



February 2009

Anticipating Spring's Arrival

by Jerry Goodspeed, Ogden Botanical Gardens

As we plan this coming year I feel a little like a child on Christmas Eve. I just can't wait for spring to get here so we can start watching our plants and our plans grow. The Utah Botanical Center and Ogden Botanical Garden are working together this year to offer more quality, fun-filled workshops and educational opportunities. With many cool things planned, I am already getting that spring itch (OK, I admit, I usually get it about the second day of January anyway).

We will offer a wider variety of classes and workshops to increase your knowledge and abilities, and help save you money throughout the year. You could call it our "Plant Stimulus Package." We will teach you how to create beautiful things for your home and landscape, and you get to take home a completed project - a hanging basket, wreath, landscape design or flower arrangement - to inspire your next attempts.

Along with our workshops, we are offering free pruning demonstrations and classes on subjects like grafting, tree selection, Japanese gardens, designing with bulbs and others. Of course, we will still have our Farmers Market at the UBC and plant sales in the spring at both locations. This year we will offer a wider selection of plants. Now, doesn't that make you all excited for the spring? For more information on specific classes please visit the UBC Web site at

<http://utahbotanicalcenter.org/hm/education/adults/garden-workshops>.



Feature Article:

Growing Plants from Seed

by Richard Anderson

Many people are discovering that growing plants from seed is extremely satisfying, especially as they learn how to do it well. An immense amount of satisfaction can be gained by watching a seed germinate and develop through various stages. In fact, growing plants is considered by many people to be a valuable form of therapy. Whether you are starting vegetables for the home garden or attempting to germinate seeds for the landscape, starting small is not only rewarding, but makes good sense on a limited budget. Growing plants from

seeds at first may appear to be quite simple; however, in some cases it is not, and a little research and preparation will be necessary to achieve success.

All seeds require a set of environmental conditions for germination. The most basic of these environmental stimuli include heat, light, water and oxygen. Replicating the natural environmental conditions for your seed variety is the first step in the germination process. This can be as simple as a germination chamber in the windowsill or stepping up to a small greenhouse or cold frame in the yard.

[Read More of this Month's Feature Article](#)

Featured Disease:

Damping Off

by Jerry Goodspeed

About this time of the year many people try their hand at starting their own vegetable or bedding plants from seed. As mentioned in the previous article, this can be fun and interesting, but it can also be a little discouraging if all the plants suddenly die. Although there are not many problems with starting seeds at home, one disease called damping off can kill a flat of seedlings overnight.

Damping off is caused by a fungal disease that likes moist warm conditions. Of course, this is also the environment most seedlings prefer. Damping off affects the seedlings right at the base of the small, new plant. The stem right at the soil level will turn brown and weaken, causing the seedling to fall over and eventually die. Of course, many people see the wilting seedling and apply more water, which simply helps the disease spread.

[Read More of this Month's Featured Pest](#)



Featured Tree:

'Horstmann's Silberlocke' Fir

by JayDee Gunnell

'Horstmann's Silberlocke' Fir

(*Abies koreana* 'Horstmann's Silberlocke')

Type: Small evergreen

Zone: 5-6 (0 to -20°F)

Size: 15-30 feet tall

8-10 feet wide

Description: While this tree is small in stature, it is big on presentation.

The cultivar, 'Horstmann's Silberlocke' is an extremely slow growing fir with an irregular, but tight, growth habit. The soft needles curl upward, revealing a silver streak to the underside. It is often listed as a variegated

fir. Even the purple-blue cones (2-3" long) add a unique presence to the landscape. Cones usually appear on well-established trees. This tree performs best in a well-drained soil with even moisture. As with other dwarf conifers, be prepared to spend more money than you normally would on other trees. The slower growth rate and time associated with producing these plants makes them more expensive. However, they are worth their weight in gold when, in 10 years, you don't have to pay thousands of dollars to cut them out (as you would if you planted their full-sized siblings).

Featured Perennial:

Western Columbine

by Richard Anderson

Western Columbine

(*Aquilegia formosa*)

Type: Perennial

Zone: 4 (-30°F)

Size: 2-3 feet tall

1½ feet wide

Description: The name *Aquilegia* comes from the Latin word *aquil*, meaning eagle, referring to the shape of the petals, while *formosa*, means

beautiful. The common name, columbine, also traces its name root, *columba*, meaning dove-like, to the Latin language. Each spring, *Aquilegia formosa*, explodes into bloom. Numerous bright, red flowers punctuate loose, airy stems. Hummingbirds, bees and butterflies love this plant because of the copious amounts of nectar it produces. Finches and sparrows feed on its seed. I recommend this species to all mountain gardeners, especially those who can provide a cool, shady bed. With regular watering, this plant can be grown at lower elevations in fertile, well-drained soil. Regular deadheading of spent flowers will prolong bloom and prevent volunteer seedlings. Go ahead and cut the entire plant to the ground once flowering is complete. If you want to save seed, let a few seed heads develop and harvest before they open. As a word of warning, columbine seed and plant parts are considered poisonous if ingested.



The Garden Calendar

- ▶ Keep fertilizing and watering poinsettias until the colorful bracts (leaves) fall, then cut back (leaving a few leaves) and let it rest until summer.
- ▶ Plant peas in the garden in late February, as soon as the snow is off the ground.
- ▶ Consider watering evergreen trees and shrubs if the ground is not frozen and there is no snow cover.
- ▶ Check indoor plants for insects and diseases. Remove any dead or diseased leaves.
- ▶ Plan to attend pruning classes (see "Upcoming Events").
- ▶ Fertilize fruit trees with nitrogen.
- ▶ Purchase seeds from your favorite nursery or garden center early, before your favorites are all sold out!
- ▶ Consider buying seeds for a couple of new vegetable varieties from one of the many gardening catalogues arriving in the mail.



Utah Botanical Center Upcoming Events

February 11	Menu for the Future discussion group, 7 p.m. at Utah House
March 7	Energy Merit Badge Class, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Utah House
March 7	Pruning Demonstration, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
March 10	Sustainable Living Class - Easy House Plants for Indoor Air Quality, 7 to 8 p.m.
March 12	Garden Workshops: Creating and Placing Wreaths

- March 21 Environmental Science Merit Badge Class, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Utah House
March 28 Pruning Demonstration, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

To view all Utah Botanical Center upcoming events, click [here](#). For all Utah House upcoming events, click [here](#).

Try This at Home

There are lots of simple things that you can do in your home to conserve energy, and save yourself money. [Read more](#).

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteering at the Utah House is an excellent opportunity to meet other community-minded individuals, make new friends, and help support an important educational resource. We are currently recruiting volunteers to serve as tour guides for the Utah House, landscape, and wetland areas; assist with K-6 field trips; and help maintain our beautiful water-wise landscape. All guides will receive training. Click [here](#) to find out more.



Ogden Botanical Gardens Upcoming Events

- March 5 Wreath and Wall Decoration Class, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
*Pre-registration required; \$25/member; \$30/public.
Each participant learn how to design and make a wreath, and learn proper placement and how to complete a wall arrangement incorporating the wreath.
- March 12, 19, 26, April 2 Landscape Design Course, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
\$75/member; \$100/public. *Note: Contact us now if you are interested.
This four-week course teaches the basics of designing a landscape. Participants learn how to create a plot plan, develop ideas, basic design elements, maintenance shortcuts, and finally how to develop a beautiful master plan. Fundamental drafting supplies are provided; participants take home a master plan for their own landscape.
- March 28 Pruning Classes, 9 a.m. to noon.
Attend various sessions on fruit trees, ornamental shrubs/trees and roses. Free and open to the public.

To view all Ogden Botanical Gardens upcoming events, click [here](#).

CONTACT INFORMATION

UTAH BOTANICAL CENTER-801-593-8969
<http://utahbotanicalcenter.org>
GARDENING HELP LINE
Phone: 801-451-3204 (M,W,F) 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

OGDEN BOTANICAL GARDENS-801-399-8080
<http://extension.usu.edu/weber>
GARDENING HELP LINE
Phone: 801-399-8080 (Mon-Fri) 12:30 to 3:30 p.m.

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