

VALE'S GREENHOUSE



Quality Plants For The Chinook Zone

301 – 3rd St. N.W., Black Diamond, Alberta

933-4814

PERENNIAL PLANT OF THE YEAR 2012

Brunnera Macrophylla “Jack Frost”

Siberian Bugloss



Every year the Perennial Plant Association sends each member a ballot to select a Perennial Plant of The Year. These plants tend not to be new introductions to the garden world, but plants that have been tested and thus proven worthy for nomination. They need to be suitable for a wide range of climatic zones. The plant chosen must be low maintenance, relatively pest free and disease resistant. It must have multiple seasons of ornamental interest and be readily available for the year of promotion. After the selection the plant is promoted all across Canada and continental U.S.A.

“And who is the Perennial Plant Association”, you might ask? Mostly, it is a large group of greenhouse growers, retailers, landscapers, horticultural teachers and “plant geeks” that work in our huge industry. The membership is large, and people join from all around the world meet once a year at a yearly convention. Here, we listen to speakers, tour greenhouses and nurseries, have a trade show, and in general find out what the others in the industry are up to.

It began in 1990, when the first Plant of the Year was *Phlox stolonifera*. Next was *Heuchera micrantha* Palace Purple and from that time on each year another perennial was picked and promoted. *Brunnera macrophylla* Jack Frost was chosen for the 2012 season.

Walters Garden, from Michigan U.S.A., first introduced Jack Frost Brunnera to the shade garden world in 2000. All Brunneras are classic shade perennials known for their beautiful heart-shaped silver leaves and forget-me-not blue flowers. Jack Frost leaves are intricately detailed with a crackle like finish. The leaves are dark green but the heavy metallic silver overlay only allows the green veins to show through. This effect is stunning, especially when companion-planted with thick leaved Bergenisias.

Brunneras are a woodland plant that enjoys growing in a moist dappled light to shade areas. Rich black earth will encourage them to grow into a large ground cover like mat that will need little care once established. Each spring the old foliage will need to be cut off, unlike many other perennials that get a hair cut in the fall. Leaving on the old foliage will protect the crown of the plant from winter drying damage.



Pretty blue flowers appear in mid to late spring and are held in clusters above the shimmering leaves. Perfect for snipping for a spring bouquet, the tiny flowers last days as a cut flower in the home. This plant is more of a bushy ground cover only getting about 13 inches high with the Forget-me-not like flowers sitting about 5 inches higher. For a more instant affect we recommend you plant two or three plants together in a cluster so in no time at all you will have a big clump. Here at Vale's Greenhouse we have also used this plant in summer containers mixed in with Begonias, fuchsia, and other shade tolerant basket suffers. The look is stunning as well as low maintenance through out the summer.

Remember to remove this plant from the container and plant in the ground in the Zone 2 gardening area to keep this plant over the winter. Perennials in general will not overwinter in containers in the Calgary area.

For more information on the Perennial Plant Association and past Selections for the Perennial Plant of the Year, check their web site at www.perennialplant.org.

