



PARKLAND PEONIES

April 2021

NEWSLETTER UPDATE

APRIL 2021, ISSUE NO.1





The News

Spring has arrived at Parkland Peonies

It's April. I sit in my chair, trying to gather my thoughts as I write our first newsletter and I am brought back to the field full of blooming peonies: the earth is moist from fresh cultivation between each peony row, a red-tailed hawk shrieks from high above, the color-rich flower heads move in the gentle breeze, the bees buzzing, while the sweet scent of peony blooms drifts through the air... So gorgeous!

Spring has arrived in the Parkland Peonies field! Can you believe it? The early herbaceous hybrids and species are already starting to poke their little noses through the soil. This is an exciting time for all peony gardeners, including us at Parkland Peonies, as we are looking forward to see all our old favorites, as well as new additions to the peony family bloom this season!

We can't wait until we will be able to have Open Field days on the 4th weekend of June, so that our local peony-loving community can come out and enjoy the beauty of the flowers together with us. We will post more information on this event in June closer to the date on our website.

Your
perfect
garden
awaits!





Local photographer opportunity!

Did you know that the Peony is a picture-perfect flower? And we're not just saying that because we spend our year growing these beautiful flowers. Okay...maybe just a little bit, but seriously look at them!

So this season we are looking to collaborate with a few local photographers on shooting the blooming plants on their own, as well as providing the field as an entourage for personal photoshoots which was a success last year. Artists wishing to do on-site flower painting are welcome too!

We expect that our mature plants will keep giving us some good blooms for cut flowers and as always, we will continue supplying some fresh cuts to local Calgary flower shops with gorgeous and one of a kind blooms only found at Parkland Peonies.

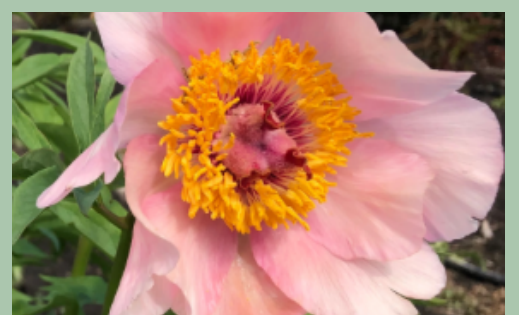
However, our biggest aspiration this season is to be more present in social media, so that we can share our love for Peony along with some helpful gardening tips with the horticultural community.

We are so very grateful for you - our green thumb customers and subscribers, and we will continue to strive to bring more good blooms for you to enjoy, as well as help you make the most of your beautiful peonies.



ADAM'S EARLY BLOOM FAVORITE

One of my early peony favorites, which is the first to bloom in our field is Nosegay. This peony is a show stopper with its soft creamy pink, shell-like petals that are glazed in silver and adorned with golden yellow stamens, captivating anyone who views its beauty. This cross was the result of breeding two early species p.mlokoewitschii x p.tenuifolia in 1950 by A.P. Saunders. Still as stunning today as it was then.



Busy Spring

After the winter that was milder than normal and with less snow cover in our field, we are interested to see how the peonies made out. Many people have asked us how they can protect early emerging peonies from cold spring frosts and freezing temperatures. The best way to protect any peony, early or late is to mulch your plants with a mid-size bark mulch. This will keep the peony dormant a little longer in spring, and hopefully miss all the cold weather which sometimes damage emerging stems that carry flower buds.

Generally, cold weather does not kill peony plants but will sometimes damage flower buds. This said, it does depend on what growth stage your peony plants are at. If peonies are in full leaf and freezing temperatures over -10 C are in the forecast, covering your plants with blankets or tarps is a must. Place 4 sticks around the peony plant, and then cover with a blanket, only removing during the day when temperatures have moved above zero degrees, and after all signs of freezing weather or snow have passed. Light snow generally does not harm the plant, but a heavy wet snow followed by freezing temperatures generally can crush the foliage and damage stems and can potentially set back the plant for a couple of years.

Don't be too concerned as peonies are very hardy perennials, and can tolerate some colder weather in early spring, adaptability and also genetics have a lot to play in plant hardiness. In our field, which is in Zone 3 Chinook climate, with over 15,000 peony plants, it's difficult to cover or mulch all plants when bad weather arrives. So we focus on protecting only the peonies which bloom the earliest, and the ones we wish to use in our breeding program, in order guarantee good blooms as breeding parents.



Spring is a great time for us to get a little prep work in the field.

We generally do some weed maintenance early season, which helps with many of the annual weeds. Our field is kept bare between planted rows, so cultivation is a must early in the season, and throughout the growing season to eliminate as many weeds as possible. It has been five years since we broke up a hay field to plant peonies, and we still get many dormant annual and perennial weeds germinating. Thankfully, the situation gets a little better each year. Thank you, Mother Nature.

Early spring is also a great time to remove any plant debris from your garden, top off your mulch layer over your peony plants, put in place your peony support, and also refresh your peony identification markers. For the past 15 years we have been using "brother" label maker on all our tags and we could not be happier. If applied on a smooth flat surface, they are waterproof, sun resistant, cost effective and last for years.

This is also the time to set up irrigation, so that you are not dragging hoses over leafed out plants. We find that mature peonies do not need to be irrigated in our climate, as they have a large root system to get them through most dry periods. Newly planted peonies and seedlings should be irrigated in their first 2 years, as they are working on building new roots, producing a stronger plant. Keep in mind, peonies do not like being too wet, they prefer a well-drained location for optimal growing conditions. The demise of most peonies can be caused by watering them too much, that we, "humans", as my good friend Jennifer would say, are doing in the best of intentions.

The Blooms



Old Faithful



Buckeye Belle



Athena

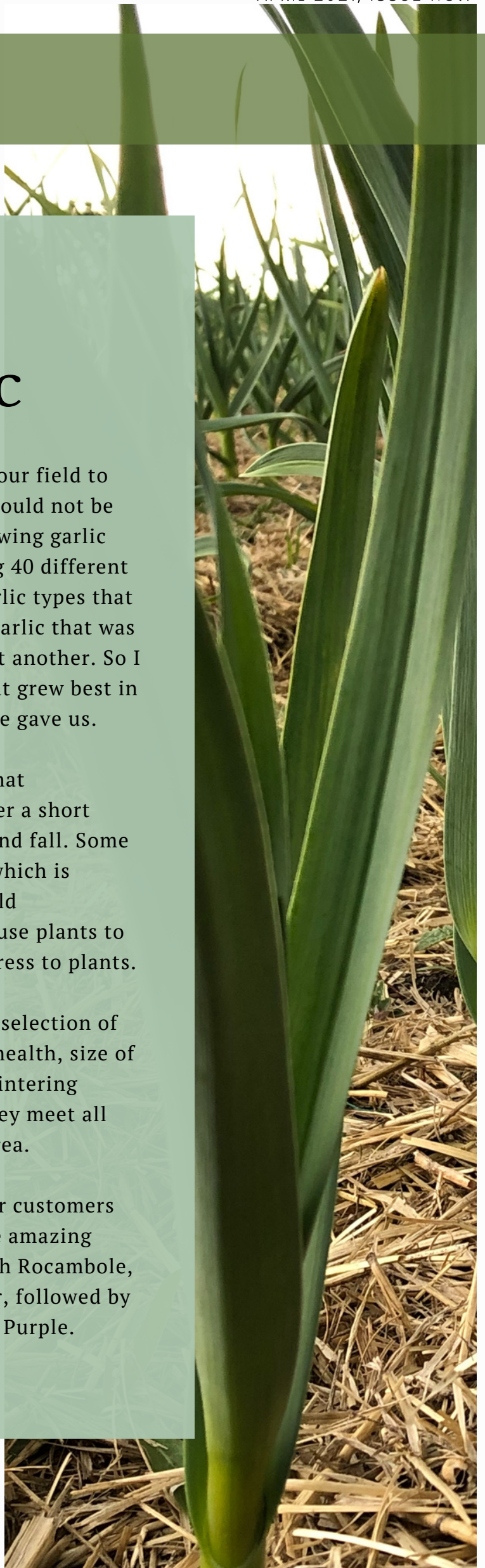
Planting Spring Garlic

Each season we dedicate a large section of our field to growing garlic, because every household should not be without this amazing spice. We started growing garlic about 5 years ago, and started with growing 40 different varieties. I read many mixed reviews on garlic types that grew well in one area, but not in another, garlic that was considered winter hardy in one area but not another. So I decided to do my own research and see what grew best in our area, with the conditions Mother Nature gave us.

We grow in a chinook zone, which means that temperatures can fluctuate very quickly over a short period of time through the winter, spring and fall. Some issues we face are not enough snow cover which is required to insulate the garlic from very cold temperatures, freeze thaw cycles, which cause plants to break dormancy early, adding additional stress to plants.

Within the first 2 year I was able to cut my selection of garlic varieties in half. I selected on plant health, size of garlic bulb, ability to store well, and overwintering ability. Now we grow only 5 varieties, as they meet all our criteria, all being great garlic for our area.

Russian Red, is our garlic of choice, and our customers know and love the taste. We can grow some amazing large bulbs of this variety. Up next is French Rocambole, which is a consistent grower year after year, followed by Great Northern, Italian Purple, and Korean Purple.



What's going on in the field?



WHAT'S IN THE FIELD
PEONIES
GARLIC
MARTAGON LILIES

We're blooming:

- *Athena*
- *Fernleaf Hybrids*
- *Sugar 'n Spice*
- *Chalice*
- *Nosegay*

Maria's Fav: Coral Sunset



Planting Spring Garlic continued...

Last season we grew about 15,000 plants, and will do close to the same again this season. Most of our garlic is planted in the early fall, right during the peony digging season, the remainder is held over and planted in early spring, as soon as the ground can be accessed. This means beginning of April for us in Calgary, Alberta.

I started experimenting with spring planting after we had a really poor garlic season due to colder than normal winter temperatures and no snow cover. A large percentage of the garlic cloves rotted before they were able to germinate. By planting garlic in spring, we don't worry about winter conditions, or freeze-thaw cycles. I can guarantee that we will have a good supply of healthy garlic in fall for our customers. Depending on when you get your spring garlic planted will determine when your crop is harvested. For us it is generally a few weeks behind the fall planted garlic. This is a plus, as not all garlic is ready to be harvested at the same time. Before planting spring garlic, I moisten and warm up the garlic cloves for a couple of days to stimulate root growth. Once roots start to develop, this is the optimal time to plant.

We still think fall planting is best, and the keys to growing great garlic are: quality seeds, planting your garlic early enough in the fall so it can develop a good root system before winter sets in, good moisture over the growing season, cutting off garlic scapes / seed heads, eliminating watering 2 weeks before harvest, and having more garlic than weeds in your garlic field.

***Botrytis** is a fungus that can infect all parts of the peony plant, foliage, stems, flowers and even the root system.*



How to prevent Botrytis

We get many inquiries from our customers about the brown spots on their peonies, or peony stems suddenly collapsing for no apparent reason. Most likely culprit, Botrytis. Botrytis is most common during the early spring, or wet season in most gardens. Some symptoms are early collapse of stem due to dark brown soft rot at base of stem, dark brown spotting on foliage, and drying of foliage early in the season, as well as bud blast, buds that turn brown and rot before they have a chance to open.

The most common causes of botrytis would be infected plant stock, or decayed peony foliage left overwinter, fungal spores overwinter in soil. Cool wet weather conditions favored by botrytis, with excess moisture on plants or ground can cause this as well. You might be thinking how do I prevent this from happening to my beloved peonies. So we created this quick guide to the right.

If your peonies or any other plants get infected, the first thing that should be done is to remove all infected plant parts, in some severe circumstances this might mean you will have to cut away the infected stems. Discard the infected plant parts in the trash, and spray the remaining plant with a fungicide. A rose fungicide works great, and can be purchased from your local garden center, without any ill effects to the remaining peony plant. If you are struggling with botrytis each season, you might want to consider replacing the plant, and or removing 2 inches of soil from around the peony plant and replacing it with new garden soil, and also top dressing with fresh mulch.

Remember, cutting back all dead material in the garden, especially peonies is a must, as it helps prevent diseases including botrytis.

HERE ARE A FEW GOOD WAYS TO MANAGE BOTRYTIS IN YOUR GARDEN:

- 1. Reduce leaf wetness by limiting overhead watering, or make sure when you water overhead, the foliage dries off within a few hours.*
- 2. Plant your peonies in a full sun airy location, and limit overcrowding, this will allow more air movement preventing botrytis spore to germinate. Keep in mind botrytis likes moisture.*
- 3. The most important thing in preventing botrytis is to cut and remove all peony plant debris in fall and discard the material in the garbage, do not use peony stems as mulch in the garden, as you can encourage this fungal disease to grow.*

With all these preventive measures botrytis sometimes does cause problems in our gardens, especially those that are more susceptible when we have wet spring weather.

FUTURE OFFERINGS

Winter is a good time to prepare yourself for the new garden season, it is also a great time to plan where you will put all the peonies you purchased over the winter from online peony growers. If you are like me, it's hard to resist the temptation of something new, something different, and something just for me, to add to your garden. No matter what the cost, justification is easy, when purchasing something you love.

Every year we spend hours looking through new offerings of peonies, from peony suppliers, and breeders around the world. We are dedicated to our peony customers to add new material to our catalog each year. Listed below are a few plants we are excited to add to our collection this fall.

Triton

Double, bright deep pink flowers with petals that twist and turn. Good stem strength, with dark Green foliage.

EXPLORE OUR PEONIES

Registered
2017



Melissa

Double, light yellow, fades to cream. Plant is very floriferous with a spreading growth habit, with 3-5" blooms.

Registered
2010

EXPLORE OUR PEONIES

Triphena Parkin

Double, warm light pink washing over a creamish yellow which in the viewed landscape gives an impression of a golden glow. Excellent flowers that are fragrant.

EXPLORE OUR PEONIES

Registered
2009



Yellow Bird

Semi-double, light yellow rounded & cupped guard petals. Inner petals soft yellow, petals at center may show some red edging.

EXPLORE OUR PEONIES

Registered
2019



Echoes of Love

Color on upper petal surface is a nearly fluorescent red pink while the undersurface of the petals is a lighter coloration with creamy pink feathered patterns.

Registered
2021

EXPLORE OUR PEONIES

Desiderata

Semi-double flowers are a deep coral-pink in color and petals have heavy uniform ruffling with small fringes along the edges. The backs of each petal have cream feather patterning,

EXPLORE OUR PEONIES

Registered
2021



Want to see all the New for 2021 Blooms?

We have 52 new peony varieties for you, that have never been listed in our catalog before.

SHOP NEW FOR 2021

7 Weeks of Peony Blooms

Extending the blooming season with any plant, is a gardeners dream. This is also true for peonies, imagine enjoying beautiful peonies blooming in your garden for 7 weeks.

Peonies bloom at different times of the season, some blooming very early, like species peonies, while others bloom very late, like lactiflora peony “Sinbad”. To enjoy peonies blooming in your garden over a longer period, select varieties that have different blooming times. Attached is a short list of peonies that can extend the season for you. Do a little research to find out more about the blooming time of your next peony purchase, and extend your peony season.

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
P. anomala	Nova	Claire de Lune	Moonrise	Coral Charm	Sarah Bernhardt	Marie Lemoine
P. peregrina	Early Scout	Roselette	Red Charm	Red Grace	Nick Shaylor	Myrtle Gentry
P. tenuifolia	Laddie	Early Glow	Scarlet O’Hara	Westerner	Ann Cousins	Hargrove Hudson
Little Red Gem	Starlight	Firelight	Richard Carvel	Miss America	Sword Dance	Sinbad
Nosegay	p. officinalis	Illini Belle	Cytherea	Gardenia	Shaylor’s Sunburst	Glory Hallelujah

Why Your Peonies are Not Blooming and How to Fix it

Does it sound familiar: You planted your new gorgeous peony last fall and finally the spring is here and you can’t wait to see those blooms? But when the time arrives, the plant doesn’t produce any flowers. Or it can sound like this: “I’ve had my peony plant for many years now, and it has never bloomed”, “My peony plant flowered beautifully before, but now I don’t get many flowers”, “Why did my peony not bloom in its first year?”

There are many reason why your peonies might not bloom in the garden. First off, location is key.

- 1. Peonies should be planted in full sun**, where they receive at least 6 hours of direct sunlight each day. Some problems occur when peonies are planted near or on the edge of trees and over the years trees grow larger, shading your peony, and also compete for moisture.
- 2. When peonies are planted too deep**, they put out a lot of green foliage, but not many flowers. Most peonies should be planted, so that 2 inches of soil is above the eyes (growing points on the root), at this depth your plant should flower without any issues.
- 3. Damage to flower buds**, caused my cold weather in early spring is a common reason why some peonies abort bud development. In this case, protecting your peony with a mulch layer might help the plant from emerging too quickly in spring, thus protecting the buds from freezing temperatures.
- 4. Sometimes peonies contract diseases overtime**, and root system starts to deteriorate. In this situation you might have to dig up your plant, divide the plant if portions of the root are still healthy, and plant your peony in a new location in the garden. This will bring back the vigor in you peony, as it develops a new healthy root system. After a successful transplantation your peony should bloom within a few years.

June Newsletter Sneak Peak

Up Next:

- *Breeding Peonies*
- *Advancement in Martagon Breeding*
- *Peonies for cut flower*
- *What's in bloom*
- *Dividing Peonies*
- *Ants and Peonies*

Evaluating seedlings



Martagon: Advancement



Collecting Peony Pollen

