

Little Jewels of the Garden

Pansies are one of the best loved and most widely cultivated flowering plants. They provide masses of delicately scented flowers in almost every color — from soft pastels to rich velvety jewel tones. Some have darker centers which appear to have been painstakingly stroked by an artist's brush. Pansies are versatile and easy to grow in almost any sunny situation.

Until Albert Behnke arrived on the local garden scene in 1930, most gardeners planted pansies in the spring. To this day many garden books and seed catalogs still recommend spring planting. This is a pity because pansies are happiest when the weather is cool, and they do much better when planted in the fall. Spring planted pansies are just getting started in May when the hot weather hits and they begin to decline rapidly. By contrast, pansies planted in the fall have been blooming off and on since September.

Albert Behnke's advice has converted many a skeptic. Although it may require a leap of faith to sink the delicate young plants into the ground as the air turns nippy and other annuals are succumbing to frost, a bouquet of blooming pansies decorating the Thanksgiving table is reward enough. It is the precise combination of soil still warm from the summer and the cool autumn nights that guarantees success.

Pansies are, in fact, winter hardy. Planted early enough they'll bloom into fall and beyond if the weather remains mild. During the coldest months, pansies will cease blooming and wait patiently, even under the snow and ice. (Mulch pansies with an airy material, such as straw, to protect the plants from damage.) If the winter weather breaks for a few days, they respond with a few brave blooms. It's not uncommon to see cheerful little pansy blossoms peeking out from a patch of melting snow!

At the first hint of spring pansies will bloom in profusion. They are beautiful combined with spring-flowering bulbs — yellow daffodils and blue pansies make a classic combination.

Children adore pansies, especially the varieties with darker centers, resembling smiling faces. The little ones can't resist picking them, and a bouquet of colorful pansies offered by a child is a cherished gift. A small bunch tucked into a paper cone can make a May basket to be hung on a neighbor's door by very young children, who'll delight in the task.

When spring fades to summer it's time to part with pansies. A few determined gardeners can keep them blooming, but they never return to their former glory. It's best to replace them with summer annuals. But before you do, pick a few of your favorite blooms and press them between the pages of an old phone book for several weeks. The tones deepen beautifully as the blossoms dry, and the dried pansies can be worked into some truly lovely pressed flower arrangements that provide year round-beauty.



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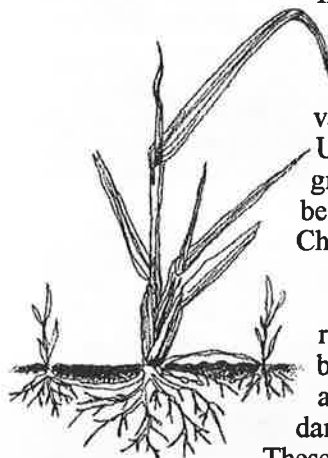
Weed This...

Handy Garden Helpers

— by Helen Gardiner

Behnke's Tall Fescue Blend -

Blended especially for us, this grass seed is a mix of Shenandoah, Jaguar III and



Guardian tall fescue. We selected these varieties from USDA trials of grasses that are best for this area. Chosen for color, disease and drought resistance, this blend produces a fine textured, dark green grass.

These varieties are also lower growing than many other grasses, which means less mowing.

Behnke's Tall Fescue Blend is available in a 5 or 25 lb. bag. Eight pounds will cover approximately 1,000 square feet for new seeding and 2,000 square feet for over-seeding.

Thatching Rake - Fall is the ideal time to dethatch your lawn. The half-moon tines of the thatching rake lift the matted dead grass which forms a barrier to seed. After dethatching, newly-sown grass seed can settle onto the soil surface where germination takes place.

Greenview Winter Green® Fall Fertilizer - Fall is the best time to fertilize the lawn and sow new grass seed. Warm days, cool nights and more frequent rains make for the ideal environment. **Winter Green®** fortifies and encourages the development of a strong root system. Its special 10-16-20 formula provides the vital elements your lawn needs during the autumn growth cycle. The formulation includes iron, manganese, magnesium, and sulfur, all of which contribute to a thick, green lawn now and a thick, green lawn earlier next spring.

Helen is the Manager of our Garden Shop

Better By Design

Plan Your Spring-Blooming Bulb Garden

We all know that fall is the time to plant our bulbs for rich spring color. But many of us tend to put it off — or do it half-heartedly. Make *this* the year that you actually plan your bulb garden, plant it and care for it properly. Then, come spring, you won't be once again wishing you had done it — you'll be enjoying a spectacular garden!

How to do it

As with all good designs, you'll need to consider the size of the space you're concentrating on, the correct proportions for each mass of color, and the correct combinations of colors themselves. First, draw a brief to-scale sketch of your garden area on graph paper, then lay a sheet of tracing paper over it and proportion out the areas for each bulb type. Then determine how many different heights the area can showcase, and the correct proportions for each group. Once this is decided, you can consider the color scheme you want to create. Use a second piece of tracing paper over the first, a color wheel, and color pencils to help you plan. Color in the separate areas on the tracing paper, then stand back to see how well you've achieved the look you had in mind. Do you prefer the blue, pink and white Victorian look, or a more assertive blue, peach, yellow combination? Perhaps a monochromatic color scheme with plants of the same color in varying heights? Use a different piece of tracing paper for each color scheme until you find the one you want. Don't be afraid to experiment, you can always change things around next year.

Once you've decided on the look you want, visit our Garden Shop to choose from the huge selection of top quality bulbs for your garden. These superior grade bulbs will give you the best results for the first year

and for years to come. Note the blooming times for each bulb, and plan for the longest period of continuous bloom. Make notes of the correct planting depths, and be sure to follow them. Buy enough bulbs to really put on a show.

When planting, use a fertilizer formulated for bulbs — we recommend **Bulb-tone®**, a complete fertilizer formulated for all types of bulbs. Prepare the beds well, and plant according to the depth recommended for each type of bulb. Apply a 2-inch layer of mulch and wait for spring!

Two of our favorite combinations are:

- A broad border of rich blue Grape Hyacinths, backed by pale apricot Tulips, and brought to life by startling white clumps of Narcissus at either end.
- A frill of blue and white Spanish Bluebells (or grape hyacinths) with the Double Late Tulip 'Angelique' and Viridiflora Tulip 'Greenland' dancing behind.

Let us know what you come up with! We'd love to showcase some spectacular combinations.



Come to our Spring Bulb Promotion, Saturday, September 21st. We'll have lots of ideas on gardening with bulbs.

Autumnal Beauties — *Fall-Blooming Camellias*

— by Helmut Jaehnigen

As autumn approaches, we think back longingly to the profusion of color that was spring. But nature has yet another glorious trump card to play!

The fall-blooming *Camellia sasanqua*, with its glossy, evergreen foliage, blooms from September to December. The flowers, though smaller than spring-flowering varieties, are exquisite. They do especially well in part to full shade and combine well with azaleas, rhododendrons, and andromedas. Camellias are rarely bothered by insects or diseases.

The one serious drawback to all camellias used to be that they were not reliably cold-hardy in the Washington area. During the super-cold winters of 1976-77 most of the camellia collection of the National Arboretum was devastated. However, one lonely fall-blooming specimen camellia, the *Camellia olifera*, came through these winters with flying colors.

The large seeds of this species, native to China, yield a useful cooking oil. Over the centuries Chinese horticulturists have selected plants for cold hardiness. One of these arrived at the National Arboretum in 1947 and

has since been named 'Lu-Shan-Snow'. It blooms in October and November in Asian Valley at the Arboretum.

Dr. Ackerman, of the National Arboretum, used this specimen as a parent to hybridize many new cold-hardy varieties. These have been tested over many years for cold-hardiness in locations up and down the East Coast. Behnke Nurseries was the first nursery to offer selected hybrids for sale in the Washington area.

My favorites include:

Winter's Star - a heavy bloomer, with single pink flowers in October to late November. A strong, upright grower to 8 feet. It is hardy to at least minus 10°F.

Snow Flurry - Masses of white flower petals that resemble snowflakes in September through November on a vigorous grower with a wide spreading habit. It is hardy to minus 10°F.

Winter's Beauty - Semi-double pink peony-type flowers which bloom in October to December. A more compact grower than the varieties above, and an excellent upright growing habit. Hardy to minus 15°F.

Other great varieties include:

Winter's Waterlily - Formal, double white flowers in September.

Winter's Interlude - Lavender pink anemone-form; blooms in October.

Winter's Rose - Formal, double shell-pink flowers on a very compact plant.

Ashton's Pride - Soft pink flowers on a strong upright plant. Probably the most cold-hardy. *Behnke's will be the first to have a few of this variety in 1997.*

.....and finally,

Agnes O'Solomon - Although this camellia is not one of the hybrids mentioned above, the Curator of Asian Valley at the Arboretum has found it to be reliably hardy in this area. At Behnke's we have grown and tested this variety for several years and we also find it very cold hardy. This plant came through the difficult winter of '96 without trouble. It is a prolific bloomer with lovely, single, pink flowers and dark, lustrous green leaves.

What could be better than evergreen shrubs that grow in the shade and bloom in October? Add a few from our palette to your garden.

— Helmut Jaehnigen,
Director of Woody Plants

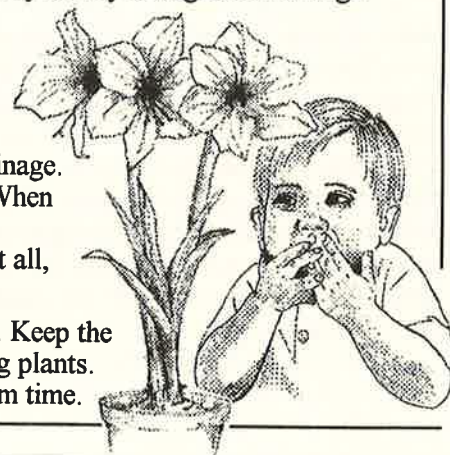
Kids' Project — Pot an Amaryllis Bulb

Amaryllis are huge bulbs that can be easily potted and grown successfully indoors. The plants emerge, grow quickly, and produce impressive blooms up to 12 inches across. Children will enjoy watching the day-to-day changes as the large flowerbud swells and finally bursts into bloom. Newly purchased bulbs potted in mid November are usually in bloom by Christmas.

How to Pot an Amaryllis Bulb

- Choose a pot about 2 inches larger in diameter than the bulb.
- Put a layer of pebbles or broken crockery in the bottom of the pot for good drainage.
- Hold the bulb in place as you fill in around the roots with a light potting mix. When potted, one-third to one-half of the bulb should sit above the soil level.
- Water well, allow the pot to drain, then empty the saucer. Water sparingly, if at all, until growth is visible.

Grow your amaryllis in a bright spot with at least a few hours of direct sun each day. Keep the soil evenly moist and feed once a month with a general purpose fertilizer for blooming plants. While the plant is blooming, protect it from direct sun — this will maximize the bloom time.



HUP, 10-6-4 HUP, 10-6-4

Fertilizers provide the basic nutrients that are essential to the growth and overall health of plants. Understanding exactly what fertilizer is, and why and when plants require fertilizer, will help ensure healthier and happier plants.

What is fertilizer? In all its forms, organic, chemical, liquid or granular, plant food contains at least one of three basic elements: nitrogen, phosphorus or potassium. The amount of each of these components is always shown on the label in that order, separated by dashes (10-6-4). The numbers express the percent of that element in the fertilizer. For example, 10-6-4, means that a 100 pound bag of this fertilizer contains 10 pounds of nitrogen, 6 pounds of phosphorus (phosphoric acid) and 4 pounds of potassium (potash). This is referred to as the N-P-K content. Yes,

the K really does mean potassium! The remainder is inert ingredients.

Why are these three elements so important to plants? Well, it is not too different from our own human nutritional needs, which require a regular intake of protein, carbohydrates and vitamins from our food. Plants require nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and trace elements to remain healthy, floriferous and fruitful.

Nitrogen promotes growth of stems and leaves and maintains healthy color. Phosphorus is important to the building of plant cell structure and is especially important for root development and formation of the reproductive portions of plants. Potassium serves as a regulator, allowing many plant functions to occur, from the metabolizing of nitrogen and the promoting of disease resistance to cold tolerance.

During the growing season plants consume significant quantities of these elements. We add these elements to the soil in the proper proportions to meet specific plant needs. For example, the turf grasses in our lawns are primarily green leaves and stems. During the growing season grass requires a higher proportion of nitrogen than the other elements. Most lawn fertilizers have high N values. On the other hand, flowering plants, such as roses, often need extra phosphorus to ensure good bloom formation. Some vegetable crops, such as potatoes, are rich in potassium and require an increased source of this element added to the soil.

The best course of action is to use a fertilizer which has a good balance of all N-P-K elements.

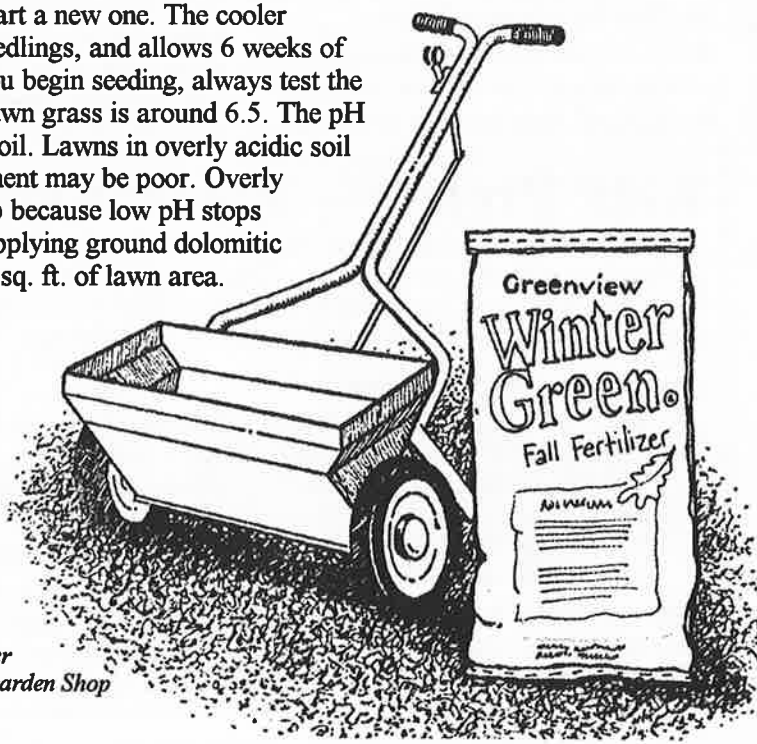
— Gene Sumi
Gene is Assistant Manager
of Customer Service

Fall — the Ideal Time to Seed Your Lawn

September is the ideal time to improve your lawn, or start a new one. The cooler weather reduces the problem of heat damage to the seedlings, and allows 6 weeks of growing time before the weather turns cold. Before you begin seeding, always test the soil in the lawn area to determine the pH. The ideal pH for lawn grass is around 6.5. The pH determines the rate at which nutrients are released from the soil. Lawns in overly acidic soil may grow too slowly. Leaves may be pale and root development may be poor. Overly acidic soil promotes disease. Applying fertilizer may not help because low pH stops or slows nutrient release. You can neutralize acidic soil by applying ground dolomitic limestone, using the formula of 50 lbs. of limestone to 1,000 sq. ft. of lawn area.

After sowing your selection of grass seed, fertilize with **Winter Green®**, my choice of fall fertilizers for lawns. Apply the fertilizer in September, then again in October, and November. Cover the seed with 1/4 inch of any of the following: peat humus, Compro, Michigan peat or Fafard topsoil. You must keep the seeds adequately moist for germination to take place. I recommend misting at least twice a day with a **Foggit®** nozzle attachment for your hose. This allows you to mist the lawn gently so the seed doesn't wash away.

—Helen Gardiner
Helen is Manager of the Garden Shop



Colorful Natives for Fall and Winter

— by Helmut Jaehnigen

Two native plants, **Virginia Sweetspire** and **Winterberry**, are plants that are unrivaled for fall and winter color. Virginia Sweetspire, *Itea virginica*, grows 3 - 5 feet tall, and is extremely hardy and easy to grow in this area. It blooms in June, with an abundance of glistening, lightly fragrant flowers, but its best feature appears in October, when the bright green leaves change to a brilliant crimson. Best of all, the foliage quite often stays on the entire winter, providing striking contrast against the snow. It tolerates (even loves) wet areas and has no serious insect or disease problems. I recommend 'Henry's Garnet,' which has 6"-long flower panicles and great fall color and 'Sarah's Eve,' which blooms in pale pink.

Winterberry, *Ilex verticillata*, an aptly named plant, will brighten even the drabest of winter days. It offers winter color in the form of long-lasting red berries on stark branches. The berries ripen in September and last into January, long after the foliage has dropped. Winterberries are excellent for mass effect, shrub borders and wet soils. They require both male and female plants for fruit (berry) set, and it is important to use the right male variety for maximum berries. My favorites, in order of heights, are:

'Red Sprite', *Ilex verticillata*, a superior, compact plant that grows 3 - 4 feet tall and has showy, large red fruit. The berries stay after all the leaves drop, making it a stand-out in the snow. Birds are attracted to the berries, but usually wait to eat them until early spring, when they have softened after a cold winter. The best male to use for pollination is 'Jim Dandy'.

'Winter Red', *Ilex verticillata*, is a patented variety which grows 6 - 8 feet tall, with dark green foliage that turns bronze in the fall. Plant it where you want a tall specimen to show off its abundant brilliant red berries. The best male to use for pollination is 'Southern Gentleman'.

'Sparkleberry', *Ilex verticillata*, a National Arboretum introduction, will grow 8 - 12 feet tall, with an upright form and spectacular red fruit. 'Sparkleberry' won the 1988 Styer Award and is always in high demand. 'Apollo' is the best male companion for berries.

—Helmut Jaehnigen,
Director of Woody Plants

Meet Lauren Buchheister



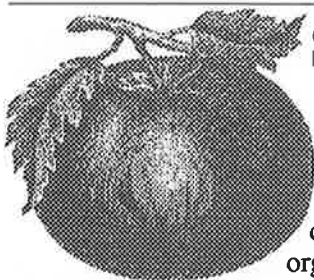
Lauren started working for Behnke Nurseries at Largo in 1989. She now works in the Annual Department at Beltsville, where she specializes in herbs. She attends the University of Maryland and will graduate in 1997 with a degree in Health Education.

Lauren shares this story about her early days here at the Nursery:

"I started at 'root' bottom, doing hard labor. During the middle of July, when it was very hot and humid, I had to load pots onto a truck. I started feeling lazy, mainly because there was no one around watching me. An old man started limping towards me. I, not knowing who he was, continued to move the pots one at a time. When the old man approached me, he said, 'I pay you to use both hands.' As he bent down and picked up three pots in his massive hands, he continued, 'You are stronger and younger than me, and I have already worked harder this morning than you will all day. So I am going to help you load this entire truck in ten minutes and, when we are done, you will know what it is to work.' And he did.

"The man was Albert Behnke, the founder of Behnke Nurseries, 80 years old, helping me to be a leader by teaching me how to be a better servant."

Albert Behnke passed away in 1992 at the age of 88. But he lives on in the hearts of those who loved him.



Summer Events Review

Tomato Taste-Off

Our first annual **Tomato Taste-Off** was a great success. This event provided everyone with the opportunity to taste over 10 varieties of freshly picked, organically-grown tomatoes and peppers. And the tomato winners were:

Pink Girl, an indeterminate midsize pink tomato, won the taste test hands down, followed closely by **Brandywine**, an indeterminate heirloom beefsteak, and **Celebrity**, a determinate midsize red. Try these varieties in your garden next year!

Karen Upton's **Mediterranean Summer Salad** and the **Panzanella Salad** were also great hits. The recipes are printed here for your enjoyment. There are still copies of our tomato culture and recipe handout available. Drop by and pick one up. You'll love the **Tomato Tart** and **Mimetta Lo Monte** recipes — we do!

Daylily Frolic

The first annual Daylily Frolic held at our Largo location on June 29th was a rollicking frolic indeed! Over 100 daylily aficionados and enthusiasts from 4 counties and 3 states joined us in walking the daylily stock beds. Everyone enjoyed this chance to see mature blooming varieties, both old and new. The surprising winner from customer balloting for Best of Frolic was a glorious old favorite, 'Baltic Amber'. It is obviously still one of the best red daylilies. Our Perennial Department will carry it and dozens more in 1997 for your daylily enjoyment.

Six lucky gardeners won new daylily varieties in a drawing we held during the Frolic. Watch for Daylily Frolic '97 - it will be held near the end of June.

We hope you'll plan to join us next year for these and other fun activities. Our goal is to offer unique opportunities for gardening education and old-fashioned fun!

Fall Activities

Mark your calendars now and plan to attend our fabulous fall activities. You'll find more details in each Thursday's Home Section of the **Washington Post**, and at the Customer Service counters at both nursery locations.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fall Decorating Demos, Beltsville | Sept. 13 and 14 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bulb Promotion at Beltsville | Sat., Sept. 21 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Farm Days at Largo | Oct. 5 and 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pansy Weekend, Largo & Beltsville | Oct. 12 and 13 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christmas Shop opens at Beltsville | Sat., Oct. 12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oktoberfest at Beltsville | Sun., Oct. 13 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apple Festival, Largo & Beltsville | Sun., Oct. 20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pumpkin & Craft Days at Largo | Sat.&Sun., Oct. 26 & 27 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dept. 56 Open House at Beltsville | Nov. 7 - 11 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Open House at Beltsville | Thu., Nov. 21, 6:30 - 8 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poinsettia Greenhouse Tour at Largo | Sun., Dec. 1, 12 - 4 |

Schedule may vary slightly due to Mother Nature.

Garden Recipes

These wonderful summer salads were served during our Tomato Taste-Off.

Panzanella

Serves 6

- 8 cups 1-inch pieces of tomatoes
- 3 Tbsp fine shreds of basil
- 4 Tbsp virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 cups cubed day-old Italian bread

In a large bowl, mix together the basil, olive oil, vinegar, garlic, salt and pepper. Add the tomatoes and toss very gently. Then add the bread cubes and toss again gently. Let the salad sit for ten minutes to allow the bread to absorb the sweet tomato juice. Toss again and serve immediately.

Mediterranean Summer Salad

Karen Upton, Mgr. of Customer Service
This recipe comes from Karen's husband Chris, the family cook.

Serves 4

- 12 ripe plum tomatoes
- ½ pound Feta cheese
- 1 red onion
- 1 sweet pepper, sliced
- 12 Kalamata black olives
- 20 - 30 leaves fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 1 lemon
- 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Sea salt and pepper

Cut tomatoes in half lengthwise, then across in 3, giving you 6 chunks from each tomato. Put in serving bowl.

Cut the Feta in ½ inch cubes, and scatter evenly over the top.

Peel the onion and cut in half, then across in half circles. Strew the onion, sweet pepper and olives on top, and push the parsley leaves in between the tomatoes so that they stick up.

Dress the salad first with the juice of the lemon, then the olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Serve immediately with warm pita bread.



Behnke's Gardening Tips

September

Plant lettuce, broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower for a late season harvest. Market packs of starter plants are available now.

Our mum crop is better than ever — choose from a dazzling selection of these fall-blooming favorites. Our plants are huge and heavily budded.

Ever had garlic or onions fresh from the garden? They're easy to grow in well-drained soil. Plant them now, then, in spring, pull up every other onion (spring onions, or scallions) and leave the rest to mature till summer. Garlic and onion sets (small bulbs) will be available in mid-September.

You may need to spray houseplants to destroy insects and their eggs, before bringing them indoors. An excellent non-chemical spray is the new **UltraFine®** paraffinic oil by SunSpray. It's safe and highly effective. Target the undersides of leaves for best results.

Divide spring and summer blooming perennials for more vigorous growth and flowering next year. Think about adding more plants or new varieties to the perennial garden. Warm soils, cool days and frequent rain make fall a great time to plant. Fall-planted perennials perform better than spring planted ones!

October

Dig up dahlias, tuberous begonias, cannas, caladiums, gladiolus, and other tender rootstock after the first frost. They won't survive most winters in this area, but you can store them in a dormant state until next spring. Let them dry in the sun for a few hours, shake off the excess soil, remove foliage and continue to dry them in a warm spot, out of the

rain, for a week or so. Store the roots through the winter in a box or paper bag (no plastic) in dry peat moss. Keep them cool, but above freezing (40-50°F is great).

Grow herbs indoors on a sunny window sill. Most herbs require at least 6 hours of direct sun. To better utilize window space, place taller plants near bright windows and consider growing smaller plants under florescent light fixtures. We have several sizes of light fixtures, ranging from 'beginner' to 'completely hooked'.

Ornamental cabbage and kale are not only sources of color in the fall garden, but they make a very attractive garnish for special dishes.

November

Clean up the vegetable garden. Remove debris and turn soil over, incorporating generous quantities of soil amendments, such as, manure, peat moss, and compost. These materials will break down slowly over the winter. Test the soil to determine the pH (6.8 is ideal for a vegetable garden) and add lime if necessary.

Protect your evergreens, including azaleas and rhododendrons, from dehydration this winter. These plants do not go into complete dormancy and will require water during mild weather. When the ground is frozen, the sun is shining and the wind is blowing, your evergreens are in real danger of "winter burn". This occurs when the plants are dry or unable to absorb frozen water. You can drastically reduce damage by providing a wind screen, mulching well, and/or spraying plants with an antidesiccant (one product is **Wiltpruf®**) which helps to seal in moisture.

Keep a Garden Journal

Keep a journal of your flower and vegetable gardens. Make note of what worked well this season — and what didn't. Include photos of especially successful areas in your garden this year, and make notes of the new plants you put in this fall. Also consider making a "wishlist" of plants you'd like to grow, and garden improvements you'd like to make.

1996

Call Behnke's for more information: (301) 937-1100

Asters — Stars of the Fall Garden

The asters have inconspicuously held their place, fading into the background of the spring and summer garden. Now is their chance to shine. In late August and September, after gaining in stature all summer, asters burst forth into spectacular masses of vibrant color.

In the waning days of summer and the color bright mornings of early fall, a patchwork of asters and goldenrod is spread before us. We have grown accustomed to seeing roadsides from Vermont to Maryland decorated with these tall lavender to deep purple flowers. Perhaps this familiarity with asters explains the relative lack of interest gardeners seem to have in these beautiful and undemanding plants. These hardy perennials thrive in almost any soil as long as full sun and ample water are available.

The cultivar *Aster* 'Purple Dome' lives up to its name by producing hundreds of deep-purple flowers which totally obscure its foliage. It contrasts strikingly with silvery artemisia and glows like a beacon in front of the arching green and white blades of the ornamental grass *Miscanthus* 'Variegatus'.

The wonderful aster, 'Alma Potschke', is a color unusual to its breed. The bright, almost coral-pink flowers bear no trace of blue. At a height of nearly four feet, it looks spectacular with tall ornamental grasses as a backdrop and *Ajanía pacífica* (previously known as *Chrysanthemum pacificum*) planted in front.

Another member of the family, *Aster x frikartii* 'Monch', doesn't wait till summer's end to show its colors, but blooms from mid-June to September. Its lovely blue-lavender flowers grace the 3-foot tall plant. This one makes a wonderful addition to any sunny perennial garden.

Almost surely the tallest fall-blooming aster is *Aster tataricus*, at an astonishing 6 - 8 feet. It puts on a spectacular show with dense clusters of lavender-pink flowers in late September or early October and still looks good into November.

Asters are naturally quite tall plants, ranging in height from one to four feet, depending upon soil conditions and water supply. In the garden, they can be pinched or trimmed back one or two times during

the late spring to mid-summer to keep plants dense and somewhat shorter. This pinching also encourages the formation of literally thousands of flower buds. The reward for this effort will be mountains of small lavender, pink or white flowers.

When the time comes for asters to take the stage they're ready to dazzle us with their belated but undiminished brilliance. Asters fill a spot in the garden and a season in the year with abounding color.

—Melodie Likel,
Asst. Coordinator of Promotions



Aster x frikartii 'Monch'

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Florist (301) 937-4032
Landscaping (301) 937-4035
Largo/Upper Marlboro, MD
(301) 249-2492
700 Watkins Park Dr. (Rte. 193) 20774

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