



Prairie Originals

WILDFLOWERS
NATIVE GRASSES



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Another growing season is drawing to a close. Amy and Stefania have finished work for the season and headed back to school. As I write this on a cool, cloudy, rainy day it feels like fall is on the way. These changing seasons make life interesting. They motivate us to get out and enjoy the sunshine and warm days of September while they last.

What's Blooming Now?

September is the time of year for Asters. New England, Smooth and Many Flowered Asters are all blooming now.

Gumweed *Grindelia squarrosa* also blooms in August and early September. These yellow flowers look somewhat like Asters and are often seen blooming along the roadsides in late summer. They are quite easy to identify because the flower buds are quite sticky or gummy. It generally grows as a biennial. It establishes roots the first year and then blooms its head off the second year. The third year new seedlings grow to replace the original plants and they bloom in their second year. Gumweed prefers sunny, dry, well drained soil. If you have a dry, gravelly spot this will love it.



Our patch of **Closed Gentians** *Gentiana andrewsii* also puts on a great show of brilliant blue blooms from mid August to early September. I didn't have any available in spring or summer because they are a tricky one to propagate. These slow growing seedlings have finally reached a decent size so we have them available now in 4 packs of XL plugs for \$15.95. They grow in full sun or part shade and medium to very moist soil.



St. Norbert Farmer's Market

We are finished at the Market for the season, however the Market is open every Saturday 8am to 3pm until Halloween. I encourage you to support our farmers and buy local. We continue to be open at our home base of 27 Bunns Road near Selkirk throughout September and into October. The 4.5" pots can be planted from now until freeze up and we have a lot of varieties available as yet. The warm season grasses are looking fabulous now so feel free to come and have a look. At this time of year we are generally open Mon. to Fri. 10 am to 6 pm and Saturday 9 am to 5 pm but please phone ahead to confirm. Note: we will be closed from Thanksgiving Weekend, Oct. 9 to 15.

Bird & Butterfly News

The Goldfinches (*right*) are having a field day in the Giant Hyssop these days as the seed ripens. I guess they are fattening up for the long trip south. They also love the seed of False Sunflower, Narrowleaf Sunflower, and Meadow Blazing Star.

2010 turned out to be a great year for butterflies. We had lots of Red Admirals (*below right*), some White Admirals and Black Swallowtails as well as lots of Great Spangled Fritillaries and Painted Lady butterflies. We had scads of Monarchs visiting too. There was a large 2nd generation that hatched in late July and early August. It was wonderful to see so many butterflies floating through the garden and visiting flowers. We were still finding occasional caterpillars in mid August and on Sept. 1 a customer spotted quite a few caterpillars on our potted Milkweed on the bench.

We put 12 mature Monarch caterpillars into our aquarium in July along with some Milkweed leaves so that Stefania, Amy and Alexis, as well as a few lucky customers, could witness their miraculous transformation from caterpillar to chrysalis to adult butterfly. (*below*).

I will also post more butterfly pictures in the photo gallery on our website this winter.



Seed, Seed, Seed

At this time of year we are busy collecting and cleaning seed. If you are thinking of doing some seeding yourself, October is a great time for seeding. The seed is naturally stratified over the fall, winter and early spring (a cool, moist treatment) and then it germinates in May & June. The seed we have available is listed on our website. Please call ahead if you are interested in Mixes. We will be assembling Mixes in late September. For information on preparing the seedbed, see the Planting and Seeding Guide on our website.

How to Collect Seed

We thought you might like to try collecting seed from your own plants so we have listed a few tips below to get you started. Feel free to contact us if you would like more information.

1. Make sure to look closely at the leaves of flowering plants so you can identify them later in the season when the flowers are finished.
2. After flowering is finished the green seed forms in the flower head. The seed should be allowed to turn brown before collecting. Don't wait too long after it turns brown or the birds will eat it or it will blow away in the wind.
3. Seed generally ripens 3 – 4 weeks after blooming, depending on the weather.
4. Collect seed on a dry day and let dry for a few weeks.
5. For many species the seed can be removed from the heads by placing the heads in a large bag and shaking them.
6. The seed can then be spread outdoors in October, November or early spring (April). It can also be stored in a cool, dry place in airtight containers if you wish to start some plants indoors in February.

Shrubs & Vines

We have a great selection in stock now. Most varieties are available in 4.5" deep pots. The only varieties sold out are Hops and Western Sandcherry. We ran out of Wild Black Currant and Wild Raspberry this spring but we have lots of them available now. We also have over 100 Hawthorn available. In addition we have a few varieties not listed in our catalogue. They are in 4.5" pots.

Leadplant

Amorpha canescens



Grey Dogwood

Cornus racemosa



White Cedar

Thuja occidentalis



This is the wild cedar of south-eastern Manitoba. It is a tree that grows 10 - 20 metres tall.

Shrubs & Vines continued...

The varieties listed below are also available in larger sizes.

Pincherry	1 & 2 gallon pots
Mountain Maple	1 gallon
Bush Honeysuckle	1 gallon
Prickly Rose	1 gallon
Dwarf False Indigo	1 gallon
Showy Mountain Ash	1 & 2 gallon
Hazelnut	2 gallon – no 4.5" pots
Red Osier Dogwood	2 gallon
Speckled Alder	3 gallon
Saskatoon	2 gallon – no 4.5" pots



The Environment

We thought you might be interested in our contributions to Living Lightly on the Land.

1. We are what you might call a “Non Traditional Grower”. We don’t have a greenhouse so we don’t have to heat it. We grow some plants in cold frames in spring with only 1/3 of them heated for a short time with heating cables. Cold frames are an old low-tech way of growing plants early in the season. They are mini greenhouses. We grow ¾ or more of our plants outdoors over the summer and then over winter them outside. We uncover them in early/mid April. (insert photo) They sprout and are ready for sale in mid May.



2. We use Oak leaves, that might otherwise go to the dump, as mulch for the plants in the shade house and for the shade garden beds and some shrub beds. The leaves are great to keep the weeds down and they gradually decompose, adding nutrients to the soil. Fallen leaves are also great spider habitat and spiders are beneficial bugs.



3. We use locally available flax straw mulch and compost when planting all our display areas and stock beds.

4. We have switched over to all organic fertilizers. We use Biofish (liquid), Biorich (granular), Humic Acid, Kelp and Eco-Tea. The plants are loving it.

5. We recycle everything possible.

6. We reuse plug trays, 5 packs and 1 & 2 gallon pots many times over. We encourage you to return them when going by Prairie Originals or to us at the St. Norbert Market next year.

7. We have a composting toilet in our Shop bathroom, The Throne Room, which works very well. There are several brands available. Ours is made by Sun-Mar and we purchased it at Home Hardware. www.sun-mar.com. They are also available at Solar Solutions in Winnipeg www.solarsolutions.ca and Home Depot and McDiarmid Lumber. There is also a deluxe Swedish model available.

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8. We use Solar/windup radios for our entertainment during the workday. They are getting more commonly available these days. We got ours at Lee Valley Tools and Mountain Equipment Co-op. We don't use the windup feature much as the windup charge only lasts about 15-20 minutes. We just set them in the sun or on a sunny window ledge and they play on and on. We never have to buy batteries or plug them in.

9. Since we grow the majority of our plants outdoors we can save a lot of water whenever it rains. And we did get a lot of watering done by Mother Nature this year.



10. And of course we grow Local Native Plants for sustainable gardens.

Fall Preparations

I like to encourage people not to tidy their gardens too much in fall. Leave your perennials, wildflowers and grasses standing through the fall and winter and cut them back in spring instead. (The exception is plants that are diseased. These should be removed in fall.) The standing plants provide a winter home for all kinds of creatures sharing your garden space with you. This includes many kinds of butterflies and beneficial bugs. The standing plants also help to trap that "other" mulch, SNOW. Snow is a great insulator for perennials and as mulch it has two more excellent qualities; It is free and spreads itself!

If you have a shady woodland garden you don't need to rake the leaves away from the perennials. Save yourself some work. The leaves can be left as mulch and the Solomon's Seals, Violets, Ferns, etc. will grow up through the leaves in spring. When it comes to raking leaves off the lawn you might wish to consider keeping them for your own use instead of sending them to the dump. They can be spread in shrub beds and woodland wildflower gardens as mulch to help keep the weeds down and to hold moisture. Oak leaves are exceptionally good because they take a little longer to break down. If you have the space you can stockpile leaves for a number of years. Just keep adding leaves to the pile every fall. After a while you will have a pile of your own leafy compost to spread – a special treat for your garden!

Below is an excerpt from an editorial by former *Wildflower Magazine* editor James Hodgins:



Turning over an Old Leaf

Every fall I shed an inward tear each time I pass a bag of leaves beside the curb. The protective blanket of fallen leaves on the ground maintains an optimum level of heat, pH, moisture and aeration for the dormant roots, seeds and soil microflora and fauna. The shed leaves are the nutrients for next years plants. As the leaves decompose by late spring, they have released carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus and so on into the soil – the same fertilizer that gardeners rush out to buy. Why bother? Leaves provide it for free.

*To bag up these "tiny organic miracles" and chuck them by the curb is terrible..... Better to put those leaves on the flower beds or compost heap. **Liberate your life-giving leaves!** (and those of your neighbours).*

Last Newsletter for 2010

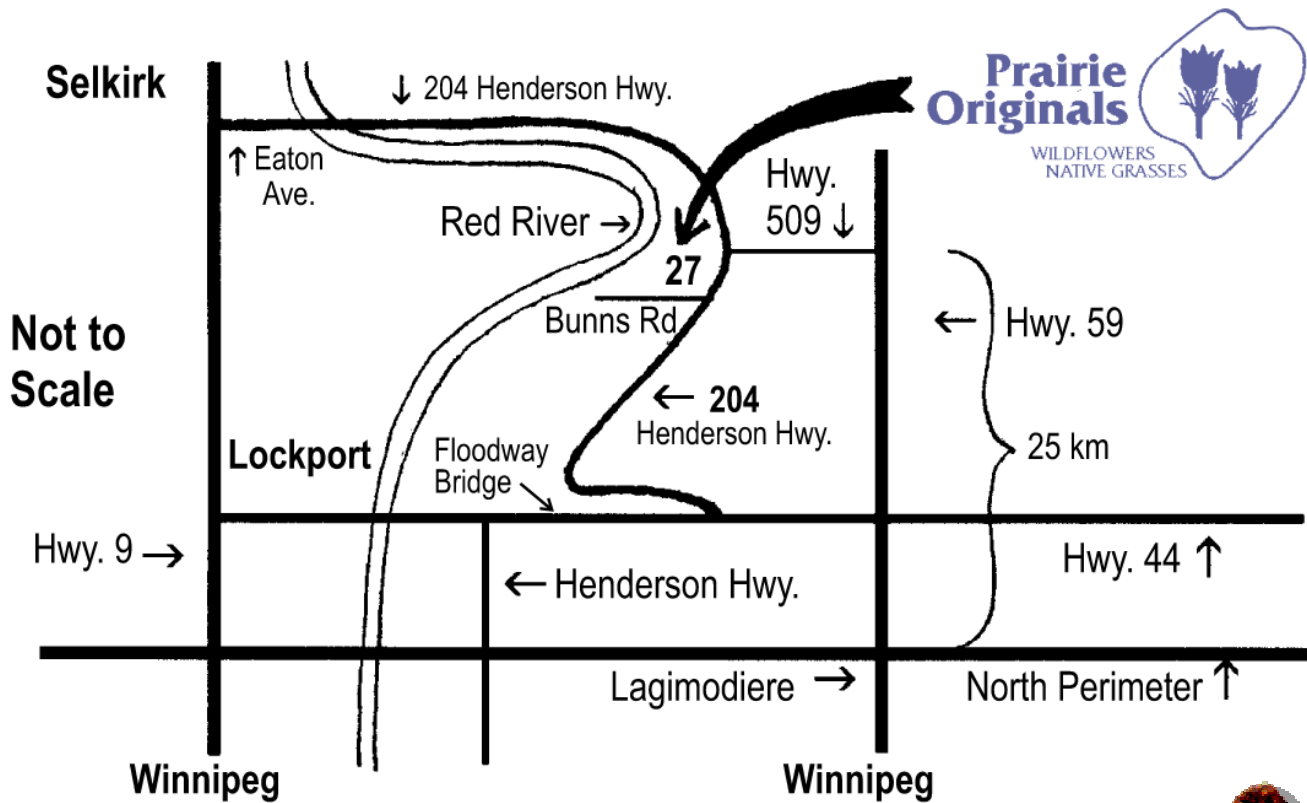


If you are a cross country skier perhaps we will see you on the trails. You might wish to check out the trails at Duck Mountain Park on the Saskatchewan side at Madge Lake (very hilly & fun) or at Turtle Mountain Park (gently rolling). Closer to home, the trails at Bird's Hill Park and Grand Beach are excellent.

Have a great winter! And if you are dreading the coming of winter, think of snow in a new light – "Ice Flowers".

Until next time,

Shirley Froehlich & Alexis Nazeravich



We are on **Fall Hours**—pls call to confirm.

Please note that a new bridge is being constructed over the floodway at Lockport. If you come through Lockport the exit for Highway 204 has moved 2 km east on Hwy. 44 as shown on the new map. You can also get to us by going through Selkirk or by taking Hwy. 59 and 509.



HOURS

May 12 - June 25	Monday to Friday	10 am - 6 pm
	Saturdays	9 am - 5 pm
Evenings by Appointment	Sundays - until June 20	11am - 5 pm
July, August, September - Usually open Monday to Saturday but phone to confirm		

ST. NORBERT FARMERS MARKET

June 5 - late Aug. Saturdays 8 am - 3 pm

Located on Pembina Highway, about 1/2 km south of the perimeter.