



Mon-Fri 10-6  
Sat 9-6 Sun 10-5

Home, Garden & Gift

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for Natural Living"

# Ecology Lawn

## Seminar

- With Mark Hopkins, co-owner of Hobbs and Hopkins, creators of *Fleur de Lawn™* and *Fragrant Herbal™* lawn mixtures.
- Learn how to conserve water and fertilizer with these low maintenance lawn alternatives.

Saturday, May 17th, 11:00 am at the Olive Street Store.

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# Garden Umbels

Delicate decorations.

The carrot family supplies (in addition to carrots) parsley, celery and many other edibles. It contains some notable weeds, as well, including bishops weed and poison hemlock, and some equally notable ornamentals. This plant family (now Apiaceae) was until recently named Umbelliferae, which means bearing umbels. An umbel is a structure in which all the flowers on one stem spring from a single point. The most typical inflorescence (think Queen Anne's Lace) is actually a compound umbel, in which many small umbels come together on one stem. Flower gardeners like this distinctive architecture because it contrasts nicely with most other flowers, from daisies to day-lilies. The flowers also attract butterflies and other insects.

**Astrantia is easy to find these days. I wish I could say the same of spring-blooming *Chaerophyllum hirsutum* 'Roseum,' which evidently needs a catchy name to make it sell.**

Several culinary herbs besides parsley belong in this family: chervil, dill and coriander are all welcome in the garden, and statuesque herbs such as lovage and angelica are really striking. So is giant hogweed, but perhaps only the British, dedicated as they are to gardening, would even consider this as an ornamental. One English author says it is "the largest and most imposing herbaceous plant that can be grown in British gardens but it is only suitable where its dangers are well-understood and guarded against." This invasive charmer with toxic sap can reach a height of 15 feet and is blessed with one of my favorite plant names (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*).

Purple fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare* 'Purpureum') is a bit of a weed, too, but for gardeners it's one of those precious plants that provide height — six or seven feet of it, in the case of fennel — without any staking. The purplish leaves are so finely divided, they look like purple haze. It's a good idea to remove the airy, flat-headed, yellow umbels before the seed ripens, or you (and your neighbors) may end up with a hazy purple carpet of fennel seedlings. In *Angelica gigas*, only the stems and big rounded umbels are purple. The leaves are large and shiny green, and the plant tops five feet, making it an architectural presence in the late summer border. It generally dies after blooming, but seedlings should provide replacements.

A mixed bag of smaller umbellifers have a special place in gardens. *Anthriscus sylvestris* 'Ravenswing' is a dark-leaved version of cow parsley. In other words — another weed, but the vogue for dark-colored leaves has made it popular. The seedlings are easy to dig out (though impossible to pull), and most gardeners I know don't consider it invasive. If you are concerned, just cut off most of the flowers after a week or so. They are prettiest when they first emerge, and it's really the plum-black leaves, lacy as a fern,



Astrantia major

that are the point. Save a few flowers for seed, though, because plants deteriorate after a year or two.

*Astrantia major* (masterwort; Hattie's pincushion) is perhaps the best of the bunch. The tiny flowers of astrantia are packed together in a cushion above a ruff of petal-like bracts. The green-tinged white or pinkish-white flowers are lovely with day-lilies of all shades (planted between dwarf day-lilies, or massed as a foreground for larger ones). 'Shaggy' is a good white form with extra-large bracts. 'Sunningdale variegated' has leaves with lovely cream markings, less so after mid-summer; and there are several varieties with pink or wine red flowers. Astrantia needs good soil and plenty of moisture. Plants grow about two feet tall, and have a very long blooming season. Astrantia self-sows moderately, but seedlings from named varieties will be less showy than their parents.

Astrantia is easy to find these days. I wish I could say the same of spring-blooming *Chaerophyllum hirsutum* 'Roseum,' which evidently needs a catchy name to make it sell. Pretty pink flowers in flat-topped umbels like Queen Anne's lace float over bright green, lacy foliage in April. It is divine, especially with pink or black tulips. *Chaerophyllum* forms a gently spreading mat, and makes a good front-of-border plant. I got mine a few years ago from Northwest Garden Nursery. Come to think of it, that's also where I got my smallest member of the family, *Haquetia epipactis*, a sweet, yellow-flowered little spreader for light shade, only 3 or 4 inches high. Unlike some of their tap-rooted relatives, astrantia, chaerophyllum and haquetia are easy to divide.

There are at least two annual umbellifers worth looking for. One should be easy to find because it is being promoted as new this year: seed for *Orlaya grandiflora* 'White Lace' is available from Select Seeds. The other is a pretty blue Australian named trachymene. Both should be welcome additions to the border for their unusual, delicate texture.

Join Oregon River Sports for our 7th annual

# Canoe Demo Day

Saturday, May 24

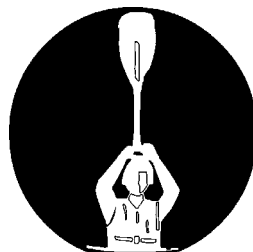
11am - 4pm

Alton Baker Canal Pond

Behind Autzen Stadium;

from Centennial Blvd., turn onto Leo Harris Blvd.

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