



[Pumpkin Brook Organic Gardening, Inc.](#)

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Greetings,

All of us at Pumpkin Brook look forward to the end of summer in the garden and the change to fall's cooler temperatures. Your gardens are putting on a good showing of all the work we have done. Thanks for the opportunity.

Color in the Garden

As summer rolls into its final blaze of glory, I get many requests for more color in the garden. Isn't it all too apparent when it's lacking!

Many people have certain colors that they avoid - orange is probably the most common one. However, orange combines beautifully with blue, with both colors coming alive in a new way. Orange can certainly pair up with reds and yellows (think zinnias for a moment). I saw a new zinnia planted in front of a Mexican restaurant recently that was rosy pink overlaid with green somehow - quite lovely, but I'm not sure I would have liked it without all the other vivid colors that had been set around it.

Others stick to a certain palette of color. This can be an effective strategy. As the seasons unroll, something new comes into bloom in your favorite colors. The all-white garden comes to mind. This can be cooling and restful during hot New England summers, if surrounded by enough greenery to tone bright white down in the hot sun. Some additional effective combinations are burgundy, chartreuse and yellow; pink, blue and silver; or purple, rose and red.

I could go on and on, but here are a few plants we've been using:



Salvia 'Indigo Spires'



Aster Avondale



Aster 'October Skies'



Seen on my recent trip

Heuchera 'Bronze Beauty' has tones of copper, burgundy and black with a large, fuzzy-textured leaf. Bold and interesting!



Heuchera 'Bronze Beauty'

Tall annual Salvias like 'Indigo Spires' are approaching peak bloom as days begin to approach 12 hours in length. These can fill a lot of empty space if you have it, or they nestle quite well among tall perennials if planted last June. Surprisingly frost tolerant, these will carry on through October.

Long-blooming woodland asters like the new blue selection 'Avondale' can light up dappled shade. This variety even likes dry shade! Of course, my all-time favorite aster is still the deep blue 'October Skies.'

A new pinkish-red annual grass called 'Fireworks' can transform a tired summer container into fall magic. Pair it with sedums or small asters for even more interest.



Pennisetum 'Fireworks'

Low, drought-tolerant sedums can be combined in a myriad of ways to make a stunning tapestry of texture and color. Check out the photo from my recent garden tour of Vermont!

Plant Health Care News

We are beginning compost tea applications again

this week with deep root feedings of trees. Our aim is to boost soil biology while soil microorganisms are actively feeding during the warm weather. This program will wind up by early October for the season.

Tick and mosquito spraying will take place during early September and again one month later. While the warm weather continues, please protect yourself, your children and your pets from these pests and check for ticks after outdoor activities. Our natural cedar or rosemary oil sprays can help.

Please contact [Carmine](#), our Plant Health Care Manager, for more information about these programs.

Fall Is for Planting

For us here at PBOG, fall began on August 15, the time when nights are generally cooler and we can (hopefully) expect more frequent rain to aid in establishment. This is the time to begin to renovate beds, transplant and rearrange perennials and shrubs, and plant something new. We will wrap up this season around Columbus Day, and I am actively working with a number of you now on finalizing designs and plans. Please [let me know](#) at once if you have a small or large project in mind for this coming season.

Bulb ordering time is here, too! Planting of bulbs takes place each fall between Columbus Day and Veteran's Day. I simply love bulbs, as most of you know. They are the harbingers of spring and certainly lend plenty of color to beds that are just waking up from winter's icy blast.



A welcome sign of Spring!

**Bulb orders due
by September 7!**

For inspiration, I turn to my collection of books on bulbs and notes from this past spring of special requests and gaps in borders. Then I pore over the bulb catalogs themselves. You might also enjoy browsing a website called www.springdisplays.com for ideas. Use the password shovel. I plan to place all bulb orders by September 7 in order to get our top variety choices. So please [let me know](#) your desires in the bulb department as soon as possible.

Watering Tip of the Month

For those who are hand watering certain plants this summer, I hope you've been using a watering wand!

I can't exist without one. This handy tool connects to your garden hose and has a shut-off valve so you can easily fill a watering can at a distance from your spigot. There is an attachment that acts



Watering wands

like a shower head, rapidly filling wells around recently-planted trees and shrubs. Use that dandy shut-off valve when you move on to the next plant.

We strongly urge you to get out and water this weekend, as there hasn't been significant rainfall since August 9. The weather is so very pleasant, but hot and dry during the daytime, and we're finding many drooping plants this week during our rounds. See our [Summer Watering Tips](#) for more information about how often you should water and how much.

Water this weekend!

Please let [Carmin](#) or [Priscilla](#) know if you would like help with watering. Our spray trucks can quickly bring water to thirsty landscapes. We recommend our Stress-X spray of kelp and other micronutrients to help stressed plants recover

quickly from any drought damage.

Iris Borer Sighting

While doing the weekly maintenance recently at one of our clients, Lisa and I found large, fat iris borer larvae active in one section of an iris bed. The first thing we saw was foliage streaked at the base, with chewed edges, and appearing water-soaked. Forking up the rhizomes below, we found the larvae literally jumping out of the plants into the soil! But in general, most of them stayed put inside the dug-up rhizomes, making now through the end of August the ideal time to control this pest.



Iris borer in rhizome

We ended up removing a large section of iris and placed everything in a black plastic bag, ready for the trash. Al followed up with a soil drench of Aza-Direct (neem oil) in case we missed any larvae. We will wait until the first week of October to replant the bed with clean iris rhizomes.

Our crew will be on the lookout as we make our rounds of various gardens for signs of iris borer. The foliage will actually regrow slightly before its final cutdown in November.

Click [here](#) for more information of the iris borer.

August Is the Time for....

- Keeping up with weeding, touching up mulch as necessary
- Deadheading flowers to promote new bloom
- Picking ripening vegetables to hasten more flower buds that lead to more crops
- Cleaning up spent foliage in vegetable gardens and removing from the site

- Watering by hand as needed (see above)
- Staking tall annuals and perennials to keep them upright in wind and rain storms
- Scouting for iris borer and removing damaged rhizomes from beds (see above)
- Finishing summer pruning of trees and shrubs, particularly spring bloomers
- Planning fall planting and transplanting projects
- Taking some garden tours
- Sitting back and enjoying your garden!

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Hope you all enjoy the last days of summer and the Labor Day holiday.

Sincerely,
Priscilla

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