



Pumpkin Brook Organic Gardening, Inc.

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Greetings,

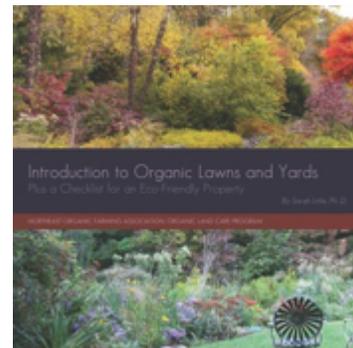
As fall draws closer, I'm beginning to plan various projects appropriate to the coming season. At the top of my list is soil amending and fertilizing. We do this in the fall since root growth of woody plants is vigorous and extensive as the soil temperature cools. The plants are building energy reserves for next year's leaves, flowers, fruit and shoots, so this is the time to amend and fertilize. Please read my article below.

Fall Soil Amending and Fertilizing What's the Difference?

Soil amending happens when we discover an imbalance in nutrients. This has shown itself to us all season (and to you) in the form of off-color leaves, insect or disease pressure, powdery mildew, or failure to bloom in abundance. Sure enough, a soil test will show too much phosphorus, for example, and not enough of the other key nutrients like calcium, potassium, magnesium and sulfur to

balance it. Micronutrients may also be lacking. Thus our fall amending program will address these issues on a case-by-case basis, with soil testing in your garden as the basis for action. We incorporate the amendments (such as rock powders and lime) into compost and then topdress your plants with the mixture, following the principles of Nutrient Dense Gardening.

Fertilizing is an adjunct to balanced soil, providing nitrogen and other nutrients in a form easily available to plants. Organic fertilizers feed slowly, breaking down over a period of months to boost long-term fertility of both the plants and the organisms that maintain soil health. We usually use Humates on woody plants in the fall, a slow-releasing blend of a coal-like material mined from an ancient source in New Mexico. Anything planted within the past five years responds well to an application of Humates. We also use special blended organic fertilizers such as Bulb Mix for spring blooming bulbs, Pro-Holly for broadleaf evergreens, and Pro-Mix when planting perennials.



Introduction to Organic
Lawns & Yards
[Booklet Available](#)

NOFA has a new publication entitled "Introduction to Organic Lawns and Yards Plus a Checklist for an Eco-Friendly Property" that has just been released. We have some available to send to our clients. We would be happy to send one to you or you may download it now by clicking [here](#). If you prefer us to send you one, please e-mail Priscilla.

Read more about soil biology in an article by the Rodale Institute. Please click on this [link](#).

If we tested your soil and amended in 2009 or 2010, we will soon be pulling new soil samples to see how the nutrient balancing is coming along. This is a multi-year process! We'll then plan our soil amending according to the test results. For those who had amending completed in Spring 2011, we'll wait until next spring for the retesting.

Our soil tests are \$40 each and provide a wealth of useful information to boost the performance of plants in your garden. We especially encourage vegetable gardeners to test soil this fall and amend in November, as these heavy-feeding crops deplete the soil annually. Rock powders will break down slowly over winter, providing ready-made enriched soil for spring planting.

For those utilizing our compost tea program, we believe that the granular amending and fertilizing programs are a natural complement to the foliar and deep root feeding provided during the warmer months of May-October. A balanced soil will be teeming with microbial life, enabling the plants to be more productive, resilient against weather extremes, and resistant to pests and diseases.

Please [contact me](#) for more information on amending and fertilizing.

Time for Making Changes to Your Garden

The great thing about late summer is that you can see your garden when plants are at their full size. In the spring when perennials are still developing, one can sometimes get an inaccurate sense of the necessary spacing between plants. Now is the time when you notice just how big that Shasta daisy plant is or how your once compact cluster of daylilies have taken over the garden.

Ask yourself if there are plants in places that don't make sense (ex: taller plants at the front of the border, untidy plants in highly visible spots, shade loving plants in a sunny location etc.) What about color scheme? Are there new colors that you would like to see? Are some plants taking up too much real estate without giving you the kind of show you are looking for? Or perhaps there is too much open space that needs filling up?

Sometimes the solution can be as simple as planting a well placed specimen shrub or tree in a highly visible spot.

We are beginning several fall plantings in late August this year with more following in September and October. Fall is a great

Seven Great Plants for Fall Color



Achillea millefolium 'Paprika'



A well placed specimen tree can make a big difference





Achillea millefolium
'Terra Cotta'

time for planting, dividing and transplanting. We can take advantage of more frequent rainfall, cooler temperatures and less humidity to assist in good establishment.



If you know that you are not crazy about certain aspects of your garden but can't quite put your finger on what's off, Priscilla, Steph or Julie can come out and do a walk-through with you around your property to help you consider different design options. Contact [Priscilla](#) today so we can schedule a time. [E-mail](#) Steph for a walk-through

Seven Great Plants for Fall Color

The fall is a time when garden beds from one house to another can sometimes look the same. Some people think that mums, sedums and invasive burning bush are the only options for fall color but there are many other interesting options. Here are seven of our favorites for fall.



Hamamelis virginiana

Achillea millefolium 'Paprika' and 'Terra Cotta' or Yarrow
These perennials have a soft fernlike appearance with bright flower heads arranged in large compact clusters at the top of each stem. They make great cut flowers too and are a nice transition from summer into fall. Very tolerant of lean soils.



Aconitum carmichaelii
'Arendsii'

Hamamelis virginiana or American Witch Hazel

This native is a fall bloomer unlike its foreign cousin which blooms in early spring. It can usually grow 10-15 ft tall and produces wrinkly fragrant yellow flowers that hold on for a while after the leaves fall. The leaves turn bright yellow in the fall. The extract of leaves, twigs and bark has astringent properties and can be used in tinctures and lotions.

Aconitum carmichaelii 'Arendsii' or Monkshood

This striking blue violet flower does well in partly shaded wooded and damp but well draining areas. It can grow 3-4 ft tall and so would do well in the back of a garden bed. This one doesn't need staking due to its strong stems. Since all parts are poisonous, site away from vegetable gardens or play areas. It's a breathtakingly beautiful shade of blue purple that will really make your garden pop.



Rudbeckia fulgida

Rudbeckia fulgida or Black-eyed Susan

This is the perennial that keeps on giving. It has an incredible bloom time with repeat blooms from July to October. Its daisylike flowers make great cut flowers. It also is a larval host and nectar source for butterflies, and birds love the ripe seeds, so it's sure to give you a show in many ways.

Symphotrichum novae-angliae or New England Aster

With showy numerous flowers on stems ranging in height from 3-6 ft, this is truly a classic fall beauty. Flower color can range from lavender to purple to white and pink. The yellow center of the

flower makes a beautiful contrast atop the hairy and abundant stems. It prefers full sun and moist rich soil.

Vaccinium corymbosum or Highbush Blueberry

This shrub is a multi-functional autumn winner. It works as a great alternative to the invasive burning bush with its bright red autumn foliage. The berries are a favorite of songbirds, game birds, small mammals and of course people. It prefers acidic soil and can reach heights of 6-12 ft.



Symphyotrichum novae-angliae

Nyssa sylvatica or Black Gum or Tupelo

Another great alternative to burning bush, this tree displays brilliant fall color with its bright red, orange, yellow and purple leaves. It has distinctively horizontal spreading branches and a conical habit. It does well in moist soils, and birds and mammals are attracted to its small, juicy fruit.

Order Bulbs Now - Next Spring, WOW!

Believe it or not, it's time to put in your bulb orders! I aim to submit my orders by September 10th before certain bulbs are sold out. Planting spring flowering bulbs can be a wonderful way to add some color to your garden when it needs it the most in early spring. When the world seems gray and cold, there is nothing like bulbs to usher in the joy of spring and the hope for warmer days.

For inspiration, visit www.springdisplays.com. There is an interactive feature where you can create a list of your favorites. When you are finished, click on the my favorites tab and either print and mail your list or send the list by e-mail to Priscilla. The password is **shovel**.

Daffodils will naturalize and multiply over time, while tulips may give you a beautiful show for one to two years. You may want to consider some of the lesser known but beautiful bulbs such as species tulips, chionodoxas or alliums to make your garden unique.



Allium

Here are a few tips we like to consider when planting bulbs:

- Location. Most bulbs prefer 6 hours of full sun, even after the trees have leafed out. Some woodland bulbs like Erythronium (dog tooth violet) prefer a more wooded shady site.



- Root Development.

It is important to allow enough time for root growth.



Erythronium

Although you can plant bulbs until the ground freezes, it is best to plant between mid-October and mid-November to allow sufficient time for root development.

- Spacing. Bulbs look best when planted in clusters or drifts. This can be accomplished by digging a hole and planting multiple bulbs in the hole so that they aren't touching or by sprinkling gently on the ground and planting them where they land.
- Amendments. We fill each hole with compost and an organic bulb fertilizer that will promote root and flower development.
- Pest Resistance. If you are concerned about rodents getting to your bulbs, we can dip them in a highly concentrated mixture of sulfur, garlic and hot pepper. Better yet, plant members of the lily family, as rodents avoid these. Daffodils, alliums, and hyacinths are long lasting in the landscape.



Spring Bulb Mix

Lisa Mattei 'People's Choice' Winner

Congratulations again to Lisa Mattei, who won the 'People's Choice' award for her native container planting on display at Garden in the Woods through August 31st. [There's still time to see it!](#)

While Lisa was busy working for PBOG, the city of Marlborough gave her an award for her beautiful home garden!



People's Choice Award Winner

If you would like assistance deciding which bulbs are best for your garden, or would like help with the planting, please [contact Priscilla](#) soon.

August Is the Time For.....

- Deadheading and shearing perennials after bloom, some will have another round of bloom soon
- Keeping up with weeding
- Snipping off spent flowers of annuals and watering with diluted fish fertilizer
- Topping off containers with worm castings to replenish nutrients lost through watering
- Finishing summer pruning of spring blooming trees and shrubs
- Dividing bearded iris
- Planning new additions to the garden for fall planting
- Ordering spring blooming bulbs
- Overseeding bare patches in lawn after topdressing with compost, late in month
- Treating grub-infested patches of lawn with Milky Spore or beneficial nematodes while the grub exoskeleton is soft and vulnerable to attack, best done between periods of rain
- Watering any shrubs and trees planted within the past five years to help pull through periods of high temperatures - deeply watering is best, an inch of water per week minimum
- Planting fall vegetable crops such as lettuce, spinach, chard,

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kale

I hope you take some time to think about all the wonderful options to change your landscape this fall and make it more enjoyable for you and your family. We look forward to helping you with the process.

Sincerely,
Priscilla

[Forward email](#)



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