

Personal Message

Recently, I was looking over old issues of this newsletter. This is the 80th issue that I've written.

We began publishing our newsletter in October, 2002. It looked much the same eight years ago as it does today. It has the same header and background, as it did then.

However, the distribution method was VERY different back then.

For years, we mailed this newsletter with regular stamps on the envelopes. While we were in the planning stages, postal rates increased from 34 to 37 cents for a first class envelope. Quite a devastating blow for a struggling company. We decided to pursue this course of action anyway.

We folded the newsletter by hand and used a sponge to seal the envelopes. Initially, we only mailed to about 30 people.

Then, we began to go "high-tech". We bought a folding machine, which is still in use to this day. We built ourselves a database and generated labels from it. A bulk mail permit allowed us to sort zip codes and mail at a reduced rate. Did you know that you only have to mail 200 pieces or more to qualify for a bulk mail permit?

This month, we're sending the newsletter out to 4,224 homes. As postage rates continue to climb, we switched to an electronic database and now email all of our newsletters. It's quite a switch from hand addressing all those envelopes years ago.

Best of all, you can view several years worth of our archived newsletters on our website. Check us out at dellsadler.com and click on NEWS. The newsletters are archived by month and year. Hope you enjoy perusing them.

Are you having a good summer? Melissa, the cat and I are still spending time in Ocean City. She loves the hot weather and I enjoy the air conditioning. The cat usually tends to side with Melissa, but it's been so hot this year, he tries to stay cool by sleeping in the bathtub.

We've managed to find a happy medium so far. She wears a sweat suit when she's inside and I get to turn the temperature way down. And so it goes...

Speaking of the U. S. mail, you'll be receiving some literature from me soon. We're gearing up for this fall's lawn service. We'll be mailing you several pieces about our natural/organic lawn care. It's just as effective as standard lawn care at about the same price. However, it's better for the environment. Hope you'll consider reading about it.

August Garden Tips

- August is the zenith month for gardeners. Flowers are still blooming. Vegetables have reached their peak. Whose garden isn't producing tomatoes yet? And, if you planted zucchinis, you're starting to panic. "Who can I share these next few zucchinis with?" is a question on lots of gardeners' minds these days. I've got a wonderful recipe for zucchini bread, if anyone's interested. I made 20 loaves one summer and we rationed them out like gold over the next year.
- You can start dividing perennials during August. Begin with those prolific bearded iris. Daylilies are also excellent candidates for division in this area. See our column about dividing plant material further down this page.
- For years, we've advised you to take photos of your gardens so that you'll remember what was in a certain spot. If you have a beautiful container that bears repeating, take a picture of it. You can enjoy it again next year.

Best Watering Practices

The heat of the summer of 2010 seems as if it will never stop. The single most important thing you can do is water. And water. And water some more.

Whether it's your lawn or your gardens, by the month of August, you always need to water thoroughly and deeply. Shallow watering is best for seed germination. Spring seeding is long over, so run that hose for a longer time frame than you did earlier this year. The root system is where water is needed, not the foliage. Moisture evaporates quickly from the top inch of the soil and never actually reaches the roots.

By the way, it's always best to water in the morning or even early afternoon. You'll want the soil to warm up before cooler evening hours begin. Fungus and other diseases may occur when the soil is moist for too long.

Funny Deer Repellent Treatments

I'm a professional landscaper who offers deer repellent services. As a result, I'm constantly receiving offers to try new offers. Phone calls, mail offers or even salespeople end up contacting me at least once a month. Some of these seem viable; others are just plain dumb.

Our natural/organic deer repellent program is 100% effective or we'll return to treat your property again. You call always give us a call to receive more information about the program.

Just for fun (and since it's too hot to get serious about anything,) here's a few of the crazy schemes we've heard about.

- Electronic deer repellents. They use a lure to get deer to the unit, then zap them to train them away from the area. This just strikes me as mean and inhumane.
- Fencing is just plain silly. Deer jump over fences.
- Wireless fencing. Deer are attracted to a sweet smell on a post. When they go to lick it, a "startling shock frightens them from the area." Again, this strikes me as mean and inhumane. Also very expensive.
- Try a mixture of milk, water, eggs, cloves, garlic and cayenne pepper. Smells bad. Won't work!
- Dish soap, cooking oil and water. Nope.
- And finally. Balls of human hair. Do I really need to comment?

New Plants...For Free!

If your garden grows like mine, plants sometimes thrive in exactly the wrong spot.

You'll see that small ornamental grass you placed in a tight spot for extra foliage has now grown into an unruly mass. Daylilies that once made a pretty border now resemble a hedge.

Instead of cutting them back, divide them for additional plant material. The original plants will thank you for it. They'll be a lot healthier because they have room to grow and bloom once again.

Although spring is the best time for dividing most plant material, others cry out for late summer and early fall. Bearded iris are a prime example of plants that need to be divided now. Peonies can also be divided after the weather cools enough to replant the new divisions.

The growth pattern of many perennials can be described as clumping. Those clumps keep getting wider year after year and the plant begins to spread outward.

After several seasons, the healthy center of perennial plants die out. Your once beautiful plant material starts to resemble a doughnut.

In order to keep plants healthy, you need to divide them before the doughnut look appears. As a rule, clumping will occur in most perennials within 2-5 years. Any plant that grows 2-3 times its' original size probably needs to be divided. Any overgrown plant that is overgrowing the space you allotted for it also needs to be divided. It's your garden, after all!

Whether you're dividing spring or fall plant material, remember that it's a shock to their system. You can help reduce the trauma by giving them a good watering, preferably the day before.

You can also help reduce the amount of work the root system has to do. Remove the top third of the leaves, especially when working with iris. Give your new division plenty of room to expand into your garden.

If you've ever noticed landscapers installing plant material, you'll see a fair amount of uniform spacing between the same types of new vegetation. They are preparing that garden for the future. They know about how much room a mature plant of a certain species will require. As a bonus, smaller holes are required for newer plants. You won't have to dig as deep.

If you're doing the work yourself, please understand that dividing bearded iris is somewhat tricky. You have to separate and cut the rhizome in a certain spot. Just be careful with this procedure.

You can always email us at dellsadler.com about dividing plants or any other gardening questions.