IRRESISTIBLE OFFERINGS AT THE 2014

Anemone × 'Macaneo01' Wild Swan™
(Photo courtesy Helen Johnstone,
patientgardener.wordpress.com.)

By Janine Anderson

After two years in its interim location at the Arboretum, FlorAbundance—our region's largest and best plant sale—returns in late April to the newly renovated Building 30 at Warren G. Magnuson Park, Seattle. A spring tradition since 1947, the sale features dozens of specialty nurseries selling a wonderful selection of locally grown trees, shrubs, perennials, annuals and edibles. Following are short profiles of four of the nurseries attending the sale, plus some of the plant offerings that they're most excited about this year. It's just a small taste of the cornucopia of botanical treasures that awaits shoppers at FlorAbundance.

Growing Girls Nursery

Beth Burman grew up in a gardening family and landed her first horticultural job in 1974. She had no formal schooling in horticulture, but her green thumb and dexterous fingers were useful for planting bedding plants and sowing seeds (all done manually in those days). In about 1990, while working at the Herbfarm in Fall City, Washington, Beth discovered Heronswood Nursery and Plant Delights Nursery—and their wide offerings of unusual shade species, which led her to develop an interest in woodland species

FLORABUNDANCE!

Saxifraga fortunei 'Rubrifolia' (Photo courtesy Beth Burman.)

Podophyllum pleianthum (Photo courtesy Dancing Oaks Nursery, www.dancingoaks.com.)

Eupatorium fortunei 'Pink Frost' (Photo courtesy Mark Dwyer, Rotary Botanical Gardens.)

from around the Earth's temperate belt. Beth fell in love with shade gardening and its unlimited combinations of foliage texture and began collecting and growing at her North Bend home. Eventually, she started her own small wholesale nursery. Now, with the help of Cheryl VanBlom, her friend in plant addiction, she shares her bounty, as she says, "From my garden to yours."

What to Look For

Saxifraga fortunei 'Rubrifolia' is slow to propagate, so Beth never has it in abundance; but it is so fabulous that you might consider shopping early to get one! A Japanese perennial with shiny, full, bronzy-red foliage and stems, it grows about eight inches tall and produces airy clusters of white flowers on rose-pink stems in midsummer. Hardy to USDA Zone 6, this fully deciduous woodland plant prefers some moisture and a nest of leaf litter or leaf mold. It not only works well in a woodland setting, but also in a lightly shaded rock garden—as well as in pots.

Podophyllum pleianthum, the Chinese Mayapple, continues to be one of Beth's favorite "big foliage" plants. Each individual plant produces a single stem crowned with just one or two, umbrella-shaped leaves—but the leaves grow to about 14 inches wide and 20 inches tall. As an added bonus, a cluster of large, showy, maroon-red flowers hangs underneath the foliage in spring and develops into rich-red, apple-like fruits. Hardy from USDA Zones 6 to 8, the plant performs well in full to part shade (avoid hot direct sun) and colonizes slowly in reasonably moist soil. Use it in a shady border, woodland garden or shaded cottage garden.

White Picket Gardens

Kristi Fina, a Master Gardener who studied agricultural economics at Washington State University, started White Picket Gardens in 1996 as a way to stay home with her two small children. The nursery, based in rural Stanwood, Snohomish County, has now grown into a wholesale enterprise that specializes in unique perennials for the greater Seattle retail nursery industry. White Picket Gardens offers a range of tried-and-true perennials as well as some new hybrids for the plant collector in all of us. The nursery also grows herbs for the wholesale market using only organic fertilizers. From spring through summer, White Picket Gardens can be found at plant sales throughout the greater Seattle area.

What to Look For

Anemone × 'Macane001' Wild Swan™ is an excellent new hybrid Japanese anemone. From June until November, yellow-centered, pure-white flowers—with blue-violet banding on the outside of the sepals—are held high above the tidy green foliage. The plant does not re-seed

Cypripedium 'Emil' (Photo courtesy Arlen Hill.)

and is great as a cut flower and for massing in a woodland setting. It is also deer resistant and hardy from USDA Zones 6 through 8.

Eupatorium fortunei 'Pink Frost' is terrific as a foliage accent plant in sun or partial shade. Its pink-tinted leaves are boldly edged in white. Pink flower clusters sit atop the foliage from late summer into fall and are magnets for butterflies. This Joe Pye weed—a cultivar of a Chinese species—requires moist soil but has no "bad" habits. It grows to about three feet tall and is deer resistant and hardy in USDA Zones 4 through 9.

Keeping It Green Nursery

Also located in Stanwood, Keeping It Green Nursery was established in 2004. It is owned and operated by Arlen Hill, whose passion for hiking in the Pacific Northwest led to an avid interest in uncommon native plant species. Keeping It Green specializes in hardy orchids and woodland perennials, with a particular focus on *Sorbus, Iris, Lilium, Erythronium, Trillium* and any plants in the Berberidaceae family. Arlen continues to explore wild habitats in an ongoing effort to understand how to replicate the complex ecological relationships and environmental conditions of nature in mixed-genus display gardens.

What to Look For

Cypripedium 'Emil' is one of the finest yellow-and-chocolate-flowered hybrids available. This lady's slipper orchid has vigorous growth, forming impressive clumps in a relatively short time. In May, the foot-high flower stalks are decorated with medium-sized flowers that last for about a month. What's more, 'Emil' looks especially nice when planted with other spring bloomers such as *Primula sieboldii* and *Epimedium*. It does best in bright open shade or filtered sun that is sheltered during the hottest part of the day. To keep the plants actively growing and producing new tips for the following year, keep them watered during the season.

Epimedium grandiflorum 'Spring Wedding' is a delight in the spring, with red-ringed new growth and cheery, light-pink flowers held above glossy foliage. This barrenwort should be planted in bright shade to filtered sun. Like other epimediums, 'Spring Wedding' is drought tolerant, though it grows more vigorously with regular water during the growing season.

Windpoppy Farm and Nursery

Windpoppy Farm and Nursery is a wholesale nursery—located in Ferndale, Washington—that specializes in ornamental grasses and

Epimedium grandiflorum
'Spring Wedding'
(Photo courtesy Arlen Hill.)

Lepechinia hastata
(Photo courtesy Jessica Friedland, Salmon Creek Photography)

Iris domestica
(Photo courtesy Tom Murphy, Wikipedia Commons)

unusual perennials. The nursery serves garden centers in the greater Seattle area and offers retail sales by appointment. Owners John and Sara Burns both earned degrees in horticulture from Colorado State University. They moved to Western Washington 10 years ago and worked as growers for nurseries in Whatcom County. Four years ago, Windpoppy Farm and Nursery was born. John and Sara love propagating, cultivating and sharing their plants with the community.

What to Look For

Lepechinia hastata (pitcher sage) is a bold and beautiful sage relative, growing quickly to three or four feet with a two-foot or greater spread. Native to Hawaii, it bears large, fragrant, tropical-looking, gray-green leaves. In summer, tall, mint-like spires of reddish-purple blossoms that attract hummingbirds are held on the branch tips. This full-sun perennial is hardy to at least 20°F, quite drought tolerant, and not appealing to deer. Plant it in a well-draining soil.

Iris domestica (formerly *Belamcanda chinensis*) features the foliage of an iris, the blooms of a lily, and the fruit of a blackberry (sort of). It's also long blooming, very easy to grow, and perfect for a sunny border. The red-spotted, deep-orange flowers arise in midsummer and continue well into fall in most areas. They are followed by plump seedpods that split open when ripe to reveal a glossy, blackberry-like seed cluster—hence the common name of blackberry lily. (The fruit is not edible.) Give *Iris domestica* full sun to light shade in any well-drained soil, including rocky or clay ones. The plant will reach two to three feet and is hardy from USDA Zones 5 to 10.

Janine Anderson, CPH, is an award-winning Pacific Northwest-based landscape designer (www.anderson-design.net), garden writer, speaker and member of the "Bulletin" Editorial Board.

FlorAbundance Details

This year's spring plant sale is Saturday, April 26, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, April 27, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., in Building 30 at Warren G. Magnuson Park. Admission and parking are free. For the best selection, attend the Member Pre-Sale & Party on Friday, April 25, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Tickets for the preview party can be purchased through the Arboretum Foundation website, www.arboretumfoundation.org, or by calling 206-325-4510. (Early-bird tickets cost $40; after April 11, party tickets will be $50 each.) All sales at FlorAbundance help support education programs and maintenance at Washington Park Arboretum.