

A Personal Message

It must be December. I'm aware of this because Melissa has baked hundreds of cookies again this year. They're hidden in the depths of our freezers somewhere.

There are huge containers of cookies in my parents' freezer too. Somewhere between the Chocolate Chippers and the Peanut Butter Kiss cookies, she stopped trusting me around the kitchen.

Now that's not to say I haven't been spending time making some of our Christmas gifts too. In fact, many of our gifts are homemade this year. I've prepared a large batch of my special barbecue dry rub in Mason jars. I even have special labels that say it's from Dell's Kitchen on the jar. Other edible gifts will also be forthcoming.

Such a busy time of year. It's a fun time of year too, especially when you're making gifts for others.

I don't know about you, but my family has pretty much everything we need in life. We delight in buying toys for the nieces and nephew on Melissa's side of the family. So, we decided to make some of our gifts this year, in addition to the 60 or 70 tins of cookies that we usually give away. It's been a rewarding experience for both of us. A ton of work, but a ton of fun too.

By the way, we have gift certificates available, if you'd like to give the gift of landscaping for Christmas. It's a bit unusual, but we've had several people who have purchased \$100 or \$200 worth of landscaping services for use during the coming year. Call or stop by the office, if you're interested.

Once again we'll offer our Winter Work Discount for 2009. Here's how it works: If you schedule a landscaping or woods restoration job during January or February, we offer 10% off all labor charges. The work does not have to be completed during those months, just scheduled and on the books. Unfortunately, we cannot extend this discount to lawn care work or deer and tick repellent services.

We'll be running crews again this winter too. Cold weather is the perfect time of year for certain types of woods restoration work.

You can also cut back ornamental grasses, and prepare new landscape beds much more efficiently at this time of year. We get so busy in the spring, that you may want to consider having this type of work done earlier in the year. We don't install plant material now, just prepare beds for plantings.

Here's hoping you have a very Merry Christmas! Remember, we don't publish a newsletter in January, so we'll see you in two months.



Melissa stands before a table of cookies during Christmas, 2007.

December Garden Tips

- We just saw a handy tip on the Internet for live Christmas trees. They recommend that you set the tree against the garage or warmest side of the house for about a day before you bring it inside. This acclimates the tree to the warmer conditions inside the house.
- Don't forget to water your tree daily to keep it fresh. Also, don't place your tree too close to a heating vent. It will dry out faster that you can possibly keep it watered.
- One more Christmas tree tip and we're finished. A great way to water a living tree is to place ice cubes on the root ball and let them melt. This method waters the tree slowly and thoroughly.
- If you use holly, boxwood or other greenery to decorate your halls, be sure to keep it watered. Wilt Pruf is a great antidesiccant which can help slow moisture loss. It's available at most florists or at Wal-Mart.
- Winter is a wonderful time to review your landscape plans for next year. Seed catalogs should arrive shortly after the first of the year. Even if you don't plant from seeds, they are a good source of inspiration. In fact, if a beautiful plant or two strikes your fancy, feel free to give us a call. Our designer will be glad to take a look and go over your ideas.



Let's Remove Your Leaves

This has been one of those years where leaves hung on the trees until almost Thanksgiving. It was really pretty, once the foliage finally started to turn colors. But now that the leaves are actually falling, we need to get them off your lawn.

A carpet of leaves can reduce photosynthesis production. Grass needs the nutrients that occur during photosynthesis, even during freezing weather.

When the weather is cooler, your lawn manufactures food in its' root system. This way, grass can actually continue a growth pattern, even during the dormant season.

In fact, your lawn needs sunlight now more than ever. Your lawn is preparing for an extended period of cold weather, just like us.

We are available to remove leaves quickly and efficiently. We have a top of the line leaf vacuum and industrial blowers. Our equipment is very similar to municipal leaf removal systems.

Our leaf vacuum actually mulches leaves as it vacuums them up. It features a 10 foot hose, which allows us to reach more of your property than ever. We can stay on your driveway and blow leaves right up to the vacuum, without placing heavy equipment on your lawn. This means we can haul away large, compacted loads in a timely and efficient manner.

Please call us if we can help you look sharp for the Holidays.



Lawn Care

By now, all of our new lawns have been installed and are waiting for next year's growing season.

We started from scratch on many lawns this fall. This means that we aerated the property in order to relieve compaction of the soil.

In this area, many lawns have compacted soil. Core aeration is the process of punching a hole in the soil, every 3-5 inches. Applying fertilizer into these holes allows nutrients to reach the root zone more quickly.

Due to the extremely dry weather of the summer and fall, we would not have been able to aerate any properties without our new Aeravator. It is designed specifically to penetrate clay-based and dry, packed soils.

The Aeravator not only punches holes in the soil, it also shatters the soil between the two holes. This provides an even larger break in the surface area of the soil for seed, compost, lime and fertilizer to penetrate.

If you aerated and overseeded your lawn this fall, the seed will begin to germinate. However, remember that the weather grew cooler than usual during October and November. So, you may not see full germination until early next spring.

Tall fescue grass seed requires temperatures of 50-55 degrees for germination. But, your grass seed is not just lying on top of the soil, waiting for warmer weather. Your grass seed is beneath the ground, in those aeration holes that we discussed above. The seed won't wash away and it won't rot either. It's protected beneath the surface of the soil.

So, if you don't see full germination, please don't worry. With the advent of warmer weather, you should see a full lush landscape because of the benefits you provided for your lawn this fall.



It's the Time of Year for Deer Repellent

Fall and winter are the seasons when deer are the most active. Here on the Eastern Shore, it's mating season and deer have only one thing in mind. Well, actually two things and the other one is foraging.

Every year, deer cause millions of dollars in damage to valuable landscaping plants, particularly in the fall. We can help with our natural/organic deer repellent.

Our repellent is 100% organic, so it won't harm people, pets or deer. It is guaranteed to work effectively against deer damage.

The spray has a wonderful aroma of peppermint, so it's not offensive when applied.

We apply the spray periodically, so it's effective year round. However, it's always applied more heavily during the first 3 months. Afterward, deer seem to grow used to the treated plants and we can reduce the amount of spray. Your cost is reduced after the first 3 months...a savings we pass along to you.



A young deer grazes on plant material right beside a home. This photograph was taken in November, 2008.