

## **Olbrich's Plant Sale with the Pros:**

### **Focus on Local Plants**

**May 8 – 9, 2009**

Article printed in the *Olbrich Garden News*, Spring issue 2009

*By Samantha Peckham, Horticulturist at Olbrich Botanical Gardens*

What makes Olbrich's Plant Sale with the Pros special? In addition to area experts on hand to give you personal advice, all the plants are locally grown and specially chosen by Olbrich's professional horticulture staff.

Where do the plants come from? Unfortunately, we don't have enough greenhouse space or staff at Olbrich to grow all the plants from start to finish. We do have a very dedicated crew of skilled volunteers that pots up bare-root perennials for the sale in mid-March. From March to May, we grow out those plants in one of our outdoor Quonset huts. We also grow as many annuals from seed as we have room for in our greenhouse. As for the rest of our plants, they come from area nurseries around Madison, southern Wisconsin, and the upper Midwest.

We feel it's very important to use local suppliers. Buying locally decreases our dependence on petroleum, a non-renewable energy source, and it supports the Midwestern economy. Locally grown plants are also better suited to our specific climate. By buying locally grown annuals, perennials, and woody plants, you can be confident that those plants will thrive in Wisconsin's challenging climate.

Now, how do we decide which plants to offer at the sale? First of all, we analyze how each plant sold the previous year. During the sale, our volunteers

-- more --

take careful notes on each plant, documenting how many are left at the end of each day, as well as the overall condition of the plants.

Once we analyze all the information from the previous year, we look for the latest and greatest cultivars and varieties that you may not be able to find at other nurseries. We also offer many of our tried and true favorites that we grow in the gardens here at Olbrich. Hardiness and overall performance are other factors we evaluate carefully by talking to growers and other folks in the horticulture industry, as well as using our own experience in the garden.

So, if you're looking for some cool and unusual plants for your garden, or if you're in need of gardening advice from one of our pros; come out to Olbrich's Plant Sale with the Pros May 8 and 9! We'll make sure you leave with great Midwestern-grown plants and all the advice you need on how to make them thrive in your garden!

####