



Lanark Orchid

Renals

Perth & District Horticultural Society

P.O. Box 494
Perth, ON, K7H 3G1
www.gardenontario.org

District #2 of the
Ontario Horticultural
Association

August 2010 Newsletter

A garden is
always a series
of losses set against
a few triumphs,
like life itself.

May Sarton

President's Pen, August 2010

All is not necessarily sweetness and light in the garden. My friend, Aileen, phoned to ask about a beetle. While visiting in Lanark and she was asked about a pest destroying some peony buds. It was not a pretty sight, and the plants were literally swarming with beige beetles. A bud was clipped into a canning jar and it must have contained 50-60 beetles. I had to go see as her description was hard to imagine. Aileen had searched the internet with no identification luck. A trip to the nursery for a consult didn't provide any definite answers either, other than it was definitely swarming and "don't open the jar in here!" Aileen did more sleuthing and finally came up with the name of culprit - the rose chafer - together with some ideas for controlling them. Read on for some ideas on controlling these voracious insects which, in numbers, can decimate a garden in record time.

Hope you are not "bugged" by your garden.....

See you in the garden, Lynda



Rose Chafer Controls

Rose chafers are tan-coloured beetles that "skeletonize" the leaves of roses (and many other plants). They eat the juicy bits of the leaves and leave just the veins. Pest pictures here: http://www.uoguelph.ca/pdc/Factsheets/Insect/Rose_Pests.htm

Rose chafers are most common in areas with sandy soils, and they can be controlled:

1. Cultivate the soil to destroy larvae
2. Spray soap (1 part soap to 20 parts water) directly on the beetles to slow them down. Make sure you rinse off the soap after ten minutes so that it doesn't damage the leaves, and don't spray when the sun is hot.
3. Hand-pick the beetles (they're slow) and drop them into a bucket of soapy water.

July Social

The day was warm and not too humid as about 32 Hort members gathered at Haddon Hall Farm to enjoy their Summer Dessert Social. Cindy from Almonte gave a flower arranging demonstration. She prepared a monochromatic white sensation (won by Ted Bryant) of three vases connected by green stems as well as an unusual

arrangement balanced on top of thinned-necked vase (won by Annette Lindhop). Cindy explained that she finds it particularly appealing when like flowers and greenery are clustered in one area of the arrangement. Another "trick" Cindy shared was changing the shape of a variegated leaf by taping it back on itself, creating a circle which she then placed in a cluster on one side of the arrangement. The result was stunning.

And I haven't said anything about the marvellous array of desserts: date squares, cheesecake, fruit flans, chocolate balls, fresh fruit, lemon cake, raspberry squares, a light fluffy sponge trifle.

Needless to say, there wasn't a calorie in sight!!

District 2 Fun Day

Plans are shaping up for our OHA's 2nd Annual D2 Fun Day, planned for August 21, 2010 from 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m at Rock Wall Gardens, 995 Code Road, Perth, ON

This is a casual day of learning, sharing information, relaxing in the garden and exploring wonderful display gardens. Our hostess for the day is Judy Wall of Rock Wall Gardens.



President: Lynda Haddon • 613-267-6754 • haddon@istar.ca

Secretary: Renai Rennick • 613-267-7272

Editor: Irene Hofmann • 613-812-8490 • ihofmann@hotmail.com

If you're not familiar with Rock Wall Gardens, you're in for a treat -- the display beds feature rock garden plants and alpine treasures as well as many sun-loving, drought tolerant perennials. Even if you've been before, gardens are always changing so there is sure to be something new to see, and you'll still enjoy the day's activities. <http://www.rockwallgardens.com>

Rideau Ferry Hort Society

On a Wednesday in July, Linda Bartlett, Madeline and David Archer and I attended the Rideau Ferry Hort Society's discussion on delphiniums. Joe and Hazel Cook from Blossom Hill in Peterborough shared hints, tips and slides on their delphinium gardens and there was good news: delphiniums will prosper in almost any soil type although water-logged soil will promote crown rot. To deal with such a problem, raise the bed slightly. They do not like to be disturbed, so if you need to move them, transport young plants only, very early in the spring. They need to be thinned as the plant matures. Weak stems need to be trimmed out close to the ground in early spring. Water consistently, especially during the growing season. They have shallow roots and appreciate a good soaking once a week when mature. When the delphiniums have flowered, cut off the spikes by leave the foliage for new growth. You might get another, shorter flowering. Cut off all plant material for the winter and clear the bed of debris to reduce any possible slug damage. They are hardy and do not require any winter mulch but benefit from a good snow cover.

Joe and Hazel also have a great display of peonies. Peonies prefer a sunny, well-drained site. They are long-lived perennials, so purchase good quality plants and prepare the soil well. Dig the hole larger than the root and amend the soil with compost or bonemeal. They do not like water-logged soil. The crown buds should be no more than 2 inches below the soil surface. If planted too deep, they may not flower for several years. Plant them at the same depth they were in their pots. The good news is that they are drought tolerant but benefit from a good watering in their first season if the weather is dry. When peonies have finished flowering, cut off spent blooms but leave as much foliage as possible to promote strong roots. Cut off foliage in September and remove it from the garden to prevent spread of any possible disease or fungus.

September Flower Show

1. Collection of 3 different annuals - 1 stem each
2. Collection of 3 different perennials - 1 stem each
3. "Harvest Festival" - a design using flowers, foliage, fruits or vegetables
4. "Triple Spires" - a parallel design

Fall Horticultural Seminars

Once again this fall, the Perth Campus of Algonquin College and Lanark County Master Gardeners are conducting a series of 3 Hour Horticultural Seminars. Unlike previous years, this year you will be able to

Ask A Master Gardener

Do you have a gardening question that you would like to ask someone about? If you do, consider asking a Master Gardener. Our Horticultural Society has 3 active Master Gardeners who always welcome questions. We also have a Master Gardener email address (lanarkmg@gmail.com) set up to receive questions. Each month, we will publish a question or two that might have wider interest in our newsletter. Of course, we will get back to you individually more promptly than once per month. This month's question was raised at the Dessert Social.

Dear Master Gardeners: This year, for the first time, I grew cucumbers in a container. I used the same seeds that I had used in the past but my cucumbers are bitter. Why is that?

Signed, Pickled in Perth.

Dear Pickled: Cucumbers become bitter if it has been too hot or if they have been allowed to dry out. Temperature fluctuations also can affect them. They react to stress by becoming bitter (sounds like some people we know). Plants growing in containers do dry out more quickly and their roots are more subject to temperature fluctuations. There is also a slight chance that you have used a different soil mix than used in your garden, causing a change in the plant growth. *Signed, Master Gardeners.*

If you have a question, ask Kevin Long 279-2098, Renai Rennick 267-7272 or Dale Odorizzi 264-8135.

register for just one of the seminars or for all six. The seminars cover the following topics:

Putting Your Garden to Bed: Learn what steps to take now to ensure that your garden is ready to thrive next year.

Bulbs – Plan for Spring Now: This is the time of year to plan your spring blossoms. This seminar provides you with the information required to plant bulbs that will thrive.

Rock Gardening: Learn how to build, plant and maintain a rock garden. This seminar will provide you with information about choosing both construction materials and suitable plants for a rock garden.

Designing and Planting a Cutting Garden: Do you wish you had cut flowers to brighten the indoors all summer? Learn which plants to select for a cutting garden and how to maintain the garden to ensure that you will have cuttings throughout the season.

Lawn Care: Looking for techniques to maintain an attractive lawn while avoiding chemical applications? This seminar will provide you with some strategies for keeping your lawn healthy.

Pruning: Your trees and shrubs will benefit from judicious pruning. This seminar provides you with a chance to observe various specimens and then learn how, where and when to prune them.

The seminars will take place this fall, dates to be determined. Check our website, www.lanarkmastergardeners.mgoi.ca for the most current information or contact Dale at 264-8135 or Algonquin College.

Gardening Tips from Whitehouse Perennials

CUTTING BACK PERENNIALS

Many perennials are really untidy after they have finished blooming. They become floppy and brown and some open up in the center. Some plants also develop powdery mildew. The best cure for these plants is a good haircut. We are often reluctant to do this because the plant initially may look worse after a trim. However it is amazing how quickly the new growth fills in and how much better the plant will look. Cutting back is also a cure for perennials that have been dried out and browned by drought. Perennials that respond to this treatment include hardy Geraniums, Centaurea, Salvia, Pulmonaria, Astilbe and Monarda. Perennials, like Delphiniums and Veronica, should be cut back by removing just the spent flower buds. They will produce more flowers from the terminal buds lengthening the bloom period. Mat-forming perennials, like Moss Phlox and Arabis, would benefit from a good trim as well. This will keep the plants compact and prevent them from becoming bare in the center. We have found that all purpose kitchen scissors are a great tool for trimming back perennials.

PLANTING BARERROOT DAYLILIES

When you purchase daylilies at the nursery that are dug from the field we recommend that you cut the foliage back by half. It is best to cut off the bloom scapes as well but that is very hard to do when there are still lots of bloom to come. Plant the daylily at the same depth they have been growing at. You should be able to see the soil line on the leaves of the plant. If you plant it at the wrong depth the plant will expend energy trying to adjust to the correct depth. Daylilies are heavy feeders so the addition of compost to the planting hole is always beneficial

In your own garden we suggest that you divide your clumps every three to four years or when you notice they are not blooming as freely. The best time to do this is during the last two weeks of August because it gives them enough time to root in well before hard frost slows their growth

STAKING DELPHINIUMS

Most gardeners with sunny borders would love to have a stand of gorgeous delphiniums waving gently in the wind. Too often however we end up with a tattered and broken mess of once gorgeous spikes that have toppled due to wind and rain. The bad weather always comes just when they are looking beautiful. The "New Millenium" series from New Zealand are reputed to have much stronger stems that will stand up to our weather. While they are better than any others we have grown they are still no match for the wind in our garden. This year Clare and I decided to copy the staking system developed at the famous Cabot Garden in the Charlevoix Region of Quebec. I had photographed the complex weave of twine that helped their massive clumps remain upright and so we decided to experiment with their system. We drove plastic-coated green metal stakes around the outside of the clump just beyond the root mass. We then wove a spider web of green jute twine between and around the stakes. The first weave was placed at 50 cms above ground. A second weave was placed at the base of the emerging bloom stems. One last weave is part way up the bloom stems. The trick seems to be to allow some play so that the stems can sway in the wind but are still supported. It seems like a lot of work but, once the stakes are placed, they can be left in place for years. They will serve as a reminder every spring to weave our spider web support as soon as the delphiniums start growing in the spring.

EARWIG TROUBLES?

This seems to be an especially bad year for earwigs so I thought it worthwhile to repeat my favourite recipe for trapping earwigs, courtesy of John Valleau of Valleybrook Gardens. Take aluminum pie shells or small glass bowls and sink them so that the surface sits at ground level. Fill them with about an inch of soya sauce and then a thin slick of vegetable oil. The earwigs are attracted to the soya sauce and then

become trapped in the oil and drown. You will catch hundreds of them every night with this simple and environmentally friendly trap. Try the dollar stores for more durable and inexpensive glass dishes and the Chinese grocery for the cheapest source of soya sauce. *Suzanne, Bruce, Clare, Jonathan, Liz and Donna*
The Whitehouse Perennials Team

Camera Buffs

Don't forget Perth's photo competition when you are taking pictures this summer. The details are in the yearbook but here is a list of the classes.

- Class 1: Winter Joy - A picture of your garden in the winter.
- Class 2: Up Close and Personal - A close-up of your favourite spring flower or flowers.
- Class 3: Garden View - A picture showing a summer garden landscape, either looking into or out of a garden.
- Class 4: Now you Sedum, Now you don't - Your favourite sedum in bloom.
- Class 5: Food for the Table - Vegetables or fruit growing in your garden, allotment or landshare site.
- Class 6: Wildlife in the Garden - A picture of insects, birds, or creatures found wild in the garden (this does not include domestic pets).

Deadline October 12, 2010

Midsummer gardening mistakes

By Helen Racanelli, Canadian Gardening online

During the spring, you transplanted seedlings, visited the plant nursery, came away with a trunk full of leafy wonders, and got to work prepping and planting your garden. Now that the heat is here, it's tempting to sit back, relax and literally watch the plants grow. Not so fast. Though plants, trees and lawns seem to take care of themselves, they need tending even through midsummer's period of bountiful growth. Here's how to avoid some common midsummer gardening mistakes.

Pruning trees

Pruning your trees should only be done in months that have an 'R,' say Pamela and Dwayne, owners of Vancouver gardening service, Gardeners for Hire. May to August is off limits for cutting trees as you could weaken them and prevent them from surviving through the winter. "It's a sad sight to see a tree that has been hacked by a loving home owner or inexperienced gardener," say Pamela and Dwayne, who recommend leaving pruning to a pro if you're not sure what to do. However, if you're confident in your pruning skills, remember to never cut off more than 30 per cent of the tree.

Cutting the lawn too short

By keeping the lawn cut to two to three inches,

the roots will have an easier time retaining water and will need watering less frequently," say Pamela and Dwayne. Longer grass requires less watering. "Longer lawns also help reduce noise pollution as the grass capture ambient noise, and is also great at purifying the dirty air and pollutants," the team says.

Overwatering grass

Don't put the sprinkler on and return half an hour later to turn it off. "Most lawns only need to be watered three to five minutes per watering. Obviously in the middle of a heat wave, more may be needed. Be sure to heed your municipality's water restrictions and conservation suggestions.

Underwatering trees

When it comes to established trees in our yards, the midsummer gardener probably figures these leafy giants can take care of themselves. Not so. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) recommends that homeowners water trees for one hour per week, using the trickle of a soaker hose to water, and more frequently when the weather is hot.

Ignoring vegetables

Many vegetables, such as tomatoes, are considered "easy to grow," meaning that they grow well in our climate and don't need fussing over every day. But that doesn't mean they can be ignored after they've been planted. Check your vegetables at least once a week, making sure they are insect-free and that leaves are healthy, while removing dead or rotting ones. Keep weeds from cropping up by using a hoe or cultivator to tame the beds surrounding plants. It's tempting to ignore vegetables until harvest season, but consider that you'll get much better yields if you stay on top of problems.

Spending all your money too soon

Whether you've set aside a budget of \$100 or \$1,000 for new plants, try not to spend it all as soon as spring hits. Reserving some funds will allow you to take advantage of perennials that may become deeply discounted when temporary nurseries shut down for the season, which can be as early as July, or to replace plants that have died.

Letting the garden become unkempt

A clean garden is always a happier garden. Don't just let dead or rotten leaves lie where they fall, thinking it is the same as adding compost. There is a difference between 'hot composting' with proper equipment and 'garden composting' the fallen debris under the hedge. Hot composting uses the heat created from the sun to help break down large debris and kills any fungus or moulds that may be present. Merely garden composting—in other words, leaving debris where it lies—is a festering environment for bacteria, fungus and disease. Keep the ground below your hedges clean.