

Personal Message

I have a big announcement to make. We're having a multi-family YARD SALE over the Memorial Day weekend. There, I said it.

Melissa is going to kill me. She professes that she is going to die of embarrassment if I have a yard sale. If I clear out some of my junk, she'll be happy. That's my only saving grace.

We'll be out in the parking lot facing the main road in St. Michaels. You can't miss us! My roadside sign is very visible as you enter St. Michaels. It will be flashing for the occasion.

Over the winter, I developed an interest in exploring antique and junk stores. I began selling items on eBay and Craig's List. Now, it's turned into a full-fledged addiction. I love to visit thrift stores, flea markets and garage sales.

My specialty is vintage kitchen equipment. I always have old mixers and coffee pots for sale. We refinished an old stove recently. It has a warming drawer, four burners and cutting board space on top of the oven. It turned out so well that we may keep it for ourselves.

Additionally, I'll have lots of lamps for sale. I love all sorts of lamps and have learned to rewire them recently. Area rugs and small pieces of vintage furniture are another favorite. We like the occasional odd chair or table from the 50's and 60's.

Melissa has gotten into the act too. She's even refurbished a lamp with a glass globe. She is so proud of the work she did. After she cleaned all the old gold leaf paint off the "grapes" in the globe, she repainted the base and I wired the lamp again for safety. It's stunning and has a place of honor in our home.

However, since it's only a hobby, I'm still forced to work for a living. So let me update you about what's really going on in our world.

We're continuing to fertilize lawns with our organic products. We're spraying a compost tea solution on lawns now. The heavy precipitation of this past winter and spring are assuring that grass is growing at an unprecedented rate. I've never seen grass grow this fast!

Then, as quickly as it grows, our Bobcat mowers are out there, mowing it down. We have a great deal of experience with mowing lawns and our prices are just right. There are still openings on our schedule. Please give us a call if you're interested. We'll provide you with a free estimate.

I need to leave. I promised to help clean out more winter debris out of our gardens. Melissa is still planting and she's run out of room for her new plants. Happy gardening to one and all!

May Garden Tips

- Smile! Summer is just around the corner.
- Plant just about anything your heart desires. May is THE month for new plant material. You may also install summer flowering bulbs and it's still okay to plant seeds. How about planting gladiola bulbs every two weeks until the 1st of July? You'll have fresh cut flowers until the first frost.
- Here's a great tip for cutting your grass. It's free and helps to control weeds naturally. Try setting your mower at a higher cut during the spring months. It helps the grass to grow in fuller and also helps to choke out weeds.
- Please use mulch wisely. Don't pile fresh mulch over layers of hard crusty stuff. If it's too old, consider removing it. There's also a chance that you may not need additional mulch this year. Often, we use a technique called fluffing your mulch. This is the process of breaking up the hard crust that formed over the winter months. It helps assure that moisture will reach the roots of your plant material. It makes it appear as if mulch has been freshly applied. Great look! Low price!

More May Garden Tips

There are lots of fabulous garden tips out there for May. In fact, there's so many, that we decided to publish a few more than normal. So, here goes:

- Please resist the temptation to cut back your daffodil's spent foliage. Blooms will be healthier and more vibrant next year, if you leave the foliage alone for at least 6 weeks. Let it go until the leaves turn yellow and brown.
If you must tidy up, try planting sun-loving annuals, such as daylilies, close to the spent leaves. Planting marigolds around the base of daffodil clumps is also a great idea. They help repel insects. Marigolds are almost as visually appealing as daffodils and they have the advantage of blooming FOREVER. We use them in almost all of our gardens as a natural insect repellent.
- Here's a great tip for purchasing annuals. Buy plant material without blooms. They're probably much healthier. Choose a flower that's short and bushy. The larger plants with long stems may not transition to their new home as well.
- It's still okay to prune hedges that have outgrown their desired shape.
- Every garden needs a tomato plant or two. When you set them, dig a hole that's deep enough to place about half the plant into the soil. As a guide, place the plant in soil up to the first true leaves. Whenever the stem comes into contact with the soil, roots are initiated. The better the root system, the stronger the plant.
Remember to leave enough space between plants for staking and caging them. Tomato plants are nothing if not droopy. You don't want the fruit to touch the ground...it will develop black spot and rot quickly.
Four feet between plants is optimum if you have the space. Four feet between rows will also be the best spacing for tomato cages.
- Last year, we had some success planting lettuce underneath our tomato plants. The leaves provided the shade that lettuce needs to thrive. However, it was a little difficult to harvest because the plants became so bushy. Still, it was nice to have lettuce in the summer.

Tick Control

Questions and Answers

After his own bout with an infected tick bite, Dell has become an advocate for tick controls. He believes that prevention is the key to safety from tick-borne diseases.

Here are the answers to some of the most popular questions he has fielded over the years.

Q: Who needs a tick repellent program?

A: If you and your family (and pets too!) live near a wooded area, you may be especially susceptible to tick incidence. Also, if you have any unmanaged landscape areas on your property, you may have an active tick population.

Q: What does your program encompass?

A: We begin with identification of a possible tick population. If you have evidence of tick activity, we may suggest a spray of their habitat areas. We also use Damminix tubes which we place in areas where squirrels and mice nest. Their nests are vectors for ticks.

Q: Do Damminix tubes harm the mice and squirrels?

A: No. The tubes contain cotton materials which have been soaked with a pesticide that's deadly to ticks, but doesn't harm mammals. The squirrels take the cotton materials back to their nests to use as bedding and it kills ticks at that site.

Q: When are the sprays applied?

A: We spray in the spring and early fall, when tick activity on the Eastern Shore of Maryland is at its' peak. May and September are the months of prime activity.

Q: Is there anything else I can do to prevent tick incidence?

A: When we analyze your property for a possible tick population, we may notice areas which are vectors for them. Rodent nests are a beehive of tick activity. Nests are usually built in brushy areas that we may suggest clearing. Older woodpiles may be host to a large population. Any woodland areas or even landscaped areas with dense ground cover, dead leaves or a heavy concentration of shrubbery can be infested with ticks.

Q: Will your deer repellent spray kill ticks?

A: Unfortunately not. It may reduce the level of tick activity by repelling the hosts (deer) away from your property, but our natural/organic deer repellent does not kill ticks.