

DIGGER

SERVING THE NORTHWEST NURSERY INDUSTRY FOR OVER 50 YEARS

APRIL 2009

GREAT GREENHOUSES

Ready to build? We look at all the factors: location, design, function and more

LITTLE ADVANTAGES

Here's why smaller nurseries may be better off than the big boys

TAGGED FOR SUCCESS

A well-designed plant tag ensures your customers' success – and yours

Contents

DIGGER

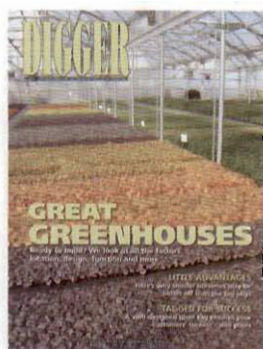
April 2009
Vol. 53 No. 4

COLUMNS

- 7 President's Message
- 17 What I'm Hearing
- 19 Brand Experience
- 62 Director's Desk

DEPARTMENTS

- 9 Calendar
- 10 Northwest News
- 52 Classifieds
- 56 Advertisers Index
- 56 Subscription Info



Cover: This month's issue is dedicated largely to greenhouses, from the structures themselves to the plants that are grown in them (whether they are placed in containers, planted in vegetable gardens, or put to other uses). These Heucheras are grown at Terra Nova Nurseries in Canby, Ore., and they create a rainbow of colors that are suitable for containers and flower beds. Photo by Elizabeth Peters. **This page:** Container combinations offer a great way to brighten up the landscape, as shown by this arrangement created by Danielle Ferguson of Ferguson's Fragrant Nursery in St. Paul, Ore. (and appreciated by Danielle's faithful yellow labrador, Emma). Photo by Curt Kipp.



32

BRIGHTER DAYS

Consumers are hungry for jam-packed container combinations to create a "rowdy chorus" of colors and textures.

21

GREAT GREENHOUSES

If you're thinking about adding greenhouses, here are some of the factors you might consider.

25

BEAUTIFUL EDIBLES

There's one word on the lips of many growers, retailers and home gardeners this year: edibles.

41

NIMBLE NURSERIES

With the economy in uncharted territory, here's why the smallest nurseries may be the strongest.

Other Features

45

THE FIGHT AGAINST BLIGHT

Dr. John Griesbach provides a progress report on *Phytophthora ramorum*.

57

TAG, YOU'RE 'IT!'

These state-of-the-art tags and labels can attract customers and help them stay satisfied.



Printed in Oregon on domestic recycled paper when available.

Value-packed
container gardens
deliver enormous
impact in a
small space



**Brighter
days**



By using a variety of colorful foliage or flowering plants and the right kind of pot, one can put together a container that's gorgeous, yet subdued. The container in the middle by Danielle Ferguson makes use of *Coprosma* 'Evening Glow', *Pieris* 'Valley Valentine', *Liriope muscari* 'Pee Dee Gold Ingot', *Heuchera villosa* 'Beajoulais', *Helleborus* 'Ivory Prince' and 'Red Lady', *Abelia grandiflora* 'Kaleidoscope', *Hebe* 'McKean' and assorted pansies. The one at right features *Heuchera* 'Marmalade', *Hakonechloa* 'All Gold', and *Phormium* 'Maori Maiden'. The one at left includes *Heuchera* 'Southern Comfort', *Begonia* 'Benitochiba', *Heuchera* 'Obsidian', *Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Nigrescens', *Caryopteris* 'Summer Sorbet', and *Phormium* 'Yellow Wave'.



GIVEN THE GLOOMY ECONOMY,
CUSTOMERS ARE DEMANDING
PLANT CONTAINERS AND
BLOOMS THAT BRING COLOR
TO THEIR LIVES

By Lisa Albert

In today's dire economy, plant lovers want color to chase away their blues – literally.

Demand for cobalt blue containers is down. "I didn't even order any blue containers this year," said Dani Ferguson, owner of Ferguson's Fragrant Nursery in St. Paul, Oregon. "It's definitely dropped off the radar screen."

What's hot? Containers in bright, powerful reds, sunset hues of rusts and oranges, metallic shimmers of silver, bronze, and copper, and eye-popping lime and apple greens.

Terra cotta, a perennial favorite, is still in demand, as are classic black and charcoal in matte, satin, and glazed finishes. The natural appeal of rustic containers in unglazed, dark clay or distressed finishes is also a hit.

Containers come in simplistic geometric shapes, such as tall rectangles and cylinders, and traditional shapes with classic details. Frost-proof stoneware and terra cotta are still the predominant materials; however, lightweight resin containers, such as Fiberstone, are gaining ground, especially as improved technology allows them to closely mimic the real thing. Cost can be comparable to traditional materials but these pots bring the added bonus of ease of portability.

Not to be outdone, the plants inside the containers are showing their colors as well. Burgundy and chartreuse foliage plants are still hip, but catching up quickly are plants flavored in oranges and rusts, such as *Heuchera* 'Georgia Peach', 'Southern Comfort', and 'Ginger Ale'.

Red-accented scarlet *Leucothoe* (*Leucothoe fontanesiana* 'Scarletta') and *Rhododendron racemosum* 'Rock Rose' make cheerful container plants. Variegated plants are shedding their sedate green and white markings for orange, yellow, green, red, or burgundy splashes. The plethora of coleus varieties provides almost unlimited color punch options for pots.

“Edibles are as appropriate for prima donna and rowdy chorus containers as ornamental plants.”

Darcy Daniels
designer and owner of
Bloomtown Garden Design



This planter contains several edibles: Sedi, 'Blaze of Fulda', Sempervivum, Rumex sanguineus (bloody dock), and Thymus citiodorus (variegated lemon thyme).

"A Quality Product
for Professional
Tree Handling"

**The Larger The Tree...
The Greater The Investment.**

Trust Braun

"The Best Wire Basket"

Share our Hands-on Experience
Visit us on the web at
WWW.BRAUNGROUP.COM
Product Brochure & Tree Harvesting VIDEO on request.

BRAUN
HORTICULTURE

For
specifications
or distributor
please call

USA (888) 732-7286 FAX (716) 282-6103
Canada (905) 648-1911 FAX (905) 648-8441

Ferguson encourages her customers to pack in as many plants as possible to “get all the bang you can out of all the different combinations of colors and plants.” Colorful explosions of flowers and foliage are still the favored container scene for Ferguson’s customers. They are also moving to containers of permanent plants with annuals providing hits of seasonal color.

“I love nandina (for containers),” Ferguson said. “*Nandina* ‘Moyer’s Red’ has red winter color and then goes back to green in summer. I love the new ones, such as ‘Sienna Sunrise’ and ‘Moon Bay’. I also like to use *Phormium*. I tend to work more with broadleaf evergreens but certainly the yellow and red-twig dogwoods work for winter interest.”

Other favorite foliage plants are *Brunnera macrophylla* ‘Jack Frost’ – “fabulous in a sliver container” – *Heucherella* ‘Alabama Sunrise’ and *Heuchera* ‘Obsidian’. She suggests heliobores with yellow, apple green, and peach winter flowers and the late season, sunset-colored *Echinacea* cultivars as great additions to stretch containers’ seasonal appeal.

Practical and pretty

The economy is driving customers to grow more edibles, in ground and in containers, in an effort to reduce their grocery bill. Seed companies are responding to that need and marketing new vegetable varieties suited for container culture. Ferguson revealed that she’s already had customers calling to request edible containers.

Daniels, Melco, and Larsen also reported increased demand for edibles, building on last year’s strong market growth. Top choices included dwarf columnar apples, dwarf blueberries, herbs, lettuce, mustard greens, chard, and hot peppers. Daniels recommended ‘Golden Sentinel’ columnar apple.

“I love my columnar apples. I have three of them (two in containers, one in the ground) in my kitchen garden. They are productive in a very small space.”

Despite these containers’ utilitarian nature, Daniels feels that with an eye to overall design, they can deliver ornamental appeal, whether the container is all edibles or a mix of edibles and ornamental plants. Edibles are as appropriate for prima donna and rowdy chorus containers as ornamental plants.



Thank you for 40 years.

Conifer, Shade &
Flowering Trees
Evergreen &
Deciduous Shrubs
B & B and Containers

24395 S. Barlow Road
Canby, OR 97013
Phone 877-630-1123
Fax 503-266-8035

Joe Carli
joec@moananursery.com
www.moananursery.com

▲ CONTAINERS



Plants used in this container include *Eucomis* 'Oakhurst', *Corydalis shimiensis* 'Berry Exciting', *Heuchera* 'Plum Royale', *Heucherella* 'Stoplight', and *Plectranthus madagascariensis* 'Marginatus'.

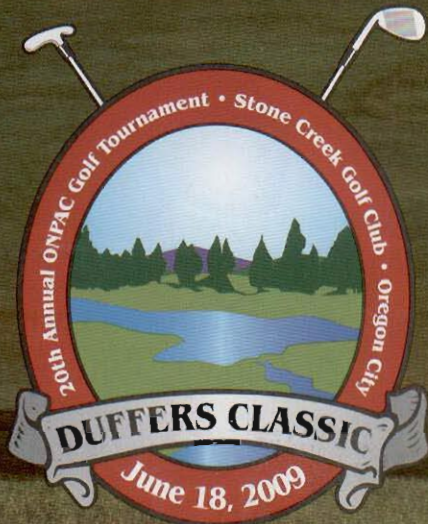
Join us June 18 at our convenient new location.



For 20 years, the Duffer's Classic golf tournament has been a great way to have fun, reconnect with old friends, and support a strong voice for the nursery industry in Salem and Washington, D.C.

This year, we've made it easier than ever to take part. Join us at Stone Creek Golf Club in Oregon City. The cost is just \$99 if you register by June 10.

We'll see you there!



Oregon Nurseries' Political Action Committee

oakleaf lettuce, rainbow chard, and cut and come again greens. Once their season is over, they can be allowed to grow bigger and fill in the container or removed to make space for other plants.

Larson cautions that growing edibles in containers may be seen as a cost-saving method only if customers already own containers or if they lack garden space, leaving containers as the only option.

However, coming back to the perceived value concept, Daniels believes that some customers may feel the end result is worth the initial cost.

"There's nothing more satisfying than harvesting something from your garden and bringing it to your dinner table," she said.

Whether solo stars or action-packed, ornamental or edible, containers create inviting entrances, decorate outdoor living spaces and tabletops, and solve landscaping dilemmas. They also brighten our outlook. ☺

Lisa Albert is a freelance garden writer based in Tualatin, Ore. Her work has been featured in Sunset magazine. Contact her at lja.garden@verizon.net or browse www.lisaalbertwriter.com.

Sign up online at <http://duffers.oan.org> or call 503-682-5089 to register