

# GROWING MATTERS

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*Proudly serving northern gardeners  
since 1982*

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## News Briefs

Andrew Ronald attended the Farwest and Canwest Trade Show in Oregon and B.C.

Wilbert and Sharon Ronald celebrated 50 years of marriage on October 4<sup>th</sup>.

Sympathy is extended to Ken and Jacquie Riske of Millcreek Nursery in Edmonton on the passing of Ken's father on October 6<sup>th</sup>.

## From the President

As I write on October 4<sup>th</sup>, company staff are consolidating potted trees and shrubs for overwintering and we have been busy with tree spading. Recent light frosts at the end of September will hasten maturation and have highlighted some good fall colour. Our weather this year has gone from the driest on record for July/August to one of the wettest Septembers. We now have good moisture for fall bare root tree liner harvest and hope to get moving on that by the middle of October. Plant shipments are still going out daily to landscapers, and depending on weather conditions, this will continue until early November.

It is always a relief to see our new catalogue placed in the mail and this year's listing features a new *Potentilla* cultivar and a dwarf willow that are outstanding garden plants and will be sold under the First Editions brand. The new *potentillas* are adapted, long season flowering plants with touches of red flower colour that intensifies in cooler weather. 'Mandarin Tango' is a single flowered form while 'Lady Marmalade' has very double flowers. 'Iceberg Alley' willow, selected from a native Canadian plant species, is a compact silver foliaged selection from the Memorial University of Newfoundland. As a native plant it adds to our diversity in that category.

Additionally, our catalogue features a new fruiting pear 'Prairie Welcome', 'Winter Splendor' Russian birch, 'Green Wall' columnar crabapple, 'Chinook Sunrise' rose from Vineland Research & Innovation Centre, and several new perennials. The Guardian columnar aspen has stood out again with its resistance to bronze leaf disease and we now have good stock of #1, #2, #5 and larger containers plus some 2" stock for wire basketing.

We will look to see many of you at the fall trade shows in Saskatoon (November 8-10) and Edmonton (November 15-16).

**Wilbert Ronald**



# A trip to Black Island

By Wilbert Ronald

Black Island is a large island in the south basin of Lake Winnipeg, the eleventh largest fresh water lake on Earth. This location reportedly has the most northerly-known native stands of Red Pine (*Pinus resinosa*) in North America. It has been a lifelong goal of mine to see these trees.

With the help of Trevor Stanley, (Director, Central Region Parks and Recreational Services, Province of Manitoba) we were able to fulfil this goal through a two hour (each way) trip in a 24 foot, lake-worthy boat powered by two 150 hp outboard motors.

After a long walk in from the shore we were able to stand at the base of these magnificent forest giants growing in almost pure stand. This location would normally be considered to host boreal forest, but the flora on site was more akin to regions of southeastern Manitoba where the Red Pine is more common.

We found native red pine trees up to 3 feet (90 cm) in diameter growing on Black Island, 100 miles north of any other known trees of this species. We were able to collect seed and hope to renew this Black Island seed strain for use in prairie landscapes.



From left to right: Jim Fisher - Director Hecla/Grindstone Provincial Park, Trevor - Manitoba Conservation officer, David Flight - Pineland Nursery, Wilbert Ronald - Jeffries Nurseries Ltd., Trevor Stanley - Director, Central region, Manitoba Conservation



# Know your "Ash"

By Andrew Ronald

With the discovery of Emerald Ash Borer in Winnipeg last November, there has been extensive coverage in the local media about the susceptibility of all ash trees to this pest. Unfortunately this reporting is creating confusion in the marketplace about whether mountain ash should continue to be planted.

The mountain ash (*Sorbus* spp.) is not related to the true ash (*Fraxinus*) and EAB does not attack these trees. In fact the mountain ash is a member of the rose family whereas all *Fraxinus* species are in the olive family. The native showy mountain ash (*Sorbus decora*) and introduced European mountain ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*) continue to be reliable small flowering trees for the prairie landscape.

Industry needs to reaffirm that EAB attacks only ash trees of *Fraxinus* genus. All *Fraxinus* species are susceptible in varying degrees. Manchurian ash (*Fraxinus mandshurica*) and its cultivar 'Mancana' ash are known to have a high level of resistance to the pest. As we continue to educate customers about the importance of tree diversity, let's remind them that planting mountain ash (*Sorbus* spp) is part of the solution, not part of the problem.



Foliage of Manchurian Ash