



Prairie Originals

WILDFLOWERS
NATIVE GRASSES



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We started out with a dry April and May but the late May and June rains have everything looking lush and green now. **The St. Norbert Farmer's Market** started on Saturday, June 2 and is now in full swing. We will be there with a whole selection of pots and plugs every Saturday from 10 – 3 pm until August 11th. We generally don't take shrubs to the Market unless you phone us with an order. The shrubs are all available at our home location. We are also open 7 days a week until Sunday, June 17 at our store near Selkirk. After June 17 we are open Monday to Saturday and closed on Sunday for the remainder of the season.

What's Blooming Now?

Our bloom season is a week or two earlier than the last few years. The **Heartleaf** and **Golden Alexanders** and **Canada Anemone** have been blooming since the beginning of June this year. We didn't have any Canada Anemone plants available this spring since they are a more difficult plant to germinate than most. However, they germinated well outside in May so we will have plugs available in mid July and pots available by mid August and September. **Giant Hyssop** will be starting to bloom by mid June.

Wild Iris *Iris versicolor* and **False Sunflower** *Heliopsis helianthoides scabra* (photo below right) started around June 6. Wild Iris is great for moist to wet areas such as lakeshores, edges of creeks or ponds or on shallow ledges in ponds, near drain pipes, ditches or swales, and any poorly drained areas. (photos below right & center) It is also called Blue Flag and is the provincial flower of Quebec.



Continued from page 1...

Our **Red Lilies** *Lilium philadelphicum* opened up their buds this morning, June 11. This is Saskatchewan's provincial flower. It adds a splash of colour in sun or part shade. These Lilies go by numerous names such as Prairie Lily, Tiger Lily, Western Red Lily and Wood Lily. There is an excellent book on these lilies done by 2 researchers called **Prairie Phoenix: The Red Lily in Saskatchewan** by Lawrence and Leighton. We grow all our lilies from seed and they are slow from seed. The first year they look like a tiny blade of grass for the entire year. Then every year they get a little bigger. Therefore our Lilies are 3 to 4 years old when we sell them and they have a higher price at \$9.95 for a 4.5" pot and \$27.95 for a 4 pack of XL plugs. They should bloom the year after they are planted. They are not sold as dormant bulbs in the fall like other lilies because the bulbs shatter and fall apart very easily with handling.



Bird, Butterfly and Creature News

2012 has certainly turned out to be the **Year of Butterflies**. On May 5th the Red Admirals (*photo below left*) and Painted Lady butterflies showed up at our place. The Black Swallowtail butterflies appeared on May 9th.

The first Monarchs (*photo center right & left*) were spotted here and all over the city on May 18. They have been looking for Milkweed, the host plant for their caterpillars, and laying eggs ever since. And we found the first tiny caterpillars on June 2. We found a Fritillary caterpillar turning into a chrysalis on June 8th (*photo right*).



We have a lot of frogs around this year too. They are in the trees and general landscaping and nearby creek as well as the containers of plugs and pots. We have been hearing them every day for at least a month. There are 8 kinds of frogs in Manitoba and our frog expert Alexis pointed out two kinds here this spring. **The Boreal Chorus Frog** is tiny little one only 30 mm long (1 ¼"). They are brown or green with dark stripes or patches. They can change colour to blend in with their surroundings from green to brown.

The **Gray Tree Frog** is medium sized frog up to 60 mm (2 1/3") that lives in trees. They have little suction cups on their feet for climbing. They can change colour too. They are usually gray but when climbing on leaves they turn green to blend in. They can have stripes or blotches too. If you pick them up they have bright yellow patches in their armpits. (*photos below*)



New for 2012

Downy Arrowwood *Viburnum rafinesqueanum* is a shrub that is native in Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec as well as most of the eastern United States. It grows in sun or shade on dry to moist soil so it is quite adaptable. It reaches a height of 90 to 150 cm (3 – 5 ft.). Arrowwood blooms in June with round, white flower clusters which are followed by clusters of navy/black berries. Birds and other wildlife like to eat the berries. The leaves turn a lovely purple in autumn. Arrowwood grows in many of our parks, like Bird's Hill and Little Mountain and along wooded roadsides. Viburnums are hosts for the caterpillars of the little blue Spring Azure butterflies as well as Hummingbird Clearwing Moths. This year Arrowwood is available in 1 Gallon pots. (Photo above)



Fascinating Facts

Wild Mint *Mentha arvensis villosa* can be used in a variety of ways, from food to medicine to air fresheners. Mint can be eaten raw or cooked but usually it is cooked with soups, stews and meats or used to flavour sauces, jellies and sweets. Wild Mint makes delicious, fragrant tea, cold drinks and even wine. My son likes to use the leaves for the Cuban cocktail, the Mojito. Wild Mint can be used to improve the flavour of other foods, including fruit juices, sauces and preserves, stout or overly yeasty beer, yogurt and fruit salads. In the past powdered mint leaves were sprinkled on berries and drying meat to repel insects, and dried mint plants were sometimes layered with stored, dried meat for flavour.

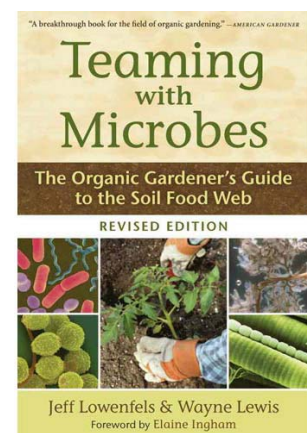


The active medicinal ingredient, menthol, has been shown to expel gas from and relieve spasms of the digestive tract – hence the advent of the after dinner mint. *Warning: Mint should not be used during pregnancy and use caution when giving to infants or small children. For more information on medicinal uses of Mint see: Edible and Medicinal Plants of Canada.*

Interesting Books

Another great book I read this past winter was called **Teaming with Microbes : The Organic Gardeners Guide to the Soil Food Web** by Lowenfels and Lewis. It explains what the Soil Food Web is – a complex world of soil dwelling organisms whose interactions create a nurturing environment for plants – and why it is so important for healthy gardens. Then it goes into how we can apply this information in our gardens.

Healthy soil is teaming with life – not just earthworms and insects but a staggering multitude of beneficial bacteria, fungi and other microorganisms. When we use chemical fertilizers, we injure the microbial life that sustains healthy plants and thus become increasingly dependent on an arsenal of artificial substances, many of them toxic to humans as well as other forms of life in the soil. But there is an alternative to this vicious circle: to garden in a way that strengthens, rather than destroys, the soil food web. The authors make the benefits of cultivating the soil food web available to a wide audience, from devoted organic gardeners to weekend gardeners, who simply want to grow healthy, vigorous plants without resorting to chemicals.



Natural Pest Control & Beneficial Bugs

Natural pest control occurs in nature all the time unless we have done something to upset the balance. We usually are simply not aware of it. The most important natural controls are climate & weather, food & habitat, pathogens (disease-causing organisms), predators, parasites and parasitoids. We cannot control the weather and in the May newsletter food and habitat was discussed under Garden Design & Maintenance. This month we will talk about predators.



Predatory insects are the lions, sharks, and hawks of the insect world. They help to keep the pest insects under control. There are two kinds of predators: those such as ladybugs and ground beetles who chew up and bolt down their victims- legs, bristles, antennae and all – and those such as assassin bugs, lacewing larvae & hover fly larvae which suck juices from their victims. The greatest predators of the arthropods are not insects but spiders. Spiders are among the most important predators of insects, and their role in controlling insect pests is often underappreciated by humans.

One day only! Greatest troupe of trained animals in the world! Don't miss this opportunity to see: death defying parachutists, skilled performers on the flying trapeze, graceful and original dancers. These clever animals make their own apparatus for they are skilled engineers. See them spin and weave. Nothing like this has ever been presented before on any stage!

So begins *How to Know Spiders* by B.J. Kaston. This magnificent spider show goes on all the time. Unfortunately, many people harbour unnecessary fears of spiders and don't appreciate the beneficial role they play in most settings. W. Gertsch in his classic work *American Spiders* discusses the enormous economic importance of spiders:

Spiders are among the dominant predators of any terrestrial community. When the fauna of the soil and its plant cover is analyzed, they come to light in vast numbers, in such convincing abundance that it is evident that they play a significant part in the life of every habitat.

Gertsch provides some very impressive figures. For example, there were approximately 64,000 spiders per acre in a meadow near Washington, D.C., and 2,265,000 in a single acre of undisturbed grassland in England. That is about one spider every three square inches!

Spiders: The True Pest Control Professionals – All spiders are predators, constantly searching for prey. Wolf spiders are particularly beneficial to farmers and gardeners because they attack many common garden pests. Their actual size is ½" to 1 3/8" (1.3 cm to 3.5 cm).

Parasitic Wasps are mini wasps that are busy controlling pest species all around you. You probably don't even notice them, but once someone with a trained eye points them out, you'll find them easy to spot in the garden. Most common are the *Ichneumon* wasps, *Braconid* wasps, and *Chalcid* wasps. They kill their hosts by parasitizing them. You're much more likely to see the work of these tiny parasitic wasps than the insects themselves: a tomato hornworm festooned with white rice-like cocoons, or a black or golden aphid mummy with a tiny hole in it.

Continued on page 5...

Continued from page 4...

Several species of *Ichneumon* wasps parasitize garden pests such as cutworms, corn earworm, white grubs, and various caterpillars. The largest of the parasitic wasps, the adults range in size from 1/8 to 1-1/2 inches, sporting long antennae, legs, and long, slender bodies. Colors range from black to yellowish.

Braconid wasps are tiny, ranging in length from 1/16 to 5/16 inch, with stout bodies. Host pests include various species of aphids, garden webworm, tomato hornworm, armyworms, strawberry leaf roller, and tent caterpillar, among others. Most are dark with some colored markings, but they are so tiny it's hard to see these colors without magnification.



Chalcid wasps range from 1/64 to 5/16 inch in length. This group includes the well-known *Trichogramma* wasp. These are available commercially for agricultural pest control purposes because they are effective parasites of pest caterpillars including cabbage worm, tomato hornworm, corn earworm, codling moth, cutworm, armyworm, webworm, cabbage looper, and corn borer. Other *Chalcid* species parasitize aphids, strawberry leaf roller, and other hairy caterpillars.

To encourage the help of these beneficial insects in your garden, supply them with food and moisture. Adult wasps feed on nectar and pollen. Small and shallow-faced flowers provide easy access to these tiny beneficial insects. Plant herbs from the dill family and native plants in the dill family like Heartleaf and Golden Alexander. Also flowers from the daisy family. If you have a bird bath or pool in your garden, place stones in the water so wasps have a place to land and drink safely.

From: Common Sense Pest Control by Olkowski, Daar & Olkowski



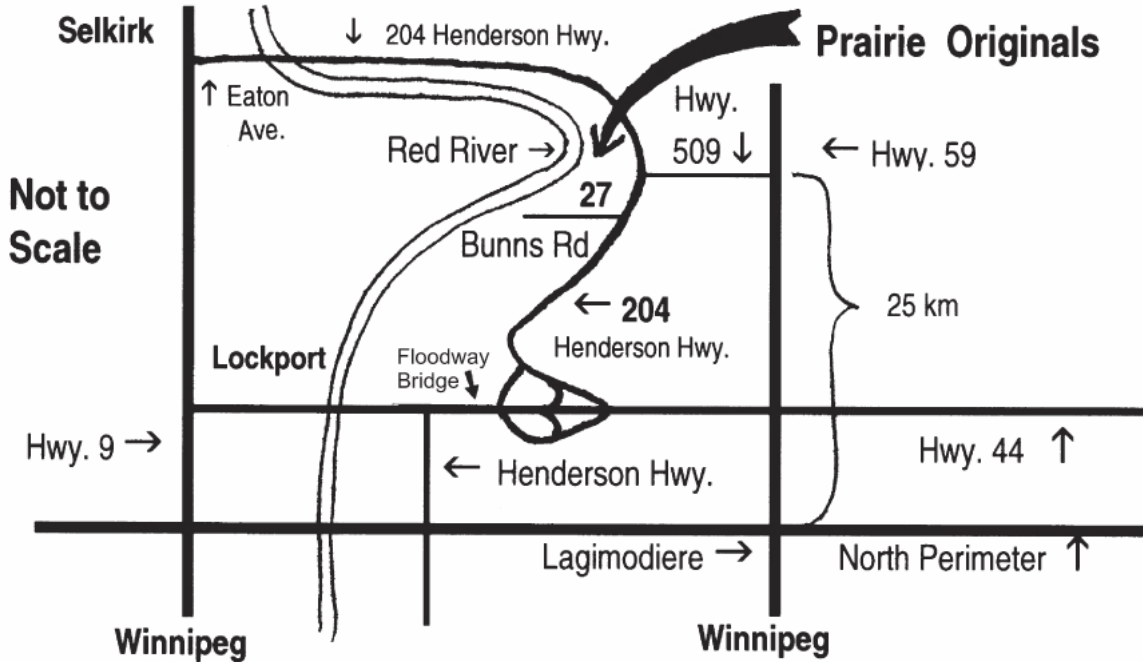
Until next time,

Shirley Froehlich, Stefania Johnson

Alexis Nazeravich and Anica Martin



LOCATION



HOURS

May 11 - June 29	Monday to Friday	10 am - 6 pm
	Saturday	9 am - 5 pm
Evenings by Appointment	Sundays - until June 17	11am - 5 pm

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

ST. NORBERT FARMERS MARKET

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

