

S W A N T O N , V E R M O N T

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## Welcome to Hamlen's Helping Hand!

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### Spring 2007 Newsletter

Now that the 2007 Spring season is well under way here at Hamlen's Garden Center, I'd like to share with you some of my favorite new varieties of trees and shrubs that we'll have available to you this year.

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## Hamlen's Helping Hand



Hamlen's Garden Center  
157 St. Albans Road  
Swanton, Vermont

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## What You Can Do To Help Save The Planet

Lately, we hear a lot about global warming. It's pretty easy to admit our weather doesn't seem the same as it did twenty years ago. The fall seems to be warmer and later and spring seems to be later as well. Our winters seem to be milder and there seems to be less snow or certainly at times when people want snow. Although a lot of people are not exactly displeased with the warmer temperatures, it can have a dramatic impact on the economy. Think about all the people whose jobs are dependent on snow and cold weather. Ski areas, people who plow snow, those who sell snow tires, snowmobiles, winter sports equipment, snow removal equipment, and ice melter and what about ice fishermen, ice fishing supplies,



firewood, heating fuel suppliers, winter clothes, and boots.

Then there are the effects of warmer temperatures on sugar maple trees. Last year maple sugar producers in Ohio produced no maple syrup at all, as the trees budded too quickly due to the warm weather. This could have a significant impact on Vermont's maple sugar industry. We feel the effects of global warming will dramatically change our living standards and the way we live.

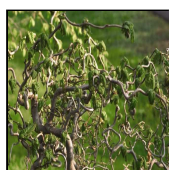
This past November I had the opportunity to hear Laura David (producer of the movie *An Inconvenient Truth*). In her talk she emphasized that scientists feel we have ten years or less to turn global warming around. After that, it is felt we will not be able to correct the warming trend or its effects. If you are wondering what the effects of global warming could be like, see the movie *An Inconvenient Truth*. Although this may sound like gloom and doom, it doesn't have to be. Changing the way we live can have a tremendous impact. The following is a list of suggestions each of us can do to help stop global warming, not just for ourselves but for future generations:

1. Change your incandescent light bulbs to compact fluorescents. Compact fluorescents use 66% less energy; it will save energy and be cheaper for you.
2. Use a clothesline to air dry your laundry.
3. Use cloth shopping bags that you bring from home. 14 plastic bags use the same amount of oil as it takes to drive a car 1 mile.
4. Use low-flow showerheads in your bathroom.
5. When brushing your teeth or shaving turn off the water when you don't need it.
6. Stop using a leaf blower. 1 hour use of a leaf blower generates as much CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as driving a car 350 miles.
7. If you are a coffee drinker, bring your own reusable cup when you purchase your morning coffee.
8. Make it a point to see the movie *An Inconvenient Truth* if you haven't already. Another good movie to check out is *Who Killed the Electric Car?* Both are available on DVD.
9. Pull chargers from the outlet when not in use. When a charger is plugged in, it is using electricity.
10. Turn off computers when you are not using them.
11. Turn the lights off when you leave a room.
12. Install light sensors on applicable lights so they will automatically come on when necessary.
13. Use low voltage lighting outside your home for night lighting. These are also available in solar power.
14. Bring a garment bag to the dry cleaners so more plastic isn't being used.
15. Instead of toilet paper and paper towels made from virgin trees that are 100-150 years old, use recycled post consumer waste rolls. The paper industry is the third largest contributor to global warming.
16. Drink water from the faucet instead of bottled water. Americans buy 25 billion water bottles/year. This translates into 1.5 billion barrels of oil annually, that's enough oil to fuel 100,000 cars for one year.
17. Thinking of buying a new car? Try a hybrid or a car that gets over 40 mpg.

70% of the oil consumed in the United States is used for cars and trucks. This results in 21 million barrels of oil per day. This figure is increasing instead of decreasing.

18. Don't idle your car, turning a car off and on does not use gas.
19. Support politicians who are concerned about the environment and promise they will help stop global warming.
20. Plant trees, shrubs, perennials, annuals, and lawns. Plants give us the oxygen we need and remove carbon dioxide from the environment.
21. Checkout [www.stopglobalwarming.org](http://www.stopglobalwarming.org)

## New Trees & Shrubs for 2007



**Harry Lauders Walking Stick:** This is a real conversation piece with its twisted contorted growth. The branches are prized for their use in floral arrangements. Use as a real focal point in the landscape.



**Polar Joy Tree Rose:** Finally there is a tree rose hardy to zone 4 (-20to-30F). Polar Joy is an everblooming soft pink 2" rose with excellent disease resistance. Unlike other tree roses this one if planted in zone 4 or higher will not need to be buried for the winter.



**Hibiscus Cristi:** This hibiscus is hardy to zone 4 and has huge ruby red flowers 6-8" in width on a nice bushy plant. Cristi blooms in August. It likes full sun and good garden soil. Keep in mind this hibiscus doesn't break bud until June.



**Fothergilla Mount Airy:** Blooms for 3-4 weeks in late April with fragrant white flowers that look like bottle brushes. Fall color ranges from yellow to orange to red. In the summer the leaves are bluish-green with white underneath. Hardy to zone 4.



**Magnolia Butterflies:** A double flowered yellow magnolia with 4-5 inch blossoms in late spring. The blossoms are upright and look like butterflies on a branch. Hardy to zone 4.



**Hackberry:** Is a tough tree that thrives in just about any imaginable area. It has orange-red to dark purple seed pods in the fall which are relished by birds. Hardy to zone 3 (-30 to -40F).



**Pinky Winky Hydrangea:** Large dark pink flowers lasting for several months in the fall. Hardy to zone 3.



**Coppertina Ninebark:** A shrub producing copper colored foliage in spring turning to a rich red in summer. The red foliage shows off the white profuse button-like flowers. Hardy to zone 4.



**Pink Knockout Rose:** Is like its parent Red Knockout, in that, once it starts blooming it never stops. Blooms start in June and stop in November. It is black spot resistant. Hardy to zone 5.



**White Variegated Elder:** Is a great plant to lighten up the garden with its green foliage mottled with white. The flowers are fragrant yellow-white with black fruit following. Hardy to zone 4.



**Moffet Juniper:** This is a upright silvery-blue juniper with tight foliage. Its bright color contrasts nicely with other plants. Hardy to zone 3.

*no photo available*

**Thume Compact Blue Spruce:** Bright blue color on a spruce that grows about 3' high x 3' wide. Another good plant to provide contrast in foundation plantings and rock gardens.



**Fat Albert Blue Spruce:** A semi-dwarf blue spruce that grows to about 15'. Fat Albert has a dense pyramidal shape. An extremely nice small blue spruce. Hardy to zone 3.



**Itea Henry's Garnet:** White fragrant flowers that occur in June & July when a lot of other shrubs aren't flowering. Does well in both sun or shade and likes moist fertile soil. Has nice scarlet fall color. Hardy to zone 5.

## Lawn Alternatives

There is a new spin on landscaping that can save you time and money over the conventional lawn. Typical landscaping includes a large lawn that encompasses

the house. If this is your lawn, I'm sure you will agree it becomes very demanding. To keep it looking good it needs to be watered, fertilized, weed killer applied, and mowed. When you start to add up what it costs you in time and money to keep your lawn looking good, it becomes very expensive.

Let's look at the rough cost to maintain 20,000 square feet of lawn. If you fertilize it, plan on \$15.00/5000 square feet = \$60.00/20,000 square feet x 3 times a year = \$180.00. Weed killer \$20.00/5000 square feet x 1 time per year = \$80.00. Watering depends on what your municipality charges for water unless you have your own water source. If you do have your own water source you still have to pay for electricity to run the pump to move the water. Let's say \$20.00 - \$100.00 per year for water. Next you have to mow the lawn or have it done by a lawn mowing company. This can result in \$25.00 - \$50.00 for each mowing for a 20,000 square feet lawn. If the lawn is mowed fifteen times per year = \$375.00 - \$750.00 per year. Total cost to maintain 20,000 square feet of lawn for the year = \$655.00 - \$1110.00.



Now think about the pollution that occurs while maintaining your lawn. Unless you use 0% phosphorus fertilizer, phosphorus can find its way into Lake Champlain and other bodies of water. Each time the lawn is mowed and weed whacked you add CO<sub>2</sub> to the environment. Now think about your own time. If you mow your own lawn it will probably take you 30 -60 minutes to mow and trim 20,000 square feet of lawn. If you do this fifteen times a year = 450 - 900 minutes per year of your time. I'm sure there are lots of fun things you could be doing other than mowing the lawn. These estimates are for 20,000 square feet so if you have more lawn than that the figures can change substantially.

Groundcovers are a low maintenance alternative; no mowing, no fertilizing, and no pollution. Once planted, they will last for years. Talk to us and we can advise you as to which groundcovers can work for you. They can save you time and money and help you protect the environment.



Another approach to low maintenance lawn alternatives is to let your property go wild. Although this may sound like the lazy persons approach to landscaping, it is an idea that is starting to catch on. Basically it works this way ~ just don't mow your lawn. By letting it go wild you will also allow a lot of native plants to establish themselves. They will take several years to become established, however it can leave you with plants that are doing well because they are native to the area. You may want to establish paths in this wild environment. Paths can be created by putting bark mulch down in the path you choose for your wild area. You will find this wild area will become more

attractive to wildlife, as it grows and develops. Although you may not win any neighborhood awards for this approach, it is an idea that protects our environment, fosters wildlife, and eliminates a good deal of maintenance.

## Hamlen's Garden Geeks

You have probably heard about computer geeks. They are referred to as nerdy individuals who can accomplish things on a computer and with electronic gizmos most of us only dream about. In January of this year, 60 Minutes did a segment on computer companies that make house or business calls to fix a problem, install new equipment, show you how to get more out of your computer or help install your new HDTV. The article brought out that tech manuals seemed to confuse the issue more than help.



While watching 60 Minutes the idea came to me that if there can be computer geeks, then why not Garden Geeks? At Hamlen's Garden Center, we have been doing garden consultation for years. This may involve laying out a garden design, handling drainage problems, giving pruning advice, addressing privacy issues, looking at insect or disease problems, or evaluating existing trees and shrubs. So, to put a new spin on what we do, when you need gardening consultation call Hamlen's and ask for one of our "Garden Geeks" .....just don't ask us to reconfigure your hard drive.

**Happy Gardening!!**



## The Adventures of Binocular Bob

**Editor's Note:** To find out where we left off with Binocular Bob go to our Fall 2004 Newsletter.

*Dear Rosie,*

*I'm at an auction minding my own business and along comes this buxom woman of at least 290 lbs. Sure enough, didn't she just plop down in a chair next to me. You should have seen that chair shake. She looks at me and says, "What's your name"? I said, "Binocular Bob". "I'm Bertha", Yeah, I thought,*



*Big Bertha. Then she says, "Why you got the glasses"? "To see the auction things", I replied. Then Big Bertha says, "I got something at home that keeps banging on my house. Someone told me it is a bird, but I don't know. So why don't you bring those glasses and come home with me"? I said, "I can't". She then says, "Never mind the I can't, your coming with me". Then that amazon grabs me and I couldn't get away. She's 6 feet and I'm only 5 feet 5 inches. So Rosie here I am a prisoner in her home. She wants me to spy out her window until I spot what makes the noise. I haven't seen anything yet, but I can tell you this, she sure can cook. Tonight she cooked something she called, "chicken cacc (I can't spell it, but it sounded like chicken catch-a-tory). So Rosie, if you have feelings for me, please help me get out of here.*

- B. Bob

**Editors note:** Rosie perhaps you had better rescue Bob before he becomes a prisoner of chicken catch-a-tory. Remember a bird in the hand is worth ....

## Hamming It Up

At the butchers the other day I bet the butcher \$50. that he couldn't reach the meat off the top shelf. He thought for a minute, then refused the bet. When asked why, he responded, "the steaks are too high".

Doctors tell us there are over seven million people who are overweight. Of course these are only round figures.

## Hamlines

***"Green is the new red, white, and blue"***

Tom Friedman

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