



The Perennial Word

July 2016

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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.

Editor's Note:

Welcome to the second issue of our 2016 Newsletter Series: The Perennial Word. Here at Cedar Mountain Perennials we are still busy growing plants and we have a lot coming along that we hope you may enjoy in your own gardens. We included a link to our website where you may find a copy of our latest inventory.

In this issue we are focusing on three topics. Our feature article looks at what the terms annual, biennial and perennial mean? These terms can be confusing to the novice gardener. We will focus on describing what these different types of plants are and how one might use them in a landscape.

The second is our feature on a plant species or group and this issue we will be focusing on grasses. **Many people don't think of grasses when it comes to planting** ornamentals in the landscape but these hardy plants can provide some great visual variety for the eye.

Our final topic in our What's Bugging Me Series is about what to do about that pot bound perennial plant you might have purchased at a nursery or perhaps grown yourself. Ideally we recommend purchasing a plant prior to becoming potbound but if you find yourself with such a plant here are some things you may do to give it a good start when transplanted.

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What is an Annual, Biennial, or Perennial?

By Jill Wilson

Herbaceous plants can be annual, biennial or perennial. These words can be confusing to many so we thought we would take a few minutes to explore what these terms mean and how these different types of plants fit in our landscapes both cultivated and wild.

The origin of the word annual comes from the Latin word for year “annus”. Annuals are flowering plants that complete their life cycle in one year and then die. That means they germinate from seed, grow, flower and set seed in one year. “Bi” means two so biennial refers to a plant that requires two years to complete their lifecycle. Biennials produce vegetative growth in the first year, typically a rosette of foliage. In the second year flower stems are produced, the plants flower, set seed and die. The latin word perennis means lasting through the year so the English word perennial means “lasting or enduring through the years”. Perennial plants live more than 2 years and typically do not die after flowering and setting seed. Some perennial plants are short lived; living 3 or 4 years while others may live many years, even decades. Perennial plants usually produce vegetative growth their first year and will not produce flowers until their second year or even later depending upon the species.

Many cultivated varieties of annuals bloom for long periods of time. Native annuals may or may not have longer bloom times, but they will bloom the same year that they germinate from seed. Meanwhile perennials typically bloom for a shorter time period during a particular part of the growing season. Neither biennials nor perennials bloom the year that they germinate.

Annual plants are adapted to germinate, grow, bloom and set seed to take advantage of favorable conditions or habitats when and where they occur. Desert annuals may only bloom during certain years when enough moisture falls to allow them to complete their life cycles. Their life history strategy is to survive years of drought in seed form, only germinating in years of plentiful moisture. Many plants we consider weeds, as well as those that we consider early seral species are also annuals and are adapted to colonize sites immediately following the disturbance such as clearing or fire. Perennials are adapted to endure both favorable and unfavorable times, such as cold temperatures during winter or seasonal drought. Perennials develop specialized root systems, such as bulbs, fleshy taproots, or extensive fibrous root systems in order to survive when conditions are less favorable for growth. In cold climates perennial herbaceous plants typically die completely back in late fall; remain dormant through the winter, before growing again the following spring.

Annuals, particularly cultivated varieties that provide color for a large portion of the growing season make stunning accents in the landscape where you may want to make a statement with a splash of season long color. Annual plants also bloom and provide color in new gardens planted with perennials if some color is desired in the garden in the first season. Annuals are also ideal for container growing since they do not produce as large a root system as perennial plants do in addition to their longer bloom times. There are a number of native

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FEATURED PLANTS:

Native Grasses for the Landscape

By Bob Wilson

When thinking of landscaping with perennials, few of us think of grasses first if at all. However, grasses can add a diversity of texture and form to the landscape in ways that other perennials can't. Grasses can give a landscape the more natural look of a meadow with clumps of fine foliage and tall seedheads. When the wind blows, grasses bring motion to your landscape.

Grasses are grouped in a couple of different ways. One is whether the grass is a bunchgrass or sod-forming. If you are planting a lawn, you probably want a sod-forming grass which has rhizomes (underground stems) that spread and tie together to form a continuous mat. On the other hand, bunchgrasses do not produce rhizomes and stay where you plant them. This makes them more suitable for planting in flower beds.

Grasses are also grouped as either warm-season or cool-season grasses. Cool-season grasses are more common in our area and will take advantage of spring snowmelt and green up early. They can stay green throughout the summer if kept moist, but when soils get very dry, they can go dormant and turn brown only producing new foliage only with the advent of autumn rains. In contrast warm-season grasses wait until the soil has warmed and are much later to green up. These plants will be more drought- and heat-tolerant and stay greener through the summer. They go dormant in the fall when temperatures turn cold.

There are several grasses we are growing at Cedar Mountain Perennials. When selecting a grass you should consider growing conditions (sunlight, moisture), size of the plant (both size of the foliage and height of the seed stems), as well as foliage color and characters of the seedhead. Some grasses have finer leaf blades than others. Idaho fescue leaves are thread-like, but pine bluegrass leaves are quite a bit broader.



Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*) is a native bunchgrass with very fine foliage. It is similar to blue fescue sold at nurseries except the leaves are much longer which makes the plant look like a small fountain rather than a sea urchin. The foliage stays fairly low (6-12") and the seed heads can reach 2'. It is a very drought-tolerant grass commonly found in pine forests. It can grow in sun or part shade.



Tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia caespitosa*) forms a lush green mound with medium width leaves. It produces airy seed stems that will grow 3' tall. It grows in wetter areas and is not at all drought-tolerant. It will tolerate heavy soils

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What's Bugging Me???

How to Transplant a Pot-bound Perennial

By Jill Wilson

Ever purchased a plant, brought it home and upon removing the plant from its pot found the entire root ball packed with circling roots? The problem is not uncommon. Any plant grown long enough in a container will fill that container. The roots, with nowhere else to grow, will circle around the circumference of the pot. Of course it goes without saying that it is best to purchase younger plants that are not pot-bound. While it is tempting to purchase a plant in bloom and get a head start on adding color to the garden, one is far better off planting a younger, smaller plant with a less massive root system.



That plant will likely outgrow its larger pot-bound cousin within a few weeks. But if you have purchased a pot-bound plant or perhaps grown it yourself, and many of us find ourselves in this situation, this article describes how to handle herbaceous plants that have been in their pots too long.

Pot-bound plants may or may not show above ground symptoms but if very pot-bound they are likely to. They will likely require more water and may have yellow leaves, particularly near the base of the plant. You may find roots growing out from drainage holes in the pot. Some plants may show signs of nutrient deficiencies as the roots grown in this condition are not as effective in taking in nutrients. They may also show stunted growth. The best way to determine if a plant is pot-bound is to remove it gently from its container and look.

Once the plant is out of its container examine the root ball. If the soil falls away from the plant, the plant is not pot-bound. If the soil remains in a ball but just a few roots are seen the plant is not pot-bound. A few circling roots is a sign of being mildly pot-bound. A circling mat of roots is a sign of a very pot-bound plant. If the root ball not only shows a circling mat of roots but is also a solid mass of root material, the plant is severely pot-bound. Severely pot-bound root balls will be very hard, not spongy like they should be.

Before planting or repotting the plant give the plant a good soak. Remember pot-bound plants tend to use more water. Examine the root ball. The goal is break up the circling roots on the sides and the mass of roots on the bottom to encourage new roots to grow out into the surrounding soil. In some cases you may be able to simply break up the roots using your fingers to squeeze and separate the root ball, in other cases you may need to actually cut the roots on the sides as well as cut off the mass of roots on the bottom. Take a knife, clippers

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What is an Annual, Biennial or Perennial?

annual plants; you will often see them featured in wildflower seed mixes since they bloom the year that the seeds germinate. Some that are found in our region that you may recognize are Small Flowered Blue Eyed Mary, Clarkia, and Yellow Owls Clover. Other western regional natives include Rocky Mountain Bee Plant, Plains Coreopsis and Common Sunflower. The downside of using annuals in the landscape is that they must be replanted each year and that is where perennials come in!

Think of perennials as the matrix for your garden. Perennials provide continuity of color and form from one year to the next. Since they have a shorter bloom period; select perennials with different bloom times in order to provide color in the garden through the seasons.



Biennials are not used a lot in the garden but there are some favorites, foxgloves are a common biennial cultivated favorite. Among western native plants Wall Flower (Erysimum) and Scarlet Gilia (Ipomopsis) are biennials. There is no particular place or use for biennials other than if you happen to love a species that is one! Both annuals and perennials have their place in our landscapes, both cultivated and wild. Learn more about each so that you can most effectively utilize them in your home landscape.

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How to Transplant a Pot Bound Perennial

or scissors and cut into the root ball on the side, slicing those circling roots all around the root ball. Do this in several places around the circumference of the plant. Next cut off the bottom of the root ball to remove the mass of roots there. Remove enough roots so you can see the potting soil. Severely pot-bound plants may need some roots removed from the sides as well. Work the root ball with your hands to loosen it up and then



plant or repot it being careful to plant the plant so that the root crown is in the same position as it was in the old pot.

The plant will need some extra attention for a while until new roots develop which means watering more frequently. If planted in the ground adding mulch to the soil surface will also help. The alternative, planting the plant in its pot-bound state is rarely successful but with some extra attention many pot-bound plants can thrive.



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and it can be very useful where there is moving water, like near a downspout or gully, and can help hold the soil with its fibrous root system. It is best in sun to part shade.

Pine bluegrass (*Poa secunda*) is our largest bunchgrass. It has a wider leaf blade than the others though not really coarse, and has a striking blue-green color. The foliage will grow 18" tall and seed stems up to 3-4'. It is moderately drought-tolerant and grows in full sun to light shade.



Pine Bluegrass

Prairie junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*) is most striking when it is in seed, producing an abundance of plume-like seed heads. The foliage is of moderate width and has a slight blue-green cast. Seed heads can reach 2' in height. It is very drought-tolerant and will grow on a wide variety of soils as long as they are not water-logged. It will grow in sun or part shade.



Prairie Junegrass

Little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) is our only warm-season grass and requires warm soil to sprout in the spring and makes it the last to emerge and green up. Its growth starts off rather ordinarily, but continues to grow more interesting as the season progresses. Seed heads will get around 2' tall and are quite fluffy. As the seed heads form, the stems start to take on a reddish hue. Fall color of little bluestem is the best of the bunchgrasses as it turns a rusty orange color. It likes a sunny location on a well-drained soil.



Little Bluestem

If you are looking for something new and interesting to put in your landscape, and who isn't?, consider one of these grasses. They require minimal care and are very long-lived. Most importantly, though, is that they add character to a landscape in ways that other perennials can't.

Check out our latest Inventory!

We have lots of beautiful native plants in stock!

www.cedarmountainperennials.com



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 Nursery. Volume discounts are available to landscapers and those purchasing in quantity.

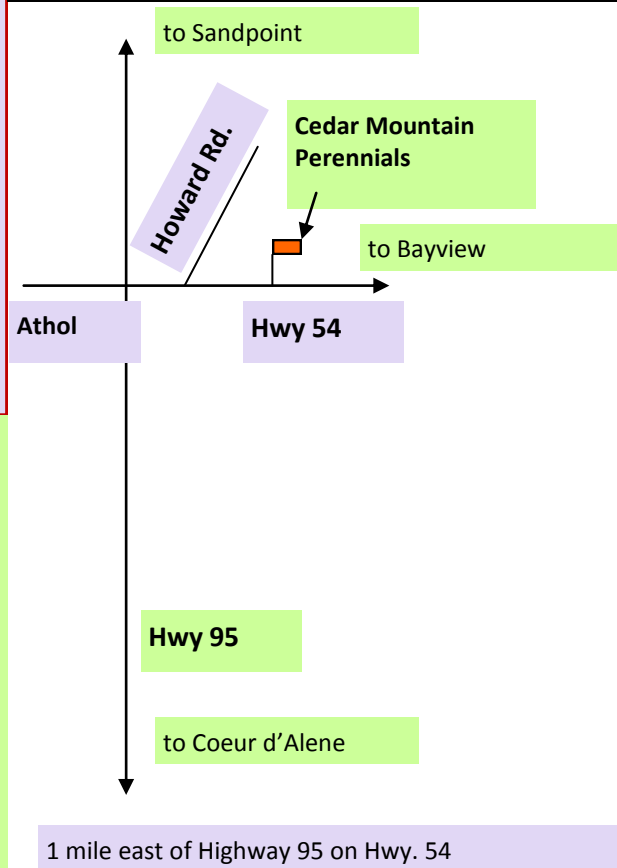
Consulting:

- Site Evaluations
- Plant Identification
- Plant Selection
- Pest and Disease Diagnosis
- Training
- Programs about Native Plants



Balsamorhiza sagittata:
Arrowleaf Balsamroot

To Find the Nursery:



RETAIL LOCATIONS:

Saturdays:

Kootenai County Farmer's Market
Highway 95 and Prairie Ave.
Hayden, Idaho
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

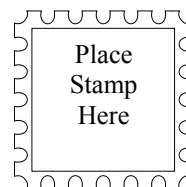
By Appointment:

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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