

THE **E. C. BROWNS'**
NURSERY, INC.

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Growin' Newz



Endless Summer™

Hydrangea macrophylla *'Balmer' (PPAF)*

The world of Hydrangeas will never be the same! With the 2004 introductions of Hydrangea 'Endless Summer' everyone, even in the coldest reaches of the northeast, will be able to enjoy the glories of blue, summer blooming Hydrangeas, 'Endless Summer' blooms on new growth, setting an endless supply of fat, mounded flowers throughout the summer. Combine that with Zone 4 hardiness and you have a plant that is nothing short of revolutionary!

WHAT ENDLESS SUMMER® IS ALL ABOUT...

Endless Summer® is a perpetual flowering big-leaf Hydrangea that blooms virtually all season long. Blooms on both old and new wood, rich pink (in alkaline soils) or blue (in acidic soils) flower mops, remarkably hardy—it's time for a new standard. And because Endless Summer® can flower repeatedly on new wood, you can be confident that regardless of whether the plant dies back to the crown or if you trim it at the wrong time, they'll still get wonderful flowers in that growing season.

What makes Endless Summer® even more appealing is that it is remarkably hardy, even to Zone 4. Mulching is always a plus, helping in the winters with little snow cover. What's more, it's proven to be more mildew resistant than other macrophylla varieties.



The color of Hydrangea Endless Summer is soil dependent. If you want blue flowers; add a couple of handfuls of aluminum sulphate at planting. If you want pink flowers; use lime. You will probably have to refresh the treatment with a single handful of the desired product each summer. Endless Summer Hydrangea prefers a moist soil (not wet) in a place with afternoon shade and morning sun. If you choose a dry spot with afternoon sun, the hydrangea will wilt and the blossoms will be short lived.



HOW ENDLESS SUMMER® CAME TO BE...

On a visit to Bailey Nurseries in 1998, woody plant expert Dr. Michael Dirr, noticed something interesting in one of the trial blocks. Having long been in search of a perpetually flowering Hydrangea macrophylla, one particular Hydrangea caught his eye. The plant had been discovered by Bailey employee and had gone largely unattended for some time. Dr. Dirr asked for and was given cuttings to take back to the University of Georgia. Once there, extensive testing began finally convincing Dr. Dirr that this selection was indeed perpetual flowering.



Natural Gardening: The New American Garden

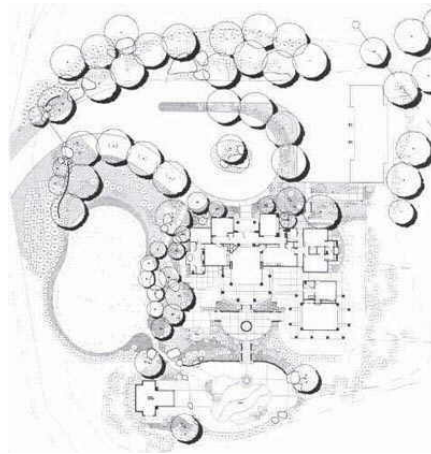
By Chris Wilson

Nothing is more beautiful than nature and the unspoiled natural landscape. More and more, the highest art seems to mimic nature or simply let nature's intrinsic beauty show. As we age (and I am now 50), gardening is harder than it used to be and nature does a better job aesthetically than we do anyway. A wild meadow is more beautiful by far than a stylized flower arrangement of contorted, wired or hothouse flowers. Many people who live in this relatively unpopulated part of the country feel just this way and that is why they are here—braving cold winters, poor soils and rocky, steep terrain. We are here because it is so pretty.

Gardening With Nature by James van Sweden describes this idea, which has brought van Sweden and his business partner, Wolfgang Oehme, to their position as America's leading landscape architects. The "New American Garden" is in harmony with nature and takes advantage of beautiful views, vistas, natural outcroppings, and magnificent existing trees. Also it is good for all seasons—taking plant foliage and shape as well as winter form and twig appearance into account. "New American Gardens" are also easy to maintain; large groups of one type of plant are easier than a mixed collec-

tion of everything.

Plants that are in harmony with the site tend to be easier to care for. Luckily today's landscape designers and home gardeners are more in tune with this idea than in the past. It's easier to have a magnificent rock

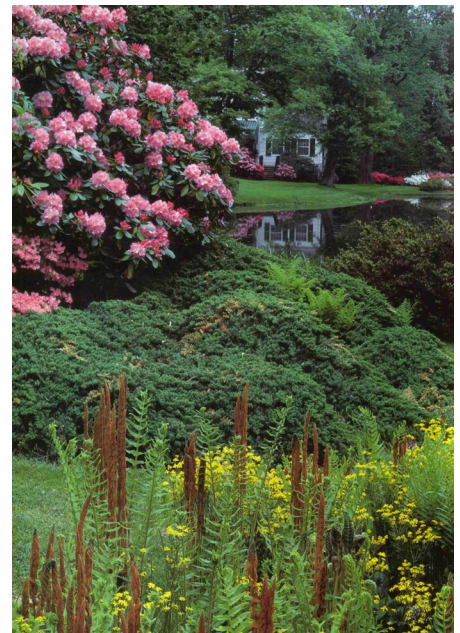


garden on a ledge-ridden Vermont hillside than on a flat suburban New Jersey lot. To have a typical English cottage garden is hard with little or no soil.

In nature, one doesn't usually find only one or two of any given plant in one location, but rather masses. It helps the overall look of one's property to have big groups of one kind of plant instead of a hodge-podge collection of one of everything interesting. We're talking about 10s or 100s of plants, not ones or twos. I personally limit my obsessive compulsive plant addiction to a few types of plants: Narcissus, peonies, roses, daylilies, Siberian iris and especially lilacs. I have a wide grassy path bordered by fifty feet of assorted Siberian Iris. Most of my peonies are

in a hundred foot long semi-circular bed. Most of my roses enclose, on two sides, a children's play yard and make it an outside room. Daffodils and lilacs are everywhere.

It is worth considering winter interest—as winters are quite long. Many of today's landscape designers do just that—as do van Sweden and Oehme. I personally would rather look out my window at red and orange osiers of willow and dogwood all winter than see tents, cones, fences and burlap protecting bushes from the cold. It's helpful in this regard to grow plants hardy to the site, especially ones native to the area rather than tricky and temperamental oddities.



The **E.C. Browns'**
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2004 Perennial Plant of the Year

ATHYRIUM NIPONICUM
'Pictum'

The Perennial Plant Association has named *Athyrium niponicum* 'Pictum' the 2004 Perennial Plant of the Year. This perennial low-maintenance Japanese painted fern is one of the showiest ferns for shade gardens. It is popular due to its hardiness nearly everywhere in the United States, except in the desert and northernmost areas in zone 3. 'Pictum' grows 18 inches tall and as it multiplies can make a clump that is more than two feet wide. 'Pictum' produces 12- to 18-inch fronds that are a



soft shade of metallic silver-gray with hints of red and blue. This lovely fern, which prefers partial to full shade, makes an outstanding combination plant for adding color, texture, and habit to landscape beds and containers.

Landscape Uses

The magnificent texture and color of the fronds electrify shady areas of the garden and make the fern a wonderful companion for a variety of shade plants. Japanese painted fern provides a nice contrast to other shade-loving perennials such as hosta, bleeding heart, columbine, astilbe and coral bells. A popular combination is Japanese painted fern with *Hosta* 'Patriot' and 'Ginko Craig'. For something different, try *Hosta sieboldiana* 'Elegans'. Another friendly companion plant for the Japanese painted fern is *Tiarella* (foam flower). One of the most unique possi-

bilities is to use this fern with sedges. *Carex* (sedges) are shade-loving, easy-to-grow grasslike plants. Try *Carex morrowii* 'Variegata' or *Carex siderosticha* 'Silver Sceptre'. Other selections that are excellent compliments to Japanese painted fern include *Brunnera macrophylla* 'Langtrees', 'Silver Wings', or 'Jack Frost'; *Lamium maculatum* 'Orchid Frost' and 'Purple Dragon'; *Astilbe* 'Snowdrift'; *Astilbe simplicifolia* 'Sprite'; and *Dicentra* 'King of Hearts'. Use these selections with white flowers or variegated leaves to echo or pick other colors for contrast. Most any plant will make a great counterpart to the graceful, attractive, and versatile *Athyrium niponicum* 'Pictum'.

Cultivation

This fern needs a well-drained, compost-rich soil and flourishes where moisture and humidity abound. 'Pictum' grows best in part- to full shade. The best frond color results in light shade. In the south, a few hours of morning sun will bring out the high colors. In the north they will take more morning sun without sunburning. The colors are more intense in the spring or in cooler temperatures or in cooler climates such as the Northwest. Add 2-3 inches of compost or peat moss to the beds each spring or fall. This fern is extremely reliable when grown in the proper environmental conditions. Its colorful foliage should be vibrant from early spring until frost, when it will go dormant and reemerge with its excellent foliage the next spring.

Propagation

Propagation can be done by tissue culture, spring or fall divisions or by planting spores. Growth habit and color uniformity is not ensured by spore propagation. Tissue culture may be used to clone exceptional plants, which are selected for excellent frond color and growth habit. Excellent selections of Japanese painted fern may also be produced by clump division. It is easy for a homeowner to buy the more colorful and uniform plants in the quantity needed or buy a few and divide the clumps yearly as needed. A well-grown plant can be separated in early spring



into 3-4 divisions and replanted. Fertilize at one-half the rate of other perennials with an organic or time-release fertilizer.

Hardiness: Grows in USDA Hardiness zones 3-8

Light: Part to full shade. The best frond color results in light shade.

Soil: Japanese painted fern needs well-drained, compost-rich soil.

Uses: The Japanese painted fern makes an outstanding combination plant for adding color, texture and habit to the shade garden.

Unique Qualities: The low-maintenance Japanese painted fern is versatile and provides impressive contrasting foliage that brightens landscape beds and containers. Fronds are 12 to 18-inches long and are a soft, metallic, silver-gray with hints of red and blue.





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