

Horticultural News and Research Important to American Gardeners

LADY'S MANTLE ON TRIAL

Plant Evaluation Manager Richard G. Hawke and his staff at the Chicago Botanic Garden (CBG) recently completed a six-year evaluation of various species of lady's mantle (*Alchemilla* spp.) and found them to be all around "good garden plants" for



Alchemilla mollis, above, and its cultivars ranked high in the six-year evaluation.

the Midwest. With attractive, scalloped foliage and sprays of greenish-yellow flowers, they have the added virtues of being "cold hardy and free of diseases and pests."

The trial included 18 taxa of commercially available lady's mantle. Rated for "floral effectiveness, habit quality, and plant health," the top performers were: *A. alpina*, *A. bulgarica*, *A. epipsala*, *A. erythropoda*, *A. glabelleta*, *A. vulgaris*, and *A. mollis* and cultivars. Most of these are hardy to at least USDA Zone 4, but do not fare well in AHS Heat Zones higher than 7.

The CBG reports results of its plant trials in a publication called "Plant Evaluation Notes." It may be ordered for \$3 per issue from the Plant Evaluation Program, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, IL 60022. Evaluation information may also be viewed at www.eplants.org.

THE OAKS HAVE IT

"The oak was the popular choice of the American people," states National Arbor Day Foundation President John Rosenow, whose organization conducted an online survey in 2001 to choose a national tree. A frontrunner throughout the voting, the oak received about 20,000 more votes than second place redwood and 18 other native trees, including the dogwood, maple, pine, and tulip tree.



The live oak is the state tree of Georgia.

Last November, Congress and President George W. Bush confirmed the people's choice when they passed a bill naming "the oak," which generically covers some 600 species, the official national tree. Several species, including the white oak (*Quercus alba*) and the live oak (*Q. virginiana*), are already state trees.

JUMP IN, THE WATER GARDEN IS FINE

On July 9 and 10, the North American Water Garden Society (NAWGS) will hold its first ever North American Pond

PEOPLE and PLACES in the NEWS



New England Wild Flower Society Names New Executive Director

Gwen Stauffer has been named the new executive director of the New England Wild Flower Society, headquartered in Framingham, Massachusetts. Stauffer's experience includes seven years at Hillwood Museum and Gardens in Washington, D.C., and, most recently, she was executive director of gardens at Callaway Gardens in Georgia. In her new position, she will lead the nation's oldest plant conservation institution in undertakings ranging from the society's new plant nursery in Whately, Massachusetts, the publication of the next *Flora of New England*, and the country's largest public native plant education program.

New Director at New York Botanical Garden

In March, Kim E. Tripp became the New York Botanical Garden's new director. Previously, Tripp was the NYBG's senior vice president for Horticulture and Living Collections. Her public garden career has also included posts at North Carolina State University's JC Raulston Arboretum in Raleigh, North Carolina, the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, and the Botanic Garden of Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. "With her strong background as a researcher and horticulturist, a keen interest in education, and a distinguished career," says NYBG President and CEO Gregory Long, "Dr. Tripp is a natural to take this new position at our 113-year-old institution." 🌿

Tour of private water gardens around the country and Canada. NAWGS chapters as well as other garden clubs, individuals, and water garden professionals will lead more than 50 tours through thousands of pond gardens of all sizes.

“Our goal is to educate people and promote the hobby of water gardening,” says NAWGS President Ellen Beaulieu, “so this event is open to anyone from koi enthusiasts to people passionate about lilies and lotuses, and a whole gamut in between. NAWGS embraces all of it.”



The North American Pond Tour includes thousands of water gardens.

To learn more about the North American Pond Tour, visit the NAWGS Web site (www.nawgs.com), where you may search for pond tours by state to find events in your area.

STAY-AT-HOME BARBERRIES

Japanese barberries (*Berberis thunbergii*) were first introduced to the United States by seeds sent from Russia to the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, in 1875. Since that time, they have become a widely planted and popular ornamental shrub.

Unfortunately, Japanese barberries produce copious quantities of seed, enabling them to spread into natural areas so prodigiously that the Plant Conservation Alliance reports they are considered invasive in 20 states.

Recently, Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, announced results of a seven-year barberry trial by Tomasz Anisko, curator of plants, and Sarah Lovinger, curatorial intern. In the process of evaluating a number of attributes, Anisko and Lovinger discovered that

the numbers of seeds produced varied by species and cultivar. Of 41 barberries tested, three produced no seeds and, the researchers concluded, “pose minimal risk of becoming invasive by seed dispersal.” These are: *B. thunbergii* ‘Concorde’, *B. verruculosa*, and *B. wilsoniae* var. *ghutzunica*. In addition, three cultivars of *Berberis thunbergii* produced very small numbers of seeds: ‘Bonanza Gold’, ‘Golden Nugget’, and ‘Kobold’.

SCOUTING FOR PLANTS

Gardeners searching for where to buy particular plants now have a new resource: Dave’s Garden (www.davesgarden.com). This popular Web site, launched in 2000 as a forum for gardeners to “share their triumphs and dilemmas in their gardens and their lives,” is offering a new service called PlantScout, an online search engine for plant, seed, and bulb sources.

PlantScout combines information from the Web site’s Garden Watchdog area, where gardeners post their experiences with plant companies, with information about plant care and vendors. PlantScout

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WINNING WINTERBERRY

This year, the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers chose as its top cut flower not a flower at all, but the fruit-laden stem of a deciduous native shrub and member of the holly tribe, winterberry, *Ilex verticillata* 'Winter Red'. This cultivar—introduced in 1977 by R.C. Simpson of Simpson Nursery in Vincennes, Indiana—will grow six to nine feet in height with a spread of eight feet. The berries begin to take on brilliant color as early as June. By fall, they are resplendent, contrasting with the glimmering bronze of this plant's fall foliage color.

Though winterberry drops its foliage, the colorful fruit persists all winter long because it is one of the last to be taken by birds. Like other hollies, winterberry is dioecious. 'Winter Red' is a female selection that needs a male winterberry for pollination. 'Southern Gentleman' is one male cultivar that produces pollen at the



The berry-loaded branches of 'Winter Red' winterberry are superior for arrangements.


right time to pollinate 'Winter Red' to ensure fruit formation.

NEMATODE NEMESIS

Root-knot nematodes (*Meloidogyne* spp.) plague a wide variety of plants, including many garden annuals, perennials, and vegetables. Plants infected with these microscopic pests may appear to have nutrient deficiencies and stunted growth as well as small, round swellings on their roots. Enter

'Charleston Belle', which is not only a tasty, heat-tolerant bell pepper, but new research indicates that it also helps other plants to resist root-knot nematodes.

Judy A. Thies, a research plant pathologist at the USDA Agricultural Research Service's Vegetable Laboratory in Charleston, South Carolina, evaluated the use of 'Charleston Belle' to reduce root-knot nematode damage to cucumbers and squashes and found that yields were better when these crops were planted after the pepper. "I think planting 'Charleston Belle' to help manage root-knot nematodes in subsequent susceptible vegetable crops would be useful to home gardeners," says Thies.

While several root-knot nematode-resistant varieties of susceptible plants are available, only a few, like the 'Charleston Belle' pepper, seem to affect the performance of crops planted after them. Certain cultivars of French marigolds (*Tagetes patula*), broccoli, and cauliflower also have proved useful in reducing nematode populations. 

CAROLE OTTESEN



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One after one; the sound of rain, and bees
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