

spring • summer 2014

gardening news



GARDENING WITH YOUR KIDS

Four Flower
Favourites

*What Does Your
Garden Say
About You?*

5 Garden Errors
You Should Avoid

Q&A, Recipes & More!

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Weed Man[®]

A Message from the Editor



Spring has always been a time for change, new beginnings and celebrations. We awake from our winter slumbers with a new energy and excitement due to all the wonderful things surrounding us in nature and in our lives. In an age where technology has taken over, spring is a time that brings us back to outdoors and reminds us of everything wonderful that mother nature has to offer!

There seems to be an App for everything, yet, people seem to be less happy and more tired. The only thing you can do to rejuvenate your lives is to accept and welcome change! Use this spring to become more active and get outdoors! Take pride in your garden and lawn, and with your efforts you will feel more satisfied and fulfilled.

Get the whole family outside and do some spring cleaning! Let nature help you out by adding a rain barrel system to assist in watering your lawn and garden. Let your kids get involved in your outdoor gardening activities by letting them help plant a vegetable garden. Homegrown vegetables and herbs are rewarding and will help you in achieving a healthy and clean diet for you and your family. Design a new garden with blooms that make you feel happy and energized, such as peonies. When your peonies bloom you can spread some joy by filling your home with their beauty and delicious scents; Or, you take them to the office or share them with your friends!

There are so many things you can do to get connected and feel alive during the springtime. Get involved in your community! Try joining a local sports team and enter your team in the Weed Man team Sponsorship Sweepstakes. Your team can win a \$5000 team sponsorship, which includes jerseys for your whole team! Grow a community garden! Or, you can even take your kids with garbage bags to the local park to do a little spring clean-up while you walk a trail or the waterfront. It takes very little effort to make a big difference and to start making changes in the world you live in!

I wish you, and your family, a very happy and fulfilling 2014 gardening season!

Sincerely,

Charlie Rice

Editor in Chief

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Weed Man



Gardening Q&A

R. Grace



Q I bought a beautiful palm tree for my bedroom a few months ago. I water my plant religiously and fertilize the plant once a month, however, the tips of the leaves are beginning to turn brown and curl. Why do the leaves appear to be drying up and dying?

A First it is important to figure out the type of palm that you own. There are many varieties of palms available on the market.

Browning of the leaves can mean many different things. It could mean that your plant is receiving too much or too little water, or that your palm is not receiving enough humidity. It could also mean that your plant is suffering from insect infestation, or a lack of sunlight.

Considering the watering information you provided I can only assume that your plant is receiving too much water. Palm trees require good soil drainage and the soil needs to dry out before watering the plant again to prevent root rot. It may be best that you invest in a water level monitor to assist you with your watering schedule. A water level monitor will notify you when the soil is dry and your plant needs more water. Also, refrain from fertilizing your plant during the winter months, and resume in the spring - over fertilizing can cause more harm than good.

Q My lilac bush looks healthy but it doesn't produce many flowers. How can I get my lilac bush to bloom?

A There could be a number of reasons as to why your lilac bush is not coming into full bloom. It could be that your lilac bush is still young and needs more time to mature, as fully matured lilac bushes will bloom more than young plants. It could also be that your lilac bush is in a shady location. Lilac bushes need full sun, approximately 8 hours each day, to fully thrive.

If either of the above are incorrect assumptions then it may be because of improper maintenance practices. Some of the following tips may help your plant thrive better:

- Do not prune your lilac bush in the spring because you will cut off potential flowers, wait to deadhead after you lilac bush blooms.
- Avoid using tree/shrub fertilizers with high nitrogen (it is the first number found on fertilizer packages, for example 16-4-8). High nitrogen fertilizers encourage foliage growth instead of flower growth; instead, look for fertilizers with higher amounts of phosphorus (the second number). Top-dress with compost for even better results.



Q My husband and I purchased a new home over a year ago. We have completed our interior design and now we would like to focus on our backyard, which currently consists of grass and one plant. We would like to create a beautiful landscaped garden so that we can finally use our backyard to entertain in the warmer months. Where do we begin? How should we spend our time and budget?

A Good gardeners always start with creating a vision of their yard whether they are redesigning an existing design or, starting from scratch. A plan is very important in producing the best outcome.

First you should focus on your hardscape (such as patios, fences, stonework, water features, etc.). It is important that your hardscape is done properly which is why we would recommend that you to hire a professional landscape designer to help you with the planning process.

After your hardscape plan is completed focus on preparing the soil in your planting areas. Soil is your garden's best investment and it is important to make excellent living spaces for your plants to thrive.

Next, buy the trees and shrubs that will form the structure of your garden, followed by perennials, bulbs and ground-covers. Lastly, select your outdoor decor and furniture.

When your vision has become a reality, remember to follow proper maintenance practices to keep your garden and landscape in good condition.

Q My compost bin is producing an unbearable stench. Is there anything that I can do improve the smell?

A If your compost material is too wet with inadequate air flow it results in anaerobic decomposition which produces the bad odour. To encourage a sweeter smelling compost aerate your compost's contents by turning the material over. Also, add a generous amount of "brown" material to absorb the excess moisture (such as dry leaves, shredded paper, straw, etc..).



Q I have noticed large anthills in my garden, how do I get rid of them?

A Even though ants do not attack plants in general, they can cause considerable damage through their underground tunneling by drying out plant roots.

Ants like dry soil, keeping the soil moist will encourage the ants to relocate. Be sure to research your plant's watering needs and restrictions to avoid overwatering the plant.

Lawn Care Q&A

Steve Tschanz



Q My lawn is very uneven and I know that I should cut my lawn at 3" in height. When I cut over some of the mounds, I constantly scalp the turf. What can I do to prevent this from happening?

A Scalping the lawn happens in many different ways such as: mowing too low, a mower wheel dropping into a low spot in the lawn and cutting over the top of a mound. As you mentioned, you are cutting at a respectable height, so there must be another problem. There may be low spots in the lawn that the mower wheels are dropping into or you are going directly over the top of any mounds in your lawn. Top dressing certain areas will solve any low spot problems. If you have mounds in the lawn, please avoid going directly over the top of a mound with the mower. The best way to prevent this type of scalping from happening is to make sure that one of the wheels travels over the top of the hill. Cutting this way may mean that your cutting pattern is altered, but the lawn will benefit from your diligence. If you are not sure if you are scalping your lawn when mowing, please contact your local Weed Man to take a look and give you suggestions on preventing this problem in the future.

Q Three years ago I moved into a new sub-division and have had my lawn on a regular program since it was sodded. The lawn was looking great up until this year when it started to look thin and there seemed to be a lot of weeds developing. Can you explain what happened?

A In new sub-divisions, developers usually remove the majority of top soil before they start any construction. When construction is finished, they replace a fraction of the soil before sodding the lawn. These newly sodded lawns will look great for a couple of years and then start to fail. There are two main reasons for this failure. One is the lack of top soil for the roots to grow in and secondly, there is a layering problem between the sod and the top soil. The best remedy is to aerate the newly sodded lawn in the spring or fall after it was sodded. This will allow the roots an avenue into the top soil layer as well as allow rain to infiltrate the soil. Continuing to aerify your lawn each year will eventually blend the two layers together and be able to support a healthy root system. Ask your local Weed Man for advice on aerating your lawn.



Q I have an in ground sprinkler system and no matter how much I watered my lawn, it did not look good all summer.

A This past year was a wet spring and wet into the early summer. Most lawns would not have needed supplemental watering early in the year. However, in August when the precipitation slowed down additional water may have been needed. A lot of irrigation systems have been set up by companies using an average watering pattern which do not take current weather patterns into consideration. For example, if it is too wet less watering is needed, if it is too dry more watering is needed. Over-watering affects the root system in two main ways. One, that the roots stay near the surface as water is abundant producing a shallow root system that will dry out quickly if weather patterns change. Two, the excess water fills air space in the soil not allowing for important gas exchange for the roots. Remember, your lawn will need 2.5 to 3.8 cm (1-1 1/2") of water each week from your sprinkler system or from a combination of your sprinkler system and rain.



Q When walking on my lawn in September, a lot of large 'mosquitoes' flew around at my feet. What are they and do they damage the lawn?

A The insect in question is the European crane fly. The crane fly does not damage the lawn, but the larval stage, called Leatherjackets, can damage the lawn when they are in large numbers (over 200 per m²). The damage is generally most noticeable in the spring, as Leatherjackets stay near the surface of the lawn during the winter and start feeding before the grass comes out of dormancy. Please call your local Weed Man if you have concerns that your lawn may have a Leatherjacket infestation.

Q In the fall, my neighbour's lawn had an orange hue to it. What would the cause of this be?

A It sounds like the lawn has a leaf disease called rust. This disease appears in the late summer and early fall when the days are short and cool and the lawn is found to be nitrogen deficient. The best solution for disease prevention is by keeping the lawn on a slow release fertility program that provides a minimum of 1.3 kg (3 lbs.) of nitrogen per year. Using a quality slow release fertilizer makes sure that adequate amounts of fertilizer are available for the grass when it is needed. Please call your local Weed Man to discuss any fertilizer needs you have.





Gardening With Your Kids

Charlie Rice

Gardening with your kids is a great way to get them outside, spend time together and to help them learn about the food they eat and where it comes from.



Planting seeds and watching them grow is fun, and always full of surprises. I like to let my five year old pick her own seeds at the garden centre, she chooses a wide range of things from flowers to vegetables and fruits. Some work and some don't, but that is the magic of gardening; sometimes the harvest grows like crazy, like our tomatoes last season, and sometimes it does not, like our watermelons.

There is such joy and a sense of satisfaction for kids when they get to pull a carrot from the earth, wash off the soil, and then eat that carrot as part of their meal. One of my favourite things about the gardening season is to see the anticipation in the eyes of my daughter as she wakes every morning wondering what has bloomed or if her strawberries are ready yet. It brings her great joy to play in our yard surrounded by the plants and flowers she has helped grow.

In this age of technology, it is a gift that we can give to our children, and the earth, to have them participate in helping things

grow. Kids need to be outside as much as possible, whether it's making mud pies or discovering a germinating seed emerge from the earth. Gardening with children, from toddlers to adolescents, brings a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment.

My daughter is so happy when we can make a whole salad for lunch from the things she has grown and picked from our garden. I strongly feel that growing our own food gives my daughter a chance to taste the difference that fresh garden foods make to her diet. I also believe this will help her make healthier choices throughout her life when it comes to nutrition. Her pathway to better health and nutrition is right outside the door. We look together for recipes to make homemade goodies such as fresh tomato sauce for her pasta and strawberry sauce for her ice cream. So far her favourite way to eat all of it is straight from the garden! That makes me so happy!

It is easy to start a small garden with your child no matter what size your yard is. Let

your child be a part of the entire process from preparing the soil to choosing the things you want to grow. Begin with only a few seed or plant varieties that grow quickly, such as strawberries, sunflowers and tomatoes, and, give them tasks appropriate to their age and skill level. You dig the holes and they plant the seeds.

Watering is a favourite at my house and even weeding can be fun as kids want to make sure they get the bad weeds out so their plants don't choke. I also find gardening teaches kids to connect with the earth, learn about nature and how everything works in harmony. Worms are not just slimy and gross, they are garden friends. There is no need to run away screaming from bees, they are only there to pollinate the flowers and help them grow. Kids learn the cycle of life by experiencing it first hand! Such as anything in life, success is relative in the world of gardening, positive experiences do help sustain interest for kids.

If you work together and maintain your garden it will thrive. If you ignore it and do not water and fertilize it, it will wither and die. Life lessons for everyone. There are a plethora of successful experiences and lessons to be learned from being out with your children in the garden. When you harvest your plants, celebrate, make memories and traditions that they can pass on. If your crops fail, learn from that and try something different next year.

The key to success and participation lies within you and the little gardener(s) with whom you plant with. Plant some seeds and grow some joy for you and your family!!



Top 5 easiest plants to grow from seed for kids!

1. Sunflowers!
2. Morning Glory!
3. Cucumber!
4. Carrots!
5. Strawberries!



Enjoy Homegrown Herbs All Year Round

Jennifer Ferguson

Herbs provide many benefits to home gardeners. They provide fresh scents to the atmospheres in which they thrive, they intensify the flavours of food, they add natural beauty and décor to your home and garden, and they can also be used for medicinal purposes.

Even though herbs are mainly harvested in the summer months this does not mean that you can't have fresh homegrown herbs all year round with a small amount of effort. Cultivate your herbs in containers during the summer so that you can easily bring them indoors in the early fall. It is important that you place your plants in a cool room that has lots of sun and adequate air circulation.



Whichever way you choose to cultivate your herbs it is important that you bring your plants indoors before the temperature dips below 5 degrees Celsius. Also, while your plants are indoors it is important to practice a proper maintenance schedule. We suggest that you water your herbs approximately every 10 days, apply a weak liquid fertilizer monthly and trim off dead leaves when needed.

Some gardeners, especially beginners, may have a difficult time deciding which herbs to plant because of the wide range of herbs available. Some herbs that grow well in containers include, but are not limited to, Basil, Cilantro, Lavender, Lemon Verbena, Oregano, Parsley, Rosemary, and Sage. While some herbs grow well in containers other herbs thrive better when they are established in ground such as, Chives, French Tarragon, Lemon Balm, Mint, Winter Savory and Thyme.

Whatever herbs you choose to grow you will not only be satisfied with how easy they are to grow and manage, but you will also be able to enjoy having fresh herbs at your fingertips all year round using the outdoor to indoor herb gardening practices.

If you prefer to grow your herbs in-ground during the summer, following these simple steps to divide and pot your herbs so that you can bring them indoors for the cold winter months.

1. In the early fall, lift a bunch of herbs from your garden using a garden fork or spade.
2. With a sharp spade or knife, divide the bunch into smaller portions.
3. Pot each portion into containers filled with indoor potting soil.
4. Water plants well and trim back the top growth.
5. Place planters in a cool room with lots of sun and good air circulation.



WHAT DOES YOUR GARDEN SAY ABOUT YOU?

Jennifer Ferguson

Is your garden lush, full of life and well kept? Or, is it in a perpetual state of neglect? This is something that not too many homeowners spend a lot of time thinking about, but if you are a homeowner this is something you should consider... the state of your garden and how it looks reveals a lot about your personality and your lifestyle.



Your garden can reveal a lot about your personal relationships. For instance, if your garden is full of life and if it has vibrant plants that have been well cared for, this can indicate that you take good care of your loved ones and that you are able and willing to provide them with their basic needs. If your garden is dull and uncared for this will illustrate that you are careless and neglectful.

How you manage your household can be revealed in how your garden is arranged. When you have different plant varieties planted in specific areas on your property, and each variety is maintained separately, this gives a visitor the impression that your home is well organized and in order before they even enter your home. If your plants are all planted together with some plants thriving while others are dying, or if your garden is full of weeds and your plants have become overgrown and invasive, this will give a visitor the impression that the interior of your home is also carelessly organized and unkempt.

Your garden can show whether you enjoy the finer things in life or if you are a penny pincher. If your garden is filled with lots of variety, beautiful colours and intricate fixtures you are displaying that you are someone who enjoys the finer things in life. If you are someone who has one or two shrubs and a few plants sporadically placed on your property, without a purpose

or design, you come off as someone who is a cheap and someone who doesn't seem to care for nice things.

The look and health of your garden can provide insights into the state of your relationships, it can illustrate the management of your home, and it can demonstrate your personal tastes or lack of taste. What does your garden say about you? Or, more importantly, what do you want your garden to say about you?





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YOUR LAWN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Steve Tschanz



In 2011, Lake Erie, the shallowest Great Lake, recorded the largest algal bloom in history. This algal bloom is attributed to increased phosphorous levels in the Great Lakes, primarily Lake Erie. This concern of phosphorous loading is common to many fresh water systems. There are many different contributors to this problem that we are facing as populations tend to migrate to bodies of water. These sources include: manufacturing, agriculture, wastewater treatment, construction, storm water, lawns and gardens, deciduous leaf waste and pet wastes. Although various government levels have implemented different strategies to minimize phosphorous loading of all bodies of water from manufacturing and agriculture, we need to see what we can do to help out by managing our own property wisely.

Often, the first thing that is mentioned when the subject of phosphorous comes up is that we should ban fertilizers on home lawns. Banning all fertilizers would be a mistake, since it is one requirement for keeping a thick, healthy, vibrant home lawn. As a component of fertilizer, phosphorous has been all but removed from the lawn care industry already. Weed Man has been proactive and has not used phosphorous in its main fertilizer program since 2009. However, phosphorous is still used when needed on new lawn establishment. Removing all fertilizer from a home lawn maintenance program would actually increase the amount of phosphorous that would end up in the water systems. Research has shown that a healthy lawn will prevent any nutrient loading to the system. It actually makes the water cleaner as it filters the water that passes by.

Storm water is also a contributor to the increased phosphorous levels in our lakes and streams. This comes in a number of ways. Some home owners have set their roof down spouts to go directly to or very close to the urban storm sewers. This creates more volume for these systems that, in many cases, gets contaminated with sewage wastes. The use of rain barrels, incorporation of rain gardens or allowing the water to run onto the lawn should be part of the home landscape design. Now, if the lawn is not adequately maintained and is lacking a good fertilizer program, then allowing the water to run onto the grass would potentially add

more phosphorous to the system as it erodes the unprotected soil on its way to the storm sewers. It gets back to having a healthy lawn is good for the environment.

If you have removed part of your lawn, make sure that you are using a ground cover or



mulch to cover up the exposed soil. Although nothing is as good as grass for erosion control, protecting the soil is the important thing. Many properties that have removed the front lawn in order to plant a garden have not taken into account that, usually, the front lawn has been contoured to slope toward the street. If the gardens do not have any barriers to water movement, the soil will move with it.

Soil is not the only item that can be moved with storm water. Animal waste products can also be carried away. Many municipalities have enacted bylaws on cleaning up after your dog when you are out for a walk. Some even go as far as including the pet owner's property. Although these by-laws keep the streets clean and prevent unwanted fecal contact by innocent bystanders, there is also a benefit to the environment. Since pet wastes contain both nitrogen and phosphorous, it is environmentally sound to clean up after your pet. Disposing of the waste in the garbage or green bin (depending on recycling



programs) does not allow the waste to get into the storm water system and into any bodies of water.

Lastly, it is important to rake up your leaves in the fall as they come down. Over the summer, the deciduous trees have provided a lot of shade, cooling and beauty with their canopies. As the leaves grow, there is a lot of phosphorous that is utilized and stored. With the changing colour and leaf fall in autumn, many of the nutrients are reabsorbed by the tree. Some nutrients, such as phosphorous, still remain in the leaves as they fall. Mulching your leaves speeds up the decomposition of the leaves and allows the turf to utilize the nutrients. However, the decomposition can be a slow process when the leaves are left to blow around and accumulate along fences and roadsides. Raking them up, bagging them, and having the municipality take them away is also a good way to eliminate phosphorous from getting into the water. If the leaves are left to blow around and eventually make their way onto the street, they can make it into the storm sewer system. Then the leaves travel to the streams and lakes, breaking down, and releasing the stored phosphorous. It would make sense that many of these leaves do not make it to the larger bodies of water until the spring,

when the majority of phosphorous loading occurs.

In order to make sure that you are helping out with the environment, please look at your activities around your yard.

In order to make sure that you are helping out with the environment, please look at your activities around your yard:

1. Use a phosphorous free fertilizer on your lawn unless you are establishing a new one.
2. Make sure that you have ground cover over any bare soil to prevent erosion.
3. Allow the rain water that comes down to be utilized by your yard rather than sending it directly to the storm sewers.
4. Clean up after you pets.
5. Lastly, make sure that you mulch or rake all of your leaf litter in the fall.

All of these items discussed are not the main contributors to fresh water contamination by phosphorous, but if we can help out in a little way, we can contribute toward the prevention of algal blooms in our streams and lakes.

Your Lawn's New Best Friend

David A Thompson

Weed Man® Halifax



What is my Weed Man story?

My father joined the Weed Man family in 1992 when he took over Weed Man Halifax. I was in university, on a different career path, so never worked in the business when I was younger like my brother and sister did. I practiced law for about 15 years, and watched the business grow and prosper – from one franchise in Halifax to eight franchises covering most of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and PEI. When my father planned to retire, I said to him, “I’d like to make a career change and take over.” I had always wanted to run my own business and here was a golden opportunity. I took over the business 5 years ago and it was one of the best decisions I’ve ever made. We have a great team of people and a great business. I enjoy coming to work every day.

How Does Weed Man Participate in my Community?

We have always recognized the importance of giving back to our community. We’ve sponsored basketball, baseball, car racing and hockey teams. We’ve sponsored many different community organizations across the Maritimes – from the IWK Hospital in Halifax to the Sussex Rotary Club and worthy organizations in most communities in between. In the last few years, we have been a big supporter of Margaret’s House, a soup kitchen in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. I have been a volunteer, we sponsored their annual fundraising dinner, and we put up Christmas lights for the holiday season at their house in downtown Dartmouth. Many of our staff participate in the decorating and really enjoy the chance to brighten the holidays for people in need.

What's the biggest challenge in our industry? How do you deal with that?

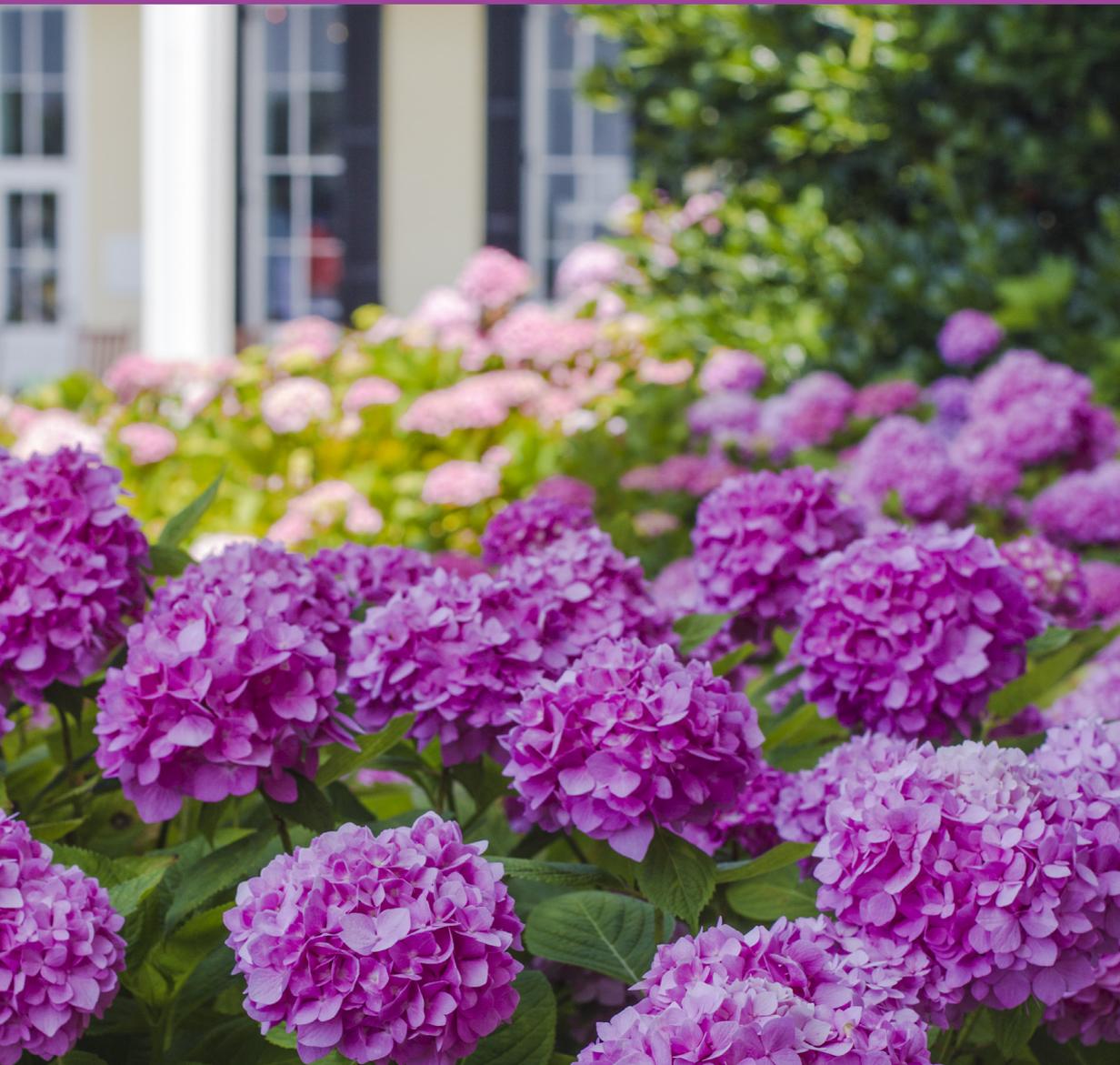
Our industry has often been unfairly portrayed during the debate on pesticide restrictions. The lawn care industry has always focussed on helping our customers keep their lawns healthy and beautiful in a safe, sustainable manner. All our technicians are licensed and trained in the use of the latest products. Our families live, work and play in our communities, and we care about the safety of the products we use and their impacts on the environment. Some have suggested otherwise, that we put profits before health, safety and the environment. This is untrue and unfair. I have worked hard to tell our story to our customers, the media and the public while these issues were being debated. I played an active role in the discussions with government and the media during the debate on new pesticide rules in all three Maritime provinces.

What don't most people realize about my company?

That we have the best staff of any company I know. Ok, I may be a little biased, but I am so proud of our crew. They work hard, do their best to look after our customers, and really care about how our customers’ lawns are doing.

Four Flower Favourites

R. Grace



Gardeners get excited about adding new plants to their gardens every year. We've decided to feature our four flower favourites that you may want to try incorporating into your garden. With vivid blooms and striking shapes, these are our top four flowers favourites.



Hydrangeas are enormous billowy flowers that flaunt lavish colours and bring charm into your garden. Hydrangeas are unrivaled in the land of shrubs, because these elegant plants are extremely easy to cultivate, they tolerate any soil type and they require very little care. Hydrangeas keep your garden looking magnificently colourful throughout the gardening season as they produce flowers in mid-summer through fall, a time where not many other plants are in bloom.

Hydrangea Facts:

Plant Type: Shrub

Hardiness Zones:

3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

Sun Exposure: Part or Shade

Soil Type: Any

Bloom Time: Summer, Fall

Planting Tips:

- Most hydrangeas flourish best in rich, porous, somewhat moist soils.
- These plants do best in full sun in the morning, with afternoon shade - however, they will continue to grow and bloom in partial shade.
- Plant in the spring or fall.
- Dig a hole as deep as the root ball and 2-3 times as wide. Place the plant in the hole and fill halfway with soil. Water the plant, then once the water is drained, finish filling the hole with the remaining soil. Then, water again thoroughly.
- If planting more than one hydrangea plant, make sure that you plant them at least 3 feet apart.

Care Tips:

- Ensure that your hydrangeas get lots of water, especially during drought conditions. Your plant's leaves will begin to wilt when the soil gets too dry - this is a clear indicator that you need to water it.
- When the cold winter months approach, cover the plant to a depth of at least 18 inches with mulch. If possible, cover the entire plant (tip included) by making cages around them and loosely filling the cages with leaves (all but maple leaves will work).



Tulips are elegant and bright coloured flowers that come in a wide range of colours, sizes and forms. The history of Tulips becoming a flower favourite in Canada is quite fascinating. In the 1940s, when the German Nazis invaded the Netherlands, Canada offered the Dutch Royal family safety on Canadian soil. The Dutch Princess Juliana gave 100,000 tulip bulbs to Canada as a gift of gratitude and friendship; A gift that she continued to send every year during her reign, which ended in 1980. So although Tulips are thought of being a sure sign of Spring, they also are a meaningful symbol of friendship.

Tulip Facts:

Plant Type: Flower

Hardiness Zones:

3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,

Sun Exposure: Full or Part

Soil Type: Sandy

Bloom Time: Spring

Planting Tips:

- Plant the bulbs after purchase in the fall, 6 to 8 weeks before frost is expected and when the soil is below 15 degrees Celsius.
- Tulips prefer a site with full sun or a place where they will receive sun in the afternoon.
- Tulips dislike too much moisture so ideally well-drained soil. Adding sand, shredded pine bark or a similar material is recommended to assist quick soil drainage.
- Space bulbs 4 - 6 inches apart.
- Plant bulbs, at least, 8 inches deep - measuring from the base of the bulb. Place the bulb in the hole with the pointy end facing up. Cover and press soil firmly.
- Water bulbs right after planting as they need the water to trigger growth.

Care Tips:

- Avoid deliberate watering. Only water your tulips in drought conditions during the Fall.
- Fertilize tulips annually.
- Deadhead tulips after flowering and remove foliage approximately 6 weeks after flowering (allow the foliage to yellow).



Peonies are outrageously breathtaking when in bloom and they provide lush foliage all summer long. Peonies provide an abundance of colour and add a delicious scent to your garden. Peonies are versatile and long lived, some have been known to thrive for over 100 years. Peonies blossom every year and grow so easily that this plant requires very little care. One of the most rewarding benefits of adding this plant to your garden is that they make beautiful flower arrangements for your home or to give away as gifts.

Hydrangea Facts:

Plant Type: Flower

Hardiness Zones: Varies

Sun Exposure: Full

Soil Type: Loamy

Bloom Time:

Spring, Summer, Fall

Planting Tips:

- Peonies bloom best in full sun; However, they can do well in partly sunny spots as well.
- They grow in deep, fertile, humus-rich, moist soil that drains well.
- Plant your peonies in a space with the least disturbance. Ideally, in a spot that is sheltered from strong weather conditions. Plant away from trees and shrubs as they don't like to compete for food and moisture.
- The best time to plant Peonies is in the Fall (usually late September/early October). Peonies planted in the Spring do not do as well as those planted in the Fall. Peonies should be settled into their space before the first hard frost.
- Dig a generous sized hole in the best spot available in your garden - if the soil is heavy or sandy, enrich it with compost. Work the soil before planting, mixing in a little bit of fertilizer to help the plant establish. Place the root so that the buds face upward and set the root about 1.5 - 2 inches below the soil's surface. While backfilling the hole ensure that the root does not get buried deeper than 2 inches below the soil surface. Water generously.

Care Tips:

- Peonies are amazing because they require very little maintenance and actually thrive best with benign neglect. Unlike other perennials, peonies do not need to be dug up and divided.
- Spare the fertilizer, unless your soil is poor. If your soil is poor apply fertilizer in the early summer after the peonies have bloomed and have been deadheaded. Do not fertilize more than every few years.
- Deadhead peony blossoms as soon as they begin to fade by cutting to a strong leaf so the stem doesn't poke out of the foliage during the summer months.
- In the Fall, cut the foliage to the ground to avoid plant disease from manifesting during the cold winter months.
- Don't smother Peonies with mulch.



Roses are most likely to be the most popular flower throughout the entire history of gardening. Roses are both beautiful and fragrant and can be incorporated into everyone's garden since they come in countless varieties, colours and sizes. Give Roses a try in your garden this season and reap the benefits of their luxurious aroma and allure.

Rose Facts:

Plant Type: Shrub

Hardiness Zones:

3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

Sun Exposure: Full or Part

Soil Type: Sandy

Bloom Time: Spring

Planting Tips:

- Roses like near-neutral soil pH, keeping the pH range between 5.5 - 7.0 is ideal. A soil test will provide you with an accurate reading and will give you time to prepare your soil for your roses.
- The ideal soil is thick and loose, with good drainage.
- Roses thrive best in the sun, so it is important to plant roses where they will receive a minimum of 5 hours of full sun each day.
- Roses like their space and do not like to compete with other plants in your garden. Don't crowd them.
- When you transplant your roses, dig a hole much bigger than you believe you need (for most types 15-18 inches wide). Add plenty of organic matter to the soil.
- Roses can be cut back and moved in the spring or fall, but definitely not in mid-summer as they are likely to die from the summer heat.

Care Tips:

- Water your roses thoroughly. Avoid frequent shallow sprinklings which do not reach the root and can encourage fungus growth. Soak the entire root at least twice each week, especially in the dry summer weather.
- Apply a 2-4 inch layer of mulch around the base of your roses. Mulch is recommended to help conserve water, reduce stress and encourage healthy growth.
- Feed your roses on a regular basis before and throughout their blooming cycle. Once a month apply a balanced fertilizer (5-10-5 or 5-10-10). Each bush will need about 0.75 - 1 cup of fertilizer. Stop fertilizing 6 weeks before the first expected hard frost, but continue your watering practices.
- Deadhead religiously as every leaf has a growth bud, so removing old flower blossoms will encourage new growth. Stop deadheading 3-4 weeks before the first hard frost to avoid new growth and causing plant damage.
- Clean debris from the base of the rosebushes to avoid disease and insects.
- Prune your roses every spring.



Sometimes the fun of gardening is when your mistakes turn out to be wonderful choices. Some mistakes can end up being useful and practical errors. However, there are some errors that are best to be avoided because they only result in wasted time, wasted money and total frustration.

This article outlines five gardening errors and how you can avoid them.

1 - Growing Invasive Plants



You love the look of a pretty leaf and you are drawn to the promise of rapid growth only to find that this once alluring plant has taken over your entire garden. Growing invasive plants in your garden is not ideal as they cause a lot of unnecessary work and become a gardening headache.

How to Avoid:

Do your research when choosing your garden's plants. Remember to research according to your area because although some plants are considered invasive in one area, doesn't mean they are invasive in another.

When purchasing your plants always read the tags and avoid purchasing a plant that contains the word 'weed' (for example, knotweed or goutweed). Also, avoid purchasing a plant that has states "grows vigorously", "spreads indefinitely", "self-seeding", or any other phrase that may indicate that the plant is an invasive species.

If you have your heart set on growing an invasive plant, such as mint, choose to grow them in a container. Container gardening allows you to control an invasive plant species without it overtaking your garden.



2 - Forgetting to Prepare the Soil

Many gardeners, especially beginners, rush out to their local garden stores at the first sign of spring, purchase their garden's plants and seeds, place them in their garden, and then later wonder why their plants are not thriving.

How to Avoid:

Preparing your soil is one gardening step that should never be disregarded. A garden's soil gives your plants the three basic needs for them to thrive: nutrients, air and good drainage. You don't want your soil to be too dry (sandy) or too wet (clayey). The main components of soil is clay, sand and silt, and the ideal soil condition is equal measures of all three components. Equal counts of sand, clay and silt creates a fertile, free draining and easy to dig soil.

Improve soil by mixing in compost (or some other form of organic matter), break up hard subsoil and repair any drainage problems.

3 - Not Mulching Your Garden

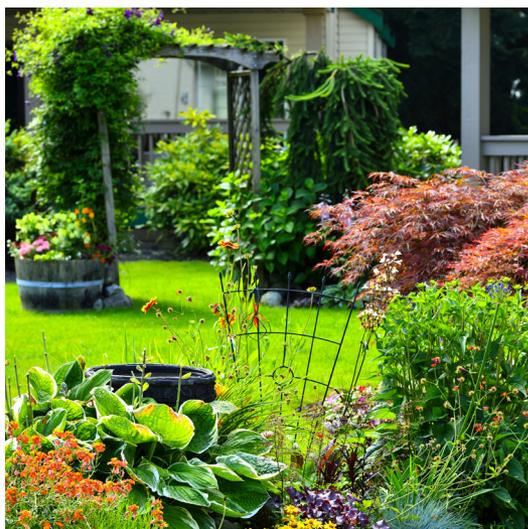
Gardeners spend a lot of time watering, fertilizing, controlling weeds, resolving weather damage and dealing with pest issues. Wouldn't it be wonderful to find a preventative solution to all of these garden hassles? Good news, one preventative action does exist... Mulch.

How to Avoid:

Lay down a thick layer of mulch to save you lots of unnecessary time garden problem solving and completing excessive garden maintenance.

Mulch has numerous benefits for your garden. Mulch protects garden soil by moderating the soil temperature, improving aeration, holding in moisture and returning nutrients in the soil. Mulch also prevents weathering, reduces weeds, and enhances the overall appearance of a garden. In addition to all the previous mentioned benefits, mulch protects your plants from soil borne diseases by creating the perfect barrier and preventing the disease from easily spreading to foliage.

Typically mulch is applied in the spring and should be restored each year.



4 - Impractical Garden Pathways

Every garden needs a pathway but sometimes what you think is a good idea for a pathway turns out to be impractical and ends up making garden maintenance an unenjoyable task. Pathways should allow a comfortable passage - without tripping or stubbing toes. They should also make maintenance practices easier - not creating an obstacle when mowing the lawn or trying to work in your garden.

How to Avoid:

A garden's pathway should be at least 1-metre wide to allow wheel barrows, plant dollies and tool caddies to pass through with ease.

A garden pathway should be continuous and level to avoid safety problems.

Lastly, although there are many surfacing options to choose from, the most practical materials include square cut stone, concrete or bricks (as long as these materials are laid on a proper foundation).

5 - Poor Maintenance Accessibility

Your garden is lush and it is overflowing with beautiful flowers and foliage - it is everything you hoped it would be until you realize you did not leave yourself enough space to complete your maintenance chores. In order to accomplish your necessary garden maintenance practices you either have to trample through your garden or become a contortionist. Garden maintenance is work that should be accomplished easily, not a hassle!

How to Avoid:

We suggest that you install stepping stones throughout your garden at convenient intervals so that you can have a firm ground to use while completing your maintenance chores. Stepping stones are practical because you can move them around your garden as your plants grow or diminish.

If your garden is more than 3 meters, then inserting a pathway into your garden may make more sense. Installing a pathway will provide you the convenience of maintaining your garden properly. You will also be able to easily inspect your plants to decide when maintenance practices are required and you will also be able to see your garden from a different perspective.



KALE

The Queen of Greens

R. Grace

Kale has been deemed the queen of greens. This dark, leafy, easy-to-grow green is packed full of nutrients for fewer calories than almost any other food available. Although the research on Kale is not as thorough as it's cruciferous vegetable counterparts, like broccoli or cabbage, it is definitely a food that you should rely on for unmatched health benefits. It has antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and cancer preventative health benefits, to name a few. Besides it's illness and disease fighting benefits, kale also provides digestive and cardiovascular support.



Kale is extremely easy to grow. To grow kale you must place the plants in full sun in well drained soil modified with compost. Water Kale thoroughly and frequently. You can harvest individual leaves once they mature to full size or harvest whole heads as soon as there is enough leaf growth to benefit cutting.

There are different types of Kale available for home gardeners and consumers.

Curly Kale has ruffled leaves and a fibrous stalk that usually is deep green in colour. The taste of curly kale is bitter and peppery, offering a strong taste that is mostly enjoyed by mature palates. This variety is best enjoyed when it is steamed.

Ornamental Kale is a red to purple veined variety boasting green, white or purple leaves and its stalks join together to form a loosely unified head of leaves. Ornamental Kale has a weaker flavour and more tender texture than other varieties. It is sweet enough to eat raw, and popular for salad.

Heirloom Kale is a common name used for the kale variety also known as 'Dinosaur', 'Lacinato' or 'Tuscan' kale. This type of kale has darker and flatter leaves that feature a blue-green colour. This type of kale has a sweet and delicate taste which can be enjoyed raw.

When consumed raw some nutrients in the kale, such as Vitamin C, are easily released after digestion. When cooked, the heat releases carotenoids from within the plant allowing the phytonutrients to be better

absorbed after digestion. Gently steaming or sauteing kale works best, boiling tends to remove vital nutrients from the finished product. Whether you choose to enjoy kale raw, or cooked it is one of the tastiest and healthiest foods you can eat.

My favourite way to incorporate kale into my regular diet is adding it to my breakfast smoothie:

Ingredients:

- 1 cup, Chopped Kale (packed)
- 1/2 medium, Banana
- 1/2 medium Apple, peeled
- 1/2 cup, Greek Yogurt
- 1/2 cup, 2% Milk or Almond Milk
- 1/2 cup, Ice (optional)

Directions:

Add all ingredients in a blender and puree until smooth.

Pour in a tall glass and enjoy.

Add this nutrient-dense green smoothie to your morning routine and you too can reap the amazing health benefits of kale.





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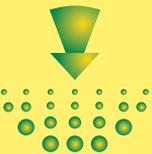
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