



Pumpkin Brook Organic Gardening, Inc.

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Greetings,

I've been experimenting with growing mushroom logs, ramps and small paw paws in my edible forest garden. Next up may be removal of hemlock saplings infested with woolly adelgid. These can be replaced with currants or blueberries. Ah, Spring! So much to do and so little time. Read Brianna's article below on the anatomy of an edible forest garden.

Edible Forest Gardens

Imagine walking out into your backyard and stepping into a garden where every tree, bush, and plant in sight provides food for you and your family. Then imagine that this garden was designed to mimic natural systems so that it would be a mainly self-sustaining garden. The garden would fertilize itself and take care of pests naturally. Edible forest gardens can accomplish all of these things!



Fruit of the Paw Paw Tree

Forest gardens are intentionally designed, resilient agronomic systems that are often composed of a mix of trees, shrubs, and perennial plants. Mimicry of natural forests is the essence of forest garden design. Although these gardens may be planted within a forested area, it is not a requirement.

The main objectives of a forest garden include:

- Ecological sustainability and resiliency
- Productivity: Ideally yielding a diversity of end products such as: fruits, nuts, edible leaves, spices, medicinal plant products, poles, fibers, fuel wood, fodder, mulches and sap products
- Low Maintenance: They should be self-maintaining, requiring little human intervention once established

There are various niches in a forest garden that can be broken down into different layers. Working from the uppermost layer to the forest garden "foundation," the layers include:

Watering Alert

In spite of the drenching we just received, there has been little or no rainfall this spring, resulting in very dry conditions. Our winter yielded insignificant snow melt. If you have an irrigation system, it is time to activate it now on a spring schedule. Give special attention to woody plants installed or transplanted in the last three years. This is critical to replenish new root systems that are not yet fully developed.

For those who hand water, get out your hoses and watering wands! Don't forget containers, as these dry out fast when temperatures soar above 70 degrees.

- Canopy Trees
- Understory Trees and Shrubs
- Herbs and Ground Layers
- Vine Layer
- Root Layer

For a complete explanation of these layers and the types of plants they contain, click [here](#) for the complete article.

Whether you are interested in becoming more self-reliant by growing more of your own food, or in providing a gourmet palate of fruits and vegetables to cook with, or in using your backyard as a medicine cabinet filled with herbs that can be used in healing, forest gardening can be a great approach.

We would be happy to do a site assessment and develop a design plan that suits your needs. We can talk to you about what you would like to grow, and more importantly, what you might like to eat. Think of new foods like paw paw and hardy kiwi. We would also be happy to maintain your forest garden for you, and since they are naturally low maintenance, it should be very cost effective.

Spring Bulb Helper

Are your bulbs blooming sparsely a few years after planting? Try these tips from Brent & Becky's Bulbs - gleaned on my recent trip to their Tidewater Virginia bulb fields. Pumpkin Brook will be implementing them in your gardens this season. Topdress bulbs yearly with compost to keep them blooming profusely, especially perennializers like narcissus and hyacinths. We'll try it on species tulips too, and see what happens! Brent also likes to layer his bulbs around perennials, groundcovers and annuals so there is no mulch or bare space showing at any time. What an inspiration to visit his display gardens in late March. I brought back many good ideas for plant combinations.



Mixing bulbs in with perennials and annuals

Earth Day & Community Happenings

Once again, Pumpkin Brook will be participating in local Earth Day activities.

Priscilla participated in Groton's [Earth Day celebration](#) held at the Williams Barn on Sunday, April 22nd.

Brianna will once again have a booth at the [Musketaquid Celebration](#) in Concord on Saturday, April 28 from 10 am - 2 pm.



Earth Day 2012

On April 14 Susan and Alana helped out with Spring clean up at the

[Virginia Thurston Healing Garden](#) in Harvard and Peggy is helping Mass Audubon at the [Habitat Sanctuary](#) in Belmont on April 28.

Lisa is offering an environmental program "Read and Seed" for children ages 3 and up with stories and a seed planting in the Tarbell Room of Lincoln Library on Saturday, April 28 from 2 pm - 3 pm. No registration is necessary.

Click on the links above for more information on these activities. If you are at the Earth Day festivities, please stop by and say hello.

Welcome New Staff Members

We would like to welcome our new staff members and let you know about some changes. Stephanie White and Julie Lisk are handling design projects this year. Jarrod Joyce has expanded his part-time organic lawn care service into a full-time business. You may still see them as they will be helping Pumpkin Brook as subcontractors this year. We are grateful to be able to have them continue with us in their new roles.

Welcome to new Crew Supervisor Paul Marean. Paul brings with him an extensive amount of experience in the landscape field and is a Mass Certified Horticulturist.

New Crew Members Alana Hernandez and Ryan Cormier have also been added to our staff. Alana completed a year long internship at the Arnold Arboretum in 2011. Ryan is finishing his degree in new media and has previous experience with farm work.

Staff Updates

We are pleased to announce that Sarah Benoit has been promoted to Crew Supervisor.

Al Newman recently received his Pesticide Applicator's License (necessary for all labelled pesticides, even organic ones). He is assisting Carmine as Plant Health Care Technician this year. You'll see Al in the field with tick & mosquito spray applications. He'll assist with our compost tea program beginning soon.

Carmine Imbriglio welcomed his 3rd child, Jackson David to the world on April 15th.

April Is the Time for...

- Finishing spring cleanup
- Dividing perennials that have become woody or have overrun their space
- Beginning to plant new trees, shrubs and perennials
- Filling containers with spring color
- Planning replacement plants for those plants damaged beyond repair in last October's storm



Quick Links

- [To Unsubscribe](#)
- [PBOG Website](#)
- [Click here to respond](#)

- Fertilizing bulbs as they finish bloom and topdressing with compost (while you can see where they sit, before foliage disappears)
- Planning to mulch beds as soon as all perennials emerge from dormancy and attain a height of 4"-6"
- Install supports for clematis and pruning this plant back according to type
- Pruning and fertilizing roses
- Weeding out cool season weeds
- Starting vegetable gardens with peas, lettuce, spinach, kale, radish and the like that tolerate cool nights
- Pruning back raspberry canes



Let us fill your containers with seasonal plants!

Your gardens are looking great! Thanks for having us back. If we haven't heard from you yet, e-mail [me](#) today.

Sincerely,
Priscilla

[Forward email](#)



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