



Growing Matters

Greetings

This winter I have been indulging in one of my other passions, reading. Although I have a stack of gardening books and magazines that I intended to focus on during this time, I've actually been reading quite a bit about spirituality. I thought it would be different. As it turns out, reading about spirituality isn't so different from reading about gardening.

When I contemplate love, joy, peace, patience, tolerance, and the mysteries of the universe, I think about how I have experienced each of these through gardening. If you are seeking greater spirituality in your life, look to your garden and discover a pathway to nourishing your soul.

-Vicky Hilleges

Gardening is an active participation in
The deepest mysteries of the universe. - Thomas Berry

Garden Planning

Selecting the right perennials for your garden can be a difficult and time consuming task, but one place you can look for help is the Perennial Plant Association (PPA). Every year since 1990, the PPA has selected a Perennial Plant of the Year (POY).

Contrary to what you might think, the plant is not selected by the big money perennial growers based on a desire to dispose of a surplus of a particular plant. The POY is voted on by all the members of the PPA, including local growers like myself. In addition to my vote, I also nominate plants for future consideration.

Nominations are based on the following criteria:

- ☼ Suitable for a wide range of climate conditions
- ☼ Low maintenance
- ☼ Pest and disease resistant

- ☼ Multiple seasons of ornamental interest
- ☼ Easily propagated by asexual or seed propagation

After reviewing the nominations, the Perennial Plant of the Year Committee places 3 or 4 perennials on a ballot to be voted on by the members. This years winner, *Dianthus gratianopolitanus* 'Firewitch,' is presented at right.

See the second page of this newsletter for a complete list of the perennial plants of the year, all available at Pippi's. If you would like more information on the PPA, visit <http://www.perennialplant.org/>.

Garden Gate Chat

When can I start working in the garden? Deciding when to get in your garden to cut back the perennials you let stand through the winter depends more on your soil than the needs of the plant. Most herbaceous perennials are not fussy about when they are cut back. However, walking on heavy and wet clay soil too early can compact the soil badly, having a negative impact on drainage and reducing the tiny air spaces that plants require for strong and healthy root growth. Your best bet is to wait a bit until the soil has a chance to dry out.

Pippi's Plant Spotlight



Dianthus gratianopolitanus

'Firewitch'

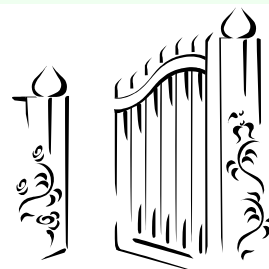
(dye-AN-thus)

aka: Cheddar Pinks

2006 Perennial Plant Association Plant of the Year

Highly praised for its spicy clove-scented flowers which face upward for maximum color impact, 'Firewitch' produces a plethora of shocking magenta pink blossoms over low, silvery-blue mats of evergreen foliage.

- ❖ Zone 3-9
- ❖ 7-8 inches tall
- ❖ Drought tolerant
- ❖ Deer resistant
- ❖ Full sun or part sun
- ❖ Attracts hummingbirds
- ❖ Good fresh cut or dried flower
- ❖ Blooms early summer and early fall



Pippi's Perennials

12 Sherry Lane
Kirkville, NY 13082-9212
315-656-0842
hilleges@twcny.rr.com
www.pippis.net

Call today to place your
Order for the 2006
Perennial Plant of the Year!

To receive *Growing Matters* electronically or to be removed from our mailing list,
contact us at hilleges@twcny.rr.com.

Perennial Plants of the Year Available at Pippi's

Who better to look to for advise on the best perennials for your garden than the Perennial Plant Association (PPA). As discussed under *Garden Planning*, members of the PPA vote on and select a Perennial Plant of the Year from hundreds

of nominations.

At right is a complete list of PPA Perennial Plants of the Year available at Pippi's Perennials. Choose these plants with confidence knowing that they are the tried and true of the perennial garden.

Although weeding, cutting back, and transplanting are activities that may seem repetitive and never-ending, when seen as a necessary and integral part of the overall unfolding of the garden scheme, they become purposeful rather than boring.

In fact, what may appear on the surface to be tedious physical work may, in the actual doing, be spiritually liberating. In taking time to contemplate the small — in observing the details of our gardens — we can experience life on a manageable scale.

- Marilyn Barrett, *Creating Eden: The Garden as a Healthy Space*

- ❖ 1990 Phlox stolonifera
- ❖ 1991 Heuchera 'Palace Purple'
- ❖ 1992 Coreopsis 'Moonbeam'
- ❖ 1993 Veronica 'Sunny Border Blue'
- ❖ 1994 Astilbe 'Sprite'
- ❖ 1995 Perovskia atriplicifolia
- ❖ 1996 Penstemon digitalis 'Husker Red'
- ❖ 1997 Salvia 'May Night'
- ❖ 1998 Echinacea purpurea 'Magnus'
- ❖ 1999 Rudbeckia fulgida 'Goldsturm'
- ❖ 2000 Scabiosa columbaria 'Butterfly Blue'
- ❖ 2001 Calamagrostis x acutiflora 'Karl Foerster'
- ❖ 2002 Phlox 'David'
- ❖ 2003 Leucanthemum 'Becky'
- ❖ 2004 Athyrium niponicum 'Pictum'
- ❖ 2005 Helleborus xhybridus
- ❖ 2006 Dianthus gratianopolitanus 'Firewitch'

Pippi's Locations & Hours (May 1st – October 14th)

CNY Regional Market Authority:

2100 Park Street
Syracuse, NY

Open:

10:00 AM – 6:00 PM Thurs.

7:00 AM - 2:00 PM Sat.

Home Location:

12 Sherry Lane
Kirkville, NY 13082

(Sherry Ln. is located off Fyler Rd., east of the Fyler & Bridgeport-Kirkville Rd. intersection)

Open:

10:00 AM–6:00 PM Fri.

Or By Appointment

Member:

Perennial Plant Association
New York State Nursery/Landscape Association