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Choosing Plants for Foundations and Hedges

— by *Miri Talabac, Woody Plants Specialist*

Some of the most common questions we get at the nursery revolve around hedges and foundation plantings. A hedge is simply a closely-planted row of plants which can serve as barriers to foot traffic, markers to define walkways or property lines, screens for unsightly views, or windbreaks that influence the heating and cooling of the yard through the year.

The foundation of the garden

Foundation plants (planted along the foundation of a building) can be a relaxed mixture of species or a more formal hedge of one, but in most cases some plants are evergreen to provide interest in the winter. They draw attention to the house while tying it to the landscape and defining an edge to the garden. Fragrant plants will really shine here as their scent can waft about a window, deck or porch. Factors to consider include roof overhangs that drop snow and waterfalls of rain (or block both like an umbrella), salt exposure from icy walks and differences in soil acidity due to concrete leaching. Beyond this, plant choice is mostly an exercise in personal taste and available space. It is important to consider the mature size so plants don't run into the roof, brush up against a wall or block window views.

Creating a hedge

Planting a hedge is straightforward: place the plants in a row at their recommended spacing so when they are near maturity they will just touch each other to form a continuous planting. If planted too close their interiors will become devoid of foliage and the plants are more stressed and prone to pests and disease. Slow-growing plants make an instant effect difficult, but faster-growing plants overwhelm limited space quickly and require frequent trimming to keep them in check. As with any gardening activity, choosing plants also depends on light levels and soil conditions. Other considerations, such as browsing deer will also impact your choices.

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Weeping Blue Atlas Cedar makes a stunning hedge at Matterhorn Nursery in Spring Valley, NY.



The Behnke GardenNews

is published seasonally.

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BEHNKE'S AT BELTSVILLE

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Increase Your Home's Value with Landscaping

— by *Christy Planinsek, Landscape Design Department Manager*

A top quality landscape design and installation will add beauty and value to your home. According to a recent article in *SmartMoney* magazine, landscape enhancements can add up to 15% to a home's value. What's more, *Money* magazine research found that landscaping has a 100%-200% recovery value at sale time. In that article, the president-elect of the National Association of Realtors, Walt McDonald, says, "When people ask me how they can get strong interest in their property, I always tell them to fix up their landscaping." Some analysts advise their clients to invest in trees as readily as they invest in stocks and bonds.

Behnke's award-winning Landscape Design & Installation Division would like to help you add value to your home by creating a beautiful and enjoyable landscape. We offer a wide range of services, including consultations, finished landscape designs, and the installation of plants and garden features such as walkways, retaining walls, patios, plants and more.

Meet our Team

Behnke's talented Landscape Design Team boasts years of experience and degrees from highly respected institutions. Together they have over 30 years of professional experience in the landscape industry!

- **Bill, Landscape Design and Installation Division Director**

Bill is a Maryland Certified Horticulturist with a Bachelors Degree in Horticulture from the University of Maryland.

- **Christy, Design Department Manager**

Christy has a Bachelors Degree in Landscape Architecture and Minors in Geography and Business from Penn State University.

- **Jennifer, Designer**

Jennifer is a USDA Trained Landscape Designer & Horticulturist.

- **Andrea, Designer**

Andrea has a Bachelors Degree in Science of Ornamental Horticulture & Landscape Design from the University of Tennessee.

Successful Design Tips

Here are a few things to consider to help plan a landscape design to suit your personal style and unique needs.

- Evaluate the functional use of the landscape items you want to incorporate into your plan.
- Assess the maintenance needs of your property. Don't create a landscape plan that will be difficult to maintain.
- Create a natural setting with a landscape that blends your home into its surroundings. Try to incorporate a few unique features for interest.

We'd love to show you how easy it is to enjoy a beautiful new landscape — a great place to relax and entertain!
Call Behnke's Landscape Design & Installation Division today
at 240-473-6733 or 301-937-1100 ext. 6733,
or email us: landscaping@behnkes.net



Hedges, continued from page 1**A row of flowers**

Favorite flowering hedges include roses, forsythia, spiraea, weigela and azaleas. But can you imagine a row of dwarf lilac, hydrangeas, dwarf crepemyrtle or sweetspire? If you want blooming shrubs in mid- to late summer, try the cool gray-blues of bluebeard, the tropical flair of hibiscus or the fragrant summersweet. Many of these plants also reward you with glorious fall color – one of the decided benefits of not being evergreen!



Cotoneaster horizontalis edges a driveway, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England

A hedge with an edge

Want a hedge that will say “keep out?” Lots of people turn to prickly plants to keep wandering kids and pedestrians at bay. You may be familiar with colorful but thorny barberry. *Pyracantha* and quince also look innocent, but push through their branches and you are greeted by serious thorns. Although many hollies are relatively tame, Chinese holly, English holly and ‘Dragon Lady’ have painfully sharp leaf spines you won’t soon forget. *Osmanthus* is a holly-like option with fragrant flowers and no berries. *Cotoneaster* (above) makes a striking hedge, especially when in berry.

The underused ducklings

Plenty of plants are great candidates for hedges but are overlooked because they are deciduous or not amenable to constant pruning. Mixing in a few evergreens or choosing plants based on size will enable them to make great additions to the landscape. While privet is the most common

deciduous hedge, the dwarf European cranberrybush (a type of viburnum) will do a nicer job. Their maple-shaped leaves are more interesting and they will not produce privet’s stinky flowers. What’s more, they have a defined presence in the winter from dense branches and do not require frequent trimming.

Willows are great for wet areas, and add great textural interest with the benefit of rapid growth. Rosemary-leaved willow has silvery leaves over reddish stems; dappled willow has pink and white-painted new leaves; ‘Flame’ willow has bright orange stems in the winter. Established plants can practically be pruned at will, and you can always weave those cut branches into baskets, mats or



Yews: Happy to be Sheared! University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England

porch furniture! You can also try chokeberry, a native shrub with shiny red or black berries and glowing red fall color.

Nandina is a wonderfully versatile plant and is available in a wide array of sizes. Typically evergreen and sometimes fruit-bearing, all provide a nice texture reminiscent of bamboo and generally need no pruning or meddling to keep them looking good. In most, the new growth emerges with colors in plum, cherry or orange, and fall coloration of scarlet hues lasts into the winter.

If you desire evergreens, consider “blue hollies,” a group of hybrids known for dark green leaves, dark purple stems and tame leaf serrations. With a pollina-

What’s in a Name?

Anything, really, can be considered a hedge, but certainly there are more prevalent plant choices that dominate the landscape. Most commonly planted:

Boxwood	Japanese Holly	Cherry Laurel
Privet	Red-tip Photinia	Euonymus
Forsythia	Burning Bush	Juniper
Arborvitae	Leyland Cypress	Yew

Fortunately for those who love to get out there and prune – one of the qualities that make most of these plants so popular is their tolerance for trimming.

tor, female plants bear bright red berries fall through spring. A native holly with no spines is the inkberry, a smaller shrubby plant that is very cold-hardy and smaller-statured. Bayberry, an

Atlantic native, makes an excellent naturalized hedge along the shore or in an informal setting with poor soil. Scented waxy berries arise if enough plants are used, which are decorative and attractive to birds. For larger areas consider fragrant *Eleagnus*, both the silvery-leaved hybrid and the yellow-edged ‘Gilt Edge.’ The old red-tip

Photinia now has an attractive variegated form named ‘Pink Marble’ which combines very nicely with silvery and deep green foliage.

Deer zone

For those with deer problems, try junipers, boxwood, and inkberry holly. The sheer spiny-ness of the blue hollies will usually protect them from browsing. Barberries are safe, as are their relatives *Nandina* and *Mahonia*. *Leucothoe* and *Pieris* are shade-loving members of the rhododendron family that aren’t as palatable as their cousins. The same is true for Japanese plum yew, which doesn’t share the buffet appeal to the deer as other yews do. ☞



Working for *Discovering the therapeutic*



I guess everyone knows everyday life is stressful— raising children, caring for the aging or sick, traumas such as death, job loss or divorce and even the demands of maintaining productivity in the ever changing and increasingly demanding work force. Multiply these stresses by a physical illness or mental dysfunction factor and life can sometimes become too much. For most, finding a healthy outlet can make all the difference. For many, that outlet is America's largest and fastest growing hobby: gardening.

Not long after accepting the Assistant General Manager job at The Behnke Nurseries' Potomac location I became the primary interviewer for all applicants seeking employment with the nursery. One of

my first interviewees was a woman hoping to secure a labor position in our ornamental trees and shrubs department. With an air of understated elegance, she informed me she had an advanced degree in International Studies from American University. She went on to say she had held a diplomatic post in Hong Kong, had two children currently attending Georgetown University, had just been through a nasty divorce and wanted desperately to water trees all summer in the baking heat. Behind my professional smile I was completely incredulous. To me, a merchant, a businessman, a non-gardener, nursery labor was a muscle burning, foot blistering, skin aging pastime. Why would a person with such obvious personal and professional resources choose to do it?

A few days later I interviewed an equally overqualified individual who had graduated with honors from the University of Southern California. He held a JD and an MBA. He had worked for many years at this firm and many more at that firm and I suppose not surprisingly found himself all burned out on the 9 to 9 downtown grind and now wanted to work for our firm. He told me unashamedly that he used to drink too much and was now consumed by sadness. He wanted nothing more out of life than to care for our plants and receive an honest wage. I remember thinking "It must be something in the water."

As the weeks of early spring ticked by, I interviewed a lot of people for a lot of different jobs and in so doing began to gain some insight into the symbiotically nurturing relationship that can exist between garden and gardener. While most of the applicants I hired were appropriately qualified persons with Certified

“Almost without exception they expressed they would be somehow therapeutic or palliative to an unskilled laborer's wage because they were willing to work for money in return for their time and effort.”

Professional Horticulturist or Master Gardener designations after their names, many were not horticulturists or even avid gardeners. Many were just folks who for varying personal reasons were attracted to nursery work. They were men and women, teachers and doctors, lawyers and homemakers. They were ex-military, ex-wives, even an ex-priest. The one thread that seemed to tie them all together was the way they answered the interview question "Why do you want to work at Behnke's?" Almost without exception they expressed the idea that working with the plants would be somehow therapeutic or palliative. They were all willing to work for an unskilled laborer's wage because they were all expecting something more than money in return for their time and effort. They were expecting to feel better.

At some point in mid-spring, as the retail garden center machine reached critical mass, I hired two high-functioning autistic men as part of a Rockville municipal jobs program. They turned out to be a great investment.

a Living nature of gardening

— Gary S. Ingram, Manager, Behnke Nurseries at Potomac

We taught them to deadhead (removal of dead blossoms and leaves), water trees and work in the greenhouse. And while they eventually learned to price merchandise and restock the garden shop, what they enjoyed more than anything was working in our display beds, pulling weeds and getting their hands dirty. They loved the plants and they loved their jobs. The counselors at their group home told me they had never seen them so extroverted and animated. Their confidence and self esteem was at an all time high. All they could seem to talk about was the plants they cared for and their job at Behnke's.

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Word that Behnke's was willing to give the specially-abled a chance spread quickly from one social services organization to another and by season's end we had eight special people working in varying capacities around the nursery. The success stories were many, the problems few— what a great group of people.


The following spring we were approached by a group from Montgomery Works, a state supported county jobs program, regarding the possible placement of a severely disabled individual. The person to whom they introduced me had faced multiple challenges since birth. He had very poor eyesight, was confined to a wheel chair and had the mental capacity of a small child. He required around-the-clock care and very close supervision. While I was completely open to allowing him to work at Behnke's, I had serious doubts about his ability to do anything, much less contribute positively to our staffing needs. But the professionals at Montgomery Works worked with Behnke's to find him a

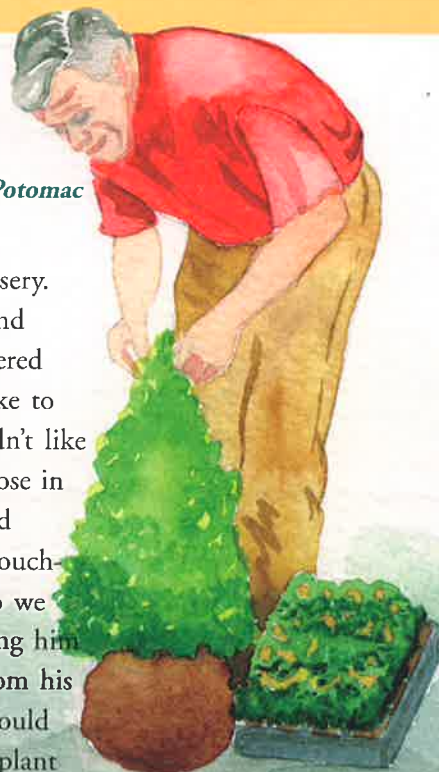
place at the nursery. Through trial and error, we discovered that he didn't like to water much; didn't like the feel of the hose in his hand. He did however enjoy touching the plants so we set about teaching him to deadhead. From his wheelchair, he could easily reach the plant

material at table level and within a few days was proudly turning in a bucket full of deadheads at the end of his shift. His caregiver reported he was happier, healthier and more relaxed than ever. I was never more amazed.

For most of us, enjoying the benefits of "Therapeutic Horticulture" can be as easy as walking out the door and putting our hands in the dirt. For others, assistance may be necessary. Specially trained and degreed

Horticultural Therapists use plants and horticultural activities to improve the social, educational, psychological and physical status of all kinds of people. They can help assess interests and environments, give advice on purchases, suggest access modifications and help with short and long term goal setting. For more

information contact The American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA.org). 



Cozy Holiday Memories

— by Carl Behnke



Thinking of the holidays at Oma and Opa's house brings back warm memories. One in particular was Christmas. The poinsettias were blooming and Opa had me come along to help him deliver a station wagon full of plants to family and friends all around the D.C. area. It was an all-day journey, culminating in a visit to

Opa's favorite German deli, Café Mozart, in the heart of the city. I can still remember the long refrigerator full of cheeses, ham, sausages, and other German specialties, and Opa going down the aisle gesturing to the gentleman behind the counter: a pound of this, a quart of that and oh, don't forget some of these cookies and candies! The ride home was one filled with enticing aromas!

The night of Christmas Eve was when we traditionally celebrated at Oma and Opa's house. When we arrived, the kitchen was full; every counter held a platter of some specialty or another – many of which Opa and I had brought back from the deli. It was a gourmet grazing festival of a caliber usually seen in fine restaurants. We nibbled our way throughout the evening, taking breaks here and there, only to find our appetite again when something new and delicious was brought out.

Whenever possible, I try to recreate this scene from my past in my own home during the holidays. It represents a sense of heritage and tradition that I wish to pass on to my own family. Poinsettias are still a major part of the holidays with us, and so, too, are the foods I remember so well. To help you start, or add to your holiday traditions, here are a few recipes that you might like to try.

Editor's Note: Carl Behnke is the grandson of Behnke Nurseries founders, Albert and Rose Behnke. He is Chef Instructor in the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Purdue University. He also serves as Special Events Chef for the President of Purdue.



Limited Edition Collectible Nutcracker

Custom "Behnke Gardener" Designed by
Christian Ulbricht Co. of Germany

This delightful nutcracker is an original design depicting an old world gardener, complete with potted plant, watering can and spade. He was custom made by Christian Ulbricht, one of Germany's largest makers of nutcrackers. Available now in our stores and online at www.behnkes.com.

Shop early, supplies are limited!

SUGAR & SPICE PECANS

This recipe is from my mother, Ele Behnke. These pecans were a staple around our house during the holidays.

- 1 pound pecan halves
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg white
- 1 tablespoon water

Beat the egg whites and water until frothy (not stiff). Stir in the sugar, salt, and cinnamon. Add the pecans and stir until coated. Spread on a baking sheet. Bake at 200 degrees for 45 minutes, stirring every 15 minutes. Remove from the oven when dry and toasty. Cool. Store in an airtight container.

CRANBERRY TEA

I learned this recipe from Mrs. Beering, the wife of Purdue's president, for whom I first worked when I came to the University. It is something different from the usual hot apple cider that is so common in the fall and winter.

- 1 pound fresh cranberries
- 2 quarts water
- 1 teaspoon whole cloves – about 30
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1 pint water
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup lemon juice
- 1 pint orange juice – no pulp
- 1 dash salt
- $2\frac{1}{4}$ cups sugar, or to taste

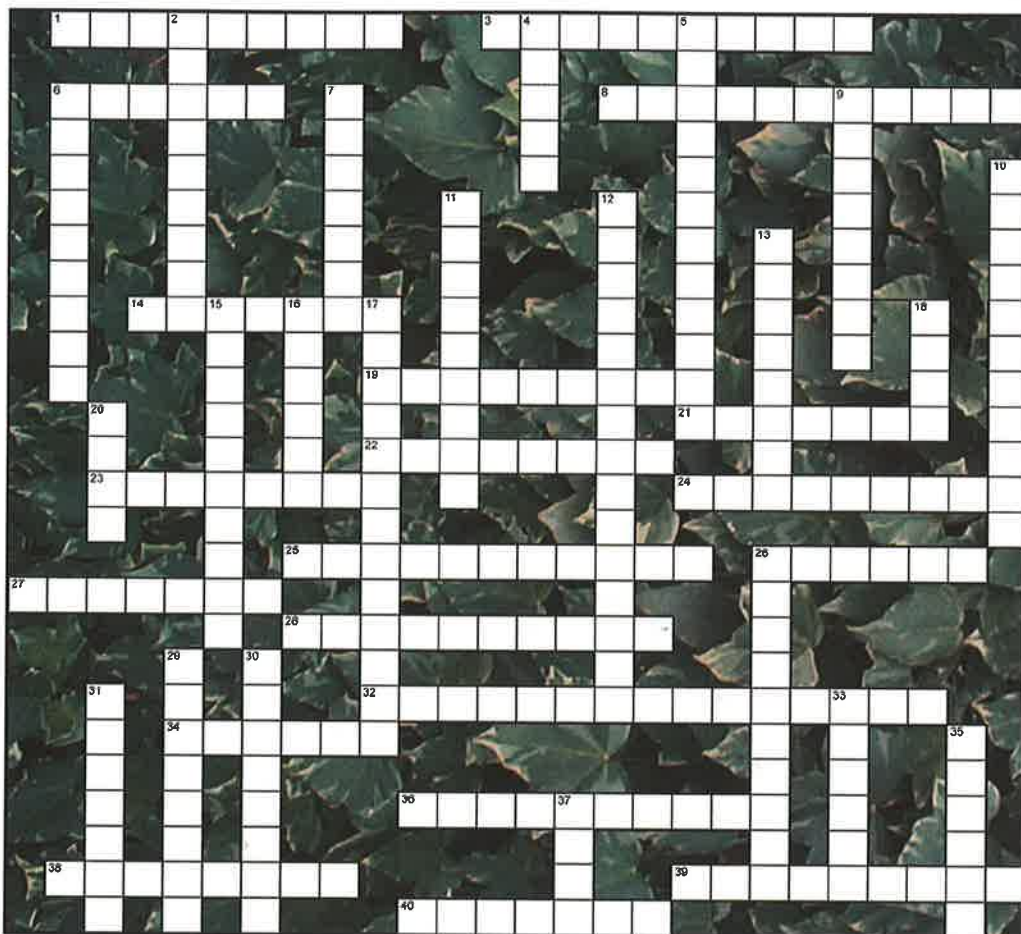
Bring the cranberries and first batch of water to a boil. Simmer until the berries pop – about 10 minutes. Strain through a fine mesh strainer. Return to a stainless steel pot. Add the cloves, cinnamon, water, and lemon juice. Simmer for an additional 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and add the orange juice, salt, and sugar. Simmer for an additional 5 minutes to dissolve the sugar. Serve warm.

Notes: Due to the high acid content, try to use stainless steel or ceramic lined containers for this recipe. This can be refrigerated for reheating at a future date.



Ho Ho Holiday Crossword Puzzle

— Gary S. Ingram, Manager, Behnke Nurseries at Potomac



Across

1. *Ursus maritimus* (2 words)
3. forced narcissus
6. circular door charm
8. dashing through the snow (2 words)
14. heavenly bamboo

19. produces laboratory adhesive of same name (2 words)
21. Christmas fire (2 words)
22. Dasher, Dancer, Prancer
23. Christmas pickle
24. the Scottish botanist's Christmas tree (2 words)

25. Oh! *Susanna ilex* (2 words)
26. one horse open _____
27. gin berries
28. scarlet firethorn
32. segmented holiday epiphyte
34. paraffin on a string
36. American Minister to Mexico's big find
38. sliced and seasoned
39. romantic parasite
40. holiday candelabrum

Down

2. South Pacific conifer
4. Moroni
5. *Solanum pseudocapsicum* (2 words)
6. tallest tree east of the Rockies (2 words)
7. pie gourd
9. aromatic wax
10. deciduous red berry profusion
11. Virgil's shepherdess
12. *Ornithogalum umbellatum* (3 words)
13. Louisiana's state flower
15. Tchaikovsky's Christmas party
16. frozen drip
17. *Picea glauca conica* (2 words)
18. stolen property
20. floating ice crystals
26. originally "Sint Klaas" (2 words)
29. sowbread
30. aromatic bark
31. Batman's nemesis
33. Hollywood, aka _____ town
35. lace, satin or grograin
37. nuclear fusion furnace

Stumped? The key/completed puzzle is available at our garden centers. Stop by, and get a \$5 coupon good on any garden center purchase over \$20.

Raising Cash for Your Organization?

Consider Behnke Nurseries for fundraisers for schools, churches, scout troops and other groups. Dozens of organizations raise money by selling Behnke-grown, top-quality poinsettias, garden mums and annuals. If you have a proposal for some other item (mulch, hanging baskets, hostas—whatever), we are interested in working with you.

It's very simple. You receive a discounted price from us, sell the product at "retail," and your group keeps the difference.

Members of your group take orders in advance — you collect and summarize the orders. On a prearranged date, we'll deliver your order to one site and your group distributes the items to the buyers.

Our Fundraising Coordinator will provide you with information on available items and price structures. To join our "Fundraiser" mailing list, or to speak to a Behnke Fundraiser Coordinator, contact us at Behnkes@Behnkes.net. We will contact you within a few days.



Think Behnke Florist for Holiday Arrangements

Award-Winning Designers Create One-of-a-Kind Floral Displays

— by Evelyn Kinville, Manager, Behnke Florist at Potomac

When the first chill of Fall is in the air, every front door should beckon friends and family with a wreath in the colors of newly turned leaves. Stop by the Behnke Nurseries Florist at Potomac and choose from a beautiful assortment of faux wreaths created from a palette of rich autumn tones, or order a custom wreath in just the right size and colors for *your* door.

A visit to the Behnke Florist is sure to stir ideas for decorating your Thanksgiving table. Imagine fresh flowers in apple reds, bittersweet oranges and rich maroons. You'll even find flowers in shades reminiscent of squash and pumpkin pie to center amidst your special china and everyone's favorite things to eat. You'll always find experts to help choose the right flowers for your individual décor. You can even bring your own china soup tureen or the cornucopia that you use every year so that your Thanksgiving table looks uniquely "yours."

Stop by the Behnke Nurseries Florist at Potomac and choose from a beautiful assortment of faux wreaths created from a palette of rich autumn tones.

While you're remembering what splendid dinner partners flowers and golden brown turkeys can be, start planning to make your home a display of winter holiday "Behnke Beauty" and know that you are in good hands. *Washington Consumer Checkbook* subscribers can "check out" superior ratings for the Behnke Florist at www.checkbook.org.

Check Behnke's website for the most recent information on fall lectures and events: www.behnkes.com



Increase your home's value with a landscape designed and installed by Behnke Nurseries. See page 2.

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