

## September To-Do List:

- September begins the cooler weather of fall and the return of the rains. This is the ideal season to plant your hardy trees, shrubs and perennials! Fall plantings are generally more robust, healthy, and resilient than late spring or summer plantings.
- Fall is lawn season! You should be applying 50% of your yearly fertilizer in fall, as well as lime and grass seed. Our lawn grasses are at their best as the temperature falls and the rains return, and there is no better time to renovate or plant a lawn.
- Apply beneficial nematodes to the soil around plants infested with root weevils. These predators will seek out the root weevil larvae and kill them.
- You should start planting cover crops like crimson clover and field peas this month.
- It's time to start planting fall vegetable crops! This includes peas, cabbage, lettuce, spinach, and other cool season crops. It is also time to plant garlic and onions!



Volume 2, Issue 8

August 30th, 2008

## Fall is the Best Time to Plant!

Fall is one of the most beautiful seasons in the garden, and can also be the busiest! The cooler weather and rain that comes with fall make it the perfect time to plant, and a perfect time to work on those garden projects that you have been dreaming of. Besides planting, it's also the best time to work on your lawn, mulch your planting areas, control slugs and root weevils, and clean up for next year. You will find it easier to get out and work in the cooler weather, and your plants prefer it as well.

Besides the planting of trees and shrubs, there is also a lot of color that comes with fall that is available for planting now. September sees a shift away from summer annuals like petunias and marigolds, and towards plants that will thrive in the cooler months, like pansies, mums, asters, and flowering cabbage and kale. It is time to start replacing those worn out summer plantings with fresh new fall color that you will be able to enjoy for months to come.

Come visit us this fall, and be sure to stop by for Le Tour des Plants later this month! You will find the nursery fully stocked with everything you need for your fall planting projects, and our staff is always here to answer your questions and help you discover the wonders of the fall gardening season!

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## Fall is Tree Planting Time!

Fall is the best time to plant, and if you find yourself in need of a tree to complete your landscape, then this is the time to install it. Trees planted in fall have a much higher survival rate than trees planted in late spring and summer, and will establish faster and require less attention over the first few years of their lives. Besides planting in fall, planting your tree correctly will also ensure its successful future, and will save you trouble down the road. Here are the key things to keep in mind when planting a tree.



- **Dig a proper hole.** The proper planting hole in our area is two to three times the width of the rootball or container, but no deeper than the root depth. This translates into a wide, shallow planting hole that will allow the tree roots to stretch out quickly for the first few years, but also keep the tree from sinking or settling too low.
- **Amend your soil, but only moderately.** You want to give your tree a head start, but you also want it to be able to properly adapt to its surroundings. Your tree will need to eventually root out into the surrounding soil to hold itself upright and absorb nutrients, so even a small tree will have rooted past its planting hole in just a few years.

Backfilling the hole with pure compost or potting soil is not a good planting practice, and will only hinder the tree's future development or create a bowl that water settles into. When amending, use no more than 50% compost mixed with the existing soil as needed. If you have already have reasonable soil, you may not need to add any amendment at all.



- **Inspect your tree before planting.** Potential problems are best noticed when the tree has been removed from the container and is about to go in the ground. If you see a lot of circling roots around the rootball, you need to score or remove them so that they don't choke the tree. You should also be able to find the root flare on your tree, which is where the trunk starts to flare out into the roots. If you don't see any evidence of any trunk flare at the base

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of the tree, you may need to remove some of the soil from the top of the rootball until you find it. This should be at the soil line or just slightly below it, otherwise you may have problems in the future.



- Remove the containers or packing material.** Unless your tree is in a biodegradable pulp pot, remove it from the container. If it is in a wire basket, cut the wire basket away from the sides once it is in the hole, so that it doesn't restrict future root growth. Burlap is generally biodegradable, but not always. Be sure to cut the twine away from the trunk, and cut or fold the burlap away from the top and down the side once the tree is in place in the hole. Burlap that is exposed and sticking up out of the ground will actually wick moisture out of the soil and can make the soil dry out more rapidly.
- Mulch around the tree, but not up to it.** A good layer of mulch on top of the soil around a tree is an excellent way to hold moisture down and moderate soil temperatures. Never mulch up to a tree though, and leave a few inches between the trunk and the mulch. Mulch that settles against the trunk can lead to rot issues, rodent problems, a poor root system, and future instability.
- Water it in well.** Watering your tree in when you plant it will cause the soil to settle, eliminating air pockets and rewetting the soil which has probably dried out since you dug it out of the ground.
- To fertilize or not?** The most important thing a young tree needs is a steady supply of water. You can also fertilize at planting, but be careful! Young plants with young roots can be easily burned by heavy fertilizers. We only recommend using a low nitrogen organic starter to be safe but still give the tree a good boost. Our EB Stone organic fertilizers also have beneficial microorganisms in them like mycorrhizae, which work with the plant and help it to establish and thrive. Your tree will eventually be able to get most of what it needs from the surrounding soil, but a little something to start with is not a bad idea as long as it is in moderation.



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- **Stakes are not usually necessary.** A lot of people assume that staking is necessary, and a lot of landscapers will stake plants by default. Staking young trees can actually cause more harm than good, and can slow their development. Trees need to flex in the wind, and learn to support their own weight in order to develop a sturdy trunk with a good taper. A rigid stake can act like a sort of crutch, resulting in weaker trees that can't stand well on their own. There are actually very few situations where staking is really necessary. If you do need to stake, use multiple stakes positioned away from the trunk and a flexible guying material. And be sure to remove the stakes as soon as they are not necessary!
- **Keep a good eye on your trees for the first few years!** Fall planted trees definitely require less maintenance, but you will still need to keep an eye on them for the first



few years. Summer water, and perhaps a yearly application of light fertilizer should be all that's necessary, but it is important to keep up until the tree is well established.

- **Remember, we can install trees for you!** Our landscape installation division can professionally install your trees, so all you have to do is decide what kind of tree you want, and where you want it. Let us do the hard work of digging holes and moving trees!

## Root Weevil Roundup

Fall brings the yearly window perfect for root weevil control! You may have noticed the notching on your Rhododendron leaves, or had a more serious problem and wondered how to get rid of these pesky little critters. Fall is an excellent time to control them because they will be in their larval stage which makes them more vulnerable, and the soil is still warm enough, allowing their natural predators to work effectively. Beneficial nematodes are tiny little eel-like microorganisms that absolutely love to feed on root weevil larvae. They are more targeted and efficient than any chemical you can use, and are 100% organic. You simply apply them with a watering can to the soil around the affected plants, and they do the rest!



## Fall is Slug Season!

Fall is not just the best season to plant, it is also the best season to control your slug population! We mainly notice them in spring, when they are chewing up the tender new growth of our plants. They are still around and active in summer and fall though, and fall is the season when they mate and lay eggs that will turn into next year's slug population. Imagine the blow you could deal to the local slug population by eliminating the adults before they lay their eggs! Every egg they lay will be a voracious little sluglet next spring, so you will save yourself a lot of headache by paying attention to them now. Control methods vary, from highly toxic chemical control to the more organic "stomp on them with an old boot method".

The first system of slug control is what we will call the "mechanical" method. This is for people who have been traumatized by slugs at some point in their life and need to inflict some severe slug damage, but it is certainly not for the squeamish. This involves going out at night with a flashlight (they come out at night, so they are easier to find then) and cutting or smashing them with a shovel, pruners, knife, old boot, computer keyboard, or whatever you may have lying around that you don't mind getting gooey. This is mildly cathartic, but also messy and somewhat gruesome. But, some people prefer this method and enjoy the nightly slug hunts.



The second system involves some common household solutions, and is where things can get funny, or weird, depending on your observations. The first, and most common instance of this is the beer trap. Slugs love beer, and will climb over anything to get to it. Beer is placed in a cup or bowl that the slugs crawl into, but they aren't so bright and get trapped in the cup and drown. The infamous way to kill slugs is to pour salt on them, but this is not practical in a full sized garden setting, and salt is pretty toxic to your plants. People have also been known to use things like ammonia, bleach, or vinegar but these are really not things that you want to be spraying in your gardens in any quantity (they are also toxic to plants).



A third system is the deterrent method, where you just try to persuade the slugs not to come into your garden. This can work, but only if they are not already in your garden in the first place. Slugs do not like

## Fall is Slug Season! ...continued

coarse materials, because they tend to scratch up and destroy their soft and easily-punctured bodies.

Things like coarse sand, lava rock, crushed eggshells, diatomaceous earth, or ground nut shells can deter slugs from entering an area. Keep in mind that this only works on slugs that are outside of your garden, and won't have an effect once they are in. Another excellent barrier is a strip of copper surrounding the area. Copper works because it always carries a very minute electrical current (not noticeable to you or me) that gets transferred to the offending slug (which definitely notices). The copper strip has to be wide enough to keep them from arching over it, and sometimes they just vault over it when they feel the zap, so this isn't always 100% effective.



The fourth system involves using commercial slug control products, which can be the most effective control method if used properly and safely. There are many types of slug control products around, but they are not all the same. There are basically two groups of slug bait, those that contain a chemical called "metaldehyde", and the organic products that usually contain iron phosphate. The metaldehyde products have been around forever, and are proven to be very effective at controlling slugs, but they are unfortunately also very toxic



to children and pets. Metaldehyde is very fast acting, and you will see quick results and piles of dead slugs, but just be aware of the potential toxicity. The newer products with iron phosphate (we prefer Sluggo®) are considered organic, and do not present a toxicity problem, so they are safe in vegetable gardens, and around children and pets. Iron phosphate is not as quick as metaldehyde, but it is just as effective (maybe more so) once it starts taking effect. Metaldehyde kills the slugs almost instantly, so you see your highest control in the first week. Iron phosphate interferes with and halts their ability to feed, so you don't usually start seeing high levels of control for about a week.

Whatever method you prefer to control slugs, the most important thing is that you start now! Every slug you eliminate now translates into hundreds more that you won't have to deal with next spring, so consider this an investment in next year's garden and your spring sanity. Happy hunting!

## Plant a Row for the Hungry

The harvest season is upon us, and we would like to remind everyone that Farmington Gardens is a participant and drop point for the Plant a Row for the Hungry program. We have had many more participants this year than ever before, and have so far collected over 600 pounds of produce this season, with more coming every week! Every little bit helps, so be sure to drop off your excess fruits and vegetables on Sundays, and we will make sure that it all gets to the Sunshine Pantry in Beaverton, who distributes the donations to local families in need. Oregon gardens are famous for their abundant harvests, and that little bit extra can go a long way towards helping those who need it!



## It's Time to Plant Bulbs!

Spring may still feel a long way off, but this is the season to plant your spring flowering bulbs! Tulips, Daffodils, Hyacinths, and Crocus all need to be planted in fall to reach their full spring potential. Most spring flowering bulbs require a period of chilling in the ground before they bloom properly, and will root into the soil during the fall. Then, when spring rolls around, they will burst from the ground and provide the spring color that we all enjoy so much! This is also the season to plant root crops like garlic, onions, and potatoes. These and other flowering bulbs will be available soon at the nursery. Get yours quickly though, because the best varieties sell out quickly!



## Plan Now for Holiday Fundraisers

The Holiday Season is coming up, and we would like to remind you that it is time to start planning your Holiday fundraisers! Farmington Gardens is one of the nation's largest producers of fresh Christmas wreaths and other greenery, and we have an established fundraising program perfect for schools, churches, and youth organizations. You simply pick the products you want to sell, take orders, and then pick up and distribute the wreaths or have us ship them to gift recipients. In order to set your organization up in our program, we need to receive a completed participation form by November 1st so that we know you are planning to participate. You can download an information packet at:

[www.farmingtongardens.com/pdf/christmaspacket2008.pdf](http://www.farmingtongardens.com/pdf/christmaspacket2008.pdf)  
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## Upcoming Events

# *Le Tour des Plants*

**September 13th-21st**



Come join us for the 2008 Le Tour des Plants, a Garden Center Excursion! This yearly, statewide event brings together some of Oregon's best garden centers and specialty nurseries for a weeklong celebration of gardening and special events hosted by the participating nurseries. Farmington Gardens is proud to be hosting a series of events for this year's tour, and we have some very special speakers and programs lined up. **You will find a complete listing on the next page, but here are some of the event highlights:**

- New introductions from Monrovia and Eshraghi Nurseries! Be the first to see what's coming up in the world of cool plants!
- Timber Press Week! We will have over 30 titles from the leader in gardening books here for you to take a look at, and all of these books will be 10% off of the regular retail prices! A great opportunity to do some early Christmas shopping, and find something new for your collection.
- Dan Heims from Terra Nova Nurseries will be here on the 27th to talk about shade gardening! Dan literally wrote the book on Heucheras (which you can buy at the event), and most of the varieties you will find at nurseries today originated with him. We will have coffee and cookies and learn about ways to garden in the shade!