

Garden Tips

- You can wrap green tomatoes in newspapers to ripen gradually this fall. Pick tomatoes that are mostly green with just a hint of red. Store in a single layer in a cool dark place. We ate our final homegrown tomatoes on Christmas Eve last year.
- If you need more foliage in your overall landscaping, now is the time to plant. One internet tip that we loved suggests red accent plants for fall color. Trees with red color include red maple and scarlet oak. Good choices for autumn type shrubs are barberry, viburnum and sumac.
- If you decide to plant this fall, you MUST water new plantings thoroughly. This summer's drought as well as the dry weather of past years makes manual watering essential. Try to make sure that your plants get at least an inch of water per week in the fall.
- It's probably best to start bringing house plants indoors for the winter. Be sure to clean them off before placing them inside.

A Personal Message

Is it possible that summer is actually over? If so, I think I missed something. I know that our company has been busier than ever, but this qualifies as the fastest summer on record.

They're saying that the summer of 2007 may also qualify as the hottest summer on record. Remember all those 97 degree days in July and early August? When January comes along, we'll probably wish for just one day of intense heat like that.

Now that the weather is slightly cooler, we are able to work full days. During the worst heat, we were forced to quit at 2:00 or 3:00 in the afternoon. I have a long-standing rule of not working my crews in extreme heat or extreme cold. We value our employees and want them with us for a long time.

One of the projects that we began last month is digging out some of the old, raggedy plant material around our offices. There must have been 200 bearded irises growing on either side of the entrance door. We left enough iris bulbs for a good show early next summer and removed the rest. Unfortunately, they were hauled to the landfill before we could divide and offer to share them. Next time, we won't be so hasty to throw things away.

Additionally, we began to install some of the landscape beds that Melissa has wanted for so long. We are working along the ditch line and in front of the offices along the front road to prepare gardens for planting. We're also building a French drain on the side of the property. Our French drain is designed to divert water from ending

up under our house.

We'll be using the same compost-amended topsoil in our gardens that we use on your properties. Talbot County soil is clay-based and extremely dense. Soil quality is generally poor and needs additional nutrients. Adding compost to topsoil as an amendment always packs a punch for plant material.

Here's an introduction for you. For over five years, my sister, Elaine, has worked for me. She has learned landscaping and lawn care from the ground floor up. Elaine has been an excellent technician and can drive a tractor better than me. I have promoted her into our Sales and Marketing Division. She'll be joining me for many appointments, so hopefully, you'll meet her soon.

Here's hoping that you enjoy a wonderful autumn. Don't forget to plant

LAWN CARE TERMS AND CULTURAL PRACTICES

Here's a glossary of terms that are basic to our lawn care services

Overseeding

Adding seed to your existing turf is the process known as overseeding. A strong healthy lawn will be able to out-compete weeds for much needed nutrients.

Overseeding is generally recommended once a year, until a thick stand of turf is established. We use only endophyte enhanced grasses for seeding our lawns.

Aerating Your Lawn - Why it's a Good Idea?

Core aeration is a process that relieves compaction of the soil. Aerating your soil allows much needed nutrients to get to the root zone more quickly and efficiently.

We aerate large properties with an attachment on our tractor. Smaller properties and tight spaces are pushed off with a motorized hand aerator.

Core aeration will leave a "plug" of soil on the surface of the lawn that makes a lawn appear to have been plowed. However, the plugs break down in one or two weeks and disappear back into the soil.

Core aeration is probably the single most important cultural practice that can be done for your lawn.

Proper pH Levels

We offer a complete process of renovation for your lawn. We can dethatch the lawn which removes excess dead roots and grass. Thatch build-up harbors turfgrass diseases and fungus. It also prevents nutrients from reaching the root zone, effectively starving the plant. Thatch is usually created by the use of quick release nitrogen and synthetic insecticides.

Additionally, we aerate, overseed and fertilize. For truly troubled lawns, we may suggest the addition of compost amended topsoil. Topsoil which includes a compost blend may be needed if conditions will not permit a healthy lawn. It can be used to redo only the trouble spots or we can smooth and grade the entire lawn.

Endophyte Enhanced Grasses

These grasses have been bred specifically to be insect, disease and fungus resistant. These grasses “taste” bad to surface feeding insects such as sod webworms and chinch bugs. Use of these grasses will reduce the chance of insect and fungus problems.

Our grass seed has been developed for Talbot County, so it works well in our clay based soil.