

The Rules

In the doldrums of winter it is hard to become inspired by the garden. The holiday season has exhausted our reserves, and while nature hibernates so do gardeners. Seed companies know this, and thus the onslaught of pornography begins to arrive on my doorstep. As a member of the Garden Writers Association, my pile of pornography is embarrassing. I slip the contents from mailbox under the cover of darkness for fear of my neighbours thinking that a gardening pervert lives next door.

I drool over the glossy pages of the Stokes and Dominion Seed House catalogues, flipping to the centerfold where the most tempting subject material lurks. Each catalogue has something new to tempt me: Stokes has a new Gaillardia, while Dominion Seed House has an exciting Acroclinum.

For the most intense pleasure there is nothing like Thompson and Morgan to satiate the appetite. This glossy tome is sure to keep you awake at night with fantasies of lush gardens, unusual tropicals and tasty vegetables. The neighbours live in fear when this annual arrives in the mailbox, previously well thumbed (undoubtedly by Canada Post); they know the lights will be on late at night as the pages are

perused, the moans and groans disturbing them.

Then there are the seed lists for the true gardening pervert. These periodicals appear as harmless pages to the uninitiated. They contain few pictures, arrive in plain envelopes, printed on bond paper; but they are the most seductive. The seed list offered to members of the Royal Horticultural Society is sure to turn the most serious individual to fits of delirium. The offerings of lesser-known exotics have us installing For Sale signs on the lawn in the cold of January and heading for Britannia.

The Ontario Rock Garden Society, in a counter action, offers its members up to 60 packages of free seed with a pullout colour centerfold slipped casually between the pages of white bond. These offerings are strictly for those for whom there is little help and who wish to throw caution to the wind becoming select members of this exclusive club: GA (Gardeners Anonymous).

Have no fear! There is help for addicts like us. Since no rules exist for dealing with this addiction, I have endeavoured to develop a few. I hope for federal legislation leading to funding to help the afflicted. If not, at least it will assist local councils in developing municipal bylaws.

1. Order only one copy of each free catalogue. Ordering extra copies to stash in the drawer at work is not permitted.
2. Limit yourself to two glossy publications and one 'plain' publication. Ok, if this is much too unreasonable, limit yourself to one mailbox full of the stuff.
3. It is not acceptable to loan catalogues to friends. Those caught doing so will be subject to community service, including rose pruning the Rayner Gardens.
4. You are allowed to use only one postage stamp for your seed order. You are not permitted to buy a five-dollar stamp, package all your orders in one envelope and send it to a friend for onward mailing.
5. You must, if failing any of the above, join a local gardening club or horticultural society and attend all their meetings baking treats for every member.

Failing all else, there is one final rule after making extensive seed lists, now into the hundreds, and contemplating a bank loan to finance the expenditure - you must do the following: Write the name of every plant you are ordering seed for on a small piece of paper. Toss these pieces of paper out the window in a snowstorm (must be from a second floor. Severe addicts need to move into an apartment building with access to the twentieth floor). Run down and collect the pieces of paper.

Garden Guru



Garden Guru is a monthly column, featuring advice from landscape designer Mike Pascoe. Ideas, suggestions and information about creating the ideal green space especially for owners of new homes.

You are allowed to order only those seeds from the retrieved pieces of paper.

Seeds are a wonderful source for developing a new garden. Those with the temperament to grow one's own seeds will find it a rewarding experience. In the next column, I will discuss the perils of growing seedlings. Only those readers who have failed all the above rules need read next month's issue.

Sources:

<http://www.dominion-seed-house.com>
<http://www.stokeseeds.com>
<http://www.thompson-morgan.com>
<http://www.rhs.org.uk>

Ontario Rock Garden Society:

Membership is \$17.50 the seed list contains over 1500 varieties of seed. Contact Andrew Osyany, Box 146, Shelburne, and Ont., L0N 1S0.

