

# ***Herbaceous Perennials***

What's Dependable, What's not...

What's Hot, What's Not...

What's New, What's an Old Reliable...

**Ed Lyon**

## **Some Basics: Keys to Success**

1. Placement
2. Ultimate Size
3. Environmental Conditions
4. Cultural Conditions
5. Zone
6. Organic Matter
7. Drainage
8. Winter Protective Cover

## **The Plants**

Thousands! Plant Groups of Interest to start...

### **On Hosta...**

Still New and Interesting Cultivars

- 'Guardian Angel'
- 'Ghost Spirit'

Minis

- 'Stiletto'

Red Stems

- 'Fire Island'
- 'Red October'
- 'Little Red Rooster'

### **On Sun and Shade**

- 'Great Expectations'
- 'June' in Shade
- 'June' in Sun

*The Tough and Durable Ubiquitous Plant*

### **On Astilbe...**

Better Performers: *Astilbe chinensis*

- 'Vision'
- 'Visions in Pink'
- *chinensis* v *taquetii* 'Superba'
- 'Rise and Shine' (*chinensis* hybrid)
- *Astilbe chinensis* v. *pumila*

Grass

### ***Hakonechloa macra* (Japanese Forest Grass)**

Culture

1. Good drainage
  2. Good organic matter
  3. Winter protective cover
  4. No significant pest or disease issues
- 'All Gold'
  - 'Albo-striata'
  - 'Aureola'
  - 'Beni-Kaze (Red Wind)
  - 'Stripe It Rich'

### ***Heuchera* (Coral Bells, Alumroot)**

Culture

1. High organic matter, well drained, no clay
  2. Keep crowns low (frost heave) – winter cover
  3. Don't like high heat and humidity
  4. Rabbit damage
  5. Some leaf spots, powdery mildew, leaf and stem smut, stem rot, strawberry root, weevil, mealybug, foliar nematode
- 'Southern Comfort'

On Purples...

- 'Obsidian'
- 'Swirling Fantasy'

On Variegations...

- 'Snow Angel'

### **Breeding Efforts**

*Color* 'Georgia Peach'

*Floriferous*

- 'Paris'
- 'Brandon In Pink'

### *Foliage*

#### Ruffled Edges

- 'Café Ole'

#### Silver Overlays

- 'Ginger Ale'

#### Foliage Sheen

- 'Obsidian'
- 'Plum Royale'

*The biggest recent advance: Heuchera villosa (Hairy Alumroot)*

Current most common cultivated have been:

1. *sanquinea*
2. *micrantha*
3. *richardsonii*
4. *americana*
5. *villosa*
6. Hybrids

- 'Autumn Bride'

Examples of *villosa* and *villosa* hybrid cultivars

'Tiramisu', 'Mocha', 'Brownies', 'Citronelle', 'Pistache', 'Caramel', 'Bronze Wave', 'Chantilly', 'Encore', 'Frosted Violet', 'Georgia Peach'

- 'Citronelle'
- 'Brownies'
- 'Caramel'
- 'Georgia Peach'

### ***Tiarella (Foamflower)***

1. *cordifolia* – Heartleaf Foamflower
2. *wherryi* – Tufted Foamflower
3. *trifoliata* – Three-leaf foamflower

T. *Cordifolia* in NY woodland

Culture

1. Moist, organically rich soils
2. Afternoon shade

- 'Iron Butterfly'
- 'Spring Symphony'
- 'Stargazer Mercury'
- 'Rambling Silhouette'
- 'Mystic Mist'

### **x *Heucherella* (Foamy Bells)**

Same cultural conditions as *Tiarella* although not as robust as either parent – tends to “meltdowns”

- 'Kimono'
- 'Sunspot'
- 'Stoplight'
- 'Tapestry'
- 'Burnished Bronze'
- 'Gold Strike'

*Pulmonaria* (Lungwort, Bethlehem Sage) Confusing taxonomy – cross readily in wild

Most common in cultivation are *P. angustifolia*, *P. longifolia*, *P. rubra*, *P. saccharata*, *P. officinalis*, and *P. vallarsae*

- *Pulmonaria longifolia* ssp *cevennensis*

### **Culture**

1. Never allow to dry out but also avoid wet soils
2. Subject to powdery mildew
3. Sun to shade, in sun need evenly moist soils that do not dry out
4. Prefer organically rich soils

- 'Trevi Fountain'
- 'Diana Clare'
- 'Trevi Fountain'
- 'Gaelic Magic'
- 'Victorian Brooch'
- 'Silver Shimmers'
- 'Majeste'
- 'Moonshine'

### **Ferns**

1. Adiantum
2. Arachnoides
3. Asplenium
4. Athyrium
5. Blechnum

6. Botrychium
7. Cheilanthes
8. Cyrtomium
9. Cystopteris
10. Dryopteris
11. Matteuccia
12. Onoclea
13. Osmunda
14. Pellaea
15. Polypodium
16. Polystichum
17. Pteridium
18. Thelypteris
19. Woodsia

Culture Varies by species - Most garden varieties prefer afternoon shade, high organic matter content, evenly moist soils (do not like to dry out). There are species that will take dry soils and sun, research the plants.

Examples of new trends

- Mutations
- Hybridization

FronD Shapes - Mutations

One of the great mysteries of 'ferndom' is the remarkable abundance of fern variations through mutation in the British Isles – integral to Victorian fern craze of 19<sup>th</sup> century

Species most affected are *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Phyllitis scolopendrium*, and *Polystichum setiferum*.

1. Crested
2. Linear
3. Congested
- 'Frizelliae'

Hybrids: Example

*Athyrium filix-femina* (Lady Fern) and *Athyrium niponicum* 'Pictum' (Japanese Painted Fern)

Lady Ferns

- 'Victoriae'
- 'Encourage'

Japanese Painted Lady Ferns

- 'Silver Falls'
- 'Applecourt'
- 'Burgundy Lace'

Hybrids

- 'Ocean's Fury'
- 'Branford Beauty'
- 'Ghost'

***Echinacea purpurea* (purple coneflower)** Oh my, another plant explosion Be Careful!

- 'Harvest Moon'
- 'Orange Meadowbrite' (Also 'Mango Meadowbrite' )
- 'Razzmatazz'
- 'Tomato Soup'
- 'Pink Poodle'
- Mac N' Cheese'

***Rudbeckia subtomentosa* 'Henry Eilers' (Sweet Coneflower)** Quilled petals

### **Baptisia (False Indigo)**

1. *bracteata* (creamy yellow)
2. *sphaerocarpa* (bright yellow)
3. *australis* (blue)
4. *minor* (blue)
5. *leucantha* (white)

*Baptisia australis*

#### Culture

1. 3+ years to establish
2. Dry to medium soils
3. Sun to very light shade
4. Tolerates drought and poor soils
5. Don't like disturbed once established
6. No major pests or diseases
7. Nitrogen fixer

*Baptisia australis*

- 'Purple Smoke'

*Baptisia leucantha*

*Baptisia sphaerocarpa* ('Screaming Yellow')

### **Tricyrtis (Toadlily)**

1. *affinis*
2. *formosana*
3. *hirta*
4. *lasiocarpa*
5. *latifolia*
6. *macranthopsis*
7. *ohsumiensis*

## Hybrids

- 'Empress'

## Culture

1. Good drainage
2. Shelter from wind
3. Good organic matter with evenly moist soils
4. Most flower late, sensitive to frost

- *Tricyrtis macranthopsis*

## Two "types"

1. "Coarse" and wide leaf, arching habit, larger flowers in leaf axils along stem
2. Finer and narrower leaf, more upright habit, more delicate looking, flowers tend more terminal
  - 'Variegata'
  - 'Golden Gleam'
  - 'Moonlight Treasure'
  - 'Lightning Strike'
  - 'Imperial Banner'
  - *Tricyrtis formosana* 'Samurai'
  - 'Empress'
  - *Tricyrtis macranthopsis*

## **From Ed's recent "Bests" lists**

*Dicentra spectabilis* 'Gold Heart' (Old-fashioned Bleeding Heart)

*Dicentra* 'King of Hearts' (*D. peregrina* x *formosa* ssp. *oregona* x *eximia*)

*Brunnera macrophylla* 'Jack Frost' (Heartleaf Brunnera or Siberian Bugloss)

Also 'Looking Glass', 'Dawson's White', 'Mr. Morse', 'Emerald Mist'

*Arisaema sikokianum* (Japanese Dragon Arum or Jack-in-the-Pulpit)

Also *A. ringens*, *urashima*

*Tradescantia* 'Sweet Kate' (Spiderwort)

## ***Polemonium caerulea* 'Brise d'Anjou' (Jacob's Ladder)**

- 'Snow and Sapphires'

**Polomonium reptans (Creeping Jacob's Ladder)**

- 'Stairway to Heaven'

***Kirengeshoma palmata* (Yellow Waxy Bells)**

**Dodecatheon meadia (Shooting Star)**

***Dodecatheon pulchellum* (Darkthroat Shooting Star)**

"Too Easy"

***Corydalis lutea* (Yellow Fumitory)**

Overlooked Plant ***Dictamnus alba* (Gas Plant)**

*Faded Glories*

***Eryngium amethystinum* Amethyst Sea Holly**

***Eryngium planum* (Flat Sea Holly)**

***Eryngium yuccifolium* (Rattlesnake Master)**

***Amsonia tabernaemontana* (Eastern Bluestar)**

***Amsonia hubrichtii* (Threadleaf Bluestar)**

***Amsonia illustris* (Ozark Bluestar)**

***Amsonia ludoviciana* (Louisiana Bluestar)**

***Amsonia montana* 'Short Stack' (Dwarf Blustar)**

***Amsonia orientalis* 'Blue Ice'**

***Rudbeckia maxima* (Great Coneflower)**

***Solidago canadensis* 'Fireworks' (Goldenrod)**

***Lysimachia ciliata* 'Purpurea' (Purple Fringed Loosestrife)**

*Some fun things I saw in 2008*

- *Arum italicum* 'White Winter'
- *Carex* 'Lemon Zest'
- *Geranium phaeum* 'Margaret Wilson'
- *Podophyllum* 'Spotty Dotty'
- *Podophyllum* 'Kaleidoscope'
- *Podophyllum dalavayi*
- *Armoracia rusticana* 'Variegata' (Horseradish)



## New in 2008

- *Campanula* 'Blue-eyed Blonde'

Brilliant gold foliage gives rise to large 1" bells of deep-blue flowers.

- *Campanula* 'Summertime Blues'

Long blooming *Campanula* has masses of large, silver blue bells on 2 foot, upright stems... all spring, summer and fall! Clumping habit. Doesn't spread or reseed.

- *Helleborus* Brushstrokes Strain

Brushstroke splashes, spots, and true, rich colors adorn the wide petals of this superior group. Shade and deer resistant!

- *Helleborus* Carousel Strain

Anemone-flowered hellebores are amongst the most uncommon of plants and hard to find in the trade. Flowers are large with picoteed edges and contrasting center "bosses".

- *Helleborus* Golden Lotus Strain

A nearly golden glow emanates from these charming lotus-like flowers. Double yellows are amongst the rarest of Hellebores

- *Helleborus* London Fog Strain

Silvery-grey colors are visible in this series. The slate roofs, the grey streets of London, the darkened skies; all are reflected in the blooms of this group. Flowers are large and plants are vigorous.

- *Helleborus* Regal Ruffles Strain

This strain is replete with double picotees, splashed forms, and the rich colors. All are shade and deer resistant!

- x *Heucherella* 'Alabama Sunrise'

'Alabama Sunrise' changes color with the seasons! Foliage in spring to mid summer is gold with red veins and is deeply cut. In late summer, the leaves go to green with red veins. In fall, the older foliage turns orange pink. Small white flowers. A *villosa* hybrid. Heat and humidity tolerant.

- *Stokesia laevis* 'Purple Pixie'

The first dwarf Stoke's Aster! Large violet blue flowers emerge over a plant with a short, compact habit combine to a form that doesn't fall apart with maturity. Blooms in early July with sporadic rebloom. Great for high heat and humidity!

## New in 2009 (Just a Few to Expect!)

- *Penstemon* 'Dark Towers'
- *Scabiosa* 'Vivid Violet'
- *Viola* 'Heartthrob'
- *Campanula* 'Jelly Bells'

Enjoy!