

Deckscaping

MANY TOWN HOME or condominium associations do not allow planting in common areas, and the only flowers you're allowed is what will fit on your deck. Here are a few ways that plants can add beauty and utility to a deck:

- For privacy, consider small ornamental trees.
- Put fragrant trees on the upwind side of the deck.
- Grow flowers and foliage in pots

This will tie your deck to the yard and liven up a seating area. Potted evergreens can also help define your deck and can be lined up for screening. Just remember that these plants will dry out quicker in pots than if they were planted in the ground.

3860 W. 127th St. Alsip, IL 60803 Phone: 708-389-8119 www.williamquinnandsons.com

Employee of the month

May 2006



Nestor Morales
Maintenance Supervisor

During the month of May, Nestor showed outstanding performance while overcoming all of the difficulties of a new property.

Nestor's been a Member of Quinn Family Since: 2005

- Hot Buy! -

6-7' Ivory Silk Lilac

Regular: \$350

Sale Price: **\$270!**



Call today to reserve yours! Limited quantities.
Offer Valid Until: 7-30-06

WILLIAM QUINN & SONS
3860 W. 127th Street
Alsip, IL 60803



William Quinn & Sons Newsletter

June 2006

VOLUME 1

Gardening in Clay

New construction, clay soil, and how to use it to your advantage.

YOU MAY ALREADY be aware that in newer construction, a builder will sell off the majority of quality top soil on a build site and leave you with an inch of "good dirt," if you're lucky. Although clay soil packs in nutrients and retains moisture well, it can, and usually is, a gardener's nightmare. The tightly packed particles of clay soil drain poorly after rain then dry to a concrete-like consistency that can make it difficult, if not impossible, to plant. The dense soil can block the spread of roots and ultimately suffocate them.

What can you do?

One option is to break up the clay soil and till in nutrient-rich compost to improve the area's drainage and aeration. This process may take several years to reach its fullest potential. The best organic amendments include coarse, partially decomposed compost and aged barnyard manure (which can be bought by the bag at garden centers). Chopped leaves, grass clippings, ground bark or wood shavings can also be used, but may be less effective.



Clay soil can make any planting difficult to maintain.

Before you start, make sure the soil is dry – working with wet clay will compact it even more. To determine whether your clay soil is dry enough to till, squeeze a handful of soil into a ball; if the ball crumbles easily, it's ready for tilling. Thoroughly till in a two inch deep layer of compost or manure, and follow up with a one-inch deep layer each subsequent year.

Your other option is to choose plants that will grow in clay soil with little, or no, help. Perennials for clay include: Astilbe, Bee Balm, Black-eyed Susan, Butterfly Weed, Catmint, Coneflower, Daylily, Russian Sage, Switch Grass, and Yarrow. Trees and shrubs that grow well in clay include: Ash, Chokeberry, Crabapple, Hawthorn, Lilac, Linden, Norway Maple, and Viburnum.



3860 W. 127th St. Alsip, IL 60803 Phone: 708-389-8119 www.williamquinnandsons.com



CATHY'S CORNER

MAY CAME AND went quickly as we had 19 [of 31] days of rain. Depending on who you listen to, the experts say the drought still isn't over. June is shaping up to be a dry month, so keep the water on when possible. Many townships have already enacted water bans, making it difficult to keep everything looking green and healthy. We know that everyone is anxious to complete their landscape projects, and we're working as fast as we can – sometimes things get beyond our control (like the weather). Please be patient. It may take longer, but Mickey and I won't sacrifice the quality of work just to complete a project. Unfortunately, everyone can't be first. The same holds true for shrub trimming. All of the rain we received in May has made it almost impossible to keep up. The may rains also caused the weeds to sprout in bed areas – we can't treat the beds when it rains. As a result, the bed spraying has been a little delayed, but we are catching up.

In this newsletter, we've included an article about this year's crop of insects. Our weather has caused many bugs to appear earlier than normal. If anyone has any concerns about pest management, please feel free to call.

Finally, while everyone's busy – schedules always rushing from one place to another, and hurrying to complete those household chores – [it may sound corny, but] I want you to take the time to stop and smell the roses! Did you know that people who garden, or even stroll through the woods are healthier, happier, and more likely to live longer? You can lower your blood pressure by just watering the flowers! Our season is short, so take advantage of it because before you know it fall will be here.

This year I am taking my own advice and spending a day in July at the Chicago Botanical Garden. It's a great way to spend a summer day; strolling through the beautiful gardens. Anyone who's interested in spending a day at the garden can contact me so that we can coordinate a date.

As always, thanks for all of your business.

- Cathy

Pest Predictions

LET'S FACE IT; our weather has been anything but usual over the past few years. Unfortunately this unpredictable weather means that our pest and disease problems also have been, and will be [for some time], anything but usual. Last year's storms, drought, and mild winter will have a big impact on the attitude of pests and diseases for the next few months.

Here are our best predictions of what you may expect to see:

- **Japanese Beetles** may be in their strongest numbers yet this year. The mild winter has allowed the beetles to nest, breed, and flourish without restraint.

- **Woody plants** may be most susceptible to the recent drought problems we've faced. Those that have sacrificed surface roots during the dry period open their deeper roots up for root rot. Herbaceous plants may face the same fate.
- **Ants!** Last month we featured an article about customer's concerns for the enormous amount of ant colonies around properties. They're only going to grow larger.
- **Mites** love, and thrive, in warmer weather, especially when it is hot and dry.

An insider's look at

Groundcover



Recommended Groundcovers

Full Shade/ Part Sun	Full Sun
Variegated goutweed	Daylily
English Ivy	Dianthus
Coral Bells	Wintercreeper
Pachysandra	Sedum
Vinca	Ajuga
Spotted Dead Nettle	

WHEN DECIDING HOW to decorate areas of your landscape, we're betting that groundcover seldom crosses your mind. Using groundcover in certain areas, however, can have many benefits – and even add interest to some of the more “dull” areas of your landscape. They can even be used as a traffic barrier, visual guide, or used to define a space in your landscape.

In areas where grass simply won't grow, or is too difficult to maintain, avoid the frustration by planting groundcover. Not only will it help reduce soil erosion, but your residents will no longer have to look at a bare, non-grassy, area again! And in planting/gardening areas, groundcovers work great for transitioning between the lawn and taller plants. Using them as a transitioning piece will add a natural “protective barrier” around more delicate plants.

There are several factors that need to be considered when choosing a groundcover. The key is to select a groundcover that will do well under the condition it will be planted in, not to forcibly grow a groundcover where it will need drastic maintenance to merely stay alive.

Here are a few factors to keep in mind:

- Shade/Sun** – Certain groundcovers will thrive in the shade, while others will perish.
- Clay/Soil/Sand** – Select groundcovers based on the soil conditions.
- Height** – Some groundcovers will grow six inches, some four feet.
- Drought Tolerance** – Our weather's becoming ever more unpredictable. We suggest a groundcover that is more tolerant of drought conditions.

A well established groundcover can brighten up an area that would otherwise appear dull and vacant. So don't just give up on that tough-to-grow hilly/shady area of your property...consider a groundcover!

5 Reasons to Plant Groundcover

1. Planting groundcover will help prevent the germination, and growth, of weeds.
2. Groundcover helps protect from soil erosion and water loss.
3. Groundcovers act as an insulating cover for the soil. This helps keep it cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.
4. Groundcovers act as a natural, living, mulch, building up the nutrient levels of the surrounding soil.
5. It's easy to care for and hearty!

