

KINGSTON VIEW GARDENING PIECE (for March 2003) By Peg Tillery, ©2005

We are so lucky to live in Kitsap County and North Kitsap especially abounds with great nurseries and plants-people. You'll find the names, locations and contact information in this issue of the "Kingston View." Read on for some tips and temptations from some of our Kingston area nursery folks.

Denise Zeemer at Sacks Feed and Garden says "Evergreen Clematis 'Avalanche' is flying out of the store." Avalanche Evergreen Clematis (*Clematis x cartmanii* 'Blaaval') is a real charmer with what's described by Monrovia as an "avalanche of snow white blossoms against a dark background of forest green leathery leaves." It's a perfect plant for containers too, topping out at fifteen feet after several years. Can't you just picture it in a large weatherproof ceramic planter with a copper trellis?

While you're at Sacks make sure you check out the Oriental poppies 'Allegro' (a bright crimson red) and 'Princess Victoria Louise' (lovely peach). The store also has a great selection of bulbs newly arrived for late spring and summer delight. Nerine lilies and semi-dwarf cannas caught my eye in particular. Denise's other tip for maximum temptation was Amber Waves heuchera.

Savage Plants staff Caroline Cloudas and Megan Stoll could hardly contain their enthusiasm when asked about their plant picks for spring. They led me on a great trek through the nursery. Megan waxes poetic when describing the tantalizing attributes of her favorite plants. One favorite is affectionately dubbed "Molly the Witch Peony." Its botanical name is *Paeonia Mlokosewitschii*. It has a single yellow flower with rounded edges cut with gold. The seedpod opens to a display of fluorescent pink. Megan says, "Molly is the queen of the peonies. Everyone loves her." Caroline and Megan say, "Hurry in, Molly the Witch will go fast."

Caroline, Megan and I are quite smitten by *Ribes florifolium* Evergreen Current. It's a four to six foot spreading ribes with white flowers. The evergreen foliage is somewhat ruffled with nearly jade green leaves. The tree *Picea orientalis* 'Skyland' is a bit pricey but the color is striking with dark green undersides and what Megan calls "gold dusted" tops. Megan and Caroline could also not resist choosing *Larix Kaempferi* 'Diana.' This small tree has twisted branches and twigs with vertical dashed striping on the bark. This time of year the ends of all twigs are tufted with clusters of bright green needles each about one-half inch or less in length.

Caroline says, "Sedums were hot last year and will continue into this year." The nursery has a nearly four foot wide pot full of sedums to provide inspiration. They've grouped several six-inch long *Agave gemniflora* into the sedum pot for vertical interest. Each *Agave* has swordlike, spiky deep green leaves growing in a circle. Both predict gardeners will love *Cotinus coggygria* 'Golden Spirit.' The foliage turns shades of coral orange and red in fall and flowers are smokey gray against golden yellow foliage during the growing season.

While I was at Savage Plants I ran into my favorite hyper-tufa artist and an incredible plantswoman, Beatrice Idris, from Raven Nursery on Indianola Road. Beatrice cultivates native plants and also designs hyper-tufa containers and birdbaths full of sedums and other tantalizing plants. You'll want to make an appointment by calling 360-598-3323 to visit the nursery and take home some healthy native plants and maybe a hyper-tufa container or two or three.

David Halsaver from Foxglove Greenhouses in Kingston says his hot tip for this year is "container gardening." His wife and partner Gail is known for her container designs featured in Sunset and other magazines and books. Growing in containers is ideal for our twenty-first century lifestyle says David. Containers will fit anywhere and can be moved and changed to suit our tastes and desires. Plus they can serve duty both inside and outside. David says, "Hot tropicals with a Mediterranean look will continue to be popular." Use Rex Begonias, cannas (both dwarf and full size) and don't forget vegetables like Swiss chard for textural interest.

One of his favorite container plants is Colo Casia 'Black Magic' commonly called "elephant ears." This plant can reach six feet tall, but in our climate can also stay about two through four feet tall. David brings his Colo Casia into the greenhouse each year, but recommends them as an ideal houseplant too. Colo Casia like moist growing conditions and work well on the edge of ponds and in water features. You can visit Foxglove by appointment by calling 360-297-0410.