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Pumpkin Brook Organic Gardening, Inc.

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Al Newman is congratulated by Priscilla on receiving his Green School Certificate

Greetings,

As our small company enters its 13th Spring, we've been experiencing a few growing pains. I am happy to announce some organizational changes that will support our recent growth.

I look forward to more time for hands-on gardening (not to mention proper sleep at night). I'll continue to be your point person for arranging maintenance visits and answering horticultural questions.

Carmine Imbriglio is continuing in his role as Plant Health Care Manager, assisted by Al Newman as Plant Health Care Technician. Together they will be brewing and making your compost tea applications, along with organic control for ticks and mosquitoes, anti-desiccant and deer repellent. They will manage pest and disease outbreaks through our spot spraying program as the season progresses.



Carmine Imbriglio

Carmine will also assume responsibility for staff scheduling in the brand new position of Operations Manager.

Paul Marean is our new Project Manager for Installation and Hardscapes who will be involved with our project design and estimating work. Most of you met Paul last year in his role as a Team Supervisor. Read Paul's profile below to learn more about his very interesting background.

Paul Marean

Paul holds a BS in Biology from Union College in Schenectady, New York and has two years of study towards a Doctorate degree in Plant & Soil Sciences/Botany from the University of Massachusetts. He trained in landscape design at The Landscape Institute of the Arnold Arboretum at Harvard University and has taken Plant Propagation classes at Logee's Greenhouse.

Certifications and Accreditations

NOFA Accredited Organic Land Care Professional, Massachusetts

Certified Horticulturist, Massachusetts
Nursery and Landscape Association

Honors

- *One of four nominees selected by Union College for the Thomas E. Watson Fellowship
- *Edith Emily McCoy Prize for excellence in botany
- *Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve undergraduate research grants



Paul Marean

Paul has many years of experience in the field while working as the designer/project coordinator at a Western Massachusetts design/build firm as well as operating his own business. He also worked for two years as the horticultural manager for a large central Massachusetts landscape construction firm.

In his spare time, Paul enjoys hiking and backpacking, vegetable gardening, constructing terraria, and tending to the eclectic collection of oddball plants round and about his house.

We look forward to offering a higher level of service with this new structure and to welcoming our veteran staff in their new roles.

NOFA Accreditation

Both Paul Marean and Alana Hernandez are now [NOFA accredited](#). We congratulate them for their achievement.

Plant Health Care Contracts

There is still time to send in your prepayment for a 10% discount off your plant health care. If you need another copy or if you didn't receive one, please [e-mail](#) us today.

Early Spring: Henry Thoreau and Climate Change

You may be interested in exploring the new special exhibition opening on April 12 at the [Concord Museum](#), comparing Thoreau's records of bloom time to today's results. Boston University professor Richard Primack says our native plants such as highbush blueberry and the pink lady slipper orchid are flowering 4.1 days earlier for every degree Celsius rise in mean spring temperatures.



Pink Lady Slipper

Of course, early 2012 was an extreme year of warmth, and plants responded by blooming up to 11 days earlier than usual. Many blossoms were later knocked back by ruinous frosts. 2013 looks to be a much later spring, hopefully more "normal." However, Primack said it's not known whether plants will continue on a trajectory of flowering early, or if "at some point plants instead will be unable to keep pace with climate change and just start dying."

Moles and Voles in the Landscape

When the snowbanks melt down, we often find large networks of tunnels in beds and lawns. This is a sure sign of winter vole activity.

Unfortunately, voles consume plants, tubers and seeds so can be quite damaging to the landscape. Voles seek protection from predators such as hawks, owls, foxes, coyotes, raccoons and house cats so adapt a stealthy lifestyle, darting out only to find food. Not only do their in-ground burrows shelter them, but they will seek out tall grass areas, excess mulch, brush piles, wood piles, rocks and almost anything left out in your yard.



Damage done
by moles

"Return to Earth"

*Through the weeks of deep
snow
we walked above the
ground
on fallen sky, as though we
did
not come of root and leaf,
as though
we had only air and
weather
for our difficult home.*

*But now
as March warms, and the
rivulets
run like birdsong on the
slopes,
and the branches of light
sing in the hills,
slowly we return to earth.*

-Wendell Berry

Moles, on the other hand, spend nearly all of their time beneath the ground excavating a system of tunnels. They are carnivorous and won't bother your plants. Instead, moles look for protein sources such as insects, worms and grubs.

What to do about the various tunnels? A good, brisk raking of damaged lawn or bed areas in early spring quickly knocks them down. Vole tunnels won't be used anyways once the snow cover is gone. Some lawn overseeding can be done in April to repair more extensive damage, especially for mole tunnels.

Next fall, mow the lawn slightly lower at the last mowing of the season. Locate wood piles, brush and compost piles, and other sources of potential cover well away from lawn and bed areas.

We recommend protecting newly planted trees, especially fruit trees, with hardware cloth set into the ground that is then filled with a peastone mulch. This can be removed in spring and must be adjusted as the tree gains girth.

PBOG also owns traps for voles that fit right into their tunnels and has employed them from time to time with a fairly good success rate!

Welcome Spring!

With Easter just around the corner, we have highlighted some plants that are both gorgeous in the spring garden and meaningful to our myths and to our souls.

Bulbs

Crocus tomassinianus 'Barr's Purple' has to be one of the most beautiful early spring crocus varieties. With its purple exterior and golden center, it provides such contrast and promise of spring amidst the melting snow.



Spring Crocus

Shrubs

Consider the native **Amelanchier canadensis** or Shadblow Service berry. The "service" berry refers to the arrival of flowers around Easter. In July, bluish-purple edible fruits appear (blueberry-like) that attract birds. Fall color is a vivid reddish orange. The 'Princess Diana' variety (Amelanchier x grandiflora 'Princess Diana') is prized for its disease resistance and ornamental value. Amelanchier 'Autumn Brilliance' is another great variety.



'Princess Diana'
Serviceberry

Trees

A beautiful Spring flowering tree to consider is the **Cercis canadensis**, common name Redbud or Judas Tree. According to myth, Judas Iscariot hung himself on the Judas Tree after which the white flowers turned red with shame or blood. The heart-shaped foliage is said to remind us of the love of Jesus Christ. Apart from biblical references, the Redbud is a simply stunning spring bloomer with flowers, borne in tight clusters along the stems before new leaves appear. Most often the flowers are a vivid shade of violet-pink, but there are many variations in leaf and flower color.



Cercis canadensis

Perennials

Ranunculus and anemone are found growing wild in Palestine near the Sea of Galilee and were probably referred to by Jesus as the lilies of the field in his Sermon on the Mount. Consider the native Anemone nemerosa 'Good White.' It has deeply divided foliage covered with white star shaped foliage. It's a great woodland bloomer and can be planted alongside Hellebores, (commonly called Lenten Rose) for early spring color.



Anemone nemerosa
'Good White'

Spring Horticultural Oil Applications Coming Up Soon

We will be starting our Plant Health Care season off with our routine applications of horticultural oil to plants such as Korean spice viburnum and pieris. This soybean-based oil smothers eggs of insect pests, effectively knocking back the early spring generation. The snowball aphid lays eggs on twigs of the Korean spice viburnum, awaiting leaf out for the larvae to hatch and devour the new leaves. Any pieris infected with lacebug last season will be targeted to prevent eggs from hatching and creating that mottled leaf effect as the larvae suck juices from the leaves in summer.

March Is the Time for...



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- Checking garden tools, repairing or replacing as needed
- Starting seeds of perennials or slow germinating annuals such as salvias, larkspur, and poppy
- Starting seeds of early vegetables such as lettuce, kale, broccoli and cabbage on April 2 with the waning of the full moon
- Avoiding traffic on frosted or frozen turf
- Spraying horticultural oil on viburnum and pieris (see above)
- Shearing back all ornamental grasses
- Shaping lavender, heather, mounding spiraea
- Cutting back butterfly bush, beautyberry and caryopteris; giving a hard pruning to vining honeysuckle
- Cleaning up beds for the new season, cutting back winter interest perennials
- Checking all shrubs and ornamental trees for winter damage and pruning it out
- Pruning fruit trees
- Pruning dormant trees and shrubs when temperatures are above freezing
- Cleaning up salt, sand and winter debris from driveways, walkways and lawns
- Applying gypsum to counteract salt damage to beds or lawns
- Making notes about plants to divide, transplant or add in April

Although it doesn't look like it today here in Townsend on the second day of Spring, we will see you soon.

Sincerely,
Priscilla

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