



## BOTANICAL SHAKESPEARE

### PLANTING INFORMATION:

# *Comedy of Errors*

#### BALSAMUM – *Myroxylon balsamum*/ Balm/Balsam/Peru balsam

A tree native to the tropical forests of North and South America where the annual mean temperature is 75-85 F., **Zones 12 – 13.**

Grows up to 150 feet tall in well-drained neutral soils on slopes that collect an annual rainfall of about 100 inches.

The tree is invasive, occurring spontaneously on agricultural land and disturbed areas.

Peru Balsam has a sweet, vanilla-like aroma with a subtle hint of cinnamon and has been used by native cultures as a soothing balm and wound cleanser.

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#### BRIER

A plant having a woody and thorny or prickly stem; a thicket or tangled patch of such plants  
A name for a number of unrelated thorny plants that form thickets, especially the sweetbrier and other wild roses.

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#### SWEETBRIER – *Rosa eglanteria*, or *R. rubiginosa*, eglantine

A prickly wild rose, reaching up to 6 feet tall, with fragrant foliage and small pink flowers that become orange hips in the fall. Native to Europe and western Asia, it is widely naturalized in North America, where it grows in full sun along roadsides and in fields from **Zones 3 – 8**. It is classified as an invasive except in the United States.

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#### CHERRY (-STONE) – *Prunus avium* (sweet); *Prunus cerasus* (sour).

The cherry is a stone fruit, having a "stone" or pit inside; the seed is inside the stone.

Sweet cherries grow best, where temperatures are mild and humidity is low, **Zones 5 – 7**, reaching about 30 feet. They require another tree of a different variety to fruit.

Tart, or sour, cherries are much smaller and grow in **Zones 4 – 6**, with two months of winter temperatures below 45° F. They are self-fertile.

All cherries require full sun in light, rather sandy soil that is rich and deep, slightly acidic, with pH levels between 6.0 and 6.8. Regular generous watering is essential.

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#### ELM – *Ulmus*

A majestic deciduous tree that reaches more than 40 feet high. Tolerant of a variety of soil textures that are moist and well drained. A moderate to fast grower that resists heat and wind, and can handle some dry sites as well as roadside conditions such as salt and pollution. **Zones 3 – 9** in full sun.

The American Elm was almost completely destroyed by Dutch Elm Disease in the late 19th and early 20th century, but resistant species and hybrids are now available for planting.

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#### GRASSES – *Gramineae* family

True grasses include cereals, bamboo, turf, and grassland, either wild or cultivated on lawns and pastures and as fodder.

Grasses grow in a wide variety of environments including very cold or very dry locations, most in full sun and well drained crumbly soil. Turf grasses grow best in temperatures from 60° to 75°F. and thrive as day length increases.

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#### IVY – *Hedera helix*

An evergreen climbing or ground-creeping woody plant native to Temperate **Zones 3 – 8**.

Thrives in poor soil and deep shade, with moderate watering, which makes them a good groundcover under trees and in places where grasses and other plants will not grow well. Strong light is detrimental to ivy, but it will tolerate some sun.

As ivy climbs a tree, its height should be controlled. It does not harm the tree until it reaches the canopy and shuts out light – then the tree will suffer and eventually die.

Buildings covered in ivy are not harmed as long as the plant does not penetrate the wall through fissures.

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#### MOSS

Tiny flowerless herbaceous plants that absorb water and nutrients through their leaves. Mosses form dense green clumps or mats, often in damp or shady locations but sometimes in dry areas such as prairies and sometimes in full sun.

Moss can grow on any type of soil all over the planet except within saltwater environments. The shallow roots hold the plant in place without drawing nutrients from the soil; the plants make their own food through photosynthesis.

Their spores are in the air and only need moisture to germinate and mature.

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### **RUSH** – *Juncus*, common rushes/*Luzula*, woodrushes

Flowering, mostly perennial, plants with cylindrical stalks or hollow, fragrant stem-like leaves.

Depending on the species, they range from six inches to four feet high in temperate **Zones 3 – 8**.

Tolerant of a wide range of moisture such as the edges of ponds and bogs, but can handle variable conditions. They prefer shade and infertile soils.

Ancient civilizations used some *Juncus* species as remedies and for nutrition from sprouts, shoots, and seeds.

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### **SAFFRON**

A spice derived from the flower of *Crocus sativus*. The flower's crimson stigma and styles, called threads, are dried and used for seasoning and coloring food.

Plant in autumn immediately upon receipt, 3-5 inches deep in well-drained moderately nutritious soil in full sun. **Zones 3 – 8 or 9**. Foliage appears in spring, then withers, and flowers appear in the fall. The bulbs multiply rapidly.

About 50 to 60 saffron flowers produce about 1 tablespoon of spice.

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### **VINE**

A flowering plant with a growth habit of trailing or climbing stems or runners along the ground.

Bittersweet, grapes, honeysuckles and ivy are examples of climbing woody vines. Herbaceous annuals and perennials such as Morning Glory, melons and squashes creep along the ground as do Vinca and Periwinkle.

Most vining plants grow in temperate **Zones 3 – 8**, but soil and light requirements vary with individual species.

