

## Horticultural Points of Interest – February 2015

- **Plants by Internet or Mail**

- Major Advantage is to obtain Plants that may be hard to find locally
  - In most cases Prices not greatly different from local Garden Centers but Plants much smaller
- Beware of Descriptions like “#1 Size” or “Field Grown”
  - Such plants may be extremely small
  - Bare Root may also be very small
  - Pot Size is the best Gauge of what you will Receive
- Beware of unfamiliar Cultivars
  - If you want named cultivars, make sure that is what you are getting
- Be very Careful of the Shipping costs, which can add significantly to Cost
- If you have internet access, check the Supplier on the Garden Watchdog of Dave's Garden (<http://davesgarden.com/products/gwd/>)
  - Based on feedback from Gardeners like us who have purchased products from these Vendors
  - Perennials from Suppliers in the Garden Watchdog's top 30
    - Annie's Annuals & Perennials
      - 4” pots with reasonable prices but shipping a bit high
    - Bluestone Perennials
      - Have 3 ¼ “square x 4” deep biodegradable pots that can be planted directly in the ground. Good Reputation and excellent Selection of Perennials and Shrubs. Likely to having newer Cultivars. Shipping Moderate except for smaller (<\$25) orders.
    - Brent and Becky's Bulbs.
      - Rather limited selection of perennials but reasonable prices and shipping. Perennials often shipped bare root, but good size and have grown well for me. Great for bulbs.
    - Forest Farm
      - Best buys are the so called tubes which are 2”wide x much deeper (4” or more). These have reasonable shipping costs from West Coast. Bigger pots have very high shipping costs to East Coast. Lots of shrubs as well as perennials.
    - High Country Gardens
      - Two pot sizes, standard 2 ½” square x 3” deep and a larger 5” deep pot. Prices and shipping reasonable. Specialize in Xeric Garden material but many plants for East Coast Gardeners as well. Good Reputation.
    - Lazy S's Farm
      - One quart pots. Great variety. Shipping is pricey.

- **Snow on Shrubs**

- Avoid shoveling or dumping compacted Snow on Shrubs
  - Evergreen Shrubs are most susceptible to Snow Damage
  - In most cases Snow will melt with minimum Damage to Shrubs
- Shrubs under Roof Lines are particularly at risk especially if Snow raking is necessary
  - As a safety measure where possible gently remove Snow from Shrubs
  - Some pruning in Spring may be necessary

- **Winter Houseplant Care**

- Watering
  - Many Plants rest in low Light Conditions but grow again as days lengthen
  - If resting, reduce water and stop fertilizer until new Growth noticed
    - Excess water during rest period can cause root rot (Passion Flower) or force Winter growth which can affect Summer flowering (e.g. Cacti)
- Humidity
  - Indoor winter Humidity is very low especially in our Climate
  - Increase Humidity for Plants requiring more Moisture in the Air by placing pots on a tray of Pebbles with Water in the tray
    - Use Saucers so Plants are not unintentionally watered
  - Group Plants together to locally increase Humidity
  - Spray a Mist of Water on leaves early in the day
  - Use a Humidifier
- Houseplant Pests
  - Mites
    - Tiny dust sized & spider like best seen with a magnifying glass
      - Typically they are found on the underside of leaves where webs may also be evident
    - Mite thrive in dry conditions and can spread rapidly
      - Affect many plants including cacti, prayer plants, geraniums, begonias, African violets and cyclamen
    - Leaves affected become yellow blotched and fall off
    - Treatment
      - A strong water spray in the sink or in a shower for larger plants is effective but must be repeated
      - Spraying with Horticultural Soap is very effective
  - Mealy Bugs
    - 1/8" long scaly looking insect with white waxy or cottony coating
      - Common in cacti but can also affect ferns, ficus, African violets, and begonias
    - Dab with Q-tip soaked in rubbing alcohol for small infestation
    - Larger infestations can be difficult to Eradicate
      - Spray with Houseplant insecticide
        - Will require repeated treatments
  - Scale insects
    - Look like tiny Oyster shells and can be numerous
    - Spray with Horticultural Oil or Soap
  - Whiteflies
    - Tiny 1/8 " white flying insects which can spread to form large colonies typically on leaf undersides but sometime in plain sight
      - Act immediately since can be quite difficult to Control
    - Spray with Houseplant insecticide with repeated applications