

June 2018 Newsletter

"If your purse no longer bulges
and you've lost your golden treasure,
If times you think you're lonely
and have hungry grown for pleasure,
Don't sit by your hearth and grumble,
don't let mind and spirit harden.
If it's thrills of joy you wish for
get to work and plant a garden!"

If it's drama that you sigh for,
plant a garden and you'll get it
You will know the thrill of battle
fighting foes that will beset it
If you long for entertainment and
for pageantry most glowing,
Plant a garden and this summer spend
your time with green things growing."

- Edgar Guest, Plant a Garden



Upcoming:

September 11: Shade Gardens
Speaker: Dave Dunn, Rideau
Woodland Ramble

October 9: Preparing Gardens
for Winter. Speaker: Mary Reid,
Green Thumb Garden Centre

Caterpillars Galore

By Dale Odorizzi

As you walk around your yard and look at the beautiful buds on your apple and cherry trees, you notice what looks like a tent made from cobwebs. Guess what? You have a nest of Eastern Tent Caterpillars. And, if you have one nest, you likely have many.

Eastern Tent Caterpillars feed on deciduous trees such as apple, birch, willow and wild cherry. A large infestation can strip most of the leaves from your trees. The tents form in the forks and crotches of the trees branches. It provides protection for the caterpillars that live inside. A fully-grown tent caterpillar can grow 6 cm long, is hairy and black with a cream coloured stripe down its

back. It may also have blue spots and brown and yellow stripes along the side of its body.

The life cycle of this little beast is egg, larva, pupa and adult. In June or July, the female adult, a reddish-brown moth lays her eggs on a branch. The eggs are laid in masses up to 300 eggs held together by a foam-like substance. The following spring, when the leaves appear, the eggs hatch into the larva stage (caterpillar). This is the stage of life that causes all the damage. The caterpillars feed for 5-7 weeks until they mature. In early July the caterpillar spins a cocoon and pupates for two weeks. After emerging, the moths mate and eggs are laid within 24 hours.

If you have the types of trees they like, you have different opportunities to monitor and control them. Check for egg masses in the fall and early spring. Scrape off the masses using your thumbnail or a knife and put them into a bucket and put in the garbage. Look for small silk tents late in the spring and remove, preventing the moths from breeding.

When the caterpillars are active, go out at night when they are back in their tent and prune off



Lanark Orchid

Renals

Perth & District
Horticultural
Society

P.O. Box 494
Perth, ON, K7H 3G1
www.gardenontario.org

District #2 of the
Ontario Horticultural
Association



President: Robin McIntosh • **Newsletter:** Irene Hofmann



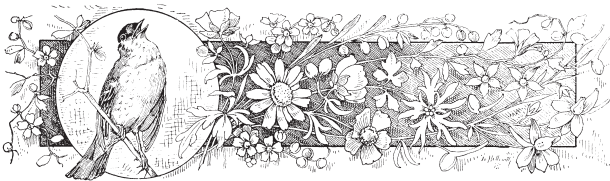
small branches and destroy the tents. You can also cut the tent open and squish all the caterpillars inside with your fingers. Squeamish people use gloves. Put them in a bucket of soapy water. Spraying your trees with Dormant Oil Spray may prevent the caterpillars from being active but read the instructions carefully or you may cause more damage to your trees than you prevent.

At our last Master Gardener meeting, we were talking about these caterpillars and we reminisced about ways we have used in the past. Someone used one of the flame thrower tools you can buy online. Another person told about the old days when she was a kid and they wrapped cloth around a broom handle, dipped it gasoline and burned them off. Another told of an irate neighbour who said it was not neighbourly to leave the crabapple tree with all those tents. The neighbour loaned her a tall step ladder and a blow torch, and she spent a couple of satisfying hours frying the little fellows. We all agreed these were not the preferred approaches, for while they did the job, it would be very easy to damage your tree.

Healthy trees rarely have any lasting damage from the invasion of tent caterpillars. Make sure your trees are well watered. With tall, mature trees it is difficult to implement any control, but they usually have sufficient leaves to survive.

If you like nature and you usually do if you are a gardener, keep in mind that birds enjoy a nice feast of caterpillars. Many are hatching their young when the caterpillars hatch. In fact, both the Black-Billed and the Yellow-Billed Cuckoos are around in greater numbers when there is a caterpillar infestation.

Dale Odorizzi is a member of the Lanark County Master Gardeners. Want to know more about the group or ask a gardening question? Visit our website at www.lanarkmg.blogspot.com or contact us at lanarkmg@gmail.com.



"Summer is a promissory note signed in June, its long days spent and gone before you know it, and due to be repaid next January."

- Hal Borland

September Flower Show

Section I: Horticultural Specimen

- Class 1** Dahlia – one cultivar – 3 stems
- Class 2** Gladiolus – any colour – 1 spike
- Class 3** Zinnia – one cultivar – 3 stems
- Class 4** Rose – hybrid tea – any cultivar – 1 bloom
- Class 5** Rose – miniature – 1 bloom or spray
- Class 6** Rose – fragrant - in a bowl
- Class 7** Rudbeckia – one cultivar – 3 stems
- Class 8** Echinacea (coneflower) – one cultivar – 3 stems
- Class 9** Tuberous Begonia – one bloom floating in water – without leaves
- Class 10** Any other annual – 3 stems – named
- Class 11** Any other perennial – 3 stems – named
- Class 12** Collection of vegetables displayed in a basket – minimum 3 kinds – named
- Class 13** Garlic – 3 bulbs

Section II: Design

- Class 14** Crown Jewels – a small design
- Class 15** Fireworks – a modern design
- Class 16** Pik'n Plunk – an arrangement of flowers and herbs

Garden Tour

The Friends of the Rideau Lakes Public Library are hosting a **Summer Garden Tour** on Tuesday July 17, 2018. The following gardens are on the tour:

- The Maitland Garden of Hope
- Von Berlo Gardens
- Rideau Woodland Ramble

Your ticket includes transportation in an air-conditioned bus departing from five locations: Carleton Place, Perth, Smiths Falls, Portland and Elgin. Please bring a picnic lunch which you can enjoy in the Van Berlo Gardens on the banks of the St. Lawrence. Tickets are \$45, on sale until July 1. (A minimum of 45 participants are required to make this tour viable. If cancelled you will receive a full refund). For further information contact lookformadeline@gmail.com 613-283-1032

Money raised is in support of the summer literacy program offered by the Rideau Lakes Public Library.

Trap Wireworms With Potatoes!

By Larry Hodgson

Wireworms are frequently found in gardens, causing the most damage in vegetable beds where they attack the roots of seedlings, including those of cucurbits (squash, cucumbers, melons, etc.), corn, beets, beans and peas, weakening or killing them. They also dig holes in roots, bulbs and tubers potatoes, onions and carrots, leaving them unfit for consumption.

Wireworms are not worms in the sense of earthworms, but rather long, thin insect larvae with hard bodies, usually in some shade of brown, orange or ochre. They measure about ½ to 1 ½ inches (1 to 4 cm) in length, depending on the species and the worm's maturity.

They're actually the larvae of click beetles, elongated, often black beetles of the Elateridae family. There are nearly 10,000 species of click beetles worldwide, but only a handful damage vegetables.

Wireworms are often found in vegetable beds recently converted from lawn, because they are very fond of grass roots. Since they can remain in the larval stage for 2–6 years, it may take several years before the population begins to drop ... unless you help it along!

You can seriously reduce wireworm numbers by trapping them. However, no special trap is needed. You just need a piece of potato and a barbecue skewer. You see, potatoes are one of their favorite foods. And if you're all out of potatoes, try carrots instead: they work just as well. Cut a raw potato into pieces of at least 1 x 2 inches (3 cm x 5 cm) in size and insert a skewer into each one (this is so you can find them readily later). Now bury the pieces in the garden about 2 to 6 inches (5 to 15 cm) deep and about 3 feet (1 m) apart, leaving the skewer visible above the ground.

After 24 to 48 hours, dig up the potato chunk using the skewer as a guide (this is best done in the evening when wireworms are most active). Remove the wormy potato segment with its wireworms and replace it with a fresh piece. Repeat as long as you keep finding wireworms (they're active from mid-spring through fall).

It's surprising how many wireworms you can catch this way! Maybe you could do a tally and have a neighborhood wireworm

challenge?

Best of luck with your wireworm hunt!

Early Summer Tips For The Vegetable Garden

Dr. Leonard Perry, Horticulture Professor
Emeritus, University of Vermont

Mulching, staking, pest and disease control, and succession planting are some of the early season tips for vegetable gardens.

Reduce the weeds in walkways in your garden by covering the soil with some type of mulch. Several sheets of moistened newspaper topped with hay or straw is attractive and works very well, especially if you move your planting areas around a bit from year to year. Landscape fabric topped with wood chips or gravel is a good choice if the walkways are permanent. Try to avoid the habit of tilling to remove weeds because the process brings up weed seeds from deeper in the soil and exposes them to the light they need to grow. Over time, tilling also destroys soil structure. Indeterminate tomato plants, such as the beefsteak 'Better Boy' or the cherry type Sun Gold, will produce many suckers. A sucker is a new shoot that starts where a branch connects with the main trunk. Removing suckers will decrease the number of fruits produced, but the remaining tomatoes will be larger and will ripen sooner.

Set your tomato supports in place before plants get too large. Smaller determinate (bushy) varieties can be supported with small cages, but larger indeterminate (vining) varieties need large cages or tall stakes. Secure cages with stakes so they don't topple. If tying shoots to a cage or stake, use soft twine, plastic tape or Velcro tape that you can buy just for this purpose. You can recycle old socks, pantyhose, towels or the like by cutting them into strips for plant ties.

Blossom end rot shows up as dark sunken spots on the blossom, or non-stem, end of tomatoes, peppers, and squash. It's caused by a calcium imbalance in the plant. The soil may have adequate calcium, but the plant isn't able to take up enough to supply the rapidly developing fruit. To minimize the problem keep soil evenly moist, apply a layer of mulch to conserve moisture, make sure the soil pH

(acidity) is around 6.5, don't over-fertilize, use a fertilizer low in nitrogen and high in phosphorus, wait to plant until soils are warm (roots can't take up nutrients well in cold soils early in the season), and avoid damaging plant roots while cultivating.

Coffee grounds, diatomaceous earth, and even sharp gravel can deter slugs and snails. Spread any of these materials in a ring around individual plants. Wrap pots or plant stems with copper tape to keep slugs from crawling up. Put out saucers of beer (slugs are attracted to the beer and drown). You may get control merely from a board on the soil where slugs may hide during the day and can be gathered up there, as well as in rolls of damp newspaper. Inspect foliage and pick off any insects that have already passed the barriers.

Young cucumber, melon, and squash plants are easy prey for cucumber beetles. As the seedlings grow, these yellow-striped or spotted beetles emerge to feed on their foliage. The beetles also spread bacterial wilt disease. To control them in a small planting, suck them up with a portable vacuum cleaner or spray beneficial nematodes on the soil.

Floating row covers can be anchored over crops until they bloom to keep these insects away. Such row covers also provide control from other insects such as the squash vine borer on this crop, cabbage insects on this and related "brassica" crops like broccoli, the leek moth on this crop plus its relatives the onions and garlic, and flea beetles on many vegetables. Install covers soon after planting, and remove them prior to flowering so pollinators can get to the flowers. Support covers over crops with hoops that you can purchase for this, or hoops of heavy gauge wire or flexible plastic pipe. Row covers generally come in three weights or thicknesses—the lightest weight is most common for insect control as it lets the most light to the crops underneath.

If you haven't sown warm season crops yet, or still have room in the garden, consider succession plantings—sowing at intervals of one to three weeks apart to spread your harvest, and not have all of a crop ripen at once. The exception would be if you wanted to just harvest all at once, then freeze or can all you didn't eat. Using succession plantings, you can eat from your garden all summer. Until about mid-summer, radishes and spinach can be sown at 7-day intervals, bush beans and

peas at 10-day intervals, beets and turnips at 14-day intervals, and carrots and cucumbers at 21-day intervals.

Baby greens, radishes, and spinach can be sown at 7-day intervals until late summer. Shade lettuce, if possible, during late afternoon to keep young plants cooler, or grow them next to larger plants that provide some shade. You'll need to water these crops more often on these hot days than you did in spring and early summer.

If you haven't "thinned" seedlings (removed excess ones) yet, the ideal time is when they have at least 2 "true" leaves—these are not the original couple of "seed" leaves that look quite different. Generally gardeners sow more seeds than are needed as it is so easy, or to make sure that enough germinate. So they need to be thinned for adequate spacing to minimize diseases and maximize growth. Leafy plants such as lettuce and spinach can be thinned by removing unwanted plants with your fingers. If you've sown them in blocks rather than rows, gently run a flexible rake through the bed to thin it. Root vegetables such as onions and beets will end up with deformed roots on remaining plants if they're disturbed. Long-rooted vegetables such as carrots and turnips will end up with forks in roots if they're disturbed. To thin such root crops, cut excess seedlings off with small scissors at the soil line.

If you're growing potatoes in the soil, when they're about a foot high "hill" them up with soil around the stems until just the top few inches of plant is showing. Some gardeners will add additional soil a few weeks later. Such hilling is needed to keep the tubers from being exposed to light and turning green. If you're growing potatoes in 15-gallon grow-bags, if you only had them one-third to one-half full on soil when planting, make sure to top them up with additional soil to within a couple inches of the bag top.

A good project for rainy days or nights is to research in books and online what problems your vegetables might encounter, and controls. Then watch for these regularly—at least once a week. Keeping up with weeding is a great opportunity to inspect your crops for pests and problems, is much easier than having to deal with weeds out of control and you'll be rewarded with healthier plants and better harvests.