

THE GARDENER

Newsletter of the Bowie-Crofton Garden Club



The aims of the Bowie-Crofton Garden Club shall be to promote interest in and develop skills in gardening through cooperation, joint efforts, and good fellowship.

September 2009

Next Monthly Meeting By *Neil Potash*

The next meeting of the Bowie-Crofton Garden Club will be held on Tuesday, September 29th at 7:30 pm at the Bowie City Hall, multipurpose room. The speaker will be FAITH JACKSON, a master gardener who has lead discussions at the Collington Life Center and writes a monthly garden column in the Collington Newsletter.

She will address the problem of what to do in the fall and winter when you have to bring all your summer potted plants inside. She knows how to keep gardenias and many other summer plants growing inside. She may have some suggestions about donating them to places where they will be appreciated, and new ideas for their storage.

Bring any questions you may have for our Master Gardener, Faith Jackson.

Presidents Comments by *Jesse Terres*

My tomato plants suffered from the early arrival of late blight to the point where I pulled up many of those that weren't already dead. I now have only four remaining plants, one Better Boy, one German Johnson, one Virginia Sweets, and one Hillbilly, and their production is rather slow. Fortunately for me my wife only eats red tomatoes leaving all the others for me. Since the only red ones are Better Boy and German Johnson and aren't producing right now she's off to the supermarket looking for red tomatoes. Pity!

I started three Diva cucumber plants in my greenhouse back in late March and transplanted them to my garden in May where they grow along my fence. The plants are now up to about 24' in length and have been producing the most delicious cucumbers all summer. They are most productive allowing me to keep my neighbor up to date with cucumbers as well. The best part is my wife, who has always been very sensitive to cucumbers, can eat them without any after taste. We have them almost every night in our salads.

I didn't grow many beets, but the few I did are delicious and we enjoy the beet tops. Not very often, just often enough to look forward the next ones. My carrots were sparse, but that was because of me and not the carrots. The seeds were a few years old and I broad cast them not expecting many to germinate when most of them did. Then I failed to thin them out. I'll do better next year.

My onions were a disaster again this year with about half rotting within two weeks of harvest. I never had this problem until last year. Initially I swore off growing them but have decided to try one more time. I've

never grown scullions before but they're in the scheme of things for next year. Kind of silly not to, when we use them in all of our salads.

My 12-foot row of lima beans is acting kind of weird this year. About a month ago I picked a bunch of them and froze about ten cups. I ate one cup full while just shelling them. Since then I haven't gotten enough to make a meal, but the plants are growing profusely and are loaded with blossoms. Last year I could pick enough for a meal about every three or four days. Fortunately, I'm the only one that eats them.

I've been thinking seriously about growing cucumbers in my greenhouse, but if they grow to lengths of 24 feet I may reconsider. That's too much space, but then again, who knows.

Meeting Minutes, August 25, 2009

The Tuesday August 25th meeting of the Bowie Crofton Garden Club was held at the Bowie City Hall.

Jesse Terres, President, called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm

The July Minutes were unanimously approved.

Program:

Mr. Rakey Hung from the Prince George's Community College spoke on Japanese Bonsai and Chinese Penjing. He teaches Bonsai and Penjing at the Bowie Senior Center.

A Friday Bonsai Club is forming at the Bowie Senior Center that meets on the first Friday of the month in the ceramics room from 9 to 11 am. Mr. Hung said this is a living work of art and there is no finished work in this type of gardening art. The goal is to create the tranquility and serenity of an old tree or forest. It was an intriguing presentation and Mr. Hung provided two handouts, one on "Bonsai or Penjing?" and the other on details of the Bonsai Club.

Business Meeting

Reports:

VP/Membership – Lynne Snyder officially resigned. Rose Arselanian and Don Sminkey will serve in the interim until a new Membership Chair volunteers.

Programs – Neil Potash announced that the speaker for next month will be from Collington. Faith Jackson is a Master Gardener and will speak on getting your plants ready for Fall and when to bring your plants indoors.

Field Trips – We've heard unofficially that Ellen Brous has resigned from this office

Garden Tours – Jesse Terres, our President volunteered that he may have a garden tour in October when the Chrysanthemums are in bloom.

Newsletter – email articles to Don Sminkey. The deadline is September 8, 2009.

Old Business

Highway Clean-Up – Linda Snow announced that the next Highway Cleanup is on Saturday, September 12, 2009. Cleanup Times are from 8:30 am to 11:30 am. To participate, contact the Bowie Crofton Garden Club Clean Up Coordinator at LCL@email.com.

New Business

Lions Club Rain Barrel Promotion -Gaye Williams shared that the Lions Club is selling rain barrels and it's a worthy cause since the proceeds go back into the Community.

Historian substitute- Francisco Roman announced that he will be missing the August and September meetings. Since Francisco documents all the meetings via photography, he asked for volunteers to borrow the camera for the next two meetings as well as for the September 12th Clean up.

Daylilies for sale – If you're interested in buying daylilies, please contact Ellen Brous.

Potting Bench Instruction – Since it was getting late, Jesse deferred to giving potting bench instruction until after the meeting adjourned to those who were interested.

Door prizes were awarded and plants/outdoor goodies were given away.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm

Respectfully submitted, *Kathleen Beres*, Secretary

Treasurer's Report September, 2009

By *Karin Banta*

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Starting Balance/Checkbook | \$3,574.02 |
| Expenses | |
| Crofton Printing/August Newsletter | \$28.52 |
| TOTAL | \$28.52 |
| Deposits | |
| None | |
| TOTAL | \$00.00 |
| Checkbook Balance | \$3,545.50 |
| AVAILABLE FUNDS | \$3,545.50 |

BCGC Road Clean-up

Hi Garden Club Members.

It's time for our next Garden Club Road Clean-up.!!! At this time, I only have two people scheduled to participate (including myself).

For those of you that are available we will be cleaning our two mile portion of Route 197. Those who can participate will meet up at 8:30 a.m. at the Burger King on Route 197. Clean-up will be from 8:30 - 11:30 and you can stay for any portion of this time.

I have gloves, bags, a few grabbers and tack sticks. After we finish the clean-up we normally go into Burger King for a FREE Whopper or to McDonalds for a Value Meal.

Please email back as soon as possible to let me know if you are able to help with this clean-up.

Let's show a little Garden Club pride and support this effort; I'm really looking forward to a good turnout for this event.

Thanks.

Linda Snow, 301-352-2850

Fall Lawn Care 101

Facts and Fiction about Grass

Contributed by *Gaye Williams*

Here is a great article with video prepared by Kathy Van Mullekom, of the Daily Press.

Timing is everything - especially when it comes to lawn care. The complete article can be viewed at:

<http://www.dailypress.com/features/family/home-garden/dp-garden-lawncare-0903,0,1373085.story>

September Lawn & Garden To-Do List



September heralds the fall gardening season with cooler temperatures and a first taste of autumn in the air. Zones 1-4 will likely experience a first frost, while warmer zones look forward to relief from the late summer heat and drought. September also marks the autumn equinox, when day and night are the same length, and the waning daylight hints at the winter to come. Now's the time to be outside to enjoy the beautiful weather while taking care of some of the following lawn and garden tasks for September.

Annuals and Perennials

- Divide and/or transplant perennials, making sure to feed the roots with a good source of phosphorus [1].
- Don't disturb asters, chrysanthemums, Russian sage, ornamental grasses, or other plants that are of interest in the fall and winter.
- September is the month to plant or transplant peonies.
- Plant annuals such as ornamental cabbage, pansies, violas, and snapdragons.
- After first frost in zones 7 and below, dig up and store tender bulbs such as caladium, cannas, taro, elephant ear, dahlia, and tuberous begonia.

Shrubs and Trees

- Container grown trees and shrubs can be planted now.
- Remove any dead shrubs and trees.
- Transplant trees and shrubs after the leaves begin to turn.
- Clean up fallen fruit to deter pests and disease.
- Address diseases now. Remove and destroy (do not compost) unhealthy leaves and branches after treating.
- Remove spent blooms, but don't do any heavy pruning that would encourage new growth which would be killed by the first frost.
- Hold off on fertilizing trees and shrubs to allow them to harden before winter.

Vegetable Garden

- Plant late-season vegetables such as peas, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbages, kale, Brussel sprouts, leeks, lettuce, radishes, turnips, and onions.
- Once your vegetable garden is finished, plant clover, alfalfa, or legumes as a cover crop. These "green manures" can be plowed under in the spring for a natural fertilizer and soil conditioner.

Houseplants

- Bring houseplants indoors before the nights get too cool.

- Prepare for Christmas color! Place poinsettias and Christmas cactus indoors where they will receive 10 hours of bright light (and 14 hours of total darkness) each day. A Christmas cactus will need a cool spot (50-60 degrees), while poinsettias are OK at 65-72°F.
- Plant some spring-flowering bulbs in pots to enjoy over the winter. If you intend to force early blooming for the holidays, put your bulbs in the refrigerator now.

Lawn

- The first half of September is prime lawn time! Take advantage of the season to ensure a strong, tough lawn in the future.
- Start with core aeration [2] and dethatching, leaving about ½” of thatch to decompose.
- If you are planting seed, or if your lawn is thin or weedy, sow seed before mid-month. Let the new shoots grow through 2--3 mowings before applying regular-strength fertilizer or a “weed and feed” product.
- Fertilize with a 3-1-2 fertilizer [1] to encourage top growth and winter hardiness.

Cleanup and Maintenance

- Now is a great time to clear out new planting beds and apply compost (or leaves and grass clippings) to be ready for spring planting.
- Attack those weeds! Commercial herbicides are particularly effective this time of year, as weeds are storing up nutrients in their roots and quickly absorb the herbicide where it counts.
- Check out our videos on how to safely target weeds [3] and organic weed control using vinegar [4].
- Label your perennials and bulbs before they die back to the ground.
- Put out extra bird feeders to support migrating birds.

Pests

- Slugs are particularly active in September – apply slug bait, diatomaceous earth, or other slug-control products during this time.
- In the fall, slugs lay clusters of eggs about the size of a small BB. Look under stones, boards, and around the edge of your lawn for these colorless eggs and destroy any you find.

Plan Ahead

- If you haven't already ordered your fall bulbs, do so now! Hold off on planting them until after the first frost.
- Simplify leaf clean-up by installing gutter guard, covering open drainpipes, and tuning up or repairing lawn equipment.
- Build a compost bin to collect fall leaves.

Info from Danny Lipford website: <http://www.dannylipford.com> , based on article by Julie Day

URL to article: <http://www.dannylipford.com/diy-home-improvement/lawn-and-gardening/september-lawn-garden-to-do-list/>

References in this Article:

[1] Phosphorus: <http://www.dannylipford.com/diy-home-improvement/lawn-and-gardening/fertilizer-101/>

[2] Aeration: <http://www.dannylipford.com/diy-home-improvement/lawn-and-gardening/adventures-in-aeration/>

[3] How to safely target weeds: <http://www.dannylipford.com/home-improvement-video/target-weeds/>

[4] Organic weed control using vinegar: <http://www.dannylipford.com/home-improvement-video/vinegar-weed-killer/>

Summer's Heat

By *Harold Moline*

(This article originally appeared in the June, 1988 club newsletter.)

By now most of you either have your gardens in or are scrambling to fill those last few spots that need something. The dry weather hasn't helped, but there are ways to adapt and still get the most from your lawn and garden.

I suspect that a few of you are going to groan when you learn that all the work of preparing that seedbed and seeding that new grass this spring will be for naught unless you continue to water generously throughout the summer dry spells. The best time to seed and repair lawns is in the fall, not the spring. The reasons for this are many. First of all, weeds are not as much of a problem if we seed in the fall. In addition, the new seed has a chance to become established before the stress of summer heat and requires less watering. Some of you are going to remember that we had a dry fall also, so, things never being perfect, you sometimes have to do the best you can with time and resources available. If you must seed in the spring, you should try to seed as early as possible to allow the grass to become established before the devastating summer heat descends on you. March, or even February, is a good time to prepare the soil and sow, assuming that the weather allows you to be in the yard at all.

Another good thing to remember is that in the spring you should minimize the application of fertilizers to lawns other than Tuff Coat (or Zoysia). This grass should be fertilized when it begins to green up in May and again in June. Fertilizer applications to fescues and other cool season grasses in the spring force the grasses into a rapid growth phase, and when the hot dry weather comes, these lawns are the first to burn up. The only way you can save such a lawn is to apply abundant amounts of water during the hot, dry weather. So if you want a lawn that is always luxuriant and lush green, go ahead and fertilize in the spring, but remember that you are going to be watering that lawn throughout the dry summer months to keep it looking nice. On the other hand, if you apply two fertilizer applications in the late fall or early winter (November and December in our area), you can have a nice lawn that will do well with minimal watering during extended dry periods.

Don't fret if you've done what many others have done, either fertilized heavily this spring, or repaired your lawn in late April or early May. Just remember to care for it throughout the summer and resolve to change your work habits a little in the future to minimize your efforts and still enjoy a beautiful lawn and garden.

Late Blight Comes Early, Hitting Tomatoes Hard, Experts Say

By Adrian Higgins, Washington Post Staff Writer, Friday, July 10, 2009

Plant scientists are asking home gardeners in the region to check their tomato plants for a disease that could wipe out much of this year's crop.

In spite of its name, late blight has appeared early in the tomato growing season, which runs from April to October, and threatens not just homegrown fruit but commercial crops, said Jerry Brust, an expert on vegetable pests at the University of Maryland's cooperative extension service.

A roma tomato plant exhibits the rotted fruit and stem lesions common to the late blight that scientists say is striking tomato plants early this year. (Courtesy Of Cornell University Department Of Plant Pathology And Plant-microbe Biology)

The disease is sometimes seen at the end of the tomato growing season, but after the fruit has been harvested. Its appearance now has the potential to cause widespread plant losses before harvest, said Brust, "especially if we start getting driving rains and some good storms that will pick up the spores," which can travel miles to infect healthy plants. Scientists attribute its early appearance to an unusually cool, wet and cloudy spring. McGrath, who works from Riverhead, N.Y., said that in 21 years she has only seen five outbreaks "and I've never seen it this early before."

In Maryland, the disease was discovered in mid-June when a Howard County gardener brought a sick plant to extension agents for diagnosis. Brust said many of the infected plants were sold unwittingly by big-box retailers -- he declined to name them -- raising fears that diseased plants could be widespread.

The initial symptoms are small, watery, gray or brown lesions on the leaf that quickly spread to the entire leaf. The fungus causes dark-brown lesions on the stems. The tomatoes turn brown and rot. The Maryland cooperative extension service has posted images of infected plants on its blog, Grow It, Eat It, at <http://www.growit.umd.edu>.

The fungus is not toxic to humans, but quickly renders an afflicted fruit rotten and inedible. Blighted plants should be placed in a sealed plastic bag and thrown out. Don't put them on the compost heap, where the spores will continue to spread, according to Brust.

The disease can be prevented if healthy plants are sprayed with a fungicide containing chlorothalonil. "That would be very helpful at that point and it would help with other foliage diseases," he said. Tomato vines are often afflicted with another disease called early blight, in which lower leaves yellow and shrivel.

Gardeners who want to spray organically could use neem oil, he said, but would have to reapply the oil weekly.

Word is getting out among farmers, McGrath said, but she is worried that the disease will spread quickly because home gardeners, many of them novices at growing food because of the recession, won't monitor their plants closely enough. "It's amazing how quickly this disease can devastate plants and that's something people need to realize," she said. "It's not like any other diseases on tomatoes that we can live with."

Hui Newcomb and Ellen Polishuk of Potomac Vegetable Farms said they have not noticed late blight on their tomato crops. They are growing approximately 2,000 plants on their farm near Vienna and an additional 3,000 on their farm near Purcellville.

"There's not a lot to be done when you're an organic grower," Polishuk said, "so we are going to wait and see what happens."

The blight, *Phytophthora infestans*, also causes potato plants to collapse and the tubers to rot. Potatoes and tomatoes are both in the nightshade family.

"We are growing potatoes but they're pretty much done already, and we'll be harvesting shortly," Polishuk said.

If the disease takes hold, consumers might see "a little less quantity and a higher price" for tomatoes as growers spend extra on fungal sprays, said Meg McGrath, a plant pathologist at Cornell University. So far, outbreaks have been sporadic but spread over a wide geographic area, with infected plants reported from South Carolina to Maine and west to Ohio. Late blight is the same fungal disease that wiped out potato crops in Ireland in the 1840s, leading to the infamous potato famine.

| Executive Committee | | | From the Editor Donald Sminkey All members of the Garden Club are welcome to write an article on a gardening-related subject. Please send via e-mail to: gardener@bcgardenclub.org. Include "B-CGC" or "Garden Club" in the subject heading; or mail to: Donald Sminkey, 508 Otway Road, Wake Forest, NC 27587 Deadline, October issue: Oct. 8, 2009 |
|---|--|---|---|
| President Jesse Terres 301-464-5914 jessgail@verizon.net | Treasurer Karin Banta 301-262-0653 k.banta04@verizon.net | Hospitality Vacant | |
| 1st VP/Programs Neil Potash 301-390-6572 snpotash1@juno.com | Secretary Kathleen Beres 301-249-1120 kabintospace@aol.com | Member Garden Tours Kent Winterson 301-464-0386 kwinterson@hrsa.gov | |
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| 4th VP/Public Relations Dorothy Bice 301-464-3748 debice@netzero.net | Plant Sale Gaye Williams 443-306-8920 LynneinMD@gmail.com | | |

Bowie-Crofton Garden Club
P.O. Box 2115
Bowie, MD 20718-2115