

the

Bamboo Shoot

FALL 2011 NEWSLETTER

THIS MONTH in your garden

LAWNS: While the soil is still warm, it is a great time to seed a new lawn. Dig out new starts of quack grass and velvet grass; add compost and reseed open areas. Shorter days mean slower top growth, allowing plants to store more nutrients and be in optimum condition for good, healthy growth next spring.

GARDENS: Lightly feed roses after their fall bloom with a granular, organic/slow release fertilizer like the Whitney Farms Rose & Flower Food. By using a slow release fertilizer, it ensures that the plants have the right nutrients as they go into dormancy. At the same time, it doesn't feed so rapidly as to cause a spurt of tender new growth that would be vulnerable in the cold winter months. Also, LEAVE THE HIPS ON THE ROSES! They help signal the plant to go into dormancy.

It's time to plant spring flowering bulbs. Be sure to add soil and compost when planting bulbs in our coastal sand, along with bone meal and slow release nitrogen. It is a great time to divide overgrown or crowded perennials, replanting into soil amended with compost.


It's still not too late to plant some vegetables for the fall and winter vegetable garden. Overwintering types of broccoli, cabbage, collards, cauliflower and Kale can be planted by starts. By seed, salad greens and Merida type carrots are still possible. If you have row covers, cloches or other protection for crops, the possibilities are wider, still. Deadhead annuals and feed with a water-soluble fertilizer to encourage some annuals to put out one last round of bloom before frost.

Plant some fall color by adding pansies and violas to your borders.

The Swan Song of September



As the shorter days are wrapping around our daylight, I am reminded that the gardens in month of September are like a "Swan Song" in their glory and burst of color. From the Greek history, Swan Song refers to a final theatrical or dramatic appearance,

or any final work or accomplishment. As the performer is aware that this is the last performance and is putting everything in one magnificent final effort, the fall perennials, waves of ornamental grasses and slowing turning foliage of trees, create the garden's Swan Song. I find myself breathing a sigh of relief. It's finally time to get caught up on watering, weeding and dead heading. Less daylight, cooler night time temperatures and less wind mean cutting watering back. Try not to prune evergreen shrubs anymore; wait till February for rhododendron, azalea, and pieris shearing. It is okay to prune summer blooming heathers that are done; start your deciduous shrub, such as potentilla and spirea pruning after leaves drop in November. I have a love affair with rudbekia. The brilliant yellow daisy heads of rudbekia or black eye susan stand tall next to the spent flowers of "Lucifer" Crocosmia. Sometimes the best groupings of plants in a yard are not just pairing of color combinations; often times it is the interplay of foliage, flowers and stems that add a full dimension to planting in a garden. It's been fun adding the new types of echinacea to the perennial flower displays. "Magnus", with its magenta petals and glowing bronze center is still a favorite, but take a look at "White swan" with its dusky white petals and bronze center or "Hot Lava", an amazing orange on a sturdy plant. All echinaceas like full sun and can handle some wind. They need some water to get established but do well with drier conditions. Take some time to enjoy the fall garden. Have some ice tea, sit back and enjoy the swan song of September.  Lisa

FALL is for Planting



It's true; Fall is for Planting! The soil is still warm, providing faster root growth and giving plants a head start on next year's growth. By next summer, they will have a larger, more established root system than spring plantings.

This increases

drought tolerance and more flowers the first year. Fall also signals shorter days and mild temperatures which lowers stress on new plants. With the advent of fall rains, the new plants will stay watered in all winter.

Jacquemontii Birch: This fast growing tree has eye catching white bark, with small leaves that flutter in the breeze. Birches grow fairly rapidly; the Jacquemonti does not get as big as the European variety.

This tree prefers full sun and reaches about 30 feet in height and 20 feet in width in our area.

Ginkgo biloba: This small tree is one of the oldest species of plants alive on the planet today; dating back to prehistoric times



of the dinosaurs. Ginkos are a very slow growing tree that prefers good, well drained soil and full sun on the coast. They perform better in a less windy spot in the yard. The fall color is an intense yellow; most of the leaves fall off within a 24 hour period.

Autumn Blaze Maple: A member of the maple family, this tree is one of the larger shade trees that do well on the coast. It has small maple shaped leaves that turn intense colors of red, orange, and yellow in the fall. Maples prefer full sun with some soil; average water, and like a sunny location. These trees can reach 30 to 35 feet in height on the coast and 25 to 30 feet wide. Maples make a good street or lawn tree as they do not sucker out or produce surface roots than can crack concrete.



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There's a Fungus Amongst Us

One of the common diseases we see this time of year on the coast is powdery mildew. This fungal disease is common when the weather is warm and the humidity is high. Some of the most commonly affected

plants are deciduous azaleas, squash leaves, roses, and summer blooming spiraea. If you see powdery-looking patches on the foliage of your plants, or leaves that look like they have been dusted with flour, you are most likely looking at powdery mildew fungal disease. Rarely fatal, it is unattractive and stresses the plant. If enough of the leaf surface is covered in the mildew, the plant may have a difficult time photosynthesizing. Although this disease is usually not fatal, the ability of the plant to photosynthesize can be impaired. This can result in a weakening of the plant and a decrease in flower or crop production.

Powdery mildew disease is host-specific, which means that different powdery mildew fungi infect different plants. The powdery mildew on a cucumber plant will not infect a rose bush near by.

Prevention of disease is always the best route in gardening. Avoid excessive dampness on the leaves by watering the base of the plant, not the leaves. Water in the morning; avoid crowding of plants, and prune to increase air circulation. Do not over fertilize your plants; excessive young growth is more susceptible to disease.

If you have powdery mildew, remove and destroy all infected plant parts. Rake up dead leaves from the ground. You can apply fungicides. Check the label to be

sure they are safe and effective on the type of plant that is infected. Look for ingredients such as: potassium bicarbonate, neem oil, sulfur or copper, or use home remedies using milk, baking soda or other readily available kitchen ingredients.

Researchers in Brazil found that weekly sprays of milk controlled powdery mildew in zucchini just as effectively as synthetic fungicides. They also found that milk acted as a foliar fertilizer, boosting the plant's immune systems. Milk is suspected to be a natural germicide and possibly boosts the plant's immune system to prevent the disease.

First hose off the powdery mildew from the leaf surface to remove as much disease from the surface as you can. Then apply the treatment spray to all sides of the leaf, including the stem and the soil underneath the plant. The best time to spray is morning. Spray plants once or twice a week in dry weather and more often if rainy.



Bamboo Dave's Corner

Maximum Height: 30 feet

Phyllostachys aurea, commonly known as golden bamboo, is one of the most common bamboos in the United States. This bamboo has been used extensively in plantings in the past. Although it is usually not very tall, golden bamboo is one of the strongest and most useful species in the world today. It grows very tall reaching a maximum height in our area of about 20 feet. The stem diameter can reach a thickness of up to 1 ¼" thick, making this bamboo one of the best for hedges and for planting next to driveways and walkways. Golden bamboo is hardy down to 0 degrees.

It often has a series of distorted internodes at the base of the cane, which gives this bamboo the name "Tortoise Shell" bamboo, that are quite ornamental and make this plant useful for craft work. The stem color of the species type is green. Like other *Phyllostachys*, when exposed to strong direct sunlight, the canes will fade to yellow with age. *Phyllostachys aurea* can be an aggressive spreader in sunny locations on the coast. Be sure to plant this bamboo where it has room to run or use bamboo barrier to prevent it from spreading.



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