a member of the nightshade family, somebody decided to test it and found the tomato not only was not poisonous but tasted good too. Breeding of tomato varieties resulted in a large number of different tomatoes and those that survived are what we now refer to as "heirloom" tomatoes. But these varieties had their shortcomings as well, being susceptible to any number of diseases or short on productivity. Further breeding resulted in what we refer to as "hybrid" varieties. Most of the varieties of tomatoes grown today are of this type. Bred to increase production, disease resistance, or uniformity, there is no end to the varieties of tomatoes today. The tag that comes with most plants today, has indicator initials like VFN, which means that variety is resistant to verticillium wilt, fusarium blight and nematodes, a microscopic root parasite. There are those who say that these hybrids have lost some of the flavor of the older varieties. The jury is out on this one.

With the more urban life style, people live in apartments and condominiums and often do not have the time or space for a big garden. This has been addressed in tomato breeding. Tomatoes all fall in to one of two categories, indeterminate or determinate. As a simplification, indeterminate varieties produce flowers and thus the fruit on the side of the stem and the top keeps growing. These are the tall tomato varieties that require support from staking or caging and produce over a longer period of time. Determinate tomato varieties produce flowers and fruit more on the top of the plant, so these are



shorter plants. These require less support, however generally still need some support. It is these determinate varieties that are used for the patio or deck pots so common today. Included in the determinate types are those bred for hanging baskets, and these are very popular, flavorful and productive. The Green House grows and sells many varieties of both kinds. We have selected 31 different tomato varieties to offer our customers.

Tomato color is also significant. Red is the most common, but yellow is popular also. Yellow varieties are low acid for those sensitive to tomato acidity, but low acid tomatoes do not can well. Now there are orange, pink (more commonly associated with the old heirloom varieties), striped, purple and all shades in between. We have found the striped and purple varieties, although very good varieties, appeal to the more adventurous gardeners. As a point of information, many of the more common vegetables have been bred for container growing as well. The list includes peppers, cucumbers, winter and summer squash, eggplant and lettuce.

## Pruning Basics

With some exceptions, pruning of trees and shrubs can generally be done most any time. For flowering nursery stock, a good rule of thumb is to prune after they are done flowering, simply because we want to enjoy the flowers. On some trees and shrubs, flower production is done on the previous year's growth. Prune these early in the growing season, after flowering.

When pruning, avoid just clipping off the tips, but remove whole branches when appropriate. This will prevent forming a layer of foliage on the outer surface of the plant that kills off interior growth due to lack of light. When pruning fruit trees, select branches to remain as ones that come more directly away from or at right angles to the host branch. These are stronger and can support more weight. When branches are at acute angles, the growth will include bark between the branches. Called phloem inclusion, it eventually becomes a weak point. Select the strongest branches and totally remove the others. The common thought is that excessive pruning will be harmful. Unless very extreme, it won't be.

# THE GREEN HOUSE NEWS

## Pruning Basics Continued

A question occasionally comes up about whether the pruning cut should be straight across or at an angle. Here is the consideration. If the branch is perfectly vertical, prune at an angle. If not, cut straight across. Here's why. A straight across cut produces a smaller wound. The objective is to produce a cut that is not perfectly horizontal so that moisture does not lay on the surface of the cut for an extended time. Moist wounds allow for more possibility of disease infection. That's it.

## Terms Explained

**pH** is a scale of measurement of acidity or alkalinity. A pH measurement of 7 is neutral. Numbers below 7 are considered acidic & the lower the number, the more acidic. Numbers above 7 are basic or alkaline. Most plants like a pH of 5.5-6.5 and very few prefer an alkaline soil. Some even require an acidic soil in order to thrive.

**Vernalization** is a process of cooling. Some plants need to be vernalized in order to complete their flowering process. Examples of these are tulips, daffodils and other bulb plants that are planted in the fall. They must go through a cooling process in order to be able to initiate flowers. That's why they are planted in the fall. Most seeds also need to be vernalized or chilled in order to break dormancy.

**Sun-loving** and **shade-loving** are terms that are kind of catch all terms. Some plants require full sun to grow at their best and we refer to those as sun-loving plants. Full sun refers to a minimum of 6 hours of sun per day. Shade loving is another matter altogether. Some plants require a shady location because they cannot tolerate the high leaf temperature that full sun produces. They cannot transpire the water fast enough to cool themselves. One prime example of this is fuchsia. Fuchsia can actually grow in sun provided they are cool enough. However, most sunny locations do not provide that condition. Other shade loving plants need shade simply because they have adapted to low light conditions, genetically, and can't tolerate high light levels.

**Hybrid** means simply a plant resulting from a cross between two varieties or species of plant. So, most all plants are hybrids. The term is used often to refer to a "special" plant. Although many hybrids are unique, simply being a hybrid in itself is nothing special.

**Photoperiodic** refers to how a plant responds to day length. The key is in how the plant responds to the length of night, but we will refer to the length of day. Some plants will flower only when the days are long enough and this is not a problem in our area, during the summer, as the days are naturally long. Some onions will produce a bulb only when days are short. Others only when the days are long. Still others are day-neutral and will bulb without regard to day length. Some plants will flower only when the days are short. Examples of these are chrysanthemums, asters and poinsettias. That is why these plants flower in the fall or winter, after the days become short enough. Many plants are day neutral, not specifically needing short or long days to do their thing.



## Local Economy

Recently, there has been a movement for people to buy more locally grown produce. A commendable attitude since it supports the local economy. Buying locally keeps the money in the area instead of sending it far out of state or out of country. When small businesses lose sales, it means fewer jobs for neighbors and friends, with less money being reinvested in the local economy. The Green House has a policy that whenever possible, purchasing be done with local businesses. Personal service is an identifying mark of small business. When we support our local businesses we get the service due us as customers.