September 2020

Buy a Bush!

Long Time No See! I am so happy to be back with everyone.

I just want to take a moment to break my arm and pat myself on the back. In May of 2019 when we were visiting Caramoor I recommended planting Redbud trees. Anyone remember? The April 2020 edition of *fine Gardening,* ALSO recommended planting Redbuds as a "spring classic". Am I good or what? The Redbuds that I planted on Mother's Day in 2019 are thriving. They had a good bloom in the spring, and have now tripled in size.

Now, autumn has returned and it's time for transplanting perennials, as well as shopping for trees, bulbs, and bushes. I have a favorite bush here for you today.

The Shadbush

The bush, or small tree, that I'm recommending today is the Shadbush, or ***Amelanchier grandiflora***. It is also called the Serviceberry, Shadblow, or Juneberry tree. It's an all-season, NATIVE beauty. The Shadbush has 5 petaled, showy, slightly fragrant, pure white, spring blooms that will ripen into red then purple berries. It has lovely grey bark, and brilliant fall foliage. It can grow 15-25 feet tall, and can have the same size spread. The Shadbush can be grown in full sun to partial shade, and adapts to a wide range of soils.

The Shadbush has many beautiful stories and folktales associated with it.

The NYBG writes:

"One story is that the first settlers in the New England area often planned funeral services at the same time that the tree bloomed. Its blooming was a sign that the ground had thawed sufficiently to be able to dig graves. So the tree became known as the 'serviceberry tree'.

Another story is that for thousands of years along the Hudson River Valley, the bloom time of the tree coincided with the massive spring shad fish run up the river to spawn. So the tree was called 'shadbush' or 'shadblow'.

There's an award-winning children's book called When The Shadbush Blooms in which a young Lenape ("Delaware Indian") girl fishes for shad and recalls a time when her great, great grandmother did the same. In fact, many Native American tribes used the plant for food and medicine and to make arrow shafts.

The journals from Lewis & Clark's expedition out west tell yet another tale. They are said to have survived on the berries when other food was scarce. Their journal entry of May 1804 lists serviceberries as plentiful as they passed near St. Louis.

The dark blue-black berries that ripen in June make a delicious fruit pie and you can find recipes on several websites. In his Manual of Woody Landscape Plants, Michael Dirr writes that the Shadbush's ripe fruit tastes 'better than high bush blueberries'."

Brendan Kelly introduced me to the Shadbush when I lived in Chappaqua. He did a lot of tree removal work for me, and then helped me choose trees for a border between the woods and my lawn. He loved the Shadbush. I do too. If anyone knows where Brendan went I'd love to reconnect with him. I moved to Croton, and haven't been able to locate him since.

ShrubBucket

ShrubBucket was founded in 2015 on the notion that it was possible to bring together the finest plants that exist in wholesale nurseries around the country and allow the general public to shop directly from that selection. They believed that technology could give customers direct access to thousands of varieties of plants in a single location that they would otherwise never have the chance to find.

Their plants are never boxed, wrapped in plastic, cut off from air and light, or shipped through the mail. This prevents waste packaging and refuse for landfills.

I bought this Shadbush from ShrubBucket ($41). I have been using ShrubBucket for two years now. I have ordered drift roses, Deutzia, Pussy Willow, a Pugster Butterfly Bush, NJ Tea, and Fothergilla. Everything has been delivered to my house on time, undamaged, and in great condition. This spring I wrote to ShrubBucket on our behalf. Rick Hedrick, the Chief Horticulture Officer, sent me 25% off coupons just for the BFC. The discount code you use when you order is BFC25! How cool is that?

Happy Bush Buying everyone!