

Horticulture HUB

The Place for Horticulture in Chenango County

March 26th, 2015

Let's Talk Horticulture



The Summer farmer's market season will be upon us soon! Just as robins are the harbingers of spring, the markets are the harbingers of summer and who here isn't looking forward to that?

Last season I was responsible for monitoring the Bullthistle Farmer's Market in downtown Norwich. A new market, managed by the Norwich Business Improvement District. I learned a lot about markets and hope to be a vendor in a market this summer as well. Did you know there are

at least 9 active markets in the county? That's a lot of places to go to get local wares. Each market is slightly different. Each market has its strengths and weaknesses. One thing that is true for all the markets, they make for an excellent opportunity to keep local dollars in the community. Many of the markets accept EBT cards and some accept FMNP checks. Both programs help people have access to fresh local produce and other food items.

Our newly [revamped website](#) lists all the markets. If you are interested in any of them, call ahead!

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Roadside Bloomer Report



The month: March

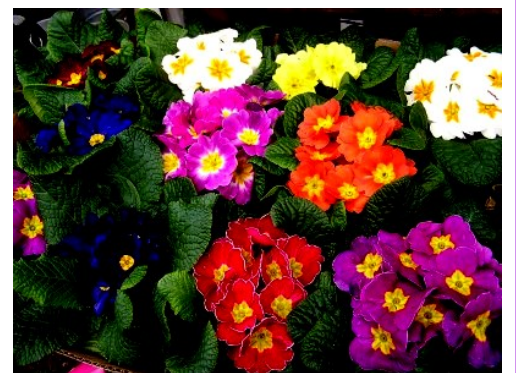
The topic: Hey, what's that plant?

There's nothing blooming out there you might say? That's right but that's ok, just like last year, we're switching over to an **Inside Bloomer**

Report for the winter!

Check out this column for interesting houseplants.

English Primrose
Primula polyantha



These little lovelies are one of the first bout of spring flowers your local nursery will carry to brighten your dreary March along with forced daffodils and hyacinths. They come in yellow, red, purple, an array of pinks, burgundy, white, blue and sometimes orange.

Primula prefer to be kept evenly moist. Not soggy, but once the top of the soil dries out a little, water them well and keep them away from your heating vents. They can be planted out into the garden in the spring but many will not survive the winter. I have seen them survive if mulched heavily and if the soil is amended with organic matter. They do not seem to appreciate soils that are too heavy or too light.

Sound picky? Well a little bit but if you can make *Primula* happy, you can definitely consider yourself a green thumb and that is rewarding indeed!



Houseplant Growing Success

In March, the only two things that save me some winters from going out in to the front yard and shoveling snow out on to the road where it will then die a slow and melty death, are starting seeds and houseplants.



Just like this one!

Warts are Beautiful

I've grown many a houseplant, studied them in college and was given the task of keeping one alive on my dorm windowsill for my flower arranging course. Quite the challenge when you're taking classes! But it lived, and on I went, adding to my houseplant collection until it became quiet large and unique. My most unusual was a lady-slipper orchid (*Paphiopedilum*). It was very ugly with twisted sepals, warts and hairs but because they tend to be trickier to grow, I loved it for rewarding my careful attention with its unsavory looking flowers.

Say No to Plant Abuse

Just like in your garden outside, houseplants all have certain conditions they need to perform admirably. In the case of my ugly orchid, it needed filtered sun, consistent moisture and higher humidity. A little bit pickier than a Mother-in-Law's tongue. Those tall, lance-shaped plants used in offices and restaurants. I didn't water mine for a month and it survived. I did that repeatedly and it eventually started to lose its roots and die. I finally noticed its cries for attention, repotted it, gave it water once a week and it's now making new leaves at a good clip. Very few houseplant will withstand that kind of abuse!

Me and Ivy Don't Get Along

Winter is particularly hard on houseplants. Many of them come from fairly tropical climates where the humidity is high if not 100% most of the time. The air is very dry in the winter. In general, you may find you have to water them more in the winter than in the summer because the air is so dry. This is especially true for things like ivy (not a tropical). I stopped trying to grow ivy even though I truly adore the form of the trailing plants and the shapes of the leaves. I was never good enough about keeping ivy watered and the minute I let it get too dry (seriously, *the minute*) the darned things would get aphids. It was like they were lying in wait and once the proper conditions were met for the aphids, (or not met for the ivy), they exploded on every new leaf and every fresh green bit of new growth. (continued on page 2)

Learn a Thing or Two

Caterpillar Gardening Program from Colleen Wolpert

April 11th at 2pm; Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall, Bainbridge, NY. Light refreshments will be served. Donations appreciated.

"Gardening for butterflies and moths is more than planting nectar sources for adults. At this presentation, participants will learn how they can assist butterflies and moths in all stages of their lifecycle, as well as distinguish them from pests so that all of us can enjoy these beautiful creatures for years to come. Participants will learn the importance of nurturing specific plants and weeds in order to maintain and increase the population" This presentation is sponsored by the Jericho Garden Club of Bainbridge. In collaboration with Rick Bunting.

Class on Pruning and Grafting at Twisted Tree Farm

March 29th 1PM- **-www.twisted-tree.net or call 607-589-7937 for more info.** \$20-40 sliding scale. This hands-on class will focus on pruning and top working apple trees. We'll be working on old wild apple trees as well as young trees. We will also be working on how to prune and care for fruiting shrubs. Participants can expect to understand why we prune, how to make a proper cut, where to cut, and why. We will also be top working some wild apple trees with different grafting techniques.

Growing Mushrooms: Farming Fungi in Forests and Logs

Wednesday April 22nd 6pm-8:30pm. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chenango County Norwich, NY 99 N Broad St., Norwich. Interested in learning how to grow exotic and wild mushrooms? Log mushroom cultivation is easy and marketable. Come learn about mushroom log production: how to grow, what tools and supplies you need, species of mushrooms, and tips on enjoying and marketing. This is a hands-on workshop! Each participant will inoculate a shii-take log, and make an indoor oyster mushroom kit, both to take home! Please bring a corded drill with you (if you've got one). A drill bit will be provided. Cost \$20 per person, includes log and kit. Call 607-334-5841 for more information. Class size limited to 20 people, please register by Wednesday April 8th.

Giant Pumpkin Growing class

April 25th 3-4pm FREE CCE Norwich, 99 N. Broad St. in the Kitchen. Didn't win in the pumpkin growing contest at the Norwich Pumpkin Fest last year? Don't worry! Alan White did with his 662 pound stunner and he's willing to share his know-how on how to grow the big, contest-winning pumpkins at this free class. Take home some giant pumpkin seeds and get growing! Call (607) 334-5841 for details.

Houseplant Success Continued.....

Plant Pests are Opportunistic

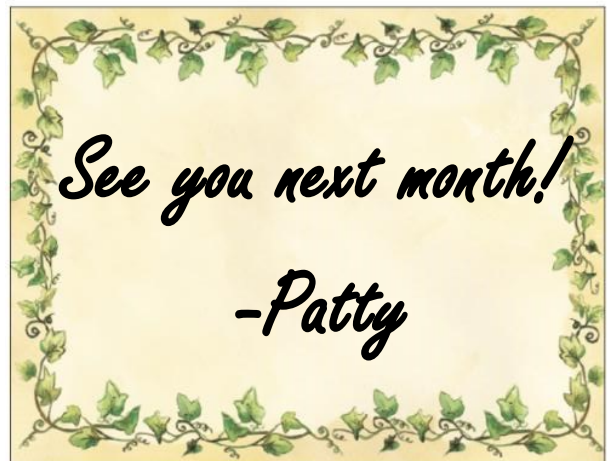
Actually, it is worth mentioning here that that is exactly what many plant pests do. They lie dormant and await the right conditions which is why sometimes it can seem as if an insect just appears overnight. Which is a great argument for two things: 1) doing the research before you buy a houseplant so you know its ideal conditions and 2) giving it those conditions if at all possible.

Moving Woes

One of the things that has caused some serious mortality rates in my houseplant collection is moving. Every place I have lived has had different light exposure. Light exposure can be a big deal for some plants. For others it's moisture or growing medium. Trying to grow orchids in your standard potting soil is a recipe for disaster. But if you tried to grow a Primrose (they're available now at some nurseries) in soil-less orchid bark mix, you would kill your Primrose pretty quickly because they prefer consistent moisture. Orchid mix drains immediately. Not such a good thing for a Primrose.

Don't Be Afraid

Everyone kills their houseplants at some point. One knocks off here and another there.....it's only natural because our lives are always changing. Don't give up. Don't be afraid and if you are concerned about wasting money, haunt the 'bloomed out' section of your nursery. Often, nurseries and garden centers will offer flowers that are done blooming at a discounted rate. Take one home, give it some love and if it dies, you won't be out quite as much had you paid full price. But before it dies please call the Master Gardener Volunteer helpline at 607-334-5841 ext. 13 and leave a message. We would love to help you save your plant.



Plant Rant

Good or bad, this is where a plant gets their due!



Kodiak Black™ Honeysuckle or *Diervilla rivularis* is the latest cultivar of a native honeysuckle being put out by Proven Winners. Many native plant proponents believe that making cultivars of species that are native can help dispel the native plant (unruly, short bloom, too wild looking) image. Cultivars are created to make plants shorter, bloom longer, or otherwise tweak their unfavorable characteristics. *Diervilla* is worth growing because it IS one of the more well-behaved native plants. Its form remains loose but well rounded most of the time and can be hedged. It just tends to be on the plain side which is why (I'm guessing) the breeders gave it something interesting: reddish blackish leaves. Give it a try if you see it. It's tolerant of

many kinds of soil including clay. But we aware that it may spread some if it's very happy.

NAME: Native Honeysuckle or *Diervilla rivularis* 'Kodiak Black'™

HEIGHT: Max 48 inches tall

EXPOSURE/SOIL: Full, part sun, part shade

FACTOIDS: *Diervilla* is not related to the invasive nonnative honeysuckles (*Lonicera* species) that spread throughout the woods in CNY, making a case for using Latin names!



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OF interest

Websites (CTRL + click to go to site)

[Proven Winners](#)

Guide to Houseplants

<http://www.guide-to-houseplants.com/>

American Primrose Society

www.americanprimrosesociety.org/

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