

Village Garden Center

& Landscape Service

ISSUE 26 April 2012

Liriope

By Eva Souded

Muscari



It is a tufted, grass-like perennial which typically grows 12-18 inches tall and features clumps of strap-like, arching,

glossy, dark green leaves (to 1/2 inch wide). Clumps slowly expand by short stolons to a width of about 1 foot, but plants do not spread aggressively. Roots are fibrous, often with terminal

tubers. The small, showy flowers occur on erect spikes with tiered whorls of dense, white to violet-purple flowers rising above the leaves in late summer. Flowers resemble those of grape hyacinth (Muscari), which is the origin of the species name. Flowers develop into blackish berries which often persist into winter.



Spicata



Creeping lilyturf is a rhizomatous, grass-like perennial which forms clusters of narrow, arching, glossy, dark green leaves (to 1/4 inch wide) typically growing 9 to 15 inches high. Erect flower spikes with small, white to pale lavender flowers arise, somewhat hidden, among the leaves in late summer. Blackish berries develop in fall and often persist through winter. Roots have prominent rhizomes and frequent tubers. A cultivar exists with variegated leaves. Creeping lilyturf looks very similar to another common species in the genus—lilyturf (*Liriope muscari*).

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Edible shrubs for

Your landscape

Imagine the possibilities!

Look around any yard in the United States and you're bound to see a limited palette of ornamental shrubs used as foundation plantings, hedges, and specimen plantings. Although beautiful, I can't help but think they're missing out on a great opportunity to grow similarly attractive shrubs that are edible instead.

Designing with Edible Shrubs

The first order of business is to decide which shrubs to grow. Much of your decision will be determined by usage and site exposure. Do you need shrubs as foundation plantings around the house, a screen to block a utility box, or a barrier to the neighbor's yard? Does the site get full sun, is it exposed to cold winter winds, or does it have poor soil? Selecting the right shrub



The American cranberry bush (*Viburnum trilobum*)

for the usage is key. Some shrubs make great foundation plantings, while others will sprawl and spread and are better as informal hedges. A common sight is an overgrown yew or juniper almost blocking a window because it was the wrong shrub for that location. Look at the shrub's ultimate height, width, hardiness zone and sun requirements before deciding to plant. As with any ornamental planting, determine if flowering and foliage color and texture will work in that location.



Once you decide the function of the shrub and the likely location to plant it, then the fun begins. Selecting edible shrubs to plant instead of the usual ornamental shrubs gives you the opportunity to produce some tasty food for your family, as well as have an attractive yard.

While it's great to plant all edibles in your yard, there's no problem with mixing in a blueberry here or a currant there with other

ornamental plantings.

Rose hips are produced in abundance on *Rosa rugosa* plants.

Growing Blueberry



shrubs

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With the right culture, berries will reward you handsomely. First, aim for a mix of different types to extend the harvest season.

Why Berries?

Compared with apples, peaches, or any of the tree fruits, bush and bramble fruits are easy to grow. They rarely require spraying for pests, and they begin bearing some fruit the year after planting. By their third season they should be in full production. Perhaps most important, they're very space efficient. None require a mix of varieties for cross-pollination.

Incorporate lots of organic matter before planting, and mulch with shredded leaves or compost every year.

Prune regularly through the season to keep each branch or cane as productive as possible.

Blueberries are extremely handsome shrubs, notable for their brilliant fall color and bright stems in winter.

Some of the newer varieties are low and shrubby. These half-high varieties, such as 'Northland', make excellent shrubs to work into a perennial border or a low-growing flower bed.

When planting in the landscape, keep blueberry bushes away from masonry walls and foundations, where the soil can be excessively alkaline. If you mix them into a shrub border or with other plants, be sure to amend the soil pH so they can thrive. Other than netting to keep birds away, they are carefree fruits that will give you years of production. Keep in mind pruning leads to healthier plants and fewer, but bigger berries.



Did you know? Blueberries can help lower cholesterol and reduce the risk of cancer. As if the great taste wasn't enough reason to eat them in large quantities.....



Blueberry bush (Fall)

From the Garden Of Eva



Asparagus is cherished for its taste, nutrients, versatility, and medicinal qualities. Obviously these factors are important, however, asparagus signifies a significant

change in seasons. In early spring, asparagus represents a shift in my 'culinary thinking and technique', whereby I transition from hearty braised and comfort items into more crisp blanched salads, light pastas, and grilled fare.

Asparagus is part of the Lilly family and is indigenous to Asian Minor where it was first cultivated by the Egyptians some 2000 years ago. The Greeks and Romans cherished the vegetable. They ate it fresh in the spring and dried it for the remain-



der of the year to use in food preparations as well as medicinal applications. Asparagus derived from the Greek word Asparagos which means to 'sprout' or 'shoot', a perfect description of it's green emergence from the winter-worn earth. Asparagus growing beds of Northern Italy were prevalent during the Renaissance period to satisfy the nobles and wealthy which was depicted in the artwork of that era.

Asparagus is a special ingredient because it can take on different characteristics depending on how it is prepared. When blanched it bomes crisp and refreshing, nutty when grilled, or aromatic when prepared in a flan. My springtime menus reflect my appreciation for asparagus: A starter lightly grilled with balsamic glaze and shaved Parmesan, or wrapped in prosciutto for a passed banquet appetizer, or blanched and used in salads and ravioli.

ASPARAGUS RAVIOLI

For the Filling:

1 large bunch of chopped asparagus, 1 cup ricotta, pinch of nutmeg, 1 tsp lemon zest, and a pinch of nutmeg with salt and pepper to taste.



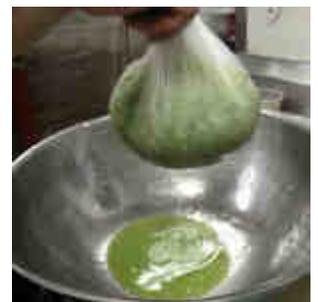
Blanch in salty water



Shock in ice bath



Pulse in food processor



Strain through cheese
cloth or strainer



At this point I place the filling in a piping bag for ravioli or keep chilled and spread on grilled baguette and garnish with Parmesan and truffle oil for a spring bruschetta.

Now you can either purchase won ton wrappers and stuff them with this mixture, or if you are game - make your own ravioli dough.



Fold in whole milk, Ricotta, Salt, pepper & nutmeg

Ravioli Dough:

2 cups flour, 1 tsp salt, 3 large eggs, 2 Tablespoons Good olive oil. Make a well with flour and egg, whisk w/ fork until combined. Bring together into a ball and knead for five minutes then wrap in plastic wrap and rest at least for 30 minutes.



Pass dough through machine on Level 1 twice. Switch to Level 2 and pass through twice. Continue same pattern until passed through Level 6 twice. Place filling equal distances apart, egg wash around filling and cover with another ravioli sheet pressing air bubbles out as you go.



Then cut by hand or with ravioli cutter. Blanch in water for 4 minutes and finish in pan with vegetable stock, asparagus tips, butter, tarragon, lemon and Parmesan.



Living with Nature

Little brown bats, as well as all other insect eating bats, employ echolocation in catching airborne insects. This has led to the common misconception that bats are blind. Bats can actually see quite well! These little bats are able to catch up to 1,200 insects in an hour; just imagine what a colony can consume in an evening. Mosquitoes beware! Little brown bats will leave their summertime breeding and feeding grounds to hibernate in caves of suitable temperatures. Look for them to return to your evening skies in late April or May with a healthy appetite for insects.

Big brown bats, *Eptesicus fuscus*, are commonly found in the same roosts as the little brown bat. Buildings seem to be a favorite roosting area but you may also find these bats in caves, tree hollows or other natural crevices. Big brown bats are also insect eaters and can consume quite a number of insects each night. A colony of 150 big brown bats can consume enough cucumber beetles to prevent the laying of more than 33 million rootworm larvae each summer.



Rootworm larvae are one of the more destructive crop pests to farmers. Big brown bats usually hibernate for the winter months in caves, but they can sometimes be found under eaves or shutters hibernating alone.

These amazing bats are able to survive sub-freezing temperatures by carefully regulating their metabolism.



Bats play an essential role in keeping night flying insects and farm pests under control. If one bat can catch over a thousand insects in an hour, imagine the dent a colony can make in nighttime biting insects. In Bracken Caves, TX, the colony of 20 million Mexican free-tails *Tadarida brasiliensis* consumes 200 tons of insects each evening! In the biologically diverse rainforests, bats are primary pollinators for numerous plant species. In fact, bats pollinate more rainforest species than any other pollinator.

So next time you are out for a hike at dusk, look above, you may see some bats zigzagging overhead in pursuit of some insects.

It's a bug eat bug world

Many plants do better when grown in presence of others. Part of this is due to the fact that several varieties of plants deter insect attacks.

Another method of protection some gardeners use is to plant a trap crop. (eg/ Plant dill to attract tomato hornworms) The trap crop attracts pests making them easier to control. Keep the trap crops in place to



(Thyme)

keep the insects preoccupied

(Cabbage worm)



Plants that deter insects

(Japanese Beetle)

Marigold Aphids, Mexican bean beetle, nematodes and other insects.



Henbit Deters most insects.

Horseradish Plant near potatoes to deter potato bug.



Geranium Deters most insects

Garlic Works against blight. Deters Japanese Beetle and other insects. (Henbit)



(Rue)

Thyme Deters cabbage worm

Sage Deters cabbage moth and carrot fly

Rue Deters Japanese Beetle and discourages houseflies

Rosemary Deters Bean Beetle Carrot fly and Cabbage moth.



(Horseradish)

(House fly) Aster Deters most insects.

Basil Repels flies and mosquitoes

Borage Deters Tomato worm.



(Borage)

Tansy Deters Japanese Beetle, striped cucumber beetle, squash bugs and ants



(Cucumber beetle)

Raddish Deters Cucumber Beetle.

Calendula Deters Most insects

Chrysanthemum Deters Most insects

Nasturtium Aphids, squash bugs and striped pumpkin beetles



(Asparagus beetle)

Onion Family Deters Most insects.

Mint Deters cabbage moth and ants.

Celery Cabbage moth

Tomato Deters Asparagus beetle



(Candula flower)



(Onion)

Thyme in the Garden

With Andi Parr

April is perfect for cleaning up your flower and garden beds. It is also time for mulching, amending your soil, and fertilizing. Now is time to plant your cold hardy vegetables, and reseed your grass as well.

Rake leaves and other unwanted matter from your flower and garden beds before you lay fresh compost and/or mulch.

You can calculate how much mulch/amendment you need by measuring the beds. Multiply length by width to get the square footage. Once you know the area, you can use this number to figure out volume. Volume is expressed in cubic feet or cubic yards. You need to know volume to buy soil amendments, mulch, compost, soil, potting mix, gravel, and many other materials. To calculate volume, measure the depth you need to fill and multiply this times the area. Keep in mind that you have to multiply the same kind of units together-you can't multiply inches by feet. So if you want to cover a flower bed with 3 inches of mulch, first divide 12 into 3 to get how much of one foot you will be needing (in this case, $3 \div 12 = 0.25$). Then multiply this result by the square feet of your flower bed.

Mulch, compost, soil, and gravel are often sold by the cubic yard, and it's more economical to buy it this way than in small bags. One cubic yard is equal to 27 cubic feet, so to convert cubic feet to cubic yards, divide by 27. You can cover approximately 100 square feet of area 3 inches deep with one cubic yard of material.

Fertilize your trees and shrubs with a slow release fertilizer like Holly tone (for acidic loving plants) or Plant tone (for those non acid loving plants). This is the recommended dosing:

Trees

Sprinkle 1 lb. (3 cups) per inch of trunk diameter around drip line of plant (area under and slightly beyond branch spread).

Triple the quantity for diameters 3 inches and over. For larger trees, make a series of holes under the branch spread starting 1/3 of the distance out from the trunk and extending a similar distance beyond the branch line. Holes should be 2-3 inches in diameter, 2-3 feet apart, and 12-18 inches deep. Divide the Holly/Plant-tone evenly among the holes and fill the remainder with soil. Water thoroughly.

Shrubs

Sprinkle 1 cup of Holly/Plant-tone per foot of branch spread (diameter) around the drip line of the plant (area under and slightly beyond branch spread). Double the quantity if branch spread is 3 feet or larger.

Garden Beds

For new beds, mix 10 lbs. of Holly/Plant-tone per 100 sq. ft. into the top 4 inches of soil. For established beds, mix 5 lbs. per 100 sq. ft.

Potted Plants

Mix one part Holly/ Plant-tone to 30 parts potting soil when planting. Feed established plants 1 teaspoon of Holly-tone for each 4 inches of pot diameter.

Time to plant your cold hardy vegetables! Seed cool-season vegetables outside such as:

beets, peas, lettuce, collards, turnips, carrots, broccoli, Brussels sprout, Swiss chard, kale, kohlrabi, onions, parsley, parsnips, radishes, and spinach.

Cover tender plants if late frost is in the forecast. Start tomato seeds indoors. Plant broccoli plants and early cabbage outdoors. Sow your cool-season vegetables in succession so you can have a steady harvest throughout the growing season. If you got your peas planted last month, you can move them outdoors. Make sure you stake any vines longer than three feet. Prepare your lawn to be reseeded You must first remove all of the debris and dead grass from the area. Remove all of the weeds as well, by manually pulling them or using weed killer. If you use weed killer, be sure to follow the manufacturer's directions, which should specify how long it will take to be effective before you can reseed.

Next, loosen the soil with a hard rake. For extremely compacted soil, you might need to rent a machine to aerate the soil, which removes small plugs of dirt and turf. This allows water and nutrients to better penetrate the soil and nourish the roots of your lawn.

If your soil is poor adding some topsoil compost mix (also called 50/50) will be very helpful before laying your seed.

You should use a grass seed that is similar to the grass that is already in your lawn and is appropriate for the climate in your area. Using seed that matches the existing grass will prevent unsightly spots where one area might be greener or have smaller blades than another. Scattering the seed by hand is sufficient, but if you are reseeding an entire lawn, it is better to use a mechanical spreader to ensure even coverage. The grass seed packaging should include instructions for the amount of seed to use for the dimensions of your lawn.

Rake the seed into the soil so that it makes good contact with the soil. If the seed is lying on top of the existing grass, it might not sprout and could become the next meal for birds that are nearby. If birds are likely to be a problem, you can cover the seeded area with weed-free straw. Keep your newly planted seed moist by watering it twice a day, once before 11 am, and again after 5 pm. Your grass will germinate in about two week's time.

Happy Planting!