

GARDENS Four Seasons GARDENDESIGN - MAY 2013

"Whoever has never tasted what is bitter, does not know what sweet is"

(spoken by someone who has no doubt enjoyed a generous chunk of raw green rhubarb!)

The Sensual Gardener

TASTE

Wahoo! Spring is here & neighbourhood BBQs are wafting their scent everywhere!
Food just tastes better outdoors. In fact, any food, even if prepared indoors, is more enjoyable when consumed sitting on your patio. How much more of an event it becomes enjoying your morning toast & jam out in the fresh air? I find a simple salmon-salad sandwich with a side of pickles packs far more punch if I just take a few more steps to enjoy it on my front porch instead of my kitchen table.

But COOKING out of doors - well THERE is a popular past time! It is not only fun, but the smell & anticipation heightens the pleasure of the meal itself. All your senses rise to the occasion. Beefy steaks sizzling on a grill, wieners crisping over a campfire - everything just tastes BETTER outdoors - it just DOES! Tried pizza or bread cooked in an outdoor oven? - then you KNOW what I'M talking about. (Come to think of it - that probably explains the wide appeal of outdoor bistros & restaurant patios - why not have someone else do your cooking & you get to relax & enjoy it outside!) ;)

When we eat outside we are exposed to a heady mix of scents accentuated & enriched by the fresh air & the warmth of the sun. Dining outside or 'Dining Al Fresco' - simple, plain everyday fare becomes a feast, whether an impromptu afternoon back yard picnic or an attractively laid out table 'set' for supper in the fading warmth of a setting sun.



Fresh produce, with it's amazing flavour, can be easily incorporated into a landscape, even in a small space. Last year my neighbour gave up trying to get her yearly vegetable plot planted & weeded. She opted instead for some hanging baskets of tomatoes & zucchini vines climbing a trellis by her sunny back door. I do believe she is leaning toward more container gardening as she discovers how much less work it is than a full-fledged garden! If you don't have or want a spot dedicated to vegetables, why not try container growing?



- a few herbs in an attractive pot makes a delightful & handy feature next to your kitchen door!

Another little trick is to steal front row space from your sunny annual or perennial borders. A border of carrots provides a lacy, leafy look all summer & is easy to harvest in the fall. Or perhaps try strawberries. They make a wonderful edging plant & are readily 'at hand' when you walk thru 'your yard'. A row of peas or beans can blend nicely with flowers as can a tomato or pepper plant. You can always revert back to your favourite annuals & perennials next year. If you don't fancy growing your own, I needn't remind you fabulous fresh eating is always as close as our Farmer's Market or your Grocery Store Produce Dept.!!

3 PLANTS to add to your TASTEFUL GARDEN:

CHIVES - yep, plain old chives offer a stunning 'spray of spiky green' when planted in the center of low growing annuals in a pot or hanging basket. Chop them off periodically to add to a fresh salad. They are one of the few things that will actually overwinter in a raised bed or plant pot!



CHERRIES - We CAN do this in Saskatchewan - Grow our own Cherries! Evans Cherry Trees (10' - 12' high) or Cherry Bushes (4' - 6' high) with names like Romeo or Juliet or Cupid abound at nurseries. You too can have 'B.C.' sized cherries picked from your garden! They are also known as Tart or Sour Cherries since they don't have the sweetness of a B.C. Bing Cherry. Even still, they are flavourful fresh eating!



HONEYBERRY - (aka Haskap) is a new shrub variety. My 3 year old bushes produced my first crop of these tasty, odd-shaped berries last Summer. They really DO taste like a cross between a Saskatoon & a Raspberry! What a treat! The shrubs are tried & true - tested for hardiness on the prairies, grow about 4' high & spread the same width. They love heat & hot, summer days but tolerate some shade too.



We can appreciate our sense of taste year 'round so delight in our Seasonal Opportunities to "Dine Al Fresco".
 SPRING - savour the *crisp crunch* of a fresh, red Radish or the late Spring *sweetness* of Strawberries.
 SUMMER - our short but *exquisitely* beautiful Summers afford the opportunity to grow Herbs to *flavour or enhance* other foods. Or think of how much more could you possibly enjoy the sunshine than lifting a *cold* glass of Orange Juice to your orange juice loving mouth?!
 AUTUMN - Harvest & Thanksgiving - an abundance of food spilling from the horn of plenty. One of my fall favourites - the *tart bite* of Crab Apples - need I say more? YUM!
 WINTER - recall the pure enjoyment of a *steaming* mug of Hot Chocolate after an enthusiastic workout of shoveling snow or watching an outdoor shinny match on a frosty day! (tho' I must admit I am so very glad we don't have to think of THAT one for a long while!)

So what are you waiting for?! Hit the great outdoors already & tuck into cold, thick slices of watermelon or simply let the sweet juice of a peach dribble down your chin.....hmmmm I believe I'll go check the progress of my new Raspberries - I can taste them already!

This concludes my blurb on the Sensual Gardener. For further reading on our incredible 'Five Senses' - I highly recommend Diane Ackerman's - *A Natural History of the Senses*

Watch for the **JUNE GARDENDESIGN** where we'll look at **LAWN EDGING**

(I get so-o-o many request on how to incorporate it successfully that I'm dedicating an entire issue to the topic!)

DID YOU KNOW - You can now **LIKE** Gardens Four Seasons on **FACEBOOK!**



<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Gardens-Four-Seasons-Landscape-Design/432201666873842>

GARDEN EVENTS for May.

Come out to any or all - you will find enthusiast gardeners everywhere you turn!

- City Park Annual Plant & Garden Decor Sale - Tues. May 21 noon - 6pm Don Shepherd 683-7550 230-6272 email: shepherdd@gsd.sk.ca
- Saskatoon Horticultural Society - May 25 Garden Plant Sale & Fundraiser - donate your extra plants to the SHS plant sale & buy a few new ones! Save your used gardening books & magazines to be donated for use by other gardeners. Sale will be held at 18 & 22 Churchill Dr. 9am-2pm contact Bob 374-6990 or Frank 249-4522
- Honeywood Heritage Nursery - Parkside, Sask. - opens for the season May 18 - 9am - 5pm www.honeywood-lilies.ca
- Saskatchewan Perennial Society - Sat. May 25 - 9am - Labour & Learn Robin Smith Meditation Garden Heritage Rose Garden at the Saskatoon Forestry Farm Park & Zoo
 - Sun. May 26 - noon - 5pm - Saskatoon Forestry Farm Park & Zoo 100th Ann. Celebration
 - Tues. May 28 - 6:30pm - Plant & Seed Exchange (members only - \$10 membership fee - an incredible deal!) Bring perennials, seeds & a dessert to share. \$2 park fee is in effect
 - memberships available at the door. Please label your plants & indicate if they like sun or shade. Plant Exchange starts @ 7pm (I highly recommend this event - it is like Christmas in May for Gardeners!)

.....& THIS is MY favourite **PLANT-OF-THE-MONTH**

BEARDED IRIS !



Iris remind me for all the world of flamboyant orchids. A relatively common perennial flower, it has many attributes that make it a great addition to any setting. While the bloom period is relatively short - they are such Showgirls! - more than worth their brief bloom span. Colours are endless & you can even get some interesting variegations on leaves!



Iris really shine, however, with the fact they have these marvellous, thick, sword-shaped leaves that appear out of the soil as a magnificent fan. The spiky look offers great leaves all Spring, Summer & Fall. What an awesome contrast to other plants! They adore hot sunny spots but will perform quite respectably in semi-shade.



Key to successful bloom is ensuring the roots (aka rhizomes) are only half buried in soil. They need their top section exposed in order to bloom properly so don't bury them deep or even just below the surface!



- funny looking little rhizomes!

DESIGN your DREAM YARD !

Landscape Design Classes will resume in the Fall - watch for the Schedule to be released sometime in late Summer!

Feel free to forward this to any friends!

(& did you know - your email address is kept entirely confidential!)

Your Comments, Tips, Questions & Garden Quotes are always invited! OR perhaps you have a PIC from your own yard you'd like to share!

Let me know if you've any to share or if there is a particular topic you want to hear more on. Questions & Answers will be published in future E-NEWSLETTERS.

* to UNSUBSCRIBE from GARDENDESIGN E-Newsletter please reply to this email with NO THANKS!
