



A GREAT YEAR FOR ALL OF US TO GET GROWING!

So what makes 2013 so great? Well actually, we're not sure yet. But every gardener knows that each year, each season, brings unexpected opportunities and challenges in the lawn and the garden.

In fact, this "not knowing" exactly what's going to happen is part of what makes our jobs more interesting and fun. Our life of working in lawns and landscapes is anything but predictable – and there's no reason that this year should be any different.

You can be sure that all year long, when surprises do crop up, we'll be here to help you sort them out.

Please know we like hearing from you and you should always feel free to call or

contact us with any questions or concerns you may have.

We hope you have a great season, and now it's time to "get growing."



CODE AREA TEST

Make This the Year Crabgrass Loses!

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE AN UPHILL BATTLE

Scientists have recorded 50-year-old crabgrass seeds sprouting after being brought to the surface from deep in the soil! They are very tough seeds, and a challenge when it comes to controlling this grassy weed.

A VERY PROLIFIC PRODUCER

Just one mature crabgrass plant can produce from 4,000 to tens of thousands of seeds, which are then brought into your lawn by birds, on the shoes of your mailman and other visitors and blown in by the wind. Once these seeds lodge in your soil, they don't need much to germinate, grow and begin to spread. Because crabgrass is an annual, it grows quickly to a circular plant 12 inches in diameter. It out competes your slower growing turf and leaves large holes or voids when it dies in the fall.

A TWO PRONG ATTACK TO WIN AGAINST CRABGRASS

1. Crabgrass needs bare or nearly bare soil in order to germinate. It has trouble getting a hold in thick and healthy lawns. So the first step is to keep your lawn healthy and thick. That means a good fertilization program, staying after pests and being sure the lawn gets enough water and is mowed properly.

2. Use a combination of both pre- and post-emergent herbicides to directly control crabgrass.

A **pre-emergent herbicide** is applied in the spring or late fall to set up a barrier in the soil. As weed seeds just begin to germinate, they are eliminated by the pre-emergent.

A **post-emergent herbicide** can be used to treat any established crabgrass plants in your lawn. This type of herbicide will kill off the crabgrass without harming your established lawn.

Crabgrass and other annual weed seeds will keep coming into your lawn. The best solution is to remember the "two prong" attack – healthy lawn practices and a combination of herbicides – to get any that slip through and make sure you win this year!



EARLY-SPRING ESSENTIALS: GET A JUMP ON THE SEASON AHEAD!

PRUNING – Many structural problems in ornamentals can be corrected right now, before plants leaf out, with corrective pruning. Any winter-damaged wood can be pruned away. Very heavy wood can be removed, improving air circulation and plant shape. Overlapping and rubbing branches should be dealt with to eliminate this as a possible site for insects and disease to invade the plants.



CLEAN-UP – Leaves and debris should be blown or raked and removed from lawn areas, as well as shrub and flower beds.

MULCHING – A spring application will help to prevent weeds, conserve moisture in the soil and keep soil temperatures cooler as the weather heats up. By including a pre-emergent under the mulch it will help control weeds throughout the season. Mulching should be a uniform thickness on the planting beds, and be sure to avoid piling mulch especially deep, or “coning” around the trunks of trees.

By just arranging for these three things, you'll have made a great start to a better looking property!



One “Don’t” and Three “Do’s” for Better Vegetable Gardens

DON'T SOW YOUR SEEDS OR SET OUT SEEDLINGS TOO EARLY!

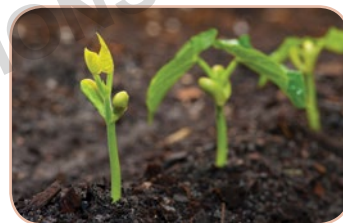


Be strong: resist the temptation to sow your garden on the first warm spring weekend! Heat-loving summer annuals will not thrive and grow well until the soil has warmed up and outdoor night temperatures are consistently in the 50° range. This includes summer flower favorites like zinnias, sunflowers, morning glories and cosmos, heat loving herbs like all basil, oregano and thyme, and all the many fruiting summer vegetables such as pole and bush beans, summer and winter squash, cucumbers, corn, melons and watermelons, peppers, pumpkins and tomatoes. Read your seed packet to find out when to sow seeds.

If you are determined to start early, be prepared to give your tender seedlings extra protection. This means using hot caps, “Walls-O-Water,” black or colored plastic soil covers, or other devices to protect them from cold nights and chilly mornings.

DO THIN TO THE PROPER SPACING

Seed packet backs give both the initial distance apart for sowing seeds and also tell you the final spacing to grow them after they have germinated into seedlings. Specifically, thinning to the final spacing means that you take out extra seedlings that have germinated too close together, leaving only those that are at the proper distance apart so they have enough space to thrive and grow to maturity. Do not neglect to thin your seedlings out to the suggested final spacing. Give away or compost the extra seedlings you take out. Over and over, we've seen proof of the incontrovertible fact that unhappy crowded plants just won't grow or produce well and are more disease prone.



DO BUILD GOOD SOIL

There is a very simple gardening Golden Rule: the better the condition of your soil, the better garden you will have! The best way is to work several inches of organic material into your garden soil to improve its balance, texture, and water-holding capacity. Use aged manure, rotted leaves, peat moss, compost (the best!) or whatever kind of organic material is available in your area. Adding organic material benefits all soil types. Add it before you plant each new crop as well as at the end of the season. Good soil is essential to having a productive garden.

DO FERTILIZE BOTH ORGANIC AND CONVENTIONAL GARDENS

Even if you have good soil with a high organic content, remember that most plants need supplementary nutrition in the form of fertilizer for best growth and to produce the abundant harvests we all desire. Whatever product you choose to feed your plants, they should have a constant and adequate supply, especially in sandy soils. Plan to feed monthly at prescribed regular intervals throughout the growing season as it really can make a big difference in getting successful, high yielding plants.



A good rule of thumb is to use a high nitrogen fertilizer during active growth. Then during flowering or fruiting, switch to a low nitrogen, high potassium-phosphorous fertilizer. There are many excellent organic fertilizers available now in both liquid and granular formulations.

By permission of Renee's Garden



Decide Early for True Spring Landscaping

Spring is a time when most of us turn our attention to the outdoors. The idea of seeing flowers and shrubs in bloom and trees leafing out gets us all excited. It's also a great time to arrange for some landscape projects around your property. Installing a new patio or building an outdoor fireplace or just renovating your entry can really make a change to your enjoyment of your outdoor living "room."

But a problem comes up sometimes, because everyone feels the same way. They want to see and use their new spring project right away. As a result, contractors often get so loaded with projects that they have to start booking jobs to be done as much as several months later.

BUT THERE IS A SOLUTION!

Decide and act before the rest of the "crowd" does. Get your plan and specifications drawn up before most people are

even thinking about it. This gives you several advantages.

First you're getting more of the designer's attention because he has a little more time to put into your plan, and secondly, your project will be done before the "Jones's" even take the first steps! So call today and make your spring and summer a lot more fun!



Professional Landscape Maintenance Just Makes Good Cents!

Maintaining your landscape can become something like cleaning out the garage – you can do just the minimum to get by and get to the rest of it "later." But unlike your garage, the landscape keeps changing and growing. Weeds keep sprouting, shrubs keep growing and turf and ground covers continue to creep over sidewalks and drives. Before long, your whole landscape can start looking shaggy and overgrown. And once problems get started they almost never disappear on their own and usually get harder to solve.

GET IT ON THE SCHEDULE!

Regular, professional clean-up, weeding and pruning will make your property and your life a lot happier. This may include a spring clean-up, edging of beds and application of mulch along with any needed pruning. This can be followed by a mid-season weeding and pruning and then in the fall for a final clean-up. Having a big event this season? Arrange now for the services you may need. Most programs are customized to some extent to meet the different challenges of various landscapes. You can make this the year to get the landscape in shape by getting it on the schedule!





TECHNO CORNER



QUESTION: WHAT IS REALLY IN FERTILIZER?

ANSWER: THE SHORT VERSION: THINGS THAT MAKE PLANTS GROW.

Fertilizer is any organic or inorganic material of natural or synthetic origin that is added to a soil to supply one or more plant nutrients essential to the growth of plants. A recent assessment found that about 40 to 60% of crop yields result from the use of commercial fertilizers.

Fertilizers typically provide, in varying proportions, six macronutrients: the "Big Three"....**nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), potassium (K)**, plus calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg), and sulfur (S); and seven micronutrients: boron (B), chlorine (Cl), copper (Cu), iron (Fe), manganese (Mn), molybdenum (Mo), and zinc (Zn).

The macronutrients are consumed in larger quantities and are present in plant tissue in quantities from 0.15% to 6.0% on a dry matter (0% moisture) basis (DM). Micronutrients are consumed in smaller quantities and are present in plant tissue on the order of parts per million (ppm).

Only three other macronutrients are required by all plants: carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen. These nutrients are supplied by water and carbon dioxide.

Even Lawn Mowers Have Roots

Some things become such fixtures in our lives that we seldom wonder "how did that get started?" There are about 66 million American households that own a lawn mower. Nearly all of those are powered by some kind of engine. How this came to be is interesting. Back in 1830 Edwin Budding, an English engineer, created the original reel mower. Once in production, the mowing machine began to replace scythes.

It took over 70 years but in America in 1902, Edwin George attached a gasoline engine from his washing machine and started a company to build his "Moto-Mower." Others had the same idea. In 1921 Albert Dremel moved to Racine, Wisconsin and created a machine that integrated a gas engine with the reel-type mower. In 1922 The Jacobson Manufacturing Company bought this concept from Dremel and began building the "4-Acre Mower" named for how much it could mow in a day. The Jacobson machine sold for \$275 and was used mainly on golf courses and large estates.

