



Pumpkin Brook Organic Gardening, Inc.

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Dear Friends,

The autumnal equinox is here this Friday, September 23. With this turn of the year, we find ourselves busy with a variety of seasonal garden chores, as well as executing many fall plantings. This is the final call for your bulb orders, as our bulb shipments will be arriving the first week of October. We will begin these plantings just after Columbus Day when soil temperatures are a bit cooler and there has been a frost.

It's Time to Finish Compost Tea Applications

The season to apply compost tea is now drawing to a close. Microorganisms in the soil are coming out of their summer dormancy period. The heat of summer is waning, and both soil and air temperatures are cooling. Woody plants will be starting a period of intense root growth, boosted by more frequent rainfall. Some perennials are going dormant or putting on a final show before frost.



This garden has been receiving regular compost tea applications.

Our compost tea application will give your plantings an extra boost during this period. For those of you unfamiliar with the ins and outs of compost tea, here is a brief refresher:

Compost tea is a liquid made by "brewing" compost inside an aerated tank of water. The finished product contains macro and micro nutrients as well as beneficial microorganisms such as bacteria, fungi, protozoa, and nematodes. Compost tea can be applied as a foliar, a soil drench, or a deep root injection to trees, shrubs, perennials, and vegetable gardens to boost their overall health. It can be used to inoculate microbial life back into the soil and restore balance to environmentally degraded soils.

Unfortunately, most residential landscapes contain environmentally degraded soils as a result of construction practices that create compaction and cause soil removal. One cannot assume that the microorganisms required for healthy soils and plants are naturally occurring in your landscape's soil. Air pollution, dust, pesticides, acid rain, salts and natural disturbances (erosion, drought, freezing and thawing soils) can kill off beneficial microorganisms. It is crucial that we understand how these factors can affect soil health and act as responsible stewards of our landscape to mitigate harm by supplying, encouraging and selecting for the appropriate microorganisms.

Liquid extracts, similar to compost tea, have been used for centuries as an agricultural practice. Actively aerated compost tea is a more recent technology that incorporates aeration to maintain optimum levels of oxygen for growth and reproduction of beneficial aerobic

microorganisms.

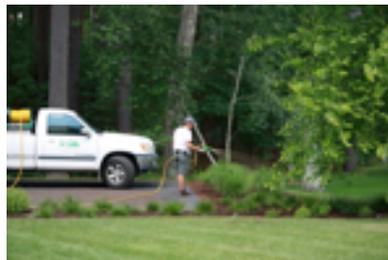
Compost teas are gaining recognition in the scientific community and are now being used in wide applications such as large-scale agriculture, the nursery trade, lawn care, and home gardens.

Some benefits of compost tea include:

- Improves disease and pest resistance
- Increases nutrient retention and availability as a result of microbial predator-prey interactions that increase plant available nutrients in exactly the right time and quantity that the plant needs
- Restores balance to the soil food web by reducing harm caused by chemical-based pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers and aids in decomposition of soil toxins
- Improves water-holding capacity in the soil and can thereby aid in water conservation
- Improves soil structure promoting rooting depth

The quality of the tea is only as good as the compost used to make it. We use only high quality high fungal compost and brew our tea with supplemental ingredients such as humic acids, kelp, molasses and fish hydrolysate formulated for optimal microbial growth and diversity.

This is our fourth year brewing and applying compost tea to our clients' properties. Over this time period we have noticed amazing improvements in the vitality of these landscapes. If you would like to learn more about our compost tea program, feel free to give us a call or email us with any questions. We will resume applications next April.



Carmine applies a compost tea application



Does Your Business Need a Lift?

Travelers along Route 110/111 in Harvard are sure to pause at this lovely garden that surrounds the Harvard Pet Care Center sign. In 2009, Stephanie White designed this garden, and look at it today.

If your business needs a lift or a business that you visit needs some help with their image, please give [Priscilla](#) a call. We specialize in garden renovations.

Anti-Desiccant and Deer Spray Programs

The winter season is around the corner, and with comes the potential for damage to our valuable trees and shrubs. Hungry deer can defoliate broadleaf evergreen shrubs. The harsh elements of wind, freezing soils, and bright sunshine can cause "winter burn," turning leaves brown. The types of shrubs that are most vulnerable to both deer damage and winter drought stress are broad leaved evergreen shrubs. These include many popular landscape shrubs such as boxwood, mountain laurel, holly, azalea, and rhododendron. Yew and arborvitae are also deer favorites.



Rhododendron without Anti-Desiccant

Fortunately, we have two plant health care solutions: anti-desiccant spray and deer repelling spray to lessen the impact.

Anti-desiccants, also sometimes referred to as anti-transpirants, work by reducing water loss via transpiration (the process of water vaporization from a leaf into the air). Winter drought stress is caused when the roots of plants are unable to take up sufficient water because the soil is frozen.

Final Call for Bulb Orders

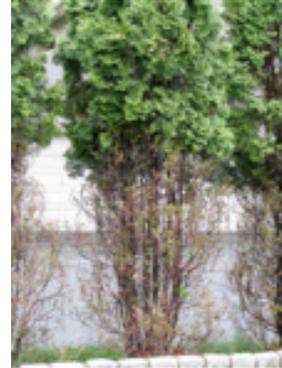
There is still some time left to order Spring bulbs. Let [Priscilla](#) know right away.



Meanwhile, above ground the leaves are being exposed to bright sun, wind, and air temperatures above freezing, all factors increasing transpiration. So water is being lost and not replenished as it normally would be. This can lead to scorch or even plant death. Anti-desiccant spray works by coating the surface of leaves so that transpiration is reduced. It is completely safe for humans and broad leaved evergreen plants and is made of all natural pine pitch. It is applied when temperatures are still above freezing (usually in the late fall or early winter).

If you live in an area surrounded by deer, you probably have already seen the damage that hungry deer can cause to your landscape. In the winter time when food sources are limited, deer will often turn to evergreen and broadleaved evergreen shrubs as a backup. They can create damage like this, causing defoliation to the lower portion of trees and shrubs.

We can apply a garlic based spray that is barely noticeable to the human nose within 24 hours. However, the smell is very noticeable to deer throughout the winter and repels them quite effectively. The product even holds up under rain and snow. It can also be sprayed during the season onto perennial favorites such as daylilies and hosta. As a secondary strategy for winter, we often wrap shrubs in black deer netting or attach garlic clips. These small units look like a ballpoint pen and contain potent garlic oil. We attach 4-5 clips per shrub.



Deer Browsed Arborvitae

We are busy scheduling site visits now for these applications, so please let [Carmine](#) know if you are interested in these services.

An Evening with Doug Tallamy Author of "Bringing Nature Home"

We thought you might be interested in an upcoming program on Wednesday, October 5 entitled, "An Evening with Doug Tallamy." Dr. Tallamy is the chair of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware and author of "Bringing Nature Home - How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants" and has a following among gardeners and environmentalists throughout the country. He presents a well-researched and engaging case for protecting our "wild" places and preserving our nation's biodiversity. In his presentation he will demonstrate how the link between native plants and native wildlife is important for human well-being and what we can do to increase biodiversity in our own back yards.



Doug Tallamy

The evening is sponsored by the Carlisle Conservation Foundation and will be held in the Corey Auditorium of the Carlisle Public School at 7 pm. Doors will open at 6:30 pm. The program is free and open to the public. Parking and access is off Church Street.

September is the time for:



Fall is the time to try something new - Stephanie is planting some new perennials

- Changing over containers from a summer to fall look
- Renovating perennial gardens
- Dividing and transplanting overgrown or mis-sited perennials such as Siberian and bearded iris, daylilies, hostas and peonies
- Adding new plants to fill gaps or to try something new
- Pulling out spent annuals and replacing with fall blooming annuals such as chrysanthemums, tender grasses, colorful dwarf peppers, kale and cabbages, or even a few fall blooming perennials that can be planted in the ground later
- 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 as crops are finished to eliminate overwintering sites for insect pests
- Harvesting the final basil leaves before frost
- Spraying insecticidal soap spray onto potted plants before bringing indoors for winter
- Scouting for cool season weeds and removing from beds
- Overseeding bare patches in lawn after topdressing with compost
- Watering any shrubs and trees planted or transplanted within the last two years if soil dries out on warmer days
- Changing irrigation system times to a fall schedule - less frequent watering.

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I enjoy these cooler days and the new colors appearing daily along roadsides and in gardens. We are lucky to have ample rainfall this season to help all the new plants and transplants get well established. Looking forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,
Priscilla

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