

The Green Patch

January 1, 2012

Volume 4, Issue 1

Conifers for Small Spaces

By Deb Daehnke , Wayne County Master Gardener

As we look out over snowy landscapes, this is a great time to peruse the garden catalogs or magazines and dream of our spring and summer gardens. If you're like many gardeners, I'm guessing your dreams often outweigh your pocketbook. Or for others, you just can't squeeze another tree into your yard or garden. Well, here is an idea that doesn't require huge expanses of garden space and when established, requires minimal upkeep. I'm speaking of conifers, specifically the miniature or dwarf conifers.

A conifer is usually an evergreen tree or shrub with long needle-like leaves which are not dropped in winter. Some examples are spruce, fir, pines, junipers, yew, cedars, and hemlocks. Larch and cypress are varieties that drop their needles in winter. But you're thinking I said you wouldn't need much space; and you won't if you stick with miniature or dwarf varieties.

Miniature conifers grow up to 1" per year. Dwarf conifers grow 1"-6" per year; but keep in mind that size may vary depending on geographical location and growing conditions. I doubt that plants ever read how big or small they are supposed to grow. Equally fascinating about conifers is that in addition to their small size, they come in all shapes, colors and textures. And since most don't drop their leaves, you have some type of color all year long. Some even have exquisitely colored cones.

Conifers can be columnar, pendulous, prostrate, globose, trimmed into shapes or grafted. Colors are unlimited: shades of green or yellow, orange, blue or purple, bi-color or variegated. And they work great with alpines or saxafrages interspersed with them. Conifers don't like wet feet so implementing them into a rock garden is a great option. And there are hundreds of varieties that work in Zone 4 or lower.

Probably the biggest drawback to miniature conifers is finding them. I have found only a handful of nurseries in Nebraska that carry any of the different types of conifers at all, and very few of them carry the miniatures. Other states, especially Iowa and Wisconsin do have nurseries that specialize in conifers or alpines or you can find reputable nurseries all over the internet. Just be vigilant of their shipping and/or return policies.



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Poinsettia

by Tom O'Gorman , Madison County Master Gardener



History of the Poinsettia, *Euphorbia pulcherrima*:

A Mexican legend explains how poinsettias came to be associated with Christmas. Apparently, a child who could not afford a gift to offer to Christ on Christmas Eve picked some weeds from the side of the road and brought into the church. The weeds bloomed into red and green flowers and the congregation felt that they had witnessed a Christmas miracle. Mexican poinsettias are bright red plants. For some, these star shaped bracts symbolize the star of Bethlehem and the red color represents the blood of sacrifice through the crucifixion of Jesus. The poinsettia plant is a native of Mexico and Central America. It was named for Joel R Poinsett who popularized the plant and introduced it while he was a US minister to Mexico in the late 1820s. In 1825, he introduced the poinsettia to the United States. December 12th is celebrated as National Poinsettia Day. This day marks the death of Joel R Poinsett.

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What can we do with the "G" word now that winter is upon us? Well, plenty. Those garden catalogs will be coming in with their new selections and proven winners. Isn't it fun to go through those pages, reading all the descriptions and admiring all the beautiful colors and textures? I am sometimes disappointed that the zoning is not correct for my yard. That doesn't mean there isn't something new to look forward to when the time comes and you can order. Some of our old favorites now come in new colors and using color in the garden is always exciting.

It is important to keep your woody plants, trees, and other perennials well watered. Should we experience a dry, desiccating winter, those items though dormant still need moisture. They should be watered, not soaking wet, but that watering might save it's life if we should have little snow cover and harsh winds. A bright sun and breeze can drain a plant of life giving moisture even in winter time.

Alice Hemsath advised walking through your yard/garden in the winter to see "it's bones". Maybe a shrub has grown larger than you had expected and now it needs some under plantings to make it look more balanced. During Master Gardener classes, she discussed with us winter interest and leaving seed heads for the birds that hang around during the winter. Even in early spring there are sometimes dried grapes left on the vines that the robins will come to from the groves and shelter belts. I've seen many a robin in January come to my grape vines and honeysuckle tree to feed on fruits that failed to drop or were left unpicked.

Speaking of grape vines, now would be a good time to refresh yourself on cutting them back. This is usually done in very early spring and NebGuides offer great illustrations and timelines. Winter could be a good time to see where they need additional support or perhaps new supporting structures. Another winter project I have in mind is a new support for my clematis out front. Sometimes new string or twine for clematis tendrils to climb is all that is needed for them to stretch out tall on the trellis. This is more easily done with the plant in dormancy.

Occasionally there are still leaves on the ground which I rake and put on flower beds and vegetable garden sites. They really should be disposed of as a matting of leaves on your grass can smother it and cause winter mold. If you do desire to just mulch them, there should be visible green blades of grass in your lawn or one could have trouble.

Growing a hyacinth bulb indoors is fun to watch. I started one 10 weeks before Christmas and it seems to be a bit slow. Once they start getting their stalk length, it doesn't seem long before they are blooming those beautiful, large showy flowers. Often they must be staked. Old window blind lathes make good supports with soft string tied around the whole works. All you need for that garden project is a sunny window, water, and patience.

Maybe your winter gardening means a whole new landscape plan. Maybe you have minor alterations in mind. Taking a break while shoveling snow to look around at your yard, lawn, and tree sites can sometimes bring to mind a quick change or an entailed one. When you see your garden world in the bare bones state of winter, the ideas can be myriad.



Getting Ready For Next Year

by Sharon Hinrichsen, Antelope County Master Gardener

The 2011 Garden Season is in the books! We have enjoyed the bounty of vegetables and fruits, gazed at God's accomplishments in the flowerbeds, and now we are in the process of deciding what we will do differently next year.

After a very spirited discussion with other Master Gardeners on the 'panels' at the October MG meeting, I have made some hard decisions on how to best improve my vegetable garden in the coming season.

Everyone needs to bear in mind that Sharon's garden projects usually come in a distant 3rd place to gravel to haul, gravel to pump, and projects in the shop!

My first bright idea revolved around that wonderful pile of manure/compost I talked them into hauling back from the feed-lot cleaning project. Why not mix that with some nice black soil and make NEW beds?? The forecast is saying snow and the manure/compost pile still is sitting where it was. I have managed to tear up beds, remove the wood chips from the landscape fabric, remove the landscape fabric and get two of five beds moved. This is all a good start. I may have to wait until next spring at this point but I am determined to complete this project and maybe have a better garden next year.

To classify my last garden as a disappointment might just be an understatement! I had one pumpkin from a beautiful vine and two cantaloupe from another lovely vine. The cabbage never developed heads, cucumbers were nothing, and very small tomatoes on very sickly vines!!

I found out that I need to clean my tools and everything with bleach water, however, I have decided that the cages that I have used for quite a number of years can be sacrificed at this point in time, in the name of good tomatoes, and new cages will be purchased next spring.

I am very excited to start a fresh garden plot for several reasons. First, it will be closer to my house (good for the bad knees) and it will be further away from the river. I will have new soil that should give everything a good start. A fresh start is always a good thing! Maybe winter will be easier to bear with the thoughts of that 'new' garden in the spring...I'm excited!!



Current garden close to the river

Mention bare root trees and most gardeners think of the stick trees that our children brought home from school on Arbor Day. Some of us might even have tried bare root rose bushes or bare root plants such as strawberries or raspberries from catalog sources. My experience was that many plants arrived in marginal condition, and by the time I got them planted, I only had about a 50% success rate at best.

Last winter I read an article by Jan Riegenbach touting the success of using bare root trees and giving her recommendation of several catalog sources with excellent stock. Since our acreage is still in the development stage and many trees are needed, I decided to give these bare root trees a try as a more economical way to secure healthy plants.

Bare root plants and trees mean that the soil has been washed from the root system while it is dormant. The root system is then packaged in some type of material to prevent moisture loss and to allow it to be shipped or stored until shipping and planting time. Most bare root plants and trees are available only through catalogs, but a few can be found at local nurseries. The quality of the plants you receive depend on the initial plant quality, but also on the storage method and medium. The root system is fairly fragile so it needs to be kept moist and hydrated prior to planting.

For best results, bare roots need to be planted in early spring before the leaf buds swell and open. They are usually shipped in March and April in our region. It is best to plant within 1-2 days of arrival. However, when my fruit trees arrived last March, we were having a string of cold snowy days. I re-moistened the wrapping and refrigerated them for 3 weeks without a problem. It is important they be kept in that 32-35 degree range for long term storage.



Exposing the plants to either warmer or colder temperatures could damage the leaf buds.

Bare roots are planted somewhat differently than potted trees. It is important to keep the root system moist so choose a non-windy cool day if possible. Carefully unwrap the plant and trim back any roots that might have been damaged in digging and shipping. Then keep the root system covered in water till planting, but for no more than 1-2 hours.

Dig the holes for the trees shallow and wide with a dirt mound in the center. The tree's roots are draped over the mound umbrella fashion. The first roots off the trunk should be just under the soil line. Firm the soil around the roots eliminating air pockets. Thoroughly water the tree immediately after planting to keep the roots moist. Because of this, it is best to completely plant each tree one at a time. Finish up by trimming back any damaged branches, staking, and mulching. Frequent watering during the first and second seasons is important to get the root system well established. You can read more about bare roots and view a planting video on the Back Yard Farmer website at <http://byf.unl.edu/web/byf/byfvideosegments>.

I was completely surprised that in just a few days the trees were shooting leaves. Within a couple months the trees looked very similar to those potted trees of the same size and by the end of the growing season it was difficult to see any difference from potted plants. The best part was I got several more trees for the same dollar investment. So this winter when you are poring over catalogs and nursery websites, checkout their selection of bare root plants. Even with the increased costs of shipping, I think you will still find them to be a bargain.

What's In A Word?

By Deb Daehnke , Wayne County Master Gardener

I guess some times you could call me a word nerd. New or different words often catch my interest; especially if they are words I can use or should know in the world of horticulture.

Through our monthly Master Gardener meetings or just reading, I have come across some words that I thought I would share.

Phytoremediation – using plants to extract pollutants from the soil to clean it up. This is especially true of heavy metals such as aluminum, zinc, cadmium, etc. Scientists use plants such as Alpine pennycress as hyper accumulators. These are plants with a genetic disposition to take up metals by their roots and deposit at other locations in the plant. Won't it be great if plants become a safe and economical way to clean up toxic dump sites?

Do you have **Pteridomania**? If so, you have Fern-Fever or a craze for ferns. And if you have that passion then you are a pteridomaniac, a person with a love or passion for ferns. The fern craze started around the 1830's in England, the Victorian era. Who would have thought we could be classified as a maniac for loving ferns.

Monocarpic – bearing fruit only once and then dying - annuals, biennials, some bamboos and some really long-lived plants like century plants are classified as monocarpic.

Polycarpic - plants that will flower over and over.

Ephemerals - plants that germinate, grow, reproduce, and die within a few weeks or months. These are plants that often live in extreme environments. The life cycle of one species in the Sahara Desert can last for as little as ten days.

Gesneriads - a family of plants containing decorative tropical plants including the African violet and Gloxinia. If you belonged to the Gesneriad Society you might be an African Violet collector.

Climacteric - in the horticulture world this is considered a term to describe fruits that continue to ripen after they are picked. Apples, bananas, melons, apricots, tomatoes are climacteric fruit. Citrus, grapes, strawberries are non-climacteric fruit.

Solarization - A method to capture the heat of the sun to kill weeds, fungi, bacteria etc. in the soil. One method is to cover the area with clear construction grade plastic and leave it for 4-6 weeks. Depending on your location this is best accomplished in June and July but other months may work as well.

Ethnobotany - the branch of botany concerned with the use of plants in folklore, religion, etc.

Coniferitis – this term is not rooted in any word derivatives but is a tongue-in-cheek term penned to describe people who are addicted to conifers.

We just never know what plants and the words used to describe them have to teach us.

Remove Snow and Ice More Efficiently, Effectively This Winter

By Sarah Browning , UNL Extension Educator

It's that time of year when snow and ice invade, but before reaching for a bag of rock salt, be aware of the effects certain deicing compounds can have on the environment, hardscapes, floors and vegetation.

De-icers are designed to help loosen ice, not melt it completely. They lower the freezing point of water to jump start in the removal process by melting through the ice to the hard surface underneath and spreading along that surface.

There are various de-icing products available in all shapes and sizes. The most common are solids, which must absorb moisture and create a certain concentration in order to reach optimum melting. Avoid the "more is better" mentality for de-icers because that's not the case. Sphere-shaped pellets are more efficient than other shapes because they penetrate ice quicker, unlike irregular-shaped pellets that melt randomly in different directions.

Various deicing compounds include:

- ◆ Sodium chloride (NaCl)
- ◆ Magnesium chloride (MgCl)
- ◆ Calcium chloride (CaCl)
- ◆ Potassium chloride (Kcl)
- ◆ Calcium magnesium acetate (CMA)
- ◆ Potassium acetate (Kac)
- ◆ Urea, ammonium sulfate and other nitrogen salts

Salts from de-icing compounds change soil texture causing increased compaction, which in turn reduces oxygen and water movement into the soil and reduces plant root development. Salt remaining in the soil during the growing season can pull water out of plant roots, increasing plant drought stress during spring and summer and causing root death at its worst. What salt gets on plant foliage, it can burn or kill part of the plant, or even kill the entire plant. Sodium and chloride components of salts are particularly damaging to plant foliage. Products containing nitrogen are at high risk of moving offsite into surface water and can kill fish and other organisms.

Salts also corrode certain surfaces that are prone to rusting, such as metal railings, grates, drains, door frames and underground utility lines that aren't properly protected. They can also cause concrete surface layers to flake. When salt solutions infiltrate void spaces in concrete, they expand between 10-20 percent in volume when they re-freeze, creating pressure that fractures the concrete's surface. Porous brick, masonry and natural stone are the most vulnerable surfaces, so avoid using deicing salts around them.

Deicing chemical residues often get tracked into homes, staining carpets and dulling wax floors. Sodium chloride and potassium chloride salts are easiest to remove from floors, but calcium chloride and magnesium chloride salts are more difficult and require wet cleaning with detergents to remove.



Making a plan for snow and ice removal this winter can help alleviate some of the negative aspects of de-icing products. Some suggestions include:

- ◆ Removing large amounts of snow and ice before using deicing chemicals
- ◆ Using abrasive materials, such as sand, that improve traction on ice and reduce the need for chemical deicers
- ◆ Using deicing compounds that have minimal impact on plants
- ◆ Using concrete treatments designed to resist deicing compounds to reduce hardscape damage
- ◆ Putting durable mats on floors to reduce residue tracking

Know which compounds will work best in different situations. Here are the effects various compounds can have on hardscapes, floors, vegetation and the environment respectively:

- ◆ Sodium chloride: severe, slight, severe, moderate to severe
- ◆ Calcium chloride: severe, severe, moderate, slight
- ◆ Magnesium chloride: severe, severe, moderate, slight
- ◆ Potassium chloride: severe, slight, moderate, slight
- ◆ Calcium magnesium acetate: slight, moderate, slight, slight to moderate
- ◆ Nitrogen salts: none or severe, moderate, slight, severe

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Caring for a poinsettia:

Room temperature is important between 65° to 75° and avoid placing a poinsettia in a cold drafty area. Best location is near a window and the plant will get direct sunlight. Check the soil daily and water thoroughly when the surface is dry to the touch. After the plant has bloomed, cut back the plant to about 4" to 8" above the soil line. Do this in late spring when the plant finishes blooming. Water the plant when the soil dries out and allow to drain out. Fertilize every two weeks using 10-10-10 or house plant food. Prune plant during June and July to maintain a compact bushy shape. Place plant in a dark closet every evening beginning in late September as the plant needs 14 hours of uninterrupted darkness each day to bloom the next season. Do this until November. By December, the plant will be ready to enjoy again.



A Winter's Walk Can be Quite Lovely

Let's face it. Winter is not typically considered a great time to be outside in Nebraska. There is a reason so many birds fly south for the winter around here – it can be cold! Throw in a sharp north wind and some sleet or snow and it can be downright miserable. And yet, botanically speaking, winter is not completely without merit. In fact there are LOTS of good reasons to bundle up and venture outside to the garden and beyond this winter:

* **Bark!** Not the noise of dogs, but rather the protective layer woody plants produce as their outer skin. Winter is a great time to appreciate the detail of a good bark: sycamore with its cream and gray mottled patches; river birch and its peeling skin; the great reds and browns of ponderosa pine; the sinewy skin of hornbeam (*Carpinus*); the red stems of dogwood; and sloughing, beef jerky-like strips of shagbark hickory.

* **Winter architecture.** Leaf drop helps reveal the true architectural character of trees. One of the best is the beautiful and nakedly coarse form of a mature Kentucky coffeetree. Bur oak, with its wide spreading crown and coarse, corky bark is also a winter beauty.

* **Ornamental grasses.** Many grasses planted in the landscape hold their form well throughout much of the winter. The Great Plains native little bluestem, festooned in hues of pinks and reds, is especially attractive. Other favorites include Korean reedgrass, miscanthus, our native switchgrass and the golden glow of Indiangrass.

* **Winter greenery.** Several species of plants are able to defy "old man winter" and retain greenness throughout the season. We are most familiar with pines, spruces and firs. Other, more uncommon evergreens to watch for include sharp-leaved hollies; our native holly-like creeping mahonia; several types of viburnum (Alleghany, burkwood, etc.); the groundcover vinca; and even a few herbaceous species such as plum-bago and pasqueflower.

* **Birds.** Amazingly, many bird species choose to tough it out right in our own backyards. Tree sparrow, blue jay, cardinal, woodpecker, hawk, owl, waxwing, goldfinch, dove, titmouse, etc. How do they do it? How do their feet not freeze off? One of my favorites is the dark-eyed junco. Easily attracted to a ground feeder, this little fellow will feed right at the back door, and may even come inside if given the right invitation.

* **Winter beauty.** Many facets of winter can be almost magical in the way they play with our senses. The beauty of fresh-fallen snow, especially on the boughs of evergreens; the crisp cold air and the steam on our breath; the crunch of snow and ice underfoot; the clearer night sky with stars so much more twinkly than in summer; and all those holiday decorations scattered about the neighborhood. Even the kitschy ones represent someone's hard work and creative vision.

If you're like me, one of the best reasons to get outside in winter is to fight off some cabin fever. No matter how much we may love our kin, being cooped up inside can get old after a while. Getting outside for a walk around the neighborhood is a great way to work off some cookies, escape whiny relatives, exercise the dog and refresh the mind. And nothing makes the hot chocolate taste better than coming back in from the frigid winter air.

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ITGDec.7 Editor: Dan Moser, IANR News Service, 402-472-3030, dmoser3@unl.edu



Conifers for Small Spaces

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You can find much information at the American Conifer Society web page, www.conifersociety.org, including information to become a member of the American Conifer Society for a very reasonable fee. Regional meetings and a national meeting are generally held each year. Many of the attendees have been ardent supporters (they have coniferitis – addicted conifer syndrome-coined by those afflicted with this affliction) of the conifer society from its inception, breeding and developing many new varieties. Each conference also has an unbelievable array of nurseries or individual gardens to tour.



You might check out the web site and see if these little bitty gems would interest you, but be careful because it is hard to get just one.



Chewy Chocolate Peanut Butter Bars

(recipe from the Betty Crocker website)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup Gold Medal® all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup butter, cut into pieces
- 1/2 cup crunchy peanut butter
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 bag (12 oz) dark chocolate chips (2 cups)
- 1/2 cup salted dry-roasted peanuts, coarsely chopped

Directions:

Heat oven to 350°F. Spray 13x9-inch pan with baking spray with flour. In small bowl, stir flour, baking powder and salt; set aside.

In medium microwavable bowl, place butter and peanut butter. Microwave on High 30 to 45 seconds or until butter is melted. Add brown sugar and egg yolk; stir until mixed. Stir in vanilla and flour mixture. Stir in 3/4 cup of the chocolate chips. Spread in pan.

Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until just firm to the touch. Remove from oven; immediately sprinkle with remaining 1 1/4 cups chocolate chips. Let stand 2 to 3 minutes or until chips have softened. Spread softened chips evenly over top. Sprinkle with peanuts. Cool on cooling rack. Cut into 8 rows by 6 rows. Store in airtight container.



TIPS:

To help the chopped peanuts adhere to the chocolate topping, make sure you sprinkle them on top of the chocolate right after it's spread over the bars.

When measuring brown sugar for this recipe or any baking recipe, it's important to firmly pack the sugar into a dry measuring cup for best results.

May be a good recipe to try for the Plant Fair concession stand.

2012 Spring Training Dates:

6:30-9:00pm Lifelong Learning Center, Norfolk

- February 14:** Vegetables: Growing and Managing Pests - Sarah Browning
- February 21:** Plant ID & Diagnostics - Natalia Bjorklund & Kelly Feehan
- February 28:** Tree Problems: Environmental and Pests - Graham Herbst
- March 6:** Herbaceous Perennial Management - Kim Todd
- March 13:** Soils and Soil Management - Brad Jakubowski
- March 20:** Weed Management Basics - Lowell Sandell

New Master Gardener Interns can begin (or continue) their education certification while current Master Gardeners can recertify. For non-Master Gardeners, there will be a charge of \$5 per person for each training session attended. All six training sessions can be attended for \$25. All members of the Northeast Nebraska Master Gardeners do not have to pay.

Any questions, contact Wayne Ohnesorg, Extension Educator at 402-370-4040.

Northeast Nebraska Master Gardener 20th Anniversary Plant Fair

Mark your calendars!

Friday, May 4 and Saturday, May 5 2012

- ◆ Vendors are invited to rent a space to sell their products. 500+ visitors attend this annual event.
- ◆ Guest speakers present on various horticulture related topics.
- ◆ The Master Gardeners volunteer their time to make this Plant Fair a success. Proceeds help fund a scholarship to Northeast Community College students in Horticulture.
- ◆ Free Admission, Great Plants, Vendors, Speakers, Door Prizes, Lunch Stand and a Children's Activity Corner all make this Plant Fair a special must attend event!





The **GreatPlants®** program is a joint effort of the Nebraska Nursery & Landscape Association and the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum that selects and promotes exceptional plants – reliably hardy, easy to care for, and ornamentally worthwhile – for Plants of the Year and for GreatPlants Releases and Introductions. Ask for them at your local nursery! <http://arboretum.unl.edu/greatplants/index.html>



2012 Conifer of the Year
Rocky Mountain Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii* var. *glauca*) is commonly known as a Christmas tree but this subspecies, native to the Rocky Mountains, makes a beautiful, hardy landscape tree. It prefers sun and moist soil, but is drought-tolerant once established. Seed is important to chickadees, red crossbill, finches and many other birds and mammals. Grows 40-60' high with a spread of 15-20'.



2012 Tree of the Year
Shantung maple or *Acer truncatum* has no serious insect or disease problems and is highly ornamental through the growing season. Emerging leaves—and winged seeds—are reddish purple in spring, turning to a very glossy green that withstands even mid-summer heat. Fall color ranges from yellow to orange with deep red accents. It prefers moist, fertile soil and sun but tolerates alkaline soils better than most maples and can be grown even in full shade. Mature height and spread is 25-30'.



2012 Grass of the Year
Northwind switchgrass, *Panicum virgatum* 'Northwind', is the Grass of the Year. The most common response to this grass is simply "Wow." In trials, this narrow 4-5' grass remained upright through droughts, storms and even hurricanes. Leaf blades are wide and steel-blue, turning yellow in fall. Very dramatic in the landscape, it works well as a specimen, in masses and as a strong vertical accent in borders.



GreatPlants 2012 Release
Prairie Classic™ Viburnum was selected by Gary and Susan Ladman of [Classic Viburnums](#) in Franklin, Nebraska. It stood out among a group of rusty blackhaw viburnum seedlings in their nursery. Prairie Classic™ offers four seasons of beauty: attractive, flat-topped white flowers in spring; handsome, leathery summer foliage; reliable orange to red fall color; and abundant fruit clusters that go from rosy red to bluish black, often with varied colors in the same cluster, and persist into early spring. It grows as a shrub but can be easily pruned into a small specimen tree with stiff branches and minimal suckering at the base. It grows 12-15' high and 10-12' wide.



mulch and can tolerate sun or shade. In deep shade it's best cut back to avoid staking. No serious pests or diseases and a wonderful plant for rain gardens, growing 2-3' high.

2012 Perennial of the Year
Pink turtlehead, *Chelone lyonii*, is a wonderful plant for fall color. Pink blossoms, in the shape of a turtle's head, cover the deep green foliage from August into October. It prefers rich, moist soil and

2012 Shrub of the Year

Deam's arrowwood viburnum, *Viburnum dentatum* var. *deamii*, is Shrub of the Year. This arrowwood viburnum is rare in the trade, but its foliage alone makes it a standout. Even heat and drought don't diminish the lacquer-like glossiness of the leaves. In early spring, flower buds are in a tight red cluster that resembles raspberries. Flowers are creamy white and flat-topped. In fall, glossy foliage turns orange to purple. Abundant, dark blue fruits are held above the foliage and persist through the winter. Grows to 8' by 8'.



The Green Patch Contributors

<u>Publisher</u>	Pam Greunke
<u>Editor</u>	Deb Daehnke
<u>Contributors</u>	Sharon Bohmont Sarah Browning Deb Daehnke Sharon Hinrichsen Jane Jensen Tom O'Gorman Wayne Ohnesorg Nebraska Statewide Arboretum



Articles and information for the April issue of *The Green Patch* are due to Pam Greunke (pgreunke2@unl.edu) by February 1, 2012.

Northeast Nebraska Master Gardeners

Meetings held at:
UNL Extension - Madison County
601 E Benjamin Ave, Suite 105
Norfolk NE 68701



Phone:
402-370-4040 Madison County
402-329-4821 Pierce County
402-563-4901 Platte County
402-375-3310 Wayne County

Master Gardeners are people who love plants,
gardening, landscaping, and teaching others.



UNL EXTENSION—WAYNE COUNTY
510 N PEARL ST, STE C
WAYNE NE 68787

We're on the web at

<http://madison.unl.edu/mastergardenerhome>

What is It?? By Wayne Ohnesorg, Extension Educator

Your challenge is to correctly identify the insect and/or plant. **Starting in 2012**, the first person to contact me with the correct answer will be awarded one (1) training hour. Everyone that submits an answer will be entered into an end of the year drawing for a free Extension Circular such as the *Landscape Diagnostic Guide for Problems Affecting Woody Ornamentals and Herbaceous Perennials*. For every *What is it?* column you provide an answer for, you will receive one entry. This offer is available for both the Platte County and Northeast Nebraska Master Gardener groups.

The first person with the correct answer from the last edition of the *What is it?* column was Ellen Glanzer. She correctly identified them as hawk moth pupae. These pupae are either tomato or tobacco hornworms. You can easily tell the difference between the two when they are adults or larvae but not pupae. As larvae, they feed on tomato, potato, ground cherry, tobacco, and other solanaceous plants. When they are done growing, they crawl down into the soil to pupate.



What is this insect???

A homeowner out in Stuart, NE sent this quarter's insect to me. It was found out in the lawn. What kind of insect is it and why or why not would you be concerned about it? Be as specific as you can.

If you think you know, you can give me a call at (402) 370-4040 or shoot me an email wohnesorg2@unl.edu.

