



The Real Dirt

October, 2011

Putting Your Garden to Bed:

Now is a great time to plant trees and shrubs or prune existing evergreens and spring flowering shrubs. Fit each of your roses with a rose collar and fill with soil. Another way of protecting them is to place six inches of soil around the base of the plant or use compost or leaves.

Either cut perennials back now or wait until spring to cut them back. Most grasses should be cut back in the spring. Early fall is the best time to fertilize or seed your lawn. This has been a terrible summer for a lot of our lawns. If your grass has not grown back after this time and you have patchy areas of dead grass, it's possible that you have an insect problem such as grub worm or chinch bug treat with a chemical drench such as Grubout. After a short period of time, top dress, seed or replace with new sod.

In mid fall collect all leaves etc. for composting. Give your lawn one last cutting at 1-1/2 inches high.

Add lime and bonemeal to your flowerbeds. Remove annuals from your planters and add some beautiful fall mums. Ensure that you continue to deadhead for continuous late blooms.

Collect seeds of your favourite plants for starting under lights in the spring. Dry and separate the seeds from the seed head, then store them in paper bags or envelopes in a cool location or refrigerator.



Water your EVERGREENS well before the ground freezes. The best way to do this is with a root feeder.

Consider buying a new garbage can with a lid to store vegetable scraps over winter so you can add these to your COMPOSTER in the spring. Annuals should be cut off at ground level and added to your compost pile.

At the end of season- after the frost has killed all the vegetation, remove all the

plant material. Add compost, fertilizer with a high phosphorus content, and potassium or bone meal. Turn over the soil. Remove all debris.

You need to lift all your summer BULBS, as they will not survive the winter. Remove your glads when the foliage starts to turn brown. Let them dry for a number of days then cut the stem about two inches from the corm. Remove and discard the stem and old corm underneath the newly formed corm. Dust with bulb dust powder and store in a cool dry location. Leave your begonias and dahlias until the foliage has been frosted and it will come off quite easily.

Remove all the soil, dust, and store in trays of sawdust or peat moss. Cut back the stem of dahlias to six inches. Remove all the earth and store in a plastic storage container. Place sand or peat moss on the bottom then add the tubers making sure they do not touch. Separate layers with newspapers or paper towels. Look forward to sprouted bulbs next Spring all ready for planting.

John Craw, Master Gardener

October TO DO List

- Divide perennials
- Mulch the garden, but avoid covering plants completely until the ground has frozen.
- When raking leaves use indifferent ways: add them to the compost pile, gather them into their own compost pile to decompose into leaf mold or mow them over and then file them into flower beds.
- Breakup leaves by putting them in a bucket and using a whipper- snipper to cut them into fine pieces.
- Amend soil with fertilizer in preparation for next spring.
- Continue to water trees and shrubs until freeze up.
- Pull out annuals and add to the compost pile
- Keep compost covered during heavy rains and sprinkle with water if it is too dry. The correct level of moisture has the consistency of a wrung out sponge.
- Start cleaning, pruning, repotting and isolating houseplants that have been outside for the summer to ensure a bug-free re-entry. Spray the plants thoroughly with an insecticidal soap and repeat two more times .times, waiting 5 days between applications, before bringing them indoors.



Master Gardeners of Simcoe County

Where to find us this month for free gardening advice!

ONGOING:

E-mail Help Line: mgoc_helpline@yahoo.ca

- monitored daily
- send photos of garden pests, diseases or plants for ID

COMING EVENTS

November 15, 2011 Master Gardener Meeting 7:00pm

The White Pine Boardroom,
2284 Nursery Rd. Midhurst

TBA Fix up session for The Bob Rumball Centre.

Ask a Master Gardener books containing answers to your most common gardening questions are available at any of these speaking engagements for only \$10 these are valuable references for you or as gifts for a gardening friend!

Either e-mail jonbon@bell.net to order or call 705-436-5292

“Carefree” refers more to your plant’s attitude than to your workload.



For information on arranging a lecture for your group please contact Joan Nieman-Agapas 705-721-9088. For more information on Master Gardeners, visit our website: and follow the links to

Simcoe County Master Gardeners.

Tip of the Month: Clean and sharpen your TOOLS. For tools with wooden handles, restore the smoothness by rubbing with sandpaper or steel wool. You should apply linseed or tung oil to the handle once or twice a year. To prevent rust, it’s a good idea to wash or brush the dirt off your tools after every use. Use a wire brush to remove caked on dirt. Your tools will work much better if you keep them sharpened by using a file or grinding wheel.