



# Digging It!

September, 2012

## Going Wild!

You might decide to naturalize your garden to reduce water consumption, chemical fertilizers and pesticides, or to attract wild life. For many gardeners a compromise is found and they nurture nature with a combination of native plants and perennials.

Regardless of how wild you want to go, first evaluate your conditions. (sun, soil and moisture). Purchase plants from local reputable sources. Do not harvest 'wild' plants or buy from a dealer that does. You are inviting unknown diseases or pests into your garden.

The woodland gardens are mostly created in shady or semi-shaded areas. You may need to dig at least 4 inches of compost or sphagnum peat moss into 8 inches of topsoil to duplicate the rich soil found in a forested area. Prune tree branches to improve air circulation and water with a soaker hose or by drip irrigation to avoid fungal diseases and mildew.

Tall perennials include Bee Balm, Snakeroot, Jacob's Ladder. Solomon's Seal, Ferns, Blue Wood Aster, Meadow Rue, Bellwort. These can be supplemented with yellow lilies

in semi shaded areas or lime green hostas to brighten up darker corners. Many woodland gardens also contain tree stumps, rocks or other structures covered in glorious green moss and surrounded by woodland ferns.

For the under-story there is a large choice of ground covers and spring ephemerals; Spring-Beauty, St. John's Wort, May Apple, Hepatica, Anemone, Wild Ginger, violets, Jack-in-the-pulpit, Bloodroot, Trout Lilies, Cinquefoil and of course mosses. Bulbs such as daffodils and snowdrops will fill in your garden quite nicely in-between bloom times if planted underneath the hostas.



Meadow gardens are sunny and usually very dry with average soil, with lower nutrients.

To create a meadow garden remove all grass from the area and plant individual plants or

wildflower seed brought in from a nursery. -Not the large mixes purchased in a can as you do not know what they contain. Good choices include; Black-eyed Susan's, Daisies, Butterfly Weed, Coneflower, Blue Flag, Rose Mallow, Poppy, Prairie Rose and a variety of grasses.

Wetland Gardens are found mostly in full sun. They can be created by the installation of a pond kit. A bog garden can be created by installing a piece of pond liner in a low lying area. Punch holes in the liner so that 6 inches down there is water and 2 inches down it is dry. Some plants will grow in the water such as water lilies, pickerel weed, duckweed and some on the periphery Cat Tails, Marsh Marigolds, Tall Meadow Rue and some plants of the side forget-me-nots, high or low bush cranberry nearby. Even a small pond will create wildlife and provide entertainment for a lazy summer afternoon. Any water tight container can be a garden pool and a musical natural spring added with a dripstone and a waterline.

The secret of any successful garden is to work with what you have and choose the correct plants for the environment.

*Cherin Harris-Tuck, Master Gardener*

## September TO DO List

- Divide perennials
- Rejuvenate garden beds by moving plants around for continuous bloom and better design & function
- Mulch flower beds with compost or shredded leaves – let the worms do the hard work of incorporating this organic matter into the soil
- Start tagging/labelling dahlias and other summer bulbs indicating colour, size of bloom and height (and cultivar name if known) so that when you lift them for storage, you will be able to include that information. Once frost hits, it's hard to identify each plant and memory is not always reliable
- Water trees & shrubs (especially those planted this year) so that they go into dormancy well watered
- 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, waiting 5 days between applications, before bringing them indoors

### Tip of the Month:

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is destroying our hardwood forests. The adults leave a D shaped hole where they emerge. It is often not until these holes are observed on the bark of the tree that the EAB is detected. The MNR is currently researching chemical and environmental methods to stop or deter the pest.

### Dig it!

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## Master Gardeners of Simcoe County

### Where to find us for free gardening advice!

Tuesday, September 18, 2012 Angus Horticultural Society meeting at Angus United Church. Meeting starts at 7:00 pm

Tuesday September 18, 2012 SCMG Meeting at the White Pine Board Room, Midhurst.

Saturday October 20, 2012 Simcoe County Master Gardeners Technical Update at the Simcoe County Museum 9-4. (\$40 members, \$45 non-members)

*Oh, Adam was a gardener, and God  
who made him sees*

*That half a proper gardener's work is  
done upon his knees.*

*-Rudyard Kipling*

**Ask a Master Gardener** books containing answers to your most common gardening questions are available at any of these speaking engagements for only \$10 or Gardening Guides for only \$1. Valuable references for you or as gifts for a gardening friend!



For information on arranging a lecture for your group please contact Joan Nieman-Agapas 705-721-9088 or email her at [jnabarrie@yahoo.ca](mailto:jnabarrie@yahoo.ca). For more information on Master