

Ready set...Spring!

Enjoy life from your garden

Why should you enjoy life from your garden? Here are a few reasons why it's great to garden.

"Studies show that people who spend time cultivating plants have less stress in their lives. Plants soothe human beings and provide a positive way for people to channel their stress into nurturing"¹.



"Over the past two decades, there has been a growing acknowledgement that humans depend on nature not simply for material requirements such as water, food and shelter but also for emotional, psychological and spiritual needs"².

"Nature matters to people. Big trees and small trees, glistening water, chirping birds, budding bushes, colourful flowers. These are important ingredients in a good life."³



Trees

And trees are a big part of the good life. Whether for food, shelter, fuel or beauty, trees are an important part of any garden providing sculptural balance, focal points, structure, an ever changing view through the season's and visual interest. Winter and early spring are traditional times of year for tree planting. The first New Zealand Arbour day was in Greytown, June 1890, and now Arbour day is a worldwide activity where people are encouraged to plant and care for trees.



Blue Mountain Nurseries has a 50-year history of tree breeding programmes and whilst the following are not plants specifically from our breeding programmes, we'd like to share some stories about three special deciduous trees that we think will be absolute winners for the New Zealand garden.

Flamingo Crab apple



This new release of Malus Flamingo is a prized selection from John McLaren's breeding programme based in Central Otago. This variety of Malus is a hardy tree that grows well with ease in most places but does respond well to good drainage and organic mulching. This tree is a dainty crab apple variety with a columnar habit to 3-4 metres over 10 years.



Double red flower buds open to deep pink flowers in spring and summer. Deep purple-plum foliage on this upright tree makes a stunning display in the spring through to autumn. Being columnar, Flamingo Malus is a great fit for the smaller garden or even a patio container garden.



¹ <http://www.plantlifebalance.com.au/>

² Beyond Blue to Green; The benefits of contact with nature for mental health and wellbeing. Deakin University Australia page 2.

³ Kaplan, R. and Kaplan, S. 1989, The Experience of Nature: A psychological perspective, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.



White Spire birch

Birches are typically very tough and hardy and are remarkably undemanding and well suited to southern climates, even in windy sites. Perhaps one of the best for this purpose is the new columnar silver birch (*Betula utilis* White Spire).

At this time of year, the upright pristine white branches and naked trunk are simply beautiful as the winter sun highlights their elegant form, even on the dullest of days.

The genetics of this plant hark from the Japanese Birch and this is a dramatic advance from the traditional birch most of us are familiar with. Few people have discovered this useful deciduous hardy tree and we're convinced it is going to be a winner! With shelter, sun and water, growth to 4 metres over 5 years is possible, but the tree is also suited to smaller restricted sites.

Some of the first available trees were planted as an avenue on the eastern entrance to Lawrence and these are already creating great interest. With their pristine white trunks, butter yellow autumn colours and long cream catkins in spring, they make a spectacular ornamental tree.



Purple weeping maple

This beautiful, mushroom shaped small garden tree is a Japanese lacy leaf maple that boasts stunning colours throughout the year. It's attractive purple-red burgundy foliage lasts from spring right through to autumn and once autumn arrives, foliage turns a vibrant fiery orange-red. Its modest size makes this weeping standard ideal in even the smallest garden. Weeping acers are grafted onto a standard so height is dependent on the size of the stand from the grafting process. Choose the longest standard you can find if you are looking for extra height. This maple, *Acer palmatum dissectum* "Tamukeyama", needs shelter from wind, moist well drained soil and ideally, dappled light.

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Pleiones- window sill orchids

Pleione orchids originate from the Himalayan chain of mountains through India- hence their other name as the Indian Crocus. These are an easy care pseudo-bulb if you're looking for something rare and quite unique. Enjoy now. The nursery has a large variety to choose from -see the website for the Pleione catalogue.

<http://www.bmn.co.nz/assets/Catalogues/Pleione-Catalogue-2015.pdf>





Galanthus elwesii Emerald Hughes

Snow drops

Spring just isn't spring without a show from these delightful woodland bulbs. These easy care bulbs are ideal for a cooler climate and can also be used to good effect in a rock garden. Group plant. One bulb will bulk out nicely in 2-3 years. Blue Mountain Nurseries have an extensive breeding programme for galanthus- see the catalogue for new and rare additions at <http://www.bmn.co.nz/assets/Snowdrops-2016.pdf>. Plant now. for next year.

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