

LA CROSSE FLORAL

2900 Floral Lane
La Crosse, WI 54601

"The GIANT Greenhouse by the Bluffs"

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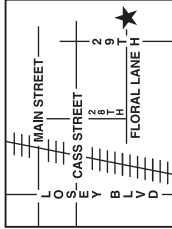
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HOURS

Mon - Fri 8:00am – 5:30pm

Sat 8:00am – 5:00pm

Sun CLOSED

Spring Open House

Saturday, April 30th 8:00am – 5:00pm

Sunday, May 1st 10:00am – 5:00pm

Special Garden Center Hours (May 2-29th)

Monday - Friday 9:00am – 6:00pm

Saturday 8:00am – 5:00pm

Sunday 10:00am – 5:00pm

MEMORIAL DAY HOURS

Monday, May 30th 10:00am – 1:00pm

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LA CROSSE
FLORAL

Roots and Shoots

Vol. 18, No. 2 April / May / June 2011



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LA CROSSE, WI
PERMIT #580

DR. GREENTHUMB

The secret to long life in all your Easter gift plants is to keep them COOL, especially at night. All bulb stock, lilies, tulips, and daffodils, can be put in an unheated garage or entry way in temperatures right down to 32 degrees F. Lilies and other bulbs will bloom again if fertilized and watered while the leaves are still green and then planted outside in mid-May.

Uncover your roses in stages. Marsh Hay can be removed the first week in April (in an average year), and the soil taken off about a week later. Remove any dead canes and weak or broken branches. Do not feed until they leaf out. Spend some time now cleaning up your garden. Last year's leaves and stems can harbor diseases and insects that winter over in the debris. Pansies can be planted outside in good soil as early as the middle of April. Don't work up your beds until the soil is dry or crumbly. Adding red Peat Moss to the soil will increase porosity for good root development and helps control weeds. Most evergreens should be pruned after the new growth stops about the second week in June. To keep them strong and well shaped, prune about half the new growth off every year. Mhujo pines are best pruned before the candles of new growth get their new needles. Prune out all dead growth so the new shoots will fill in the voids.

If you purchase plants and do not want to plant them yet, great care must be taken to keep them in good conditions. Small plants are shocked by high winds and frequent drying out. If you keep them



inside, they will get softer, leaves will turn yellow, and in the case of Geraniums, buds will drop and not come back for three weeks. It's best to leave unplanted material outside on the east side or in partial shade. Bring them in only if temperatures below 40 degrees F. are predicted. The larger blooming annuals like Geraniums, Rieger Begonias, and hanging baskets, serve double duty. They can be given as gifts at Mother's Day, enjoyed in the home by everyone, and then be planted or used outside in the yard for a whole summer's enjoyment.

Try not to plant on a hot, windy day. I use cardboard boxes and lawn chairs to shade my plants the first two days or plant when it's cloudy...no transplanting shock. The best container to buy when purchasing flowers and vegetables, is one in which each plant is in its own cell or segment. When you plant them, the roots are not damaged, plants start out quicker, they are more even, and very few die from disturbing the roots. Plant vegetables in stages to spread out the harvest season. Plant quick crops (radishes and lettuce) between slow crops (tomatoes) and make double use of your garden space.

Don't miss our Spring Open House, April 30 and May 1. See acres of ideas on what to plant for the most beautiful, long-lasting garden in the neighborhood. New varieties, huge hanging baskets, pillar geraniums, new garden giftware, and always help with your gardening questions.



TRENDS

I hope some of you are already aware of Fairy Gardening. It is definitely a "trend" that fellow Garden Centers are doing with their customers. To me, "fairy gardening" is an adult version of Doll Houses. The major difference is that the focus is on the plants and their setting versus the furniture and such that one finds in doll houses. Fairy Gardens are miniature landscapes created using small-scale plants and accessories. The plants can be either Indoor Houseplants or true Outdoor small-scale flowers and foliage. Even the "Indoor" Fairy Gardens can go outside in the summer, provided you select a shady location. Always select a shady spot when placing your Fairy Garden outdoors. They can even be small enough to fit under a giant hosta leaf. If you are going to bring it inside for winter, make sure you create your little landscape in a container.

Common Celtic belief is that fairies were driven away by humans to live in the other world. However, many fairies have chosen to stay among us. They wear flowers for clothes, which

sometimes make it hard to find them. If you have ceramic or resin fairies, remember that they will fade with time in the outdoor garden. You may want to apply a clear-coat varnish on them to help protect from fading. Fairies are also available in a metal finish which will simply develop a "patina" with time. Again, they will then be able to blend in with their surroundings. Some believe that the mere presence of a fairy statue encourages the elves and fairies to visit.

Fairies make their homes in the holes of trees, fallen logs, and mossy hillsides. However, they are never ones to turn down a comfy ready-made home. In fact, fairy homes can run in the \$200-\$400 range – really! If you have a "house" outdoors, you will want to place fine mesh screens across any openings so that bees and wasps do not create hives inside. Once you have a house, the fun begins. You can create paths with various small stones, bark, pebbles, marbles, etc. We will have tiny bridges, birdbaths, benches, fences, and such to help authenticate your setting.

TRENDS (CONTINUED)

Flat stones are a popular addition. Myths say that fairies like to sit on flat stones to sun themselves and dry the dew from their wings. Miniature birdbaths provide the perfect spot for your fairies to take a quick dip to refresh.

Fairies are said to have magical powers, are very shy, and tend to be a little mischievous. They like to play tricks – they move things around in a garden, and hide things, just for their own amusement. Many say the fairies come out at night, dancing with the fireflies in the dark. Many of the fairies sleep most of the daylight hours because of their frolicking all night long. Is this why we do not see them?

Come and learn more about Fairy Gardening at a FREE Seminar on Saturday, May 14th at 10:00 a.m. We will show you how to build a container fairy garden and also what types of plants and flowers work best in your little landscapes. By the first week in May we hope to have all of our Fairy Garden accessories available for you to purchase. The miniature accents will be very accessible in prices starting under \$10. Fairies themselves are arriving daily!



DID YOU KNOW...

That Carnations are one of the most popular flowers in the world? They last a long time and come in numerous colors. They are used in corsages, wedding bouquets, and a wide range of floral arrangements.

Grower To Grower

All gardeners have that day when they look at their gardens and want something new to get their blood pumping again. It doesn't matter that your neighbors think you've got the best garden around; for you - the sparkle is gone. If your garden has lost that certain something, it's time to go in search of new inspirations. I've got plenty of "Cool Noodle" ideas for your garden.

Begonia "Gryphon" -- This is one I'm really excited about. A foliage begonia for shaded areas, it compliments Dragon Wing Begonia, Kong coleus, and Impatiens. It has a truly unique tropical appearance that looks fragile, but without a doubt is tough. Easy care, low water needs, and fast growing are some of its' great qualities. Garden-to-home Gryphon lets you extend the season by bringing the plant inside at the end of the season. Like the mythical creature it's named for, the animal elements of both a Lion and an Eagle, it's tough yet elegant.

Cyperus "King Tut" & "Baby Tut" —These annual grasses will evoke visions of the pyramids and the sphinx. King Tut will grow an amazing 6' tall! Baby Tut is smaller at 2' and perfect for containers. They like a moist soil and will do great in water gardens. Well-behaved and elegant in appearance, they will add interest and a bit of mystery to your garden.

Dorotheanthus "Mezzoo" – What a name! This vigorous vine trails almost 2 feet making it a great addition to combo planters in full sun. In the succulent family, it likes it hot and dry, but will tolerate the

occasional downpour. The soft green leaves are edged in white and under high light, send out dime-sized rose-red flowers. It's a tough one with no known diseases or big problems.

Begonia "Exotica" – We will have baskets this year of three different "winged" begonias.

1. **Waterfall** "Encanto Orange" has loads of single deep orange cascading flowers that bloom continually.

2. **Bonfire Choco Red** is a rose-red dark leaf selection that excels under high heat and light.

3. **Lana** has that unique tropical angel-wing appearance. The gray-green leaves with silver markings are the perfect backdrop for the soft pink flowers. Lana is the only one that can tolerate a little more sun. It's a multi-use plant, which can be brought indoors later. All of these selections provide an exciting evolution in Begonias.

Sun Coleus – Cool Noodles to the 21st power! We have an unbelievable selection this year. Eruption, Oxblood, Songbird, Alligator Tears, Tiny Toes, Tilt A Whirl, and Blackberry Waffle are just seven of the twenty-one gorgeous colors we will have. Coleus are one of the hottest crops for dynamic landscape displays.

Start your wheels turning with some of these plant selections to jazz up your yard. Whatever you do, don't give up, get excited. Your garden is calling you!



THEME DAYS

Administrative Professionals Week Mon. April 25th – Sat. April 30th

Unfortunately, this week is kind of thrown between Easter and Mother's Day this year – and right before our Spring Open House. Don't Despair...we have lots of ideas for that special person in your office...no time? Visit our website: lacrossefloralshop.com. You can even place your order there when our shop is closed. We want to make it EASY for you. With spring just around the corner, how about a Gift Certificate for the Garden Center? You can even present it with a small geranium or mini-rose plant.

Flowers are always the appropriate gift – not too personal – just right!



Earth Day Friday, April 22nd

Due to its popularity last year, we will once again offer our own Bagged Soils at 30% off. Soil never goes on sale – except this Earth Day. Have you ever tried our Soils? They are hand-mixed sterilized blends perfectly formulated for your potting needs. We offer Garden Mix, Special Mix, and Cactus Soil.

Spring Open House Sat, April 30th 8am-5pm Sun, May 1st 10am – 5pm

There are great specials found only on these 2 days meant to Kick-Off the Gardening Season.



Ice Cream Sunday Sun, May 22nd 10am – 5pm

YUMMY! Join us for **FREE** Pearl Vanilla Ice Cream Cones, and specials on ice cream flavored flowers and veggies.

You'll LOVE this day! 😊



Summer Rose Sale Begins Wed. June 1st

One Dozen Wrapped Roses for only **\$24.99** (reg. \$49.99)

This is a Cash-and-Carry Special for the summer.

Roses are in season – TREAT yourself!

Saturday Chats & Sun Fun

We are going to offer you FREE 45-60 minute seminars during the busy gardening spring this year. They are at 10am on Saturdays (SAT CHATS) and at 1pm on Sundays (SUN FUN). These will open your mind to Gardening and perhaps show you some plants you may not be familiar with. *The schedule is as follows:*

SAT. April 30th	10am	"Cool Noodles"	SUN. May 15th	1pm	"Grow your Pizza"
SUN. May 1st	1pm	"Big Plants for a Big Show"	SAT. May 21st	10am	"Herbs in the Garden"
SAT. May 14th	10am	"Fairy Gardening"	SUN May 22nd	1pm	"Summer Sizzlers"

Makes 6 servings (about 6 cups)

Spring Rissoto

Total time: 1 hour

For the Broth, simmer:

6 cups low-sodium chicken broth

For the Rissoto, cook:

3 oz. Prosciutto, diced

2 Tbsp. Olive Oil, divided

1 lb. Asparagus, trimmed, cut into 1" pieces

Sweat:

1 Tbsp. Minced shallots

1 tsp. minced garlic

Stir in:

1 ½ cups dry Arborio Rice

Deglaze:

½ cup dry white wine, hot

2 cups chopped fresh spinach

1 cup frozen peas, thawed

2 Tbsp. Chopped fresh chives

½ cup shredded Parmesan
Salt and Black Pepper to taste

For the broth, simmer broth in a saucepan over medium heat. **For the Risotto, cook** prosciutto in 1 Tbsp. Oil in a large sauté pan over medium heat until crisp, 3-5 minutes; remove and set aside. Add asparagus to pan; sauté until tender, 5 minutes, then remove and set aside. **Sweat** shallots and garlic in remaining 1 Tbsp. oil until translucent, 3 minutes. **Stir in** Rice and sauté until each grain is coated in oil. **Deglaze** the pan with wine and stir until completely absorbed, 1-2 minutes. Add broth to the pan in ½ cup increments; simmer and stir frequently until each addition is almost completely absorbed before adding the next, about 45 minutes total. Stir in asparagus, spinach, peas, chives, and Parmesan. Season with salt and pepper; top with prosciutto.



TOP 10 REASONS TO GROW YOUR OWN FOOD!

1. To spend more time with your children.
2. To get the kids to eat more vegetables.
3. To have a sense of accomplishment.
4. To be more "green" this year.
5. To take extra produce to local food pantries.
6. To get more essential nutrients and vitamins.
7. To get to know your neighbors by sharing your harvests.
8. To spend less money at the grocery store.
9. To have an instant BLT.
10. Because it just plain tastes better!



TERESA'S PIECES

Season's Greenings! Nope, not a misprint, just my way of sayin', "Hey! Spring is finally here!"

Container gardening has been around for a long time, and is perfect for folks who not only don't have a lot of space, but also are more economic-minded these days.

Just about anything can be grown in containers, but I'd like to focus on--food, dude! Veggies, herbs, edible flowers. It's all good.

Choosing the right container is easy – a window box works well for herbs like basil, dill, oregano, and rosemary, to name a few, and for edible flowers such as nasturtiums, pansies, calendula (marigold) and scented geraniums.

Large plastic or metal containers are good for food crops. If the container doesn't have drainage holes, drill holes in the bottom and about ¼ of the way up. Clay pots can be used but remember, clay is very porous and unless treated with pottery sealer first, it will dry out quickly. If the pot you're using does have a large drainage hole, cover the hole with a piece of mesh screen, a shard of a broken pot, or a coffee filter to prevent soil from escaping.

Fabric grow-bags are excellent for crops like potatoes and tomatoes as they let air and the warmth of the sun in, and drain well. These bags can be purchased from Gardener's Supply Co. (1-800-427-3363) and cost around \$13.00 each.

Using the right potting mix is important. The soil should contain perlite for good drainage and to maintain moisture levels, and peat moss or horticultural vermiculite to keep the soil light and airy, exchanging air for water and vice-versa. Don't use mixes containing moisture crystals or fertilizer as they are made from synthetic materials that leach into the soil as they break down. We now carry Fox Farm Happy Frog Soil which is composed of "The Good Stuff" – bat guano, beneficial microbes, earthworm castings, dolomite lime (to adjust P.H.), oyster shell calcium and the aforementioned peat and perlite.

Fertilize your plants with organic products such as Happy Frog, Dr. Earth, or Neptune's Harvest about

every two weeks. Don't overdose! Under-fertilized plants actually grow better than those that are overfed.

Some veggie plants to consider for containers are:

CORN – miniature varieties and popping corn are ideal in pots. Grow only one variety and at least two plants per pot to ensure a good crop. Corn hates to germinate under cold, wet conditions so don't plant too early.

PEAS – These guys prefer cooler temps. So plant seeds in a container outside as soon as the ground is thawed. Applying a legume inoculant to the seeds will boost the yield and help the plant make it's own nitrogen. Try quick producing snow peas or sugarsnap varieties.

TOMATOES – Give 'em plenty of sun (8 hours) and lots of water. Determinate varieties stay more compact and bushy and should be planted at least 8 inches deep. Indeterminate types can grow quite tall, so use the biggest pot you can find. Pinch off "suckers" once a week to encourage growth of lots of yummy fruit.

PEPPERS – Peppers don't eat much, and keeping their roots constricted encourages fruit production. When the first blossoms appear, spray with water-dissolved Epsom salts to set the fruit. (Yes, we have Epsom Salts)

RADISHES – Another cool-weather plant, they will produce quickly so grow a few crops in spring and fall. Don't let them dry out or get too much direct heat or they will bolt and become woody and too fiery.

POTATOES – A few of us at La Crosse Floral are trying container spuds this year. Potatoes start from seed potatoes which can be purchased, or made by cutting a large spud into fourths – each piece must have at least one eye and should be placed in a cool, dark spot for a few days to "scab-over" before planting. Add 8" of soil to your pot and bury the potato 3 " deep. Once the vine develops, mound more soil around it and continue adding more until the vine reaches the top. When the plant turns brown and dies, it's time to harvest.

So, be a Foodie and grow yer own!

Remember to sing, "Happy Earth Day" on April 22nd.



Mission

To provide quality floral products and floral related services to businesses and people of all income levels in the Coulee Region. To help improve the quality of life in an environmentally friendly manner.

The Little Sprout

Perennials can be a mystical, sometimes intimidating category of plants to grow. And yet, we find that our customers are willing to learn about them and put in the time to perhaps groom them if only they have the correct information. Entire books are written on perennials; however, here is some basic info that may have you trying this wonderful category of plants. Care of Perennials is often divided by Season. So here are suggestions on what to do with your perennials in the spring, along with some helpful hints in our area.

While spring is usually a good time to divide or transplant perennials, **DO NOT** divide peonies, iris, or oriental poppies in the spring. Check on any perennials you planted later in the fall last year – winter frosts may have “heaved” them out of the soil a bit. When the snow is gone, and if any have popped out of the ground, gently press them back in place.

I am a **Huge** fan of Hellebores-maybe it is because of how the Europeans use them as cute “blooming plants” in the spring. With that said, Lenten Rose (*Helleborus orientalis*, specifically) and Barrenwort (*Epimedium*) should both be cut back in late winter, before any flower buds appear. This allows the flowers to be seen, rather than hidden among any old leaves. Other types of Hellebores, especially *Helleborus niger*, should not be pruned.

For perennials that have died back completely to the ground, remove the dead stems to just above the soil level. Late summer and fall blooming daisies (like *Rudbeckia* and *Coreopsis*) usually have dead flowering stems on top, but green leaves at the base. Remove the dead stems only. Evergreen perennials like Coral Bells (*Huechera*) and Lungwort (*Pulmonaria*) sometimes look worse for wear by spring. Go ahead and remove any dead or damaged leaves to tidy up the appearance, but leave any healthy green leaves. Evergreen rock garden plants like *Creeping Phlox* or *Candytuft* (*Iberis*) should not be cut back in spring. This may actually kill them or prevent them from blooming.

Woody-stemmed perennials are usually cut back to a height of 6-12” in mid-spring. Doing this too early may cause further dieback during sudden cold snaps. Examples include: Russian Sage, Butterfly Bush, Tree Mallow, Lavender, and *Caryopteris*. Cut back fall flowering ornamental grasses before any new growth appears in spring. We usually trim ours back at the same time as both our *Coreopsis* and Russian Sage – late March to mid-April, when the snow is gone. I cringe when I drive by clumps of grasses and see they are never cut back. It is really so simple.

Spring flowering bulbs should not be pruned back-they need to ripen their foliage to store energy in the

bulb for the following season. True Lilies should not be cut back (divide and move mid to late fall). Peonies have great foliage through summer and fall (divide and move mid fall). Oriental Poppies should be divided and replanted in August when plants are dormant. Bearded Iris can be moved or divided late July through September.

With Silver Mound (*Artemesia*), sometime in June you may notice round silver balls appearing, which are the flowers. A few weeks later, the whole plant collapses into a pile of black mush during the heat of summer. By cutting the whole plant back to about 2” in mid-June, you can encourage new growth to appear which will look good until fall frost. Did you know Garden Mums benefit from a trim? Cut them back about half way by or before the 4th of July for a nicely branched fat and full head by fall.

Another group of plants that benefit from a less dramatic summer pruning are the popular spring-flowering rock garden plants such as Wall Cress (*Arabis*), Rock Cress (*Aubretia*), Basket of Gold (*Aurinia*), Pinks (*Dianthus*), *Creeping Phlox*, and *Candytuft* (*Iberis*). By the start of summer or after the flowers are finished, plants should be pruned back by about half, using a shears. This results in both bushy compact growth and improves their survival in our humid warm summers.

Aside from the few plants listed above, most spring and summer blooming perennials can be safely cut back by at least half to two-thirds, once flowering is finished. I hope some of these “basics” help you with your perennial gardening.

Garden Glossary

Botrytis Blight – A disease also known as gray mold, or bud and flower blight. It usually grows on old flowers and leaves. It thrives in cool and moist conditions. Once established, it moves onto healthy plant parts. It causes unsightly spotting on flowers and leaves.

Cloche – A miniature greenhouse device (usually glass) used to protect an individual plant or seedling from harsh weather conditions. Also, now a trend in silk flower design.



Spring is the time of the year when nature awakens-plants and trees sprout new leaves and flowers bloom. Flowers are so beautiful and some are wonderfully fragrant.

Lilies are one of the most graceful looking flowers. The Asiatic lily is grown in almost every color imaginable and has 2-6 blooms on each stem. It has minimal to mild fragrance and is used as a focal point in many floral arrangements.

The Oriental Lily such as the Stargazer, is the best-known lily in the world, showing off its crimson flowers with a white edge. For more than 25 years it has remained a cut flower of choice, with its stunning beauty and potent fragrance. No wonder it's a favorite of floral designers!

The Casa Blanca Lily has world-famous enormous pure white flowers of incredible beauty! Add to that its marvelous fragrance and this too, is a floral designers favorite. You will often find this Lily in an expensive vase on the counters of such stores as Tiffany's. Accent Flowers are what we Designers refer to as the flowers we add to arrangements to fill in spaces.

Waxflower is a commonly used “accent” in many bouquets. It features tiny buds in pink, lilac, or white – and the tiny leaves resemble pine needles. Waxflower can make a beautiful bouquet in itself.

Statice is another accent flower that has a delicate, paper-like texture in colors of purple, white, and pink. They are famous for being able to last a long time without water, which can be helpful in a wedding bouquet.

Babies Breath was once a very popular accent, but fell off the charts for a few years. Well – Babies Breath is Back! (Say that three times fast). It is now falling into the category of “country chic” Love it!

Limonium or Caspia is a perfect accent in wedding bouquets, table centerpieces, and flower arrangements. It is a wispy stem made up of hundreds of tiny blooms in a lavender tint; however, the fragrance is something to be desired. Don't worry, though -- we spray it with Febreze before it comes to your door.



BARB'S BLOOMS

Monte Casino is from the Aster family and has many small daisy-like flowers in single or double types. They are grown in white, purple, pink, and yellow, and have yellow centers.

Soligago is one of my favorite accent flowers. Its fun yellow color makes it stand out from other accent flowers. Each stem has foliage and is topped by a cluster of yellow flowers. Add a handful of Soligago to a vase and you have a beautiful and inexpensive way to add fresh flowers to every room in the house.

Bupleurum may be considered a foliage because it is green, but can add color and shape to any arrangement with its cluster of little green flowers on each stem.

Alstroemeria can make for an absolutely awesome vased arrangement all on its own. Alstro (for short) comes in a variety of colors and resembles a miniature lily. (The common name is Peruvian Lily). The leaves of Alstro grow upside down, with the leaf twisting as it grows from the stem. The Astro has a long stem with shorter stems branching out from the top. Each short stem has a bloom which is why using several stems of Alstro in a vase is an excellent and beautiful arrangement for your table.

Still have those little vases under your kitchen sink? Set a few on your table, buffet, or coffee table – even a window sill, and use “Accent” Flowers for each vase. I can see a cluster of Waxflower in each one...or Monte Casino...try bunches of Babies Breath, and of course, my favorite – Solidago. WOW!

So, don't ignore Accent flowers because they can actually be quite beautiful and affordable.

Is it time for Accent Flowers to start taking Centerstage? *Hmmmm*



FLOWER FACTS

The perennial Lupine has the ability to absorb excess pesticides and other soil poisons. They were planted around Chernobyl, Ukraine, to absorb radiation poison after the nuclear disaster.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL

4th (Monday)
School Librarian Day
 7th (Thursday)
NO Housework Day
 24th (Sunday)
Easter
 27th (Wednesday)
Administrative Professionals Day
 30th-May 1st (Sat/Sun)
Spring Open House



MAY

3rd (Tuesday)
National Teachers Day
 8th (Sunday)
Mother's Day
 11th (Wednesday)
"Fly a Kite" Day
 22nd (Sunday)
Ice Cream Sunday
 30th (Monday)
Memorial Day



JUNE

1st (Wednesday)
Donut Day
 13th (Monday)
Weed Your Garden Day
 19th (Sunday)
Father's Day

