



Pumpkin Brook Organic Gardening, Inc.

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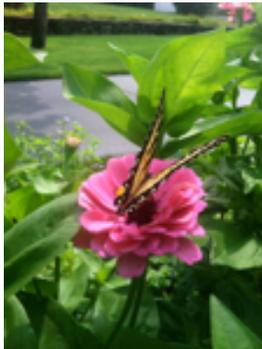
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Some of the views that our customers will be enjoying this time of year!



Greetings,

Fall in New England is something to look forward to. I will be helping man the booth for the local garden club at [Grotonfest](#) this Saturday. Hope you will be enjoying the many festivals available in your area.

The Fall Is a Great Season to Plant

While springtime seems to be the most popular time to plant trees, shrubs, and perennials, the autumn can actually be a better time to plant for a number of reasons. Planting in the fall allows root systems adequate time to develop without the stress of summer's heat. Spring plantings are exposed to the heat of summer while still supporting new leaf and flower growth. This is a lot to process for a young plant in a new place. As a result, spring plantings can be more prone to transplant shock. However, fall planting allows the roots to establish all autumn and into the winter (as long as the ground temperature is above 50 degrees Fahrenheit) without the added stress of needing to support above ground growth. With this jump start, your plants will be well established by spring time.



Plant these now for next year's Spring bloom!

You can also conserve water by planting in the fall. When new plants go in the ground they require more water until they are established. When the days are shorter in the fall, photosynthesis is slowed and therefore plants require less water. Water also stays in the soil longer since temperatures are cooler and evaporation is slowed.

The fall is also a time when the show in the garden can start to dwindle for many gardens. It doesn't have to! Please [e-mail](#) Priscilla to learn more about colorful options for your particular site.

Late Blight Alert



In the past few weeks, we have noticed Late Blight (*Phytophthora infestans*) infestations on tomatoes and potato vines at some of our clients, particularly those living in Middlesex County. This same pathogen was responsible for the great potato famine in 1850s Ireland.



Late Blight on Tomato Plants



Thriving in cool, wet conditions, this fungal disease spreads through the air via spores carried on the wind. It also spreads short distances from rainwater splash. This disease can devastate local farms, wiping out entire crops and destroying a farmer's livelihood. For this reason, we ask you to please act as a responsible neighbor. If you see symptoms on your potatoes or tomatoes, dispose of plants and any debris (dead leaves, tubers, rotten tomatoes etc.) in the trash. Do not compost as spores can still travel from the compost pile. There is no harm in eating any infected fruit, but it will have an off flavor.



The telltale signs to look out for on both tomatoes and potatoes include:

- dark lesions on leaves and stems that enlarge over time until the entire stem dies
- leaf undersides covered with a white fuzzy growth that contains the spores of the pathogen
- infected tomato fruits with shiny, dark or olive-colored lesions
- infected potato tubers with dry rot that often shows up in storage.

Unfortunately, there is no way to treat and save a plant once infected. However, a nutrient dense soil management plan can offer a preventative approach. If you are not already on our program, [e-mail Priscilla](#). We will take a soil test and get you on your way to healthy soil and thriving vegetables. To read more about late blight, click [here](#).

Downy Mildew Infecting Impatiens

Have you noticed that your garden impatiens (*Impatiens walleriana*) are yellowing and wilted? Chances are they're infected with the fungal disease Downy Mildew (*Plasmopara obducens*). Early symptoms include faint yellowing and stippling of leaves, followed by a white fuzzy growth on the undersides of leaves. Eventually the leaves will all fall off, leaving a bare stem behind.



Downy Mildew on Impatiens

This is a serious disease that has severely impacted the

Northeast this year, and many nurseries in the area are already planning on carrying limited or no quantities of this garden favorite next year. Infected plants cannot be rescued and must be bagged and disposed of to prevent fungal spores from travelling through the air to other healthy plants in the area. Do not replant new garden impatiens in the same soil as the new plants will inevitably contract Downy Mildew from the contaminated soil.

The good news is that New Guinea Impatiens and SunPatiens® varieties are not affected. Wax begonias and annual flowering vinca (*Cataranthus roseus*) also make great substitutions. More on this next May. A soil remediation and nutrient balancing program will help your garden beds recover from this problem.

Click [here](#) for the data sheet from UMass Extension that has more information on Downy Mildew disease.

Brent Heath of Brent & Becky's Bulbs to Speak at Mass Horticultural Society

One of my favorite speakers is coming to town soon, so mark your calendars for 7 pm on October 18 at the Mass Hort Society in Wellesley. Brent Heath from Brent and Becky's Bulbs in Gloucester, Virginia will speak to us on the many glories of spring blooming bulbs. He'll have some beautiful slides, and of course, Brent delights in answering tough horticultural questions.



Brent Heath

Also on October 18th, Brent tells me that he'll be planting bulbs in the large garden at Mass Hort designed by Adrian Bloom. He will plant containers of bulbs in the afternoon. The public is invited to join him for these activities. At this time, plans are being confirmed and are not available as yet on the Mass Hort website. We will have updated information in our October newsletter. To receive information directly from Mass Hort on this event and future events, sign up for their [newsletter](#). Updated information on this event should be available on Mass Hort's [website](#) soon.

What Is a Soil Test and Why Is it Important?

We've been pulling soil tests this past month and are studying the results with interest. Some clients have been on the Nutrient Density soil balancing program for the past three years. In most cases, things are coming along quite well and little further amending is necessary. I can now walk into these landscapes and see visible improvement in leaf color, bloom

I will be planting these plants at my home this fall!



Juniperus virginiana



Physocarpus opulus 'Summer Wine'



Myrica pennsylvanica

landscapes and see visible improvement in leaf color, bloom and growth.

Pest and diseases outbreaks have been reduced. The soil is alive with microbes and is an ideal environment for our applications of compost tea.

This yearly soil test data is the yardstick of our progress with soil amending. Sometimes one or two nutrients are present in excess amounts in the soil. We need to know exactly the amount of excess which will be revealed by the soil test. I can then plan the soil amending on a yearly basis to bring things into balance.

This can be a three to five year process with the slow-release rock powders and organic amendments that we use. Fall is the time to amend soils, capitalizing on the cooling soil temperatures that are ideal for root growth of woody plants.

For example, look at my own roadside! This spot was planted last in the overall scheme of things and has received very little attention over the past 15 years. However, with a need for screening the view of new houses across the way, now I want to renovate and replant with a mixed border of taller plant material. I found very dry soil when the test was pulled. The soil test results say it's embarrassingly low in calcium and magnesium and high in sodium, the latter probably from the road salt that gets splashed onto the bed each winter during plowing season.



The roadside view at my home

So we will be renovating this area with compost and soil amendments as we plant this fall, thereby boosting the capacity of this soil to support the required screening plants. I would never have guessed this from just looking at the area. A soil test gave me this valuable information.

What am I going to plant, you might ask?

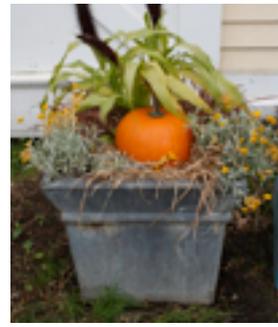
Eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginianus*) and Bayberry (*Myrica pennsylvanica*) will be set on the edge nearest the road as they will tolerate salt spray. On the inside edge, visible from the house, will be plants with fall/winter interest such as colored twig dogwoods, winterberry, and viburnums. Dwarf Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulus* 'Summer Wine') and perhaps a few hydrangeas will offer summer color. Working back to spring, I'm trialing a Japanese woodland peony that blooms in April and will add azaleas, hellebores and bulbs, too.

September Is the Time for...

- Planting in general!
- Preparing new beds that you'll



plant next year by smothering grass or weeds with layers of plain brown corrugated cardboard topped off with mulch



Fall Container

- Renovating summer containers, beefing them up for a fall look
- Pulling out spent summer annuals and replacing them with fall bloomers such as chrysanthemums, tender grasses, colorful dwarf peppers, kale and cabbages or even a few fall blooming perennials that can be planted later in beds
- Reworking perennial gardens to fill in gaps in bloom
- Dividing and transplanting spring and early summer blooming perennials as needed
- Transplanting shrubs
- Digging and harvesting vegetables before frost
- Covering late season crops of lettuce and greens on cooler nights to prevent frost damage
- Cleaning up vegetable garden debris in stages as crops are finished
- Cover cropping any bare soil as you clean up the vegetable garden to control weeds and erosion
- Overseeding bare patches in lawns after topdressing with compost
- Scouting for cool season weeds and removing from beds
- Spraying insecticidal soap onto potted plants before bringing indoors for winter
- Changing irrigation systems timers to a fall schedule with less frequent watering
- Keeping trees and shrubs planted within the last three years well hydrated until the ground freezes

Quick Links

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There's still time to schedule Pumpkin Brook's crew for your fall planting but [e-mail](#) me now. We look forward to helping you enjoy your garden for many more weeks.

Sincerely,
Priscilla

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