



Wilson's Nursery



Connie's Corner

Written 6/21/24

Images above taken by Connie

Weathering Minnesota

by Connie Kratzke

Greetings, all! I am writing today from my dining room table and that's perfectly fine with me. This week started on a soggy note and the slop runs on. No one can ignore the contrast between this year's weather and last's. A couple of years of dry starts and ends almost purged our memories of mud. Determining which is worse is like choosing whether you'd rather burn or drown. Ask a mosquito, though, and they'll say this is awesome!

During periods like these, it's easy to identify the plants that can't hang. They're dead. What interests me far more are the ones that can. Obviously, y'all know the O.G.'s. We ship them out in droves. Penstemons and Chelones are both great for opposite reasons. Both also tolerate what they don't prefer. It's nearly impossible to kill Nepetas and Salvias. Feather Reed Grasses are harder to kill than rocks, despite their tendency to age badly. Hostas and

Alliums are as reliable as weekend rain. Natives like Eupatoriums, Asclepias and Aruncus adapt to most conditions. 'Bevan's' Geranium is a remarkable plant that deserves a direct shout-out. Still, there are other superb options that don't move as quickly.

All of the Betony-species Stachys that we grow are just awesome! Fantastic longevity in both the nursery and landscape is their best asset. Tidy habits and stiff stems that don't bend down in the rain are additional perks. I prefer them to Salvias because their foliage holds up better in the heat. Of course, they don't come in blue, but that leads me to my next mention.

Yes, most of us already love Nepetas. Foliar interest in addition to flower longevity really makes them a no-brainer. That said, there is a new one with green leaves that kicks butt. 'Neptune' is a totally great plant. Four of them are lined up in my backyard for planting whenever that becomes possible. Lovely blue flowers are large and loud. Bright green, mint-like leaves are strongly scented enough to repel undesirables from the garden. I will be shocked if this plant doesn't catch on like the mud on boots.

Athyriums seem to be the most reliable ferns without obvious downsides. (I'm calling you out, Ostrich Ferns.) They start well from plugs in the spring and they endure dry conditions once established. 'Lady in Red' is a great plant and we do sell it in volume. We mustn't forget about the nipponicums, though. Japanese Painted Ferns really do hold up well in most settings. I have pushed the boundaries with better results than expected. 'Godzilla' will survive almost anywhere, despite failing to achieve its ultimate size.

With as many Joe Pyes and Goatsbeards as we sell, I am kind of surprised we don't move more Culver's Roots. Veronicastrums are enormous and tough. Whorled leaves and spiky flowers create an interesting backdrop for shorter layers. They prefer full sun, but are flexible on moisture. Mine has triumphed in a very hot, dry location for many years. There aren't really that many super tall perennials that thrive under dry conditions. Baptisia would be another. The species is still our best seller, but 'Pink Lemonade' and 'Goldfinch' are both great plants. So is 'Twilite Prairie Blues', which dwells happily in our yard.

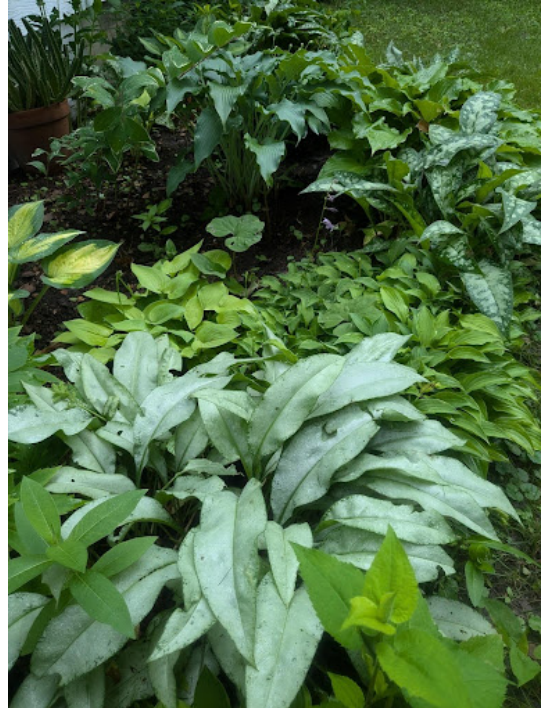
Pulmonarias have also done exceptionally well for me. They are better plants in the ground than they are in production. Under eaves where they receive very little moisture, they have grown and flourished. They also self-sow and I have found that beneficial, because it's not excessive. A couple new ones pop up each year and I just move them where I want them. Different flower colors and leaf patterns result and I find that kind of fun. The rain hasn't dampened the spirits of my Lungworts and their very name is dreary.

When it comes to daisy-type flowers, there are a few that stand out and don't move out. I don't think there is a better Echinacea than 'Pixie Meadowbrite'. 'Pow Wow Wildberry' is the one people buy and it's great, but I prefer the foliage of the former. 'American Gold Rush' and 'Gold Strike' Rudbeckia are the future of Black-Eyed Susans because they resist Septoria. 'Banana Cream' is a really nice Leucanthemum. 'Early Sunrise' and 'Zagreb' are really the best Coreopsis from a performance perspective. 'Burning Hearts' Heliopsis is a super good plant and I think we should start growing more of them.

Naturally we like sending plants out the door. We will keep planting more and more of whatever you ask for. In a nursery setting, results can differ from what occurs in the landscape. That's why I trial so many plants at home. My former employer, mentor and second dad (Jeff Kahnke) gave me a phenomenal deal on plants early in my career so I could do that very thing. My research is a never ending justification for my purchases. When we propose substitutions, we want you to love them. Please share your experiences freely so we can deliver what you need!



Above Left, 'Neptune' Nepeta



Above Right, assorted Pulmonarias

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These varieties are all available for preorder!

Contact Matt at 612-990-4073 to discuss details and how many you would like to put on order!

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Current Hours of Operation
Monday-Friday 7:30am-5:00pm
*Remaining Saturdays open from
8:00am-12:00pm (6/22, 6/29), then we
go to Monday-Friday only.

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