



Prairie Originals

WILDFLOWERS
NATIVE GRASSES



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We have seen some promising signs of spring in the last few weeks. The Pelicans arrived back in Lockport the week of April 22. The Marsh Marigold & Rhubarb are some of the few plants that are sprouting and showing some green. We uncovered our overwintering plants on April 29, 3 weeks later than normal. We had to wait for the snow to melt around them. We are very hopeful that the sunshine and warm weather arrives the week of May 6.



Opening Day is Saturday, May 11. Please note that due to the very cold weather in April, not all the plants will be ready for opening day. Feel free to call us at 204-785-9799 or Toll Free 1-866-296-0928 if you are wondering if specific plants are ready.

What's Blooming Now?

There is hope, in this coldest spring in 140 years. The furry little crocus buds are up and started to open on May 5. Our Marsh Marigold are usually always blooming for Mother's Day but it is not going to happen this year.

The **Wild Plum** *Prunus americana* will bloom in mid/late May this year with a cloud of white before the leaves emerge. This large shrub/small tree grows 3 – 5 metres tall (10 – 17 ft.). It makes a good barrier because the branches have stout thorns. It produces small, red plums ripening in August. Wild Plum is a host plant for caterpillars of Spring Azure and Tiger Swallowtail butterflies.

It is often an understory plant in forests so it grows in either full sun or shade with medium to moist soil. It is available in 4.5" pots, and 2 Gallon pots.



Seed Mixes

For anyone interested in our Seed Mixes, May is a very good time for seeding, assuming your site is all prepared. If your site is not ready and you need information, read the Seeding section of our Planting and Seeding Guide at www.prairieoriginals.com/Planting-SeedingGuide.pdf

Bird, Butterfly & Creature News

We had some interesting creatures visit us last summer since our last newsletter.

In August we discovered an **Ambush Bug** in the process of attacking and killing a large Moth. We noticed it because the moth was flapping its wings at high speed trying to escape.

Can you see the Ambush bug in the photo on the right? You have to look closely at the Giant Hyssop flower to notice it. These bugs are named after their habit of lying in wait for their prey, relying on their superb camouflage to blend in with the flowers.



Ambush bugs eat mites, thrips, bugs, flies and routinely capture prey ten times or more their own size, such as bumblebees, wasps, moths and butterflies. When prey approaches closely enough, the Ambush bug grabs it with its front legs. Holding its victim in these pincers, the bug inserts its short beak, injects paralyzing saliva, then sucks out the body fluids. One of the most common North American species is usually found on Goldenrod flowers. They range in colour from cream coloured to yellow/orange to greenish yellow, with a dark band and irregular light brown to black blotches. They are ½" or less in size. There are many types of Ambush bugs which are part of a larger Assassin bug family. They are an interesting part of the web of life in our gardens.

We included a picture and description of the beneficial Green Lacewings in our July Newsletter last year and later in August we discovered some **Green Lacewing eggs** hanging from a blade of grass.

They don't lay their eggs directly on the leaves. The eggs are laid at the end of a short silky stalk to help prevent predators from eating them.



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We found three different kinds of frogs in our container area last year.

These tiny little **Boreal Chorus Frogs** are only 30 mm long (1 ¼") and are probably Manitoba's most common frog. They are brown or green with dark stripes or patches. They can change their colour to blend in with their surroundings and become lighter or darker. It is a type of tree frog and finds food in low branches or on the ground. Boreal Chorus frogs are hard to find because of their size and camouflage.



The **Wood Frog** is larger at 50 mm long (2"). They can be reddish brown to dark brown, but always have a black patch under the eye. They are very common too and there may be as many as 100 frogs in every hectare of forest. Both frogs eat insects and other small animals. Both are found mainly in forests, but also live in grasslands and marshes. They spend the winter under leaves or logs in the forest or thick grass and can freeze solid.



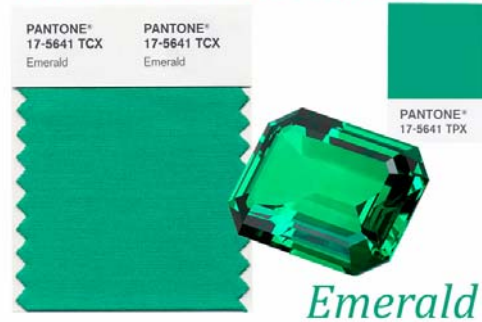
It is easy to see how the **Leopard Frogs** get their name with their black spots. They grow up to 100 mm (4") and are the largest frog in Manitoba. They live near lakes, ponds, or other wetlands. They will move far away from water in summer to hunt for food but come back to waters edge by fall. These frogs spend winter on the bottom of large ponds or lakes. All three types of frogs are found all over Manitoba except the Chorus Frog is not present in the far north.



2013 Colour of the Year

Emerald, a Lively, Radiant, Lush Green has been selected as Pantones Colour of the Year. It is a colour of elegance and beauty that enhances our sense of well-being, balance and harmony. Since antiquity, this luminous, magnificent hue has been the colour of beauty and new life in many cultures and religions. Also the colour of growth, renewal and prosperity, no other colour conveys regeneration more than green. For centuries, many countries have chosen green to represent healing and unity.

Pantone 2013 Color of the Year



Green is the most abundant hue in nature. Symbolically, Emerald brings a sense of clarity, renewal and rejuvenation, which is so important in today's complex world. Your backyard with its many shades of green is a perfect place to experience this. Green is the best backdrop for flowers and green takes centre stage in shade gardens where beauty is all about texture and shape in various shades of green.

New

This spring we have **40 - 1 Gallon pots of Giant Hyssop** available as well as **17 Big Blue-stem in 1 gallon pots**. We have potted 75 more 1 Gallon Big Bluestem for summer and fall availability as well. These larger sizes are \$9.50 each or 10/\$85.

Check out our new Facebook page at www.Facebook.com/PrairieOriginals and "Like us" for up-to-the-minute news.

Essential Organics Premium Worm Castings are a fantastic soil amendment that is environmentally friendly, all natural, easy to use and safe to handle. Worm Castings enrich and condition the soil, helping the plants grow to their full potential. They will not burn when added directly to plants. When mixed into a garden or applied to soil, castings act as a slow release fertilizer, soil builder and inoculum for beneficial bacteria and fungi which helps to hold moisture in the root zone while allowing extra moisture to drain away. They can be used on houseplants as well as in gardens. It is locally produced by Overton Environmental Enterprises in Winnipeg, the same people who produce Eco-Tea www.Ecotea.ca, an aerated compost tea. Worm castings are non-toxic to humans, pets, wildlife and lakes. In addition to city gardens, this is one of the best fertilizers to use at the lake because there is no negative effect from run off. WormCastings, complete with instructions on how to use, are now available in 20 Litre bags for \$19.95. For more information see www.overtonee.ca



Fascinating Plants

Sarsaparilla *Aralianudicaulis* is an excellent, tall groundcover for shady gardens, either part or full shade. It grows 30 – 50 cm tall (12” to 20”) with rope-like creeping roots. The compound leaves are oval, finely toothed and pointed at the tip. Since the leaflets are in groups of three to five it does look a little like poison ivy. However, poison ivy has shiny leaves, white berries and short woody stems. Sarsaparilla is mainly a foliage plant with globe shaped clusters of greenish white flowers followed by round bunches of dark purple berries that hide under the leaves. It is a common understory plant in forests across Canada from Yukon to Newfoundland. Very adaptable and very hardy, Sarsaparilla forms a lush, emerald green forest floor all summer which transforms to bronze in autumn.

Many people grow lawn under their large shade trees and then must spend hours or days in the fall raking all the leaves off the lawn. An easy way to do less leaf raking and less lawn mowing while creating a more interesting looking and more biologically diverse garden is to plant an easy growing ground cover like Sarsaparilla under the trees. Then in the fall you can simply watch the leaves fall with no raking required. The Sarsaparilla simply grows up through the leaves in the spring. The leaves make an attractive mulch that suppresses weeds and gradually decompose over the summer, improving the soil at the same time. At Prairie Originals our Sarsaparilla are in shade but not under large leafy trees so I actually liberate bags of leaves in fall from Lockport and Selkirk and dump them onto our woodland plant beds to a depth of about 10 cm (4”). I do practically no weeding in these leaf-filled beds. These leafy areas are also great overwintering spots for beneficial bugs like spiders and ladybugs.

The ropy rhizomes were used in the past for food and medicine. The berries were generally considered inedible and the rhizomes were considered emergency food only. But these roots have a warm, aromatic, sweetish taste so they were used to make tea, mead and root beer. For medicine, the rhizomes were pulverized and used in poultices to soothe and heal wounds, burns, sores, boils and other skin problems and to relieve swelling and rheumatism. The rhizomes and berries were boiled to make medicinal teas and syrups or soaked in alcohol to make tinctures to treat many different problems from stomachaches to syphilis. The pleasant tasting rhizome tea was valued as a blood purifier, tonic and stimulant. It was widely used for treating lethargy, general weakness, fevers and coughs. Wild Sarsaparilla was widely used in patent medicines in the late 1800’s.



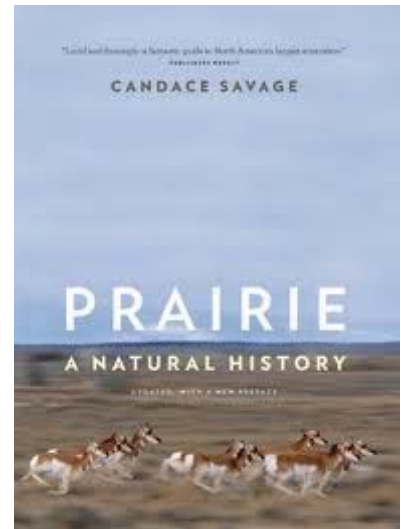
Sarsaparilla Early Spring Leaves



Sarsaparilla Summer Leaves

Interesting Books

Prairie : A Natural History by Candace Savage. The prairies are among the largest ecosystems in North America, extending across the Canadian prairies and south to the Mississippi River. Until recently they were also one of the richest and most magnificent natural grasslands in the world. Today, however they are among the most altered environments on Earth. Nevertheless, Candace calls the prairies a landscape of hope – a place that has experienced the onslaught of modernization yet still inspires us with its splendour. Spectacular colour photographs and elegant black & white drawings illustrate the beauty and diversity of the North American heartland. It is an authoritative reference and an easy to read guide, everything you ever wanted to know about Prairie. This book is a must for anyone who wants to know more about the dazzling natural variety of the prairies.

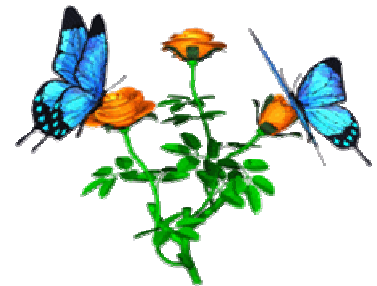


Until next time,

Shirley Froehlich, Stefania Johnson

Alexis Nazeravich, Kelly Leask

and Jacquie Stanton





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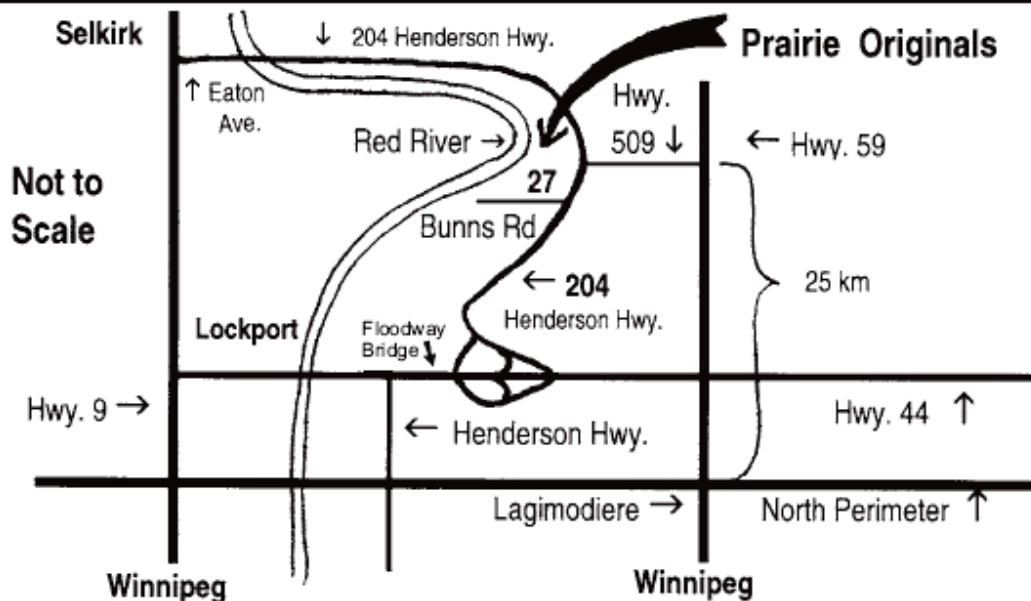
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LOCATION



HOURS

May 11 - June 29	Monday to Friday	10 am - 6 pm
	Saturday	9 am - 5 pm
Evenings by Appointment	Sundays - until June 16	11am - 5 pm

July, August, September - Usually open Monday to Saturday but **phone to confirm**

ST. NORBERT FARMERS MARKET

June 1 - mid Aug.	Saturday	8 am - 3 pm
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Located on Pembina Highway, about 1/2 km south of the perimeter.

