



# J&L Garden Center

The All Season Gift  
and Garden Center

620 North 500 West Bountiful, Utah 292-0421

The Gardening Newsletter

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## Summer Gardening

Spring gardening is the time for planting. Summer gardening is the time to do all the work needed to keep your plants alive, to keep them looking pretty, and to keep them from being eaten by insects. Fall gardening is the time to enjoy the 'Fruits of your Labors' and to prepare your plants for winter. Winter gardening is time to plan for next year, hoping that Mother Nature is not going to kill the plants you planted the previous year. Gardening is a year-round effort.

## Broadleaf Evergreens

Did you know that **spring leaf drop** is something that can effect some shrubs this spring and summer. Some broad-leaved evergreens, such as holly, rhododendron, and laurels, drop their oldest set of leaves in the spring as new growth begins. A sudden yellowing of the oldest leaves occurs uniformly from top to bottom. The leaves at the branch tips remain green and healthy while the inner leaves turn yellow and fall. Once the yellowed leaves drop off, no further yellowing and leaf drop should occur until next year.

## Narrowleaf Evergreens

Did you know that narrow-leaved evergreens (pine trees, yews, spruce) drop their oldest needles in the fall. The inside needles (oldest needles) often turn yellow or brown in late-summer or fall. This is the normal shedding of the oldest needles. A rather sudden yellowing of needles affects the oldest set of needles on all the branches. Some years this yellowing affect is much more spectacular than in other years, depending on how Mother Nature treated them. The yellowing is uniform from the top to the bottom of the tree. The needles at the tips of the branches stay green, while the needles in the center of the tree turn yellow and drop off. On a windy day, the yellowed needles blow off the tree and litter the ground. This is a normal process, so nothing needs to be done.

## Plants Improve Air Quality

One tree can remove 26 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere annually, equaling 11,000 miles of car emissions. Landscape plants, including shrubs and turf, remove smoke, dust, and other pollutants from the air. One study showed that 1 acre of trees has the ability to remove 13 tons of particles and gases annually.

## Rose Care

We are going to have a special **Rose Care Day** at J&L on Saturday June 3. We will have several members of the Utah Rose Society here to answer any and all of your questions about roses; this will be a great time to try to 'stump the experts'. They will also be here to help you select a few new rose bushes for your yard. J&L will provide several door prizes for the Rosarians to give away, and a portion of all the rose sales on that day will be donated to the Utah Rose Society. Mark this date on your calendar and plan to attend.

Fertilize roses every six to eight weeks from mid-April through mid-August with **Systemic Rose and Flower Care**. This rose fertilizer helps stimulate new blossom development and helps kill unwanted insect pests. Roses need regular fertilizing to keep blossoms developing all summer.

Roses are thirsty plants. Although roses will survive with skimpy watering, they'll bloom their best when their roots are kept moist during the growing season, especially during their blooming season. Do not sprinkle roses. If water gets on the blossoms, the flowers will fade and fall off sooner than if they are left dry.

## Pruning Pines and Topiaries

Many homeowners have dwarf mugho pines that are now six to ten feet tall, instead of the two or three feet tall they should have been. Other homeowners planted a full-size spruce in an area that needed a dwarf variety. Too much water and fertilizer make trees grow faster and larger than they should, so, you may need to help the plants stay smaller by pruning them - while they are still young. Once a juniper, pine, or spruce is too large for an area you may need to remove the entire tree, you usually cannot prune the tree back to a smaller size.

Now is the time to trim and shape your pine trees, spruce trees, and junipers, especially those grown as topiaries. Junipers may be trimmed and shaped all summer without damaging their growth or appearance. Junipers produce new buds and branches all summer. The more often you trim junipers the bushier they stay. Pine and spruce trees are different; they only produce new buds and branches once a year. If you cut off all the buds, or the part of a branch with all the buds, after the new growth is completely finished for the year, the tree may not be able to produce new buds on that branch; you

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may ruin the shape of your tree. You can remove an entire branch or limb any time of the year, if needed, just don't cut the branch tips off after all new growth is completed for the year. Alberta Spruce is the exception to this procedure. Alberta Spruce continue to produce new buds throughout the summer. You can trim them similar to junipers, just be careful not to prune them too severely or to remove all of the new buds.

Once the new growth appears on pines and spruce (new growth on pine trees is commonly referred to as candles) you can remove as much of each candle as needed, to maintain the shape and size of the plant. Try not to remove all of the candles on every branch, but, you can trim as much as needed on part of the plant to help maintain its shape. Remember, you are only trimming the candles, not the older branches, in this manner. Many Christmas tree growers trim pines, fir, and spruce in this manner to keep their trees looking 'Perfect'.

## Summer Lawn Care

Fertilize your lawn every six to eight weeks during the spring, summer, and fall. Try not to fertilize during July. Your lawn should grow slower during the heat of summer. Fertilizer stimulates growth, which is not good for the grass when it is really hot. Too much fertilizer also makes the lawn require extra water to keep it growing.

Don't forget to control the dandelions, clover, and oxalis before the heat of summer arrives. Spray them with **Morgro Weedit II**. You may need to spray some weeds again in 2 weeks to completely kill them. Be sure to mix a spreader-sticker with your weed spray. Many leaves repel water. If the weed killer doesn't stick to the leaf long enough to be absorbed, the chemical will not kill the weed. Oxalis and violets are probably the hardest weeds to kill in the lawn. Two products that are a little stronger than **Weedit II** are **Spurge Power** by the Monterey Chemical Company and **Brush Killer** by the Fertilome Chemical Company. Both of these products are registered to kill these pesky weeds without harming your lawn.

Be careful, all broadleaf weed killers can also kill petunias, roses, grape vines, and many other trees and shrubs in your yard, or in your neighbor's yard. Spray on a calm day, and when the temperature will stay below 85 degrees. Weed killers volatilize (evaporate) when the temperature is too warm and will then drift on to other plants and kill them.

## Mowing Tips:

**Mow your lawn when it is dry; not wet.** Wet grass tends to plug up your lawn mower. Besides the extra mess, mowing while the lawn is wet can create a compaction problem. Wet thatch and soil is easily compacted by your weight and by the weight of the lawn mower.

**Mow in the cool part of the day.** Besides helping to keep you cool, your lawn will recover quicker after being mowed if the soil is cool.

**Mow regularly.** Don't wait until your lawn looks like an alfalfa field to mow it. Letting the lawn grow to an excessive

height and then removing most of the plant creates excessive stress within the plant and root system.

**Mow grass at a longer height** in the heat of summer. Mow your lawn about 1.5" during the spring and fall. Mow your lawn to about 2" or even 2.5" long during the heat of summer. Long grass provides extra shade for the roots system and it helps prevent as much water from evaporating.

**Keep your mower sharp.** A dull blade tends to whip the grass rather than cutting it. A dull brown tinge will appear a few days after mowing if the blade was not sharp.

## Watering Tips

**Water during the cool part of the day;** either morning or evening. The lawn cannot use as much water efficiently during the hot weather, and, water evaporates much quicker during the heat of day. Do not water between 8 am and 6 pm because of the city water restrictions: you might get a ticket!

**Water infrequently.** Try not to water every day, even during the heat of summer. Change how often you water as the temperature changes. You may only need to water once a week in April. You may need to water twice a week in May. You may need to water three times a week in June and July. You may only need to water twice a week in August and September. You may only need to water once a week in October. Watch the weather and change accordingly.

**Water deeply.** Grass roots do not seek for water, they will just grow in the areas that already have water available. Water long enough so water can penetrate 4" or 5" deep into the soil. If the water is just running off the lawn and down the gutter, or into your neighbor's yard, the extra watering time is not benefiting your lawn. You may need to aerate more frequently or water your lawn differently. Try watering half as long but 2 times on the day you normally water. (do not water every day) Once the water starts to run off instead of penetrating into the soil you should stop watering immediately. Water again two or three hours later in the day, so the water can be absorbed.

## Thatch Problems?

Thatch is the organic layer between the soil line and the green blades of grass. Thatch naturally occurs in your lawn due to dead grass and from grass clippings. A small layer of thatch is beneficial. An extreme thatch buildup is detrimental and can cause several different problems including a breeding ground for insects and an excellent harbor for lawn diseases. Too much thatch can also repel water and stop your lawn from growing normally. Measure the layer of thatch in your lawn. If the layer is less than 1/4" thick your lawn is healthy. If the layer is 1/4" to 1/2" thick you need to watch your lawn closely. If the thatch layer is more than 1/2" thick you need to remove some of the thatch.

Traditionally, power raking the lawn has been the way to remove excess thatch. However, the **Natural Guard Company** has packaged an organic product called **Grass Clip-**

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**ping & Thatch Decomposer** that helps remove thatch naturally. This product contains humic acid. Humic acid not only helps remove excessive thatch naturally but it also provides many microorganisms that helps the lawn to grow better and helps to improve the soil structure. Humic acid is an important part of the soil structure that you can apply any time of the year; spring, summer, or fall. This product can also be used in flower and vegetable gardens to help improve the health of the soil. Please stop by and ask for a copy of the fact sheet about this product.

## Summer Fertilizer

Don't give up fertilizing your vegetable and flower gardens during the heat of the summer. They need fertilizer regularly to grow and bloom properly. Fertilize every six to eight weeks with **J&L 16-16-8 Multipurpose Fertilizer**. This fertilizer provides a long lasting fertilizer.

If your flowers need a little extra boost to make them bloom a little better for a special occasion, spray them with **Fertilome Blooming & Rooting Fertilizer**. Spray your flowers at least a week in advance of the special occasion. This fertilizer is fast acting but needs to be re-applied frequently, so, don't rely exclusively on it to fertilize your gardens. Use a combination of both **16-16-8 Fertilizer** and **Fertilome Blooming & Rooting Fertilizer** for best results.

## Fertilizer Lingo

Why do packages of dry fertilizer recommend different application methods? Some say to side dress, others say to band or broadcast. What's the difference and when should I use each technique?

**Side dressing** is applying strips of fertilizer beside rows of plants. Doing this puts the fertilizer right next to the plant so its root system doesn't have to search very far. Use this method along rows of vegetables.

If you **band fertilizer**; you spread fertilizer in a circle around a single plant. This gives you the opportunity to use a special fertilizer for specific plants. For example, you might feed an acid-loving plant, such as a rhododendron, that is mixed in with other non-acid-loving shrubs. You can band each plant with the fertilizer it requires.

**Broadcasting** works best when you want to apply the same fertilizer to a large area - just scatter it around. Use this technique on an established lawn or over your garden before planting it in the spring.

## Epsom Salt - Magnesium Sulphate

Many people ask why they should use it in their garden. What good is Epsom Salt?

First of all, Epsom Salt is good for soaking your tired feet after a long day. But it also has a place in your garden. Epsom salts is made up of magnesium and sulfur. Plants need magnesium for the manufacture of chlorophyll and for the production of fruit and nuts. It also helps strengthen plant

cells and helps with the uptake of other nutrients. Sulfur helps the plant produce vitamins and certain acids and enzymes that influence the flavor and sweetness of many vegetables and fruits. Sulphur also helps lower the pH of the soil.

A yellow leaf with dark-green veins may indicate either an iron deficiency or a magnesium deficiency. A simple way to tell the difference is see how wide the vein is. If the vein looks like it was drawn by a pencil it is an iron deficiency. If however, the vein looks like it was drawn by a crayon it is a magnesium deficiency. Both deficiencies are harmful to the plant and should be treated with the proper nutrients.

A rule of thumb is to apply 1 pound of Epsom salts to 100 square feet of soil. All plants benefit from Epsom salts especially roses, annual flowers, tomatoes, peppers, and most perennial flowers. Give your plants some Epsom Salt twice a year; once in April and once in August.

## Rediscover Beets

When you were a kid, did you ever cunningly "hide" the fresh, canned, or pickled beets on your plate while your parents weren't looking? Me, too. Naturally, I then offered to clear the dinner table and no one was the wiser.

Your mother probably told you that beets were good for you - they're loaded with vitamin C, iron, potassium, folic acid and fiber. But what she may not have conveyed is that they also taste good. The flavor of home grown beets is fresh and fantastic. If you haven't tried these delicious vegetables as an adult, try growing your own, I bet you'll feel different about them.

Described as "sweet jewels from the earth," beets come in many hues, from ruby red to glimmering gold to pearly white - even striped. The entire beet is sweet and delicious; from the tender root to its green or red top.

All varieties can be used for both roots and tops, but if beet greens are what you crave, then grow varieties that produce tall tops. Beet greens can make a spectacular companion in an ornamental flower garden. Try growing some green-leaved and red-veined varieties together in the flower garden.

If you've had good luck with carrots, chances are, beets will be easy for you. The secret is loose, rich soil. If you're lucky enough to have a loose soil texture already, you probably won't have to go to the trouble of building raised beds or amending the soil. The faster beets grow, the better their flavor and texture will be. Work plenty of rich compost or well-aged manure into the soil before you plant. This will provide nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium for the roots, so they'll hit the ground running. *Be* careful not to use *fresh* manure - it can cause beets to grow rough, hairy side shoots.

You may be in for a bit of a surprise the first time you see a beet seed. Looking more like a mini asteroid or tiny, golden-brown nugget, it's actually a fruit cluster containing several embryos. Each cluster produces three to five seedlings. The seed clusters should remain intact to protect the embryos, so don't break them apart, just thin them after they grow.

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In spring, once the soil has warmed to 50 degrees, sow seeds directly in the garden about ½ inch deep and 1 to 2 inches apart. Sow every two to three weeks for a continual supply of greens and small, tender beets. You can also plant them in the fall, at least six weeks before heavy frosts are expected.

Beets are a shallow-rooted vegetable, actually forming their roots on the soil surface. All it takes is one hot day to dry the soil enough to kill a tender seedling. That's why the seed bed must be kept uniformly moist until seedlings emerge. Once seedlings are 4 inches tall, carefully thin them to 4 inches apart. Use the thinnings, both leaves and immature beets, in the kitchen. Skip thinning altogether if beet greens are your primary passion - the greens don't need as much room as the roots do.

Water is a key factor to great-tasting beets. Keep the soil evenly moist all summer; that doesn't mean they need to be kept constantly wet, just evenly moist. Depending on the variety, beets are ready for harvesting 45 to 60 days after sowing. Harvest beets while they're young to enjoy them at their tender best. That's about the size of a golf ball or an apricot. Just be sure to pull them before they reach the size of a baseball or an orange or they may get tough.

To store your beets, cut the tops off about an inch above the root and store the roots in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator or in a root cellar. They can keep up to six months if they're kept moist and very cool (but not freezing).

Beet greens are quite versatile and can be used the same as spinach or Swiss chard. Tender greens are delightful mixed into salads, tossed in stir fries or lightly steamed. Mature greens are ideal slow-cooked in soups and stews.

Lightly steam, shred and toss into salads and slaws or slice and saute' tender beets with butter and garlic. Larger roots are excellent when wrapped in foil and baked. And there's nothing like roasting to bring out the delicate, earthy flavor that is so characteristic of beets. Now that you know how to grow and cook your own beets, I bet getting your family to eat them won't be difficult at all.

## Root Weevil or Leaf Cutter Bee?

Many people see damage from the leaf cutter bee and become panicked. Leaf cutter bees are beneficial insects. The leaf cutter bee is one of the most important pollinating insect in this area. It is not really a bee and does not sting people. Their damage will not harm the trees or shrubs in any way. Leaf cutter bees eat large semi-circle holes in the leaves of roses, redbud trees, and a few other plants. They eat the leaves to build nests. The rest of the time they eat pollen.

Root weevil on the other hand are devastating insects that kill many trees and shrubs. Lilacs, privet, strawberries and roses are just a few of the plants affected by root weevil. Root weevil eat very small semi-circle holes in the edges of the leaves. Spray **Orthene** right at dark, on all infested plants. You must spray every two to three weeks, from late May through August to prevent root weevil damage. Do not use

**Orthene** on edible plants. **Lilly Miller Pestkill Dust** is an alternative to spraying. Apply this dust regularly every week or two, especially if water washes it off the plants.

Another possible control for root weevil is to apply beneficial nematodes. **Beneficial Nematodes** are tiny insects that feed on soil dwelling insects. They may take a while to reduce the root weevil population, you may not see any results the first year, but they give good long term results. Beneficial nematodes may be used in vegetable gardens and in all other gardens in the yard. Beneficial nematodes do not always survive through the winter so you may need to re-apply them every two or three years.

## Insect Stings

If you have ever disturbed a hornet's nest or stumbled onto a beehive, you may already know how important it is to learn what to do for an insect sting. If not, here's what you should know.

The most common stinging insects are honeybees, bumblebees, hornets, wasps, and yellow jackets. If you are stung by one of these, you will feel pain and see swelling and redness around the site of the sting. The area may also itch and burn. These symptoms can last from 48 to 72 hours. Following a few simple steps right away will help relieve your discomfort.

First, check to see whether there is a stinger in the wound. (Only honeybees leave a stinger behind.) If there is, remove it by gently scraping the skin with a clean fingernail. Do not try to grasp the stinger or squeeze it out. This may pump more venom into the area. Next, wash the area, and apply a cold compress to keep the venom from spreading. To help relieve pain and itching, apply calamine lotion, baking soda mixed with water, a corticosteroid cream, or take an antihistamine or a pain reliever.

Approximately one person in 200 is allergic to insect venom. Those who are allergic are at risk for serious medical problems, or even death, if stung. If you, or someone you know, displays any of the following symptoms after being stung by an insect, get emergency treatment immediately: coughing or wheezing; difficulty breathing; hives; nausea or vomiting; dizziness or weakness; numbness or tingling.

If you know that you are allergic, talk with your doctor about the precautions you should take and about what to do if you are stung. You may need to carry a special first aid kit and learn to give yourself an adrenaline injection.

## Vacation Preparation

If you take a few steps to prepare your plants, hanging baskets and gardens before you leave on your vacation, you can have a nice looking yard when you get home. The best way to take care of your yard while you are gone is to have a friend check and water your plants regularly. Since this is not always practical preventative steps can be beneficial.

1. Move planters into shady areas.
2. Stop fertilizing plants two or three weeks before you leave so the plants will not be growing fast; slow growing plants require less water than fast growing plants.

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3. Apply a layer of mulch to the gardens to help preserve water.

4. Prune some of the leaves and stems to reduce the amount of water the plant will need.

5. Water thoroughly as soon as your return. Do not fertilize plants for a few days after you return. With a little care and planning your yard will look as nice when you get home as it did when you left.

## Gardenias

**Q.** Every year I buy gardenias in pots for my patio. A few flowers open, but most of the buds drop off. What am I doing wrong?

**A.** Rapid changes in temperature and low humidity can cause buds to drop. For buds to form, gardenias require temperatures around 70 degrees during the day and above 60 degrees during the night. Buds will drop if the temperatures get too high or too low.

Gardenias like both soil moisture and humidity. Misting their leaves can cause fungus problems so, instead of misting, set the container on a tray of gravel and water to raise the humidity. Keep the pot from sitting directly in water or the roots may begin to rot. Keep the soil moist but do not keep the soil wet. Use a moisture meter as a guide to keeping the soil moist.

Indoors, potted gardenias need full sun, but outside, part shade is best - especially during the hottest part of the day.

## Sucker-Stopper

Sucker-Stopper is hormone made from the plant growth regulator NAA (naphthaleneacetate). This product is widely used in commercial agriculture to prevent suckers and as a thinning agent on fruit trees.

Sucker-Stopper is used to prevent suckers and water sprouts on apples, pears, willows, maples, non-bearing citrus and woody ornamental plants. Unfortunately quaking aspen is not specifically listed on the label but the label does indicate it is effective on many woody ornamental trees and shrubs. It is worth a try if aspen suckers are a major problem in certain areas of the yard; just don't plan on this product stopping all your aspen suckers!

Many trees produce suckers every spring. Even though you cut them back, the suckers will continue to come back all summer long, which can be very annoying. Also, after pruning, many trees will put out suckers around the pruning wound. These are very hard to keep under control. One application of Sucker-Stopper after pruning will prevent this. Thoroughly cover the primary wound or where the existing sprouts have been removed. Be sure to treat before new growth suckers are 10 inches in length. The earlier you treat, the better. Control should last about 3 months.

On bearing trees (apples, pears), do not apply during bloom or fruit set because fruit set reduction may occur. On woody ornamentals, this is not a problem but do not

apply the spray to buds or foliage or injury may occur. Simply apply to the area around the primary wound or to the root suckering area.

## Chemical Update

Many new synthetic chemicals are now available to start replacing the older types of chemicals. The **Bonide** company has a new product for use on fruit trees that contains permethrin, an organic chemical. **Eight Insect Control** is labeled for use on both Fruits and Vegetables, along with many other ornamental trees and shrubs. This product kills insects quickly and may last up to four weeks for certain types of insects, it has even provided excellent control of boxelder bugs. **Eight Insect Control** is also available in a granular form for use on lawn insects.

**Be Careful** this product is still a poison and will kill animals and people just as quickly as the other older types of chemicals. The big advantage of these new types of chemicals is they do not last as long and will not harm the environment as much as the older types.

Unfortunately **Eight Insect Control** is not labeled for use on Cherry trees and can only be sprayed three times a year on Apple and Pear trees. You will still have to use either Diazinon or Malathion to control the Cherry Fruit Fly and the Apple Coddling moth, but the chemical industry is changing.

**Neem Oil** is another option for an organic way to control many insects and diseases. The **Greenlight Company** packages this product as **Rose Defense** and **Fruit and Vegetable Insect Control**. We have had mixed reports of the effectiveness of Neem Oil. Some say it works great and others have not had much success, but it does seem to have good potential.

Several other new chemicals are available including **Bonide Garden Dust**, **Bonide Rose Dust**, and **Bonide Remedy Disease Control**.

**Dursban** is still the chemical of choice for controlling peach tree borer this year. Dursban will not be available after December 1 of 2001. We are not sure what product we will recommend to control peach tree borer next year.

## Stumped?

What can I do with a stump from an old maple tree in our back yard? You can use either a chemical or an organic method to get rid of the stump.

Cut the stump as close to the ground as possible. Drill holes in it with an electric drill and push it in as deep as the bit will go. You can use any size or type of bit: the bigger the better. You can also make cuts into the stump's surface with an axe or saw - in other words, rough up the surface.

**Organic Method:** Mix soil & compost made with tree leaves. Leaf compost usually contains microscopic wood-digesting organisms that don't normally live in regular garden soil. Mix in a cup or two of blood meal or some other

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'high nitrogen' fertilizer. The blood meal, or nitrogen, feeds the micro-organisms that will decompose the stump. Cover the entire stump with the soil mix, working it down into the holes. Depending on the hardness of the wood and the size of the stump, it should rot away in a year or two (or four or five).

**Chemical Method:** Mix Hi-Yield Stump remover with hot water. Pour the solution down the holes. This mixture chemically burns the stump so bacteria can decompose the stump more quickly. Depending on the hardness of the wood and the size of the stump, it should rot away in a year or two.

However, if the stump is in a good spot, you might want to use it as a garden feature as it slowly rots away. Hollow stumps make good rustic planters. Fill the cavity with soil and plant some of your favorite annuals. The soil inside the stump will help make the stump decay faster.

Or, instead of cutting it down to the ground, turn the stump into a garden pedestal. A stump makes a great base for a sundial, birdbath or other garden ornament. Depending on the height and girth, you could even use it as a garden bench.

## Say, what type of mud is that?

Good gardeners recognize that soil is actually made up of a variety of materials, defined according to their size: Sand, Silt, Clay. Sand particles are the largest of the three types of soil particles. When mixed with water, sand particles settle out of the suspension first. Silt particles come next and are medium sized. Clay particles are the smallest. Sand provides the best drainage in a garden but holds the least amount of water and minerals. Clay holds the most water but often ties up minerals so plants cannot use them. Silty soils share some characteristics of both sand and clay. A combination of all three of these soil particles make the best mud.

## Hardy Ferns

Ferns are valuable garden plants of great dependability and beauty. Their leaves, known as fronds, can be lacy or leathery, plain green or variegated. Ferns can provide a long season of interest. Ferns do not flower but their foliage is extremely pleasing in the shade gardens. Ferns offer trouble free elegance, rarely suffering from pests and diseases. Naturally occurring ferns inhabit the cool, shady woodland areas, in the protection naturally provided by trees.

Ferns require moist, humus rich soil. Roto till four to six inches of **well-rotted manure** or **soil pep** into the entire garden before planting. The mulch helps to increase the moisture holding ability of the soil and helps to increase the soil acidity. Most ferns do not like hot temperatures or dry winds. Plant ferns in cool, shady areas that are somewhat protected from hot winds.

Ferns grow well on the north or east side of houses, fences, or sheds. Ferns also grow well under trees and shrubs, if properly planted and cared for. The tree's roots may rob nutrients and water from the fern's roots. You may have to water and fertilize your ferns more often in these areas than in other flower gardens, to have them flourish. Mulch your ferns once

a year to improve the soil, to keep the roots cool, and to help the soil retain moisture.

Ferns do not like to be moved or transplanted, so plan and prepare your gardens before planting them. Most ferns do not grow well the first year planted. Don't be discouraged if your fern loses most, or all, of its fronds the first summer. Keep your ferns moist, not wet, and they'll look great next spring. Ferns look best if they are trimmed and groomed occasionally. Remove any damaged or dead fronds close to the ground. Trim ferns lightly all summer if needed. Don't trim ferns in the fall or winter; wait until the new growth appears in the spring to remove any winter injured fronds. The older fronds protect new buds during the winter.

Ferns, as a rule, need very little fertilizer: just make sure the soil is very rich in humus. Do not use fresh manure as a fertilizer, it may be too strong and may burn the plants. Apply a little slow release fertilizer, such as **bone meal** or **blood meal**, early each spring. An occasional application of **Miracid** fertilizer during the summer will help acidify the soil and give your fern a light feeding. Never apply any fertilizer directly to the fronds, the fertilizer will turn them brown.

There are many varieties of hardy ferns to choose from. Many of the native species that grow in our mountains are not available to buy, but some of the hardy species should grow in your yard, if they are planted in just the "right spot". Choose one, two or more varieties to add color, variety and interest to your flower gardens.

## Where does fragrance come from?

Fragrance in flowers is nature's way of encouraging pollination. Just as fragrance draws people to take a deeper whiff, it lures insects to blossoms hidden by leaves and other plants. Some flowers are fragrant only at night and attract only night-flying pollinators, like moths, while others are more fragrant during the day and attract day flying insects, like bees and butterflies. Still other flowers perfume the air both day and night, attracting both day and night insects.

The fragrance itself comes from essential oils called attars that vaporize easily and infuse the air with their scents. They are present in different combinations in different plants, but often they're markedly similar; which is why there are some Irises that smell like grapes.

## Flower Types

When it comes to reproduction, the birds and the bees certainly have a less complicated time of it than plants do. Did you know that whether or not a plant will bear fruit or seeds is an incredibly complex process, tied to the sex of the plant? That's why some plants need a similar type of plant growing near them in order to produce desirable fruit. For example, some plants produce only male or female flowers; to produce seeds, both male and female flowers are needed.

The following terms may help you understand some of the intricate aspects of plant reproduction.

**Perfect flowers**-These flowers have both male and fe-

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# J&L's Coupon of the Month

**Free**

**One Miniature  
Rose in a**

**2" Pot.**

*Your Choice of  
Color and Variety.*



**Bonus Buy**

Buy More Miniature Roses  
in 2" pots for only

**\$ .99 each**

Buy More Miniature Roses  
in 4" pots for only

**\$ 2.99 each**

*Coupon Expires June 30, 2001 Limited to supply in stock.*

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male reproductive organs, meaning they can produce both pollen and seeds. The male organs, known as stamens, produce pollen. The female organs, known as pistils, contain ovaries that will eventually hold seeds if the flower is pollinated. A perfect flower can often pollinate itself if the pollen from the stamen falls onto the pistil or is brushed there by a visiting bee or some other insect. Most common flowers, including African violets, roses, daffodils, potatoes, strawberries, and pears produce perfect flowers.

**Imperfect flowers** Sometimes a flower contains only male or female organs, so we call that a male or female flower. Since these flowers lack the full set of parts, they are considered "imperfect," and as such, cannot be self-pollinating. A bee or other insect must travel from a male flower to a separate, female flower either elsewhere on that same plant or on a nearby plant in order for there to be seeds or fruits. Plants with imperfect flowers include squash, walnut, apples, cherries, birch, and many begonias.

**Polygamous** Some plants can have both perfect and imperfect flowers at the same time. One flower may have both male and female parts, while another flower on the same plant has only male or female parts. These plants can produce their own fruits, but they usually produce more fruits if there is also a similar plant growing nearby to act as a pollinator. (Bees and other insects transfer the pollen from one plant to another on their body.) Some maples and smokebush are polygamous.

**Dioecious** To add another level of complexity to the confusing business of plant sex, some plants themselves are either female or male in that they have only male or female flowers. These are the plants that must be planted in pairs or other multiples containing at least one male and one female in order to produce fruit or seeds. If you don't want your plant to produce seeds or fruit, look for male plants.

Dioecious plants include many hollies, ginkgo, asparagus, and willows. For many types of holly to produce their fruits,

pollinator male plants such as 'Blue Boy' or 'Blue Prince' must be planted near the female plants. For Asparagus plants to produce seed 'Jersey Knight' must be planted nearby. Because they act as pollinators, these male plants cannot bear their own fruits.

Knowing the sex of some plants is handy in other ways: Many gardeners and landscapers avoid planting female ginkgo trees, because the fruits emits a bad smell.

## Nice Trees for the Yard

**Japanese maples** are excellent trees for small spaces and for center pieces in a garden. Many varieties of Japanese maples are available. Some have green leaves while others have red leaves. With the proper care, Japanese maples are one of the best small trees for the yard. All Japanese maples prefer moist, well drained soil. They also like an acid soil - use plenty of peatmoss when you first plant them. Japanese maples are very cold hardy, they have their biggest struggle during hot, dry summers especially the first summer. All Japanese maples will grow in full sun or partial shade, even the laceleaf varieties, if they are given the proper care and mother nature cooperates the first year.

**Greenleaf Japanese Maple (Acer palmatum)** This variety is the hardiest of all the Japanese maples. It will tolerate the hot sun and winds, after the first summer. This variety will grow 12 to 20 feet tall. It may be pruned as needed to maintain both the size and shape you desire. The leaves turn scarlet red in the fall.

**Ribbonleaf Japanese Maple (Acer palmatum Atropurpurea)** This variety grows 8 to 15 feet tall and is very colorful. The leaves start out red in the spring, July the leaves turn a bronze-green color, and the leaves turn bright red in the fall just before they drop. This tree will tolerate quite a bit of sun and heat but the leaves turn green quicker in the heat. The cooler the summer is and the more acid the soil is determines how long the leaves will stay red in the summer.

**Bloodgood Japanese Maple (Acer palmatum Atropur-**

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# The Gardening Newsletter

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**purea 'Bloodgood')** This variety grows 8 to 12 feet tall but may be pruned as needed. The leaves are red in the spring and hold their red color the best of all the Japanese maples. The leaves may turn green when the tree is first planted or if the tree is under stress from extreme heat or alkaline soil. Apply a little sulphur around the tree each spring and fertilize regularly with **Miracid Fertilizer** to help keep the leaves red. Once the leaves turn green in the summer they will stay green until fall, when they turn red just before they drop off the tree.

### **Laceleaf Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum dissectum*)**

This variety is usually grown as a shrub. It has a weeping habit with delicate lacy leaves. Most laceleaf maples are three to six feet tall but you can train them to grow ten to twelve feet tall if you want to. They are available with green leaves or red leaves. The red leaf varieties need an acid soil with cool temperatures to stay red. Newly planted trees may turn green from stress for the first few years. Make sure to apply sulphur early each spring and fertilize with **Miracid** regularly to help keep the leaves red.

These are just a few of the more popular varieties of the Japanese maples. Many other varieties are available, each having its own unique quality: **Coral Bark, Burgundy Lace, Ohio Beni, Lion's Head, Emperor I, and Butterfly Maple**, just to name a few.

## Poisonous Plants?

There is no set manner by which plants poison people or animals. Most plants must be ingested to become toxic, while others can be just be touched to cause a skin reaction. Toxicity

often depends on the part of the plant eaten, or the amount of the plant ingested. For example, the leaves of a cherry tree are "moderately toxic" but the fruit is "non-toxic". The leaves of rhubarb are "very toxic" but the stems are "non toxic". All parts of the sunflower plants are on the "slightly toxic" plant list. If you eat too many sunflower seeds you will have a toxic reaction (you may get sick). Since sunflowers are a large part of our snack food diet many people are surprised. Sunflower seeds are a good example of the amount of a plant needed to be ingested to cause a toxic reaction. Did you know that the shells from sunflower seeds dropping from a bird feeder may kill the grass below?

Just because a plant produces a poisonous berry or leaf should not automatically exclude it from being used in your home landscape. Most plants are perfectly safe for children. However, there are many plants that contain poisonous substances that warrant precaution. Adults should learn their landscapes and distinguish those plants that are potentially dangerous. A plant dangerous to one family (or family member) may not be dangerous to another, depending on the age of the person and the location of the poisonous part. For example, the poisonous berries of "Lily of the Valley" are more hazardous to a small toddler than to a ten-year-old because the berries are at ground level where the toddler may see them.

The best way to protect small children from plant poisoning is to teach them not to pick or eat any plant parts without adult supervision: until they are old enough to be positive that the plant is safe to eat. Teach your children that just because an animal eats a particular plant or berry it does not mean that a human can eat the same plant or berry.