IN THE NEWS THIS WEEK:

→Market will be closed Good Friday and Easter Sunday.
→Featured this week: Pansies
→Sign up for Spring Workshops
→Plant of the Week: Caliente and Calliope geraniums
→Garden Tips: Fertilizers 101

April 21st E-NEWS

We're Canadians~ we talk about the weather! Apparently in warm tropical climates the weather never comes up in conversation because it's always the same. So today, I refuse to talk about the weather. It'll change in 5 minutes anyway.

Plants, plants, plants! The Greenhouse is almost full. It's time to be planting up your containers so they'll look great by the May long weekend. We will pot up your containers for you (for a fee) or you can pot up your own in our potting area (for a pro-rated fee). I think this is an idea whose time has come: you have access to soils, fertilizers, plants and pots and you don't have to mess up your patio!

Have you given any thought to how good gardening is for you? If you grow your own veggies, you know exactly what's gone in to producing them and you can pick them at the peak of perfection when the nutritional benefits are at their highest. And, of course, every time you're actively gardening, you're burning about 275 calories an hour. (Personally speaking, I'd sooner get my exercise in the garden than at the gym.) Not only are you working off the food you've eaten, but you're taking in 'soul food' while you're at it.

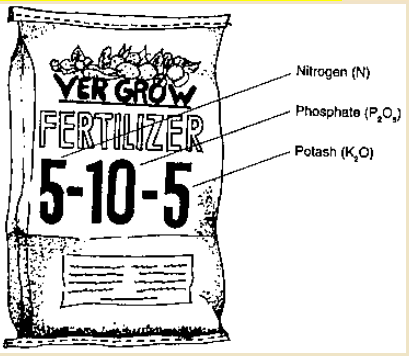
PLANT OF THE WEEK: Geranium 'Caliente' and 'Calliope' series

We're all looking for plants that are low maintenance yet provide lots of colour and look great all season long. The Calliope and Caliente series of geraniums do it all. After many years of cross-breeding, these new series combine the best qualities of the zonal geraniums and ivy geraniums. Both series offer vivid flower colours, have large flower heads, are drought tolerant, versatile and easy care. They have mounding semi-trailing habits, quickly filling hanging baskets, containers and flower beds and grow equally well in full sun and in part shade.

NEW FOR 2011: Teeter-Totter Garden Ornaments

The few I brought in last year sold so quickly that I've brought in more and in different designs. They are so very cute!

GARDEN TIP: Fertilizers 101



What do the numbers mean? Every package of fertilizer is required by law to carry the percentage by weight of the three major nutrients, Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium, found in the product. The percentages are represented as you see them in the diagram above. Nutrients are always listed in this order but sometimes minor nutrients are listed as well. The fertilizer above has:

5% Nitrogen (N)
10% Phosphorus (P)
5% Potassium (K)

Sometimes a 4th number will be present. This will be the percentage of Sulfur. The rest of the product in the bag are either other nutrients or are filler. Each nutrient affects plant growth differently.

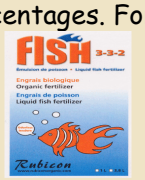
Nitrogen, the first number listed, is the nutrient that contributes to green, leafy, vegetative growth. Plants will grow larger, faster, and greener with the application of Nitrogen. This is an important nutrient for lawns, corn, and leafy vegetables.

Phosphorus aids in root development and increases flowering and fruiting ability. Obviously, when you want to encourage rapid root development and/or flowering, a good percentage of phosphorus in the fertilizer is important.

Potassium, too, is important to plant development. It guards against diseases, develops strong cell walls, aids in drought protection and is crucial in developing cold tolerance.

When you know how each of the nutrients is used in plant growth, you can determine which analysis (percentage) of fertilizer would be best in different applications.

When you check the analysis of organic fertilizers as compared to synthetic fertilizers, you will quickly see that the organic formulations have very low percentages. For example:



Organic: 3-3-2

Synthetic: 15-30-15

If you consider only the analysis, the synthetic fertilizer would appear to give a 'lot more bang for the buck. But each type works differently and the numbers don't tell the whole story.

Organic fertilizers were once alive: animal manures and bone-meal, for example. **Inorganic** fertilizers come from naturally occurring, but non-living, sources. Rock phosphate and garden sulfur are examples. **Synthetic** fertilizers are man-made, combining a variety of elements, ingredients and processes. It makes little difference to the plant whether the nutrients are provided in organic, inorganic, natural or synthetic form.

The real difference is in how they work. **Inorganic and synthetic fertilizers are immediately available to the plant.** When you apply Miracle Grow, which is a fast-acting soluble synthetic fertilizer, the 15-30-15 is immediately available. But this also means that because it readily dissolves in water, it quickly washes through the soil. Its effects are short-lived and, in consequence, it must be continually re-applied throughout the growing season.

Organic fertilizers must be converted by soil micro-organisms into a form that plants can use. While the analysis may be low because only a small percentage of the nutrients are available at any one time, the effect continues all season-long (sometimes for years) as soil microbes continue to break down the organic material. And because soil microbes are more active at warmer soil temperatures, organic fertilizers are particularly beneficial in that plants grow more quickly in warmer temperatures and consequently require more nutrients.

While I prefer to use organic fertilizers and will use them in most situations, there are times when the 'fast-acting' character of a synthetic fertilizer is a distinct advantage. You may have been told to add Bone Meal at planting time to encourage rapid root development. This is, in fact, not true. Because bone meal is organic, it must be broken down by soil micro-organisms into usable form before plants can access it. It is, to all intents and purposes, inactive until at least mid-summer. However, it is an important source of root-growth-stimulating phosphorus over a very long period of time. So when immediate root growth is desired, a synthetic fertilizer that is high in phosphorus (the second number) so that the nutrient is immediately effective is the one to use. This is why I recommend using a Transplanter fertilizer with a 5-15-5 analysis (and also contains a rooting hormone) when planting.

Applying fertilizers, particularly synthetic ones, when soils are cold and plants are not in active growth usually results in the nutrients washing through the soil before the plants will actually use them. Not only is this a waste of product and money, it increases the nutrient load in ground water and contributes to pollution!

Organic fertilizers are valuable, long-acting sources of nutrients for trees, shrubs, perennials and vines. They feed the micro-organisms which, in turn

contribute to the over-all health of the soil.. Continued fertilization with synthetic fertilizers does not enhance the health of the soil and eventually, when soil microbes have been depleted because there is nothing on which they can feed, plant growth will be negatively affected. Organic matter is essential to a healthy soil.

Two other terms you will encounter when choosing a fertilizer are 'Slow-release' and 'Granular'. Slow release fertilizers are usually synthetic (but may be organic which, as explained earlier, are naturally slow-release) and, contrary to common belief, are not released with each watering. They are instead formulated so that nutrients are released with warmer temperatures and most will provide nutrients from 3 to 6 months depending on the formulation. Granular fertilizers can be from organic, inorganic or synthetic sources. 'Granular' is just a term that means that the products are in a form than can be easily applied by hand or by spreader.

COMING EVENTS: Mark your calendars

1. **Master Gardeners Clinic**
Saturday, April 30th
10am to 4pm

2. **Saturday Farmers Market**
All Farmers, All Local **starts Saturday morning, May 7th**, here at our market.

3. John Quilty, designer of the locally made heavy- duty **QUILTY QUIK-SOIL Composter**, will be on hand on **Saturday, May 7** to demonstrate how easy it is to use and how effectively it composts yard/kitchen waste

*Sign up for Spring Workshops

For details on each course, go to the **Special Events Calendar** page on our website and click on the workshop that interests you. www.hannaorchards.com

PLANTING A MOSS BASKET

April 26: 6-8 pm (note earlier time)
FEE is $45 + GST per person

CONTAINERS WITH PIZZAZZ

MAY 3: 6:30-8:30 **(Encore presentation)**
FEE is $15 + GST per person **(Workshop is FULL)**

SQUARE FOOT GARDENING

MAY 4 Time to be determined.
$5 per person. Register if interested. We will call and let you know the time when it has been set.

Featured this week:

Pansies: 4 paks: 1.49
6 paks: 2.29
4 inch pot singles: 1.99
Apples & pears: 89¢/lb

Listen to our **Garden Answer Minute** on local EZ-Rock radio, Wednesdays, Thursdays, or Mondays at 7:45 am.

Best regards and Happy Gardening,
Harriet

HANNA ORCHARDS MARKET & GARDEN CENTRE

3181-11TH Ave. NE., Salmon Arm, BC

Open Mon.-Sat. 9-5:00

Starting April 11, Open Mon-Sat.
8am to 6pm

Closed Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

Closed Sundays until May 1st

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