

TREE TALK

Alberta Nurseries 'Goes Native' in 2005

Native Tree Species

For several years there has been a movement towards a broader use of native plants. Landscapers and government agencies alike have begun to specify that more indigenous plant material be introduced into large and small projects. Native plants are now being used in formal designs, erosion control projects, and in everyday residential and commercial landscapes. Many native plants prove to be more drought tolerant and more adaptable to specific site conditions. Many have distinguished aesthetic qualities-rich fall color (cranberry), interesting floral displays (chokecherry), attractive bark (red osier dogwood or paper birch), or delicious fruits (saskatoon) all in an environmentally appropriate package.

Making headlines now are several notorious non-native species, Scentless Chamomile, Purple Loosestrife and Canada Thistle that are wreaking havoc in local landscapes, escaping beyond their boundaries, and forever changing an ecosystem. Most non-native plants are not invasives, but outstanding ornamentals that deserve great attention in the landscape. Yet there are some ornamental species that can escape boundaries and spread and the same goes for native plant material.

The Alberta Invasive Plants Council was formed to take on the responsibility for the management of invasive plants. We all have a roll to play in the control of invasives and it starts with being informed. The councils website www.invasiveplants.ab.ca provides helpful information for landowners on the plants to be aware of and the control measures to be taken. We encourage everyone to visit the site or call the AIPC coordinator to obtain information.

Spring is when you feel like whistling even with a shoe full of slush.

Seedling Quick Start Fertilizer now available

Alberta Nurseries is now offering Nursery grade slow release fertilizer for application on nutrient deficient planting sites. This fertilizer is formulated to release its nutrients over the duration of the growing season.

The release rate is regulated by soil temperature and not moisture levels to ensure optimum levels of nutrients are available when the seedling is growing at its fastest. The fertilizer is easily applied as a top dressing around the seedling plant and is conveniently packaged so no measuring is required. Slow release fertilizers are widely used in the nursery trade because their release rate is controlled by temperature. They provide a degree of crop safety not found with the application of liquid or granular farm fertilizers which are better suited to grasses and well established plants.