



Organic Newsletter

Summer Edition, 2009

A Weed to Know Basis

Ever tire of the endless battle with weeds in your lawns and gardens? Here are some helpful tips to turn the tide of the war.

1. Know Your Foe: Correctly identifying the weed that's troubling your garden will point you to its morphology, or physical characteristics. Why is this important? If your weed is a dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), it possesses a tap root

which stores carbohydrates. Therefore, if you only pull the leaves and flowers the root left behind still has the power to regenerate a complete plant! This also goes for weeds that are rhizomatous



(stems that spread underground) such as mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*); this weed has foliage very similar to chrysanthemums and can colonize open spaces very quickly.

2. Seed Smart: There is an adage that says "One year of seed, ten years of weeds." The reason we tend to think of some plants as weeds is their ability to grow and take over bare ground quickly and profusely.

One major way to combat the return of weeds is to remove the seed head before it releases its offspring. Another to help control weed seedlings from cropping up is to avoid

digging and cultivating the soil unless needed and even then cover with mulch immediately after. The reason for this is that digging and cultivation of the soil brings seeds to the surface, helping them to germinate more readily.

3. Don't Stand a Chance: Another way to help deter weeds is setting up your garden to deprive them of sunlight. Of course you need to have adequate room for the plants to grow but planting a little closer than recommended will help to create a dense shade that weeds detest.

~*~

Just a Reminder!

Your irrigation system should not have been on this past June as we had close to eight inches of rain! This past month was an example of how our irrigation guidelines must be used in conjunction with the recent weather trends!

~*~

Hydrangea Hype

One of the jewels of the summer landscape is the hydrangea. Blooming usually in mid to late June, even dry their flowers hold their beauty well into the fall.

They can be found in many gardens and one of the most common species is *Hydrangea macrophylla* or big leaf hydrangea. This plant is versatile enough to thrive in either full sun to part shade. Typically this hydrangea has a domed form, with dark green (or variegated) rugose leaves. Flower-wise the big leaf hydrangea can have large pom-pom like clusters or the more delicate lace-cap variety in varying shades of blue, pink and white.

This is also the plant that can be somewhat manipulated in regards to flower coloration. Blue

flowers denote an acidic soil while pink flowers tend to bloom in alkaline. The change in color and pH



actually has to do with the availability of the element aluminum. Applying dolomitic lime several times throughout the year will help

to raise the pH and keep your hydrangeas pink. However, raising the pH above 6.2 could cause iron deficiency.

For blue coloration you can add other organic components such as coffee grounds or grass clippings. Nevertheless, if the plant has white flowers, you're stuck with them!

This plant may require some pruning occasionally but beware; it flowers on last year's wood. This means it forms and sets its flower buds before the winter and if you prune them in the spring you've just lost your flowers for the year. However, many nurseries now carry a big leaf hydrangea called Endless Summer®. This hydrangea flowers on new and old wood, but to get the second round of flowers deadheading is required.

The versatility of this plant is unrivaled. Whether it's used as a foundation planting, in a mixed border or simply by itself, it's sure to lend beauty to your landscape throughout the year.

Fun Fact:

What we think of as petals on dogwood flowers are actually modified leaves called bracts!



The actual flower parts like stamens, pistils, ovaries and anthers are in fact located at the center of the bracts in that small raised button.

Common Scents

Some research has shown that scents have the power to bring on memories and even affect our moods. When deciding what new plant you want to add to your collections consider one of gardening's most pleasing aspects, fragrance.

Scents are made up of volatile compounds that evaporate but the time and rate they evaporate can vary. Therefore in order to determine which plant may suit your olfactory ambitions, you need to decide the method of scent release and the time you want the scent to be present.

In the plant world, flowers attract pollinators by scent and having it carry on the air as well as only releasing the scent at certain times of the day. However, some plants have foliage that exude fragrance but only when brushed by or bruised. So planting rosemary's aromatic foliage under your window won't give you the scented breeze you desire.

Here are some examples of fragrant flowering plants for different times.

Spring: Koreanspice Viburnum (*Viburnum carlesii*), Carol Mackie Daphne (*Daphne x burkwoodii* 'Carol Mackie')

Early Summer: Peony (*Paeonia lactiflora*) 'Duchesse de Nemours', Painted lady sweet pea (*Lathyrus odoratus* 'Painted Lady')

Mid Summer: Casa Blanca lily (*Lillium* 'Casa Blanca', Madonna lily (*Lillium candida*)

Late Summer: Hosta cultivars, 'Venus' & 'Honeybells', Heliotrope 'Fragrant Delight' (*Heliotropium arborescens* 'Fragrant Delight')

Night Scents: Moonflower vine (*Ipomoea alba*), Flowering tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*)

In addition to these plants there are other favorites such as lavender, mint, lemon thyme, sweet alyssum, verbena, and artemisia (wormwood), to name just a few.

Also important to consider is the selection of your fragrant flora. When possible go to the nursery to smell the flowers and foliage. The reason for this is that smell can vary between different species, cultivars and also from person to person.



Other factors to consider when siting your fragrance garden is that open windy areas can carry away your hard earned scents, while placing them near patios or walls intensify the fragrance due to the reflected heat. Having these tips will help you to create a garden your nose will thank you for!

Fun Fact:

A 2,000 year old seed found in Israel actually germinated and three years later produced a healthy Judean date palm!

Best wishes for a fun and sun filled summer!

The Organically Green Team

“A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in. “

~ Greek Proverb

Organically Grown

ORGANIC CHICKEN UNDER A BRICK

Ingredients:

1 organic chicken
 1/3 cup of olive oil
 16 garlic cloves, smashed with the back of a knife(skins removed)
 2 branches of thyme
 Grey sea salt with Herbs de Provence
 Fresh cracked pepper

Method:

Rinse chicken underneath cool water and pat dry with paper towel. Using kitchen shears, cut out the backbone of the bird by cutting along one side of the backbone and then along the other side (do not confuse with the breast bone which is between the chicken breasts). Save and freeze backbone to make chicken stock. Heat olive oil in a sauce pan over medium low heat, add the thyme branches. Slowly bring oil to a simmer and stew for about 20 - 25 minutes until the garlic is soft. Using a slotted spoon remove the garlic cloves from the oil and let cool. Set oil aside. Bring a grill or cast-iron grill pan to medium high heat. Wrap two bricks in aluminum foil. Once garlic has cooled, loosen the skin around the chicken breasts, legs and wings with your fingers or a small paring knife. You will have to cut small slits in the thighs and the wings to loosen the skin. Place stewed garlic underneath the skin of the breast, legs, and wings. Brush chicken with garlic and herbed olive oil, and salt and pepper bird to taste, using the grey sea salt. Once grill is ready brush with any remaining herbed olive oil. Transfer whole chicken to grill, skin side down and place bricks on top of the chickens. Grill chicken about 10-15 minutes per side until the chicken is tender and the juices run clear when pierced with a small knife. About half way to three-quarters through the cooking time brush the lemon halves with garlic and herbed olive oil and place on grill flesh side down. Grill about 5 minutes until there are nice grill marks on the lemons. Once chicken is done, serve with grilled lemons. (Serves: 3-4)

Note: If your are trying to achieve an organic lifestyle we recommend using certified organic ingredients, when available, in all recipes to maximize flavors and nutrition while minimizing your risk of exposure to pesticides, chemicals and preservatives.

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

Tree / Shrub:

- ❖ 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
- ❖ Vertical Mulching
- ❖ Anti-Desiccant Spraying
- ❖ General Tree and Shrub Maintenance Removal

Turf:

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

Organic Pest Control:

- ❖ Flying Insect
- ❖ Deer / Geese
- ❖ Rodent Repellent
- ❖ Organic Tick & Flea Control

New for 2009!

We are now offering Outdoor Holiday Décor.

Call (631) 467-7999 for a free estimate!

