

A lush garden scene with a gravel path, green lawn, and various trees and shrubs. The text is overlaid on the image.

The Garden Professors
present

All Things Arboricultural

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WSU Extension
Urban Horticulture



Are natives the answer?

Posted by Bert Cregg

Last week Jeff kicked off a lively discussion about invasive plants. Let me state up front that no one on this blog is promoting invasive plants. But the issues surrounding invasive plants are extremely complex and have profound implications for many groups with whom we work in landscape horticulture and urban and community forestry. It is essential in these discussions that we separate fact from hyperbole. In some quarters, lines have been blurred and people fail to make key distinctions and lump exotic, alien, or non-native species together with invasives. According to the Federal Executive Order on Invasive species *"invasive species" means an alien species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.* All invasives are alien but only a small fraction of alien species are invasive (all humans are mammals but not all mammals are humans). Nevertheless, there is a temptation to 'hedge all bets' and promote only native species for horticultural planting since native plants, by definition, cannot be invasive. In addition, there is a 'feel good' aura that surrounds native plants - if they're native they must be good - that clouds some of the logic in the argument.

Some examples:

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www.gardenprofessors.com

Bert
Holly
Jeff
Linda



We'll discuss trees to buy...



Aesculus pavia



Acer griseum

...and those to avoid



We'll wrestle with roots



...and muse about mulch

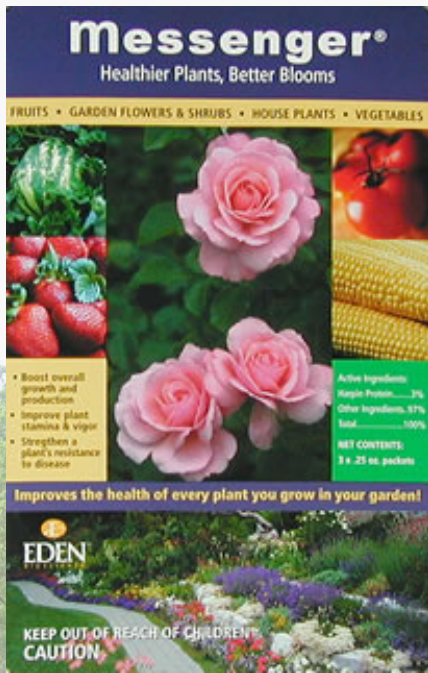


We'll analyze crime scenes...

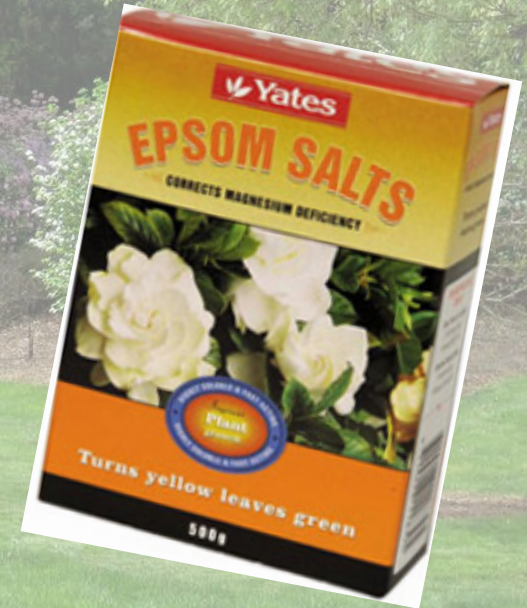
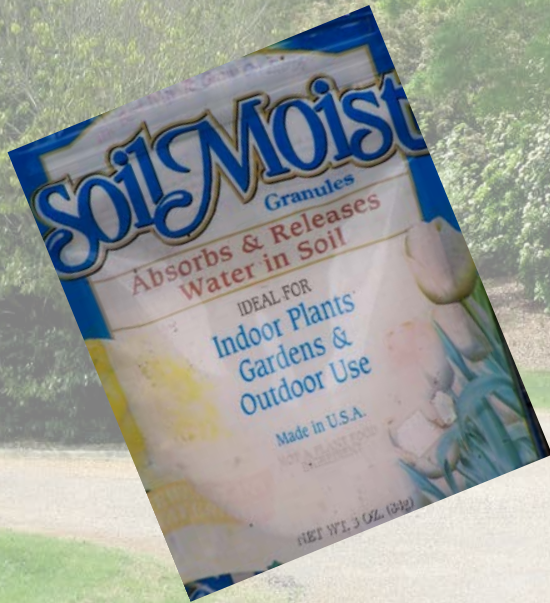


...and exhume bodies





And what about all of these?





Most importantly

We need your input! Send your questions to Holly Scoggins (hollysco@vt.edu) for inclusion in our “Stump the Chumps” free-for-all!

See you in Toronto!

