

Inside

3

Hosta 'Liberty'

Invasive Plants
Conference

4-5

The National Parks
Rose Collection
for 2003

6

Solar Lighting

Introducing
WOLF-Garten Tools

7

Geraniums and
New Guinea Impatiens

8

Book Review:
*The Well-Designed
Mixed Garden*

Clematis Vines for Every Garden

— by Alfred Millard, Horticulturist

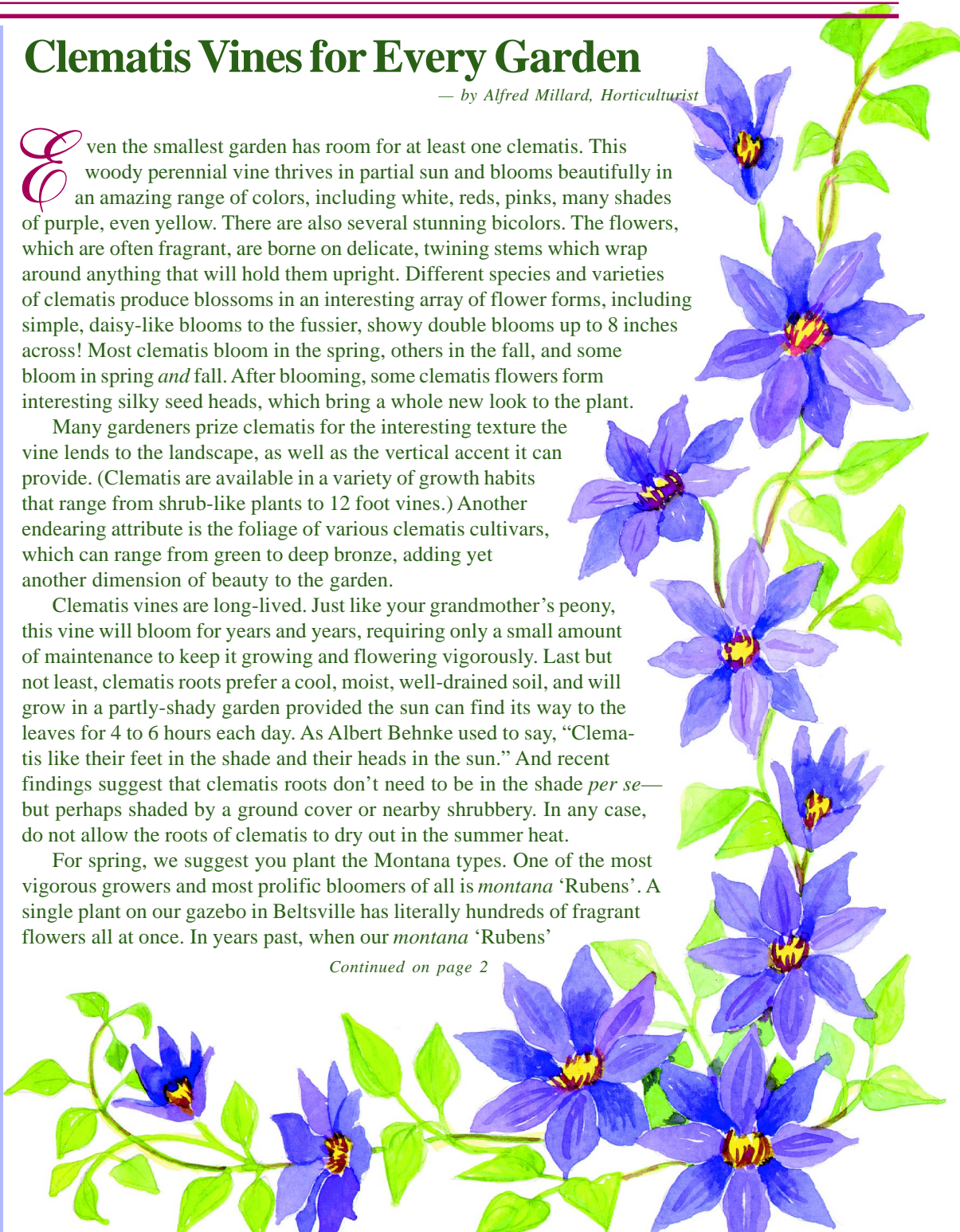
Even the smallest garden has room for at least one clematis. This woody perennial vine thrives in partial sun and blooms beautifully in an amazing range of colors, including white, reds, pinks, many shades of purple, even yellow. There are also several stunning bicolors. The flowers, which are often fragrant, are borne on delicate, twining stems which wrap around anything that will hold them upright. Different species and varieties of clematis produce blossoms in an interesting array of flower forms, including simple, daisy-like blooms to the fussier, showy double blooms up to 8 inches across! Most clematis bloom in the spring, others in the fall, and some bloom in spring *and* fall. After blooming, some clematis flowers form interesting silky seed heads, which bring a whole new look to the plant.

Many gardeners prize clematis for the interesting texture the vine lends to the landscape, as well as the vertical accent it can provide. (Clematis are available in a variety of growth habits that range from shrub-like plants to 12 foot vines.) Another endearing attribute is the foliage of various clematis cultivars, which can range from green to deep bronze, adding yet another dimension of beauty to the garden.

Clematis vines are long-lived. Just like your grandmother's peony, this vine will bloom for years and years, requiring only a small amount of maintenance to keep it growing and flowering vigorously. Last but not least, clematis roots prefer a cool, moist, well-drained soil, and will grow in a partly-shady garden provided the sun can find its way to the leaves for 4 to 6 hours each day. As Albert Behnke used to say, "Clematis like their feet in the shade and their heads in the sun." And recent findings suggest that clematis roots don't need to be in the shade *per se*—but perhaps shaded by a ground cover or nearby shrubbery. In any case, do not allow the roots of clematis to dry out in the summer heat.

For spring, we suggest you plant the Montana types. One of the most vigorous growers and most prolific bloomers of all is *montana* 'Rubens'. A single plant on our gazebo in Beltsville has literally hundreds of fragrant flowers all at once. In years past, when our *montana* 'Rubens'

Continued on page 2



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Sunday - Wednesday: 9AM to 7PM

Thursday - Saturday: 8AM to 8PM*

Easter (April 20): 9AM to 5PM

*Or to available light

(CALL, HOURS SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

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Clematis, from page 1

blooms, we immediately sold out our entire supply! This year we found a reliable source, and will have plenty of this variety in sturdy, two-year-old plants that will make a statement in your garden the first year. We'll also have *montana* 'Mayleen', a free-flowering variety with pink, wavy-edged fragrant flowers and bronze foliage. We'll also debut *montana* 'Marjorie', with semi-double coppery-pink flowers that bloom in May and June.

For blooms in summer our choice would be *C. tangutica* which blooms July through September. It has 1-2 inch, bell-shaped flowers of a rich buttercup yellow on a fast-growing, hardy vine. Although this variety can be somewhat fragile, it is an outstanding addition to any summer garden.

Repeat blooming clematis will reward you with a second burst of color. Their big display is typically in spring, followed by an echo of blooms in late summer or fall. One favorite is 'Haku Ookan', which has rich violet-purple flowers with white stamens. It will bloom once in spring with semi-double flowers, and again in the fall with fully-double flowers.

The big dilemma in buying a clematis, of course, is in choosing one of the many varieties! That's why most of us here at Behnkes have 4 or 5 in our gardens at home. We love the textures and colors in the foliage, and the incredible seed heads that appear after the flowers are spent. We plant them in our shrubbery, along walls, amidst perennials and shrubs alike. We let them ramble up and over trellises, decorate our lamp posts and mail box supports, and we think they are most beautiful when they are allowed to grow up and around old-fashioned porch pillars. We also plant them to add a surprising blast of color when they grow up through evergreen shrubbery, the canopy of a Japanese maple tree, or even though old garden furniture or discarded children's tricycles!

Clematis are also suitable for containers, providing a vertical element to deck or patio, a moveable feast for the eye. You will need a large container so that the roots don't dry out. We recommend at least a 10 gallon container that can overwinter without cracking (use concrete or even the hard plastic containers now available). As long as they get moisture during the winter months they'll do fine.

You can make the most dramatic statement with clematis by planting in combinations with other plants. Since it grows vertically, it accents other planting which are usually horizontal and low-growing. Try combining clematis with Japanese maples, azaleas, evergreens, perennials and annuals. For real drama, plant two clematis together in the same hole. Since they grow vertically, they will wind around each other, with their flowers mingling in and around each other. This effect is heightened by planting large-flowered varieties with smaller flowered ones (just make certain that they bloom at the same time). The small flower variety typically has many more blooms and the mass of smaller blooms really highlights the big flowers—just like in a flower arrangement. One good combination is the large-flowered 'The President', which is purple, and the *C. spooneri* 'Alba', both of which flower in June. The 6-8 inch rich purple blooms contrast beautifully with the masses of white 3-4 inch blooms. A beautiful combination for any garden.



Hosta 'Liberty'

—by Larry Hurley, Perennial Plant Specialist

An outstanding cultivar of Hosta will be readily available for the first time this year, and anyone with a shade garden should add a couple to their collection. Hosta 'Liberty' was released by Mobjack Nurseries, a wholesale nursery located in Mobjack, VA, an amazing coincidence. Mobjack also released the very popular cultivars 'Patriot', 'Minuteman' and 'Night Before Christmas'. The plant was patented, and first shown at the annual meeting of the American Hosta Society in 2000, where it was an immediate hit.

The plant is a sport, or mutation, from the cultivar 'Sagae'. 'Sagae' was named "Hosta of the Year" for 2000 by the American Hosta Growers Association. It was voted the most popular hosta amongst American Hosta Society members in 2002. 'Sagae' is a large, strong growing, dramatic, bold, upright hosta. It has a yellow edge and a blue-green center, which over the course of the season in our area turns from blue-green to green. The leaves top out at 30 inches high, and the clump eventually reaches 60 inches in diameter.

'Liberty' differs from 'Sagae' in that the leaf edge is much wider, beginning as a golden yellow and fading to cream as the season progresses. Lavender flowers are borne above the leaves in early summer. As with other hostas, the true majesty of this plant will not be evident when you see it in the pot, even though ours are large, high quality specimens. It takes several additional years of growth in the ground for it to achieve full size and develop a mature leaf shape and plant size.

Because of their thick leaves and other genetic factors, 'Sagae' and 'Liberty' are less prone to slug damage than many other hostas. They will grow best with a couple of hours of early morning sun, or good bright shade all day (such as under tall oak trees). Hostas appreciate good garden soil and irrigation during the drier months. If you have a deer problem, you undoubtedly know that hostas are not deer-resistant. But nobody ever said that life was going to be easy.

Visit the American Hosta Society website at www.hosta.org.

Invasive Plants:

Upcoming Conference to be at The University of Pennsylvania

Over the past several years, we at Behnke Nurseries have promoted the use of Maryland native plants through our Baysafe program. (See our website for past Behnke *GardeNews* articles). We have also encouraged you to plant alternatives to some ornamentals, such as English Ivy, which are invasive. Put simply, invasive plants are aggressive plants that invade parks and other natural areas and become weed problems. Sometimes they are agricultural weeds as well. Many were introduced accidentally, as contaminants in seeds or packing materials; others were introduced intentionally for use as wildlife cover, erosion control, or ornamental garden plants. Over the years, we have stopped carrying some invasive ornamental plants, such as purple loosestrife, *Hesperis*, and porcelain berry. We are also encouraging you to carefully consider what you plant, especially if you live in a sensitive area near a park, wetland or other natural area. You will find signage and brochures in our stores to direct you to the best plants.

Each year, the Mid-Atlantic Exotic Pest Plant Council (MA-EPPC), in conjunction with other organizations, sponsors a symposium dealing with invasive-plant issues. This year it will be at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia on August 6 and 7. Topics are varied, and while some are aimed at professional land managers, others are of interest to horticulturists and gardeners. Speakers include Cole Burrell ("Native Alternatives to Invasive Species"); Rick Darke ("Roadside Restoration with Native Plants") and Behnke Nurseries' John Peter Thompson, who will be on a panel discussing the Saint Louis Declaration (recently drafted codes of ethics for gardeners, botanical gardens, and nursery professionals).

For a conference brochure contact the Morris Arboretum: 215-247-5777 ex. 159.
For information about MA-EPPC visit www.ma-eppc.org



The National Rose Collection



'Cuyahoga'TM

A healthy, hardy floribunda selection. The hot pink flowers glow above the deep green foliage. The Tudor style plants stand 36 inches tall and 20 inches wide. Bred for good disease resistance.



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Clear, bright white flowers with a touch of rose fragrance highlights this floribunda rose selection. Good disease resistance on a 36-inch-tall by 24-inch-wide bush.



'Grand Canyon'TM

Salmon-pink double flowers held above dark green foliage fill the bush from late spring until fall. Typical size is 32 inches high and 20 inches wide, making it a knockout in the garden. Winner of the *Golden Rose of the Hague*, 1999, and four other awards and certificates in International Rose Trials.

A stunning brand-new U.S. introduction of world-class floribunda roses from Poulsen Roser ApS Nurseries. This trademarked collection, created by the Danish rose breeder Poulsen Roser ApS, with 120 years of experience and a long history of breeding roses for the splendor of The United States of America's National Parks. Breathtaking in color and form, this collection bloom from late spring until the first frost in autumn. *They require minimal care.* What's more, for every rose grown and sold from the National Parks® Rose Collection, a portion of the proceeds is strengthening the enduring connection between the American people and the land. Danish rose breeder Poulsen Roser ApS, with 120 years of experience and a long history of breeding roses for the splendor of The United States of America's National Parks. Over 200,000 roses are produced annually in both beauty and quality. Because of this unending process, they are known as the favorite flower. To date, Poulsen Roser has brought no less than 330 new roses to the United States. The intense color pallet and hardy vigor make these roses a must have in any garden. From the glow of 'Yellowstone' to the dark and fragrant 'Redwood', the National Parks® Rose Collection is this breathtaking collection.

Support our National Parks

The roses in the National Parks® Rose Collection are bred for color, hybrid vigor and uncompromising quality. They offer an exceptional number of important qualities:

- Are satisfying and rewarding to grow
- Bloom from late spring to frost.
- Require only minimal care.
- Have good to excellent disease resistance

For every National Parks Rose purchased, a portion of the proceeds goes to the National Park Foundation, a non profit organization that strengthens the enduring connection between the American people and the land. To learn more, please visit www.nationalparks.org

National Parks® Contribution™ For 2003

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‘Redwood’™

Fragrant dark red, double, old fashioned Tudor style flowers. This stunning floribunda commands attention in the landscape, growing 30 inches tall and 20 inches wide. Bred with good disease resistance. The dark green, glossy foliage is the perfect backdrop for the non-fading flowers.



Yellowstone™

Offers non-fading, bright yellow flowers from spring until fall. Good disease resistance. Floribunda bush is 36 inches tall and 24 inches wide. Winner of 1997 “Rose of the Year” in the U.K. and over 15 Awards and Certificates in International Rose Trials.



‘Shenandoah’™

Blazing coral flowers continuously fill the space where this rose lives. The deep green foliage is the most elegant backing for this exceptional floribunda. Typical size ranges from 36 inches tall to 24 inches wide.

Solar Landscape Lighting - for Ambience and Security



Now you can easily and inexpensively add landscape lighting to your walkways, gardens, shrubbery and patio with our new line of solar powered landscape lights by Astonica Lawn and Garden. Available in a wide range of ground-staked or wall-mounted styles and colors, these lights are sun-powered and need no special wiring or power cords. And, since they don't need to be wired in, they can be moved around the garden at will. A light sensor automatically turns the lights on at dusk and off at dawn.

Since they are easily transported, you can put the lights in a sunny spot during the day to recharge them, then move them to the desired location in your yard for nighttime lighting. Each lamp has two rechargeable Ni-Cd AA batteries that garner solar power from the sun. The number of hours of sunlight the solar panels receive determines how many hours of illumination the lights produce each evening. Eight hours of sunlight will generally charge the lights for 8 to 10 hours of illumination.

You can use these lamps and lights to accent your walks or driveways, around your patio or pond, and generally to create a soft lighting effect whenever you need it.

WOLF-Garten Tools: Their Bite is Stronger Than Your Bark

This year Behnke Nurseries is bringing in a new line of quality German-made gardening tools produced by one of the best-known brands in the European garden market. The WOLF-Garten company was founded in 1922 (They're older than Behnke Nurseries!) by August Wolf and his two sons. It is now Europe's largest manufacturer of heirloom-quality gardening tools.

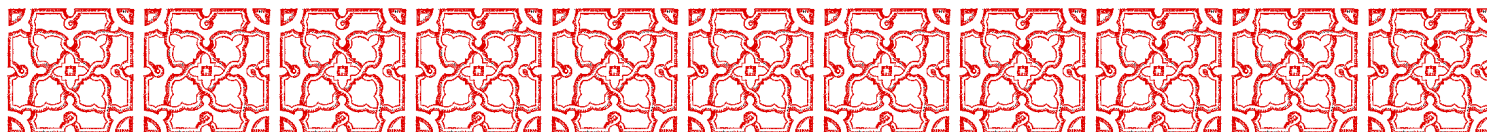
The WOLF-Garten company is dedicated to innovation in the design and performance of its products, focusing on providing ideal solutions to our gardening needs. WOLF-Garten tools are built to provide excellent service for many years: One simple example: their hand pruners are tested to ensure that they can make 26,000 clean cuts with no appreciable dulling of the blade. Properly cared for, WOLF-Garten tools will be a part of your family for many years to come.

We gardeners at Behnke's were especially intrigued with WOLF-Garten's new "Multi-star" system of tools. This innovative system consists of a selection of handles with a huge variety of detachable heads—everything from lawn rakes to trowels to pond nets. You'll save valuable storage and extra cost with this system. The tool heads snap in and lock firmly, then release instantly when required—just like a car seatbelt. This unique system means you can use the same tool head for close work in beds or to reach the backs of borders with just a simple change of handle.

You simply choose the special lock-in handles in lengths to suit your height and/or gardening needs, then attach any of our wide range of interchangeable tool heads to them. That means everybody in the family, down to the youngest 'sprout', can have fun making the garden grow.

With such a complete range of handles, you need never bend or stoop painfully to perform any gardening tasks. You can fix the same tool head to a variety of handles—our push-pull weeder, for example, and work the front, middle and back of a deep border or garden plot quickly and comfortably. You aren't likely to tread on any valuable plants either. The serious gardener will really appreciate the convenience, flexibility and easy storage of the Multi-Star tool line.

Look for the distinctive red and yellow display with the WOLF-Garten emblem the next time you stop at Behnke's, and begin collecting your family's gardening tools.



Geraniums and New Guinea Impatiens

— by Marian Parsley, Horticulturist

Everyone remembers seeing geraniums at one time or another. The cheerful plants have adorned beds, porches and entranceways to homes for as long as anyone can remember. In fact, the common geranium, *Pelargonium hortorum*, may be known and loved by more people than any other flower in the world. They will grow almost anywhere with few requirements.

Like jewels, the primary purpose of flowering annuals is to delight the eye. With exceptionally attractive foliage and large, showy flowers produced in abundance and held above the foliage, geraniums certainly fill the bill. They are best when used as a bedding plant but will also thrive in mixed containers and even as houseplants when light levels are high enough. Blooms start to arrive in early spring and continue right up until frost in the fall. During the Victorian era geraniums were used as cut flowers to cheerfully brighten up any room in the house.

The growers at Behnke Nurseries strive to bring you the best plants and newest varieties available. This year we are pleased to add the **Rocky Mountain series** to our ever-growing collection of varieties. This series offers large flower clusters held well above foliage, a vigorous growth habit which makes them ideal for landscaping, and exceptional heat tolerance. Plants in the Rocky Mountain series are available in shades of red, white, pink, salmon, coral and magenta.

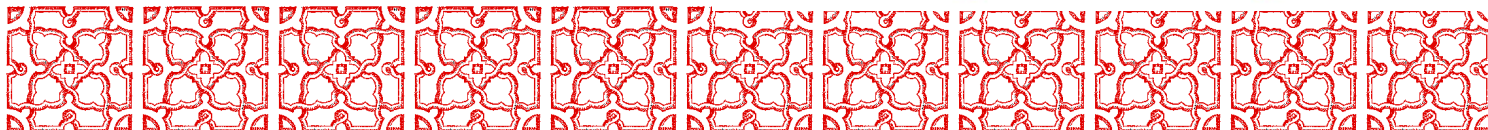
Two more exciting new geranium families are the **Romance Series** and the **Candy Series**. 'White Truffle,' from the candy series, offers semi-double, pure white blooms with true dark leaves, a compact well-branched habit and heat tolerance. From the Romance series 'First Kiss' is a delicate bicolor pink accented by magenta flowers with extra wide petals. A dense branching habit makes them ideal for pot and container use.

In the **Patriot Series** 'Watermelon' offers hot coral pink semi-double flowers that really take the heat. They offer unique color and medium growth habit combined with reliable garden performance and heat tolerance. Last but not least, 'Apple-blossom' offers beautiful double flowers in a soft pink color. They also feature distinct leaf zoning and an upright, vigorous growth habit. The varieties listed above are just an example of what the growers at Behnke's have to offer. We will continue to offer the **American Series** as well as an extensive selection of ivy geraniums and specialty geraniums such as 'Melosilver', 'Vancouver', 'Centennial' and 'Red Happy Thought'.

New Guinea Impatiens

Do you love the sweet, delicate blossoms and bright colors of shady impatiens but have a little too much sun? The New Guinea impatiens are a great alternative. These impatiens are available in the same array of colors as regular impatiens but have more unique foliage—ranging from green to bronze to variegated. At Behnke's, we are pleased to be able to offer over twenty varieties of New

Guinea impatiens. They do best in early morning or late afternoon sun, and perform very well in hanging baskets, mixed containers or as accent plants. Once established in the garden or container, a regular fertilizer regime is required. Using a general-purpose fertilizer every four to six weeks should be sufficient to produce blooms all summer long. A few of the unique varieties are listed below. 'Super Sonic Cherry Cream' offers 3-inch pale pink-ivory bicolor blossoms with bronze-red foliage. For a taste of the tropics check out 'Paradise Mango-Orange' with huge exotic salmon-orange fully rounded blooms, and compact, rich green foliage—great for landscapes and mixed containers! Be sure to check out 'Paradise Wine', an unusual shade of burgundy-red, with green foliage. Finally, no shopping experience is complete without seeing the newest of the New Guinea varieties—the **Painted Paradise Series**. Unique, variegated leaves add an old-fashioned look to the garden. These plants are early to bloom and reach 15 to 20 inches in height. They are excellent in mass plantings, hanging baskets and mixed containers. Painted Paradise impatiens are available in orange, red, lilac and wine-colored blooms. Stop by for a visit, relax in our greenhouses and take home a touch of the tropics.



Book Review: The Well-Designed Mixed Garden

— by Judith Conway, Marketing and Advertising

The Well-Designed Mixed Garden is a design book with a difference. Written for gardeners who are passionate about plants of all kinds (hence the “mixed garden” of the title) it reflects decades of professional experience and artistic innovation. As with her bestselling book *The Well-Tended Perennial Garden*, master designer and plantswoman Tracy DiSabato-Aust provides not only inspiration but also scrupulously organized information on design and connoisseur plants, all from original research dating back to her degree work in horticulture.

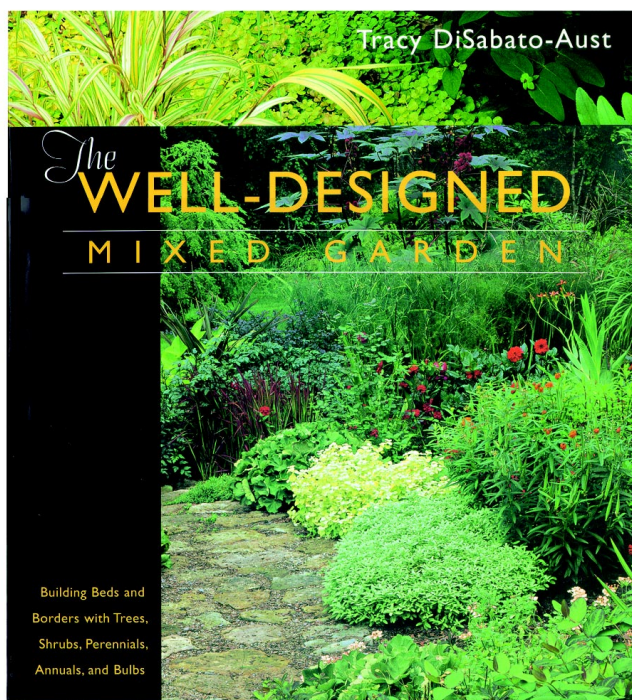
DiSabato-Aust’s new offering is a master class of design fundamentals, with an emphasis on often-neglected topics, such as site evaluation, color theory, and planning for maintenance. It is also a gallery of detailed design plans that show how ideas are put onto paper and then translated into three dimensions. Lessons learned in its first two parts are strengthened in an “Encyclopedia of Plant Combinations”, where breathtaking photography highlights fantastic plant combinations, explains the design considerations at play and provides tips on how to keep the combination looking its best. And the lifetime care needs and unique design characteristics of featured plants are summarized in the useful charts and lists that conclude the book. The result is a nearly foolproof guide to every aspect of designing superior gardens with superior plants. With more than 250 color photos and illustrations, this book is as much a feast for the eyes as it will be a trusted reference for the library shelf.

Alex Dencker, the Beltsville Store Manager, feels that this is one of the best books on gardening, and perennials in particular, he has ever read. He says that it belongs with the “Best of the Best Books” and that years from now it will still be a major reference for the educated gardener’s library. (Hardcover. 460 pages, 227 color photos, 25 color illustrations.)

Also by Tracy DiSabato-Aust

The Well-Tended Perennial Garden

One of the 25 all-time best-sellers in print by Timber Press, this book is a must for any perennial gardener. Tracy has devoted years of study to creating showplace gardens with minimal maintenance. Her methods of pruning and shaping perennials, thoroughly explained and illustrated in this book, produce more flowers, encourage new growth, discourage pests, stagger bloom time, and maintain vigorous health for your plants. (Hardcover. 338 pages, 131 color photos, 20 line drawings.)



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Find out about these great new roses:
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see pages 4-5!