

Garden News

City  People's
garden store + landscape

Growing Grasses in the Garden

Autumn
2006

City People's Garden Store

2939 E Madison
Seattle, WA 98112

Hours:

Monday–Saturday 9-6
Sunday 10-6



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In autumn, as most perennials are reaching inward before going dormant, ornamental grasses come alive. The sun, lower in the sky, peaks through their tall blades highlighting their golden, coppery, or purple foliage, and the cooler weather provides conditions for them to shimmer about. Ornamental grass, as a filler plant, specimen, border planting, or backdrop will take center stage in the fall.

Waving Wheat

If you have ever run through a prairie or sat in a field of wheat, you know the magic of tall grass. Bending and rustling freely in the wind, grasses both dance and sing, and their height offers a hiding place for

all things low-lying including nests and playing children.

In the home garden, even a single clump of ornamental grass can evoke the prairie experience: waving in the breeze, they act as screens and even provide that special “hideaway” for many a garden tool!

Fall Dramatics

As the trees drop their colorful leaves, ornamental grasses hang onto theirs into winter. The soft arching *Anemantbele lessoniana* turns red/bronze.

A drift of *Hakonechloa macra* ‘Aureola’ or *Acorus gramineus* ‘Ogon’ stays yellow gold in the otherwise fading landscape (*Hakonechloa* eventually dies back). Majestic Miscanthus species become fall focal points with their dramatic silky plumes (pictured above). The tall ‘Purpurascens’ has orange-red foliage in fall and pink flower tassels that turn to silver. Although the plumes persist well into winter, Miscanthus will die back completely and will not emerge again well into spring. But their late season show makes them worth the wait. (It’s a good idea to prune the top in March).

The evergreen Carex family (which are

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Christmas Tree Concerns

by Steve Magley, owner

Every year as gardening season slows, I travel south to hand pick most of our Christmas trees. City People's Garden Store relies on revenue from its Christmas tree sales in winter to stay in business, including funding health care costs for over 30 permanent employees.

As the trees arrive, I hear concern from staff and customers for the environment. It is not something I take lightly. Our mission here has always been to promote earth-friendly practices, from offering organic yard care products to eliminating harmful pesticides and herbicides from our shelves.

From years working with tree growers, I have come to believe that the Christmas tree industry is a positive one. For instance, I have seen what happens when a Christmas tree farm is sold—the acres often become a development site for condominiums. And in researching the environmental impacts of the industry, I came across a piece written by **Dr. Patrick Moore**,

co-founder and former president of Greenpeace, that put my mind further at ease. Moore writes: *"I often say that one way to protect the environment is to choose renewable materials and energy wherever possible."* And he goes on to explain environmental *benefits* of real Christmas trees:

They're recyclable. Moore notes that real trees are often chipped for mulch or used whole for erosion control, while artificial trees are made from non-renewable petroleum-based products, have an average life span of 9 years, then remain in landfills for centuries.

They grow back. For every tree harvested, growers plant up to three more to ensure a steady supply.

And lastly Moore notes that growing forests plays an important part in the **fight against global warming** as trees take CO₂ out of the air.

I enjoy the beautiful trees that come to us for the holidays. And knowing that they, in some way, protect the land they grow on, I will be able to enjoy them even more.

Each tree farm acre provides the daily oxygen requirements of 18 people

Grasses, continued from page 1

not actually grasses, but are sedges) comes in a variety of autumn colors. *Carex testacea* has bronze leaves with orange tips that become more pronounced in cool weather. *Carex dipsacea* has bright orange highlights, and *C. buchananii* and *C. tenuiculmis* 'Cappuccino' are both coppery brown. These look especially nice in fall container designs.



Planting a prairie

There are a variety of grasses to try in the garden, some evergreen, some herbaceous. Once established, many of them require very little maintenance for year round interest. Most varieties benefit from rich, but well-draining soil in full sun or partial shade. Rake them out in the fall, and when they become overgrown, cut back or divide, but not until late winter before they break dormancy.

And don't be surprised if your lost garden glove or hand weeder appears suddenly within the crown: grasses are magical that way!

— Kyra Jane Butzel

Indoor Gifts: New Paper Products from PaperBlanks

Stock up on your personal planning paraphernalia

Carina Manz, the Garden Store's card and paper products buyer is excited about **PaperBlanks**, a new line of journals, day planners, and calendars. Well-priced and handsome, they combine conscientious bookmaking, elegant designs, and careful handwork.

And **Calendars** are in!

This year we have a greater than ever selection of wall, desk, pocket, and bookmark calendars. It's time to start making plans for 2007!



Back to School FALL WORKSHOPS

Two-Day Mosaic Workshop

Saturday, October 28th 11 am–3 pm

Sunday, October 29th, noon–3 pm

Create your own garden art. Learn how to make striking mosaics in this two-day, hands-on workshop.

Participants will learn how to adhere and grout their mosaic masterpiece. Choose from either a pot or stepping stone to adorn. Most materials included (*bring any bits and scraps you may want to use in your creation*). Class size limited. \$50.00 fee. Register with Jose Gonzales @ 206.683.5224.



Fall Bulb Planting: Timing is everything!

Saturday October 14th 11 am-noon

Annual buyer and gardener extraordinaire Jose Gonzales will give tips on planting bulbs for spring. The workshop will cover what to plant and where and how to plant them. Also learn fun design techniques for a naturalized look with tulips and daffodils, and check out new varieties of bulbs now available. **Free.**

Both workshops will be held at the Garden Store, 2939 E Madison St.



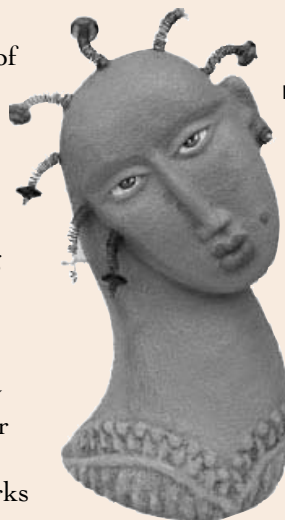
Artwalk in the Garden

September 30th – October 29th

Even if you are finished with plants for the year, come take a stroll in our outdoor nursery this October to see the incredible work of numerous Northwest artists. “**Contemporary Art in the Garden**” is City People’s annual outdoor sculpture show, featuring amusing and fanciful garden art fabricated in concrete, metal, tile, and wood.

This beloved art show encompasses the outdoor nursery, where you can have fun finding the works of these creative sculptors.

All the artwork is for sale, but will remain on display through October 29th.



Please join us for the opening reception, September 30th from 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm.

Returning artist Zef Rose will have several of her concrete pieces on display such as this one, left. Above, a frieze of frog heads by ceramic artist Eve Wright.

Spread Soil and Save

Distracted by school and football, it’s easy to forget what a great time fall is for gardening. Plants that you get into the ground by early November have enough time to establish a healthy root system before frost, and the oncoming rains keep them watered naturally. (*Most plants need four weeks to establish good roots. Evergreens tend to need at least 6 weeks.*)

Simply **spreading compost** and **mulching** around your plants goes a long way to building healthy soil and healthy plants. Organic compost

PLANT SALE!
Now through fall,
all outdoor nursery
plants are on sale.
*Limited to stock
on hand*

feeds the soil and mulching helps protect plants from freezing temperatures, and prevents nutrient loss from winter rains. **Gardner & Bloome’s Soil Building Compost** can do both. \$8.99 for 5 cubic feet. Healthy soil is critical for plants, and will help them fight pests and diseases. And any time you create a stronger plant, you reduce the need for supplemental watering, harmful pesticides, and overzealous fertilizing.

With **plants sales** and cooler days, this might be the best time to garden all year.

Getting Ready for Cooler Weather

What to do while waiting for winter

Prune out dead wood

Fall pruning includes taking out dead, diseased, and damaged branches, as well as weak branches that may break under the weight of snow or ice.

Divide overgrown plants

For most perennials, dig out the entire clump and divide apart with a spade. But wait to divide ornamental grasses until late winter.

Get garlic in the ground

Plant garlic in full sun with lots of good organic matter. Timing is critical. Cloves must have time to develop roots development before the onset of winter.

Color up containers

Fill containers with colorful cabbages, pansies or mums to brighten up your door step and combat winter blues.

Remove debris

Clean up fallen leaves from around struggling shrubs and perennials. These can harbor dormant diseases and pests that will return full force in spring. You can, however, mulch with leaves that have fallen from healthy plants.

Prep outdoor furniture

Bring in cushions and cover patio furniture unless going for that weathered look. Turn over empty terra cotta containers which can crack in freezing temperatures.

Houseplants care

As temperatures get cool and days shorter, cut back on watering and stop fertilizing altogether. Allow plants to dry out more, but careful that central heating doesn't keep them too dry for too long.

Visit our Web site!

Brand new and a work in progress. Read past newsletters for more gardening tips. Get store hours and directions.

citypeoplesgardenstore.com



It's BIG Sale Time at the Garden Store!
All containers are 20% off during the month of October.
Outdoor nursery plants 20% - 30% off

Valid only with coupon at
City People's Garden Store
through October 29th, 2006.
Does not apply to sales items
or landscape orders.

All Regularly
Priced Merchandise

15%
Off

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