



## Pumpkin Brook Organic Gardening, Inc.

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### Compost Tea Routes Are Beginning

Al is on his way with the first compost tea of the season. Did you forget to sign up? Please contact [Doris](#) right away!



Al on his route.

Greetings,

April finds the staff of Pumpkin Brook out in the community. We started the month with staff training at the Townsend Historical Society and the Groton Country Club. Led by Priscilla our group of Paul M, Karla, Peggy, Alex, Susan and Tyler helped to get sections of these properties in shape for Spring and practiced their pruning skills at the same time.

Last weekend, Priscilla and Peggy were at [The Healing Garden](#) in Harvard preparing the gardens for their Spring blooming.

Susan will be at Townsend's Earth Day celebration. She is on the town committee and has helped organize this event. They promise that there will be entertainment to please all. Please join her on April 27, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Rain date is April 28 from noon to 5 p.m.

Some of our staff will be helping out at Drumlin Farm in Lincoln and Habitat in Belmont for [Mass Audubon's](#) Statewide Volunteer Day on April 27th.

PBOG staff will be at Orchard House in Concord on Saturday, May 4 (Rain Date Sunday, May 5) helping to transplant woodland perennials from the new sunny orchard area to a shady bank.

Our crew is happy to be part of the communities where our clients live and to help out these important organizations.

We hope to see some of you out and about.

### Arbor Day - April 26th

Arbor Day is fast approaching on April 26 and we are all thinking about the gift of trees that are budding out from the dawn of a late spring. Trees nourish our soul and give us

shade, comfort, and structure in our landscapes. They also give us comfort within our homes when they are planted in particular places around the microclimates of our yards. This increased comfort will reduce our needs for energy inputs that heat and cool our house. So, how do we design our landscapes so that trees can help alleviate energy demands?

Here are a few tips:

- Using trees for shade will reduce energy costs in the summertime. Give priority to planting shade trees due west of west facing windows. Shade trees due east of east facing windows should be your second priority. Because of the lower angle of sunshine in the morning and afternoon, sunlight during these times is more likely to directly penetrate into the house and can be buffered with shading trees.
- Contrary to intuition, the least energy efficient place for a tree is the south side of a home. In summer when the sun is high at midday, the shadow of a tree falls directly under the tree and misses a home to its north. In winter, however, the shadow of the same tree will fall on the house throughout most of the day.
- Using trees to create windbreaks will reduce energy costs in the winter. Evergreen trees and shrubs planted to the north and northwest of the home are the best type of windbreak.

Plant these trees at a distance from the house that is three to five times the height of the mature trees.

Here's an amazing fact: windbreaks can reduce the force

of wind for a distance of 30 times their height downwind, but the greatest protection comes in the region closest to the windbreak. In our cold region of the country, windbreaks are one of the most important landscape design features we should all have.



Deer resistant western arborvitae makes a good wind break

Priscilla can help you decide which trees will work in your yard. Please [e-mail](#) her if interested.

## Top Alternatives for Garden Impatiens

In another month, we will be planting annuals! Give some thought to these top alternatives for garden impatiens recommended below.

### What is Impatiens Downy Mildew?

Impatiens Downy Mildew (*Plasmopara obducens*) is a fungal disease sweeping our region, affecting common garden impatiens (*Impatiens walleriana*). Symptoms include faint yellowing and stippling of leaves, white fuzzy growth on the undersides of leaves, and early leaf drop.

Many area nurseries are recommending planting with alternatives and will not be carrying any garden impatiens this year. Here is a list of some of our favorite resistant choices:

### New Guinea Impatiens (*Impatiens hawkeri*)

Consider the 'Blushing Lilac' variety. These plants are hardy, and work great planted in masses for a vibrant pop of color. They require minimal deadheading and work best in part shade to shade, growing to a mature height of 10-14 inches.



New Guinea Impatiens  
'Blushing Lilac'



Torenia 'Summer Wave'

### Torenia

The 'Summer Wave' variety swells with blue/purple flowers that scramble outward. It's a very low maintenance plant that holds up well in the heat. For this reason it does well in window boxes and containers. Plant Torenia in filtered sun to shady areas. Mature plants reach 8-10 inches tall.

### Flowering Vinca (*Cataranthus roseus*)

The "Cascade Cherry" variety has great color and works in full sun or part shade. The flowers and structure of the plant closely resemble garden impatiens. It has a somewhat trailing habit and looks great in containers. Keep it well fertilized with fish fertilizer, and you will be rewarded with a great show.



Vinca 'Cascade Cherry'

## Priscilla's Tips for Clematis and Hydrangea Pruning

The first tip is to wait! What may look dead now might spring to life tomorrow, or early next week. It's been a long, cold spring this year.

On clematis, if the variety is not known, it's safe to prune the vine back to the height of 3' and secure it to its support. Otherwise, if variety name is known, [determine](#) if it is a Type A, B, or C and follow the directions on the linked article. Rampant specimens of the sweet autumn clematis can be cut to the ground to control sprawl. If any clematis stems are broken during the pruning process, cut them above the node below the damage. We like to use fishing line for ties as it's nearly invisible and strong.



Clematis



Hydrangeas in the summer garden

For hydrangeas, there are many rules to follow. In general, the white blooming types flower on new wood that will be produced in 2013, so it's OK to give them a hard pruning. Don't worry, with warm weather, these shrubs will soon push out 1'- 2' of new growth and flower. Varieties include 'Annabelle,' 'Tardiva,' and 'PG' (Paniculata grandiflora).

The blue flowered hydrangeas bloom on old wood, produced in 2012 or earlier. At all costs, preserve the long canes, for at their tips will appear this summer's flowers. Prune above an outward facing new bud and work for equal cane length as you move around the shrub. Eliminate interior weak, crossing or dead stems by cutting down to the base of origination.

'Endless Summer' and its kin, the newer varieties on the market, will bloom on either old or new wood. So it doesn't matter where you prune them. In general, we work to prune these down to a 1' height to start them over for a new season, again pruning just above an outward facing bud and eliminating dead canes.

Hydrangeas appreciate half shade to full sun and water at their roots, along with a rich garden soil. If your hydrangeas haven't been blooming to their full potential, we might

consider a fall soil amending program or perhaps winter protection for marginally hardy varieties such as 'Nikko Blue.'

And after all this pruning work, we all look forward to flowers!



Time to plant the peas and lettuce

## April Is the Time for.....

- Finishing dormant season pruning before leaves emerge on fruit trees and shrubs
- Cutting back butterfly bush, beautyberry, caryopteris, heather and lavender to stimulate new growth
- Shearing down ornamental grasses
- Cleaning up perennial borders after winter
- Enjoying spring bulbs, noting where additions are needed for fall orders
- Dividing and transplanting perennials
- Transplanting shrubs
- Beginning spring planting of new trees, shrubs, perennials or vegetables
- Topdressing vegetable gardens or perennial beds with compost
- Pruning and fertilizing roses
- Pruning clematis and hydrangea as new growth emerges (for tips on each, see article above)
- Watering any woody plant installed or transplanted over the past one to three years to support new growth especially in prolonged periods with no rain. Attached are our [Spring watering instructions](#).

### Quick Links

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We've had a few calls this season so far for help with vegetable gardens. Did you know that Pumpkin Brook can deliver our special blend of high fungal compost to your home? We also have a new product that makes an excellent mulch between rows. See our website or [e-mail](#) me for more details.

**Sincerely,**  
Priscilla

[Forward email](#)

