

The February HORT REPORT

LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

- Base any fertilizer application on a soil test.
- Fertilize ornamental, fruit and nut trees, and shrubs, annually.
- Finish pruning shade trees, summer flowering shrubs, and hedges. Spring blooming shrubs such as Forsythia may be pruned immediately after flowering.
- Most bare-root trees and shrubs should be planted in February or early March.
- Apply first pre-emergent summer annual herbicide to turf areas from February to mid-March.
- Begin the vegetable garden with cool season crops such as potatoes, onions, and radishes.
- Dormant oil can still be applied to control mites, galls, and overwintering aphids.
- Spray peaches and nectarines with a fungicide for prevention of peach leaf curl before bud swell.
- A product containing glyphosate PLUS a broad leaf herbicide can be used on dormant Bermuda in January or February, when temperatures are above 50 degrees, for winter weed control.
- Pre-emergent crabgrass control chemicals can still be applied to cool and warm season turf grasses. Heed label cautions when using any weed killers near or in the root zone of desirable plants.

NOTE* When spraying harmful chemicals near desirable plants, cut a LARGE SECTION OF CARDBOARD to hold up and shield the plant from the spray. It works great! Just be careful.

THE KEY TO GARDENING SUCCESS

Soil health in the root zone is vital using good bacteria and fungi. *HUMALFA 'Nature's Prescription' in the bottom of each hole you plant in is always the answer!* This spring remember my recommendation as always... you will base any fertilizer application with a SOIL TEST. You MUST know your specific soil to fertilize smart. Life does not start with the seed ...it starts with the soil. Don't guess ...soil test! I promise this, you will do more GOOD with LESS MONEY BY DOING A SOIL TEST. I have a real love for this job, and I want to be a mentor to my customers teaching that we FEED THE SOIL! The soil then creates these high-quality plants for the WIN! ...Everyone is happy!

DO YOU KNOW YOUR SOIL PH?

You should! Gardens do best in neutral or slightly acidic soil with a PH between 6.0 - 7.0. Adding anything to your soil without knowing (OR GUESSING) your soil PH can

cause problems and make growing worse. DO NOT listen to your neighbor when he tells you what you need... he has no clue what your soil test will reveal!

A soil test is always the best place to start. The acidity OR alkalinity of soil is measured by its PH. 7.0 is considered neutral. Anything lower is considered acidic. Anything higher is alkaline. LIME raises the PH and SULFUR lowers the PH. Now, before spring planting, is a great time to get your test done. *There are two ways:*

- 1.) OSU Extension provides this service at a cost of \$10.00. The extension service for Canadian County is located at 218 N Country Club Rd. in El Reno, (405) 262-0155. They have a brochure and complete instructions on how to collect your soil sample. Trust me it is SO EASY! Results are usually back in about 10 days to 2 weeks.
- 2.) True Value offers a complete and easy to use sample collect kit that comes with everything you need. You send it in, and the results will come back in a timely manner. All from the comfort of your home.

Both ways will come back with complete instructions and guidelines to bring your soil back to optimum health. Whether it be lawn or garden, when you start with healthy soil, everything grows better!

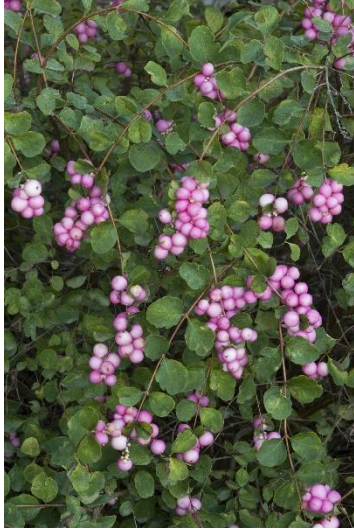
“When a flower doesn't bloom, you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower.” Alexander Den Heijer

FOUR SEASON LANDSCAPING

Last month we explored two different plantings that would give you year-around interest. Let's look at two more.

SCARLET PEARL SNOWBERRY (AKA: *Symphoricarpos Scarlet Pearl*)

Light pink summer blooms produce an abundance of highly ornamental pink berries that persist on bare stems in winter. Stems will last two weeks in cut floral arrangements. Easily naturalizes in native landscapes and woodland gardens. Great for erosion control on slopes. Plant within a window's view to enjoy from indoors.



Scarlet Pearl Snowberry Details:

- Deciduous shrub.
- USDA Zones: 3-7
- Light Needs: Partial to Full Sun
- Water Needs: Water regularly – weekly, or more often in extreme heat.
- Average Size at Maturity: 4' tall, 4' wide.
- Growth Rate: Moderate.
- Garden Style: Cottage.
- Special Features: A fresh new addition for foundation plantings. Add to any garden for a ready supply of berry sprays for autumn decorating. A superbly beautiful addition to wildlife habitat gardens as a late season food source for many species. Plant as low formal hedge or arrange in irregular groupings as a stand-alone specimen.

PROFUSION BEAUTYBERRY (AKA: *Callicarpa Bodinieri 'Profusion'*)

This selection is valued for its abundant clusters of long-lasting, violet-colored berries that cover the branches in the fall. New growth has a beautiful bronze tinge. Small, purple-pink flowers appear in summer between large green leaves. Prune in late winter to early spring to encourage new growth. A beautiful addition to Audubon gardens as a late season food source for many species of birds. A standout specimen. Plant in a focal point as the plant matures into a vase shape form.



Profusion Beautyberry Details:

- Deciduous shrub.
- USDA Zones: 5-8.
- Light Needs: Full Sun.
- Water Needs: Water regularly - weekly, or more often in extreme heat.
- Growth Rate: Moderate.
- Average Size at Maturity: 6' tall, 6' wide.
- Garden Style: Asian/Zen, Cottage, Rustic.
- Special Features: Bird friendly, easy care, fall color, ornamental berries.

We have visited about four different shrubs in the last two months that you can add to your landscape this spring that will serve as beautiful summer flowering, fall color producing, winter interest, berry producing, wildlife friendly, ways to enjoy easy care plants year-around.

WINTER BIRD OF THE MONTH **MOORNING DOVES**

Mourning doves are beloved in backyards across America. These doves will hang around our cold, snowy winters rather than migrate, if there is food. That is, if we keep our bird feeders stocked.



MOURNING DOVE FACTS:

- Their color is gray, brown with black spots on the wings.
- **WHAT DO THEY EAT?** Mourning doves are primarily seed eaters. These birds can, and do, eat weed seeds, which is certainly valuable to gardeners as well as farmers. They are ground feeders.
- **WHAT DOES THE MOURNING DOVE CALL SOUND LIKE?** And why do doves coo? The COOOO-WOO-WOO-WOO is almost always uttered by the male, not the female. The distinctive mourning dove sounds are a wooing call, an enticement to a mate or potential mate.
- **UNIQUE SLEEPING POSITION...** When they sleep, their head rests between their shoulders, close to their body. They do not tuck their heads under their shoulder feathers like other birds do.
- **HOW FAST DO THEY FLY?** Their long-pointed wings are almost falcon-like in appearance, while their pointed tails are longer than those of other doves. These features enable them to fly fast! They have been clocked at 55mph!
- **TWO EGGS ARE COMMON IN THE NEST...** When they lay eggs, it is almost always just two. Incubation takes just two weeks.
- **GOOD CO-PARENTING SKILLS...** Males and females work together to feed their new babies. Weaning is fast. By the fourth day of life, their diet is mainly seeds, and by two weeks, the youngsters are nearly fledged.
- **MOURNING DOVES MATE FOR LIFE...** Pairs tend to mate for life, and some call them "Turtle Doves". They are one of the most abundant and widespread of all North American birds.