

Garden Tips

- We just read that if you pinch snapdragons back, they will bloom a second time during the summer. Snapdragons are easy to grow in this area; we can even grow them from seeds
- Also, if you want to make your mums to bloom in the fall, pinch them back for the last time this month. Blooming should be delayed until late August or September if you follow this schedule.
- You'll want to take it as slow as possible in the garden during the hot days of July. You may want to do a little weeding (or call us for help) and deadheading, but don't try to transplant when it's over 90 degrees. The extreme heat stresses you and the plants unnecessarily.
- Remember that containers need more water on a regular basis than plants in landscape beds. However, you may grow herbs in various containers like we do. As a rule, allow herbs to dry out completely before watering again.

A Personal Message

A tragedy occurred in our small family last month. We discovered that one of my cats, Katherine Hepburn (Miss Katie) had terminal cancer. After fourteen years with me, she was euthanized on Thursday, June 8th. The kind and compassionate staff and doctors at the Veterinary Medical Center in Easton knew Katie for many years. When she had a heart attack four years ago, they resuscitated her. Dr. Tyson and Dr. Bruce removed polyps from her throat and paw in several different surgeries. After that, we knew our time with Katie would be limited, due to her various health problems.

When she could no longer battle her illness last month, Dr. Bruce came to my home here in St. Michaels. Katie passed away in my lap, while Melissa petted her. The end seemed to be painless for her, but we are still grieving and will always miss her.

Katie was a rescue cat and she seemed to have a calm, brave soul. I understand that this is National Adopt-a-Cat month by the ASPCA. We will adopt again when we are able. If you're considering a new pet, I strongly urge that you think about adopting a cat. If you do, I hope you get a winner like Katie.

When you drive by my property and see two tanks that look like alien spacecraft, don't be alarmed. We set up our compost tea brewers on a point of land in the back last month. Several hundred gallons of this lovely liquid is brewing almost every day. Just don't try to drink it!

We began using compost tea in conjunction with our natural/organic lawn care program several years ago. Now, we also offer a natural root and natural plant spray for your landscaping shrubs and flowers. It really makes plants and shrubbery come alive.

Compost tea is an aerobically brewed liquid extract made from compost. It has a pleasant earthy smell, which is not overpowering.

Bacteria and fungi grow in the brewer because the water is aerated, a food source (we use kelp) is provided and an active compost (worm castings) have been added. Additionally, we add liquid garlic to some brews as a natural insect deterrent.

Our brewer is sterilized daily to prevent harmful bacteria growth. Because it contains live enzymes, compost tea has a shelf life of less than 24 hours.

If you're interested in having your landscaped plants and shrubbery sprayed with this wonderful amendment, please give us a call.

Bulletin for Natural/Organic Lawn Care Customers

It may seem too hot to worry about caring for your lawn this fall. However, in order to make sure that my staff is ready and products are here, I'm already planning for autumn.

If you're a current lawn care customer, I'll be contacting you soon. I'd like to arrange an appointment to take a look at your turfgrass and discuss our objectives for the future.

If you're interested in natural/organic lawn care, please give me a call and we'll set up a time to meet at your property. There is no cost and you're under no obligation after the meeting.

Another New Toy

We have a new addition to our family of property management equipment. Our DR Field and Brush Mower is hard at work clearing thick underbrush, weeds and other unwanted vegetation.

The DR is a walk-behind mower that chops and shreds underbrush at the same time. It's excellent for mowing along fences, driveways, hedgerows, property boundaries and under trees. We can handle tough areas in rugged conditions. This mower can even be used at a 20 degree angle, due to its' low center of gravity.

Examples of areas that we have cleared include pastures and wooded lots. We have taken heavily wooded areas and turned them into park-like settings. We can mow hiking trails and open up vistas that you may not be able to enjoy otherwise.

Because this mower is graded as low impact, it can be used near the water's edge. We can also mow saplings up to one inch in diameter.

Watering Your Lawn

Why, oh why do some people still insist on watering their lawn in the middle of the day?

Volumes have been written about proper watering techniques. Page after page has been published about the benefits of watering in the morning. (Or at least the early evening, if mornings are impossible.) So much information and yet...some people still aren't paying attention.

If you're watering your lawn in the morning or even during the early evening, Congratulations! If not, maybe you'd better read on.

Early morning watering gives your lawn a chance to dry out during the heat of the day. Additionally, morning moisture helps to reduce the rate of water evaporation. You can actually reduce the amount of water you use. Great for your water bill and even better, it assists conservation efforts.

When you water your lawn at night, there's no chance for the ground to dry out completely. The ground stays moist all night. This creates the perfect environment for fungus. Insects love these damp conditions also. It's an ideal breeding ground for them.

However, it's not a perfect world and your lawn must deal with this fact. If you must water the grass at night, shut off your sprinklers and hoses at least 30 minutes before sundown. This way, your grass can at least dry out a bit before the cool of the evening occurs.

As you probably know, the soil here in Talbot County has a heavy clay base. Water holds well in this soil. So, it's usually best to give your grass about one inch of water once a week (or 1/2 inch twice weekly.) This means that you're watering the root zone of your grass. In a healthy lawn, the root zone is about 6-8 inches deep. This method of "deep" and less frequent soaking is the optimum method of watering. It is considered to be shallow watering when you water the root zone less than three inches.

Shallow watering makes a lawn less drought resistant. The lawn is also more apt to have weed, insect, disease and thatch problems. Additionally, more water evaporation occurs from shallow watering practices.

Now, if we could just get people to direct their sprinklers toward the grass, instead of the sidewalk, we'd be one step closer to a perfect world.