



Organic Newsletter

Spring Edition, 2009

Lawn-gevity

Since the lawn care season is upon us, we wanted to give some helpful hints about the most common lawn problems and questions.

When it comes to mowing we always suggest returning your clippings to the lawn, which when broken down provides a free source of nitrogen. However, for the **first mowing of the**

season (around April 27th) we recommend that the clippings should be bagged as it will help to reduce the amount of weed seeds



present in the lawn.

Watering the lawn is one of the most misunderstood and critical aspects of lawn care.

Your lawn typically needs an inch to an inch and quarter of water a week, which also includes any rainfall it receives. **Overwatering your lawn can lead to compaction of the soil as well as surface rooting and most importantly fungus outbreaks.** Watering deeply helps to create an extensive root system and during the hot summer months the roots are better able to withstand the stress of the rapid transpiration from the leaves.

Also during the hot summer months a good practice to keeping your lawn healthy is syringing. **Syringing is a short burst of water during the hottest portion of the day; it helps to keep the crown of the grass plants cool. A correct mowing height also helps prevent the grass from burning up.** Keeping grass blades at three inches provides more photosynthetic tissue and shades the crown.

Implementation of these cultural practices will surely help your lawn in its annual fight against foot traffic, heat and weeds.

All About Containers

During this time of year our thoughts begin to turn to the garden and we are one step closer to acting on the plans dreamed during our wintery exile. One way to indulge our need for beauty and bloom is containers. With container plantings you have the versatility to use annuals and change them seasonally or mix them with perennials. In order to have success there are several factors that need to be considered before and after planting.

Take for example watering, pots lose water through the sides, bottom and surface which may mean more watering during hot and windy days as well as for smaller sizes and clay pots. However,



grouping containers together can help slow evaporation. Another important step to container success is drainage, and also pore space. Whether you

have media already in your planters or are starting new, one way to accomplish good drainage is by simply placing coarse gravel or clay pot pieces at the bottom of your container. Another idea is using a soil-less media, which consists of peat moss, perlite and vermiculite. Peat moss typically consists of decomposed peat and fresh sphagnum moss. Peat moss has a water retention capacity of 20 to 30 times its dry weight in water as well as also having a

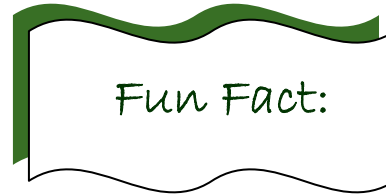
high cation exchange capacity (CEC). Perlite (the little white balls in your mix) is primarily used for drainage because it is light weight and porous as well as being chemically inert and has a neutral pH. Vermiculite is actually expanded mica; it provides magnesium, potassium and calcium as well as increasing water holding ability. This expanded mineral also has a high cation exchange capacity (CEC) and a pH of 6.3-7.8. The perlite and the vermiculite help to create pore spaces which further encourage your plants rooting and help water percolate through. Even the special potting mixes you can purchase will need to be changed after two-three seasons, regular watering by your hand (or Mother Nature's) compacts the soil, ridding it of needed pore spaces.

Since plants have a limited area in which to grow, we usually need to supply supplemental nutrition. Good organic fertilizers are diluted liquid seaweed and fish emulsion, these nutrients are readily available to your plants. Granular and powdered forms of organic fertilizers may take time to break down, meaning you may have to set the pots up a few months before planting.

Also if you are planting perennials in your containers this spring, you need to consider the cold hardiness of the plant. Since the plants roots are above the soil, they lose the insulating factor of the earth exposing it to harsher winter conditions than it may be able to withstand. When using perennials in containers, or for even your houseplants, from time to time you should check to see if the plant is becoming root bound.

After a long period in a container, plants roots begin to circle around the pot, and eventually if left, form a solid mass of roots with no soil to hold nutrients or water. This can lead to the decline and possibly the death of your plant.

So remember when planting your containers this year that they have their own little environments and may need some extra consideration and care!



Did you know that roses don't have thorns?

Roses actually have prickles. Generally, prickles are outgrowths of leaves and stems. In the case of roses, though, the prickles are modified epidermal (skin) hairs!

(Thorns are modified stems and can be found on plants such as hawthorns and wild apples.)

Butterfly Gardening

Considering planting a new bed or re-working an existing one this year? Installing some butterfly friendly features will help attract these flirty



flutterers to your garden. One of the major components needed is a bright sunny area with stones or walkway nearby. Butterflies like to bask in the

sun in order to keep their wings dry and warm which enhances their flying capabilities (they actually can't fly if their body temperature is less than 86°F).

Another feature you can add to your garden to increase the butterfly magnetism is a drinking pool. Submerge a large saucer into the ground filled with a mixture of half sand and half composted manure and keep it wet. Butterflies tend to drink from mud puddles, imbibing salts and nutrients from the mud.

In addition to the previous features they also require protection from the wind. This can be accomplished by a hedge, shrubs, a fence or even placing the garden next to wall of the house or garage.

Nevertheless the most important attracting feature is plants! Butterflies have poor eyesight, so planting brightly colored flowering plants will help

direct them to your blooms. Also planting large drifts of one color will also make it easier for them notice your garden.

A few plants they are partial to include, sedums, New England aster (*Aster novae-angliae*), purple coneflower (*Echinacea*



purpurea), butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia* spp.), giant allium (*Allium giganteum*), globe thistle (*Echinops ritro*) and of course, butterfly bush (*Buddleia davidii*).

With these tips you're on your way to a beautiful garden filled with butterflies.

Fun Fact:

Most butterflies and insects have their skeletons on the outside of their bodies, also known as exoskeletons.

This helps to protect them as well keeps the moisture inside their bodies and stops them from drying out.

Have a wonderful spring!

The Organically Green Team

“Do nothing to mar its grandeur for the ages have been at work on it and man cannot improve it. Keep it for your children, your children’s children and all who come after you.”

~Theodore Roosevelt

Organically Grown

Green Lasagna:

- 1/2 lb lasagna noodles (you can substitute with “green” lasagna)
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup oil
- 1 1/2 lb **spinach (from your organic garden!)**
- 1/2 cup Parmesan
- 1 cup **basil** pesto (see below for basil pesto recipe)
- 2 cups ricotta
- 1 cup cottage cheese
- 1 1/2 lb mozzarella, grated
- 1/4 cup raw walnuts

Directions: Toast walnuts in oven until golden. Sauté onions in oil and add some salt and pepper. Meanwhile, cook lasagna noodles in boiling, salted water for 12 minutes and then drain. Mix spinach with onions. Add the pesto, walnuts, cottage cheese, ricotta, and 1/2 of the parmesan. To assemble, grease a 9" x 13" pan. Put a layer of noodles in the pan, spread 1/2 of the filling over the noodles, sprinkle 1/3 of the mozzarella over filling, and repeat, ending with a layer of noodles. Sprinkle the rest of the mozzarella and parmesan over the top. Cover and bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Makes 10 servings.

Basil Pesto:

- 2 cups loosely packed **basil leaves (from your organic garden!)**, washed and dried thoroughly
- 2 tablespoons toasted pine nuts
- 2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan
- 1/4 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste

Directions: In a food processor, combine the basil, pine nuts, Parmesan, garlic, and salt and puree. While the motor is running, drizzle in the oil until incorporated. Season with pepper to taste. Use immediately or store in the refrigerator with a piece of plastic wrap placed right on the surface of the pesto to prevent discoloration, for up to 3 days, or freeze for up to 1 month.

We offer the following services to help increase the enjoyment and beauty of your property:

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- ❖ Shrub & Tree Spraying / Fertilization Programs
- ❖ Integrated Pest Management
- ❖ Soil Restoration
- ❖ Plant and Soil Stimulation Program
- ❖ Deep Root Feeding
- ❖ Root Growth Enhancement
- ❖ Mature Tree Restoration
- ❖ Air Spading
- ❖ Radial Trenching
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- ❖ Anti-Desiccant Spraying
- ❖ General Tree and Shrub Maintenance Removal

Turf:

- ❖ Lawn Renovation
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- ❖ Overseeding
- ❖ Core Aeration
- ❖ Estate / Property Purification

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New for 2009!

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