

Garden Tips

- June is a busy month in the garden. It's time to prune and shape spring flowering trees and shrubbery. Remember how beautiful the forsythia and azaleas were this year? Keep them healthy by paring off the old branches to make way for new growth next spring.
- Deadheading your flowers is the best way to keep your bedding plants blooming. This is especially effective when dealing with hydrangea, day lilies and roses.
- We got a tip that this year's strawberry crop is one of the best ever. By the time you receive this newsletter, it should be peak season for local strawberries and blueberries will follow soon.
- When you purchase container or bedding plants from a garden center, be sure to gently break away some of the roots when transplanting. If you place a mass of circular roots into the ground, they will continue to grow that way.

A Personal Message

June is bustin' out all over and it looks like we have a fine summer ahead of us. Those drenching rains during the spring cleared the way for some beautiful landscaping. The rains also paved the way for lots of weeds and we're busier than ever, trying to get rid of them.

I'm afraid my own landscaping projects have ground to a halt somewhat. The demands of various jobs stretched us a bit thin. So, we're not as far along with our own gardens as we had hoped. Melissa is using some innovative container gardens, including a big straw hat she found. We hope to have more gardens ready later this summer. Meanwhile, we're still dealing with those tiny peat pots that our cats love. They insist on batting the pots around, especially since they've become overgrown with trailing vines, assorted herbs and rather leggy flowers.

We were able to squeeze in a few days at the beach last month. I worked for 42 days in a row this spring. That's a record for me and I hope I never have to go through a streak that long again. Needless to say, I was ready for some rest and relaxation. However, I had never been on vacation with a two year old.

Part of our vacation was spent with Melissa's sister and her family. The last time I saw my niece, Scarlett, she was an infant who mostly slept and drank bottles. Not so this time. At age 21 months, she is a veritable whirlwind of activity. Everything, including sand, goes into her mouth. She runs faster than I do. And she talks - loudly and often. It was a terrific vacation. But, we were so tired after they left that we extended our vacation by another day to recuperate. How do people with children do it? Can you tell I've never had kids?

May really was a busy month. We had a wonderful time with the Talbot County Master Gardeners and the Wilson Reading Garden Committee at their May meeting. I spoke about natural/organic lawn care at that meeting. It was part of their series on Bay- Wise landscaping.

The Master Gardeners maintain a website about their programs. It offers a wealth of information about safe, effective and sustainable gardening practices. There's information about their classes as well as various gardening topics. It's definitely worth your time to check them out at <http://mastergardener.umd.edu>.

If the demands of your lawn and gardens start to overwhelm you and prevent you from enjoying the summer, please give us a call. We can help make this summer a little more relaxing for you.

Elatior Begonias

For years, Elatior begonias have been enormously popular in Europe. We just discovered them this past spring. Elatiors are a hybrid begonia which were introduced to this country only a few years ago.

These plants are incredible to behold. They produce beautiful blooms just like a tiny rosebud in many vivid colors. And the foliage is a deep green that highlights the intense colors of the blooms.

Elatiors have been cross-bred with a tuberous begonia and "*Begonia socotrana*" from the small island of Socotra, off the Horn of Africa. This island gets extremely hot during their summer. The flowers grow dormant in the heat, but flourish during cooler weather. We already have several plants that are growing well in a shady spot on our deck.

Ajuga - Deer Resistant and Terrific

We found Ajuga while browsing the wonderful plant material at Garden Treasures. They carry 3 or 4 different varieties of it. Ajuga is a stunning ground cover that forms small white, pink or purplish-blue rosette flowers among the foliage. It's a creeping ground cover, so it will provide a thick carpet, if given enough time. Ajuga tolerates a wide range of soil conditions provided the soil is well drained. It can be grown in full sun or full shade. The leaves may be smaller if grown in full sun, but it produces more rosette flowers in the sun. Ajuga likes moist, well-drained soil.

Best of all, Ajuga is known to be a deer resistant plant. So, it can be used over a large area without fear of it disappearing to feed hungry deer.

One more fact: Ajuga is one of the few plants that a pre-emergent herbicide will harm, if not fully established.

Weeding Woes???????......

Are this year's crop of weeds too much for you to handle alone? We may be able to help.

Once again, we're offering our monthly weeding service which can encompass as much or as little work as you choose.

Every 3rd and 4th week of the month, we make a point of contacting everyone who has requested our services for the month. We email or mail a work order to you which provides the details of the job as we understand it. You'll need to review the work order and make any changes or corrections as you see fit. You can call or email any changes that are necessary for that month. You may also advise us that you don't need us to visit your property. If you don't need us, there is no charge for the month.

When you return your work order, we'll know the parameters of your job. You'll know what to expect after we finish the work. As always, we guarantee your satisfaction with our work.

Please keep in mind that there is no minimum charge for this service. You do not need to sign a contract either. This is simply a way that we can allocate resources for basic property maintenance without a 4 or 5 week waiting period.

In order to keep the quality of our work high, we have limited the number of client spaces that are available. At this time, we only have a few spots left for these monthly services. Give us a call soon if you are interested in one of the remaining spaces.

Deer Repellent That Really Works!

Are your landscaping plants providing a summer buffet for deer and their fawns? If you need a repellent that is 100% effective, please give us a call.

Our program is completely natural and organic. Unlike the traditional garlic and egg based repellents which are horribly offensive, our formula uses peppermint which is both effective and pleasant. It's a powerful formula that really works.

Best of all, the cost decreases after the first 3 months of usage. We spray less product and maintain the same effectiveness after three months. So, the savings get passed along to you.

We have an Owner's Guide which explains the program in detail. If you'd like a copy which will provide more information, please give us a call.