



The Floods of 2000 . . .

It started in mid-May with a roaring gully-washer that left a six-foot wide crevasse in the parking lot and threatened to take the last row of potted evergreens. That happens once every couple of years and while it's inconvenient, we chalk it up to the fact that we run our business in a deep picturesque valley, and water really wants to get down to the creek.

After a few truckloads of gravel, we smugly settled into the rest of the summer, knowing full well that the worst was over.

But it kept raining.

The morning of June 1 was the big

one. About 8" of rain fell in 18 hours. Not only was all of our new gravel gone, but the parking lot crevasse was twice as wide and ten feet deep. All the potted shrubs, fruit trees and crabs were gone; half the potted evergreens, the Gator, and our 3/4 ton cargo van vanished. The creek rose a foot over the bridge.

Natives of Readstown said they'd never seen it so bad along the Black-bottom (what locals call our stretch of yummy, rich soil) and would likely never see it like that again. So after the clean-up was underway and the plants restocked, we smugly settled into the rest of the summer

(once again!), knowing for sure, the worst was over.

The very early morning of July 10 it poured 4" in four hours. It was a fast and furious flash flood; the ground was saturated and the vegetation along the creek was already damaged, so there was no holding the creek within bounds. Again, water over the bridge; again all the brand new plants in the lower sales areas gone.

We're not too smug anymore. We moved to slightly higher ground, and no one's ever seen the water that high before . . .

. . . lead to our new location!

Sometimes you just have to be hit on the head!

We invite you to visit our new location just 1/4 mile west of the original entrance, still on Highway 14. We moved there after Flood #2 but didn't really make it official until now.

The new entrance off the highway, to be completed in early April, will offer easy and safe access to the nursery AND a parking lot with room for everyone. This should appeal to our customers who know what its like to visit us on busy spring weekends!

We will still carry all the finest varieties of shade trees, fruit trees, ornamental shrubs, evergreens, hardy roses, and loads of perennials—only now they'll all be available in a compact, easy-to-shop location.

Those of you who enjoyed the old location are welcome to wander the gardens. The flood literally "took" quite a bit of ground, but some of the more "upland" areas survived with minimal damage. We'll continue to work on and further develop these areas in the coming years.

As for the gift shop, we offer a more concise version in our new location! Pots, garden art, soils, fine tools, and more will be available. We'll keep you posted on that development.

Welcome to a New Season
(and thank you for getting us through the last one!)

Here we are again at the start of a new planting season—we hope this newsletter finds everyone sufficiently healed from last year's weather woes and excitedly preparing for a great spring.

This will be a rebuilding year here at Read's Creek Nursery. We heartily thank all who pitched in last year during the flood. From borrowed backhoes, bobcats, and other vehicles to many hours of labor cleaning plants and shoveling rock. Everyone's support is fondly remembered and very appreciated.

But on the real news! The fully relocated nursery will feature a more compact layout, easy access, and plenty of parking! Call early for special plant requests—we'll try to find just what you're looking for; We'll be opening April 1 - see you then!

Bill Kappler and Lisa Ashley

New Perennials for 2001

Every year plant growers and hybridizers come up with loads of new perennials for our home gardens. Part of our job at the nursery is to select those that have the most garden potential, in terms of beauty, hardiness, and disease resistance, for our area—and the best choices are not always the most advertised! Plus there are lots of plants that aren't "new" but are rediscovered natives that can add lots of natural beauty. Read on for a listing of just some of the new plants at Read's Creek Nursery this year. Stop in and see what's new!

***Achillea siberica* 'Kamschaticum'** **Siberian Yarrow**

I hesitated to put a yarrow in this year's listing of favorites; it can be weedy looking, gets into everything, and is pretty common. But this one sounds different—it has rich, shiny green serrated foliage that grows strongly upright about 15", and blooms large dusty pink flowers in midsummer. Our supplier calls this the "classiest yarrow yet"! Enough for me—I can see it surrounded with clumps of silvery *Stachys b.* 'Helene von Stein' (a non-blooming lamb's ear).

Amsonia hubrectii*/*A. tabernaemontana **Bluestar**

This is not a new plant but certainly an underused one. *Amsonia* blooms in mid-spring with lovely pale blue star-shaped flowers. In fall, the plant really puts on a show, turning bright gold for weeks! *A. hubrectii* has thin thread-leaves and *A. tabernaemontana* has thick, leathery leaves. Both grow slowly and get about 36" tall.

Baptisia minor **Dwarf False Blue Indigo**

Many people are familiar with *Baptisia australis* and its jewel blue flowers, but it can be a bit tall and floppy.

This species of False Indigo only grows 15" or so, so would be perfect for a smaller garden or maybe even an edger for the bed.

***Perovskia* 'Little Spire'** **Dwarf Russian Sage**

Russian Sage is one of those plants that has really become popular in recent years. It has great foliage, blooms a long time, and get big fast. This "getting big" aspect can be ok if you have a large garden, but those with small gardens can find *Perovskia atriplicifolia* a little much. "Little Spire" only gets half the height, about 24", doesn't flop, and looks a little like lavender.

***Rudbeckia nitida* 'Herbstonne'** **Autumn Sun Coneflower**

A relatively unknown species of Coneflower that's bound to get more attention. Blooms for a long time starting in mid-summer with bright yellow daisies and green cones. This plant continues until frost, relentlessly blooming. And yes, it gets huge—6-8 feet! But just think of all the flowers! Might we say, the back of the border?

***Stachys grandiflora* 'Superba'** **(Not your usual) Lamb's Ear**

No, this one's not gray, it's not really woolly, and it doesn't look weedy. In fact, it looks like *Salvia* with rasp-

berry colored blooms. It's very compact, about 20", and upright which lends itself to edging or massing.

Perennial Plant of the Year!! ***Calamagrostis a.* 'Karl Foerster'** **Feather Reed Grass**

This grass is one of the most outstanding grasses hardy for our area—unfortunately, it doesn't show itself as well in the pot as the *Miscanthus* varieties, so it's not planted as often. This is a cool season grass, which means it starts growing in late March and by the time the *Miscanthus* grasses poke their heads up, it's already knee high at least! Fluffy seed heads, bronze fall color, clumping habit, and a distinctly vertical shape is perfect for covering a hillside or punctuating a bed or foundation area.

Clematis heraclefolia **Bush Clematis**

This is a very different clematis—it doesn't climb, but rather sprawls like a soft bush and blooms like crazy in late summer with silvery-blue tubular flowers.



Try a Wildlife Hedge

A wildlife hedge is an informal grouping of large shrubs and trees that provide a variety of berries and seeds for all kinds of wildlife including deer, grouse, and songbirds. But given a little prior thought, wildlife hedges can be also be a beautiful tapestry that creates texture and beauty for humans to enjoy too! Here are a few ideas . . .

Arborvitae	Viburnum	Dogwood	Serviceberry	Hemlock	Birch	Ninebark	Euonymus
Sumac	Oak	Bluestem	Aspen	Red Cedar	Fruit Trees	Winterberry	Perennials

Fruit Trees for the Kickapoo Valley

Every spring we get lots of questions about fruit trees from pollination to diseases to varieties. Here are answers to the most common ones. Feel free to call, stop in, or email us with your questions!

🍏 One or Two?

* Many trees need to cross-pollinate so choose at least two different varieties that bloom at the same time. In apples, this can be determined by whether or not the tree is considered “early”, “mid-season”, or “late” in terms of its bloom time. You can overlap bloom times by planting a Wealthy, which is an early bloomer, with a Honeycrisp, which is a mid-season bloomer, but avoid planting only early bloomers with late ones. We have a list at the nursery describing the bloomtimes of all the apples we carry.

\$26.50!

That's what most potted, well-branched fruit trees cost at Read's Creek Nursery! **Bargain!**

🍏 Size Matters

* Most fruit trees are grafted. The rootstock determines whether the tree will be a standard size, a semi-dwarf, or a dwarf. Many of the fruit trees we carry are grafted on “semi-dwarf” stock which will grow a tree that is 60% of the standard size—about 12' tall. This is a good size for picking from (and you'll get fruit much earlier than standard sized trees!). The rootstock should also be considered when choosing how many fruit trees will fit in your yard. A standard sized fruit tree might quickly overgrow a residential yard! A semi-dwarf tree will need approximately 150 square feet.

🍏 Branched Are Best

* Whips or branched? Whips are trees with only a central leader, no branches. This means you have to do the initial pruning and branch selection. For this reason, most of the fruit trees we carry are branched. We find that it's easier to keep a nice shape when you start out with one!

🍏 Disease Resistance

* Keeping fruit trees healthy is very



important and can be challenging. There are many fruit varieties available that are resistant to the diseases that commercial nurseries spray for. It's important to select these especially if you don't want to use toxic sprays (which is why many people plant their own fruit trees in the first place!). Apples like “Honeycrisp,” “Haralson,” “Honeygold,” and “Liberty” are very resistant and hardy. But even the best bred trees can become diseased if the conditions are right. If you do have trees that become diseased, dormant oil spray is very effective, but should be done in the spring.



Other Fruit Facts

- Pears— Usually are disease-free; need “Parker” variety for pollinizer
- Tart Cherries—Disease-free; self-pollinating; sweet cherries are not reliably hardy in the Kickapoo Valley
- Plums—Easy to grow; need “Toka” variety or nearby wild plums for pollinizer; “Mt. Royal” is a small Italian plum and self-pollinating
- Cherry Plums—Excellent tree with a beautiful form and fruit that's a cross between plums and cherries; needs two to cross-pollinate
- Apricots—Two different varieties needed for cross pollination; plant in a protected spot
- Peaches—Everyone wants peaches! Plant the hardiest variety in a protected spot; self-pollinating
- Blueberries—Two different varieties of the same type (highbush or lowbush) needed for pollination; must have very acid soil; highly ornamental
- Lingonberries—Cute, evergreen, minishrubs that produce tart berries that taste like cranberries; need acidic soil and protection from the wind
- Grapes—Vigorous vines that need strong support and annual pruning to be productive; seedless varieties are not reliable hardy in zone 4
- Raspberries—Everbearing or fallbearing; different pruning methods for each kind; “Heritage” variety benefits from complete cane removal each spring—easy!
- Currants—Red currants are 5' shrubs that produce loads of tart red berries. Black currants are the host of cedar-apple rust so keep them away from fruit trees
- Gooseberries—Cultivated varieties grow with fewer thorns; “Pixwell” has green berries, “Hinnomaki Red” has red.
- Kiwi—Small fruits the size of grapes, but sweet, grow on vigorous vines; male needed for pollinizing and has variegated leaves
- Strawberries—Junebearing and everbearing



**Please return
nursery pots!**



Top 10 Reasons why people select their plants from Read's Creek Nursery . . .

- # 10. More than 1,000 hardy plant varieties
- # 9. Unusual annual flowers, vegetables, and herbs
- # 8. Environmentally sound growing practices
- # 7. Experienced planting advice
- # 6. Plant wish lists fulfilled (if we don't have it, we can get it!)
- # 5. Helpful information on our website www.readscreeknursery.com
- # 4. Site-specific plant solutions
- # 3. Landscaping services available
- # 2. Resource and reference library on hand

And, the number one reason why people select their plants from Read's Creek Nursery . . .

We'll work hard to earn your business !

www.readscreeknursery.com

Log on to our internet site for

- Informative gardening articles
- Availability lists
- Photos
- Sending wish lists
- Emailing your gardening questions

We'd love to hear from you - ashkapp@mwt.net

We're easy to find! Located right on Hwy.14 just 3 miles west of Readstown. The entrance is west of the sundial.

