Great Plants of the Year 2014

The goal of the Great Plants program is to bring superior ornamental landscape plants into gardens to meet the challenging growing conditions of the Great Plains.

Tree of the Year
Liriodendron tulipifera, tuliptree

Leaves and flowers are large and tulip shaped. Yellow-green flowers with orange base, bloom May into June. Foliage turns bright yellow in fall. Coned-shaped fruit persists into winter. Prefers moist fertile soil in full sun. Grows 62–90 feet tall.

Conifer of the Year
Abies koreana, Korean fir


Shrub of the Year
Callicarpa dichotoma, purple beautyberr

Abundant blooms and drought tolerant. Grows 2–3 feet tall.

Perennial of the Year
Rudbeckia fulgida var. speciosa, showy black-eyed susan

Showy fall display of violet berries on arching branches. Full sun or part shade. Yellow fall foliage. Grows 3–5 feet tall.

Many plants are easily propagated by layering. Verbenas, euonymus, English ivy and climbing roses are a few plants that will root if the stems are fastened down and covered with soil. A brown or grayish cast over a lawn can be caused by a dull or improperly adjusted mower blades that shred grass rather than cut it. For fall harvest of lettuce, radish, carrots, beets, turnips, kale and spinach, sow seeds in late July to early August. A garden needs one inch of rain or water each week. Early morning is the best time to water. Evening watering is less desirable because plant leaves that remain wet through the night are more susceptible to fungus diseases. Mulch plants to reduce water losses and improve yields. Cutting flowers is best done with sharp shears or a knife which will help avoid injury to the growing plant. A slanting cut will expose a larger absorbing surface to water and will prevent the base of the stem from resting on the bottom of the vase. It is best to carry a bucket of water to the garden for collecting flowers, rather than a cutting basket. Cut back and fertilize delphinium and phlox to encourage a second flowering. Store pesticides in a safe place in their original containers, away from children and pets. Use pesticides carefully in your garden. Read the labels and follow the directions. The warnings and precautions are for your protection. Certain pesticides have a waiting period of several days between the time of the last spray and harvest. Read and follow directions on all labels before applying to your vegetable crops. Wash all produce thoroughly before use. Control mosquitoes by eliminating all sources of stagnant water. Divide and transplant bearded iris using the vigorous ends of the rhizomes. Discard the old center portion. Cut the leaves back to about six inches. Continue to make successive plantings of crops like beans and sweet corn to provide a continuous harvest until fall. A small garden will produce a large quantity of vegetables if replanting is done throughout the summer.

Are You Already Using Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Around the Home?

Let’s take a look at some common IPM techniques. You may already be using these:

**Start by Keeping Pests Outside by Excluding Them**
- Block entry to your home by caulking around windows, making sure weather-stripping and door sweeps fit securely, and plug or patch holes. Keep window and door screens in good repair. Caps on chimneys and screens on vents can keep out larger animals like raccoons, squirrels and birds.
- If you have leaks or rotted wood on your home, make repairs immediately.

**Keep Your Yard Mowed and Trimmed**
- By keeping your property maintained, you’ll help reduce pest populations outdoors. Fewer pests outdoors, can mean fewer pests indoors.
- Trim trees and shrubs so they don’t touch your home. Don’t give pests easy access to your home.
- Wood mulch looks great and serves an important function, but it can also harbor pests like cockroaches. If you use mulch around your homes foundation, and are having a problem with pests, trying pulling back mulch a few feet from the house.

**Keep the Inside of Your Home Clean and Uncluttered**
- Put food away immediately after cooking or when finished with a meal. Wash your dishes. Pests have no problem taking advantage of food we leave out. Sanitation is key to pest control.
- Clutter should be removed or kept at a minimum. A cluttered home can provide a nice habitat for pests.

**Use Pest Traps**
- If you think you have a pest problem or want to monitor pests, use a pest trap like a mouse glue board or “roach motel.” Place the sticky traps in locations like under kitchen sinks, in bathrooms, under sinks, in the laundry room, by the refrigerator and in a utility room. Check the traps routinely.

**Caulk cracks around windows.**

**Glue board traps (at left) are better for catching insects than glue trapv traps (right).**

If you catch something on the trap, you can bring it to the Extension office for identification. Each pest caught on a sticky trap is also one less pest in your home. For larger mammals, you can work with a pest control professional to exclude and if needed, the animal can be trapped and removed.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
UNL Extension in Lancaster County has information on pests found in and around the home at http://lancaster.unl.edu/pest.