

SPRING

Somehow it seems that each spring is connected to all springs past in a very poignant way. I know, autumn with its passing colors and dying leaves is a symbol of nostalgic loss, but it seems to me that spring carries a share of pain for lost times, lost friends. It is a loss comforted by the hope engendered by the life emerging everywhere you look.

Plant something in memory of a special time, the birth of a child, the loss of a friend. As a special tree grows, it will delight the child whose birth inspired its planting. What is chosen to remember a friend will remind you season after season to count having had that friend among your blessings.

Have you read that there will be 2,749 trees planted in New York City beginning this spring, one each in memory of the lives lost in the World Trade Center disaster? Gardens, too, are being planted. One, a bed of perennials designed by Piet Oudolf of the Netherlands, is dedicated as a Garden of Remembrance. In an almost universal impulse, flowers were piled high in parks and near firehouses after 9/11. Inspired by that outpouring of sadness and concern, flowering trees in groups of 25 to 100 will be planted throughout the city's five boroughs.

CABBAGES & KING

A chore that is among the March's "to-dos" is cutting down the grasses and grass-like plants to within a few inches of the ground. It is easier to manage now than after the new blades emerge. Liriope can be mowed over or attached with the weed-eating trimmer. The larger types will require long, stout gloves and a hedge trimmer or chain saw.

Most pennisetums, sedges, panicums do well in sun, filling in and giving needed height to a planting where there isn't space enough for a shrub. One beautiful grass that does well in shade is Hakonechloa. This native of Japan has a low fountain habit and lights up a dark corner with its white striped leaves. H. "Aureolo" is a golden variegated form as is a newcomer, "All Gold."

Lawn grass designed to be cut, can also be used uncut. If you have property bordering a stream or lake, grass is a fine way to stabilize the soil and prevent erosion. Left alone, it won't get very tall and it is less expensive than other plants as ground cover. Native grasses are a boon for this use, offering attractive seed heads for the birds.

MORE ABOUT GRASS

This is not a put-down of golf or golfers but just a few figures to encourage golfers to find a course experimenting with Xeric (water-wise) grass. The world's golf courses use 2.5 billion gallons of water every day. That same amount would support a 4.7 billion people at the daily UN – stated minimum. The average amount of pesticides used per acre, per

year on golf courses is 18 pound. In agricultural use the amount is only 2.7 pounds per acre, per year.

Another interesting figure is the 150,000 acres that could be covered to a depth of 2 feet with water drawn from the Colorado River by the city of Las Vegas, which uses much of that allotment to water its more than 60 golf courses. Well, you can't expect visitors to spend all their time in the casinos?

Time to think roses but do not have space for large ones and the miniature roses just don't have the impact of a real rose, try the mini-floras! The "miniflora" is a new official classification by the American Rose Society of a rose that has larger blooms, plant, and foliage than the miniatures but is still smaller than the floribundas. They can be seen at the Bridges Roses website, www.bridgesroses.com. Their catalog has a listing of several but the ultimate height is not given. However, in both miniatures and mini-floras, tall is defined as 24 to 366 inches.