Lanark Orchid Renals

Perth & District Horticultural Society

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District #2 of the Ontario Horticultural Association

August 2009 Newsletter

An addiction to gardening is not all bad when you consider all the other choices in life.
Cora Lea Bell

Presidents' Message

The rains held off long enough on July 18 to allow our members to enjoy Pat and Paul Bertrim's beautiful gardens. The many scrumptious, luscious desserts crowned a perfect afternoon. Thank you, Bertrim Family, for sharing your lovely Eden with us.

If you missed this event, be sure to take in our outing to Rideau Woodland Ramble (www.rideauwoodlandramble.com) on August 15, where District Two will be enjoying a fun day from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

A semi-potluck picnic is planned in this beautiful centre. Bring your own sandwich and a dish (salad or dessert) to share. Brief but exciting presentations and demonstrations have been planned. Come, even if you did not pre-register, as we are expecting you! (Take Hwy 43 past Merrickville and exit the second turn-off to Burritt's Rapids. Follow blue provincial attraction sign to 210 Burritts Rapids Rd., County Rd. 23)

Our floating gardens have been launched and to date, the ugly wire fences are still doing their job. The hungry muskrat's mouth is watering but he has not yet reached the delicacies!

The flag garden and the cenotaph continue to look good. Thank you to all the hard working volunteers who are taking part in these community projects.

Don't let these rains "dampen your spirits." Summer is just around the corner!!

What's The Deal With Tea Tree Oil?

Lately, you can find tea tree oil listed in the ingredients of just about everything you can use on your body: shampoo, soap – you name it. While its antifungal and antibiotic properties have not been studied conclusively, tea tree oil, which is distilled from the leaves of the Australian tea tree (Melaleuca alternifolia) has been widely used for just such purposes for decades and the Australian aborigines have used it for centuries.

Tea tree oil is now being researched as a possible ingredient in bug repellents and as a tool in fungicidal sprays to fight downy and powdery mildews. All oils have the potential to burn leaves, so tea tree oil should be used sparingly, but it's heartening to see another potential tool for our green gardening toolbox.

Fine Gardening Spring 2009

Pollinators: Vital Key to Garden Success

The Master Gardeners of Eastern Ontario invite you to attend a star-studded program featuring a very special keynote speaker, Dr. Peter Kevan. Dr. Kevan will be ably supported by excellent local presenters on the vital matter of pollination – that quiet activity that often goes unnoticed and under-appreciated, but which plays

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a major role in the ongoing survival of our fragile planet.

We want this up-to-date information to leave you inspired, better equipped to explain the pollination process and ready to take a stand on the protection and encouragement of our complex population of pollinators.

Peter Kevan is a Professor in Environmental Biology at the University of Guelph, and is regarded as one of the most active pollination biologists world-wide. He is presently the principal investigator on a multi-million dollar NSERC-Canadian Pollination Initiative research network, chair of the Task Force on Declining Pollination of the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources), part of the steering committee for the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign, and a member of the Canadian Pollinator Protection Initiative. Dr. Kevan is actively involved in initiatives in pollination stemming from the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as many other pollination or pollinator-related projects.

Scott Olan is from Ministry of the Environment a Pesticides Specialist and designated Provincial Officer in Eastern Region in March 2005.

Ken Farr is a forest taxonomist and science policy advisor with the Canadian Forest Service, Natural Resources Canada. He will talk about Trees and Pollinators.

Dale Odorizzi, Gloria Oopzoomer and Ankaret Dean will lead the Partnership for Pollinators. Gloria and Dale will present a case study on developing and maintaining an all-volunteer public Butterfly Garden, combining the strengths of the Rideau Valley Field Naturalists, the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority and Lanark County Master Gardeners. Ankaret will describe the Secret Life of Bees.

Saturday, September 26, 2009
Algonquin College, Woodroffe Campus, Ottawa
(south of College Square Mall near Woodroffe Avenue and Baseline Road)

To register, forward a cheque to the following address, including your name, mailing address and e-mail address if you have one. Also, include any group affiliation (MVFN).

United Counties Master Gardeners
Mail To: E. Falconer,
3276 Klondike Road,
North Gower, ON, K0A 2T0

($35 for Master Gardeners, $40 for all other participants)

Lunch and refreshments for the day will be catered by the Algonquin College Catering Service. Cost of all food and beverages is included in your registration fee. If you have special needs, please note them in this section. If we can accommodate them we will.

If you have any questions, please contact Dale Odorizzi at 613-264-8135 or odorizzi@storm.ca.

Hope to see you there.

Flower Show Schedule

SEPTEMBER 8

1. Collection of 3 different annuals – 1 stem each
2. Collection of 3 different perennials – 1 stem each
3. Collection of herbs - named
4. Onions – 3
5. Corn – 3
6. Pumpkin – 1
7. Vegetable oddity - 1
8. 'Autumn Feast' – a design using fruits, vegetables and flowers
9. 'Country Kitchen' – a hanging arrangement of dried herbs and flowers
10. 'Flowers for my Lady' – a hand-tied bouquet to be exhibited in a glass container

Making Sense Of Specialty Fertilizer

Because there are so many fertilizers on the market, it can be difficult to decide which, if any, to purchase. While there are differences in the amount and release rate of nutrients in each one, you don't need a dozen different types of fertilizer in your storage shed.

Fertilizers such as 8-8-8 or 10-10-10 are quick-release fertilizers . (The number refers to the percentage of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, respectively, each bag contains.) They are less expensive than others on the market but are more subject to loss by leaching with heavy rainfall or irrigation than slow-release varieties because they contain water-soluble nitrogen. Little of the fertilizer may ever reach plant roots. Similarly, fertilizer spikes and stakes waste more fertilizer than is used because little of the nutrients ever come in contact with the root system. Lateral fertilizer movement in the soil is limited, making this purchase a less-than-ideal option.

Some fertilizers claim to be better for specific plant types, such as roses, hollies, camellias, or azaleas. these fertilizers work well but are more expensive per pound of nutrient than most fertilizers. Some of the compounds used in these plant-specific fertilizers have an acidic reaction that can be beneficial for acid-loving plants, but the value is modest if you already have acidic soil. So test your soil before investing in a specialty fertilizer.

I normally use a lawn fertilizer, such as 16-4-8 or

12-4-8 to fertilize trees, shrubs, annuals and perennial flowers – they do just fine. Actually, the ideal fertilizer ration for most trees and shrubs is 4-1-2, so any fertilizer that follows this formula should do a good job. A word of caution: Make sure the fertilizer does not contain a herbicide. A number of lawn fertilizers are sold as a weed-and-feed combination, which could end up harming your plants.

Many gardeners have the false impression that the more they fertilize, the more their plants will grow. But fertilizing does not always result in improved plant growth. You have to think of fertilizer as a supplement, like a vitamin. Plant produce their own food using water, carbon dioxide, nutrients from the soil and fertilizer, and energy from the sun. It is a combination of appropriate conditions that produces a healthy plant. If a plant appear healthy and is producing at a normal rate of growth, why fertilize?

Erv Evans, Fine Gardening Mar/Apr 2009

Arrivederchi Aroma

Humans aren't the only ones finding it hard to stop and smell the roses. Scientists at the University of Virginia have discovered that air pollution can significantly decrease the fragrance of flowers, and thereby impede pollinating insects' ability to follow a bloom's scent trail. The researchers believe this decrease could play a factor in the declining population of pollinators, particularly bees, which rely on nectar for food.

The 2008 study found that in less-polluted eras, such as the 1800s, a flower's scent molecules could travel as far as 1,200 metres. However, in today's polluted environments, molecules may spread no more than 200 to 300 metres, often making it difficult for pollinators to find blooms. "Air pollution destroys the aroma of flowers by as much as 90 per cent compared to periods before automobiles and heavy industry," says professor and study co-author Jose D. Fuentes.

Not only are nectar-dependent insects adversely affected, but so too are the flowers, which rely on pollination to proliferate.

Bee helpful

What you can do to aid pollinators:

•Plant a diversity of nectar- and pollen-producing species that provide blooms from early spring through fall.
• Include indigenous plants.
• Avoid the use of pesticides.
• Include larval host plants for butterflies
• Join Pollination Canada's Citizen Science project and monitor the pollinators that visit your garden (see pollinationcanada.ca).
• Support the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (see nappc.org).

Bee-attracting plants

Spring:
Serviceberry (Amelanchier spp.) from Zone 2
Dogwood (Cornus spp.) Zone 2
Wild strawberry (Fragaria virginiana) Zone 3
Wild geranium (Geranium maculatum) Zone 4
Oregon grape (Mahonia aquifolium) Zone 5
Redcurrant (Ribes sanguineum) Zone 6
Violet (Viola canadensis) Zone 4
Summer:
Hyssop (Agastache scrophulariifolia) Zone 5
Sunflower (Helianthus spp.)
Blazing star (Liatris spicata) Zone 4
Bergamot (Monarda fistulosa) Zone 4
Black-eyed Susan (Rudbeckia hirta) Zone 3
Stiff goldenrod (Solidago rigida) Zone 4
Culver's root (Veronicastrum virginicum) Zone 3

5 Easy Steps For A Weed-free Garden

By Yvonne Cunnington, Canadian Gardening online

New gardeners can be forgiven for thinking that weeds are unwelcome garden guests invited by nature to drive them crazy. Not quite: nature abhors a vacuum and has an arsenal of opportunistic plants that colonize open soil very quickly. Tough and fast-growing, weeds can easily out-compete desirable plants if you don't take firm control.

How to outsmart weeds

1 Know your enemy

The first step is to distinguish the weeds from the garden plants (for photos of some common weeds, check out www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/ont-weeds/weedgal.htm). This can be a challenge, as both may look alike to the novice. However, in spring, weeds tend to grow and green up before many perennials even get started, and most produce tiny flowers that bloom and go to seed quickly. Weedy plants also tend to have a somewhat acrid odour, so breaking off a piece of stem and

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sniffing it may give you a clue.

2. Turf the turf

Do a thorough job of getting rid of lawn or turf grasses and perennial weeds before you plant. Never just rototill an area then plant directly into it because grass and perennial weeds can regrow from small pieces of root or stem left in the ground. It's best to turn over the soil with a digging fork, breaking up any clods and removing any roots you find. A non-chemical way to kill off weeds and grass is to cover the ground with commercially available black plastic, but this can take up to a year to be effective.

3. Observe the land

When you see a weed, remove it immediately. When small, they're easier to pull up or hoe out. Less tugging will be required if the soil is moist. Don't allow weeds to go to seed and multiply, and don't compost them.

4. Mow with care

Be sure to mow away from your garden beds -- lawn clippings may contain weed seeds.

5. Muchos mulch

To suppress weeds once you've planted, layer about 7.5 centimetres of mulch over bare soil between plants. Commonly available mulches include straw (not hay-too many weed seeds), cocoa bean hulls and shredded cedar bark. Basically, mulch keeps weeds down by blocking out the light they need to germinate.

Handle With Care

To preserve the wooden handles of your garden tools, coat them with boiled linseed oil. The oil will gradually weather out of them, so just apply a new coat. A good time to do this is in the fall when you are putting tools in storage. Be sure to clean the metal parts of your tools and rub them with used motor oil on a cloth. To store small tools, push them into a pail of clean dry sand, which will keep them from rusting. Some people add used oil to the sand, then place their tools in it.

14 Earth-Friendly gardening techniques

By Judith Adam

Green your garden with these easy tips

Planting

• Stabilize soil structure with reliably cold-hardy plants that will remain in place for years.

• Select disease-and insect-resistant varieties to reduce reliance on pesticides.

• Avoid deeply tilling the soil, which displaces beneficial organisms.

• Add a five- to eight-centimetre layer of shredded bark over tree and shrub roots to conserve moisture and insulate them from excessive heat.

Feeding

• Feed plants with trace minerals by making compost from disease-free garden leaves and vegetable kitchen waste.

• Fertilize with nutrients from natural sources such as blood, bone and kelp meals, alfalfa pellets and fish emulsion.

• Add organic material (leaves, peat moss, pine needles) to the soil to improve texture and help retain oxygen and moisture.

• Enhance nutrient take-up with Epsom salts: 1 cup (250 mL) per nine square metres raked into soil in spring.

Use commercial organic fertilizers with low formulations, below 15 (e.g., 5-10-5), to prevent root burn and excessive soil salts.

Watering

• Irrigate in early morning (especially roses and other plants prone to fungal diseases) or water at night to keep evaporation to a minimum.

• Replace water-wasting fine mist and overhead sprinklers with soaker hoses.

• Cover exposed soil with five centimetres of organic mulch (leaves or shredded bark) to conserve moisture.

• Water lawns thoroughly once or twice weekly instead of a brief, daily irrigation, so moisture absorbs deeply into soil, promoting healthy root growth.

• Choose drought-resistant plants that can withstand summer heat.

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You Know you're A Master Gardener When:

• You rejoice in rain...even after 10 straight days of it.

• You have pride in how bad your hands look.

• You have a decorative compost container on your kitchen counter.

• You can give away plants easily, but compost is another thing.

• Soil test results actually mean something.

• IPM rules!

• You'd rather go to a nursery to shop than a clothes store.

• You look for gardens open to the public whenever you go on vacation.

• Your non-gardening spouse is actually getting involved with your garden endeavors...digging ponds, building bird houses, watering, pruning, turning compost piles, planting...

And you definitely know your a Master Gardener when...

• You are surrounded by terrific people who share your passion!