

the

# Bamboo Shoot

August 2011

## • SUMMER IS FOR TRAVELING •

With the sun finally here, the days are longer, the plants grow bigger and the weeds grow faster. I've been taking some time off to be with our daughters who have moved beyond the skirts of home. We just got back from Idaho, amazed by the openness, the light, and the abundant fields of onions, corn and wheat.

Whenever we visit family we take on projects with them. Last year in Idaho at Emma's, it was landscaping the front flower bed along the house which was a thistle patch. Ten hours and four blisters later, we had added roses, "Diablo" ninebark, hydrangeas and a deutzia. No rhododendrons please. This year I went to Emma's with purpose: we needed to add trees to shade the house. The 105 degree weather cried for shade. So off we went to an Idaho nursery in search of the perfect shade tree. We decided that a catalpa tree would be too messy with its dropped pods. Aspens would sucker through the yard while crabapples would drop their bounty in the fall, creating a slippery mess. We were a nursery worker's worse nightmare, in search of the "perfect" shade tree.

The power of Google on a smart phone



helped us answer the right questions: How tall and wide would the tree get? How well will they grow in a lawn? Could they really thrive in the inhospitable place such as Idaho farm land? We settled on a purple ash and a sunburst locust for the front and back yards, while a California Red tree graced the side yard. We bought our bags of composted steer and soil blend. Then for the hole

digging. Ah yes, this is REAL dirt I exclaimed as my shovel sunk deeper into the ground. The tree will be happy with those worms that we found three feet down in the ground. Stake the tree? Why...the ground is so heavy how could they blow over.

Last night my daughter texted me and said that the leaves were turning purple on the ash. I told her it was stressed and she should go talk to it. Better yet, I suggested she sing a country western song to it to make it feel better. I think the tree will do just fine; Idaho dirt, lots of water, sunshine, and a little George Strait "twang" to keep it growing tall. Enjoy your summer. Make some family memories together!

 Lisa

### THIS MONTH in your garden

#### PERENNIALS, ANNUALS & VEGETABLES

Cutworms may be out. These larvae eat the roots off of many plants, especially vegetable plants. Remove these critters by hand, or apply beneficial nematodes.

Garlic will soon be showing signs of being ready to harvest (yellowing leaves, leaning or all but falling over). If weather permits, it is easiest to pull the bulbs and lay them out along the bed to dry in the sun for a few days before storing.

It is already time to start planning

the fall and winter vegetable garden. You can start direct-seeding some vegetables, as well as setting out seedlings. Be extra careful of watering, to keep seeds and small plants moist, and consider using floating row covers to protect plants like broccoli, and cabbage against moths laying eggs of caterpillars.

Use bright annuals to help fill in any gaps in flower beds or containers. Remove spent blossoms and trim back to the next branching stem to encourage new growth. Fertilizing will also help keep annuals flowering and happy.

#### LAWN CARE

Aerate lawns for more effective

utilization of water and fertilizer.

Try raising the setting on the mower height — it will not only decrease the frequency of mowing (more time in the hammock) but it will also help to shade out and therefore discourage weed growth.

You can now apply weed & feed. Be sure to water lawn well a day or two before applying, whether you choose the liquid or granular form. Don't apply if temperatures are expected to be above 85°.

It's still okay to apply beneficial nematodes for crane fly larvae, fleas and other lawn-living pests. September and October are ideal times for targeting Root Weevil larvae.



## Is It Time *to aerate* YOUR LAWN?

**Here are three signs  
that it could be time  
to aerate your yard:**

**(1)** Your lawn is thinning. If your yard seems to be thinning and you can't trace any other obvious cause, such as a new source of shade or watering changes, the reason may be soil compaction.

**(2)** Lawn fertilizer doesn't do much good anymore. When soil is highly compacted, the lawn fertilizer nutrients are unable to reach the roots of grass. If you fertilize but don't see much in the way of results, you may have overly compacted soil.

**(3)** You have a lot of runoff. Overly compacted soil doesn't absorb water as well as soil with space between particles. If you're starting to see more runoff than normal, and more rain or irrigation isn't the cause, you may need to aerate.

Most lawn experts recommend you should aerate a lawn every 1-3 years. Aerating is a great way to save water as grass with deeper roots allows you to water less often and still have a green lawn in the summer.

If your lawn has inclines, pets or active outdoor children you may even need it every year. The best time to fertilize and over seed is just after you aerate. Particularly for new lawns, turf aeration is very important in helping lawns become established and helping the sod to establish its roots into the lower substrate. A core lawn aerator can speed up the process of soil integration by encouraging roots and grass growth. It is very effective to also fertilize and over seed right after aerating to strengthen the root system and encourage root development. After a lawn is established most experts still recommend that you aerate once every three years.



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## *New at the* **NURSERY**

*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* 'Wissel's Saguaro' Zn5a (-20° to -15°) One of the best of the "Cactus Armed" *Chamaecyparis*, this slow growing form has gorgeous steel blue congested foliage and a very unique habit. Columnar, and a bit twisty, several "arms" will develop over time and give it a familiar saguaro cactus look. To only 3' tall and 2' wide in 5 years in well drained soil, full sun with little summer water once established. Great for small gardens and containers.

*Podocarpus alpinus* 'Red Tip' Zone 7. This dwarf conifer evergreen is a very hardy *Podocarpus* selection from New Zealand with needle foliage that emerges burnished red in spring and matures to dark blue-green in the summer. It grows slowly to only 1' tall, spreading to 3' wide with an arching habit. It has inconspicuous flowers which produce red berries. It is great for rock gardens as it is compact and low growing. It likes sun or partial shade, some summer water and good drainage in the winter.



# Phytophthora and You...

One of the most important diseases that gardeners need to be aware is Phytophthora (Fy-TOFF-thor-uh). Buying, transporting and planting of nursery stock puts the gardening trade into the triangle of helping to control the spread of this pathogen.

Phytophthora species make up a group of microorganisms that are important plant pathogens. The name Phytophthora derives from Greek and literally means "plant destroyer." Phytophthora species resemble fungi but are not. These organisms need water to complete their life cycle.

Certain species of Phytophthora cause important diseases in vegetable crops, fruit and nut trees, and forest trees as well as in nursery crops. Phytophthora disease is the number-one disease of nursery crops nationwide.

Phytophthora organisms infects the root system starting in the fine root hairs, gradually



moving into larger roots. After plant cells become infected, they lose the ability to take up and transmit water and

nutrients. Some Phytophthora species can infect leaves as well as roots.

After the plant cells are killed, the leaves or roots discolor. At first the plant may exhibit subtle above-ground symptoms such as reduced vigor, reduced growth, or "off" color. The organism continues to infect & may eventually girdle the plant.

Many plants with Phytophthora root rot do not show aboveground symptoms until summer. As hot, dry weather sets in, the plant does not have enough roots left to keep up with transpiration. Plants may wilt and collapse. Because of the wilting, many people water plants even more than usual, flooding their roots, encouraging the pathogen, and potentially spreading

the disease even more.

When buying plant material, inspect the plants to see if they appear to be healthy. Don't buy plants if they appear to be sitting in muddy areas or standing in water for a long time. Avoid allowing containers to sit in water for long periods or on plastic or muddy woven fabric as Phytophthora can spread through contaminated roots and containers. One of the best practices is to hold your plants on gravel. Avoid reusing plastic nursery pots unless you sterilize the pot prior to reuse. Clean off and disinfect your plant holding area periodically.

Water management is the most important step you can take to control Phytophthora diseases in the landscape. Also, avoid excessive applications of nitrogen fertilizers. The resulting succulent new growth is very susceptible to Phytophthora. Avoid reuse of potting soil medium in landscaping or when up potting plants.

**For more information on Phytophthora, check out the online course through OSU Extension.**



## Bamboo Dave's Corner

*Fargesia robusta* "Green Screen Select" is a large non-invasive clumping bamboo, reaching 15-18 feet at maturity, with culms reaching about 1 inch wide. This bamboo is native to western China and is the natural food for the

Giant Panda. Green Screen is cold hardy to minus 10F. It prefers rich soil with good drainage.

*Fargesia robusta* is a good choice for a clumping bamboo that can create a narrow screen. Use as hedge, privacy screen or bold specimen. Fast-growing and sun-tolerant, this bamboo has

great potential in any garden. This species has dark green foliage and light green culms, new shoots are hairy and rusty red upon emergence from the ground in early spring. The culm sheaths persist and soon fade to a light color, almost white, giving the culms a very attractive checkerboard look in the spring through early summer. *Fargesia robusta* Green Screen™ is wind and drought tolerant for coastal gardens and for people who like low maintenance "easy care" plants.



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