



The Ladyslipper

Perth & District Horticultural Society

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P.O. Box 494
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October 2022

Est. 1984

President's Pen

"Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom."

— Marcel Proust NOVELIST

October finds us celebrating Thanksgiving. A time to pause, reflect, count our blessings and show our gratitude. This is the month to dig up the dahlia tubers, gladioli corms and other tender bulbs to prepare them for overwinter storage. October is a good month to plant tulips, daffodils and other spring flowering bulbs as well. Here are my tips: Plant daffodil bulbs around your tulip bulbs, use plenty of blood meal and camouflage the planted areas with lots of leaves. This way the squirrels are less likely to dig up the bulbs. They tend to go after freshly dug patches of earth.

Our November meeting will be on Tuesday, November 22. It will be our Annual General Meeting where the society business is conducted and the board of directors elected. If you are interested in sitting on the board as a director, please speak to one of our current directors. If you want to attend a Board meeting to find out what being on the board is all about, let us know so we can include you. Our next meeting will be in early November to plan the AGM. At the November AGM, we will have a floral art demonstration by Cindy Zorgel and the designs will be auctioned off at the end of the evening. The Board is still determining if our Annual Dinner will be potluck or catered and where the meeting will be held. I will inform everyone by email as soon as the details are confirmed.

Linda

Society President's Awards

At our September meeting, the following members were awarded with a Society President's Award in appreciation of all of their volunteer hours they dedicate to the Perth Community Gardens:



Judy Buehler and Linda Bartlett, President

Judy Buehler has been working in a number of Perth's Community Gardens for a couple of decades. She is reliable, dependable and brings a depth and variety of gardening knowledge each and every time she shows up. If she isn't sure of a plant, she is the first one to research and search out a useful answer. Judy brings a delightful sense of humour and wisdom every time she shows up. It is a special knack of hers.

Doug Smallwood has been working for four years in the gardens. He works in all of the gardens, even when we have a work bee. He shows up early, stays late and is a great self-starter. Doug has even gone back and

whipper-snipped goutweed on his own time at Inge Va, for which we are grateful.



Doug Smallwood and Linda Bartlett, President

Janette Wood: Janette has made valuable contributions to not only PDHS's Board of Directors over six years, but also in the Museum gardens and now at Inge Va. Janette has valuable ideas regarding moving the gardens forward and improving their designs. She also has brought many lovely perennials from her own gardens to enhance both the Museum and Inge Va gardens. Janette describes herself as "not an morning person," but that doesn't stop her from putting in a decent day's work each and every time she volunteers.



Janette Wood and Lynda Haddon, PDHS Community Garden Coordinator

Rita Godin has been volunteering in the gardens for the past five years, and she is worth her weight in gold. She works in all of the gardens. She shows up early, stays late and is a great self-starter. We really appreciate her contribution to the maintenance of the gardens.



Rita Godin and Linda Bartlett, President

Last but not least, Richard Catchpaw was nominated as the Year of the Garden 2022 PDHS Garden Hero. Richard has been gardening with the PDHS Community Gardeners for nine years and a director on the PDHS Board for seven. He works at all of our gardens. He is ALWAYS pleasant, early, ready to work and to take on the most challenging of jobs. In addition, he has a wonderful personality. He donates plants from his extensive gardens for our Sales, as door prizes at our Meetings, the gardens we work in, or just because to his fellow gardeners. Richard is a cornerstone in our organization.



Richard Catchpaw and Linda Bartlett, President

Growing Garlic Organically

By Dale Odorizzi, Lanark County Master Gardeners

At this time of year, most gardeners are putting their gardens to bed, but Garlic Growers are springing into action. In our climate, garlic is planted in October. It sets its roots before freeze-up, rests over the winter, resumes growing in April, and is harvested in July or August.



To start your garlic garden, pick a location with good soil, drainage, full sun and access to water for irrigation. Your soil must be high in organic matter. Start with loam, if possible. Sandy soil dries out easily and should be avoided. Clay soils can be built up over a number of years with large amounts of compost. In building up the soil, use liberal amounts of organic matter (compost or composted animal manure). Sprinkle wood ash on the surface to provide potassium.

Garlic may be grown in flat rows or in raised beds. Raised beds have the advantages of deeper soil for the roots, earlier thawing in the spring and good drainage. Make trenches in rows at least 12 inches apart and 4-5 inches deep in which to set the cloves.

You have a large choice of what type of garlic to grow, Porcelains which grow up to 6 feet tall and produce huge bulbs of only four cloves, to the short, softneck Artichokes, often called 'Italian' garlic, which grow up to 12-15 cloves per bulb. Most home gardeners start with a Rocambole strain of 7-8 cloves per bulb. Whatever your choice, get it from a local grower. Avoid trying to grow garlic found on grocery shelves. It's likely imported and not suitable for our climate. Take the bulbs and carefully divide them into their separate cloves. Garlic is propagated vegetatively, and it is the clove that is planted as a 'seed.' Set aside any damaged cloves, as even a little nick can foster green mould disease.



Hand planting is preferable. Place the clove vertically in the trench, basal end down (pointy end up) and press it gently into the soil. Cover the garlic by filling the trench, ensuring at least 4 inches of soil cover. Garlic should be mulched to insulate it against mid-winter thaws and resulting winterkill. Wait until the ground is frozen, usually November, and then mulch with 4-6 inches of clean straw. The same mulch can be kept on the following summer to help keep down weeds and preserve moisture. If you do not have access to straw, cover your garlic with shredded leaves, but the leaves must be pulled back in the

early spring. Even before the frost is out of the ground, the garlic spears will be seen poking up through the mulch. Carefully move the mulch away from the row to enable faster thawing and rapid growth.

Inspect the garlic by walking the rows twice weekly. Hand-pull any weeds that emerge through the mulch. Look for any yellowed or diseased garlic and remove it right away to prevent spread. Garlic needs a steady supply of moisture, so irrigate to supplement rainfall, giving it a total of one inch per week. If you start with rich organic soil, no added feeding is needed.

Garlic lends itself readily to organic methods. It is bothered by few insect pests (with the exception of leek moth) and, if carefully handled and grown in healthy soil, is relatively unaffected by disease. Beautiful, tasty, top-quality bulbs are the result when garlic is handcrafted organically. The harvest is the tasty reward for your hard work of growing garlic. Harvesting must be carried out carefully, by hand, in order to get top-quality bulbs that will store well over the winter.

How to Care for Garden Tools

By Deanna Dority – Source: www.gardenmaking.com



Dramm pruner photo by Garden Making

Give your garden pruner a thorough cleaning and sharpening.

Hard-working — and often abused — garden tools such as pruners (also known as secateurs) need some pampering to be rejuvenated and at the ready for next time around, especially before being put away for the winter. A thorough cleaning and sharpening now will ensure the pruning you do next spring is performed smoothly and easily, without damage to your plants. Think of it as a spa day for your secateurs.

Cleaning garden tools

Secateurs should be wiped clean after each use and thoroughly dried to avoid rusting. To keep them working their best, here's how to give them the deluxe treatment.

Separate the blades by removing the main bolt or screws. Wash each blade in soapy water. Use a stiff brush, such as an old toothbrush, to get at all the areas where dirt can get trapped. If there's rust, use sandpaper, steel wool or a wire brush; for sap, you may need to apply a cleaning solvent, such as mineral spirits.

Once thoroughly dried, it's time to restore the blades to their former glory.

Sharpening

A sharp cutting edge is essential so as not to crush or tear branches or stems, which can injure plants and leave them vulnerable to disease. Whether you have bypass or anvil secateurs, the honing method is the same; note, however, that a bypass pruner has one bevelled outside edge that needs sharpening, while an anvil pruner has a bevel on both sides of its blade.

There are a variety of sharpening tools available, including stones and files. Some require water, others oil; some are anchored, others hand-held. Whichever you use is a personal choice—just be sure to follow the manufacturer's directions.

Key to proper sharpening is the angle of the blade relative to the sharpening surface; for example, the coarse side of a whetstone. Ideally, it should be around 23 degrees, following the angle of the bevel. Glide the cutting (beveled) edge from its base to its tip across the tool in a single direction (not back and forth), as if you're shaving a thin layer off the stone. Repeat this several times until it's sharp enough to slice through a piece of paper.



To smooth away any burrs, run the flat (non-bevelled) side across a finer grit surface (typically the opposite side of the

stone) a few times at roughly a five-degree angle.

Next, apply a thin coating of oil, such as WD-40 or even vegetable oil, along the blades, wiping off any excess. This helps prevent dirt and sap from sticking and guards against rust.

Reassemble, add a drop of motor oil to the mechanism, and your rejuvenated secateurs will feel like brand new.

More garden tool TLC

Taking care of the business ends of shovels, spades and trowels will make your gardening chores easier. Plus, it just feels better to grab for gear that's clean and rarin' to go.

It's always best to hose off your tools after each use and to make sure they're completely dry to prevent rust. Alternatively, you can keep a five-gallon pail mixed with builder's sand and about one litre of motor oil (sand should be damp, not wet) to dip the blades in to keep them cleaned and conditioned.

If there's a lot of rust that can't be removed with steel wool or sandpaper, use a drill with a rotary wire brush attachment.

Use a hand-held flat file with a bastard cut, such as a mill file, to sharpen the edges of the blade and to smooth away any nicks or burrs. Then apply a thin layer of oil over the metal to prevent rust.

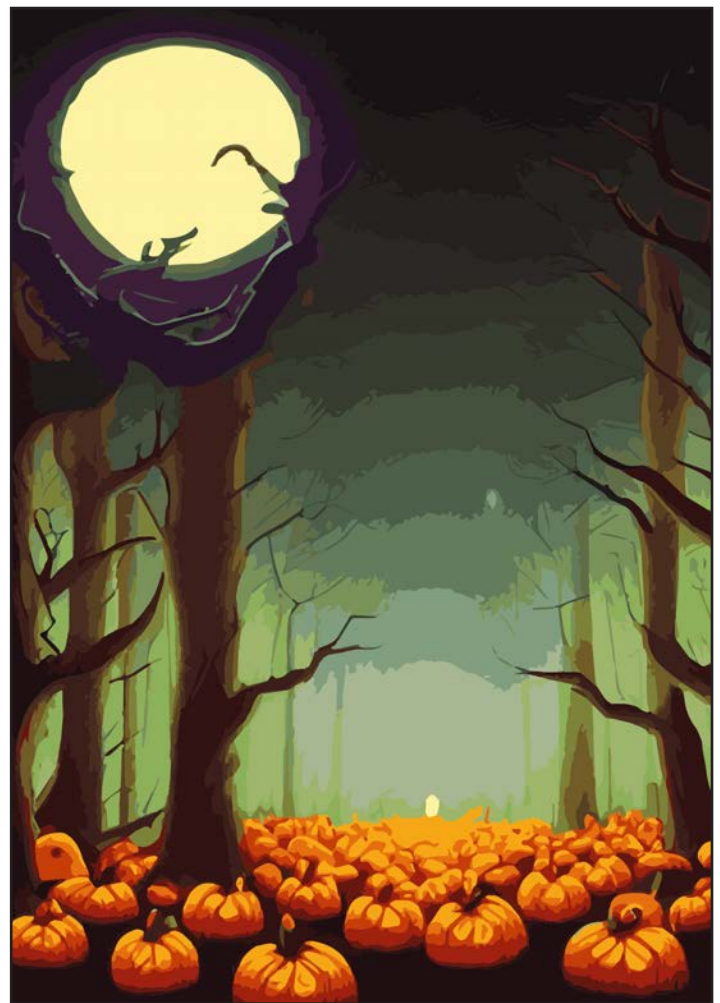
Hang up tools rather than setting them on their edges on the floor.

Handle with care

To protect and preserve unfinished wooden handles on long tools, run medium-grit sandpaper over them to remove any dirt and splinters. Then, with a rag, apply store-bought boiled — not raw — linseed oil to keep the wood from absorbing water and cracking.

Tip: putting it all back together

Once pruners are cleaned and sharpened, it may be difficult to remember how all the pieces go back together again. When disassembling, place the parts in a row on the work surface in the order in which they're removed. When reassembling, start with the last part removed and work backwards.



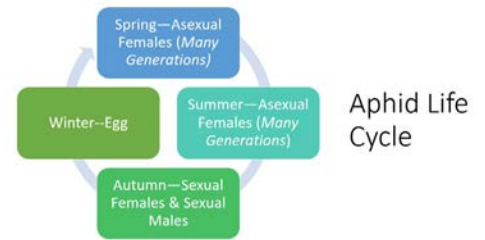
HAPPY HALLOWEEN

The Amazing Life Cycle of the Aphid

Dale Odorizzi, Lanark County Master Gardeners

Like every gardener I know, my garden has been visited or should I say attacked by aphids. In my earlier gardening years, I sprayed and squished trying to eliminate every one. Then, 20 years ago I joined Master Gardeners and in one of my courses learned about the absolutely amazing life cycle of the aphid.

Aphids overwinter in our gardens as eggs. In spring, the eggs hatch as asexual females—no males needed. Within about 5 days, these females start producing about 5 nymphs, every day for 30 days until they die. All spring and summer, these asexual females produce live offspring, without the necessity of fertilization. This is called parthenogenesis. They have many generations throughout the summer. The mother give birth to her live young (viviparity) right where she happens to be sitting. This isn't because she is such a good mother, it is just that she is lazy and does not have wings to fly to another plant. From time to time, the plant gets overcrowded, and the next batch produces asexual females with wings. The winged female then flies to another plant to continue the process. Sometimes, they will fly to the same type of plant they were born in and other times, to something completely different. In autumn, aphids realize that winter is coming, and it is time to produce sexual males and females. This generation breed and produce eggs that will then overwinter.



Aphids spend most of their lives with their straw-like beaks stuck into leaves and stems, sucking out sweet plant juices, causing stunting, leaf yellowing, or leaf distortion if severe. They secrete honeydew, leading to sticky residue and sooty mould on the fruit and foliage. They act as a primary vector of several economically significant virus diseases, spreading the virus as they feed. Ants have a good relationship with aphids. They harvest the sweet sticky sap, and they help to protect the aphids from their many predators.

The larvae of many insect predators love to eat aphids—Lady bugs, Lace wings, hover flies. Earwigs are voracious eaters of aphids. Parasitic Wasps lay their eggs in aphids.

My favorite aphid predators are birds. A chickadee can eat up to 1500 aphids in an hour. They feed them to their nestlings as an important protein source. I always thought of Hummingbirds as simply nectar eaters but in fact, their nestlings require protein to develop, and the hummingbirds find that in the form of aphids.

I am quite a “laid back gardener” to quote Larry Hodgson. I rarely do anything to remove aphids from my plants unless I see significant damage. I have a large stand of Helopsis (False Sunflower) that is frequently covered in bright red aphids. The plant doesn't seem to mind so neither do I. I like to leave the aphids for the birds and the beneficial insects.

If you do not like to see them on your plant, there are a few ways to get rid of them. A hard spray of water will often dislodge them. Failing that, spraying with insecticidal soap is effective. Remember, though, that the soap must contact the insects to kill them so you will have to keep checking the plants regularly to get rid of them. Please do not use any of the home-made recipes that abound on many gardening sites as many are not effective and can cause harm to your plant and to other insects in the vicinity.

My favorite approach is to simply start at the bottom of the stem and run my fingers up it, squishing the aphids as I go. I usually do not have a hose or a bottle of spray with me when I am looking at my garden, and this is a quick easy and satisfying solution.