

Welcome to Hamlen's Helping Hand!

This is our Spring newsletter, the 1st newsletter of 2005.
We look forward to seeing you at the garden center.

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Hamlen's Helping Hand



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

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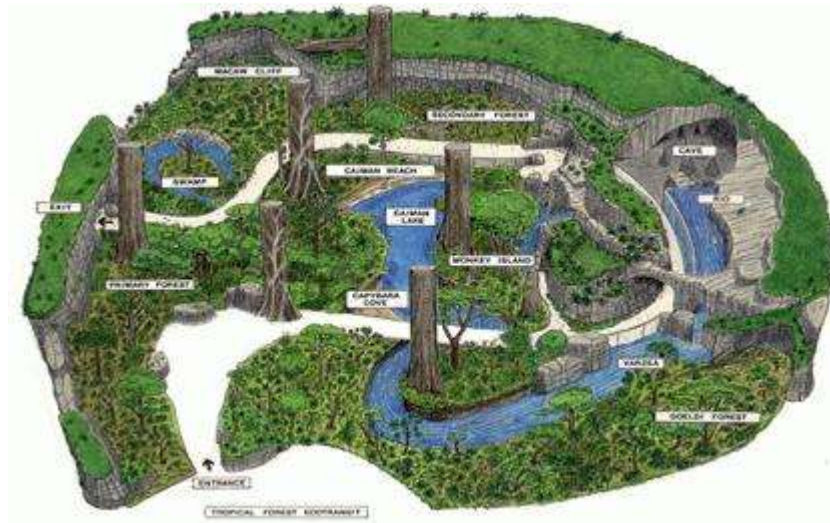
Cabin Fever Beaters

Late winter and early spring can be a bitter/sweet time of year. Bitter from the standpoint it seems like winter will never end. Sweet from the standpoint each day we are one day closer to spring. Here are some suggestions to help hurry spring along, at least for your own peace of mind.



1. Visit the Botanical Gardens in Montreal. While the 180 acres of Botanical Gardens maybe under snow and frozen the conservatories are warm and open. The conservatories represent several climates. They range from a tropical rainforest environment, to an arid desert like atmosphere to a nice collection of Japanese bonasi. To get there head to Montreal and cross over the Jacques Cartier bridge, after crossing the bridge, stay on the road you

are on till you come to Sherbrooke St. Turn right onto Sherbrooke, when you arrive at the Olympic stadium on the right, the Botanical Gardens will be on your left.



2. Visit the Biodome. While visiting the Botanical Garden Conservatories the biodome is across from it and a 15-20 minute walk will take you there. Just ask at the conservatories for directions. If you haven't been there, it too is a real treat. Like the Botanical Garden Conservatories there are several different environments to walk through. Environments represented are a tropical rainforest, a natural Quebec environment, a seashore, an underwater environment, and an arctic environment complete with entertaining penquins.



3. Another way to hurry spring along is to have your own greenhouse. You will be surprised how warm a greenhouse can become on a sunny March day. We find our employees are happier after spending time in the greenhouse with its bright light and warm temps. In fact its a very pleasant environment to be in. We say its like a cheap Florida vacation. Owning your own greenhouse can be less of an investment than you might think. New for 2005 at Hamlen's we have the "Flowerhouse" greenhouse. These are quick to set up and give you an economical greenhouse to start seedlings and the ability to step into your own warmer environment. They range from \$199.99 for the "Starter House" (3' high X 8' wide X 4' deep) \$179.99 for the "Spring House" (6 1/2' high X 6' wide X 6' deep) or the \$229.99 "Bloom House" (7' high X 7' wide X 7' deep). Please go to Hamlens.com to view all greenhouses we offer.

Forces of Nature

Can't wait for spring blooms? There are ways to jump-start spring. Forcing plants into bloom is an easy way to enjoy spring early. Forsythia (Forsythia Northern Gold, pictured), lilacs, rhododendron, and spirea vanhoutte can give you an early spring inside your home even though it's still winter outside. Cut a branch or branches 1-2 feet in length from the terminal bud back. Place them in a vase with water inside the house. In about 2-4 weeks depending on what you are forcing you should start to see color.



Why Not a Winter Garden

When you live in an area that is void of color for six months, why not plan a winter garden. We think of gardens with spring, summer, and fall color. Here in the northcountry there is an equal amount of time when there is a lack of color or interest, unless we plant a winter garden. Green mountain boxwood (hardy to zone 4), goldthread chamaecyparis, montgomery blue spruce, saybrook gold juniper, Harry Lauders walking stick, february daphne, ivory halo dogwood, and ornamental grasses offer interesting texture and color.



Now is a good time to plan where to put your winter garden so it will be ready for next year. Don't forget berries and fruits for fall and winter color. Winterberry, viburnums, mt. ash, and certain crabapples offer food for birds and persistent color through the winter.

The texture of certain plants can also offer winter curiosity. Exfoliating bark like shagbark hickory, heritage birch, or seven son flower, create unusual interest. Plant shapes also break up the winter landscape. Weeping plants look like umbrellas with snow piled on top of them. Upright, spreading, and oval shapes also stand out.

Don't think just because it is winter you can't have color. Red and yellow stem dogwood, bergenia, winterberry, corneliancherry, and february daphne provide color during the drab winter months.

Winter doesn't have to be a bleak time of year. A winter garden can provide beauty and interest so the winter months don't have to be so long and gardening can be enjoyed for twelve months instead of six.

Hamming It Up

Back in cowboy times, a westbound wagon train was lost and low on food. No other humans had been seen for days, and then the pioneers saw an old Norwegian sitting beneath a tree.

"Is there some place ahead where we can get food?"

"Vell, I tink so" the old man said "but I wouldn't go up dat hill and down de udder side. Somevun tole me you'd run into a big bacon tree"

"A bacon tree?" asked the wagon train leader.

"Yah, a bacon tree. Would I lie? Trust me, I wouldn't go dere"

The leader goes back and tells his people what the Norwegian said, that they should not go there. The pioneers said, "Oh you know those Norwegian people. They lie just for a joke"

So the wagon train goes up the hill and down the other side. Suddenly, Indians attack them from everywhere and massacre all except the leader who manages to escape and get back to the old Norwegian. Near dead, the man shouts. "You fool! Why did you ever mention the bacontree. The Indians killed everyone but me. We followed your route and there was no bacon tree, just hundreds of Indians"

The old Norwegian man holds up his hand and says "Vait a minute"

He quickly picks up an English Norwegian dictionary and begins thumbing through it. "Oof-da, I made such a big mistake! It vuzn't a bacon tree, it vus a ham bush"

Hamlines

From "God's Garden" by Mrs. Dorothy Frances Gurney 1858-1932

The kiss of the sun for pardon
The song of the birds for mirth,
One is nearer God's Heart in a garden
Than anywhere else of earth.

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