



Grand Trees

Pick up any garden book or catalog these days and you'll likely read about all kinds of small, ornamental trees for your garden or yard. And they are wonderful; satisfyingly reaching maturity in *this* lifetime, not planted for only future generations to enjoy.

So why an article on "grand" trees? The beauty of an enormous, gnarly, century-old tree simply cannot be matched by an "ornamental" one. Consider that they are the largest living land organism. A large oak, for instance, can weigh 30 tons, cover 2000 square yards, and include ten miles of twigs and branches. Each year the tree pumps several tons of water about 100 feet in the air, produces a new crop of about 100,000 leaves, and covers half an acre of trunk and branches with a new pelt of bark. Impressive.

So, pick an undisturbable place, and plant one this year!

The Oaks (*Quercus spp.*) The white oak, bur oak, and red oak all achieve 70 feet or more, so no matter what your soil type, there's one that would work for you.

Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) An ancient genus, reaching back 3 million years, *Metasequoia* is certainly a grand tree on many levels! Has proven hardy here for several years, but unfortunately no large specimens in our immediate area. It's certainly worth planting; grows fast into a pinnacle-like shape, has delicate, ferny, deciduous leaves that turn a pink-bronze in the fall, and it's prehistoric!

Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) Another much underused tree, the tulip tree is native to eastern US and there can grow to heights of 170 feet! Again, there are not many specimens here in these central farming areas, but they're hardy. We have a five year old specimen that literally glistens with health. And we stumbled onto a 70 foot tree in Onalaska a few

years ago. It was stunning. Oh by the way, they also get greenish-yellow tulips for their flower and foliage unlike any other.

Cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) Ok, now here's one that's well represented in our area! Fortunately, they're fast growing, because for the first few decades they're too symmetrical to be grand. After that though, as they reach 60 feet or so, they get rugged, perhaps a little unbalanced, and a little more personable. Easy and fast to grow.

Sycamore (*Platanus spp.*) Popular in cities because of their high pollution tolerance, one might think they couldn't possibly be one of the most beautiful trees, but they are. If you can keep the Anthracnose fungus from them. Planting the cultivar "Bloodgood" helps to keep that culprit at bay, and allows you to enjoy the beauty of the scalloped, exfoliating bark in cream, olive, cinnamon, and beige. Can reach heights of 90 feet.

Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*) Popular now for it's medicinal qualities of improving memory, ginkgo trees have been around for longer than people have cared about what needed remembering! This genus made it's start 350 million years ago in the region now know as China, but back then bore little resemblance to today's world. It's very disease resistance, perhaps, is because it evolved long before any leafeater existed! The tree looks somewhat fossilized and certainly unique with it's nubbly branches and fan-shaped leaves (the coveted shape for any tenth grade botanist's collection). Mostly male specimens are planted today to avoid the odorous fruit that bears 30 years or so down the road. Probably a good idea if you want the tree to survive, since our preoccupation with cleanliness and odor will likely increase over the years and you'd hate to have the tree removed for smelliness!

A Fresh Start

To all the newcomers to the nursery, thanks for stopping in last year, and to all of our established customers, thanks for your continuing support. You all made our rebuilding year wonderful. We heartily look forward to the year to come as one full of refinements to the nursery space and of our service to you.

So, what's new this year? We have an expanded selection of nursery plants of course, but more this year than any other. The more wonderful gardens we visit in our area, as well as public arboreta, the more plants we find we just have to carry! But there's no sense in selling plants with inherent problems like disease, poor growth, etc. so we constantly refine our choices, and we've found so many great plants not easily available. We believe that's what makes us unique.

We're expanding the gift shop by adding lots of cool garden art and accessories. It's a work in progress, so check in on it occasionally.

And watch the progress along the highway. From a new pond, to a "new" old log cabin, to new demonstration gardens, we'll be beautifying our space and, we hope introducing everyone to new specimens!
Bill Kappler and Lisa Ashley

Great Perennials for 2002

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 favorites at Read's Creek Nursery this year. Stop in and see what's new!

Anemone spp. **Windflower**

Anemones are graceful, their stems dancing high above their foliage; they're hardy and robust, growing in a variety of soils and exposures; they come in lots of colors and bloom times too - what more could you want? *Anemone sylvestris* blooms early, dainty, and white, *Anemone x lesseri* also early but rose-red flowers, and then the fall bloomers like *Anemone tomentosa* 'Robustissima', *Anemone hupehensis*, and *Anemone* 'Honorine Jobert'.

Epimedium spp. **Barrenwort**

We've carried this plant in the past and we've added a few new cultivars this year. I have a special admiration for this plant after this winter though. Here in Southwestern Wisconsin, 2002 was very mild with little or no snowcover. In our hosta garden along the driveway is a very mature *epimedium rubrum*, relatively inconspicuous in the summer when the hostas are huge and strong. But this winter there it was, a stunning purplish-red clump that I looked at every day! And when it blooms in early spring - wonderful!

Geranium phaeum 'Samobor' **Perennial Geranium**

Perennial geraniums are so often overlooked; maybe because they get confused with the annual kinds, or maybe they seem ordinary and even weedy. We've collected many varieties that are just gems though, and this one is great. 'Samobor' has a chocolate-brown zone on each leaf with dusky-purple flowers. Grows wild in Croatia.

Helianthus maximiliani **Tall Sunflower**

We grew this plant a few years ago but it was lost in the flood and I haven't found it available since. Luckily we have it again - it's fantastic! But it's huge - from 6-8' tall with very late blooming panicles of sunflowers almost pendulous with the weight.

Verbascum 'Yellow Johnson' **Ornamental Mullein**

We had a mullein called 'Arctic Summer' blooming in one of the demonstration beds at the nursery, which, aside from the gigantic artichoke, received the most praise. Lemon yellow flower spikes all summer long above woolly silver/gray foliage. Because it produced so little seed, it just kept blooming from May through August. We should have some of that variety as well as this one with creamy yellow flowers and red eyes.

Perennial Plant of the Year **Phlox paniculata 'David'** **Tall Garden Phlox**

Here's a good example of a plant that's not really new, it's from the 1980's, but it may be newly appreciated. We've had lots of Phlox cultivars over the years, but many of them are plagued with powdery mildew no matter what we do. 'David' is very mildew-resistant, 36-40" tall, with huge white, fragrant flower panicles, and it blooms for much of the summer. All of these criteria make a plant worthy of being called "Plant of the Year". The Perennial Plant Association has commended the following plants over the years:

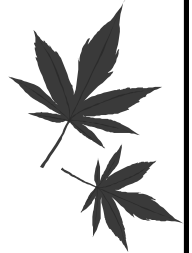
- 2001 *Calamagrostis* 'Karl Foerster'
- 2000 *Scabiosa* 'Butterfly Blue'
- 1999 *Rudbeckia* 'Goldsturm'
- 1998 *Echinacea purpurea* 'Magnus'
- 1997 *Salvia* 'May Night'
- 1996 *Penstemon* 'Husker Red'
- 1995 *Perovskia atriplicifolia*
- 1994 *Astilbe* 'Sprite'
- 1993 *Veronica* 'Sunny Border Blue'
- 1992 *Coreopsis* 'Moonbeam'
- 1991 *Heuchera* 'Palace Purple'

Small Trees

Ok, ok, just the smallest blurb on ornamental trees. I can't help it, mostly because of one specimen in particular, *Acer pseudosieboldianum*, also called Korean Maple, or sometimes Purplebloom. The tree is very similar to a Japanese Maple, delicate leaf, arching shape, reaching heights of 25' or so, lovely colors in the fall ranging from orange to red to yellow. Here's the best part - it's hardy to zone 3! So yes, even you can enjoy their beauty.

Another favorite is the Fox Valley Birch, *Betula nigra* 'Fox Valley', which sports all the wonderful qualities of a river birch like exfoliating bark that reveals a range of creamy colors, dark green toothed foliage that shines with health, and bronze birch borer resistance. For those with small yards, this one works - it only gets 10' tall and approximately 12' wide! I can imagine them randomly scattered in a mini grove underplanted with dwarf hostas and tiny woodlands. Like a fairy garden!

Prunus maackii, the Amur Chokecherry, has always topped my list. Stunning bark like tightly wrapped copper exfoliates at a young age. Fruit in late May that birds eat while still green - so, no mess! Grows 30' tall.



A "new" old log cabin

If you've driven along Hwy. 14 this winter, you've likely seen a "new" log cabin positioned just east of the greenhouse. In December 2001, this 18.5' x 17.5' cabin was moved intact across the highway nearer to its original location.

But this was not the first move for this cabin. The cabin was built in 1885 by Austin Erickson on the other side of Read's Creek. In October of 1893 both the land and cabin were sold to Peter Hendrickson who proceeded to move it across the creek - not an easy task in 1893! The roof was sawed in half and all the logs taken apart, each one marked so that it could fit back together as it was originally.

The cabin eventually changed hands again, this time purchased by Leo Callahan in 1946. Not wanting the cabin destroyed when Highway 14 was relocated, the cabin was moved, this time in one piece, to the other side of the proposed road.

The cabin and land were then part of the Methum dairy farm purchase, and then sold to Royce and Fran Jones in 1969, who actually lived in the cabin for two months while the Methum brothers moved off the farm.

During the late 1980's and early 1990's, the log cabin was fitted with old

cast iron coolers and used for the strawberry business that occupied the old tobacco land along the Blackbottom.

Since that time, it's been vacant, except for the occasional cat that needs shelter. Slowly over the last 115 years, several of the bottom logs have started to decay and return to earth. It was either "fix it or lose it!" In balmy December it was jacked up, hauled intact across the road to its new foundation, had it's composted logs replaced, and gently lowered. By January the structural imbalances were corrected and the roof repaired.

The restoration will be a work in progress for the following summer and beyond. Imagine large, arching elms (dutch-elm disease resistant of course) shading the perimeter, and hollyhocks, bleeding hearts, and peonies hedging the entrance. The cabin will be open to the public so that everyone can share in this

piece of history.



Water Plants

Over the years, our desire to offer water plants for sale has far exceeded our ability to care for them - from keeping the water pure to actually putting them, dripping wet, into your backseat, water plants present way more challenge than they suggest! After all, they don't even need watering!

Until last year. Well equipped with display tanks that circulate water, we confidently stocked them with a variety of exotics and natives for everyone's tastes and budgets. And what a

success! Plants stayed tremendously healthy, even through the scorching heat of July, and the water was clear and scum free.



Water plants come in a variety of sizes and effects. Sometimes the simplicity of a water-lily pond is completely satisfying, and other times the seclusion of a hidden woodsy bog is what you're after. We carry a nice selection of hardy water lilies in yellow, white, pink, and red - and we hope to obtain this year a few hardy lotuses. Variegated, dwarf, and regular cattails, several kinds of papyrus, iris, rushes, plenty of submerged oxygenators and floaters, taros, and a selection of regular perennials that enjoy the moistness of a pond's edge.

An added bonus: this year we'll be working on a large pond between the greenhouse and the highway. We'll be working with Robert Dobbs, a large wall and pond specialist from Richland Center, to develop an inter-

Royce Jones - a premier plantsman 1920-2001

This past December marked the passing of Royce Jones, age 81. Many of our customers remember Royce, the previous owner of the nursery, then called Jones' Arboretum. In 1973 Royce and his wife Fran purchased the barren dairy farm that eventually evolved into a densely planted and beautifully flowing country estate, as well as a nursery business and arboretum. Royce, a nuclear scientist, used his education and passion for plants to teach local residents about the "new" hobby of gardening. He also created a Vernon County landmark, the 36 foot armillary sundial.

When he sold the nursery in 1992 and moved into Viroqua, his property soon became one of the wonderful gardens in town. He is also responsible for planting and beautifying the sledding hill between his place and the Vernon County courthouse; the property is owned by the county, but because lots of people walked along it, and Royce could see it from his porch, he started planting. With only perennials, so the sledders would not be disturbed, he created a spectacular garden worth visiting.

Thanks Royce, for all you've done for us.

esting aquatic environment to experiment with. **We invite any of our customers to bring their pond building questions to the nursery.** We're bound to learn a lot of new techniques and Robert will be on hand to offer his expertise as well. While we don't stock heavy-duty pond liners, we've always been happy to order them, custom cut, for you. For updates on the pond, stop by anytime, or give us a call.

A few favorites!

Black Taro	<i>Colocasia spp.</i>	tropical
Parrot Feather	<i>Myriophyllum aquaticum</i>	oxygenator
Floating Clover	<i>Marsilea quadri-folia</i> 'Variegata'	tropical

**Opening
April 15 -**
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appointment



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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 !



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- Informative gardening articles
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- Photos
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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.

