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**Natural/Organic Lawn Care**  
**Natural Deer Repellent Service**

**Tick Repellent**  
**Landscape Maintenance**

Monthly Newsletter

March, 2012

Volume 96

## March Garden Tips

\* Let's face it. You know you want to get back into your gardens. The weather is getting warmer and certain things need attention. Concentrate on removing dead plant material first. Also, trim perennials and ornamental grasses that need it. Ornamentals may be trimmed severely. Generally, they grow back very quickly.

\* Outdoor chores need to be scheduled carefully during the spring. You should make sure that the soil isn't too wet when you walk in the garden. Otherwise, the soil will become heavy and compacted. Water and light are unable to reach the plant material.

\* Are your houseplants showing signs of wear and tear? Spring is the best time to repot them. Your plant may need a bigger pot. Symptoms of needing a bigger pot include drying out more rapidly than usual. Or, the plant may just look too big for the container. Always use fresh potting soil and be sure to loosen the roots of the plant if they seem tangled. When you give your plant a new home, increase the size of the pot by about one to two inches in depth and width. Always water your plants after repotting. Just avoid overwatering.

## A Personal Message

Here it is, the beginning of March. It's the start of springtime in my mind. But whatever happened to the winter of 2012???

Mind you, I'm not complaining. Just a general question. It seems strange that my electric bill wasn't appearing as a four digit number. The bags of fertilizer and salt I set aside for clearing my sidewalks are still full. My snow shovel stayed put, hiding his face in the corner. All good things as far as I'm concerned.

But, there were some negatives. The crocuses in our garden shot up in February. Not exactly conducive for the health of these plants. Cold winter weather helps kill off certain insects, like grubs, that can damage your lawn during the growing season.

And, most importantly, Melissa and I didn't get to tuck ourselves away for a snow day or two this year. Since we live above our offices and right beside our warehouse, we enjoy the isolation of an occasional snow day. Not too many, but a couple of days are always fun. However, most of our staff has returned to work from their winter hiatus. We're ready to assist you with those spring clean-up plans. I'm back on WCEI radio (96.7) every Thursday morning at 8:10 AM. Matt Spence and I discuss landscaping and gardening information each week. Hope you'll give us a listen.

**By the way: Check out the new and improved format of our newsletter you can receive via email. There's more pictures, more content and even some nice coupons here and there.**

**You can join our newsletter email list by going to the "Contact Us" section of our website and filling out the form. It only takes a second and we WILL NOT give your email address to anyone else.**

**We're hoping to bring a fresh face to it as we approach the 100th issue of the newsletter later this year. And, we believe there's always room for improvement.**

**Thanks for allowing us to be part of the information you receive about landscaping.**

## It's Springtime on the Eastern Shore

**And where there are plants,  
there are deer**

As new plant growth emerges, so do hungry deer and their new offspring. Foraging deer are a real menace to fledgling gardens. Actually, they do a lot of damage to mature plants as well.

Farmers are constantly plagued by deer. Even local nurseries report damage to their stock. If the professionals have trouble, how can you protect your valuable plant material?

**ALERT:** *As I was writing this article, I confess to gazing out the window several times to gather my thoughts. Six white-tail deer ran across the St. Michaels Road. They ran from the Volunteer Fire Department, across the Rails to Trails pathway, into the empty field on the opposite side. For those of you who know the area, it's a very well-traveled road. Amazing!*

Back to the article...

We offer a natural/organic deer repellent service that can work in tandem with an integrated approach to other deer controls. Our repellent is sprayed directly onto the plant material and contains peppermint oil. Deer definitely DON'T LIKE peppermints. They quickly learn to avoid treated plant material and move on to other feeding grounds.

There are other avenues you can follow to help control damage. Start by using deer resistant plant material when you purchase new plants this spring. Iris, Purple Coneflowers and Black-Eyed Susans are some of the native plants that don't usually appear on a deer's buffet table.

Rutgers University has a wonderful list of plant material that is deer resistant. It's subdivided by annuals, perennials, ornamentals, etc. Here's the link to get right to the file from the Rutgers Cooperative Research & Extension Agency Bulletin: [njaes.rutgers.edu/deerresistance/](http://njaes.rutgers.edu/deerresistance/). It's a very interesting site.

## Customer Comments

We received a very cute letter recently. A customer thanked us for removing her leaves. When we invoiced her, the description on her bill read like this:

*"We began removing leaves from the lawn and from the landscaped beds, as outlined in the work order dated January 15, 2012. We blew leaves into piles and vacuumed them with our large leaf blower which mulches as it removes the leaves. This compacts the load so that we can haul more leaves away at once, making the process much more efficient. All debris was loaded and hauled to the landfill."*

~  
Here's what she wrote back:

*"I appreciated your coming over ASAP. It was a big job! I also thank you for giving me a "blow by blow" (so to speak) description of what you did - !!"*

~  
Although we have standard phrases on our invoices, we're still a small company. We remember our clients and the projects that we complete for them. We can always provide more information about the job if you ever have questions regarding your bill.

Additionally, all of our trucks now have GPS navigation systems on them. We're able to verify where our crews are at any given moment. One other benefit...we also don't get lost as often these days!

## Natural/Organic Lawn Care

### A Green Approach for a Green Lawn

We've been providing green alternatives for lawn care for a long time. Now in our ninth year, our natural/organic program is a viable alternative to chemically based programs.

There are many reasons to consider an organic lawn care program vs. a synthetic chemical approach. Our proximity to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries is probably the most obvious one.

A healthy lawn acts as a natural filter to slow or stop unwanted pollutants from entering our waterways. To that end, maintaining your healthy lawn with a natural/organic program seems well worth considering.

Organic products provide slow release, naturally occurring fertilizers that treat the soil, as well as feed your grass. Our insecticides are natural and organically derived and will not harm beneficial bacteria that move nutrients and decompose thatch.

Chemical programs use quick release nitrogen which contributes to thatch buildup and attracts insects. Synthetic insecticides and fungicides are not selective and kill beneficials. Beneficials do everything from controlling pest populations to eliminating thatch.

Synthetic pesticides and fungicides also build up resistance in the target pest. Rutgers University has identified 330 species of insects that have resistant strains.

We believe that our natural/organic products and services will enhance plant growth and deter unwanted pests. There is no need for more pesticides on our lawns, in our drinking water, polluting the Chesapeake Bay and in the air. Switch to a healthier approach to ensure the health of your lawn and the future of our environment.