



J&L Garden Center

The All Season Gift
and Garden Center

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The Gardening Newsletter

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March Gardening

Gardening is for everyone, or at least it can be. Gardening is still America's number one hobby. Even if you live in an apartment, there are opportunities to garden. Container gardening or raised bed gardening are two great ways to garden in small spaces. Be sure to attend our class on **Pot Gardening** on April 21 to learn more about this fun topic. We also have several other classes scheduled that you may like to attend: Pruning, Square Foot Gardening, Pond Care, and Growing Herbs. Please call for a schedule or check our website.



This year we have some fun, new items for your gardening pleasure. We have found your '**Perfect Petzzz**', a lovable, life-like pet for your home. It loves to sleep and is acceptable in all apartments. We have '**Soil Pearls**' that are great to use with cut flowers and Lucky Bamboo. We have '**Croc Shoes**' available this spring. They are very comfortable to wear for any occasion, not just for gardening. Other new items include '**Garden Claws**'; '**Real-Looking Topiary Shrubs**' for the deck and patio; '**Mesh Tubing**' for storing vegetables; and a new line of '**Hand Tools**' made by Corona. Corona has been a leader in high quality pruning tools. They are now making high quality hand tools.

We also have our **2007 Garden Calendar** available.

New Rose Varieties

There are three new **2007 AARS** winning roses. They are: **Moondance**, a white floribunda rose; **Strike It Rich**, a golden-orange grandiflora rose; **Rainbow Knockout**, a multi-color, coral, orange and pink shrub rose. In addition, we have the **2007 Jackson and Perkins** rose of the year. **Sheer Magic** is a coral-blushed, hybrid tea rose. We have these roses, along with another 100 different varieties of roses in stock. They are ready to plant, as soon as the weather cooperates. Stop by and pick up a copy of our 2007 Rose List, or download a copy from our website.



Rose Care

Wait until your roses start to send out new leaves before you prune and fertilize them; usually wait until early to mid-April to prune. Pruning roses too early in the spring may stimulate them to start growing before they normally would. This new growth could be damaged by any unseasonably cold temperatures. The general rule for pruning roses is to prune them severely in April and then lightly trim and shape them all summer, to keep them blooming their best. Stop trimming roses in October to help them prepare for winter. After the roses are completely dormant, sometimes not until late-December, only trim your rose bushes enough to prevent winter breakage. Wait until next April to prune them severely.



Fertilize your roses with **Bayer Rose & Flower Fertilizer with Systemic Insecticide** as soon as you prune them. Fertilize your roses every two months until August 15 with this same fertilizer. This fertilizer will help your roses grow and bloom vigorously while keeping the pesky aphids and thrips under control. In addition, spread one-third cup of **Magnesium Sulphate** (Epsom Salts) around each rose bush when you prune them. Spread another one-third cup of epsom salts around each rose bush again in mid-July. Your roses will look beautiful all summer. **Magnesium Sulphate** is also great to use in all the flower and vegetable gardens. Put some Magnesium Sulphate around your petunias, marigolds, and tomatoes. You will notice a big difference in their growth.



Pansies and Primroses

Pansies and primroses are two great spring flowers. They bloom early in the year, letting us know that spring is just around the corner. Pansies and primroses love cool weather, so they grow great in gardens that are also used for begonias and impatiens. Pansies will bloom repeatedly from early spring until the temperature gets hot during the summer. Some gardeners actually have some pansies bloom all summer. If you planted pansies last fall, you are probably already enjoying their blossoms.



Primroses will grow and bloom for at least a month or two in the early spring. You can extend their blooming time if you will take time to remove the old flowers as soon as they start to fade. A new set of flowers may begin to grow if you remove the old blossoms soon enough. Remember, pansies and primroses love the cool areas, they do not like the hot, sunny areas. We have both of these flowers in stock - ready for planting in your yards.

Tulip Alert

Watch your tulips this spring, because the deer certainly will be. Your tulips will be '*just-about-ready-to-bloom*' when they will suddenly disappear in one night. To prevent deer from eating your tulips and pansies, you can physically cover them with netting, a frost blanket, or even with a sheet, for the night. You can also try fertilizing them frequently with either **Blood Meal** or **Milorganite** fertilizer. These two fertilizers have an odor that deer don't like. The smell will sometimes repel them. However, if they are hungry enough, the deer might not care about the smell and will eat the plants anyway. We have a spray, **Liquid Fence**, that will sometimes help keep deer away. Deer do not eat daffodils and hyacinths, so you don't have to watch them as closely.



Lawn Care

Early-spring lawn care is very important, so now is the time to start thinking about your lawn. Don't fertilize



continued from page 1

too early in the spring, it won't help your lawn very much. Wait until the soil temperature is at least 50°F before applying your first application of fertilizer, usually mid to late-March. If you fertilize in March, just apply a good lawn fertilizer without any weed controls. Wait until April or May to control weeds.

Proper lawn care is sometimes hard to predict. Weather conditions vary greatly from one year to another. Lawn diseases and lawn insect pests do not always follow the general lawn care recommendations. You will need to carefully monitor your lawn and make any necessary adjustments when you see a problem start to appear. Try not to wait too long after you notice the problem, before you start to control it. Listed below are a few of our 'Best Time' recommendations for lawn care. However, every lawn is a little different and you may not have all these problems.

The 'best time' to kill dandelions is when they first start to bloom, before the flowers have time to be pollinated.

The 'best time' to prevent crabgrass is when the forsythia plants (in your neighborhood) are just past their full-bloom stage.

The 'best time' to prevent spurge is in mid-May.

The 'best time' to kill morning glory is when the tomato plants are killed, by frost, in the fall.

The 'best time' to prevent many summer lawn insect problems is around Memorial Day. Use **Season Long Grub Control**.

The 'best time' to prevent many summer lawn diseases is in June. Use **F Stop Lawn Fungicide**.

The most important part of lawn care is to remember that the best prevention for most lawn problems is to keep your lawn as healthy as possible to start with. **A.** Water properly - this is a topic in itself. **B.** Fertilize regularly. **C.** Mow your lawn at the correct height - for each season. **D.** Aerate as needed. **E.** Don't power rake unless absolutely necessary.

We suggest that you fertilize your lawn four times each year. The four fertilizer steps we normally recommend are:

1. **Crabgrass Preventer** - mid-April to May
2. **21-7-7 Lawn Food** - late-May to June
3. **Weed & Feed** - late-August to September
4. **Fall & Winter Fertilizer** - October to November

We have a **4-Step lawn fertilizer package** which contains one bag of each of the above fertilizers. This package sells for **\$59.98** and it includes a free bag of either **Vegetable and Flower Fertilizer** or **Natural Guard Soil Activator** (Humic Acid).

A healthy lawn is more resistant to diseases. It crowds out unwanted weeds better, it overcomes insect damage faster, and it withstands drought conditions easier. For information about using organic methods to keep your lawn healthy, please read our **Dr. Earth Organic Fertilizers** and **Humic Acid** articles.

Recipe for Good Garden Soil

For a 'quick fix' of a 100 square foot area (10'x10') 8" deep use:

5 bags **Bumper Crop Mulch** - It adds organic mulch, 'trace' nutrients, and mycorrhizae.

5 lbs **Ironite** - It adds iron to your soil

5 lbs **Dr. Earth #7 All Purpose Fertilizer**

5 lbs **Gypsum** - It adds sulphur and calcium to the soil and releases nutrients already in the soil.

5 lbs **Natural Guard Soil Activator** - It contains Humic Acid which organically activates the soil with humates.

Mix well into the soil, plant, and water thoroughly.

You will be pleased with the results.

Dr. Earth Organic Fertilizers

Dr. Earth is a company that produces very effective organic fertilizers and incorporates many beneficial bacteria with their fertilizers. Their organic fertilizers are derived from fish meal, cottonseed meal, alfalfa meal, fish bone meal, feather meal, soft rock phosphate, kelp meal, and potassium sulphate. With all these sources of fertilizer, the plants benefit greatly. Traditionally, organic fertilizers have been very slow to break down and it took plants several weeks to start receiving any benefits from the fertilizer. The Dr. Earth company changed this slow process into a faster releasing fertilizer, by adding beneficial bacteria to the fertilizer. These beneficial bacteria digest the natural ingredients and release the nutrients in a form that plants can absorb and start to utilize within just a few weeks. All of the **Dr. Earth** fertilizers include humic acid, seaweed extract, ecto & endo mycorrhizae, and seven strains of soil building microbes. All of these ingredients help improve the soil conditions and help make plants more vigorous.

Dr. Earth also has an excellent organic lawn fertilizer. This is a slow release fertilizer, in a natural way, so the lawn is consistently fed. This fertilizer lasts longer than chemical fertilizers. Even though it may seem like it is more expensive to use, you only need to apply it two or three times during the year, not the traditional four times. In addition, **Dr. Earth lawn fertilizer** contains many beneficial bacteria that can help prevent some lawn diseases. This fertilizer will not cure lawn diseases, but it can help a lawn recover from a disease that it may already be infected with. If you have ever had a disease in your lawn, you know how expensive lawn fungicides are. In the long run, Dr. Earth lawn fertilizer is not more expensive to use than traditional fertilizers.

The only problem we have experienced with Dr. Earth Lawn Food is its smell. It does have an 'organic' odor. However, the smell will go away once you apply it, and after it is watered in. Just try not to get too much fertilizer on your hands while you are applying it.

We have a handout that gives more details about **Dr. Earth organic fertilizers**. Please stop by and pick up your free copy or download a copy from our website.

Say, what type of mud is that?

Good gardeners recognize that soil is actually made up of a variety of materials, defined according to their size. Sand particles are the largest of the three types of soil particles. When mixed with water, sand particles settle out of the suspension first. Silt particles settle next and are medium sized. Clay particles are the smallest size and settle on the top.

Sand provides the best drainage in a garden but it holds the least amount of water and minerals. Clay holds the most water and nutrients, but clay particles often tie up nutrients so the plants cannot use them - additional fertilizer may be required. Silty soils share some of the characteristics of both sand and clay. A combination of all three of these soil particles make the 'best mud' for your garden soil. We have a handout that goes into more detail about this important subject. Please stop by and pick up a copy.

Feed Your Garden Soil - not just your plants

Your garden's soil condition is the single most important part of gardening success. Without the proper soil conditions, gardening can become a chore, and your plants will not respond and grow the way you want them to



continued from page 2

grow. Some of the insect and disease problems your plants struggle with during the summer may be prevented just by making sure your soil is in good condition before you plant them.

First, remember **Garden Soil is not Dirt**. Dirt is the stuff you wash out of your clothes after working in the yard. Garden Soil is a complex mixture of minerals, air, water, organic matter, microbes, and other critters. Soil is full of life and deserves your attention. With good soil, gardening will be more fun. The soil will be easier to plant in, cultivate, and it will be easier to grow your plants.



Perfect soil is hard to come by in most home gardens and it may take a little extra effort to achieve. The best way to improve your garden soil is by adding **Organic Materials** every year. The best time to apply **Organic Materials** is in the fall, not in the spring. However, most gardeners forget to add **Organic Materials** in the fall, so it is important to add 'well-rotted' **Organic Materials** in the spring, so you do not injure tender plants. Mix as much well-rotted manure, Bumper Crop, Ferti Mulch, Soil Pep, or other organic materials (within reason) as you can afford. Do not add fresh materials or your plants will actually suffer. You will be amazed how much better your soil is this year than it was last year. Many garden soils may take four, six, or even ten years to completely change, but you will notice an improvement each year. We have several mulch products that we hope will help you with your gardening soil projects.

Bumper Crop is a natural, fortified soil amendment that is excellent for both vegetable and flower gardens. It is pH balanced and contains long-lasting organic nutrients. This product contains Chicken Manure, Bat Guano, Worm Castings, Kelp Meal, Composted Bark products and Mycorrhizae, a beneficial bacteria. Bumper Crop will not burn any plants - new or old. It helps break up clay soil and it helps increase the water holding capacity of sandy soils. It is an excellent mulch to mix in soil when planting new shrubs. This mulch is much safer around plants than even Soil Pep or Nutri Mulch. **This is our best organic mulch.**



Ferti Mulch is a poultry based compost. It contains chicken manure. It is very well composted and pH balanced to prevent burning new root systems. It contains many organic nutrients from the poultry droppings. It is an excellent mulch to mix into the soil of vegetable and flower gardens before planting. It will help loosen the soil and it will help retain water for the plants to use. We recommend this product in place of Nutri Mulch. We feel this product is a more uniform and a better composted mulch to use in the garden than Nutri Mulch. However, we still stock and sell Nutri Mulch for those who like it.



Black Forest Compost is great for mulching on top of gardens, covering lawn seed, and for planting trees and shrubs. This product contains Chicken Manure, Bat Guano, Bark products, and is pH balanced so it will not burn any plants - new or old. Its long lasting ingredients help break up clay soil and help improve drainage in compacted soils. It also helps to increase the water holding capacity of sandy soils. It contains many of the same ingredients as Bumper Crop but it does not contain the beneficial bacteria. It is a black compost, instead of the traditional brown compost. If you want to help darken your soil, this is the right product to use. It is also great to use as a top dressing, to improve the appearance of the soil, after you finish planting.

Acid Planting Mix is a mulch formulated for all acid loving

plants. It contains all organic, long lasting ingredients that help improve soil porosity and drainage. Use this product when planting rhododendrons, azaleas, Japanese maples, daphne and all other acid loving shrubs and trees. Use this mulch instead of peatmoss. This has a good mix of organic products that have been composted and pH adjusted to prevent burning new roots. You can also use this product to amend soil in containers. Mix this 50/50 with potting soil for containers, or mix 50% with the soil around each plant. All your plants, especially the acid loving plants, will love this particular mulch. **Be sure to use this mulch instead of peatmoss.**



Utelite - Clay Soil Conditioner

Many garden soils lack the necessary physical structure to hold, or to allow movement of air and water for plants to grow, especially clay soil. Most clay soil needs additives that will hold water (like peatmoss) but that will allow water to drain (like sand). However, adding peatmoss or sand to clay soil may just add to the problem. Clay and sand mixed together may produce 'bricks' instead of better soil. If you want to add sand to clay soil, you must add 'a lot of sand' to improve the soil. Peatmoss mixed with clay may produce a soil that stays too wet, too long. This may cause worse problems for your plants than not adding any mulch at all.



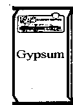
The best way to fix a clay soil is to add lots of 'old' manure, compost, Bumper Crop, Soil Pep, or Perlite to the garden, rather than adding peatmoss or plain sand.

Another additive that is available to help improve clay soil is **Utelite, Clay Soil Conditioner**. **Utelite** is a porous rock chip which acts as a permanent reservoir for both air and water. **Utelite** increases the water holding capacity of the soil and it also helps improve drainage within the soil. It does not decompose, like mulch, so it does not have to be added every year. We have **Utelite** available by the bag or in bulk.

For best results, add as much Utelite to the soil as you can reasonably afford. Beginning with good soil is sometimes easier than trying to improve it a little every year. You can mix 10% to 25% to 50% Utelite with your soil. Some clay soil definitely needs more Utelite than other clay soil.

If your clay soil is fairly good, you may only need to spread about 1/2" to 3/4" of Utelite over the area. Rototill it as uniformly and as deeply into the soil as possible. One cubic yard should cover between 450 and 650 square feet using this guideline. Apply this amount of Utelite to your soil every year until you reach the desired soil structure.

Gypsum is also a soil conditioner that helps to improve clay soil. However, gypsum changes the chemical structure of the soil, not the physical structure. Gypsum actually helps to improve all soils, not just clay soils. Gypsum improves the soil by adding calcium and sulphur, which allows the soil particles to release other nutrients already in the soil. Plants can absorb and utilize the nutrients that were not previously available for plants to use, even though they were in the soil. The release of nutrients is the reason many plants show an increase in growth when you apply gypsum. For more information about improving your garden soil please ask for a copy of our 'Garden Soil and Mulch' handout.



Dormant Spray ... It's Important

Dormant spray is the single most important spray of the year because it prevents and kills more insects



continued from page 3

than any other single spray during the year. **Dormant Spray** is an insecticide that you apply before the plants begin to grow, while they are still dormant. Dormant oil (not motor oil) can be sprayed alone. It can also be mixed with another insecticide such as **Malathion** or **Lime Sulfur**. All plants benefit from **Dormant Spray**, especially fruit trees, raspberries, roses and evergreens. Sometimes the only way to kill certain insects (pear psylla, juniper scale, spider mites, etc) is with dormant spray.



Wait to apply **Dormant Spray** until the buds of your plants begin to swell. Be sure to spray your plants before the buds open. The best time to apply Dormant Spray is usually early in April. Thoroughly spray the upper trunk and branches. Do not spray the lower trunk because many beneficial insects lay their eggs in this location.

Unfortunately, dormant spray does not kill all insects. You may also have to spray later in the year as needed. For example, dormant spray will not kill the worms that get in apples, cherry fruit flies, peach tree borer, aspen borer, or root weevil. These insects either live inside the tree or they live in the soil during the winter. Dormant spray only kills those insects it comes in contact with. We have an information sheet about using dormant spray. This sheet will further explain how to use this important spray. Please stop by and pick one up.

Fruit Tree Care

Besides pruning and dormant spraying your fruit trees, fertilizing them should be a high priority each spring. Fruit trees must be fertilized early each spring if they are to produce high quality fruit every year. Fruit trees need more fertilizer than both shade trees and pine trees. Fruit trees should be fertilized at least six weeks before they bloom. Do not fertilize your older fruit trees after their blossoms drop, or your trees may produce too much undesired growth later in the year.



Young trees (up to 5 years old) benefit from the use of **Ross Fertilizer Stakes**. Older trees (more than 5 years old) benefit more from a good garden fertilizer, such as **16-16-8 Multipurpose Fertilizer** or **Dr. Earth #7 All Purpose Fertilizer**, than from fertilizer stakes.



Too much fertilizer can be just as bad for fruit trees as not enough. Stop by and pick up a **Fertilizing Fruit Tree** handout, to help you decide how much fertilizer your trees really need. This handout is free, just ask for a copy.

Humic Acid

Humic acid is a natural soil stimulant. It is processed from some of the most concentrated organic materials available. Humic acid is usually composed of 50% carbon, 40% oxygen, 5% hydrogen, 3% nitrogen, 1% phosphorous, and 1% sulphur. Most humic acid was formed when trees and vegetation underwent compaction and heating many thousands of years ago. Over the ages, this organic material was slowly carbonized and became coal. During this compaction process, many of the organic acids and esters, contained within the vegetation, were squeezed out and formed a pool on top of the coal. This pool dried, aged, and became a layer known as shale. This layer of shale is the source of humate, which contains humic acid. Because of its vegetative origin, this material is very rich. It benefits all plants when incorporated into the soil.



Humic acid helps chelate many nutrients and helps bind

them to soil particles. Chelated nutrients that are attached to soil particles, are easier for plants to absorb and use. Magnesium, iron, calcium and many other 'trace elements' are just some of the nutrients that humic acid helps plants utilize more effectively. Humic acid helps the fertilizer you apply reach the plants easier. It also helps to release nutrients, already in the soil, that your plants have not been able to absorb and utilize.

Add humic acid to the soil as you rototill your gardens in the spring. You can also spread humic acid on your lawn, just like fertilizer. It can be applied any time of the year - spring, summer, or fall. Humic acid is not a fertilizer, but your plants will react as if you just fertilized them. If your lawn needs a little 'extra help' during the hot, summer weather, apply humic acid instead of lawn fertilizer to green it up. Humic acid helps all plants become more healthy. It can actually help prevent, and help plants overcome, disease problems. We have 20 lb bags of Humic Acid called **Natural Guard Soil Activator** and 50 lb bags called **Humate Soil Conditioner**.

Seed Germinating Tips



Carrots, and many other small seeds, are sometimes hard to germinate because the soil dries out too quickly. The seeds die before they can establish a root system that can absorb water. Either cover them with a fine layer of **Black Forest Compost** after planting them, or try laying a 2 x 4, or other narrow piece of wood, over the top of your rows of seeds. The wood will retain moisture in the soil, absorb a little extra heat from the sun, and generally increase the germination rate of all your seeds. Let the 2 x 4 cover the seeds for about one week, or until you peek under the board and see small white shoots starting to emerge from the ground. **Caution:** Do not leave the 2 x 4 on the seeds too long or the plants will become deformed.

Beet seeds are sometimes hard to germinate because they have a tough outer coat called a 'testa'. This coat has to be softened so water can penetrate, enabling the seeds to germinate. One way to help soften this coat is to soak the seeds in water overnight. After several hours of soaking, place the seeds between two pieces of paper and roll them lightly with a rolling pin. You will be surprised how many more beet seeds actually germinate when you treat them this way.

Planting Schedule



Don't be in too big of a hurry to plant annual flowers outside this spring. If you plant early, you sometimes have to plant often. It is better to plant many annual flowers and vegetables a day too late than a day too early. Many factors will influence how cold tolerant a particular plant will be. Watch the weatherman and plan your planting schedule according to the weather, not according to the calendar. We have a handout available that gives a little more information about the cold hardiness of some of the common annual flowers and vegetables. Please stop by for a copy.

Pruning - It's important

One of the most important jobs early each spring is pruning. Prune plants to make them more eye appealing, to correct potential problems, to keep plants healthy and strong, to encourage more blossoms, and to 'just make-plants-more-beautiful'. Pruning helps you keep your plants growing the way they should -or at least the way you think they should grow.



The best time of year to prune is '**RIGHT NOW**', whatever time of year it is; especially if the plant has a problem. Preventative pruning and major pruning should be done early in the spring, while the plant is dormant. Minor pruning, shaping, and trimming can be done all summer as needed. Don't prune plants heavily in the fall, when plants are getting ready for winter. Wait until the plants actually go dormant in the fall or winter before pruning them.



Winter: Pruning during winter dormancy helps the tree produce a vigorous burst of new growth in the spring. The tree's framework is easy to see and major faults can be easily detected and repaired. Prune grapes in January or February. Prune fruit trees just before they start to grow in the spring.

Prune summer flowering trees and shrubs (such as rose of sharon, potentilla, butterfly bush, golden rain tree, and hydrangeas) anytime before they start growing in the spring.

If your main goal for spring flowering trees and shrubs, is to have as many flowers as possible, wait until after they have finished blooming to prune them. Prune all your spring flowering trees and shrubs (such as lilac, forsythia, wisteria, bridalwreath, flowering cherry, flowering pear, and quince) later in the spring or early in the summer.

Summer: Pruning after the burst of new growth helps to slow down or '*dwarf*' a plant. You can control the suckers and branches you don't want to grow, without stimulating new branches to take their place. You can also reduce the number of leaves on the plant, which will also help to slow down the plant's overall growth.

Fall: Fall pruning helps to prevent damage from heavy snowfalls. Fall pruning also helps eliminate unwanted insect and disease problems. Major fall pruning should be kept to a minimum so that you do not stimulate new growth, too late in the year, that would be prone to winter injury.

Winter: Some trees will bleed sap if they are pruned heavily in the spring. This sap loss is not usually harmful, but it may invite insect or disease problems. Prune trees that bleed either in the late-fall or during the winter. Maple trees, birch trees, beech trees, dogwood trees, willow trees, grapevines, and some flowering trees will bleed sap if you prune them in the spring.

Pruning is an art, not a science. Even though there are correct principles and steps for pruning, there is not '*one best way*' to prune a tree or shrub. Unfortunately, trial and error is usually the best teacher. Many gardeners are reluctant to prune because they are not sure how to prune, or they are afraid of making a mistake and injuring their plants. Plants are usually very forgiving and will often recover from incorrect pruning - your plants may take a few years, but they will usually recover.

1. Start pruning the tree while it is still young. The cuts will be small and the tree will grow the way you want it to, right from the beginning.

2. Start with a visual inspection of the tree. Start at the top and work to the bottom. Remove defective parts such as dead, diseased, broken, narrow crotched, and hanging branches (except in weeping trees) before you try to shape the tree. Stand back and look again. What has changed, does it look better or worse?

3. After removing any defective branches, trim and shape your tree according to the type of tree it is. Knowing what shape and what size your tree should be is helpful in determining how much to prune. If the tree is too dense, remove a few of the

branches to 'open it up' but make sure to keep the tree uniform. If the tree is too tall or wide, trim some of the branches part way back, but keep the tree uniform.

4. Stand back and look again. What has changed, does it look better or worse? Repeat this step until you are satisfied with the results.

Things to consider:

1. Make clean cuts. Buy good tools and keep them sharp.

2. **Do not leave a stub** or cut too close to the trunk.

3. Remove crossing, parallel, vertical suckers, and branches growing too close together.

4. No pruning can be just as bad for a plant as incorrect pruning.

5. Light pruning and the removal of defective branches can be done '**now**', whatever time of the year it happens to be.

6. Attend a pruning class and buy a good pruning book.

Weed Preventers for the Garden

Besides cultivating the soil and physically pulling the weeds, there are easier ways to keep weeds out of gardens. Many chemical weed preventers are available that are safe to use in both the vegetable and flower gardens. **Treflan®** is one of the most common weed preventing chemicals because it can be used safely around vegetable plants and in flower gardens. Treflan only kills seeds as they germinate, so it will not harm young seedlings. Treflan will not control roots growing from perennial grasses or from plants that have already germinated. The best time to apply Treflan is after all your plants are planted and growing for at least a week. You can enjoy your garden, without very many weeds, for the rest of the summer. **Treflan** is also sold as **Prevent®** and **Preen®**. Another organic weed preventer that is safe for the garden is **Corn Gluten**. This weed preventer is a by-product of corn. It safely prevents weeds but it does have to be re-applied often. This product is known as **Concern Weed Preventer Plus®**.



Casoron® is another popular weed preventing chemical that is much stronger, and prevents more weeds, than most other common weed preventers. Casoron is great to use around shrubs, trees, and along fence lines. Casoron prevents weeds up to nine months. It is much safer to use in home gardens than the soil sterilizers because it will not kill existing plants, it only kills emerging plants. Casoron cannot be used in the vegetable or flower gardens, but it is labeled to control weeds in shrub areas and around trees. Casoron can also be used in the raspberry patch and in the rose garden. Stop by to learn more about these labor-saving, weed-preventing chemicals. We have a hand-out available about many of the weed preventing chemicals.

Pesticides - constant change.

There is constant change in the chemical industry. It is hard for us to keep ahead of all the changes, so I am sure it is even more challenging for home gardeners to understand all of the changes. **Malathion** is the chemical that we will be recommending this year for use on apples and pears. It doesn't last as long as Diazinon so you will have to spray more frequently. Listed below are a few other pesticides.



Neem Oil - This is not a new pesticide; we have been selling it for several years. It is bottled by the Greenlight company and sold as **Rose Defense, Fruit Nut & Vegetable Spray**, and **Powdery Mildew Killer**. Neem oil is an organic oil derived from the Neem Tree grown in Australia. Neem oil smothers and kills

continued from page 5

many insects and diseases without having a toxic impact on humans. It also repels many insects for up to two weeks. It is safe to use within a few days of harvest on most vegetables and fruits, including apples. You have to be careful using it in hot weather because it may burn leaves. We have a more extensive handout explaining Neem Oil.

Eight - This is an organic insecticide that has many of the safer properties of an inorganic insecticide named **Sevin**. **Eight** contains *permethrin*. It is labeled for use on fruits, vegetables, flowers, shrubs and trees. It cannot be used on apple or pear trees for controlling codling moth - at least for now. **Eight** controls most insects, both good and bad. **Eight** does not have a long residual, making it a good choice for controlling most insects in the vegetable garden, especially close to harvest. **Eight** is a poison, even though it is classified as an organic insecticide, and must be treated accordingly. **Eight** is a good alternative to **Diazinon**, **Sevin**, and **Malathion**.



Merit is a relatively new product for homeowners. Commercial applicators and farmers have been using this product for several years. It is safer than many of the older types of insecticides and does a very good job controlling many pests. **Merit** can be applied to most ornamental flowers, shrubs, and trees. It is not labeled for home use on fruit trees. This chemical is found in **Bayer Rose & Flower Insect Killer**, **Bayer Lawn & Garden Multi-Insect Killer**, **Bayer Season-Long Grub Control**, and **Bayer Tree & Shrub Insect Control**.

Tempo, just like **Merit**, is a fairly new product for home use. It kills many insects that are hard to control and stays active up to 30 days. **Tempo** is strictly for use on ornamental plants and it is not registered for home use on any edible plants. This chemical can be found in **Bayer Rose & Flower Insect Killer**.

Cedar Oil. Remember grandma's cedar chest? The cedar odor is a natural repellent for many insects. Cedar oil does not kill insects, it only repels them. However, repelling an insect is just as good as killing it when you are trying to protect your plants. The insect just decides to visit your neighbor's plants instead of yours. **Natural Guard Lawn, Plant & Pet Insect Spray** contains cedar oil. It is labeled for use on vegetables, fruits, lawns, and pets. It specifically lists Cherry Trees, Apple Trees and Pear Trees. This might be a good alternative in controlling the worms in these fruit trees. We do not know how well it works, but I think it is worth a try. Be careful using cedar oil during hot weather, oil can burn leaves and fruit if it is too hot.

Stay Alert - Gardeners should never forget that pesticides designed to kill insects can be dangerous for people as well. That's why it's so important to select garden chemicals carefully, apply them sparingly, and always read and follow all instructions to the letter. Even '*safe*' organic pesticides can be fatal to humans if improperly used.

What to Spray? - When facing an insect infestation, some gardeners grab the nearest spray bottle. Two separate gardeners have told me their horror stories. They wanted to kill some insects in their garden, but they accidentally grabbed a bottle of Weed B Gon by mistake; they meant to use Bug B Gon. Both products were in the same type of bottle and they just picked up the wrong one. Both gardeners had to dig up their old plants and plant new ones because the Weed B Gon killed the plants. These gardeners were embarrassed by their mistake and I am sure that many other people have made a similar mistake.

Be sure you know which pest you're dealing with and make sure the product you plan to use is effective on that particular pest. For example, insecticidal soaps are very safe to use but they may not get rid of the insect you are trying to control, such as fungus gnats, peach tree borers, or grasshoppers. Make sure the product is safe to use on your particular plant. Even though insecticidal soaps are very safe, they may still damage delicate plants, such as African Violets.

Borer Killers

We have a few insecticides that are registered for borer controls. **Bonide Borer Killer** contains **permethrin**. This product is safe to control borers in all fruit trees. It can even be used to control many other insects such as aphids, and beetles in fruit trees, shade trees and in vegetable gardens.

Orthene is available to control borers in pine trees, birch trees, ash trees, and other ornamental trees. It cannot be used on fruit trees.

Merit is the chemical in **Bayer Tree & Shrub Insect Control**. This is a systemic product that you just mix and pour around the base of the plant. The roots absorb this chemical and translocate it throughout the plant. This product can remain effective within the plant up to 12 months. It is labeled to control many types of insects. It is extremely effective in controlling the pesky aphids in the tops of tall trees. You can use **Bayer Tree & Shrub Insect Control** on all ornamental trees and shrubs but you cannot use it on edible plants. *You cannot use this chemical to control peach tree borer or any other insects on fruit trees.*



Pine Tree and Shrub Care

Now is the time to fertilize all your trees and shrubs including pine trees and pine shrubs. Fertilize young pine trees and pine shrubs (one to five years old) with **Ross Evergreen Fertilizer Stakes**, use 2 to 5 stakes per tree. Fertilize older pine trees with **Dr. Earth #7 All-Purpose Fertilizer**.

Watch your trees to see if they are getting the right amount of fertilizer. Your trees will let you know if they are getting the right amount of fertilizer by their rate of growth. If a tree is not getting enough fertilizer, it will grow very slowly. Too much fertilizer will make a tree grow too fast. Too much fertilizer can be just as bad for the tree as not enough. A tree that is fertilized too heavily may become too tall, it may become too sparse, it may have weak branches, or it may '*just not look like it is supposed to*'. Have you ever wondered why your dwarf mugho pines are not so dwarf? We didn't sell you the wrong plant, they just got too much fertilizer so they grew larger than they should.

A rule of thumb is to fertilize pine trees about half the amount you fertilize similar sized deciduous trees.

Flowering Shrub Shape Up

To keep flowering shrubs looking their best, you need to prune them. The best time to prune summer-flowering shrubs (potentilla, spiraea, weigela, roses, etc) is during the winter or early-spring, while they are still dormant. The best time to prune spring-flowering shrubs (lilac, forsythia, snowball, wisteria, quince, etc.) is after they finish blooming, in the early-summer.

Flowering shrubs that bloom on new wood can be pruned more severely than flowering shrubs that bloom on old wood. Forsythias, potentillas, spireas, privets, weigelas, and viburnums



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continued from page 6

bloom on new wood and are easy to train and prune. Lilacs, climbing roses, wisteria vines, and rhododendrons bloom on older wood, so be a little more conservative when you prune these types of plants. You can keep all your shrubs more compact by pruning them every year or two.

Pruning tip: Try to keep the tops of your shrubs a little narrower than the bottoms. By keeping the bottom a little wider than the top, sunlight can reach all the leaves and the plants will stay bushier at the bottom, instead of losing the bottom leaves. This is very critical when you are trying to keep a hedge uniformly bushy.

The easiest method of pruning many of the shorter flowering shrubs is to cut all the stems down to within a foot or two of the ground. You can cut the stems longer or shorter as needed, depending on the type of plant you are pruning and how tall you want it to be. Some spiraeas, potentillas, dwarf privet, and even the dwarf barberries respond well to this type of pruning. They can grow 18" to 36" after being trimmed this severely.

To rejuvenate a tall shrub, remove some of the larger branches completely to the ground. Leave the smaller branches to grow back in their place. After removing the large branches, make sure the shrub still looks uniform. You may need to trim a few of the remaining branches back to maintain the proper balance. Follow this procedure every year to keep your older shrubs looking their best.

Top Mulches

Top mulches have several important roles in the garden. They are even more important in 'low-water-use conditions'. Some of the most common **Top-Mulches** include Bark Chips, Shredded Bark, Black Forest Compost, Soil Pep, Coconut Fiber, Grass Clippings, Newspaper, Weed Cloth, and Plastic sheeting. Another top mulch that you may not know about is **Cocoa Bean Shell Mulch**.

Cocoa Bean Mulch is the hulls of cocoa beans. This product has been washed to remove theobromine (a chocolate product that can make dogs sick) so it is completely harmless to pets. Once applied to gardens, Cocoa Mulch releases a natural gum product which binds the shells into a porous mat that holds moisture in the soil, suppresses weed growth, and holds it in place through a minor windstorm



(unfortunately not through a 70 mph wind). Cocoa mulch is not meant for walkways, but is an excellent top dressing in perennial flower gardens.

This product also naturally deters slugs and snails, but it should not be used in shady areas where it will stay wet. If it is kept shady and wet, it will decompose quickly and create an unsightly, but harmless mold during the decomposition process. It does not decompose as quickly in hot and dry areas, but you usually don't have a snail problem in the sunny areas either. Apply a new layer of Cocoa Mulch each spring to keep the mulch looking fresh. It will also add a fresh fragrance of chocolate in your garden areas.

The key benefits are of top mulches are:

1. Retains soil moisture by reducing the amount of evaporation from the soil surface.
2. Protects the plant roots from heat, cold, drought.
3. Keeps the soil cooler.
4. Prevents germination of unwanted weed seeds.
5. Helps prevent erosion from wind, rain, sprinklers.
6. Adds a decorative top cover to your garden.

Crop Rotation

Crop rotation is the practice of changing the type of crops growing in a garden each year. Farmers use crop rotation extensively in the management of their fields. Without crop rotation, farmers would suffer heavy losses in their harvest. Home gardeners have a much harder time trying to rotate their crops because of the limited amount of space available, and the types of plants they want to grow in their yard. However, it is always a good idea not to plant the same type of plant, in the same area, year after year. Both insects and diseases multiply in the soil and can greatly affect the plants. A little change helps a lot. We have a handout about crop rotation, if you would like more information.



Eliminate Nuisance Fruit

Plums, crabapples, pinecones, maple whirlygigs and cottonwood's cotton can sometimes be reduced or eliminated. Obviously the best defense against unwanted or nuisance fruit, dropping all over your lawn or the sidewalk, is not planting trees with nuisance fruit. However, many of us



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The Gardening Newsletter

continued from page 7

inherit trees that may be quality trees, most of the year, until their evil twin arrives and drops debris all over the lawn.

There are chemical sprays available to help eliminate nuisance fruit. However, these sprays have to be applied each year and timing is critical. The trick is **'the chemical must be applied while the flowers are open but before the fruit can set'**. For most flowering trees there is only a ten day to two week window of opportunity to make a successful application.

Since the key to success in controlling nuisance fruits is timing, now is the time to think about these applications and watch for the flowers to appear. This will ensure that you do not miss the window of opportunity for spraying this spring. A foliar spray of **Florel® Fruit Eliminator** can be used to reduce or eliminate undesirable fruit development on many ornamental trees and shrubs such as crabapple, cottonwood, elm, ornamental plum and pear, maple, oak, pine, sweetgum, and sycamore.

Something New At J&L

Many of you already know that we sell fruit. We have apples, oranges, grapefruits, lemons, squash, potatoes, and even three kinds of peanuts. However, we only have fruit available from October through March. By the time you receive this newsletter we will probably not have fruit available until next fall.



What you may not know is that we stock other types of food items. We have two lines of food storage products available. We have products from both the **Blue Chip Group** and from **Grandma's Country Foods**. These two companies package items for immediate consumption, and for long term storage.

Some of the items that we have in stock are Cookie Mixes, Pancake Mixes, Bread Mixes, Gluten Free Products, and many different spices. We have the long-term storage cans of freeze-dried milk and freeze-dried fruits and vegetables. We also have cans of dehydrated fruits and vegetables, soup mixes, TVP products, and pasta products. In addition, we have one gallon through six gallon storage containers available, including Gamma Lids. Gamma lids are only \$5.98.



We have many items in stock, ready for immediate purchase, and we also have a **'Special Order List'** of other items that we can order for you. We do not have this list on the internet because food prices change frequently. Please stop by and pick up a current price list of the items that you may be interested in.

Newsletters and Handouts Available On CD

We have all of our gardening handouts and many of our past newsletters available on a CD. Sometimes it is easier to view items from a CD than from the internet. We sell the CD for \$9.98. We are constantly adding and changing our handouts, so if you have one of our older CDs, feel free to bring it back and exchange it for the latest version, at no additional cost.

Plants Improve Air Quality

One tree can remove 26 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere each year. This amount equals 11,000 miles of car emissions. Landscape plants, including shrubs and lawns, remove smoke, dust, and other pollutants from the air. One study showed that one acre of trees has the ability to remove thirteen tons of particles and gases annually -- **Gardening is important!**