



Prairie Originals

WILDFLOWERS
NATIVE GRASSES



I can't believe June is here. Now that the month of gardening in toques and turtle necks is over we can break out our shorts and enjoy the sunshine!

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What's Blooming Now?

The dry prairie bed on the south side of the shop looks really nice in early/mid June. The picture on the right shows the Three Flowered Avens, Pussy Toes and Blue Eyed Grass, a nice spring combination for dry to medium sites. A little extra sand in our heavy clay soil is appreciated by these plants. Later in July this bed has Whorled Milkweed, Purple Coneflower and Harebell blooming.

Blue Eyed Grass



Many of our native shrubs bloom in June too. Wild Plum *Prunus americana* is always the first to bloom, even before its leaves come out. It started the last week of May. Pincherries and Saskatoons have also just started blooming. Pincherry *Prunus pensylvanica* is a fast growing large shrub or small tree 3-5 metres tall (9-15 ft.). Pincherry jelly can be made from the bright red, pea size fruit that ripens in mid/late July. Birds like to eat pincherries too. (pictures below)



These shrubs are hosts for the caterpillars of those little blue butterflies, the Spring Azure, (top left) as well as for Tiger Swallowtail butterfly caterpillars (bottom left).



St. Norbert Farmer's Market

We will be at the Market with a whole selection of plants every Saturday starting June 6th, rain or shine. We generally don't take shrubs, so if you want us to bring shrubs please phone ahead.

See <http://www.stnorbertfarmersmarket.ca> for location and more information on the market. We continue to be open at our Selkirk location 7 days a week until June 20th. Beginning June 21st we are open Monday to Saturday and closed on Sundays for the remainder of the season.

New for 2009

Smooth Camas *Zigadenus elegans* is a compact plant with elegant white flower spikes and grassy leaves. It grows 30-60 cm tall (1-2 ft.). Since it doesn't grow very bushy, I suggest a 15-20 cm spacing (6-8"). It is a member of the Lily family and is a good companion with Red Lilies, along with Early Blue Violet, Harebell, Purple Prairie Clover, and Prairie Dropseed. It makes a good cut flower. In the wild it grows in moist meadows and is quite common on the Canadian Prairies. It could be confused with another similar plant called Death Camas *Zigadenus gramineus* or *Zigadenus venenosus*. Death Camas is poisonous to people and livestock. There is a lot of confusion between the two species in books and on websites so Do Not Eat any part of either type of Camas. While doing research on the plant I discovered there is even a band named Zygadenus elegans with a profile on My Space and Facebook. Who knew!



Marsh Reed Grass *Calamagrostis canadensis* is an attractive, cool season grass. It spreads easily by roots and prefers wet conditions. It is great for erosion control along shorelines and for very wet meadows. It is also called Canada Bluejoint Grass. It grows 90-150 cm tall (3-5') in full sun. It provides shelter and nesting areas for waterfowl and shorebirds.



Bird & Butterfly News

The weather always affects wildlife even more than us. The cold spring conditions this year have kept some of the migrating warblers around here a little longer than usual. Some of the new birds spotted that I haven't seen much before are Yellow Rumped Warblers, Red Starts, Rose Breasted Grosbeaks, Cowbirds and Baltimore Orioles. A cut orange stuck on the birdfeeder enabled us to see the Orioles.

We have seen the odd Morning Cloak butterfly in May but that is all so far. It has just been too cold. I did have a customer report seeing a lot of Painted Lady butterflies migrating by his place in late April and early May.



Great Combinations

If you are wondering what grows well together, here are a few suggestions. They can be planted either in masses in flower bed style or mixed together in prairie style. They are listed in order of blooming times.

Combo # 1

Northern Bedstraw (1)
Awned Wheatgrass
Swamp Milkweed
Culver's Root (2)
Joe Pye
Big Bluestem

Combo # 2

Golden Alexander
Tufted Hairgrass
Black Eyed Susan
Blue Vervain (3)
Stiff Goldenrod
Switch Grass (4)



Both combinations are best in full sun but will also take a bit of shade. Medium to very moist sites are good.

Problem Wildlife and Repellents

Sometimes we seem to have just a little too much wildlife in our gardens. Watching wildlife in the garden is a lot of fun but it can be frustrating as deer and rabbits eat your prize roses, lilies and veggies. I encourage you not to abandon your garden though. We need to be persistent and learn what can be done. When we moved to our new place on Bunns Road the neighbours warned us, "There are lots of deer around here and they will probably eat your plants". I wasn't prepared to give in without a fight. I really missed having a veggie garden the first year after we moved so I was determined to plant one the following year. I had heard that deer like carrots, beets, spinach, lettuce, peas and beans so I grouped these together and set up a Motion Detector Sprinkler from Lee Valley Tools. And guess what? It worked! I have used it for three years now and wouldn't go without it. You could also group your favourite flowers together for the motion detector sprinkler. We don't have many rabbits so I can't say how well it works for them. The deer don't generally bother tomatoes, corn, peppers, cucumbers, melons and pumpkins.

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My field of flowers was too big for a motion detector sprinkler so I needed another plan. I couldn't spray the whole field with repellent. It would be too costly and time consuming. So I watched what varieties they ate the first year and they ate a lot less than I expected. Here is what they like to eat in native plants at my place.

Asters – Smooth, Many Flowered & Flat top White
Gentians
Fireweed
Wild Columbine
Philadelphia Fleabane
Fireweed
Wild Strawberry
Prairie Rose
Nannyberry
Pincherry
Mountain Maple

Red Lilies
All Violets
Canada Milkvetch
Tall Meadowrue
Solomon's Seals
Saline Shooting Star
Wild Flax
Pearly Everlasting
Highbush Cranberry
Bush Honeysuckle

They leave the rest of the plants alone so these listed above are the only ones that I spray repellent on. I have used Deer Away made by Havahart for the last three years. It is OMRI Listed and USDA approved for Organic Gardening. It works very well for deer at my place and the packaging says it works to repel rabbits also. I don't have any experience in its effect on rabbits because we don't have many. I guess the coyotes, foxes and owls keep them under control.

Deer Away contains rotten eggs so it repels by scent. The rotten egg smell simulates decaying protein and the animals believe there is a predator nearby. Fortunately it dries colourless and odourless to people. I usually apply in late May when perennials are a few inches tall and when new shrub growth is about 2.5cm long (1"). I find one application lasts all season long for most varieties. I occasionally give a second application to Asters in August. Deer Away is available at Home Hardware and T & T seeds. I have also tried another common repellent for deer and rabbits called Plantskydd in fall. It is made of dried blood so it repels by odour too. It is also an organic product. It prevents fall and winter browsing of shrubs and small trees. If you want to get into that Halloween spirit in late fall there is nothing like stirring up a batch of dried blood! If sprayed on flowers in summer they get a dark red coating which is not very attractive. However, Plantskydd is now available in pellet form so this would be better for around flowers and shrubs in summer. I haven't tried the pellets myself so let me know if you have tried them. Plantskydd is available at Home Hardware and many garden centres.

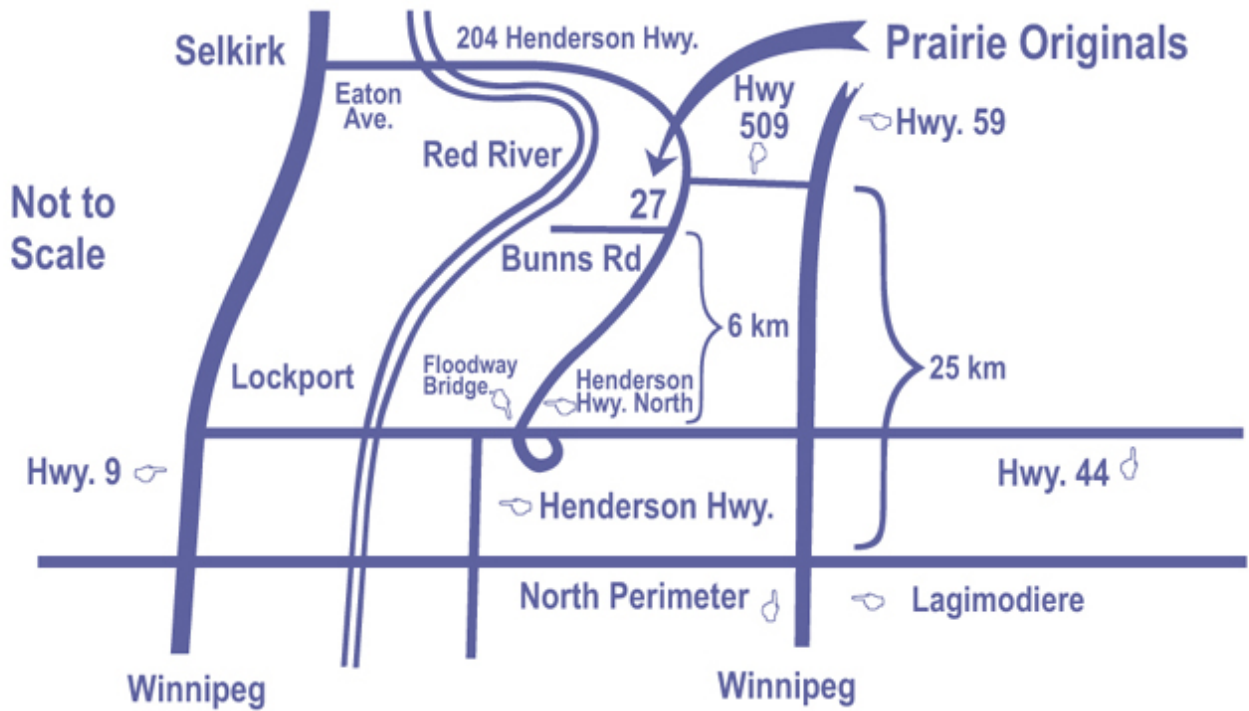
There are other options available too. Garden centres usually sell netting. Electric fences and tall fences can also be used. There are solutions out there so don't give up too easily. We can enjoy our gardens along with the wildlife.

Until next time,



*Shirley Froehlich, Stefania Johnson
& Gwen Donohoe*

LOCATION



HOURS

May 12 - June 27	Monday to Friday	10 am - 6 pm
	Saturday	9 am - 5 pm
	Sundays - until June 15	11 am - 5 pm
July, August & September	Usually open Monday to Saturday, Phone to confirm	
Evenings by Appointment		