

# American Horticulturist

## Choosing a Christmas Tree

### How to Identify and Care for the One You Want

The Christmas season seems to begin earlier each year. Trees decorate department stores before Halloween—even earlier in some retail establishments. Though we may think we are seeing them too early, we still look forward to our own Christmas tree whether we bring out treasured ornaments or style it differently each year.

Below are listed some of the most popular trees grown in the United States as determined by the National Christmas Tree Association. Our brief "tree key" should make it easier for you to search for the tree you want. Be sure to check on a certain tree's availability in your area, however, as all those listed below are not available in every location.

#### Spruce

Upright, pyramidal, single-trunked trees. Stiff in appearance with horizontal branches produced in whorls. May be used as a specimen tree but is sometimes difficult to establish in the landscape. Loses its branches when planted too close together or densely shaded. Not the best ornamental tree because it is often ragged when mature. Diseases: Cytosperma canker, rust. Propagation: hardwood cuttings or seed.

***Picea abies*, Norway spruce.** May grow to 150 feet. Branches droop; shiny, dark green needles are grouped in four, angled and to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches long; cones grow to seven inches long. Native to Europe, but is

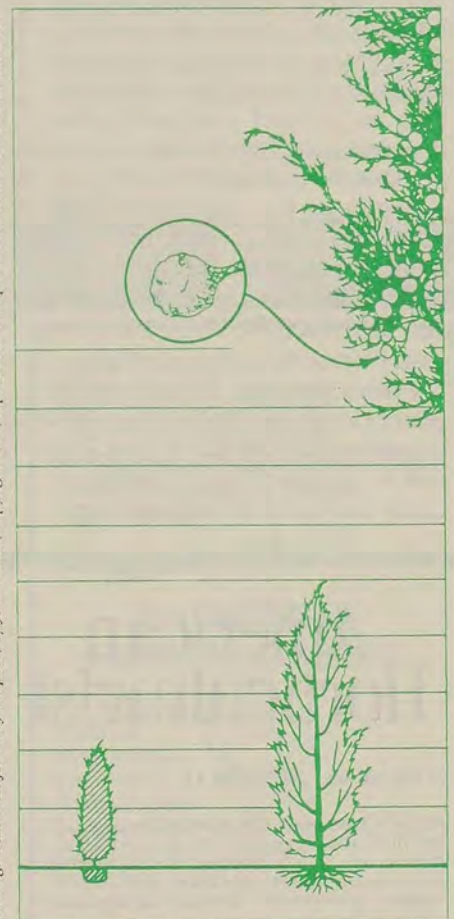


***Picea abies* (excelsa), Norway spruce**

mass produced along the northeastern seaboard (Wisconsin and Minnesota to the Mason Dixon line) and in the Northwest. Prefers cool weather.

#### Cedar

Cedars are popular for the use of their wood and their ability to look



***Juniperus virginiana*, Red cedar**

aesthetically pleasing in mass plantings. There are many variations in this group that are good for hedging if pruned correctly. They are best in hot, dry, sunny locations and do especially well under urban growing conditions. They grow in either acid or alkaline soil but prefer a soil that



isn't too acidic. Diseases: twig blight, Cedar-apple rust, Cedar hawthorn rust, and Cedar-quince rust. Propagation: seed or hardwood cuttings.

**Juniperus virginiana, Red cedar.** May grow to 75 feet with scale-like, strongly overlapping leaves. Grows very slowly, and prefers lime regions and poor, dry soil. Native to the northeastern United States, and is mass produced along the eastern seaboard. Does not do well in the extreme northwestern regions of the United States. The wood is very durable and fragrant.

## Pines

These evergreens are among the most important in the United States for lumber. They grow widely in the northern temperate regions of the world and are represented well in America. Most pines can grow in good to very poor soils, from the seashore to the highest timberline. They are divided into three groups depending on the number of needles per sheath (bundle). Prune in late spring or early summer when new shoots are half grown. It is important to leave a dormant bud below the cut or otherwise no other shoots will develop. Diseases: White Pine blister rust. Propagation: seed, grafting.

**Pinus strobus, Eastern white pine.** Grows to 120 feet. Soft, bluish-green needles are five inches long and in groups of five. Cylindrical cones are up to six inches long.

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**Abies procera, Noble fir**

Grows well in moist, sandy soil. Heavily cultivated and seldom found in the wild. Heavily produced along the eastern seaboard and parts of Minnesota, Illinois, and Michigan. Lends itself beautifully to shearing. Has a soft appearance.

**Pinus virginiana, Virginia pine, Jersey pine, scrub pine, spruce pine, poverty pine.** Grows to 50 feet with needles in fascicles of two, three inches long, stiff and slightly twisted. Cones are 2½ inches long and conic-ovoid. Thrives in barren soil along the eastern part of the United States. Very sweet-smelling gum.

**Pinus sylvestris, Scotch pine.** Grows to 100 feet or more with stiff, twisted, bluish-green three inch-long needles in fascicles of two. Cones are 2½ inches long and conic-oblong. Important timber tree in Europe; produced heavily throughout Canada and the eastern seaboard, predominately in the north. Prefers cold weather and sandy soil with good moisture content.

**Pinus radiata, Monterey pine.** Grows to 75 feet with bright green



**Pinus strobus, Eastern white pine**

four-inch-long leaves in fascicles of three. Cones are seven inches long and conic-ovoid to seven inches long. Many planted worldwide, especially for timber in the Mediterranean climates. This tree is commercially grown on the West Coast in the fogbelt areas of San Francisco and San Diego inward. Prefers a sandy, loamy soil.

## Fir

Stately trees with wide trunks and horizontal branches. They prefer high altitudes such as those of the mountains on the West Coast. They produce a soft wood and prefer a cool, moist climate. This tree almost refuses to grow in a hot, dry, drought-stricken area. Pruning is difficult because of its habit not to shoot new growth in the same area. Topping disrupts its stiff pyramid form. Fir cones are always erect. Diseases: needle cast, needle rust. Propagation: seeds, grafting, hardwood cuttings.

**Pseudotsuga menziesii, Douglas fir.** Grows to 300 feet with dark, bluish-green needles one to 1¼

Drawings from Trees for Every Purpose, by John Hudak, copyright 1980, reproduced with permission from McGraw-Hill Book Co.



## Tips on Tree Care

Almost any freshly cut Christmas tree will last 30 days or more if it is cut off one to two inches from the base. David Baumann, associate executive director of the National Christmas Tree Association, says, "To determine a Christmas tree's freshness, grab the tree midway down the trunk and tap it on the ground three or four times to see if a number of needles fall off. Then, place your hand six to eight inches from the tip of the branch in toward the tree trunk and pull. If more than five to ten percent of the needles drop, ask the owner when the tree was cut. When a tree is cut it will begin to callus over at the base after a few days to maintain its moisture content. This is why it is important to recut the surface to encourage moisture uptake."

Baumann says that tap water is the best liquid to keep the tree fresh. If you are planning to spend Christmas away from home but still want to have a freshly cut Christmas tree in your house, Baumann's advice is to use a one- to two-gallon reservoir container. This supplies the tree with

water for three days. Plan to bring your tree into the house two or three days before you leave for the holiday, however, for the first day it is indoors it may drink up most of the water. On the second or third day, refill, and then you can leave the tree for three days.

If you are planning to buy a balled tree, please take your "tree key" with you when you shop. Remember that there are cultivars of the trees we have mentioned which mature at different heights and have different forms.

According to Baumann, you should display a balled tree for only one week in your home. The soil must stay moist at all times during this period. A cloth skirt will help minimize evaporation. Also, be sure to place one or two layers of cloth under the container in case it leaks. Prepare the hole as early as possible and cover it with leaves so that the ground does not freeze before you plant. Finally, consult your local nurseryman for directions on planting your tree.

compiled by —Brian C. Little

inches long. Branches are rarely glabrous. Cones are 4½ inches long. Excellent ornamental evergreen. Prefers mild, humid climates. Commercially grown in parts of the Northwest, the coast of California, and the west coast of Canada.

**Abies procera, Noble fir.** Grows to 100 feet with reddish pubescent branches. Bluish-green needles are 1½ inches long, rounded at the apex, and slightly notched. Cones are ten inches long and have a cylindrical-oblong form, turning purplish-brown when mature. Best in a humid climate with cool, short growing season in elevations of 1,500 to 4,000 feet. Commercially grown in a narrow band in sections of Washington, Oregon, and northern California.

**Abies balsamea, Balsam fir.** Grows to 75 feet with pubescent branches. Needles are rounded and slightly notched to one inch long. Oblong cones are 2½ inches long and violet-purple. Prefers a cold winter and warm summer, and may be planted in a moist but well-drained soil. Commercially grown in the

Northeast and in areas of Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, southern Canada, and Nova Scotia.

**Abies fraseri, Frazier fir, Southern balsam fir.** Grows to 75 feet with reddish-pubescent branches. Glossy, dark green needles are one inch long, rounded, and slightly notched at the apex. Purple cones are oblong or somewhat ovoid to 2¼ inches long. Prefers high elevations. Commercially grown in the Appalachian mountains, Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee.

## Cut Poinsettias?

Christmas decorating possibilities with brilliant red or white bracts are now increased by the news that a simple procedure will keep them attractive for eight to ten days as cut flowers. If the stems are dipped in rubbing alcohol for ten minutes after cutting, the latex flow from the stem, which prevents the uptake of water, will be prevented.

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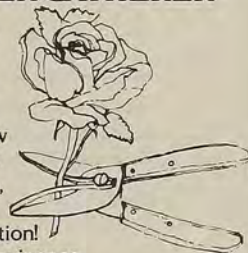
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## More About Trees

- Researchers at Cornell University have developed a new technique that makes tough-to-propagate trees and shrubs easier to grow. The technique, called blanching, is a method of banding shoots grown in the absence of light. This has been tried before, but researchers found that Velcro was more effective for banding than black plastic electrical tape. Velcro works best because it can be removed without causing injury to the stem, and root-promoting hormones can be applied before the shoot is banded. The sugar maple, paper birch, Chinese chestnut, pin oak, English oak, Scotch pine, and mugo pine are some of the trees successfully cloned by this method.
- The black walnut is not as much the villain in a yard as it is claimed to be. Frank Robinson, estate manager at Albermarle Farms, Charlottesville, Virginia, has discovered that there are a number of annuals, perennials, bulbs, vines, and shrubs that will survive beneath its shade. Write the "Gardener's Information Service" to obtain a list of the species and cultivars which appear to be friends of this tree.
- A tree breeder at the U.S. Department of Agriculture has a new theory that certain enzymes in trees control whether two trees will grow together when grafted. It is hoped that this tree enzyme research will lead to the availability of new landscape trees in the next decade. Successful grafting that matches the enzymes of good shade and flowering trees with the enzymes of good rooting trees could speed up development of cultivars without waiting years for results. Trees could be developed to tolerate the abuses of urban conditions such as salt, herbicides, poor soils, and air pollution.
- The National Arborist Association recently released its revised *Book of Standards for Tree Care Practices*. Included are standards for pruning, cabling, bracing and guying, fertilizing, hydraulic sprayer calibration, and the installation of lightning protection systems. The standards are illustrated and referenced in the 25-page book, which can be ordered from the National Arborist Association, 174 Route 101, Bedford, NH 03102 for \$12.



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### November 4-December 1 Oriental Chrysanthemum Show

Information: Des Moines Botanical Center, 909 East River Drive, Des Moines, IA 50316, (515) 283-4148.

### November 6-12 American Society for Horticultural Science and Congress of the Interamerican Society for Tropical Horticulture Annual Meeting

Hyatt Orlando Hotel, Kissimmee, Florida. Information: Dr. William J. Carpenter, Ornamental Horticulture Department, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611, (904) 392-7943.

### November 7 California Native Plant Sale

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, Claremont, California. Hours: 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Information: Education Department, Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, 1500 North College Ave., Claremont, CA 91711, (714) 625-8767.

### November 8-29 Pittsburgh Fall Flower Show

Sponsored by the Pittsburgh Department of Parks and Recreation and Phipps Conservatory. Phipps Conservatory, Schenley Park, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. For further information call (412) 622-6915.

### November 9-10 International Chrysanthemum Conference and Show

Tokyo Hilton International Hotel, 662 Nishi - Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, 160 Japan. Information: The Japanese Travel Bureau, Inc., Foreign Tourist Division Convention Center, 1-13-1 Nihonbashi Chuo-ku, Tokyo 103, Japan Tokyo 03-276-7885, Telex: Tourist J24418.

### November 9-11 Penn State Golf Turf Conference

Keller Conference Center, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA. Sponsored by The Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council, Inc. Information: Dr. Joseph Duich, Dept of Agronomy, 21 Tyson Bldg, University Park, PA 16802, (814) 865-9853.

### November 10 Table Decorations Workshop

Williamsburg, Virginia. Registration Fee: \$32. Information: Eugenia Corrigan, Williamsburg Flower Workshops, P.O. Box C, Williamsburg, VA 23187, (804) 220-7206.

### November 11-13 Regional Meeting on Water Management

Sacramento, California. Sponsored by the United States Committee on Irrigation and Drainage. Information: Larry Stephens, United States Committee on Irrigation and Drainage, P.O. Box 15326, Denver, CO 80215, (303) 236-6960.

### November 12-15 Annual Conference and Show

Sponsored by Professional Lawn Care Association of America. San Antonio, Texas. Information: Douglas K. Moody, Professional Lawn Care Association of America, 1225 Johnson Ferry Road, N.E., Suite B-220, Marietta, GA 30068, (404) 977-5222.

### November 14-30 Annual Mum Festival—"Growing Chrysanthemums the Cypress Gardens Way"

Florida Cypress Gardens. Information: National Chrysanthemum Society, 2139 Vegas Valley Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89109. (Florida) 1-800-282-2123; (National) 1-800-237-4826.





**November 18  
Christmas Wreath Workshop**

Williamsburg, Virginia. Registration Fee: \$32. Information: Eugenia Corrigan, Colonial Williamsburg Flower Workshops, P.O. Box C, Williamsburg, VA 23187, (804) 220-7206.

**November 21 - December 27  
"Christmas at Oatlands"**

Oatlands, Leesburg, Virginia. Admission: \$5, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Candlelight tours, \$6, after 6 p.m. Information: Michael T. Sheehan, Oatlands, Rt. 2, Box 352, Leesburg, VA 22075.

**November 29 - December 3  
"Evolution 87" Entomological Society  
of America Annual Meeting**

Sponsored by the Entomological Society of America. Boston, MA. Information: Entomological Society of America, P.O. Box 177, Hyattsville, MD 20781.

**December 1  
Used Plant Sale**

Information: Des Moines Botanical Center, 909 East River Drive, Des Moines, IA 50316.

**December 3-4  
Meeting on Toxics in Agricultural  
Water**

Sponsored by the U.S. Committee on Irrigation and Drainage. Alexis Park Hotel, Las Vegas, NV. Registration: \$80; \$110 after November 19th. Information: USCID, P.O. Box 25326, Denver CO 80215, (303) 236-6960.

**December 12-January 10  
Holiday Flower Show**

Sponsored by Pittsburgh Department of Parks and Recreation and Phipps Conservatory. Phipps Conservatory, Schenley Park, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Admission: Adult city resident, \$2.00; Adult non-city resident, \$2.50; Senior citizen/children 2-12, 75¢. Hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For further information call (412) 622-6915.

**December 13  
American Horticultural Society  
Christmas Open House**

7931 East Boulevard Drive, Mt. Vernon, VA. Hours: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission: free. Information: Margaret Burke, AHS, P.O. Box 0105, Mt. Vernon, VA 22121, (703) 768-5700.

**December 16-18  
Desert Turfgrass Conference and Show**

Sponsored by the Nevada Cooperative Extension, University of Nevada-Reno. Tropicana Resort, Las Vegas. Information: Robert Morris, Nevada Cooperative Extension, S.T. & P. Bldg, Suite 207, 953 E. Sahara, Las Vegas, Nevada 89104 (702) 731-3130.



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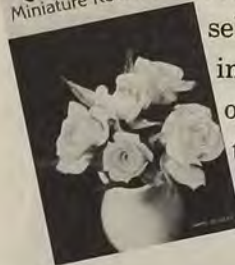
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# Gardener's Check List

**I**t is already November. Are you keeping up with your garden chores for this month and next? Whatever November means climatically in your part of the country, there are things to be done. To instruct you (or merely nudge you to get started), we contacted several knowledgeable persons across the nation for a checklist.

## Northeast

- Mulch perennials and roses after a hard freeze to minimize freezing and thawing.
- Mound soil around the base of roses and then add evergreen boughs.
- Put up windbreaks around broad-leaf and needle-leaf evergreens. Wooden frames are good for wind and snow protection.
- Check for insect infestations in house plants, and cut out inside branches to encourage light penetration.
- Cut back water and fertilizer to half strength to discourage "leggy" growth of house plants.

—Lois Berg Stack,  
University of Maine,  
Orono, Maine

## South

- Plant spring flowering bulbs. For extended flowering, select early, mid-season, and late-flowering varieties.
- Plant trees and shrubs. Plan for the mature size as well as cultural requirements in order to locate them properly in the landscape.
- Muscadines can be pruned in December. Pruning too early in the fall or too late in winter results in bleeding of canes.
- When cutting hollies and other evergreens for holiday decorations, prune lightly. Heavy pruning can result in winter damage.

—Alta Kingman,  
Residential Horticulturist,  
Clemson University  
Clemson, South Carolina



## Inland

- Plant cool-season crops.
- Plant strawberry plants November 1-15. Use plastic mulch.
- Repair hotbeds and cold frames for January use.
- Clean up garden.

David N. Sasseville,  
State Horticulture Specialist  
University of Missouri &  
Lincoln University,  
Columbia & Jefferson City, Missouri

- Use a lawn fungicide to guard against snow mold.
- Remove leaves of diseased roses.
- Cover root crops and roses with mulch to minimize freezing and thawing.
- Delay pruning until spring to minimize snow damage from excess pruning.
- Continue to water shrubbery to guard against winter drought and windburn.
- Clean debris from the base of fruit trees to discourage mouse girdling.

—Larry Sagers,  
Ornamental Horticulture Specialist,  
Salt Lake City, Utah

- Apply the second application of lawn fertilizer.
- Prune large trees.
- Move house plants to brighter locations.

—Deborah Brown,  
Extension Horticulturist,  
Saint Paul, Minnesota

## Southwest

- Test soil for salt build-up.
- Add soil conditioners (manure, compost, or comPRO) to the soil.



- Plant spring bulbs.
  - Plant trees, especially fruit and nut trees.
  - Start bare root shrubbery in December.
  - Start pruning later in November.
  - Inspect and repair all equipment.
- John E. Begnaud,  
Extension Horticulturist,  
San Angelo, Texas

### West

- Harvest cool-season crops.
  - Plant perennial vegetables.
  - Plant bulb onions; use direct seed or transplants.
  - Plant containerized woody plants and perennials.
  - Plant pansies, Calendulas, snapdragons, California poppies, sweet peas, sweet allysum, stock, and African daisies for splashes of winter color.
  - Start a wildflower meadow for flowers six to eight weeks later.
  - Cover crops, such as annual rye grass, should be planted in a steep area for slope stabilization.
  - Continue to build garden soil.
- Dennis Pittenger,  
University of California,  
Riverside, California

### Northwest

- Garlic, onion sets, peas, and other cool-season crops can be planted.
  - Fava beans may be planted later in the month to minimize top growth.
  - Lime soil to raise pH, or use weathered manure to increase nutrient content.
  - Plant bare root fruit trees.
  - Prune trailing blackberries to five new canes per plant.
  - Prune red raspberries to five feet and leave 10 strong canes per plant.
  - Plant woody shrubs and trees now so they may be established before next year's stressful periods.
  - Propagate broadleaf evergreens.
  - Prune evergreens for Christmas.
  - Holly berries and leaves should be dipped in a hormone to prolong their freshness during display.
  - Turn house plants once every other day or once a week to retain their shape.
  - Check spruce trees for aphids.
- George Pinyub,  
Extension Horticultural Agent,  
Washington State University,  
Pullman, Washington

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# Q&A

## New Feature! A Column of Questions and Answers Starts This Month

One of the valuable AHS member benefits is the Gardener's Information Service. Every week an average of 30 to 40 letters asking for help arrive from puzzled gardeners. The questions are varied, come from all over the United States, and, together with their answers, form a body of quick and factual information that can be useful to many other members.

We felt that all readers should be able to share in the horticultural knowledge that comes from the research by Brian Little, Gardener's Information Service horticulturist, in preparing the answers. "Questions and Answers" (keep those letters coming!) will be a continuing feature of the *News Edition*.

**Q: I have some *Liriope* plants in my border that are turning greyish-white at the tips. What can I do to prevent this?**

—S.C., Martinsville, VA

**A:** I think you have an infestation of thrips. If you look closely at the center region of the plant, you will notice insects resembling brown or straw-colored wood slivers moving around. They can become a widespread problem because they are carried by wind. However, you can spray with Liquid Seven, Malathion, or an insecticide containing Diazinon. Repeat, spraying every seven to ten days, until there are no more signs of thrips. In the fall, be sure to remove all grass piles, or other such materials, to discourage thrips from wintering in your yard. In the summer, be sure not to water from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. or you will scorch your leaves.

**Q: Enclosed are samples of flowering shrubs I collected at Martha's Vineyard. Can you identify them?**

—M. L. G., Elnore, NY

**A:** Unfortunately, the samples that you sent are not large enough for us to identify. However, if you follow the guidelines below in the future, we will not have a problem identifying your sample. (1) Submit only portions of plants that have reached full maturity. (2) Send only fresh material. Dried plant material is very brittle and often difficult to handle. (3) Include information about the form of the plant you want identified; for example, a vine, shrub, tree or other. (4) If the plant is flowering, be sure to include all flowering parts or mention the color and size of the flowers. (5) If you know when the plant flowers, be sure to give that information as well. (6) Indicate the current height of the plant. (7) State whether the plant is growing in sun or shade. (8) Note whether the plant is deciduous (losing its leaves in the winter) or evergreen. (9) Tell where you saw this plant growing—in a wildflower meadow, forest, public garden, etc. (10) Send flattened portions of the plant to be identified along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Gardener's Information Service at the Society.

**Q: I want to learn about flowers and shrubs that will grow in sandy soil. I live near Nags Head, North Carolina, and I find it almost impossible to garden in sandy soil. I want continuous bloom, month after month, year after year. Can you help me?**

—M. D., Wanchese, NC

**A:** *Wyman's Garden Encyclopedia* (MacMillan, New York, 1986) has a section on seashore gardening that is helpful. This book is available at most local libraries. Also contact your local extension office and inquire about gardening in your type of soil. The extension office is listed in the phone book under "County Government." Remember that large amounts of composted leaf mold, peat moss or compRO will help to improve the amount of organic matter in the soil. You may even incorporate wood ashes to increase the amount of potash in the soil. Be sure



not to add too much; you could raise the pH considerably and make the soil too alkaline, thereby causing acid-loving plants to become severely stressed. Consult your local extension agent to determine the correct amount of potash that is best for your conditions.

Once your soil is well conditioned, you should contact the Perennial Plant Association to obtain a list of perennials that will bloom all season long. Their address is: Perennial Plant Association, Box 86, Kensington, CT 06037.

**Q: I have a winter-flowering azalea that has twisted leaf tips. I tried spraying with an insecticide containing Malathion and Benomyl to control any type of insect infestations, but they have no effect. What else can I do for it?**

—B. C., Melrose Park, PA

**A:** If you have not noticed any insects around your azalea, I would think that the azalea has a calcium deficiency. Too much or too little calcium causes a chlorosis in the earlier stages, severe tip burn on young expanding leaves, or slightly yellow twisted leaf tips. A severe condition could lead to death of terminal and lateral buds.

Don't use hydrated lime because it releases calcium too fast. Ordinary superphosphate contains a sufficient amount of calcium for azaleas and will not reduce the acidity level in the soil.

**Q: I need to know what is happening to several of my azaleas. Many of the leaf ends puff up like puffed wheat. Sometimes the whole leaf is affected, and it turns from green to white. What is the problem?**

—D. K., Westmont, NJ

**A:** Your azalea has a leaf gall which is a disease caused by a fungus (*Exobasidium vaccinii*). The spores of this disease are carried by wind or splashed from plant to plant by rain, and it favors damp areas with low air circulation. Remove all galls from the leaf to prevent further damage, then spray with a fungicide containing tri-basic copper sulfate or zineb before the buds open. Repeat this process

every two weeks until two or three new sets of leaves have matured. Be sure to space your azaleas to allow proper ventilation, and avoid deeply shaded areas.

**Q: I have recently been given a few *Arcauria arcauran* (monkey puzzle tree) seeds, and I have no idea what to do with them. They are not common around here, so no one has information on how to propagate them. Can you give me any information on the tree and any instructions on growing it from seed?**

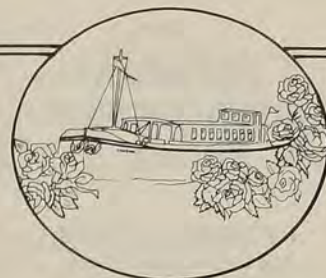
—A. S., Seattle, WA

**A:** *Arcauria arcauran* is a tall, evergreen, coniferous tree that has closely overlapping ovate-lanceolate leaves that are sharply pointed, leathery, and one to two inches long. The male cones are three to five inches long and two inches wide. Female cones are four to seven inches long and three to five inches wide. It is native to Chile and thrives vigorously in areas with mild winters, but can grow in USDA Zone 7.

This tree can be cultivated from seed, but in the industry it is most commonly propagated from cuttings. However, when raised from seed, the plants' tiers are sparse and thus less attractive than the parent tree.

*Arcauria* seeds have a short viability and must be sown within one month after collecting. If the seeds cannot be sown within this time frame, take the seed and place it in a plastic bag or on a moist napkin in an airtight container, then store at 38° F. The seeds will stay viable for almost six years. This particular tree's seeds need shade in order to germinate. Sow on a well-prepared bed and cover with 3/4 inch of sawdust.

Provide full overhead protection until the seeds germinate, then 75 percent shade for the first two or three months of shoot development, followed by 50 percent shade for the next three months. Do not give the young seedlings full light until after the first year. Transplant seedlings in pots after they are six to nine inches tall, or two years old. Germination may take ten days if conditions are between 70 and 80° F., or 50 days or more if it is very cool. The period of germination could also depend on the quality of seed. Good luck!



## AHS TRAVEL 1988 with PASSAGES UNLIMITED, INC.

In 1988 **Passages Unlimited** has again designed three unique trips for the Society's membership. It is our great good fortune to have Dick Hutton, Board member and President of Conard-Pyle/Star Roses, as our tour leader for two of these offerings. Back by popular demand is his trip to see **The Gardens of the Riviera & Burgundy** (June 11-25), featuring one week in the south of France and one week on the barge *Janine* in Burgundy. In October we will **Fall Into Spring** when Dick will also lead a three week trip to **New Zealand, Tasmania and Australia** to see gardens and do some botanizing in this extraordinarily beautiful and rugged part of the world.

By contrast to these exotic destinations we are also presenting the **AHS 'At Home' In Virginia** (April 23-May 1) with a tour during Historic Garden Week to visit many Restoration and private gardens. We will conclude our week's visits with a gala at the Society's Headquarters, *River Farm*.

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# What's Happening at AHS



Mary Read Cooper contributed her weeding skills when needed and, on other days, her writing and organizing talents.

## Thanks, AHS Volunteers!

River Farm receives invaluable gifts of time and talents from volunteers who work at everything from weeding flowerbeds to giving tours. To recognize their contributions, a luncheon was held September 15, and gifts were presented to those who logged the highest and second highest number of volunteer hours during the past year. Certificates of achievement were given to every-

one—some 50 volunteers in all.

Volunteers, visitors, staff, and members appreciate that special feeling of community at River Farm. AHS members who are too far away to drop in are urged to include a visit to this beautiful spot whenever they might be in the area. The grounds are open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Please come visit us.

## River Farm Events

Dahlia Day at River Farm, planned for September 12, turned into a washout as heavy rains made the grounds too soft for walking or parking. But it revived the lawn and brought the dahlias to their peak. Spectacular blooms lasted right through the Fall Festival, October 4.

The next event, Christmas Open House, is scheduled for December 13. Usually attendance is around

1,000, but this year it is likely to exceed that. In addition to the large collection of decorative greens that are traditionally offered, the Cottage Shop will have kissing balls of River Farm boxwood, herb vinegars, pot-pourri, handmade beeswax candles, Christmas tree ornaments, and many other seasonal items. As always, Colonial mulled cider will be served to guests.



## Plants Wanted

Members who are growing or who have access to any of the plants or seeds listed below are invited to help fellow members locate seed, plants, or cuttings. Those who can provide such information should write directly to the persons listed below.

Searchers for rare or hard-to-find plants are invited to submit their lists, including genus, species, common name, and a brief description to "Plants Wanted" in care of the Society. Please type or print names clearly. Requests will be published on a space-available basis after a check for sources in the Society's catalog file.

• ***Aralia racemosa***, Spikenard. Perennial herb that grows to six feet, becoming slightly shrubby. Sparse leaves are 2½ feet long, two to three pinnate, leaflets are ovate and serrate to eight inches long. Flowers are borne ten to 25 in each umbel, fruit is brown to purple. Rhizomes are used medicinally.

Robert J. Boklund, 612 Weller Ave., La Porta, IN 46350.

• ***Prunus cerasifera***, cherry plum. Small tree that grows to 25 feet. Leaves, one to three inches long, ovate to obovate, and somewhat serrate, smooth above and hairy beneath. Solitary white one-inch flowers appear before leaves in spring. Native to Central Asia. David L. Poor, Hickory Lane, Box 535, Clemson, SC 29633.

• ***Quercus frainetto***, Italian oak. Deciduous tree that can grow to 120 feet. Leaves are obovate to seven inches long with usually seven very deep lobes, dark green above and pale green below. Cup enclosing one-third to one-half of the nut. David and Michele Thomas, 6126 Hadley, Merriam, KS 66202.

• ***Solanum muricatum***, Pepino, melon shrub. Erect perennial subshrub that grows to three feet with spiny young gray to white hairy new growth. Leaves, oblong to ovate lanceolate, two to three inches long and somewhat silky. Flowers, bright blue. Fruit, violet to purple, ovoid four to six inches long, flesh firm, aromatic. Fruit is edible. Jeanne Schwaller, 1926 Hayselton, Drive, Jefferson City, MO 65101.

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- **One Circle: How to Grow a Complete Diet in Less Than 1000 Square Feet.**

David Duhon, with other contributors, shows how to design diets consisting of foods that can be grown in a small space yet are able to supply all necessary nutritional requirements. For the backyard gardener, the six chapters cover intensive nutrition theory plus culture of the crops necessary to provide the diets. Send \$9.50 to Ecology Action, Ridgewood Road, Willits, CA 95490.

- **Plants for Coastal Dunes of the Gulf and South Atlantic Coasts and Puerto Rico.**

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Louisiana, Alabama, Florida, and Georgia, and includes information on how dunes are formed and the ecosystem created by dunes. Available free from the Soil Conservation Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 2890, Washington, DC 20013.

- **The Tumbleweed Gourmet: Cooking with Wild Southwestern Plants.**

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- **The Urban Naturalist.**

This is a nature guide for the city. The urban

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- **Meanings of the Garden.** What does *your* garden mean to you? In May 1987, horticulturists, landscape architects, artists, journalists, historians, psychologists, and others gathered to define and debate what role gardens play in individual lives and in society. Papers presented fell into two categories: theoretical perspectives on the roles gardens play in peoples' lives and stories which summarize one or more cases of a garden's relationship or meaning. For a copy of the proceedings, *Meanings of the Garden*, send \$24.50 plus \$2.75 shipping and handling to the Center for Design Research, Department of Environmental Design, University of California, Davis, CA 95616. Make checks payable to the Regents of the University of California.

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