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## Pumpkin Brook Organic Gardening, Inc.

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Greetings,

Hard to believe, but we're putting the finishing touches on our "spring" letter now! Look for it in your e-mail in box next week.

I hope the recent blizzard was not too hard on you and your plants. However, the benefits of deep snow cover are many: moderates ground temperature, protects plants from windburn and sun scald as days lengthen, recharges groundwater upon meltdown, and covers all those unfinished projects very well! Remember to leave broken branches where they are for now - don't try to pull them out of the snowbanks. On our first visit of the season we will be sure to check for such damage and take care of it then.

I'm happy to announce that all our staff from 2012 are on tap for 2013. We will have a few new hires and changes of roles that will be announced next month.

## Dormant Pruning Season Approaches

**Spring Recommendations and Plant Health Care Contracts will arrive in your e-mail or mail box next week!**

Please watch for it and let us [know](#) if you have any questions.

The time is coming soon for dormant season pruning of fruit trees and woody ornamentals. We are waiting for a bit less snow cover, lack of ice, and temperatures above freezing. Sometime in March we will begin to contact our list of clients with waiting subjects such as crabapples, Japanese maples, cherries, dogwoods, and apple trees. Soon we'll turn to wisteria, red twig dogwood, spiraeas, forsythia, and more.



Dormant Season Pruning

Why do we prune now, you might ask?

Without leaves, it's easy to make good pruning decisions. Thinning of parallel branches is also much faster without leaves. Densely twiggy shrubs are much easier to handle when leaves are absent. Study a twig and you'll see that leaf and/or flower buds are swelling, so it's easy to see where we need to focus.

Note we will hold off on pruning birches and maple trees until summer, as these tend to "bleed" sap in early spring. Many conifers like white pines fall into this category as well.

Please let [Priscilla](#) know if you have a tree or shrub in need of an early season makeover!

## Tick and Mosquito Spray Program Update

### Seedling Order Form just posted on our [Website!](#)

Orders are due March 17 so we can grow what you're looking for - organic vegetables and annuals. We'll consider special requests, too. Please contact [Priscilla](#).



This beautiful bulb collection was seen at a visit to the Smith College Bulb Show

We will continue to use our cedar-based tick and mosquito repellent this coming season. However, last year we found the product was often unavailable due to the great volume of orders the manufacturer was receiving. Production could not keep pace! We intend to order as much of this product as possible for 2013 but have a new back-up plan in place. Therefore, we may be using a combination of two products this year.

With guidance from Dr. Robert Childs, entomologist at University of Massachusetts, Amherst, we have located another similar new-to-market product that we will use on our spray routes this year. Scientific studies and university research show that this is the most effective organic product yet for control of ticks and mosquitoes. It is approved for use by the National Organic Program and is based on rosemary oil. The cost is roughly the same per gallon as the cedar oil-based product.



Protect Yourself from this  
Tiny Predator

Please contact Carmine if you have questions about this new addition to the [Plant Health Care Program](#). There will be an opportunity to sign up for tick and mosquito applications in our spring letter.

## Where to Go for a Glimpse of Spring

Here's my annual list of places to find spring or tropical color, fairly locally, right now! We've put in links to each so you can plan a day trip now:

[Lyman Estate Greenhouses](#),

Waltham

[Tower Hill Botanic Garden](#),

Boylston

[Wellesley College Greenhouses](#),

Wellesley

[Smith College Bulb Show](#), Northampton - March 2-17

[Mt. Holyoke College Bulb Show](#), South Hadley - March 2-17

[Stonecrop "Spring Under Glass"](#), Cold Spring, NY - March 25-30



Hyacinths and Cineraria

## New Nantucket and Upper Cape Service Announced

Last season PBOG traveled to Nantucket to handle seasonal fine gardening needs for one of our local clients at their second home. We've got our system down now and would welcome a few additional properties so that costs of transportation can be split. This year we are working with another client in the Cotuit area, so this region is also a possibility. Please let Priscilla know if you would like to discuss our regional services for 2013.

## February Is the Time for...

- Looking, observing, note taking, pondering design issues
- Reviewing plans for our landscape services in 2013
- Finishing seed orders (popular varieties can sell out)
- Ordering seedlings
- Fertilizing houseplants with a weak solution of fish fertilizer every other week to encourage strong new growth
- Making plans for dormant season pruning



Seed Starting

Please feel free to [e-mail](#) us if you would like to discuss anything about your gardens or yard. Carmine and Paul, along with Julie and Stephanie, stand ready to help you with design issues. We have more time now than we will in April! I will be vacationing for a little bit but look forward to hearing from you when I return on March 11. Many thanks!

Sincerely,  
Priscilla

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