

A Personal Message

We had quite a scare in our little family last month. Melissa has been diagnosed with an enlarged heart as well as arrhythmia. These problems, combined with low blood pressure, placed her in the hospital for six days recently.

She has an viral infection of the heart (myocarditis). It may have been caused by the flu or even some of the many medications she takes. Remember, Melissa is a stroke survivor of almost five years.

Apparently, most cases of myocarditis are very mild. Melissa's is extremely severe, but for now, her doctors are attempting to control the symptoms with medication. I must say, I have never seen such an assortment of pills that are her breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Melissa truly frightened me this time. She had a really bad episode, following a heart catheterization where her blood pressure dropped rapidly. The medical team went racing about her room while I stood by helplessly.

Her cardiologist had done the catheterization himself, only a short time before. Therefore, they were able to rule out a heart attack immediately and treat only her blood pressure symptoms.

I can only offer my sincerest thanks to Dr. Condit of the Chesapeake Cardiology Clinic. He knew Melissa less than a week when he began treating her. We now trust him implicitly.

Melissa can be a willful patient because she tends to downplay her ailments. She powers through her problems. It's a good thing for the most part, but her illnesses are usually fairly serious and tend to require medical care. Dr. Condit tamed her down a bit and has caused her to make some lifestyle changes, including a low sodium diet.

While I'm on the subject of medical care, thanks once again to The Memorial Hospital at Easton. Once again, this small, but powerful hospital saved her life. They have my undying gratitude.

Melissa has been a patient at Memorial Hospital four times over the past four years. Each time she was admitted, the staff was professional and caring. I can't say enough good things about this unique institution.

During this visit, Melissa stayed in the Telemetry Unit. She wore a heart monitor during the entire admission. There were frequent blood pressure checks and blood tests. However, most importantly, she had the gift of a kind and caring staff during her stay.

Thank you for the opportunity of letting you know about this important episode in our lives.

Garden Tips

- August is the best month for just enjoying your garden. The fruits of your labor are finally paying off as flowers and vegetables reach their zenith. Weed growth slows as plants mature and bloom. If you're ever going to enjoy summertime, August is the month to do it.
- During the dog days of summer, some plants will look wilted on hot afternoons. This means their roots can't take in enough water to compensate for what is being lost through the leaves. Water these plants deeply and they should perk up by late afternoon.
- We're still providing complimentary jugs of our compost tea for use on your potted plants. Remember that our tea is an aerobically brewed liquid extract made from compost. We use it on our own gardens and our plants love a good drink on a hot summer day. If you would like a complimentary gallon of our tea to treat a favorite plant, please let us know. Call the office to make sure we're brewing tea that day. You'll need to swing by with an empty plastic jug for the tea. Make sure you use the tea that same day. Our compost tea only has a shelf life of 18-24 hours. But, it's well worth the effort. The plant material will really spring back to life.

Tick Repellent Program

The year of 2008 has seen a rampant increase in tick activity across the state of Maryland. It seems that only pets used to be affected by ticks. You would snap a collar around your pet's neck and dog ticks would generally be controlled.

Now deer ticks are a part of life in this state and the news keeps getting worse. Deer ticks spread Lyme Disease which can mimic neurological problems like meningitis or Bell's Palsy in later stages.

I was bitten by a tick in the spring of 2006. I was fortunate enough that I didn't contract Lyme Disease. However, I did live through a severe allergic reaction that I still have problems with today.

After I recuperated, I decided that I could actually assist people who have the most exposure to ticks. Unfortunately, one of the most frequent victims of tick borne illnesses are children, particularly campers. Children usually aren't savvy enough to check themselves for ticks after outdoor playtime. And, they may not be able to articulate the areas where they've played during the day. If you live near a grassy or wooded area, you may need help.

Keep in mind that August and September are two of the prime tick activity months. The spring months of April and May are also active months.

We now treat dozens of properties with our barrier tick repellent service during these months of frequent activity. After inspecting your property, we'll identify the areas of activity and recommend our barrier treatments there. We may also suggest placing Damminix tubes around areas where rodents nest.

Damminix tubes are cardboard tubes that contain treated material which is deadly for ticks, but doesn't harm squirrels or mice in their nests. Additionally, brush removal may help clear areas of frequent tick activity. We can clean up woodpiles and other debris quickly and efficiently.

How to Care for Your Lawn

It's now officially hot enough to fry an egg on the sidewalk. I know because I fried one there several days ago. Apparently, we have far too much time on our hands.

Spare time won't be a problem for long. August is the month that landscapers start to plan for the care and maintenance of your lawn.

We actually begin overseeding lawns in late August. Fall is much more conducive to the installation of lawns than spring. That's because the soil is already pre-warmed from the summer's heat. And the air temperature starts to cool a bit, making conditions perfect for seeding in the fall.

The Mid-Atlantic region offers a fairly wide window of time for overseeding. But even with autumn's cooler temperatures, there are limits to the weather's cooperation.

Grass seed generally requires that daytime highs reach about 70 degrees. When nighttime lows dip below 50 degrees, most grass seed won't germinate.

Here's where our natural/organic lawn care program can help.

Our program is 80% non-toxic. We only use chemicals to kill weeds in the lawn. After many years of testing, we still have not found a viable substitute for synthetic weed controls. So weed control remains the one facet of our program that is not natural and organic.

The remainder of our program incorporates natural/organic liquid and granular fertilizers. It also incorporates natural insect, disease and weed controls.

We use only endophyte enhanced grass seed which has been bred specifically to be insect, disease and weed resistant. These grasses taste "bad" to surface feeding insects such as sod webworms and chinch bugs. The use of these grasses will help to reduce the chance of insect and fungus problems.

We would appreciate the opportunity of providing you with a free analysis of your lawn. There is no-cost and no-obligation for this service.

At this time, we have over 200 appointments set for lawn consultations, so please be patient. And, be sure to give us a call soon.