



The Perennial Word



A Publication of Cedar Mountain Perennials

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Cedar Mountain Perennials :



Specializes in native plants for the Inland Northwest Garden.

Offering a wide selection of native perennial wildflowers grown from seed or cuttings at our nursery outside Athol, Idaho. We

also feature a limited selection of trees and shrubs.

Our plants have been selected to be ideally suited for climate, soils, and moisture regimes of the Inland Northwest.

Inside this Issue:

Editor's Note	1
Planning for all season color	2
End of Season Sale at CMP.....	3
Plant of the Month: Penstemons.	4
What's Bugging Me: Heat.....	5
Products and Services.....	8
Retail Locations.....	8
Calendar of Events	8

Editor's Note:

We hope you have been enjoying your gardens this summer. We thought with this very warm and dry weather we have been experiencing we would include a couple of articles that relate to that. Penstemons for the most part love warm weather and they can tolerate dry conditions. They are our featured species this issue and Bob will introduce you to a few of our favorite species here. Truly we love them all and it was very hard to just select a few!

We also discuss planting in summer. Everyone knows spring and fall are ideal times to plant but with some attention to detail it is possible to do some planting in summer so check out that article as well.

The first article discusses how to plan for a longer blooming season with native perennials plants. This is one of the most common questions we receive. Everyone is looking for that plant that will bloom all season! While we may not be able to accomplish that with one species as you will see it is possible to extend your bloom time in your garden with some attention to when different species bloom. Hope you enjoy! The ed.



Planning for Color in the Garden through the Season with Perennials

By Bob and Jill Wilson

One of the most frequent questions we receive is: What perennials do you have that bloom all summer? In truth, for an all season bloom, one really needs to plant annuals; most temperate perennial flowering plants have a distinct bloom period. For some it may be fairly short, for others a bit longer, but 4 weeks is typically the longest most perennials will bloom. Fortunately perennials don't all bloom at the same time so, if you would like to have an attractive, colorful, and interesting garden, one that does not need to be replanted each year, you can do it with perennial plants. You just need to do some research and planning!

To have a long blooming garden requires some advance information about bloom times. That can be a little tough since many factors affect bloom times. A plant that grows at higher altitude and is reported to bloom in July may bloom in June or earlier at lower elevations. Similarly a plant reported to bloom in June in USDA Zone 4 might bloom earlier in when planted in Zone 6. So it helps to have some local information about the plants you are interested in growing. If you are interested in native plants, you can observe when they bloom in nature in your area. If that is not possible you might join your local native plant society and inquire there. Botanic gardens and arboreta are also excellent resources for finding out this sort of information where plants may be labeled in your area. For other cultivated plants you might check with a local master gardener or knowledgeable nursery person.



Creeping Phlox

We have been loosely tracking bloom times for the plants we have been growing for the last several years, so I took the time to tally that information. I found that in the lower elevations here in the Inland Northwest, at around 2400 feet, most local natives bloom between April and July. August is typically hot and dry here in the lower elevations in the Inland Northwest and most perennial forbs and shrubs have finished blooming. The majority of our native plants bloom in June, but there are many species that bloom earlier or later!



Prairie Smoke

So what is a gardener to do who wishes to work with as many local native plants and at the same time wants to have all season interest in their garden? For early season color in April, look for Balsamroot, Creeping Phlox and Shrubby Penstemon. There are other species blooming at that time but few are found in cultivation. Among the shrubs, Serviceberry is one of our first to bloom along with Kinnikinnick. For May there are many more choices including Pussytoes, Arnica, Leafy Bract Aster, Subalpine Fleabane, Buckwheat, Prairie Smoke, Streambank Lupine and Blue Clematis to name a few. Creeping Phlox and Shrubby Penstemon may also still be found blooming in May. Among

(Continued on page 3)



Phlox diffusa: Creeping Phlox

(Continued from page 2)

Taper Leaf Penstemon

the shrubs, Black Hawthorn, Chokecherry, Ninebark and Mountain-Ash bloom in May. As the temperatures warm up in June, lower elevations in our area are awash with color. This is when you will find Sticky Geranium, Alum Root, Mountain Hollyhock, Western Iris, Silvery Lupine, Narrowleaf Penstemon, Yellow Penstemon, Wilcox's Penstemon, Lyall's Penstemon, Slender Cinquefoil, Munro's Globemallow, Blanketflower and Orange Honeysuckle in bloom. Many shrubs also bloom in June such as Blue Elderberry, Chokecherry, Douglas Spirea, Lewis's Mock-orange, Ocean Spray, Snowberry and Wood's Rose. The palette gets smaller in July but there are still some good

choices for this month. Our reliable July blooming perennials include Nodding Onion, Showy Milkweed, Oregon Sunshine, Blanketflower, Scarlet Gilia, Bee Balm, Tufted Evening-Primrose and Canada Goldenrod.

If you are interested in planting some native plants from outside our immediate area, Purple Coneflower, a Great Plains native, is an excellent choice for a later blooming species. Black-eyed Susan and Missouri Evening-Primrose are two other species that bloom in July and even later! Hummingbird Mint a southwestern native is an excellent choice for providing late season color. Scarlet Bugler is another southwestern native that is an excellent choice for a hummingbird garden and blooms in late July.



Sticky Geranium

So as you can see with a little planning, you can have color in your garden for most of the season!

End of Season Sale! *Everything priced to go!*

4 inch perennials \$2.00

Quart Perennials \$3.00

Gallon Perennials \$4.00

Gallon Shrubs \$6.00

Two Gallon Shrubs, trees and vines \$10.00

See us: at the nursery Fridays

Sandpoint Farmer's Market Weds pm

Kootenai County Farmer's Market Sat



Featured Plant:

Selecting Penstemons for the Garden

Bob Wilson

Anyone who visits our nursery can see that we have a fondness for Penstemons. They provide a great variety of rich colors, come in many sizes, and look fabulous in a sunny rock garden or perennial bed. They are water-thrifty plants and do well with little care once established. They are also appreciated by pollinators, especially bumblebees and hummingbirds.

The difficulty with Penstemons is choosing which ones to plant in your garden. There are so many, around 270 species at last count, and most of them are native to the western US. Flower colors range from deep blue and purple to lavender, pink, red, and pale yellow. The blue-flowered species are the most common and often multiple hues can be found in a single flower.

Here are a few of our favorites



Lovely Penstemon

Lovely Penstemon - *Penstemon venustus*: A good size plant with considerable spread. Many stems emerge from a central crown that lay down with the weight of the many light purple flowers. Plants grow to 2 feet tall and at least 3' across. Native to Central Idaho, NE Oregon and SE Washington.



Lovely Penstemon

Whipple's Penstemon - *Penstemon whippleanus*: This species has perhaps the most unusual flower color I have seen in Penstemons. Deep burgundy-colored flowers rise up from lush green foliage. Stems are 2' tall. Whipple's Penstemon is native to the Rocky Mountains at mid to high elevation.



Whipple's Penstemon

Taperleaf Penstemon - *Penstemon attenuatus*: Produces upright, 2' stems with rich-colored deep blue to violet flowers. Found throughout Idaho and adjacent states.



Whipple's Penstemon

Mrs. Barrett's Penstemon - *Penstemon barrettiae*: This very unusual Penstemon is native to only 5 counties along the Columbia Gorge where it grows up on the rocky cliffs. Fortunately, it has been brought into cultivation and can be grown without collecting seed from the wild. It has striking blue-grey foliage with the leaves oriented more vertically than horizontally. Flowers are deep pink on 1' tall stems. Plant is rhizomatous and will slowly spread.



Scarlet Bugler

Scarlet Bugler - *Penstemon barbatus*:- Our tallest Penstemon and truly a hummingbird magnet, it has bright red, tubular flowers on 4-6' tall stems. Blooms in mid-summer. The Firecracker Penstemon, *Penstemon eatonii*, also has similar flowers although on shorter stems. Although Scarlet Bugler is native to the southern Rockies, it has done well in our northern Idaho garden.

Cutleaf Penstemon - *Penstemon richardsonii*: This Penstemon gets its name from the toothy leaves it has. It produces flamboyant hot pink flowers on 2' tall stems. Is found growing



Taper Leaf Penstemon

(Continued from page 4)

on the east side of the Cascades through Oregon, Washington, and up into British Columbia. It likes a hot, sunny spot to grow in. Another good hummingbird plant.

Yellow Penstemon - *Penstemon confertus*: A common resident of our area, it has a more subtle beauty. Flowers are pale yellow, almost white, and appear on numerous 1' tall stems.



Mrs. Barrett's Penstemon

It is important that you find a good location to grow Penstemons. The one thing that is most critical is having good drainage. Penstemons are not at all tolerant of clay or wet soils. Many properties in the area have soil that is formed from the glacial outwash from the Lake Missoula floods. It is often a gravelly or stony soil. Penstemons love this. A few are more tolerant of wet ground including Rydberg's and Whipple's Penstemons. They also prefer a sunny spot, although some will grow just as well in partial shade such as Wilcox's or Yellow Penstemon.



Cutleaf Penstemon

For more information on Penstemons

American Penstemon Society

<http://apsdev.org/>

Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center

<http://www.wildflower.org/>



Yellow Penstemon



Taper Leaf Penstemon on North Chilco Mountain

What's Bugging Me?

The Heat

By Jill Wilson

If you read our last "What's Bugging Me" column you already know that this year has been an unusual one from a weather standpoint. Winter was warmer than average, snowfall was well below average. So while overall precipitation was close to normal, the warmer than average temperatures have meant resulted in much drier than normal conditions and an earlier spring. So what's on tap for the rest of the summer? Experts predict more of the same, with warmer temperatures expected through the summer, including some downright hot spells at times. How will that affect our inland northwest gardens and what can we do? That is the topic of this month's column.

Plants need water, carbon dioxide, nutrients and suitable temperatures for growth and development. During periods with hot temperatures, typically greater than 90 degrees, greater stress is placed upon plants. Photosynthesis shuts down when temperatures reach 90 to 100 degrees, while respiration continues. These create stressful conditions for plants and water becomes one of the main limiting factors during periods of extreme heat. Many plants have developed a variety of adaptations to grow and/or survive hot/dry conditions, certainly those native to our area have. So if you have begun to grow native plants in your landscape you are one step ahead in finding plants better adapted to our climate including its extremes.

Two of the questions we receive commonly this time of year are 1) how much should we water and 2) can we plant in the heat of the summer. We will take each question separately.

How often native plants in a home landscape should be watered is a good question. After all, we have chosen to go native in order to reduce reliance on irrigation in our landscapes. Most native plants, when planted in an environment that is similar to their natural environment, will need little extra water. With that said, there are some caveats. Plants that have been recently planted need supplemental watering until they set down new roots and become established. Plants that may be growing in conditions that may be a bit outside their natural conditions, say a high elevation plant growing at low elevation, or a wetter site plant growing in a drier site, will also need some supplemental watering during the hottest and driest parts of the summer. So understanding where plants grow within their native range is helpful. A Water Birch planted on a site that is hot and dry in the summer, say on the Rathdrum Prairie will need supplemental watering to look its best through the heat of the summer. In addition even though many natives will survive a hot summer like this one, they will benefit from a few deep waterings during the summer. Water plants early or late in the day so that the maximum amount of water is available and less is lost to evaporation. A layer of organic mulch, such as leaves, bark or pine needles, will help retain soil moisture and reduce heat stress on the plants.

While we don't generally recommend planting during the heat of the summer, it is possible to do so if you take some extra precautions to conserve water. First, plant during the cool of the day, preferably in the early evening, so that the new planted plant will have overnight to adjust to its new environment. Water the area where the plant will be planted thoroughly before planting. Some recommend digging the hole and then filling the hole with water, letting it drain and repeat the same process prior to planting. Make a moat around the plant to keep water around the plant when it is watered after planting. Consider placing mulch around the plant to maintain more even moisture levels. You can even make a temporary shade structure for the plant. Water the plant frequently (daily at first) to maintain adequate soil moisture. Monitor soil moisture around the plant. With some diligence you can plant successfully even during the heat the summer!

Cedar Mountain Perennials

Products and Services

Wildflowers:

Our selection includes over 60 species of local, regional and western native wildflowers.

Shrubs and Trees:

We carry a broad selection of native shrubs and some trees.

Pricing:

We offer retail sales through the Kootenai County, Sandpoint Farmer's Markets and the Six Rivers Market. Volume discounts are available to landscapers and those purchasing in quantity

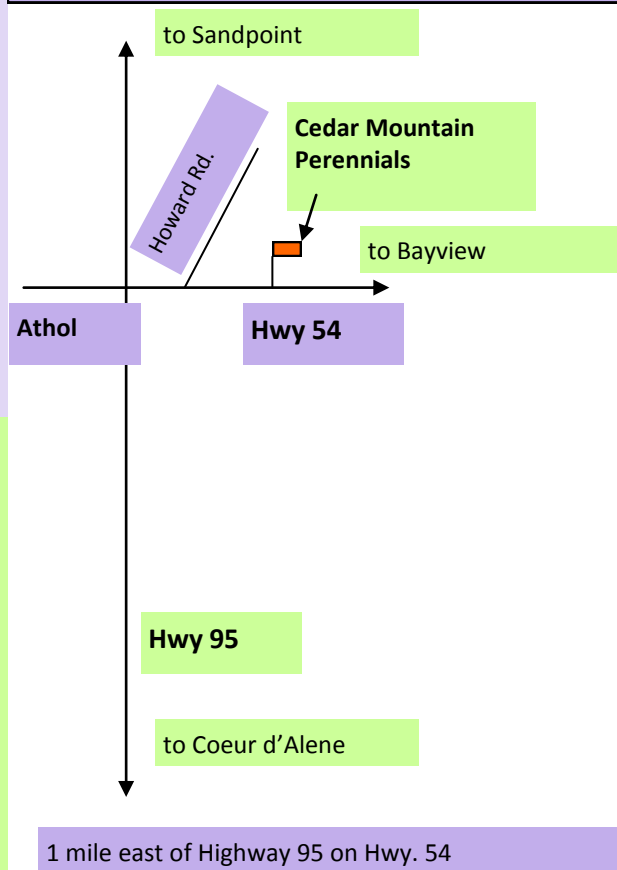
Consulting:

- Site Evaluations
- Plant Identification
- Plant Selection
- Pest and Disease Diagnosis
- Training



Balsamorhiza sagittata:
Arrowleaf Balsamroot

To Find the Nursery:



RETAIL LOCATIONS:

Saturdays:

Kootenai County Farmer's Market
Highway 95 and Prairie Ave.
Hayden, Idaho
Note new time 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM

Wednesdays:

Farmer's Market at Sandpoint
Farmin Park, Sandpoint, Idaho
3:00 to 5:30 PM

Fridays:

At the Nursery
9:00 am to 4:00 pm

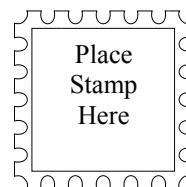
By Appointment:

The Nursery
7875 E Highway 54
Athol, Idaho
Please call first
(208) 683-2387



Erigeron speciosus
Showy Daisy

Cedar Mountain Perennials
7875 E Highway 54
Athol ID 83801



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