

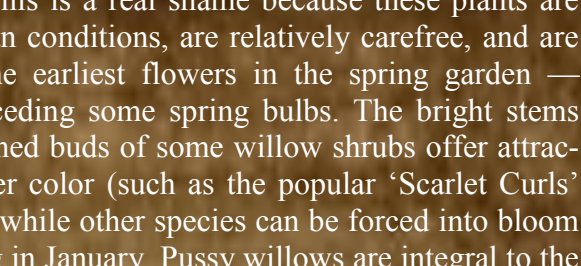


December 2011

We wanted to take a moment to thank all of you who have made our year a great one! Without each and every one of you supporting us, we would not have so much to be thankful for this time of year! We wish you and your families a wonderful and Merry Christmas!

Pussy Willows on Parade!

Among the many species and numerous hybrids of Salix (willow), there is a distinct group of willows with one major attribute — their spectacular early display of furry catkins. After a long winter, the humming of bees around velvety sprays of pussy willow branches signifies new life in the landscape. Children have a special affection for the soft, furry catkins that appear overnight, as the buds that have grown fatter each sunny day finally burst from their hood-like scales. For many of us, the memory of a pussy willow tree in the backyard is the strongest early childhood horticultural experience.



For northern temperate zones, the flowering of pussy willows coincides with the Easter season. In Eastern Europe, where true palm leaves are difficult to obtain, willow branches decorate the churches on palm Sunday and the dried willow twigs are blessed by priests and taken into homes as a symbol of protection from the adversities of nature. Even with all of their wonderful attributes, the pussy willow has still become somewhat old-fashioned, and seldom appear in residential garden plans. Perhaps it is because the traditional varieties are such large shrubs. This is a real shame because these plants are fast growing, tolerant of poor soils and urban conditions, are relatively carefree, and are among the earliest flowers in the spring garden — even preceding some spring bulbs. The bright stems and polished buds of some willow shrubs offer attractive winter color (such as the popular 'Scarlet Curles' willow), while other species can be forced into bloom beginning in January. Pussy willows are integral to the goal of having something to pick from the garden year round.

Flower buds containing the furry catkins, or inflorescences, form during the preceding year, and their development continues throughout the winter until they expand enough to push off the bud scale. At this stage, inflorescences are very dense, consisting of tightly grouped individual flowers subtended by bracts with dense hairs that determine the color of the catkin — silver, gray, green, pink, or even black.

Willows are dioecious woody plants, having male or female inflorescences borne on separate plants. Male catkins are typically showier than the females, displaying dramatic pollen colors with anthers ranging from deep red to yellow and orange. As spring progresses, catkins elongate, losing their velvety density. Blooms normally drop off the branch soon after the filaments become visible.

After flowering, some willows turn into ordinary green shrubs and their beauty fades away until next year. Others have attractive or unique foliage, texture, or stem color, making them excellent foundation plants for garden structures. But even the short and glorious early spring display warrants the addition of pussy willows to your garden.

For maximum catkin productions, shrub willows should be pruned back hard each year or two. The best time to prune those varieties of willows that bloom before leafing out, which includes the varieties we grow here, is right after they have flowered. The plant benefits significantly from pruning, and it helps turn the shrub into an attractively full specimen. Hardy pruning also helps maintain a willows appropriate height and promotes straighter branches that will produce numerous flower buds suitable for floral arrangements.

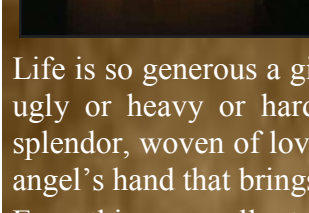
The most commonly used willow, and also the most available, is the beautiful Salix caprea. This cultivar offers a very prolific catkin display in spring, featuring gray and/or pink catkins that measure about 1/2" long. This plant can grow to 20 ft. tall and 10' wide, making it best-suited for larger landscapes. A few clones are available to us that do very well where space is limited. One of them, Salix caprea 'pendula', is most suited to small residential plantings. This small plants common name is simply, 'weeping pussy willow'. This miniature pussy willows also makes a handsome container plant to be admired on the patio.

For most of us, it's easy to look back on a childhood memory involving pussy willows, but not many children today can treasure such an experience, as the use of the fine trees and shrubs have diminished in the landscape over the years. By incorporating these plants into our landscapes, we can bring more beauty into our yard, and offer new memories as well!

Cheers! ~M

Joy: Within our Reach

THE AUTHOR
Fra Giovanni Giocondo (c. 1435-1515) was a Renaissance pioneer, accomplished as an architect, engineer, antiquary, archaeologist, classical scholar, and Franciscan friar. Today, we remember him most for his reassuring letter to Countess Allagia Aldobrandeschi on Christmas Eve, 1513.



THE LETTER
I salute you. I am your friend, and my love fore you goes deep. There is nothing I can give you which you have not. But there is much, very much, that, while I cannot give it, you can take. No heaven can come to us unless our hearts find rest in it today. Take peace! No peace lies in the future which is not hidden in this present little instant.

Take peace! The gloom of the world is but a shadow. Behind it, yet within our reach, is joy. There is radiance and glory in darkness, could we but see. And to see, we have only to look. I beseech you to look!

Life is so generous a giver. But we, judging its gifts by their covering, cast them away as ugly or heavy or hard. Remove the covering, and you will find beneath it a living splendor, woven of love by wisdom, with power. Welcome it, grasp it, and you touch the angel's hand that brings it to you.

Everything we call a trial, a sorrow or a duty, believe me, that angel's hand is there. The gift is there and the wonder of an overshadowing presence. Your joys, too, be content with them as joys. They, too, conceal diviner gifts.

Life is so full of meaning and purpose, so full of beauty beneath its covering, that you will find earth but cloaks your heaven. Courage then to claim it; that is all! But courage you have, and the knowledge that we are pilgrims together, wending through unknown country home.

Take Joy!

Cook's Corner

Cook's corner is where we can share and inspire one another by sharing wonderful new and old-stand-by recipes! If you have a recipe that you love, and wouldn't mind sharing it with us, please send it to: andrewsseed@gmail.com

I dare you to try and find an easier and more delicious recipe than this one (thank you, Paula Deen)! This is a perfect cookie for packing away to give to friends and family during the holiday season! (You may have tried this cookie at our last seminar!)

Chocolate Goopy Butter Cookies

- 1- 8 oz. package cream cheese
- 1 stick butter, at room temperature
- 1 egg
- 1- 18 oz. box moist chocolate cake mix
- 1 t. vanilla
- Powdered sugar

butter until smooth. Beat in the egg, then vanilla. Beat in cake mix. Cover and refrigerate 2 hours to firm up so you can roll the batter into balls. Roll chilled batter into tablespoon sized balls, then roll in powdered sugar. Place on ungreased cookie sheet, 2 inches apart. Bake 12 min. Cookies will remain soft and 'goeey'. Cool completely and sprinkle with more powdered sugar if desired!

Preheat oven to 350. In a large bowl with an electric mixer, cream the cream cheese and

2012 SEMINAR SCHEDULE

March 17th Proper Landscape Maintenance: Watering & Pruning with Benny Seiders	May 19th Healing Herbs with Deni Morgan	October 20th The Ins & Outs of Terrarium and Fairy Gardens
April 21st Container Planting Made Easy	June 16th Planting for the Heat	November 24th Garland & Wreath Making

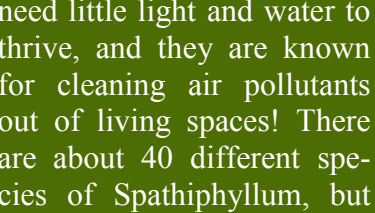
*ALL SEMINARS BEGIN AT 10AM & ARE FREE TO ATTEND

Visit www.andrewsseed.com to view this monthly newsletter or subscribe by e-mailing us at andrewsseed@gmail.com

Reminders!

1. Start planning for next season!
2. Take notes (or pictures) of your garden so you will know where you need to make adjustments.
3. Keep your bird feeders filled.
4. It's time to think about Christmas presents! Maybe your gardener friend would enjoy a new garden magazine subscription, perhaps you know someone who has been eyeing a specific garden book or bird feeder, or for your hard to buy for garden friends, there is always an Andrews Seed gift certificate!

Plant Spotlight



'PEACE LILY'
SPATHIPHILLUM

As a houseplant, the 'Peace Lily' ranks in as one of the most easy maintenance. They are one of few that need little light and water to thrive, and they are known for cleaning air pollutants out of living spaces! There are about 40 different species of Spathiphyllum, but the most common houseplant variety is, Spathiphyllum cochlearispathum. Our 'Peace Lilies' are watered about once a week (about twice a week if they are in very small pots), and they are fed with an all-purpose fertilizer every two weeks. A great choice for your home!



We are now happy to be a part of Facebook! Click here and 'LIKE' us!

Quotables

Nature has undoubtedly mastered the art of winter gardening and even the most experienced gardener can learn from the unrestrained beauty around them.

~Vincent A. Simeone

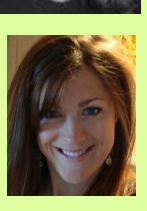
12 Shopping Days till Christmas

Be watching on Facebook or our blog for updates about our annual 12 Shopping Days of Christmas Sales Event! For the last 12 shopping days leading up to Christmas we are putting a different item on sale each day. Once the item is put on sale, it will remain on sale until Christmas is here!

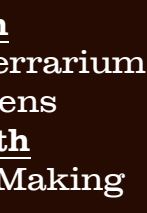
Take advantage of this sale, and find the perfect gift for anyone on your list!

Written by:

Mike Kurth



Susan Kurth



Laura LeBoutillier

