

Lanark Orchid

Renals

## Perth & District Horticultural Society

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District #2 of the  
Ontario Horticultural  
Association

# October 2009 Newsletter

*"There's nowhere  
left to plant' is not an  
uncommon cry and,  
ironically, the larger  
the garden, the worse  
that problem  
can be."*

*Joy Larkcom*



## December Social

The December Social is planned for Friday, December 4 at the Legion on Beckwith Street. Stay tuned for further details...

## Mulch, the Easy Way

Rather than bag fallen leaves for a sanitation truck to haul away, do yourself - and your garden - a favor by turning them into mulch. Rake the leaves into long rows, and then run over them with a lawn mower to chop them up. Spread the mulch around flower beds, trees and plants to enrich the soil, minimize weeds and reduce watering frequency. *Source: Martha Stewart Living magazine, October, 2009*

## Flower Show Schedule NOVEMBER 10

1. Christmas Wreath
2. 'Shimmer and Sparkle' - a Christmas design using fresh or dried material, accessories permitted i.e. lights, fruit, Christmas balls etc.
3. Christmas garland using plant material, nuts, pine cones, fresh and dried fruit.

## Fall Garden Tasks

Fall is one of the best times to work in the garden. The weather is cooler, the leaves are changing, there's a sense of accomplishment that comes with closing up the garden for the season. Fall is a great time to do many garden chores. Here's an essential fall task list to consider;

### Overseed

Now is the perfect time to overseed your lawn to keep it thick and healthy. Seeding in fall reduces the competition from fast growing warm season weeds such as crabgrass. Soil temperatures are also still warm in fall for germination while the cooler air temperatures are better for grass growth. Also, there are usually better rain amounts (true for this fall so far!).

### Start a garden journal

Now is the time to make notes about what you loved, and what you would change, things that you've seen in other gardens, or perhaps something new that you want to take a chance with next season.

### Icicle pansies

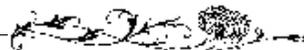
Pop these cold hardy bloomers into bare spots where summer annuals have been cleaned out. They will bloom until December. Then cover with evergreen branches until earliest spring when they'll be ready to sprout new flower buds.

### Move clematis/ honeysuckle vines

Autumn is the only time to move these vines to prevent shock to growth. Both of these vines begin pushing out leaves and shoots in early spring while frost is still in the ground. If the vines are large, cut them back by half and they'll recoup two-fold next season.

### Leaf disease

This season was a bad year for powdery mildew, black spot, scab and blights. Rake up all diseased leaves from under plants and dispose of them in the garbage not in your compost. If left on the soil all winter they will re-infect the plants with disease spores the following spring.



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**Burlap**

Set up burlap barriers to block tender shrubs and broadleaf evergreens from the prevailing winter winds. Do not wrap plants with burlap directly, always place 3 stakes around the shrub then attach burlap to these stakes leaving room for air circulation.

**Hill roses**

Tender hybrid teas, floribunda and grandiflora roses need hilling up above their crowns with fresh soil or triple mix to help winter them over.

**Vegetable garden**

Clean out the vegetable garden and be sure to amend the soil with lots of manure, peat, and bonemeal. Working all this in now allows you to be ready for the first of the cool season crops to be planted next spring.

**Bulbs**

Plant now for gorgeous splashes of colour in your garden next spring. Tulips, daffodils, crocus, muscari and snowdrops are all such a pleasant sight after a long cold winter. Plant in groups of 5 and 7 to make a statement, cover plantings with squirrel netting to keep the pesky critters from stealing all your hard work!

**Wrap trees**

Be sure to put tree wraps around tree trunks (especially fruit trees) to protect them from hungry mice, rabbits and moles chewing the bark in winter. Once girdled, trees will not survive the next season.

**Anti transpirant**

Use generous amounts of an anti-transpirant spray like Wilt Pruf on your broadleaf evergreen such as euonymus, rhododendrons and especially boxwood. The waxy coating of this product helps to preserve moisture and prevent windburn and sun scald in winter. You can even use it on your Christmas tree to help keep it fresh throughout the season.

**Mulch**

Once the ground is frozen add a thick layer of mulch to any tender perennials and shrubs to help protect them through winter. Do not mulch too early as often mice find mulch and leaf piles great winter nests.

**Falling for water**

I just cannot stress enough the importance of watering your trees, shrubs and especially evergreens in the Fall.

Plants need moisture to help them survive the winter. Now that our thoughts have turned to all

things autumn; back to school, apple picking, the changing colours, we all but forget the gardens that had preoccupied our minds and hearts for the last 3 months. With the cooler temperatures, we often assume that plants have gone dormant but the winter damage that trees and shrubs sustain stems from their inability to draw water from the frozen earth.

Winter can resemble desert-like conditions (no I'm not crazy), strong winds with no windbreak can make plants very susceptible to winter burn and deep watering greatly minimizes their chances of injury.

The most important time to water is in late autumn, just before freeze up. All evergreens,

deciduous trees and shrubs should be given a deep watering before packing in the hose for the season. The idea is to have the stems and branches full of water before freeze up, so don't let your garden go thirsty at this important time of the year.

*From Gemmill's Garden Centre e-newsletter*

**(H)ear....WHAT?....EH?**

This is a gentle reminder to those who feel inclined to "chat" during a presentation

**PLEASE DON'T**

**Treasurer's Report**

August 1 to August 31, 2009

Balance July 31, 2009 \$5,183.06

**Receipts:**

Membership	\$40.00	
Donation	13.50	
Bank interest	<u>.02</u>	
	53.52	<b>\$53.52</b>

**Expenses:**

Community Projects	\$78.75	
Speaker Fees	75.00	
Socials	24.77	
Meeting Expenses	17.40	
Postal Services	131.25	
Office Supplies	42.93	
Plant Sales	<u>93.27</u>	
	\$463.37	<b>\$463.37</b>

Balance August 31, 2009 **\$4,773.21**

Bank Balance August 31, 2009 **\$2,279.99**

Reserve Fund 2,500.00

**\$4,779.99**

Outstanding cheques \$ (6.78)

**\$4,773.21**

## Spray Away Deer

If deer like to nibble on your roses and shrubs, try this recipe to keep them away. Beat 12 to 18 eggs in a blender, then mix with 5 gallons of soapy water. Spray the liquid on plants (except those with fruits or vegetables that you plant).

## Hanging on to Tomatoes

Here's a tip for gardeners who can't let those green tomatoes go to waste. Use the plastic flats that transplants come in and fill them with your unripe tomatoes. Place the filled flats in a room inside your home and cover with a sheet of newspaper. Check on them every day, removing the ripe ones and discarding any that go bad.

## Taking Care Of Ornamental Grasses

By Stephen Westcott-Gratton, [canadiangardening.com](http://canadiangardening.com)

Relative newcomers to Canadian gardens, ornamental grasses have rapidly made up for lost time; so much so that it's rare to find a herbaceous border without at least a few specimens. Many contribute as much oomph as petalled plants, while requiring much less care than most perennials.

Ornamental grasses include members of several different plant families: the true grasses (Poaceae), the sedges (Cyperaceae) and the rushes (Juncaceae). Although there are exceptions, grasses generally perform best with at least six hours of sunlight daily, while sedges and rushes prefer shade.

Soil: Most ornamental grasses grow best in average garden soil; very rich soil high in nutrients produces excessively lush growth, which can cause tall specimens to topple. If you need to improve its texture, add organic matter with low nutrient levels, such as shredded leaves or peat moss, before planting. Similarly, adding fertilizer (whether organic or chemical) to the soil can make otherwise well-mannered grasses invasive.

Watering: The majority of ornamental grasses are drought tolerant, making them popular choices for xeriscaping. Although newly planted specimens need to be irrigated while establishing strong roots, supplemental watering is usually unnecessary for older ones.

Dividing: As with many perennials, grasses that have been growing in the same spot for several years may die out at the centre of the crown, producing a doughnut-like effect. When this happens, use a sharp spade to dig out the specimen by its roots; then, with

the blade or a saw, divide the plant into quarters. Discard the dead sections and replant each quarter at the same depth. Water well.

Cleanup: While the foliage of ornamental grasses may be cut back to the crown in autumn, you can leave it in place for winter interest, then cut the dead stalks back to three to four centimetres above the crown in early spring before new shoots appear.

### Grasses to avoid

Some ornamental grasses are naturally aggressive and are best confined to containers or areas where they can be controlled by barriers.

European beach grass (*Ammophila arenaria*): Used for erosion control on sand dunes, it has proved invasive on the West Coast but is better behaved in Atlantic Canada. Zone 5

Manna grass (*Glyceria maxima*): Spreads aggressively by rhizomes and is difficult to eradicate. 'Variegata' is slightly less rambunctious. Zone 5

Blue lyme grass (*Leymus arenarius*): Stout rhizomes make it almost impossible to eliminate once well established. Zone 4

Silver banner grass (*Miscanthus sacchariflorus*): The black sheep of the *Miscanthus* tribe, this variety can colonize huge areas in a very short period of time; stick to named cultivars of *M. sinensis*. Zone 5

Switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*): Manageable in regions with moderate soil fertility and low rainfall; avoid planting in rich soil where it can run rampant. Named cultivars tend to be less aggressive. Zone 4, with winter protection

Reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*): If provided fertile soil and sufficient moisture, all forms are invasive. Though widely planted, ribbon grass (*P. a. var. picta*) is no less rambunctious. Zone 4

Prairie cord grass (*Spartina pectinata*): Spreads rapidly in moist soil but is better behaved in poorer, dry soil. Zone 4

## Other Things to Clean Up

by Diana Roberts, [northerngarden.ca](http://northerngarden.ca)

I don't know about other gardeners, but each year as we head into fall, a tiny bit of dread comes over me. Not only will the wonderful warm colors of our gardens will be replaced with cold white, but also because my garden and yard now require fall cleanup and organization. This year, I was determined to not get overwhelmed with the cleanup process, and I think I have succeeded.

The first thing I made up my mind to do was keep my garden shed organized all summer. So many times it is handier to leave shovels and rakes tucked away in a corner because you may use them every day. Of course this sometimes leads to a new 'tool shed' area,

and the tools must be all carted back to be put away for the winter.

If tools are left out all summer long, a little rust may have formed, so they will need a good scrubbing before putting them away. Years ago, I found out about a way to keep your tools in top shape, the easy way (and who doesn't love the easy way?). For small tools I have a bucket half filled with a mixture of sand and oil in my garden shed (used motor oil works great!). When I finish with a hand tool it is plunged into this bucket of sand, which cleans it as well as keeping it rust-free.

For larger tools such as shovels, a large garbage can works great. Not only do the tools stay in great shape, but they are also stored where they are handy the next time you need them. I have found that with the sand in the garbage can, it won't fall over when the tools are placed in it. Be sure to also leave some room for all the extras that may need to go into your shed, such as bikes, chairs, pots and wading pools. Then when these items are no longer being used it will be easy to store them away.

If you keep your gardens mulched with compostable material all summer (to keep the moisture in and weeds out), then it will be easy to dig this into the soil, adding necessary humus without the work of hauling it to the garden. As the leaves fall, why not bag them up to use as winter mulch for your garden? It's not a good idea to mulch before the ground freezes because you will be providing the perfect winter home for mice. Before the snow comes, bring out your bags of dry leaves and you have any easy mulch.

When the weather is still warm, it is a good time to scrub down your barbeque even if you still plan on using it. Dust, grease and dirt accumulate inside and out even with a cover on. Of course it's best to clean things up after every use, but who really wants to clean their barbeque in the middle of a backyard party?

Garden hoses always seem to be a problem, as they must be thoroughly drained so the water doesn't freeze and break them. Then they have to be put somewhere, either hung up or in a container of sorts. The prettiest hose storage containers I have seen are low flat clay pots about 2 feet wide, in which to curl up a hose. Any clay pots should be stored inside for the winter to prevent damage to them. Large garbage cans make good storage if you have a lot of hoses, or a five gallon bucket for a single hose. Rubber hoses will of course curl up better

than others, but if you store them on a very warm day, the heat will help you.

## Vines And Creepers For Fall Interest

By Anne Marie Van Nest

### Round out the season with a colourful flourish of groundcovers and climbers

Fall is an exceptional time of the year in the garden; as cooler weather intensifies, so do the foliage colours of many vines and groundcovers. With shorter days and lower nighttime temperatures, the green chlorophyll that masked the original pigments in the leaves of deciduous plants throughout the season is no longer produced, allowing their true colours to blaze. The fluctuation between warm, sunny days and cool nights accentuates carotenoid, which produces the scarlets, yellows and oranges in plants such as 'Gro-Low' fragrant sumac, while the pigment anthocyanin shines through to create the blues, purples and magentas of Virginia creeper and the ground-hugging rockspray cotoneaster.

Groundcovers, which so generously spread to cover bare spots in the garden, have a quiet attractiveness throughout spring and summer. Come fall, however, specimens such as dwarf blue plumbago burst into glamorous masses of magenta buds and gentian blue blooms.

Not to be outdone by the showy groundcovers at their feet, many vines play a dramatic role in the autumn landscape, too. There's no missing the brilliant maroon foliage of Virginia creeper and its Asian relative, Boston ivy.

#### Care checklist

**Soil and Exposure:** Full sun (for better foliage colour and flowering) to part shade. Moist but not soggy soil, preferably well-drained, loamy and organic; amend heavy clay with compost, leaf mould or sand.

**Maintenance:** Plant in spring or autumn and mulch with shredded bark or small wood chips to prevent weeds. Moderate- to fast-growing vines and groundcovers may need to be contained by edging or raised beds; site them carefully so they don't overpower diminutive neighbours. Apply two centimetres of sifted compost or slow-release, granular, 10-10-10 fertilizer annually.



*"Designing the garden is like learning to speak. You begin with odd words - learning the individual plants. Then you create a simple phrase, finding two or three plants that look well together, next comes a sentence and finally the complete story." ~ Beth Chatto*