

Before



and After



Garden renovation. Abriola Parkview Funeral Home. Trumbull, CT

“When we learn to call flowers by name we take the first step toward a real intimacy with them”

Mrs. William Star Dana

Please send newsletter requests, questions and topics to designingeden@charter.net. To receive this newsletter send one box of milk chocolate (Nuts and caramels only, no creams) with your contact information to the address listed above.

Garden Calendar

July:

Water plants not receiving at least 1” of water per week. Water deeply and thoroughly. Avoid light sprinkling. Indication of a plant needing water include drooping or curling leaves, burnt leaf edges, needle or leaf loss. Scrape away the mulch and place your hand on the soil. If it feels cool, there is most likely sufficient moisture in the soil. If the soil doesn't feel cool to the touch it's time to take out the hoses.

It's okay to prune back most perennials at any time. By pruning after bloom, you'll end up having a tidy plant for the rest of the season. Doing so might even encourage a second bloom. You can also cut back fall blooming perennials by 1/3 to prevent staking.

Trim evergreens such as yews, hemlocks and boxwood. Shearing stimulates new growth and will create a denser shrub. Remember to shear hedges so the base of the hedge is slightly wider than the top. This will allow sunlight to reach the hedge evenly. □

August: Now is the most beneficial time to reseed damaged turf or install turf areas.

You can transplant and divide most perennials if the plant is given adequate water.



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Syringa vulgaris



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Greetings from Richard



What a strange year it's been. At first it seemed that spring would never come. Long into March the cold and snow persisted. Then spring arrived. Below average temperatures and rain. Lots and lots of rain. Summer

arrived with a snap of the fingers. Major drought and seven straight days of temperatures in the high eighties to low nineties. Last year, we only recorded 4 days where temperatures made it into the nineties. We've already surpassed that in the first full week of June. Despite the date on the calendar some perennials and shrubs just started to wake at the end of May. I've also notice many trees and shrubs having abnormal growth. The other day I noticed two dogwoods growing next to each other. One was fully leafed out while the other was just beginning to break bud. It's the middle of June! It seems that the plant material is just as confused as the rest of us as to what season we are currently in and what season will happen to show up tomorrow. I've also noticed more than a few hydrangeas where one side of the plant was fully leafed out and the other half looked dead. The removal of what I thought was dead wood revealed to my dismay a shrub that was half dormant. Oh New England, it will definitely keep you on your toes or as the old timers say "If you don't like the weather wait five minutes."

Richard Schipul

EARTHWORMS: Our Underground Allies

What would you say to free garden help? Someone who would be available 24/7 to aerate, fertilize, rototill, etc., etc., etc. What if I told you that you might already have that helper. Earthworms have the potential to do more to maintain a beautiful property than most people could ever imagine. Past research has shown that over 90% of a plant's problems occur below ground. With healthy soil, a plant will be able to better resist insects and diseases, will be less dependent on fertilizer and look better in the long run. Let's look at these below ground allies to understand what they are doing to provide a better environment for our plants and lawns.

Earthworms are fortunate enough to be able to eat their weight many times over in any given day. Earthworms benefit our soils and plants by breaking down organic matter, improving soil fertility, aerating the soil and improving drainage. An entomologist by the name of Clive Edwards says "what comes out of the back end of a worm is 10 times more useful than what goes in the front". Worms excrete organic matter rich in all the key nutrients needed for healthy plants; phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, iron and sulfur. They also convert mineralized forms of nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium into a more useable form for plant uptake. Going about their daily



routine, worms mix organic and inorganic materials together by distributing nutrients and organic matter throughout the soil profile. They are nature's rototiller. Plant roots proliferate in worm tunnels not only because it's an easy path to the subsoil but because the tunnels are rich in organic matter and nutrients. There is also some evidence that the slime the worms leave behind contain hormones that stimulate plant growth.

Does your lawn and gardens have earthworms? A property with healthy soil will contain millions of earthworms. The problem is a lot of insecticides used for grub control kill not only grubs but worms and all other beneficial organisms. What you end up with is a dead soil dependent on fertilizers.

Worms are most active in the spring and fall. They tend to escape weather extremes by burrowing deep into the soil. To check for worm activity, look for soil pellets on the soil surface. Worms will also appear on the soil surface immediately after a rain. If the weather doesn't cooperate, you can always mix 1 tablespoon of dry mustard in a quart of water and pour it in a concentrated area. That should bring deep burrowing worms to the surface in 5-10 minutes. If a limited amount of worms come to the surface it might be time to add some night crawlers to your soil. They're not just for fishing!

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Plant Pick



Try Pulmonaria 'Berries and Cream' for it's multi seasonal interest. Pink flowers, silver speckled foliage, deer and slug resistant. Used as a groundcover Pulmonaria takes morning sun to full shade. Valuable source of nectar for honeybees.



LAYERING:

Don't you just wonder why you are naturally drawn to some gardens? The key could be layering. Layering or plant hierarchy is the practice of using varying plant heights from low growing edging plants or groundcovers to taller perennials, shrubs and finally trees towards the back of a plant border. This approach is pleasing to the eye and gives gardens a more natural feel.