



LAELS MOON GARDEN

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Thank You!

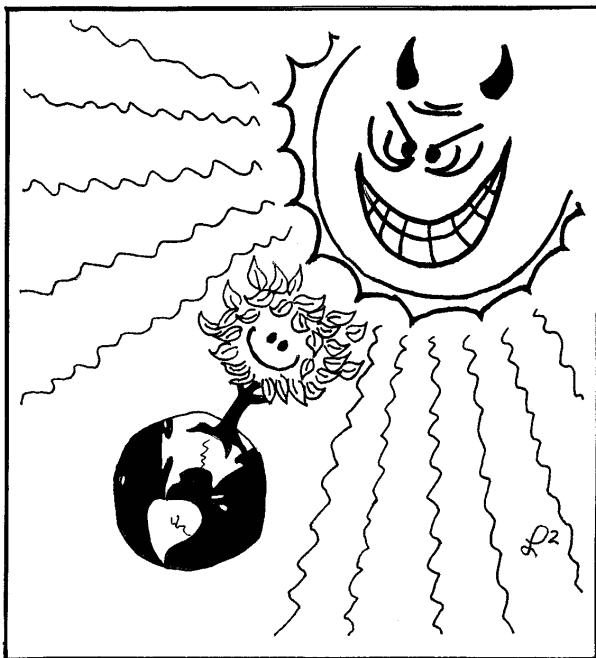
Thank you for your patronage this past year. You make this newsletter (and our Costco-chic lifestyle) possible. We especially appreciate your referring friends who have not been to our nursery and display garden before. You are helping to make us famous one person at a time. We work diligently to locate and offer quality trees, shrubs, and classy perennials at reasonable prices. This newsletter is an effort to provide you with useful information too.

As confirmed plant geeks, Bethany and Larry experiment with (and research) new plants and visit numerous growers and gardens in the US and abroad. We are very proud that our two most senior “moonies”, Jean Lien and Ava Berg, are both honor students in the horticulture program at South Puget Sound Community College. We all want to be worthy of your friendship and patronage. One of the many joys of gardening is the continuous opportunity to learn (and sometimes unlearn) things about plants and the natural world. Gardening is a continuous learning process. You can rest assured that we will answer your questions with information we honestly *think* we know at the time you ask!

Fall Is the Best Time for Planting

There's a certain chill in the morning air, the goldfinches are fading to a beautiful chestnut brown, and the incontinent starlings are massing to do one final whitewash of our windows before departing for warmer climes. The fall planting season is here. Fall is the best time to plant because new plantings will not have to face hot weather (and the need for much supplemental watering) for almost seven months. Now is the time to plant shade trees, shrubs, and that windbreak or privacy screen you've wanted all summer. Don't worry about winter cold harming fall plantings. Roots are well insulated in the ground.

Strike a Blow against Global Warming



Whether or not you believe the globe is getting warmer, this past summer definitely proved that the last ice age is over. Plants absorb carbon dioxide (the major greenhouse gas) and emit pure oxygen, which we (and much of our machinery) all breathe. Without plants, we animals could not exist. The faster a plant grows, the more oxygen it produces so we in the northwest are fortunate to live among fast-growing Douglas fir, western hemlocks, vine maples and yes, weeds. The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture estimates that one acre of forest absorbs six *tons* of carbon dioxide and emits four *tons* of oxygen per year. If all the scientific arguments don't convince you, come sit under our big oak trees on a hot summer day, breathe the cool air, and you'll know that trees fight warming (global or otherwise).

Strategically placed evergreen windbreaks can reduce heat loss from your house in the winter. They can also help to cool in summer by evaporating water into the air and providing some shade and shelter from drying winds. Carefully placed and sized deciduous trees can shade windows in summer and allow in warming light in winter. If you select trees that won't grow much above your eaves, they won't put leaves on your roof and in your gutters either. So what's not to like about planting trees? Get out your shovel and get on with it!

Plant Your Own Eden: Part 3

At its best, gardening is an art form. You are the artist. Like much other art, a beautiful garden is at least part illusion. People have speculated about the reason for Mona Lisa's faint smile for centuries. Would the painting be as famous if she were deadpan? Not likely. A garden needs mystery too. You may not feel yourself a great illusionist but if you've ever planted a tree or hedge to make your neighbor's mildewed, blue tarp draped, motor home "disappear," you've done it! Here are some slightly more subtle ideas to create illusions in a garden.

When *placing stones* in a garden, create the illusion they have always been there by burying them in the ground to their widest point. Although less of the stone is actually showing, it appears to go on underground and thus to be larger and a permanent part of the earth. To create a dramatic alpine or mountain look, use stones that are broken with some angles and pointed edges. (The illusion is that the stones were just broken from larger boulders as they really are in the mountains.) To create a more peaceful lowland look, especially around water, use rounded smoother rocks. (The illusion is that they have washed down from the mountains over centuries and have been rounded and smoothed in the process.) Try to avoid using rounded and jagged rocks together. This is rare in nature and looks, pardon the expression, phony.

If you live in an area where there are houses nearby but you have a small distant view of Mt. Rainier or some other beautiful feature, you may be able to use the Japanese concept of *borrowed scenery*. Careful use of plantings can obscure the nearby man-made objects while retaining your view of the distant object you want to see. This creates the illusion that you are in a completely natural setting with a distant view. Study the distant view from every angle to decide where your plantings should go. It may be possible to create the illusion only from your favorite viewing position, say a deck, a garden bench, or an often-used window.

The concept of *garden rooms* is a little over used in garden writing, perhaps because it's useful shorthand. To us it simply means if you want your garden to appear larger and more interesting, design it so that you can't see it all from one place! Moving around in your garden in order to see it creates the illusion of greater size. It also creates little private places to read, nap, or share some wine with your sweetie (take your pick!). Finally, dividing up your garden and connecting the parts with pathways gives you more nooks and crannies to plant stuff. That's Nirvana to us compulsive plant collectors!

To create the illusion of greater size in your garden, *obscure the source and destination* of pathways and streambeds. A pathway that disappears around a planting appears to go on forever, even though it may end immediately behind the planting. A waterfall or streambed that begins in boulders partly obscured by plantings above appears to originate in (perhaps imaginary) distant mountains, even if it flows out of a hidden pipe into the boulders.

To create an artificial streambed, *study a real one*. Real streams change direction for a reason, so place one or more larger boulders on the outside of curves in the stream. Note that the water is usually deeper on the outside of a curve in a stream and shallower inside the curve. If you're making a stream with real water, mimic that. If it's a dry streambed, use smaller rocks on the inside of curves and larger ones on the outside, because that's what you'll find in a real stream. And don't forget to put some cascades in your artificial streambed (wet or dry.) Straight chutes with no curves or stair steps rarely occur in natural streams so they look artificial.

Doing More Good with Living Christmas Trees

Once again this year, we'll be offering beautiful living Christmas trees. These are dark green Frasier firs that look like a noble fir, but have fewer root problems when later planted in the landscape. Many people buy living Christmas trees to plant after the holidays to grow into large evergreen trees of lasting beauty.

But what if you don't have room or a large evergreen wouldn't fit in your style of landscape? Here's a great idea. After the holidays, donate your live Christmas tree to a non-profit organization and you may qualify for a tax deduction! Your local church, park or school may qualify and be interested in some free trees. One non-profit organization that would definitely be interested is the Grand Mound Rochester Park Association (Tax ID 94-3142054). They have limited funds and are in the process of converting a treeless field into a park in Rochester. For details about tree donations, contact the association president, Mary Lewis, at matslewis@msn.com or call her at 273-0398. Your donated tree would be planted in a protected public spot to absorb carbon dioxide, produce oxygen, and be enjoyed for a very long time.

A Classy Christmas Gift Idea

Other than gift certificates and living Christmas trees, we have not offered Christmas items in the past. All of the big box stores already turn Christmas into a merchandising frenzy. We've always considered ourselves too cool for that. Recently, though, we discovered some garden-related Christmas tree ornaments that are really elegant and are not widely available. We thought our fellow gardeners would be interested, so we have them available at the Nursery.

The ornaments are made from real maple, oak, and ginkgo leaves, maple seeds, redwood cones and cypress sprigs that have been electroplated with real gold or burnished copper to make a beautiful and long-lasting ornament. They are relatively inexpensive considering their quality and the fine materials from which they are made. Each ornament is individually boxed to make a refined gift--or throw the boxes away and put them on your own tree!

Choosing Fall Color and Winter Interest Plants

Many plants that have great fall color in New England do not color up well in the soggy Northwest. But there are many trees and shrubs that have outstanding fall color here. It's helpful to see plants in autumn to see which colors you personally like. Some are subtle and some are bright. Here are some less-common fall color plants we highly recommend: **Sourwood** (*Oxydendron arboreum*) is a 15-20 foot slow growing tree with excellent red fall color at the same time as it produces hanging clusters of small white flowers. **Franklinia** (*Franklinia alatamaha*) is an eight-foot multi-stemmed shrub or small tree with shiny large teardrop leaves that turn bright red over burgundy at the same time as it produces white single camellia-like flowers in fall. We offer several kinds of **Stewartia** (*Stewartia pseudocamellia*, *S. rostrata*, *et.al.*) that have very bright, glowing red and orange fall color. They have

white summer flowers like single camellias. **Smoke bush “Grace”** (*Cotinus obovatus* hybrid) is a 6-10 foot shrub or small tree that has smoky purple over green summer foliage and bright scarlet fall color. Some other smoke bushes also have outstanding fall color. **Ginkgo “Autumn Gold”** is a slow growing, open-branched tree with green leaves shaped like a duck’s foot. They turn (you guessed it) bright gold in autumn. **Red Maples** (*Acer rubrum*) are large green shade trees that develop bright fall colors. “October Glory” is orange red, “Red Sunset” is scarlet, and “Burgundy Belle” is red over burgundy. **Oak leaf hydrangeas** (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) are shrubs that have panicles of white flowers in summer and scarlet to burgundy fall color. We also recommend lots of old standbys such as burning bushes and sweet gums, but they are too numerous to list here. Come have a look!

Pruning Weeping Lace Leaf Maples



Almost all of the growth that comes out of a weeping Japanese maple arches toward the ground. This characteristic is what gives them their mounded “haystack” look. Newly planted lace leafs usually don’t need much (if any) pruning. After several years however, the weeping branches form dense layers on the plant and the inner branches die due to lack of light. This dense branching obscures your view of the beautifully contorted trunk and branches in winter. Thinning out the tree in the winter before it pushes new leaves will contribute to its year around beauty. This can be done any time after the tree loses its leaves in fall and before the buds start to swell in spring.

First, there’s no cure for dead so remove the dead inner branches. Their light gray color and lack of bright healthy buds easily identifies them. A gentle pressure at their base snaps them right off. Second, remove any live branches that are growing toward the center of the tree. These will not receive enough light and they will be next year’s dead branches.

After these steps, an older tree will still have two or three dense layers of live branches and you have some choices to make. If you want the tree to get *wider*, remove the *inner* live branches. If you want to control the width of the tree, say to avoid encroaching on a sidewalk, remove the *outer* layer of branches so the width is reduced and the inner layer gets more light. Larger branches that cross each other should also be removed to give a more pleasing shape. It’s almost impossible to remove *all* of the crossing branches because there are so many, but the idea is to let light in to all remaining branches. When you’re done the tree should look like an open umbrella—hollow in the center with branches weeping down all around. (See above picture.)

If you want to increase the height of your weeping maple, select a long limber branch near the existing top and *very gently* stake the flexible tip of it up using soft tape or yarn to avoid cutting the bark. (Don’t force it, even live limbs are fairly brittle.) The staked limb will stiffen in a couple of years and branches will begin to weep down from the higher new “trunk.” This procedure should be done in the winter—actively growing limbs are very brittle.

If this explanation seems unclear, visit our display garden after deciduous plants go dormant to see what the pruned tree should look like. Our weeping maples are planted on mounds with decorative rockwork under them, so we also shorten the branches to expose the rocks.

Gentle Reminders

- ✓ We are now on our winter schedule, open weekends only 10am to 5pm, until the first week in March. Other times by appointment. We will be closed in January in order to hibernate.
- ✓ We prefer to send newsletters by email (rather than USPS) as it is faster and less expensive. Please send us your name and email address **together with** your name and mailing address so we can remove you from our snail mail list. Send the information to laelsmoon@msn.com—we'll confirm we got it. And we do not share our mailing list with anyone. Of course if you don't have email, we will continue to send the newsletter by snail mail.
- ✓ We still provide delivery of larger plants to all of the Rochester suburbs (Olympia, Tumwater, Lacey, Tenino, Elma, Montesano, Centralia, Chehalis, and Napavine.) We do this on our own schedule, so we're always prompt no matter how long it takes!
- ✓ We recycle nursery pots (one gallon and larger) no matter where you got them.
- ✓ If you are looking for hardy plants you can't find, we'll try to locate them for you—this service is free and you are under no obligation.
- ✓ If you have suggestions for future newsletter topics, please let us know and we'll make up something.
- ✓ If you have suggestions about how we could improve our service or if we disappoint you in anyway, please let us know and we'll do what we can to fix it.

Garden Show Dates for 2007 – Mark your Calendar



The little logo for Laels Moon Garden indicates we plan to have a booth at the show.

Tacoma Home and Garden Show—Tacoma Dome January 31-February 4, 2007

Sponsored by the O'Laughlin Trade Shows <http://www.oloughlintradeshows.com/hgshow.php>

Northwest Flower and Garden Show—Seattle Convention Center February 14-18, 2007

Sponsored by Salmon Bay Events <http://www.gardenshow.com/nw/index.html>

Portland Home and Garden Show at the Portland Expo Center February 21-25, 2007

Sponsored by the O'Laughlin Trade Shows <http://www.oloughlintradeshows.com/hgshow.php>

Yard, Garden and Patio Show at the Portland Convention Center February 23-25, 2007

Sponsored by the Oregon Association of Nurseries <http://ygpshow.com/>



Home & Garden Show at Southwest Washington Fairgrounds in Centralia, March 23-25, 2007

Sponsored by Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce <http://www.chamberway.com/>



Nisqually Valley Home and Garden Show at Yelm High School, March 31 and April 1, 2007.

Sponsored by Yelm Chamber of Commerce <http://nisquallyhomeshow.com>



Garden and Gift Show at St. Martin's University in Lacey. April 27, 28 and 29.

Sponsored by Jr. League of Olympia <http://www.jlolympia.org/>

Home and Garden Show at the Fairgrounds in Elma WA. Dates to be announced, usually Mid-May.

Sponsored by the Master Gardeners of Grays Harbor & Pacific Counties <http://graysharbor.wsu.edu/MG/>



Pt. Defiance Garden Show in Tacoma, Friday, Saturday and Sunday June 1-3, 2007

Sponsored by the Metro Parks Foundation <http://ptdefianceflowershow.com/>



The Big Show at St Martin's University in Lacey. Dates to be announced, usually in September.

Sponsored by the Olympia Master Builders <http://www.omb.org/index.html>

Laels Moon Garden Newsletter #3 - December 2006

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**Happy Holidays to All
We Wish You and Yours a
Joyous New Year**