



Notes from
HORNBAKER GARDENS

"The Princeton Perennial People"
22937 1140 N. Ave., Princeton, Illinois 61356

NEWSLETTER No. 22

(815) 659-3282

MAY 2003

hornbakergardens.com.

Hours

We are open Monday through Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. We are closed on Sundays. We will be open on Memorial Day, Monday, May 26, which should be a great day for the irises.

Open House

Our sixteenth annual Open House and Hosta Walk will be held on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, June 12, 13, and 14. Refreshments will be served, and drawings for prizes will be held each day. We will also have a selection of specially priced plants.

The Rocks Must Roll

If you have been here lately, you have noticed the large rocks that line the parking area. Two or three years ago, we bought in a large truckload of these fractured boulders in order to use some of them in a pond that we built for a customer. Even though we only needed a portion of the truckload for the pond, we bought a whole load in order to spread the cost of hauling it in over several tons, rather than over a few tons. We priced the individual rocks based on their weight, and have been selling them ever since.

Now we would like to clean up the looks of the parking lot and move these rocks out of there. So here is your chance to buy these colorful boulders at very reasonable prices. All of the rocks are now on sale for half price. If you want several rocks, talk to Rich, Kathy or Mike. They are ready to wheel and deal.

Peak Iris Bloom

If anything, the iris season is just a bit later than normal due to the lack of any serious heat so far this spring. We anticipate that the peak of the season will span the last two weekends in May, and run into June for several days. The short, early bloomers have been blooming since May 5, and many of the Border Bearded and Intermediate Bearded varieties were starting to bloom by May 12. The Tall Bearded varieties can't be too far behind.

For those of you who have never purchased irises from us, a short explanation

of the procedure might be appropriate. We take orders for the irises here in the spring. Customers walk through the field during bloom time and select the varieties they wish to order. The orders are placed and paid for now, and we dig the orders in July, usually shortly after July 4. We can ship the iris rhizomes to you, or you can pick them up. Most of our customers pick up their orders in July so that they can see the daylily field blooming at that time.

Deciduous Conifers For The Midwest

Some of the most interesting conifers are deciduous, meaning that they drop their needles in the fall, and grow a new set of needles the following spring. The soft needles of these trees give them a ferny or feathery texture and appearance. Some are so soft in appearance that you just want to hug them. The main disadvantage of planting one of these trees is that you will have to contend with a neighbor telling you next winter that it looks as if your "pine" tree has died. Treat this as an opportunity to educate him. You will sound very intelligent just saying the words "deciduous conifer".

Metasequoia, or Dawn Redwood, is a cousin of the huge Sequoia trees of the Northwest. It grows tall and pyramidal, with interesting exfoliating bark. (If you use the term "exfoliating bark" shortly after saying "deciduous conifer", your neighbor will know that you are a tree genius.) The needles turn orange before dropping in the fall.

Taxodium, or Bald Cypress, is a truly majestic tree, growing 50 to 70 feet tall, with a spread of 20 to 30 feet. Although it is ideal near water, where its "knees" grow up out of the water, it is also a fine street tree. It has good, orange fall color, and is hardy to Zone 4.

Larix, or Larch trees, are the ones that you will really want to hug. The new spring growth is so soft that is simply begs to be touched. We carry several varieties. 'Conica' has the standard pyramidal form. 'Pendula' is a weeping larch that can be staked to any height, and allowed to weep from there. 'Varied Directions' is a fantastic, small, grafted weeper that makes a small, elegant tree. 'Diana' is a lovely, narrow tree with contorted branches held horizontally. All of

continued on back



Rich beside a 10-year-old Dawn Redwood.

Sale On Hosta Clumps Continues

Several people have called recently, concerned that the supply of hosta clumps might be running out, or that the sale might end. The sale will remain in effect all season. And, although the clump sale has been very popular, and wagon loads of clumps go out of here every day, you can be assured that we started with a lot of clumps. Next to this article is a picture of the Hosta Clump House, taken on the morning of May 13. We still have some clumps for you.



Hosta Clumps

Conifers

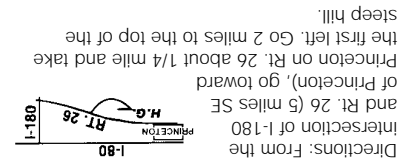
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the Larches need lots of summer moisture. Watering is especially important on newly planted trees. The foliage turns yellow in the fall. Larches are hardy to Zone 3.

"Refreshing" The Website

We have had a few calls from customers who insist that our website (www.hornbakergardens.com) still says that we are open on Sundays. What we have learned is that, with some computers, it is important to hit the "refresh" button occasionally when you go to sites that you have visited before. Your computer may be remembering the way the site was the

last time that you visited, and puts up an image of the way the site was, rather than the way the site is now. So if changes have been made, you may not be seeing those changes. Just hit the "refresh" button when you get to sites that you visit often to make sure that you are seeing the latest changes.



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