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Nature's News & Notes

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"PROVIDING BEAUTIFUL, HEALTHY & BALANCED LANDSCAPES"

We hope you are enjoying the changing leaves, fresh apples and pumpkins here in the Hamptons. As the growing season winds down we provide information about preparing for that inevitable cold & stormy weather.

Preventative Care for Trees



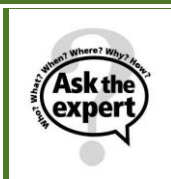
The best way to care for tree injuries is to prevent them from happening. If your tree looks vulnerable to wind or damage from heavy snow, cabling or bracing can help reduce stress damage. Too often we are called after the tree has already begun to split or even fail completely. Cables and braces installed correctly

in a tree can extend the useful and safe life of a tree. Cabling and bracing does not repair a hazard, but when done correctly by a trained arborist, it can extend the time a tree or its parts are safe.

Cabling and bracing creates artificial support to structurally weak or injured trees and branches, and reduces the likelihood of limb or trunk failure. It is not a guarantee and will not always make a tree safe. Cables and bracing rods are often installed in mature trees with co-dominate leaders, large weak or heavy limbs, or cracks and splits in the trunk or limbs. Trees that are near or overhang homes and driveways should receive special consideration. Cables generally consist of extra high strength steel attached to bolts. They are intended to limit the movement of the supported branches so they are less likely to fail during storms. Braces are rods that are installed through unions of weak branches and multiple stems to provide more rigid support from forces that can occur in violent weather.

Supplemental structural support systems should only be installed based on a thorough inspection and evaluation of tree structure by a certified arborist. Not only can improper cabling or bracing result in damage to the tree, it can also be very dangerous. All our materials and techniques comply with published industry standards (American National Standards Institute A-300). Those who already have supplemental structural support systems should contact us as these need to be inspected once a year.

[Complimentary Consultation](#)



Why Should I Lime My Lawn?

Liming is the practice of applying calcium and magnesium carbonate (the same thing that is in your Rolaids!) to reduce soil acidity (raise pH) and make soils more favorable for turfgrass growth. Raising soil pH requires a quantity of liming material that is determined by the degree of soil acidity as well as the quality and type of liming material. Cool-season turfgrasses grow best in soils ranging from pH 6.0 to 6.8. In humid areas, such as the northeast, water from rainfall percolates through the soil, leaching ions such as calcium and magnesium (which prevent the soil from becoming more acid) and replacing them with acidic ions such as hydrogen. Proper soil pH affects turfgrass health by improving availability of plant nutrients and can discourage weed infestations & disease problems. Many beneficial soil microorganisms do not

Plant of the Month-Hyacinthiflora Lilac



With Winter coming, why not think Spring! Lilacs are fabulous shrubs with showy flowers from early May to June. Of all the lilacs available, there is an outstanding group that should be on every gardener's list. These are the Hyacinthiflora lilacs, sometimes called the Early Flowering Hybrids. Vigorous and easy to grow, they are exceptionally hardy and reward with sweetly-perfumed blossoms that open 1 to 2 weeks before the common lilac. This puts them among the earliest of Spring bloomers. As a bonus, their foliage is highly resistant to the powdery mildew that can plague other lilacs and often turns shades of red, purple and bronze in autumn. You can plant lilacs in early spring but it really is better to plant them in the fall before the ground freezes. Remember October is still an excellent time to plant.

Whats Going on with My Boxwoods?



Volutella blight is a fungal disease of English and American boxwoods.

It can be confused with Winter injury symptoms.

The two often go hand in



hand because the fungus often infects wounds resulting from winter injury. If winter injury alone is the problem, new, healthy leaves will appear in spring and eventually hide the bronze-colored leaves. The first noticeable symptom is that certain branches or certain plants in a group do not start new growth as early in the spring as do others, nor is the new growth as vigorous as that on healthy specimens. Infected leaves turn upward and lie close to the stem instead of spreading out like the leaves on healthy stems. Symptoms consist of weak and spindly plants. Dead or dying branches occur randomly in the bush. Volutella moves down the stem, whereas winter injury happens seemingly at once and does not progress down the stem. We have seen this disease affecting many Boxwoods on properties this season; often doing very serious damage.

The best way to control this disease is to improve air circulation within the plant by thinning the branches. Crowded growth and dead leaves in the branch crotches tend to maintain high levels of humidity in the canopy, making conditions conducive to dieback diseases. Dead branches should be removed as soon as they are noticed. The annual removal and destruction of all leaves that have lodged in crotches of branches is also recommended. Proper pruning aids the development of strong stems. Avoid shearing since it promotes compact, twiggy growth and injures leaves, making them more prone to disease. Prune dead stems back to healthy tissue. Removal of dead branches and leaves from crotches of the plant, as well as yearly renewal of mulch material, will also aid in control. Utilizing anti-desiccant sprays (see below) can help in reducing the Winter injury that leads to increased incidence of this disease. In serious situations a Spring fungicide program should be considered.

thrive in strongly acidic soils. These microorganisms break-down nitrogen fertilizers, thereby releasing the nitrogen for use by the turfgrass. Soil microorganisms also aid in the decomposition of thatch and grass clippings. Liming is needed if the pH of your soil is too low for optimum growth of the turf you want to maintain. Soil pH can be determined only by a soil test. Apply limestone only if your soil test results show a need for it, and never guess at the amount of limestone needed.

[E-Mail Your Questions](#)



Winterize Your Evergreens



Winter injury to Evergreens is most often caused by loss of moisture. Evergreen plants continuously lose water through openings in the leaf or needle surface. During winter, drying winds extract precious moisture at a time when roots are embedded in frozen soil making it difficult for water lost through the leaves to be replenished by the roots. Common Evergreens such as Boxwood, Hemlock, Pine, Spruce, Rhododendron, Laurel and Holly are just a few species that are prone to damage. New transplants are particularly sensitive.

What are the effects of winter-burn? Leaves and needles turn brown or become scorched along the tips and edges. Buds and twigs will become brittle and snap when bent. The plants become more susceptible to disease. In severe cases the entire plant may die. When you consider possible replacement costs versus prevention, treatment is a wise decision.

Antidesiccants form a thin, transparent film on leaf surfaces. This creates a moisture barrier over the plants surface, holding water in place or slowing its outward movement. These applications help reduce excessive water loss from leaves during the dry winter months when the ground is frozen. Plant moisture loss during the winter months is reduced between 15 to 20%.

Antidesiccants also help to minimize sun scald, which occurs when white surfaces, like snow or the siding of a house, cause reflection of the sun and burn the plant. The use of an anti-desiccant does not guarantee that foliage will be spared against winter injuries & does not protect against plant cells being damaged during excessively cold temperatures but are effective at greatly reducing the risk of damage.

A Mossy Lawn



Moss is a common problem in many lawns. Moss can grow to a sizable thickness prohibiting turfgrass from growing in these areas, it usually occurs in sites where growing conditions are unfavorable for good turfgrass. Some of the most common unfavorable growing conditions include low soil fertility, low soil pH (acid soil), poor drainage (wet soil conditions), compacted soil, insufficient sunlight due to shade from trees and buildings, surface tree roots that compete with turfgrass that is not adapted to the particular site. These growing conditions need to be evaluated and corrected, as they not only encourage moss growth, but lead to a thin, poor lawn. While mosses are most likely to be found growing in moist, shaded areas, they are found growing in full sunlight. There is a uniquely formulated granular that quickly eradicates moss on contact and does not harm the grass. Results are seen in 24 to 48 hours; it contains no Heavy Metals or Toxic Residual Chemistries; and helps Prevent Re-establishment.



Aquatic Plant Care

The seasonal change from summer to fall is apparent by the beautiful, multi-colored leaves and the dip toward cooler temperatures. How will that chill you feel in the air affect the plants in your aquatic paradise?

Dropping temperatures signal your hardy aquatic plants to prepare for their winter dormancy. It's ok to leave these plants where they are in your pond to weather the cold of winter, be sure the dying foliage is trimmed down to 2" above the water level.

Water lilies will also begin to show their dislike for the cold with yellowing leaves and fewer flowers. Water lilies are happy in the pond year round, as long as the water temperature stays above 60°F. When freezing is likely, it is easiest to simply buy new plants each season. The foliage of your lotus plants will need to be trimmed back after they have died back and turned brown. It's important not to cut the leaves while they are still green because the freshly cut, hollow stems are susceptible to disease which can spread to the plant's tuber, possibly killing the plant. Lotus tubers will not withstand freezing, so any plants that are growing in the shallow areas of your pond should be moved to the bottom, away from freezing water.

In warm climates, tropical plants will keep growing. Water gardeners who live in our planting zone should treat these plants as any garden annual by replacing them each season. A fun alternative to this is to treat them as tropical houseplants and bring them in for the winter. Most tropicals will do well potted in heavy garden soil in a sealed clay pot with no drainage holes. When kept wet, the plants do well in a sunny window or sunroom.

Caring for your aquatic plants in the fall will mean less work and healthier plants come spring. Use some of your tropical aquatics to water garden indoors!

Fall Garden Clean-Up



This summer's cool, wet weather made it a difficult growing season. That means that clean-up will be especially important this fall to reduce next year's diseases and insect problems. Sanitation is one of the most important steps you can take to insure that next

year's garden will be healthy.

Plant disease agents such as bacteria, fungi and viruses all remain alive, though dormant, during the winter months. By recognizing the places where these organisms hide, they can often be destroyed and prevent disease outbreaks the following spring. Many fungi spend the winter on or in old leaves, fruit and other garden refuse. The fungus that causes scab on apple trees and flowering crabapples stays dormant, in fallen leaves. Black Spot, one of the best-known rose diseases, overwinters on fallen leaves and twigs and re-infests healthy plants in the spring.

Insects, too, survive quite nicely in plant debris over the winter months. To avoid any or all of the above problems, plant debris should be carefully raked up and disposed of. Keep in mind that insects and plant pathogens can survive on weeds as well as on garden plants. Many weeds serve as alternate hosts for insects and fungi, helping them to

complete their life cycle. Destruction of these weeds removes a source of future troubles. And if you get them before they go to seed, you can cut down on next year's weed problem.

No More Sprinkling



Without proper preparation your sprinkler system might be damaged by freezing temperatures. An irrigation system needs to be winterized to prevent water in the lines from freezing and causing the pipes to rupture. A home sprinkler system is winterized by replacing the water in the lines with air. The system is first drained of most of the water by opening an outlet valve, usually at the lowest point on the system. An air compressor is then attached to a port in the piping system and used to blow compressed air through each sprinkler head until all the water is gone. That's the most important part of winterizing, though a few other measures can be taken to prepare for winter. Be aware of mice looking for a place to over-winter, like valve boxes and open drain lines. Make sure there's no standing water in valve boxes or other places where freezing could damage components. Don't forget to schedule an appointment now to have this vital service performed.

It's Pondemonium

Pondemonium 2009 Inspires Attendees to Go Green!



The 10th anniversary of Pondemonium was celebrated this July and showcased developments in sustainable landscaping and rainwater harvesting. Held in Illinois, Ed Drohan a Certified Aquascape Contractor and our Water Gardens Division Manager, attended to further his knowledge of these green initiatives and apply them to local projects. Hundreds of distributors, contractors, and retailers from across North America came together for education, networking, and fun at the 10-year anniversary of the industry's premier water gardening event. A variety of classes and workshops filled the week but the focus was on sustainable landscapes and rainwater harvesting. Attendees had the opportunity to participate in several hands-on training sessions including this year's highlight, the Extreme Green Community Makeover.



Green projects installed in Sugar Grove, Illinois during the community makeover included ecosystem ponds, rain gardens, a unique rainwater harvesting system called RainXchange paired with a pondless waterfall, decorative fountain, and pervious pavers and fountain. LED lighting installations, native plantings, and permeable patios were incorporated into the residential landscapes. A large aeration system was added to the community's retention pond and native plantings were added to the banks of the pond. Ed Drohan participated in several different projects throughout, primarily on a rainwater harvest system that holds 3,000 gallons of water that can be

used for irrigation or sustainable water features. This system features a water feature of decorative stone spires (picture to left), with any overflow going to a nearby rain garden so no water is wasted or soil eroded. The benefits of using rainwater include augmenting water supplies for irrigation; reduced city water use and cost; conservation of groundwater, and improvement of water quality through reduced soil and fertilizer runoff. A 2,500 square foot home produces nearly 80,000 gallons of water annually from roof run-off.

**We are now offering Winter Snow Plowing services.
Please call us for details**

