



Lanark Orchid

Renals

Perth & District Horticultural Society

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District #2 of the
Ontario Horticultural
Association

November 2010 Newsletter



Gardening
is the art that uses
flowers and plants
as paint, and
the soil and sky
as canvas.

Elizabeth Murray

President's Pen, November, 2010

With the warmer weather we had into late October, getting the timing right to put the garden to bed is a challenge. A vigilant eye needs to be kept on the forecast in an attempt to choose the optimum moment to make sure cutting back, planting bulbs (and garlic) and watering precious evergreens right up to the first frost isn't done too soon and that the garden can be enjoyed right up to the last moment. Of course the more fragile plants such as impatiens, coleus and hosta are long gone. My friend called and said, "Who would have believed that on October 27, we would be sitting on the balcony having coffee and overlooking our neighbours' glorious annuals?" Waiting until the last possible moment to cherish the last few blooms from annuals and perennials alike isn't unheard of by new and experienced gardeners alike. It's always bittersweet to put the garden to bed, I find. My marigolds were just covered with buds and a couple of times daily over the last couple of weeks I go and check them

to see if they remained hardy enough to stay put a little longer after some of the colder nights. They are still there, still not too bad the worse for wear. Some Black Eyed Susans and other rudbeckia have managed to hang on and I've brought in a couple of bouquets to dress up the table. The best of all though are the Ornamental Cabbages. The early cold has only heightened their colour and they truly strut their stuff with little competition remaining from anything else in the garden. Strangely, I still have a rose, tall, with 3 lovely buds on the end of a branch, courtesy of the wonderful Rose Fertilizer Mix that we offered earlier this year to our members. That mix has to have produced some of the best results I've ever had in my garden. I hope you have a few stragglers that you can still admire before we have to admit the inevitable: Winter has arrived!

See you in the garden,

Lynda



Christmas Social and AGM

The Xmas Social is on Friday Dec 3 at the Legion in Perth on Beckwith St., and entertainment to be provided by the PDCI school's senior band, doing a Beatles medley for us. Cocktail hour is at 6pm with dinner to be about 6:30-6:45pm.

Members are allowed to bring 1 guest. Turkey, gravy and buns will be provided. Members can bring a hot dish, hot salad, cold salad, or a dessert to share. Members of the board will again be bring a tablecentre piece to be raffled off during the evening.

Collect now for Christmas decor

1. dogwood branches
2. mosses
3. thistles
4. pinecones
5. herbs
6. bird's nests
7. berries
8. nuts
9. seed pods
10. hydrangea

Our guest for this evening, Judie Cross, will be happy to explain how these & other "found" objects can be used.



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How to Make a Grapevine Tree

By an eHow Contributor

Grapevine trees make attractive centerpieces or side table decorations at holidays and year-round. If you are crafty, you can easily make these trees with some grape vines, tomato cages, crafting wire and a few tools.

Instructions

Things You'll Need:

- Tomato cage
- Wire
- Needle-nosed pliers
- Grapevine
- Wire cutters
- Decorations

Hold a tomato cage upside down. Cut a piece of wire about 15- to 16-inches long. Loop it around the staking spikes, bending them together to form a point, with a needlenosed pliers. The tomato cage should

look like a tepee.

Attach the grapevine to the bottom of the tomato cage with about 6 inches of wire. Loop the wire around the vine to hold it in place. Snip any excess wire with wire cutters.

Go around the base with the grapevine, looping around to hide the cage. Once you've covered the base, move up and continue to go around the cage.

Wrap the grapevine around the cage, creating a spiral with each row. Move up and cover as you go, adding wire throughout to attach the vine to the cage.

Continue wrapping around until you reach the top of the cage. At the peak, cut the vine with pruning shears, leaving 3 inches to cover the top where you fastened the spikes together.

Scan the finished tree for areas that need more wire to keep the vine in place or spots where you should trim any excess wire. Tuck extra vine inside the tree or prune away.

Add ribbons, garland, lace, beads or other decoration to your grapevine tree. Attach clips to hold

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.

Dear Master Gardeners:

In the past, I have always bought my bedding and vegetable plants at a store or at your wonderful Plant Sale. This year, I would like to start some of my own plants and maybe even donate some of my seedlings to the Sale. Where is the best place to purchase seeds?

Eager to Seed

Dear Eager to Seed:

Welcome to the wonderful world of seed catalogues. I recommend them for reading even if you do not plant a single seed. I order most of my seeds from seed catalogues. I find that there is such a great choice of colours and varieties that I can get the exact plant I want. Also, Seed Catalogues usually arrive in my mail box on a dreary day in November when I need a planting fix. There are many many companies that produce seed catalogues. I order most of mine from Vesey Seeds (www.veseys.com or phone 1-800-363-7333) and Stokes Seed (www.stokeseeds.com or phone 1-800-396-9238). Order a catalogue from them now so you can enjoy some delicious reading. Both companies provide a huge variety of seeds and excellent instructions as to when and how to start planting. If you want more company names give one your friendly Master Gardeners a call or email.

Of course, as soon as the displays of seeds arrive at the various local stores, I spend a long time studying the display to see if there are any seeds I missed and should pick up. I usually avoid the seed packets that are 3 or 4 for \$1. If you see something that you can't resist, pick it up. I don't like to rely on my "must haves" on something that is cheap but may have a low germination rate.

Next month, we will include an article about tips to grow plants successfully from seeds.

Lanark County Master Gardeners

If you have any questions, send an email to lanarkmg@gmail.com or call

Dale 264-8135, Renai 267-7272 or Kevin 279-2098.

small Easter eggs, birthday cards, Valentine hearts or other holiday ornaments.

Preparing Garden Tools for Winter

By Dale Odorizzi

As the days of working outside in your garden draw to a close, it is time to put away your garden tools properly for the winter. Doing so can add years to the life of your garden equipment. Your tools will be protected from rust and wear and they will be ready to go the moment spring fever hits next year.

Scrape any excess mud or dirt from the tool. You can use a stick to knock off large pieces and a wire brush for tougher spots. If soil is really caked on, you may need to leave the tool soaking in a bucket of water for a few minutes before moving on to the next step. Wipe the tool off with an old rag and let it dry thoroughly.

Once it has dried, remove any rust by rubbing it vigorously with a small piece of steel wool. Be sure to wear gloves for this step. After removing all rust, sharpen the tool, if it has a sharp edge. This includes shovels, edgers and pruners.

Condition wooden handles by sanding any rough or splintery portions with sandpaper. You can rub the wooden handles with Linseed Oil. Be careful with how you dispose of your rags after doing this as Linseed Oil can be very flammable.

Spray metal parts with penetrating lubricating oil to protect them from rust. Another approach to lubricating your tools is to fill a bucket or container with clean sand. Mix in a litre of cooking oil. You can use used cooking oil. Plunge the metal part of your tools into the sand 2 or 3 times. Some people leave their tools in this bucket of sand. If you read about using sand and oil, you may find that older sources tell you to use Motor Oil. Motor Oil is now treated much more carefully and should not be used for this. You can also use your sand/oil bucket throughout the growing season to keep your tools well lubricated. The oil lubricates the tool and when you wash it off after using, all the dirt and muck simply slides off.

Store your tools in a dry spot. Avoid leaving tools on the floor of your garage or any other places likely to get damp in winter.

How To Grow Herbs on your Windowsill

By Marie Iannotti, About.com Guide

You can bring your herb garden indoors for the winter, by planting a windowsill garden. Many herb plants grow quite easily in containers and require only minimal care. You'll be snipping fresh herbs in

your kitchen throughout the winter.

Here's How:

1. Make sure you have a sunny windowsill where your herbs will survive. A south or southeast window would be perfect if it gets at least 5 hours of sun per day and is away from drafts.

2. Purchase some of your favorite small herb plants from your local nursery.

3. Get a container that is at least 6-12 inches deep. You can plant multiple herbs in a wide or long container or use at least a 6" pot for individual plants.

4. Use a soilless potting mix to avoid soil born diseases. Be sure the mix is light and will be well draining.

5. Put a 2-3 inch layer of potting mix into the bottom of your container.

6. Position your herb plants in the container.

7. Finish filling in with the potting mix, firming gently around the plants. Leave about an inch at the top of the container for watering.

8. Water sparingly. Herbs don't like to sit in wet soil.

9. Feed once a month with a fertilizer labeled for use on edibles.

10. Allow the plants some time to acclimate. Once you see new growth, you can start using your herbs.

Helpful Tips:

1. Choose herbs that don't grow too wide or tall. Chives, basil, lavender, parsley, mint and thyme are good choices.

2. Fluorescent lights can be used if you don't have a sunny window. They will need to be placed close to the plants (18") and kept on for about 10 hours/day.

3. Snip and use your plants often to encourage them to grow full and bushy.

4. Never trim more than 1/3 of the plants foliage.

What You Need:

- Herb Plants
- Pots or containers
- Soilless Potting Mix
- Fertilizer

How to Winterize a Mandevilla Vine

J. Amistaadt, www.gardenguides.com

As days shorten and nights begin to cool, your rapidly growing mandevilla will begin to slow down in preparation for a restful winter. The beautiful, exotic mandevilla was never meant to live indoors, and it knows it. But it won't survive temperatures below 45 degrees Fahrenheit, so it will require a little special management for successful wintering indoors. This is much easier to do than you might think, and you won't need a greenhouse or any fancy equipment. A little common sense will ensure that your beautiful tropical vine makes it through the winter to perform beautifully next spring.

Step 1 - Dig up your mandevilla and pot it three to four weeks before the first predicted frost for your area, usually in September. Leave it next to its customary spot to begin hardening off for the winter. Give it one last seasonal feeding of water-soluble liquid fertilizer to toughen it up. Water a little only when the soil completely dries out for the rest of the winter.

Step 2 - Bring the mandevilla indoors when overnight temperatures dip to 45 F. This is roughly about the time that most people begin closing their windows and turning on the heat. Place the plant in a cool, sunny location. Don't be alarmed when it begins to drop its leaves because of lowered humidity, and don't try to increase the humidity. This is normal, and you can expect the mandevilla to begin to look ratty.

Step 3 - Treat the plant for insects with an application of insecticidal soap because you're bringing it inside. Water it only when the soil dries out completely.

Step 4 - Prune the mandevilla back hard the first of February. Cut stems to 12 inches above the soil line. Begin monthly maintenance feedings of half-strength water-soluble fertilizer.

Step 5 - Saturate the root ball with water one time in early spring when the mandevilla begins to develop new shoots. Thereafter, water only enough to barely moisten the soil surface. Always allow the surface of the soil to dry out before watering again.

Step 6 - Feed a full strength solution of water-soluble fertilizer in May or June, about three weeks before the last predicted frost in your area. Begin regular feedings per the packaging instructions and continue throughout the growing season. Begin pinching off new shoots to encourage bushier growth.

Step 7 - Move the mandevilla vine to a sunny spot outside for an hour each morning for several days in May, once daytime temperatures no longer drop below about 50 F. This will begin the plant's acclimation to living outside again. Bring it in before the sun gets hot for the first few days. Gradually increase the outside time over the course of a couple of weeks, working up to eight hours of full sun daily.

Step 8 - Replant the mandevilla in its prior outdoor location after all danger of frost has passed.

Axl J. Amistaadt began as a part-time amateur freelance writer in 1985, turned professional in 2005, and became a full-time writer in 2007. Amistaadt's major focus is publishing material for GardenGuides.

Storing tender bulbs, tubers & corms

Judy Wall, Lanark County Master Gardener

Tender plants add a beautiful dimension with their bold array of colors, shapes and forms within our gardens. Tender plant (bulbs, tubers and corms) do require storage over the winter, so that we can enjoy their beauty next year and for many years to come.

Most tender materials should be dug after the foliage dries up or is killed by the first tender frost and before the ground starts to freeze. Dig carefully so as to minimize damage which can cause disease or rotting. For larger roots such as dahlias, cannas, Caladium the roots can be gently washed with a hose to get rid of soil, then left in open air away from direct sun or winds to dry for 1-3 days. Smaller corms such as gladiolus, Crocosmia, tigridia, tuberous begonias, Acidanthera are best left unwashed and allowed to dry for 3 weeks, then the soil may be gently removed by hand. Be sure to label each batch so you know the plant names and colors for next year.

Once dried do an inspection, checking for insects, disease, and old corms which should be removed. Keep only those which are healthy, then dust with an insecticide-fungicide mixture following the labeled instructions for various plants.

For longer term storage the ideal location is one that stays constantly just above freezing around 4c/40f. Many older homes have cold storage areas which are ideal. If not, find the coolest dark location in your basement. Perhaps an unheated room up against an outer wall or directly on a cooler floor, as long as the area is dry and not prone to flooding. Larger bulbs can be packed in boxes with dry sphagnum peat moss or vermiculite under and all around them. The smaller tubers such as those of tuberous begonias can be stored in perforated plastic bag filled with peat moss or vermiculite in a cool dark place (40-50f). Check on your tubers periodically in areas with low humidity which may cause drying (shriveling). If this is the case you may need to add a very small amount of moisture with a spray bottle to prevent drying.