



# Prairie Originals

WILDFLOWERS  
NATIVE GRASSES



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Greetings from Selkirk! June is upon us and spring is now well underway. As usual dandelions are making an appearance at our spring party. If you decide you don't want dandelions in your garden there are many different tools to remove them that work quite well. Check out local hardware stores, garden centres, Canadian Tire and Lee Valley. We use three different models for our digging – Shorty is a short handled model with a 6" long fork on the end. Shorty is very effective to get out those long roots and you get lots of bending exercise using it. And exercise is good for you! Skinny is a spade type with a very skinny blade and a long handle from Lee Valley. You can push the Skinny blade in with your foot which is easy. The third one is a new one called Fiskars from Canadian Tire. For those who find it difficult to bend over, the Fiskars works very well in lawns.

Something else you can do with dandelions is to harvest and eat them. Your garden instantly turns from a weed patch to vegetable patch. Simply google "Dandelion Recipes" and you will find many recipes ranging from Dandelion Fritters to Soup to Salad to Jelly and Wine. You can something new and different to your diet and the dandelions are free for the picking. Just make sure you harvest an area that hasn't been sprayed.



## What's Blooming Now?

More flowers are bursting on the scene every day here and with the rain everything is looking really lush.

**Saline Shooting Star** is looking great and has been blooming for several weeks. The bright pink flowers sit atop small rosettes of leaves. This little plant grows best in sun or part shade in moist to wet locations. It can be planted in small groupings on its own or mix it with other late sprouting, larger plants like Joe Pye or Swamp Milkweed.



**Tall Bluebells** is also blooming away. This showy plant is great for shady spots with medium to moist soil. The flower buds are pink and then they open to a rich blue. It grows 30 – 60 cm tall (1 -2 ft.). Tall Bluebells reseeds easily but it is not an invasive seeder at all. For several years we have seen Hummingbird Clearwing Moths visiting the flowers for nectar. We have 4.5" pots available now and will have 5 packs of plugs available in late June and July.



Other flowers blooming at the moment include Western Canada Violet, Yellow Violet, Heartleaf and Golden Alexanders, Pussy Toes, Blue Eyed Grass, Three Flowered Avens, Canada Anemone, Sheep Fescue and Sweet Grass. Wild Iris is also putting out flower buds several weeks early.

## Bird and Butterfly News

Stefania saw our first Monarch Butterfly of the season on Friday, May 28<sup>th</sup>! A customer also reported seeing one around the same time. Hopefully, if the weather cooperates, it will be the first of many this year. After several years with very few Monarchs we are all waiting with anticipation to see what the 2010 season brings. Milkweeds, the host plant for Monarch caterpillars, will bring the Monarchs right to your garden if they are growing there (*right*).

Other butterflies are also starting to appear. We spotted several Red Admirals (*right*) and several Painted Lady butterflies in late May. The host plants for Painted Lady caterpillars are Pussy Toes and Pearly Everlasting.

The Great Spangled Fritillary caterpillars have been munching on the Northern Bog Violet leaves. These black caterpillars with orange spines live over winter as small, partly grown caterpillars in the soil at the base of the Violets. In spring they have food right in front of them as the violets start to grow again.

I also saw a Hummingbird coming to the Wild Columbines on May 30<sup>th</sup>.



## St. Norbert Farmer's Market

The Market is **opening Saturday, June 5<sup>th</sup>** and we will be there with a whole selection of plants in pots and plugs. Opening Day festivities for the Market include an afternoon presentation by a local Manitoba mushroom expert teaching how to grow your own Shitake and Oyster mushroom on Oak and Poplar logs. He will also have the mushroom growing kits available for sale after his presentation. If you would like to keep up to date with all the new and interesting things happening, the St. Norbert Farmer's Market has a new newsletter to which you can subscribe at their site [www.stnorbertfarmersmarket.ca](http://www.stnorbertfarmersmarket.ca).

## New This Year

I discovered a new book this winter and we are happy to offer it for sale.

**"Eco-Yards, Simple Steps to Earth Friendly Landscapes"** by Lauren Rama

This book is full of hands on practical information. It shows step by step how to create and look after gardens in an environmentally friendly way. Practicing the common sense gardening and landscaping principles in this book might just be your way of making this world a better and healthier place. An excellent book. \$29.95



We also have **Sweet Grass Braids** available this year. They are in straight braids as well as braids tied in an oval. They come with a card explaining the significance of Sweet Grass in native culture.

Stefania made several hundred of them last year in August and they make our store smell wonderful. We will have them available both at our store near Selkirk and at the St. Norbert Farmer's Market for \$5.00. If you would like to grow your own Sweet Grass we have 4.5" pots available and we will have 5 packs of plugs available in July and August.



## June 5th World Environment Day

This is a day to stimulate awareness of our environment and to take action to preserve, protect and care for it. It was started by the United Nations in 1972. One way to celebrate World Environment Day is by planting a Native Plant or a whole Native Plant Garden. Visit [www.unep.org/wed/2010/english](http://www.unep.org/wed/2010/english) for more information.

## 2010 International Year of Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the Variety of Life on Earth. The more biodiversity we have the more interesting and sustainable our lives are. Our natural world is a very complex environment and there are many, many benefits and things we can learn from the vast array of plants and creatures on our planet. There is also great enjoyment in just getting out and observing and being surrounded by nature.



One way we can help save biodiversity in our own patch of earth is by planting native plants. This not only preserves our Manitoba native plants, which are still disappearing, but also all the creatures associated with them. Don't just think of yourself. Consider the garden ecosystem and plant for the birds, butterflies, bees and beneficial bugs too. This also gives you front row seats to watch nature in action in your own garden.

## Invasive Plant Alert

Unfortunately some plants that were brought to North America in the past have decided they want to take over the world.

**Creeping Bellflower** *Campanula rapunculoides* is one of these invasive plants that is a very common weed in Winnipeg gardens. It not only invades our gardens, it also escapes into the wild where it damages natural habitats and displaces native plants. It is tolerant of a wide range of conditions, from dry to wet and from shady to full sun, which helps it spread into a number of different habitats.



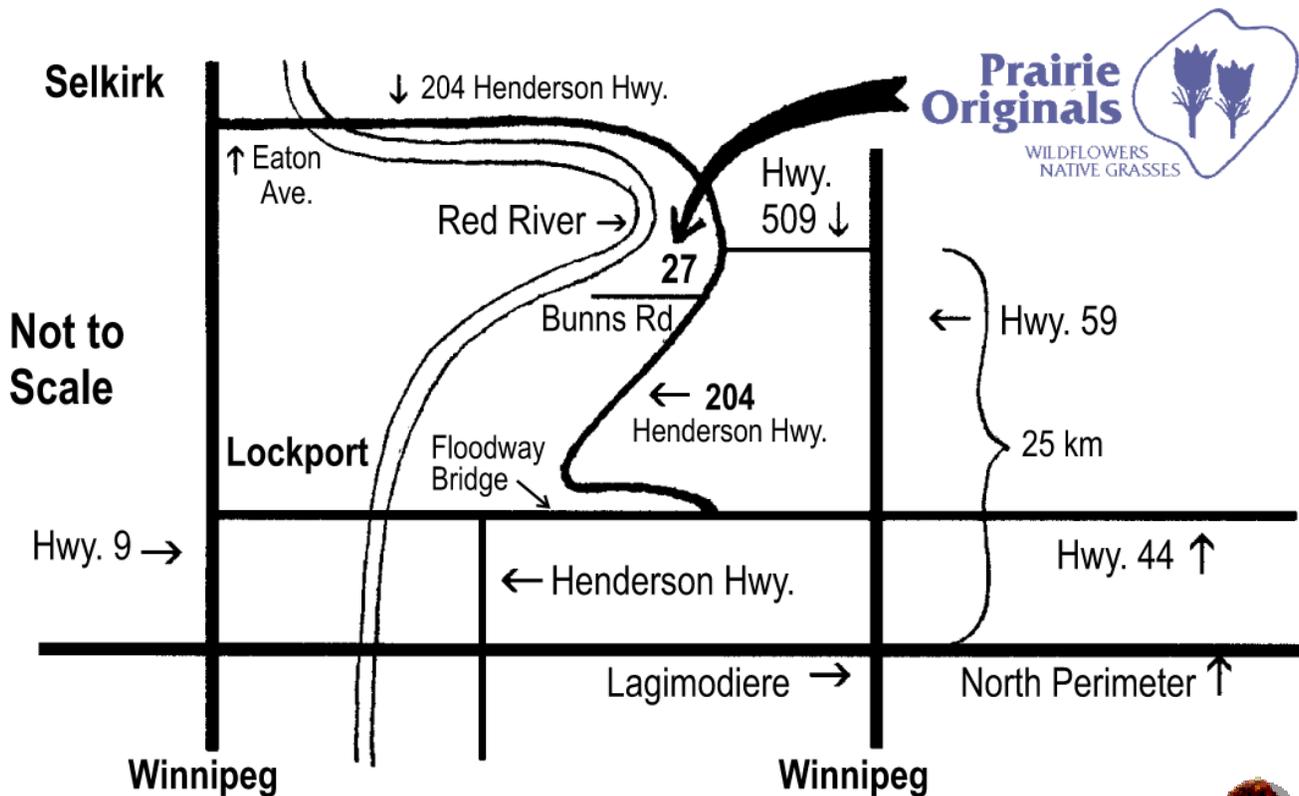
Creeping Bellflower is usually a large plant with showy, bluish purple flowers that can grow up to one metre tall (3 ft.). Sometimes it takes on a creeping form that consists of a mat of leaves with no flowers stalks. It has an alternate leaf arrangement, with the lower leaves being long stalked, heart-shaped and coarsely toothed, and the upper leaves stalk-less and more lance shaped. The flowers are nodding, bell shaped, found on the upper flowering stalk and usually on one side of the stem. Often the stem of the plant is hairy.

Although the plant spreads by seed (up to 3,000 per plant), the most dangerous part of the plant is the root system. Creeping Bellflower is able to spread very rapidly with its rhizomes and has thick, parsnip-like roots that it uses to store nutrients. In older neighbourhoods it grows under fences and creeps down the alley, spreading into neighbouring back yards. Plant swaps also offer it other opportunities to spread. Be sure to know what you are buying at and bringing to a plant swap.

You can try and pull it if it's concentrated in a certain area such as a flower bed. A garden fork can be used to lift the rhizomes from underneath while gently pulling up on them with your other hand. This can work as it loosens the soil and prevents the rhizomes from breaking off in the soil. If the plant is in flower and you can't dig it out right away, at least cut the flowers off to prevent them from going to seed. It helps to be vigilant in your garden and remove them as soon as they appear before they spread widely.

Until next time,

*Shirley Froehlich, Stefania Johnson  
& Amy Jordan*



We are **Open for the Season.**

*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
<b>Evenings by Appointment</b>	Sundays - until June 20	11am - 5 pm
July, August, September - Usually open Monday to Saturday but <b>phone to confirm</b>		

## ST. NORBERT FARMERS MARKET

June 5 - late Aug.	Saturdays	8 am - 3 pm
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Located on Pembina Highway, about 1/2 km south of the perimeter.