

GROWING MATTERS

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*Proudly serving northern gardeners
since 1982*

**P. O. Box 402
Portage la Prairie, MB.
R1N 3B7**

**Toll Free: 1-888-857-5288
Fax: (204) 857-2877
e-mail: jeffnurs@mts.net
www.jeffriesnurseries.com**

Office Contacts

President

wilbert.ronald@jeffriesnurseries.com

Sales / Production Manager

michel.touchette@jeffriesnurseries.com

Western MB / SK / AB Sales Rep

pete@jeffriesnurseries.com

Accounts / Inside Sales

shawna.ronald@jeffriesnurseries.com

Field Manager

andrew.ronald@jeffriesnurseries.com

Research / Marketing

philip.ronald@jeffriesnurseries.com

From the President

The shorter, cooler fall days move all staff into overdrive to complete overwintering protection of container stock with 200 large plastic blankets and associated sandbags and a range of cold storage buildings. Bare root harvest starts on October 14th and all these overlapping operations should be completed about November 1st based on long term experience.

Our new 2017 catalogue is in the mail and the price list will follow shortly. Study our new plant offerings and point of purchase materials. We have sought to limit any price increases to what was needed to cover material inputs and labour increases. This newsletter's customer profile features Sheyenne Gardens, a garden center in Fargo, N.D. The company has a reputation for a strong selection of plants and offers a great source of horticultural knowledge.

Our company has been developing and growing some smaller trees, suiting the smaller footprint of newer housing developments. These include the columnar Spire series, **Starlite®** and **Gladiator®** flowering crabapples all of which have become top sellers. We are introducing the new **Guardian™** columnar poplar with tolerance to Bronze leaf disease and have witnessed **Parkland Pillar®** birch develop into a valued accent tree in the landscape. In medium-sized trees, we have watched colourful Sugar maples become a rising star in our production and we continue to work with Freeman maples (Red x Silver hybrids) to bring zone 2-3 hardiness, fall colour and adaptation to high pH soils into new selections. Next year we expect two new trees, **Inferno®** sugar maple and **Regal Celebration™** Freeman maple, to be more widely available by mid-summer. All of these cultivars will make excellent feature trees for Canada's 150th birthday next summer. Enjoy the fall colours and the beauty we see around us.

Wilbert Ronald



*Nobility
White Ash*

News Briefs

Wilbert and Sharon Ronald travelled to the Canwest Trade Show and celebrated their 48th anniversary in Vancouver, B.C. at the beginning of October.

Our 2017 Reference Guide, Price List and Order Form are available online. Use the password: xxxxxxxxxx to access protected files.

Visit our booth at the upcoming tradeshow:

Saskatchewan Green Trades Conference

Saskatoon, SK - November 1st to 3th

Green Industry Show

Edmonton, AB - November 17th & 18th



*Commemorates
Canada's 150th
birthday in
2017*



Canadian Shield

*was developed at the
Morden Research Station
and is the first rose to be
introduced by the
Vineland Research and
Innovation Centre*





Sky View

This aerial photo captured by a hovering drone offers a unique view of the east side of Jeffries headquarters including our Amaro box growing area, wire-basket tree holding area and staging and shipping area.

Look for more Jeffries' drone shots in future newsletters.



OUR LATEST INTRODUCTIONS



LITTLE LADY™

Hybrid Lilac



MANDARIN TANGO™

Potentilla



Little Lady

Miss Kim



CUSTOMER PROFILE

Sheyenne Gardens

By Pete Van Vliet

Sheyenne Gardens was originally owned and operated in West Fargo from the 1940's until the 1970's by the Johnson Family. When Neal Holland started selling plants at his Harwood location, Martin Johnson encouraged him to use their business name. That was the beginning of the Sheyenne Gardens in Harwood that we all now know.

Neal Holland is very well known in the horticulture industry all across North Dakota. He is Professor Emeritus at NDSU, and retired after serving the university for 32 years. His teaching career at NDSU lasted from 1954 until 1986, during which time he taught many who are still in the industry today.

Neal purchased his 60 acre parcel of land in 1960, and built his house in '68. He has lived there ever since!!! In 1987, after retiring from NDSU, Neal built his first of six greenhouses, and started selling plants the following year. Over the course of time, Neal has grown his greenhouse operation to over 10,000 square feet of greenhouse space. Not only that, he also has extensive outdoor retail areas where he displays his trees, shrubs, roses, water plant and perennial availability, all sorted alphabetically by their botanical name.

And what an availability they have!! Sheyenne Gardens boasts one of the largest selections of plants in the area with over 500 woody plants consisting of fruits, shade trees, shrubs and evergreens, as well as over 700 kinds of perennials, annuals, tropical and vegetables!!! Neal always has his eyes open for new and interesting varieties and has introduced the Fairy Tale lilac series. Retirement means different things for different people!

The display gardens at Sheyenne Gardens offer many specimen trees, shrubs and perennials where clientele can tour and see what a long-term planting will look like at maturity. You can also tour through a few display gardens that resemble two separate backyards, check out his raised vegetable beds, as well as shade and perennial beds that showcase certain varieties.

In the year 2000, Adam Volz started working with Neal at the garden center, having a horticulture degree himself from Crookston, under Professor Roger Wagner (one of Neals past students himself). Adam has a major role with the company, managing day to day operations, sourcing in and ordering new product, scheduling and guiding staff, and has a strong sense of ownership in his work. Adam also help customers with landscape designs as requested, and helps point people in the right direction. They make a great team, working out the where, when and whys of the business.

As a customer with any horticulture requirement or question, rest assured that Neal and Adam can help you!



The Right Time to Grow & the Right Time to Buy

By Michel Touchette and Sharon Ronald

Late spring weather in 2016 was unfavorable to plant sales. Even with modern greenhouses and shopping areas, our industry remains vulnerable to poor spring weather. Poor spring weather can result in disappointing garden centre sales. How can a garden center implement a strategy to limit the impact of poor weather on finances? Most prairie garden centers grow some of their annuals and perennial crops for their own sales. When the spring weather is favorable, selling 95% of their own crops of annuals and perennials is very profitable. When the weather is dominated by extended rainy periods then selling only 65-75% of the crop can result in a serious financial blow.

Poor spring sales present the following challenges:

1. Every crop has a shelf life for a specific pot size. Annuals and perennials planted in March and April will reach their past-due date by early to mid-June. Even with the best growing techniques such as slow-release, water soluble fertilizer, pruning and proper spacing these plants will reach an overgrown and leggy stage. A crop that has lost its "wow factor" is not going to sustain impulse sales without a price discount.
2. Additional labor is required to prune, remove dead leaves and water (sometimes twice a day) on left-over plants.
3. Unattractive plants in the garden center may deter or block other sale opportunities.

May we suggest an alternative strategy:

Grow 50-75% of your annual or perennial crop required and buy the balance from a wholesale grower. Develop a good relationship with the grower to ensure a quality product is delivered and not their overgrown plants. Use the extra space in your greenhouse to grow high value products such as container annuals, herbs in a bowl, etc.

At Jeffries we plant close to 25% of our 1 gallon perennial crops after May 5th. The bulk of our spring shipping (65-75%) must be completed by Mother's Day. Once shipping is completed, labor and other resources are diverted to pot up freshly-propagated perennial plugs. Our Mexican crew is busy potting while our greenhouse crew are busy condensing, sorting and throwing out poor plants to make room for the new summer crop.

Let me ask one question: Does a garden center have time, 3-4 days before or after Mother's Day, to pot an additional 25% for a new summer crop?

Advantages for purchasing June plants from a grower:

1. For June sales a fresh 1 gallon blooming perennial has an immediate impact in the customer's yard.
2. Blooming plants with a "wow factor" stimulate impulse sales. Develop a color theme with the growers using plant species such as dianthus, coneflower, sedum, hosta, salvia, astible etc.
3. Pay only for the good plants delivered rather than the over-grown plants left over in your greenhouse.
4. Allow the grower to pick only the very best bloomers for the week. Two weeks later bring new and different crops to create an exciting shopping experience for your customers. Inform your customers of new plant arrivals via e-mail.
5. Reduce your labor for plant maintenance.
6. Save your spring expenses by growing fewer plants; spend your savings buying what the late-spring market wants.
7. Reduce your exposure to poor weather.
8. Reduce the quantity of plants that have to be put on-sale in late spring due to poor quality.

Challenges:

Freight costs are a factor when re-ordering after the initial spring shipment. To offset this cost, capitalize by adding blooming or colorful shrubs such as weigela, hydrangea, spirea, ninebark, etc. Approximately 165 1 gallon perennials can be housed on a perennial pallet while 75 2 gallon shrubs fit on a second pallet. By adding a second pallet the drop charge is reduced by half.

Experts tell us that climate change is the new reality. In the past, poor spring weather had a negative impact on our industry. Climate change almost guarantees more frequent severe weather events rendering our industry more vulnerable. A new reality demands a new strategy. A good business plan will have a strategy in place for inclement spring weather.

WARNING Every August, 200 mouse stations are distributed in our container field. We normally do 3 applications: early August, September and October. We monitor the stations monthly. Normally three applications are sufficient to bring the mouse population to the point where 10% of the stations are empty by mid-October. However this year, 90% of the mouse stations were empty by October 7th. Sightings of mice in our buildings and container field are higher than normal. This winter might be a bad winter for mice damage. Please be more aggressive with your mouse poison program.