

# VALE'S GREENHOUSE



*Quality Plants For The Chinook Zone*

301 – 3<sup>rd</sup> St. N.W., Black Diamond, Alberta

933-4814

## PERENNIAL PLANT OF THE YEAR 2006

### DIANTHUS GRATIANOPOLITANUS 'Feuerhexe' (FIREWITCH)



Each year the Perennial Plant Association sends each member a ballot to select a Perennial Plant of the Year. These plants do not tend to be new introductions to the garden world, but plants that have been tried and thus proven worthy for nomination. After the selection, the plant is then promoted all across Canada and continental U.S.A. Here, in the Black Diamond and Calgary area, there have been years that the plant chosen has not been hardy to our Agricultural Zone of 2 or 3.

Largely unknown until a Connecticut nurseryman, Pierre Bennerup, discovered it in 1987. While traveling in the Netherlands he found two small plants of "feuerhex" and was impressed with the plant because they were in full bloom well past the normal blooming season. He purchased these two plants and produced plants for the North American market, which has now become a widely used garden plant.

Dianthus feuerhex (Firewitch is a hardy UADA Zone 2 plant) is excellent as a border edger, a rock garden plant, can be planted in wall crevices, or as a ground cover on a sunny slope. Large 4 inch blooms are brilliant purplish-pink and cover the plant from June til frost. The colour combination of the blue green foliage against the flowers, which have a spicy clove-like fragrance, makes this plant an extremely colourful addition to the garden.

The foliage height is 3 to 4 inches high and the flower stems reach up to 8 inches high. Flowering is promoted all summer long, when the spent flowers are removed. The spread of each plant is approximately 16 inches. Plants should be grown in sunny locations in well-drained neutral to slightly alkaline soil. Firewitch is propagated by tip and heel cuttings for by division before or immediately after flowering.

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](http://www.perennialplant.org).