

## Fall Musings

It must be fall. Foliage is displaying reds, oranges, purples and yellows in all their glory.

It must be fall. Suddenly the overnight temperatures have dropped to seasonal norms and I check the forecast every evening to ensure my unripened tomatoes will not freeze.

It must be fall. The 2012 catalogues are arriving at the Nursery; it's time to order stock for Spring. (I love doing that!)

It must be fall. The late bloomers - Maximillian sunflowers, Miscanthus, rabbitbrush and others are putting on a spectacular show.

It must be fall. I've taught my fall gardening courses at the College in Penticton and Kelowna; it will be January 2012 before I welcome a new group of students to the Landscape Horticulture Certificate program.

It must be fall. My dog smells. The freshwater salmon are running in Trout Creek (that is, in the creek itself after which this area of Summerland was named!) and the chance to roll in dead fish by the water's edge is irresistible for Ranger and his canine buddies.

It must be fall. This is the final Water Wisdom for 2011.

In keeping with fall, and the spirit of Thanksgiving, I am ending this year's column with a huge "Thank You". Thanks to all our retail customers, design clients and installation clients for a great year. I don't just mean in terms of the bottom line.

Gardeners who visit our nursery are, for the most part, cheerful, interesting people. Some folks know precisely what they're looking for; others wander through the demonstration gardens to get ideas or introduce themselves to new plant specimens.

Some folks are not just new to the concepts of xeriscape or edible gardening, but new to gardening. Period. Others are lifelong gardeners looking for something to fill in a vacated spot or try something new in their landscape.

Whatever the situation, we've found two distinct scenarios that keep us on our toes and keep us loving what we do.

One, we always welcome the challenge of selecting the right specimens for the space as drawn (often with a stick on the ground!) or explained by a customer - seasoned gardener or otherwise. Okanagan gardening trials can be numerous - heavy or

rocky soils, deer or other wildlife, high wind exposure, steep slopes. It's the rare gardener who doesn't have to contend with one issue or another.

Two, we are always, *always*, learning: from our clients, from each other, from educators, from references such as books and the Web. For example, this year Element Eco-Design from Vernon taught us (and a group of volunteers from BC and Alberta) how to use land contours to create water-capturing swales.

Thank you for visiting Grasslands Nursery. We know it can be difficult to step outside your 'comfort zone' to investigate low water, low-maintenance, sustainable gardening. We very much appreciate your efforts. And, if I may speak for Her, Mother Nature appreciates your efforts too.

Have a pleasant and safe winter everyone ... so long for now!

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A special thank you to John W. (Kelowna), Gwenda K. (Naramata), Gwen S. (Kelowna) and Elaine van S. (who lives in Spain!) for the seeds and seedlings.

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