



HABERSHAM GARDENER

Volume I, Issue 1

All the Dirt That's Fit to Print

April 1996

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Our Maintenance Crews Help Out Busy Gardeners

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Exclusive British Seed Line Reaches GA- and the First Stop is Habersham!

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TAKING STOCK: REJUVENATING THE PERENNIAL BORDER

April is the perfect time to take a good hard look at your perennial beds and borders. Many common design errors can easily be corrected now. Think back to last year. Do you have something too tall near the front of the border? Now's the time to move it. Are clashing colors a problem? Either move one of the plants or, if space allows, plant a white flowering companion between the two warring companions. Silver foliage plants like the *Artemisias* also work well to separate strong colors.

Do you sometimes have gaps where nothing is blooming? It's always a challenge to keep the border full and lush through our long growing season, so take advantage of Habersham's excellent selection of perennials. For spring color, go for *Baptisia*, foxglove or Siberian iris. In summer, you can't beat the long-blooming verbenas and veronicas. Or, plant a succession of early, mid and late blooming daylilies. In fall, try mums, ginger lilies, asters and the daisy-like *Boltonias*.

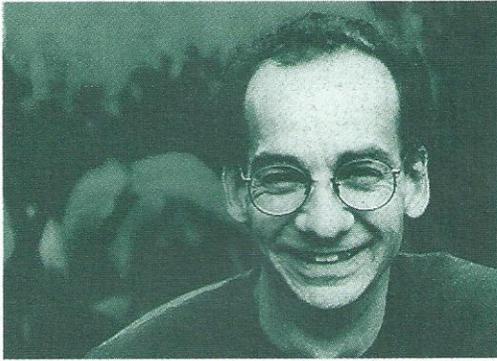
Habersham's annuals are also a great way to fill up gaps. After

the last frost date, it's easy enough to plug in seedlings between emerging perennials. Again, when choosing annuals, keep compatible color schemes in mind. Instead of relying solely on compact bedding plants, try the taller-growing cosmos and cleome for greater height in mixed beds. *Gomphrena* is also available in mid-size cultivars, and pentas will easily reach two feet in a season, blooming until frost.

Lastly, at this time of year, it's easy to spread fertilizer or manure around plants before they grow together. It's also a great time to start mulching. Keep mulch an inch or two away from the crowns of perennials to prevent rot, and put down a generous amount to discourage weeds.

"... I want it said by those who know me best, that I always plucked a thistle and planted a flower where I thought a flower would grow."

-Abraham Lincoln



MEET BRIAN MORRIS, OUR NURSERY MANAGER!

"What interests me most is how people use plants to define their space and to express themselves."

That statement says a lot about Habersham nursery manager Brian Morris. With a Masters degree in landscape architecture from the University of Georgia, he's not only focused on horticulture, he takes the architecture part of his role very seriously as well. His knowledge of both plant material and design principles has given him excellent qualifications to work with Habersham customers, who often want more than just a pretty plant — sometimes they need advice on how to place it, and how to build their outdoor rooms.

A story that comes to Brian's mind is one about a customer who wanted an evergreen screen for privacy. Someone had suggested planting a row of a particular shrub. While Brian was talking to the customer, however, he learned that the area was half in sun and half in shade. The suggested shrub is not at all shade-tolerant and was therefore unsuitable for the site. But Brian planted the seed of an idea in the customer's mind by proposing another way of creating an outdoor wall. Rather than a straight row of what Brian calls a mono-

culture, the image of an English-style hedgerow came to mind, inspiring a thicker kind of screen that included several types of trees and shrubs. Intrigued, the customer returned for more discussions and is now carrying out the plan in phases.

Brian Morris is a nurseryman who doesn't just care about plants; he cares about people. Feel free to say 'hi' and introduce yourself to him while you're shopping at the nursery. Whether you know a lot or a little about horticulture, you're sure to find some common ground with Brian.

YOUR APRIL CHECKLIST

The last frost date is April 15. Then it will be safe to plant summer annuals, vegetable transplants and to sow summer seeds.

- ✦ After last frost begin planting summer bulbs like gladioli and tuberoses. Plant every two weeks for a succession of bloom.
- ✦ Begin fertilizing roses with a high phosphorous fertilizer. Use a balanced fertilizer on perennial beds.
- ✦ Fertilize azaleas and camellias after blooming. If shaping is desired, prune lightly now.
- ✦ Divide or move summer-blooming perennials if clumps are not too advanced.
- ✦ Do not cut away yellowing bulb foliage — the leaves must photosynthesize to create next year's flower.
- ✦ Begin mulching around emerging perennials and newly planted annuals.
- ✦ Keep an eye out for pest problems — especially aphids, which attack succulent new growth on roses, and slugs, which chew up seedlings overnight.

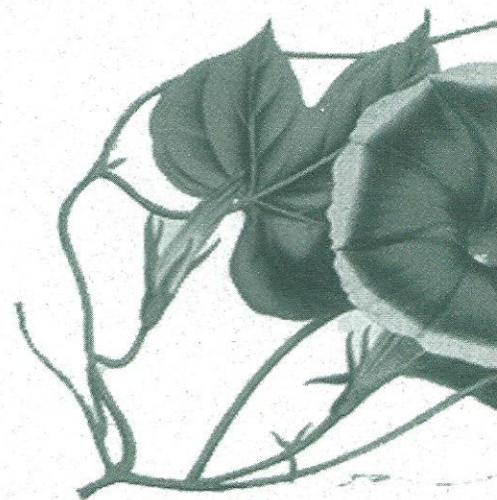
✦ Warm season grasses like bermuda and zoysia should be 'scalped', cut as low as possible. Put out a pre-emergent to help prevent summertime weeds. Fescue can be fertilized before the warm weather sets in, and should be kept at three inches from now through the summer.

PERENNIAL OF THE MONTH:

Corydalis lutea

In the shade garden, summer belongs mainly to leafy ferns and hostas. It's springtime that lights up these difficult shady areas with colorful blooms; for example, the golden-yellow flowers of *Corydalis lutea*. Both the blooms and the finely divided, ferny foliage of *Corydalis* somewhat resemble bleeding heart (*Dicentra eximia*). *Corydalis* is a low grower, stretching from nine to 15 inches, but a plant can eventually form a clump 18 inches across.

For a nice show, try using *Phlox divaricata*, a spring-flowering, blue phlox, as a companion plant to yellow *Corydalis*. The two bloom together in April and both enjoy the same moist, shady conditions.



Habersham exclusive: pick up a specimen
See last page

SHRUB OF THE MONTH:

Viburnum plicatum 'Shasta'

The Shasta viburnum will be prized by anyone with fond memories of their grandmother's snowball bush. Immense, fluffy white flowers virtually smother the leaves of the shrub for two weeks in April to May. The shrub itself is also somewhat of a puffball, reaching about six feet in height and up to 10 feet in girth, making it suitable for a summertime screen or for an accent specimen in a shrub border. It could also find a place in a foundation planting, its broad shape perhaps helping to soften the sharp corners of a building.

Shasta will reliably supply you with reddish-purple fall color and will require little care. If there is one thing Shasta asks for, it is a well-drained soil, so amend your clay with plenty of organic material before planting. A bit of shade and some supplemental water during the dog days of summer would also be appreciated.

TREE OF THE MONTH:

Halesia carolina

No doubt your neighbors are industriously planting dogwoods and redbuds this spring. While



Packet of 'Heavenly Blue' morning glory seed.
Newsletter for details!

they're busy blending in with the crowd, why not do something a little bit different and very special? Go ahead and plant a Carolina silverbell (*Halesia carolina*).

This native southeastern tree will thrive anywhere a dogwood will, in sun or in semi-shade as an understory tree (it reaches 20 to 40 feet). Most years a Carolina silverbell will bloom slightly earlier than the dogwoods. Its flowers are enchanting little bells of a nearly translucent white, which usually dangle enticingly from *Halesia's* branches for ten days to two weeks. While the flowers are not as showy as dogwood blooms, their delicacy is sure to delight. So be the first on your block to plant a Carolina silverbell. You just might start a trend.

VINE OF THE MONTH:

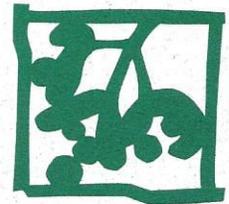
Lonicera x heckrottii

For the vine that produces the signature scent of the South, honeysuckles sure get a bad rap. Everyone knows the questionable reputation of Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), the weedy rogue that chokes out Southern woodlands. But consider this: not all honeysuckles are so badly behaved. The goldflame honeysuckle (*Lonicera x heckrottii*) is a beautiful hybrid that is a very valuable asset to the home landscape and can easily be kept within bounds.

Goldflame begins blooming in March or April and continues through midsummer. It blooms again sporadically when the cooler days of fall arrive. Buds are a bright rosy red, fading to a paler shade of pink as they open to expose a yellow throat. Full sun promotes the most flowers, but partial shade is tolerated well. Michael Dirr, horticulturist at the University of Georgia, judges this

to be 'the most handsome of the climbing honeysuckles.'

Goldflame is evergreen in all but the coldest winters. It climbs by twining so if you give it a trellis or wire grid and point it in the right direction, it will quickly reach 10 to 20 feet.



LANDSCAPE SERVICES

"And when your back stops aching and your hands begin to harden you will find yourself a partner in the glory of the garden."

The poet Rudyard Kipling wrote these lines more than six decades ago, but his whimsical expression of the gardener's burdens holds true today.

Springtime is an especially frantic and back-breaking season. There is soil to turn, pruning to be done and winter's debris to remove. So why not free up your own time, eliminate the worry and let Habersham take on some of these tasks? Our maintenance crews are experts at mowing, pruning and fertilizing shrubbery.

We will accommodate you whether you want a one-time spring cleaning, quarterly tidy-ups during the year or regular monthly or weekly visits. It all depends on how much free time you have and how much you enjoy the hands-on, nitty-gritty tasks of gardening — whatever you decide, we'll pick up the slack for you. With Habersham as your partner, you can always revel in the glory of the garden!

THE LADIES IN RED

Aphids on your roses? Spittle bugs in your perennial bed? Before you reach for those chemicals, think organic. Consider releasing a brood of ladybugs in your yard — these favored insects are fierce predators that feed exclusively on soft-bodied, sap-sucking pests.

The ladybugs are currently available at Habersham Gardens, in mesh bags containing approximately 1,500 of these tiny beetles. Timing couldn't be better -- ladybugs are best released in April. Simple instructions are provided to guide you through their safe release and offer tips to entice them to stay with you through the summer. Praying mantis cases are also available. From each case, 200 to 300 hungry baby mantises will emerge, ready to devour your cut-

worms and other leaf-chewing insects.

Why not just spray? Today horticulturalists and environmentalists advocate integrated pest management (IPM). Methods like introducing natural predators are a positive step back toward the balance nature once maintained. When man starts spraying, the balance is upset. Both pests and predators are wiped out, the food chain is upset and often large populations of another pest emerge somewhere further down the line. The non-judicious use of chemicals tends to be self-perpetuating. Come meet the ladies in red and try an organic approach this year!



*"A morning glory at my window
satisfies me more than the
metaphysics of books."*

-Walt Whitman

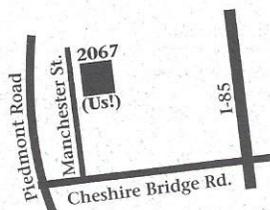
FROM ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

After 195 years in business, Britain's finest seed producer, Johnson Seeds, has initiated a presence in the 'Colonies.' Habersham Gardens is the first Georgia nursery to offer this seed line, carrying only selections deemed suitable for the Southeast,

Seed packets are hermetically sealed to ensure germination and they contain a plastic marker for your seed flat. Try an English cultivar of an old favorite or, for fun, experiment with a variety not readily available here

*Habersham
Gardens*

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Nursery Hours

M-F 8:00-6:00
Sat. 8:00-6:00
Closed Sundays



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