



# Trumpet Vine

Knowledge for the Community from Loudoun County Master Gardeners

## Fall 2011

Volume VII, Issue 4 [www.loudouncountymastergardeners.org](http://www.loudouncountymastergardeners.org)

### LOUDOUN COUNTY MASTER GARDENER MONTHLY MEETINGS

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC  
UNLESS NOTED, MEETINGS ARE HELD AT  
THE VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION  
OFFICE, 30B CATOCTIN CIRCLE SE,  
LEESBURG, AT 7PM

October 6, *Humanely Resolving Conflicts with our Wild Neighbors*, John Hadidian, Director of the Urban Wildlife Programs, Humane Society of the United States. John was an associate editor of the Journal of Urban Ecosystems, chair of the Montgomery County white-tailed deer task force, and a research associate with the Department of Anthropology at The Catholic University of America. John is an adjunct professor at Virginia Tech's Northern Virginia Center. He has participated in or led nearly 100 urban wildlife workshops and has published numerous scientific articles on wildlife issues.

November 3, *Preventing and Mitigating Winter Injury to Landscape Plants*. Jeremy Hager, Bartlett Tree Experts. Jeremy Hager earned his BS in Forestry from Virginia Tech in 2002. In 2008 and 2009 he was the Arborist of the Year with Bartlett Tree Experts. He is a frequent speaker and instructor for Master Gardeners, VA Certified Horticulturalist Programs, local garden clubs and industry safety seminars.

### Fall Gardening Events

**Bluemont Fair**, Sept. 17-18. Enjoy old-fashioned fun at a country fair held in the historic village of Bluemont, in the foothills of Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains.

**Parkfairfax Native Plant Sale** Sept. 24, 9 am to 2 pm, 3601 Valley Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22302. 15<sup>th</sup> year of semi-annual native plant sales featuring 14 vendors from 5 states.

**Virginia Natives Plants and Trees Showcase and Sale**, Oct 1, 10 am - 3 pm, at Broadlands Nature Center.

**Virginia State Fair**, Oct. 6, 10 am to 6 pm, at the Meadow Event Park in Doswell.

**Arborfest**, Oct. 8-9. The State Arboretum of Virginia's annual fall festival, Boyce, VA. This year's ArborFest theme is TREES Are the Answer. Vendors will offer Virginia native plants as well as a wide variety of other perennials, small trees, boxwoods, and fine items for the home and garden.

**Ashburn Farms Green Expo II**, Oct. 9, noon to 4 pm, at the Windmill Community Center in Ashburn Farms.

**Loudoun County Farm Color Tour**, Oct. 15-16. Free, self-guided tour that showcases local active farms in Loudoun. Master Gardeners will be giving guided tours of the Ida Lee Demonstration Garden as well as helping children decorate small pumpkins to take home.

**10th Annual Family Stream Day**, Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>, 11 am to 3 pm, Loudoun Water, 44865 Loudoun Water Way, Ashburn, VA. Co-hosted by Loudoun Water Watch and Loudoun Environmental Stewardship Alliance (LESA).

**Cascades Green Expo**, Oct. 22, 11am to 4 pm at Potomac Falls High School in Cascades.

### Garden Clinics:

The last day for the LCMG Garden Clinics is September 24. Feel free to call the Help Desk with your gardening questions! The desk is staffed by LCMG volunteers from 9am until 12pm Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Email: [ex107mg@vt.edu](mailto:ex107mg@vt.edu) Phone: 703/771-5150



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## Have You Thought About Becoming a Master Gardener?

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Loudoun County Master Gardeners (LCMG) are gearing up for the Class of 2012! If this is something you would be interested in, please contact us as registration is now underway. The deadline to register is November 18. This year we are offering a \$200 Early-bird Registration (received by November 1, 2011) or \$225 for applications received after November 1, 2011.

The LCMG training program trains volunteers to assist the Urban Horticulturalist in providing service and educational programs to Loudoun homeowners. Persons interested in joining the LCMG program do not have to be experienced gardeners. The one characteristic all Master Gardener Volunteers (MGVs) have in common is a desire to give back to or contribute to their community. To join the program, you must complete and return an application form to the Extension Office (form and additional information about the program can be found online at [Loudoun County Master Gardeners](#)).

Training space limits the number of students accepted to 30. Applicants are personally interviewed by current MGVs and Extension personnel before being accepted into the program. Your commitment begins with classroom training which runs from January 31st through April 26th. Classes meet every Tuesday and Thursday mornings, 9am until noon, in the Extension Office in Leesburg. It is expected that trainees attend each and every class. The classes follow the Loudoun County School calendar, so breaks are scheduled accordingly.

Are you ready for the call of the Garden? Come become a Loudoun County Master Gardener!

***Pam Buennemeyer, Master Gardener, Training Team Leader***

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## Save the Date — LCMG Gardening Symposium

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Save the Date! The Third Annual LCMG Gardening Symposium will be held on March 24th and 25th at Carradoc Hall in Leesburg VA.

Speakers signed up so far:

- ❖ Mary K Stickley, Manager of Gardens and Grounds at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley;
- ❖ Donna Williamson, designer, coach and teacher for over 20 years, teaching classes at Shenandoah University, the State Arboretum of Virginia, and Oatlands Plantation.
- ❖ Charles "Chip" Osborne, Jr., founder and President of Osborne Organics, LLC, has over 10 years experience in creating safe, sustainable and healthy landscapes, and 35 years experience as a professional horticulturist
- ❖ Adria C. Bordas - UC/Extension Agent-Horticulture, VCE-Fairfax County Office
- ❖ Karen Rexrode - horticulturalist, former owner of Windy Hill Plant Farm, photographer and a favorite speaker of the Master Gardeners.

With much more to come.....stay tuned.

***Becky Phillips, Master Gardener, Symposium Committee Chair***



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## **Lessons Learned in our 2011 Demo Garden Season - A Few Notes on Vegetable Gardening -**

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### **Tomatoes**

We had a wet, cold spring in the Demo Garden which delayed some seed and seedling plantings. Because of this, we purchased three 'wall-o-waters' (red plastic water teepees) and used them on three tomato plants so they could be planted earlier than temperatures would normally allow. We filled the plastic cells with water and put the teepee in position directly on the soil bed and planted the tomatoes within the water walls just a week or so prior to Mother's Day. The walls worked well to keep the plants warm so next season we will place the 'wall-o-waters' in the garden earlier.



We trellised most of the tomatoes. Some were in cages. Ultimately, we had a good season, good harvests and good looking fruit. The stink bugs arrived late August and their damage to the fruit followed.



### **Root Crops**

We had a banner season for onions and carrots. Besides having nice loose soil and compost, the key is to not use any fertilizer. Root crops do not like too much nitrogen. The beds that we did fertilize, radish, turnips, beets, did not grow well. Fruits were stunted and small. We have planted an area with turnips, under row cover with no fertilizer.

The first harvest of potatoes was July 5th with 87 lbs. of Yukon Gold, Cranberry Red, Carola and King Harry donated to Interfaith

Relief. Thankfully, there were not a lot of Colorado Potato Beetles (CPBs) this season. We are using a 'smart pot', which is a fiber grow pot, and it has potatoes growing in it that draw the CPBs to it. That is what we call a 'trap crop' as it pulls the bugs toward it rather than the bugs destroying the major potato crop in another location. Also, crop rotation is an effective control against CPB. One other note: Our fall crop isn't growing as well as the spring crop. More than likely, it was the 90+ heat we had in July.

### **Peppers**

We planted sweet and hot peppers in separate beds, using silver mulch for the sweets, and straw mulch for the hots. Silver mulch reflects the sun up into the under canopy which



confuses insects and increases yields. This seems to work well as we had good harvests of peppers this season.

## Legumes

The sugar snap and snow peas were planted on St. Patty's Day, as per tradition. They seemed to take forever to get any height. We looked a little closer and realized they were being munched on! So we covered all the peas with netting, but they only grew about 5 ft. and only put out a handful of fruit. We had good harvest last year, so we'll just try again next year.

## Beans

This is the second year we've had problems with beans. There are LOTS of bean beetles on the pole and bush beans. We have harvested just a handful of beans, mostly from the bush beans. Next year we will grow just bush beans, under row cover from their beginning to their end!

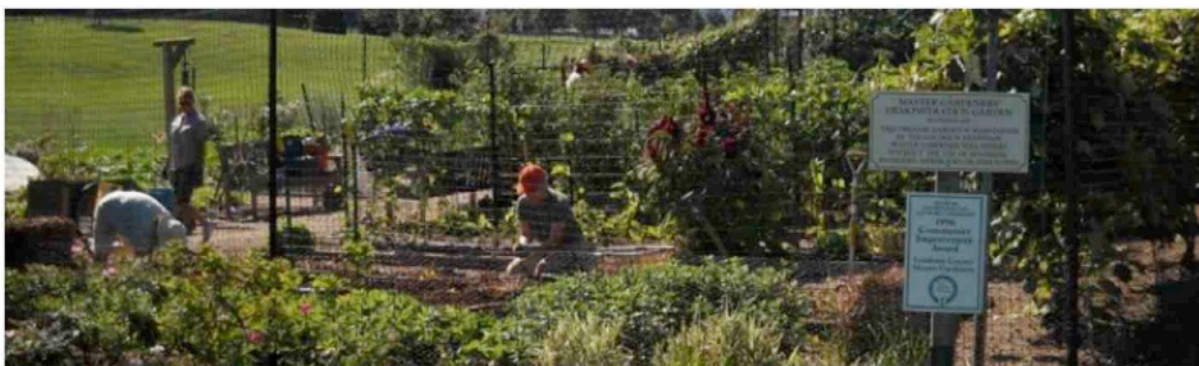


## Brassicas

The spring broccoli did not do well. They all "button headed". This is when young plants with a stalk the thickness of a pencil, are exposed to cold. They think it's time to form heads, but the plants need to be bigger. So, we ended up planting all cabbage in that bed in spring. We planted more fall cabbage, some arugula, and kale all covered with row cover.

The insect weight agribon row cover is very delicate and it develops holes very easily. But it keeps most insects out.

We are very lucky indeed to have this great garden we are allowed to tend. And we are lucky to have a seven foot deer fence around the veggie garden and even more lucky to have a new chew guard around the base perimeter of this deer fence (to thwart chewing bunnies and digging groundhogs). But I think our lesson learned on the chew guard will be that for it to be effective against digging wildlife, it will need to be buried vertically about eight inches rather than turned outward toward the field, buried an inch or two and covered with mulch. There is already a groundhog hole dug from the outside in!



*Normalee Martin, Demo Garden Leadership Team*



## Don't Forget Your Vegetable Garden!



When September rolls around we tend to put our vegetable garden aside as other tasks loom larger and in the case of school age children, scream louder, diverting our attention. Remember to continue to harvest your ripe produce although mature size and ripening time will slow considerably during this month. Keep an eye out for frost or freeze warnings after mid-September. Frosts are unusual here during September as the average first frost is generally around October 15<sup>th</sup>, but they do come early.

When the calendar changes to October it is really time to start collecting all your summer

vegetables before the first frost. Summer vegetables left on the vine during frost will be damaged. Gather the rest of your peppers, chop them up, freeze in a single layer and then put into a plastic bag and then back into the freezer for adding to winter dishes. Pick all of the tomatoes and sort the green tomatoes away from the ripe ones. Throw out any green tomatoes with soft or rot spots; the others, lay on newspaper in a cool, dark location to ripen to red (the taste will NOT be vine ripened) or use them in their green state.

Cut your tender herbs such as parsley, dill, cilantro and oregano and dry or freeze according to the particular herbs requirements. Basil should be collected before nighttime temps get below 50 degrees at night in September and then stored fresh for a day or two on the counter or frozen whole in a plastic bag. Some herbs like parsley, thyme or oregano can be overwintered inside. Carefully lift their roots from the ground, pot them up with a mixture of potting soil, sand and compost and then set in a sunny location inside.

After the first frost, pull out any old vegetable plants and weeds. Dispose of plant material in the compost bin but diseased plants should go in the household trash. Do not let vegetable plant debris overwinter in your garden as it harbors disease and pests during the cold months. Remove any hardscape like trellises, tomato cages and plant markers. Round tomato cages take up lots of space and you may want to consider buying square collapsible cages if space is at a premium.

Give your garden a head start on next spring's planting by performing a soil test. If adjustments are necessary they are best done in the fall. Another important task is to add organic matter to your garden soil. Kinds of organic matter are leaf mold mulch, chopped leaves mixed with straw or animal manures. If you use animal manures fall IS the season to apply. If using manure, turn under lightly into the top 4 inches. Other kinds of organic matter can be left on top of the soil to protect and cover it from the winds and snow of winter and then turned into the soil in the spring.

Don't forget to write down your final thoughts on this year's season in your garden journal. Make notes about new techniques, tactics or plants you want to test next season along with what went wrong and why. Now you and your vegetable garden are ready for winter.

***Denise Palmer, Master Gardener***



## Fall Flowers



**Mexican Bush Sage** - *Salvia leucantha* forms a large 4-foot-tall and wide mounded bush of long shoots bearing grey-green, lance-shaped foliage. The bush is ornamental in its own right, but in late summer to fall the shoots are topped with purple-spiked blooms. There is an all-purple type and a more common form with white blooms protruding from the purple calyxes. Provide plenty of sunlight for best results.

**Pineapple Sage** - *salvia elegans* One of my favorites,  
Pineapple Sage

is easy to grow and fast growing to even though it is an annual for us - we still get the full joy of it's fall display. And if you like to make herbal vinegars? This adds a wonderful red color when you use the flowers. Plant it in a pot or in a bed close so you can enjoy the wonderful pineapple smell of the foliage. At its best in fall when it sends up spikes of vivid red flowers, this salvia's foliage smells like ripe pineapples. Pictured at right is the variety S.e. 'Golden Delicious' which grows 1- to 3 feet tall with fire-engine red blooms and chartreuse leaves. Other varieties can grow taller. Needs full sun.



**Pink Culver's Root** - *Veronicastrum virginicum* I had a wonderful treat this summer and was able to visit a friend in Maine. And while there we visited the Maine Coastal Botanical Gardens, where this flower was in glorious bloom. Pink Culver's Root is a North American native wildflower. Growing tall - about 4 to 5 feet, but with strong stems that usually don't require staking - the plant bears large branching spikes of lilac-mauve flowers in mid to late summer and continue into early fall.

The flowers arch gracefully at the tips and make good cut flowers. Culvers root is attractive to butterflies and deer-resistant. Adaptable to most soils; grow in full sun.

**Toad lilies** - *tricyrtis hirta* I have grown this plant with no problems or pests. The flowers look like little orchids and are held close to the stem. Although the





descriptions talk about low growing foliage my experience has been they have long arching foliage that falls gracefully to the ground under the weight of the masses of flowers. Not a bad problem to have! They add a touch of color to shady parts of the garden during late summer and early fall. Toad lilies prefer partial to full shade and soil that is well-drained, but moist. They are available in various colors and are hardy in USDA zones 4 through 9. A word of warning -bunnies! Most articles reference that the bunnies love these little guys, I had and currently have bunnies in my yard and have not had a problem....but then maybe they just prefer my hostas!



**Bugbane/Black Cohosh** - *Cimicifuga* Looking for some height? Bugbane, a native to the woodlands of Eastern NA will add height without blocking the view. It is a wonderfully lacy, airy backdrop in the garden reaching 10' with some varieties. It performs best in partial shade and moist, organically enriched soil. Water supply should be constant throughout spring to fall. Other benefits include fragrant flowers and deer and bunny resistant. Once plants have reach mature clump they do not like to be disturbed, cut back in early spring.

**Red Spider Lilies** - *Lycoris radiata* Like Naked Ladies these wonderful flowers have no foliage when they sprout and bloom. A single green stem will suddenly sprout from the ground in

early September and quickly grow to a height of about 18 inches in about a week's time. When the plant blooms, about six to eight individual bright red flowers open up to create a large, umbrella shaped bloom that is over seven inches in diameter. Because of their "nakedness" Lycoris is easily planted in beds of groundcover to add fall interest. They also make great cut flowers, though care should be taken as they are poisonous if ingested. They can withstand our heat and humidity, and are rumored to thrive on poor dirt and neglect.



**Becky Phillips, Master Gardener**



## Planting Fall Bulbs



It's that time of year when we gardeners turn our efforts toward getting all the bulbs in the ground. If you are like me, back in the winter when you picked out all your bulbs all you were thinking about was how wonderful they are going to look when they come up. And now? You're thinking how am I going to get all these in the ground? My plans are always bigger than the work my body wants to do. And, no matter what type of gardener you are, there is a way of planting bulbs to fit your style.

OCD? Planting in rows should work for you....



Maybe you're impulsive like me?  
Toss your bulbs into the area where you want the color and then plant them where they land.

Or it could be that you love your tools and any excuse to use one.....so pull out the drill and hook up the auger.

Or if you are lazy like me but like to use your tools, get that roto-tiller out and dig some holes and throw in a nice mix of bulbs, add some bone meal, cover and ta da! You are done!

Maybe you are an over achiever? You could aim for something like Longwood Gardens.....



But whatever you decide your style is, and no matter how many or how few bulbs you are planting this fall; there are basic steps that need to be taken to ensure they survive the winter and give you the beautiful display of color that you are imagining. I would follow the advice given by VT's Professor Relf. I have excerpted part of it on the next page with the link to the whole handout at the end. And however you decide to do your bulb planting this fall....enjoy!



**Becky Phillips, Master Gardener**



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## Flowering Bulbs: Planting Instructions

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*Diane Relf, Extension Specialist, Environmental Horticulture, Virginia Tech,  
Elizabeth Ball, Program Support Technician, Virginia Tech*

**Selecting bulbs.** Selecting quality spring bulbs is very important, because the flower bud has already developed before the bulb is sold. Size is also important; look for plump, firm bulbs. Select on a basis of color and size for intended purposes; for example, small ones for naturalizing and large ones to stand out as specimen plants.

**Site Selection.** In selecting a site for planting, consider light, temperature, soil texture, and function. Most bulbs need full sun. Select a planting site that will provide at least 5 to 6 hours of direct sunlight a day. Bulbs left in the ground year after year should have 8 to 10 hours of daily sunlight for good flowering. Bulbs planted in a southern exposure near a building or wall will bloom earlier than bulbs planted in a northern exposure. Adequate drainage is an important consideration. Most bulbs and bulb-like plants will not tolerate poor drainage, and rot easily if planted in wet areas. Function must also be kept in mind. If bulbs are being used to naturalize an area, toss the bulbs then plant them where they fall to create a scattered effect.

**Site Preparation.** Good drainage is the most important single factor for successful bulb growing. Bulb beds should be dug when the soil is fairly dry. Wet soil packs tightly and retards plant growth. Spade the soil 8 to 12 inches deep. As you dig, remove large stones and building trash, but turn under all leaves, grass, stems, roots, and anything else that will decay. Add fertilizer and organic matter to the soil. Use 1 pound of 5-10-10 fertilizer for a 5 by 10 foot area, or a small handful for a cluster of bulbs. Place a 1 to 2 inch layer of organic matter over the bed. Thoroughly mix the fertilizer and organic matter with the soil. For individual planting holes, loosen the soil below the depth the bulb is to be planted. Add fertilizer and cover with a layer of soil (bulbs should not contact fertilizers directly). Set the bulb upright in the planting hole and cover with amended soil. In wet, hot summers, organic fertilizer may retard blooming and promote disease, especially with gladiolus. If voles are a problem, the bulbs can be planted in baskets made of wire screen to prevent the animals from reaching and destroying them.

**Time of Planting.** Hardy, spring-flowering bulbs are planted in fall. Hardy, fall-flowering bulbs, such as colchicum, are planted in August. Tender, summer-flowering bulbs are planted in the spring after danger of frost. Lilies are best planted in late fall.

**Depth of Planting.** It is best to check correct planting depth for each bulb with a successful local grower or other good local source. Bulb catalog and reference book recommendations for planting may be either too shallow or too deep depending on soil condition. As a general rule of thumb, bulbs should be planted 2½ to 3 times the diameter of the bulb in depth. It is important not to plant bulbs too shallow, as this will encourage frost heaving.

For the full handout [click here](#).



## To Propagate, or to Compost ...

Those tender perennials (TP), what we call annuals, that you bought this year usually end up in the compost pile after fall clean-up. Buying them each year can get pricey. Would you like to keep them for next year? If so, propagate or winterize them!



This is the time of year to be thinking about this. There are several ways to keep your wonderful TPs for next year. First, take cuttings of the new growth, not the woody sections. Remove lower leaves, dip in rooting hormone and then place the cutting into a container with vermiculite or a seed starter mix. Cover the container with a plastic bag, for increased humidity, and monitor to ensure moisture consistency. Place near a window or use a plant light. Within 3 to 4 weeks, roots will begin to grow and you have a new plant. Since this is a smaller plant than the original, you can usually find room in your home to keep it over the winter. If the plant begins to get too big while inside, take other cuttings from it, and begin again. Before you know it, you will have several plants! This is a great method for *Coleus*, *Lemon verbena*, *Lantana*, *Salvia*, *Heliotrope*, *Osteospermum* (cape daisy), and *Pentas*.

The second way to keep your POTTED TP is to trim it back a bit and prune out some branches, while still in the container. Just after the first light frost, move your pot into your garage or the basement. Check it occasionally during the winter and water if the soil dries out completely. Then come March, begin watering again and give it more sunlight. You will begin to see new growth within about two weeks. Keep watering and when it begins to get warm during the day, you can move outside. This method works great with *Lantana*, figs, and *Heliotrope*.

The third way to have that gorgeous TP again, is to just pot it up in a container, use a systemic insecticide on the root ball (to keep unwanted guests from coming inside) and bring the plant inside and put near a south or west facing window. Treat it like a normal house plant during the winter, but water sparingly. You might have some leaf drop, but that is normal. When days and nights begin to stay warm and above 60°, then you can take the plant back outside and plant it in the ground or another of your containers. This method is wonderful for *Salvia*, *Begonias* (at right), *Impatiens* and any other tropical TP that you might have.



Last, but not least, if you have a basement that is cool and bright, or a room where you can close off the heat, the majority of TP plants can be placed here. This 'cool storage' keeps insects at bay, prevents active growth, and puts the plants in a semi-dormant state. They will need very little water and attention at this point. This method works well with African Daisy, Marguerite Daisy, *Angelonia*, *Evolvulus*, *Osteospermum*, *Heliotrope*, *Gazania* Daisy, and *Pentas*.

Remember when temperatures get above 60°, you can begin hardening off your plants outside. But keep them covered during the cold nights and watch for a drop in daytime temperatures. If this happens, you might have to take them into your garage. I have been using these methods for several years, and have had great success. I encourage you to take that leap of faith the next time you begin to throw a tender perennial on the compost pile!

Excellent references with pictures and directions: [Bulbs in the Basement](#), [Geraniums on the Windowsill](#) by Alice and Brian McGowan and [The Plant Propagator's Bible](#) by Miranda Smith.

**Diane Hayes, Master Gardener**



## Fall Garden Cleanup

Readying your garden for winter is a season-long process, not a weekend chore. Your goal should be to stretch your garden as far into the fall as possible while taking care of time- and temperature-sensitive tasks and keeping wildlife and the environment in mind. This can be a very enjoyable process if you make a list of tasks for September through November so you aren't caught short by a hard freeze. You can adjust the following list based on the weather.

### September tasks:

- ❖ Check the houseplants that have been summering on the deck. Cutback, clean-up and repot if necessary. They can stay outside for another few weeks.
- ❖ List the tender bulbs that will have to be lifted and brought inside before the first hard freeze. These include gladiolas, tuberous begonias, cannas, dahlias and caladium. Clip the list to your November calendar.
- ❖ After reading the article on propagating tender perennials, assess your candidates. Do you have the space and desire to save some coleus, impatiens, geraniums, etc.? Monitor any that you want to overwinter and bring them in as the days start to turn cool.
- ❖ Weed beds thoroughly and carefully dispose of the weeds to avoid spreading the seeds.
- ❖ Cut down and dispose of any plants with mold or mildew or any other disease. Clean up roses and peonies by removing mildewed leaves, bag and dispose of the debris.
- ❖ Collect seeds from any plants that you want to propagate. Seeds are also a nice gift for a gardening friend.
- ❖ Plant spring bulbs and lilies so they can establish some roots before the ground freezes.



**Lift Tender Bulbs**



**Gather Seeds**

### October tasks:

- ❖ In early October divide perennials such as iris, black-eyed Susans, and daylilies.
- ❖ Check your houseplants for pests and spray with an insecticidal soap before bringing them indoors in mid-October, or as the temperatures dictate.
- ❖ Mulch or compost leaves, don't send them to the landfill. Use a mulching mower, leaf vac or other type of leaf mulcher to chop up leaves. Chopped leaves can be used like mulch on all your gardens or put on the compost pile where they will decompose very quickly.
- ❖ Remove annuals as the plants are killed by frost.
- ❖ Cover bare soil as it is exposed. Consider using leaf mulch or a cover crop if a slope is bared when annuals are removed. Fall and winter rain erodes bare soil and leaches the nutrients.



- ❖ Avoid cleaning up too much. Leave coneflower, black-eyed Susans, sunflowers and other plants with seeds and berries standing to feed the birds. Sedum remains attractive through the winter and holds the snow providing winter beauty in the garden.
- ❖ Some plants do better if they are left standing through the winter and cut back in the spring. They like the protection their foliage provides for their crowns. The following perennials fare better if cleaned up in the spring: Asters, Butterfly Weed (Asclepias), Astilbe, Balloon flower, Cardinal flower, Chrysanthemums, Coral Bells, Gayfeather (Liatris), Goldenrod, Joe-Pye Weed, Lavender, Russian sage, Tickseed (Coreopsis), and Turtlehead. (This is a partial list, for the full list search on *Suggested Perennial Plants to Prune in the Spring*)
- ❖ Other plants do better if cut down in the fall. Here's a partial list: Blanket Flower, Bronze Fennel, Catmint, Columbine, Daylilies, Hardy Begonia, Penstemon, Phlox, Salvia, Veronica and Yarrow. (For the full list search on *Perennial plants to prune in the fall*)
- ❖ Healthy plants that are cut down can be left lying in the garden to provide hiding spaces for beneficial insects.
- ❖ Winterize your roses by cutting back canes to 6-12 inches and covering with leaves. Cut back peonies.
- ❖ You may want to lift your tender bulbs now, if you wait until November, watch the weather closely and lift them before the first hard freeze.
- ❖ Inventory your collection of plastic pots and trays. The open trays are useful, the molded ones less so. Wash the pots in a mild bleach and water solution. Stack the ones you want to save for storage. If you start seeds or pot tree seedlings don't be too ruthless in the fall throwing out pots you'll need in the spring. Stacks of the smaller pots can be slipped into a plastic sleeve recycled from the newspaper to keep them together and tidy. Do not throw away the pots you don't want. Lowe's, Home Depot and other garden centers will recycle them. Do this now before the garden centers close. Some curbside recycling services will also take these plastic pots.

**Leave Seeds****Recycle Pots and Trays**

## November tasks:

- ❖ Review your task list and your garden and take care of the remaining odds and ends. Do a once over of your garden to remove stakes and complete any final cleaning that is necessary.
- ❖ Gather all your garden tools and equipment. Drain, coil and bring in the hoses. For your tools: scrape off excess mud, wipe with a wet rag and let them dry thoroughly, remove any rust with grade 00 steel wool, sharpen tools that require sharpening, check wooden handles for splinters, condition with sandpaper and wax, spray metal parts with a penetrating lubricating oil to protect from rust, store in a dry spot. Avoid leaving tools on the floors of garages or other places likely to get damp during the winter.
- ❖ Sit back and relax.

**Carol Ivory, Master Gardener**



## The ABCs of Trees



Ansel Adams

Trees have an immeasurable impact on our everyday lives. Does even a minute pass when they don't touch us in one way or another? Trees clean our air, hold our soil tightly, give us privacy and treasured meeting spaces. They provide shade in the summer to keep us cool and fuel in the winter to keep us warm. Trees supply lumber for our shelters, medicines to fight our diseases, paper for our books and art and inspiration for both. Scents, syrups, spices—all the delicious edibles from fruits to nuts that trees freely give up to us. The very table where we gather to enjoy these foods, as often as not, is made from wood.

With this edition of the *Trumpet Vine* the Loudoun County Tree Stewards will begin a series of informational articles about trees. We'll begin with *Amelanchier* and work our way through to *Zelkova*. Our hope is that this will become a base for your own personal resource guide on our woody friends—learning more about trees, their needs and gifts, their care and maintenance. We must all be *tree stewards* to keep our populations healthy and increasing in number.

### Internet Resources

The internet is rich with informational websites on woody plants, which encompasses trees, shrubs and vines. Many sites include perennial and annual information as well. Some of the sites provide data including planting zones, mature height and spread, sun and water requirements, identification features, common pests and diseases, as well as photos of the tree and it's leaves/bark/twigs/flower/fruit/etc. Here are some of my favorite:

- ❖ Virginia Tech Tree ID: <http://dendro.cnre.vt.edu/dendrology/factsheets.cfm>
- ❖ Cornell University Woody Plant site: <http://woodyplants.mannlib.cornell.edu/>
- ❖ Missouri Botanical Garden: <http://www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder/Alpha.asp>
- ❖ NC State Univ. Factsheets: <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/factsheets/index.html>
- ❖ Univ. of Connecticut (UConn) Database: <http://www.hort.uconn.edu/Plants/index.html>
- ❖ National Gardening Assoc. (NGA) Plantfinder: <http://www.garden.org/plantfinder/>
- ❖ Arbor Day Foundation: <http://www.arborday.org/trees/treeGuide/index.cfm>

If you are not yet convinced of the importance of trees, please consider this: without them, **no coffee...no chocolate**. A sad world indeed.

***Edye Clark, Loudoun County Master Gardener & Tree Steward***



**Botanical Name:** *Amelanchier arborea***Common Name:** Downy Serviceberry**NATIVE**

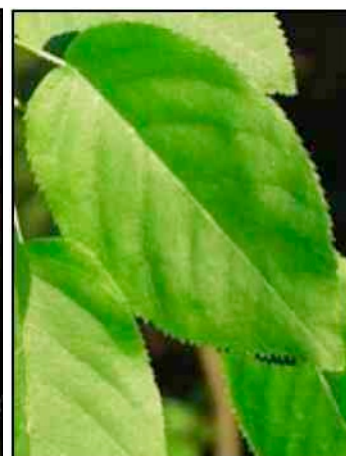
- Zones:** 4 - 9
- Family:** *Rosaceae*
- Habit:** Deciduous
- Form:** lg. shrub or small, often multi-trunked, tree with irregular branching; narrow, rounded crown
- Height:** 10 to 25 feet
- Spread:** 10 to 25 feet
- Growth rate:** moderate (9-10' in first 10 yrs.)
- Texture:** medium-fine in leaf
- Leaf:** alternate, simple, obovate; 1-3" long, finely serrated edges; exceptional fall color—yellow to orange to dusty red
- Flower:** white, 5 long petals, in drooping clusters (racemes); early spring blooms are slightly fragrant
- Fruit:** ¼ - ⅜" round berry, red to dark purple; edible and sweet in mid-June, if you can beat the birds to them
- Bark:** smooth, ashy-gray when young; later becoming rough, with long vertical splits and furrows

**Site Requirements:** full sun to part shade; prefers moist soil, but will tolerate a range of soil types (dry, clay, sand, wet). Not very pollution tolerant.

**Diseases and Insects:** rust (cedar serviceberry rust), some blights, powdery mildews, leaf miner. Many of the newer cultivars are free of any serious insect and disease problems.

**Landscape Uses:** can be used in mass shrub borders or as a small ornamental tree. Effective in naturalized areas or woodland edges, as well as along stream banks and ponds. Excellent wildlife draw. Four-season interest. Currently underused in the developed landscape.

**Noteworthy:** *Amelanchier* (pronounced 'am-e-lang' kē-ēr) is commonly called 'Shadbush' or 'Shadblow Bush' because the flowers appear in early spring when the shad—fresh-water herring—run. Also called 'Juneberry' because of the timing of the ripening berries. The berries are frequently used in jams and pies.



Photos: VT Factsheets



### Related Species:

- ▶ ***Amelanchier alnifolia*** (Saskatoon Serviceberry) - more often a shrub-size of 6 to 10' and multi-stemmed. Smaller flowers. Not well adapted to Zones 6 - 8; prefers 4 - 5. Native to the Great Plains from Manitoba and Saskatchewan to Nebraska. Saskatoon Serviceberry has been developed for commercial fruit production.
- ▶ ***Amelanchier canadensis*** (Shadblow Serviceberry) - often confused with *A. arborea*. A shrub with erect stems spreading by means of sucker growths, 6 to 20' tall. Native occurring in bogs and swamps from Maine to S. Carolina along the coast. The fruit is black, juicy and sweet.
- ▶ ***Amelanchier x grandiflora*** (Apple Serviceberry) - a hybrid between *A. arborea* x *A. laevis*. The young leaves are purplish and the flowers are larger, on longer, slender racemes, tinged pink in bud.
- ▶ ***Amelanchier laevis*** (Allegheny Serviceberry) - the leaves are a distinct purple bronze and the the flowers occur in nodding, fleecy 4" panicles. The fruit is black and sweet and were preferred by Native Americans over others.

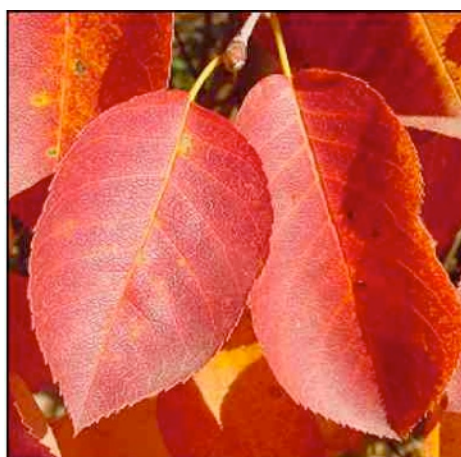
### Recommended Cultivars:

- ▶ ***Amelanchier x grandiflora* 'Autumn Brilliance'** - will reach 20 to 25' at maturity. "Beautiful white flowers, edible fruits, clean summer foliage, persistent leaves and brilliant red fall color are notable attributes" (Dirr, *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*).
- ▶ ***Amelanchier x grandiflora* 'Autumn Sunset'** - mature landscape size 20 to 25'. Superior leaf retention and rich, pumpkin-orange fall color. Shown to have excellent heat and drought tolerance.
- ▶ ***Amelanchier x grandiflora* 'Ballerina'** - reaches 15 to 20' in height and the fall color is brick red. Fruits can get to 1/2" in diameter, bright red turning to purplish black, tender and sweet.
- ▶ ***Amelanchier x grandiflora* 'Princess Diana'** - abundant white flowers, 3/8" diameter edible fruits and stunning red fall color.

'Princess Diana'



'Autumn Brilliance'



Ripe berries



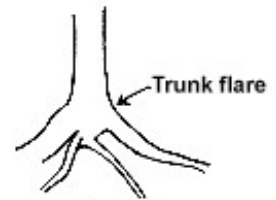
Photo: Dave's Garden



## Proper Tree Planting – a Matter of Life or Death

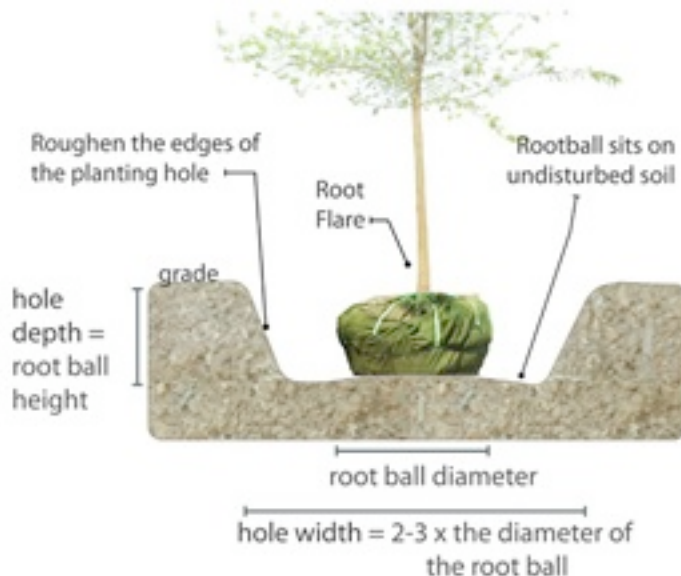
Fall is the best time to plant trees but many trees die each year because they were improperly planted. They may die within a year of being planted or many years later. But the proper care taken at the time a tree is planted can produce a healthy tree that grows to a ripe old age.

**1. Locate the trunk flare.** When you purchase a tree at a nursery it will come in a container or balled and burlapped. In either case the most important step is identifying the trunk flare. The trunk flare should be planted just at the soil level or very slightly above, but definitely not below the soil level. On some container and balled and burlapped trees the trunk flare can be buried within the soil and you may need to pull the soil back to find it. It will not hurt the tree if you pull this soil back. If you find roots that have grown above the trunk flare, carefully prune them off near where they are attached.



**2. Dig a hole to the proper depth.** This is the hardest part of the job of planting a tree. Measure the depth of the root ball from the base of the trunk flare to the bottom of the root ball. Dig your planting hole only that deep or slightly less. Dig the planting hole 3-5 times the width of the root ball. Over 90% of a tree's roots are in the top 12" of soils. You want to create nice loosened soil that the roots from the tree will be able to easily grow into. When the trunk flare is buried, the roots are not able to get the oxygen they need.

**3. Place the tree in the planting hole.** You should have a firm base in the bottom of the hole since you didn't dig the hole too deeply. Remove the tree from the container or if balled and burlapped remove any twine, burlap and wire (if a large balled and burlap plant, place the plant in the planting hole and then remove as much of the burlap and wire as you can - you may need bolt cutters to remove the wire). Make sure you find the trunk flare for proper placement to make sure it will not be too deep.



**4. Examine the roots.** It is very important that the roots are growing outward and none of them are girdling or circling the root ball. You may need to take a hose and wash away enough soil to expose the roots. Tease out circling roots or if necessary cut them. This actually encourages new root growth.

**5. Backfill the planting hole.** Walk around the tree and look at it from several angles to make sure you have it straight in the planting hole. Use the original soil you removed from the hole as the backfill. Do not add amendments such as potting soil, peat or sand to individual planting holes. Amending individual planting holes can

interfere with root growth beyond the planting hole as well as water drainage. Backfill the planting hole about 1/3 of the way, add water to make a soupy mix and let it settle. Repeat this process two more times, each time making a soupy mix and letting it settle – this will



remove the air pockets. Use the remainder of the backfill to bring the soil up to the proper level, making sure not to cover the trunk flare. Any leftover soil can be used to make a small raised rim around the outer edge of the planting hole or if planted on a slope make the rim on the downside of the tree to catch and direct rain and irrigation to the root ball of the tree.

**6. Mulch.** Research has proven that trees grow best when they don't have other plants such as turf or ground cover growing underneath them. Ideally you should provide a layer of mulch 2-3" inches deep from a few inches away from the trunk out to the dripline of the tree. The dripline is at the point where the foliage of the plant is widest. For a small young tree this can be 3-5', but for a mature shade tree it could be 40-50'. Do not use plastic or landscape fabric underneath the mulch.



Mulch wide—not deep.

**7. Staking.** Staking is usually not required but it may be required for some evergreen trees, trees planted in windy locations, or trees that could be damaged by vandalism. Staking should be placed on the lower ½ of the tree and should allow some movement of the tree in the breeze, but not so much that the root ball can shift in the planting hole. Use 2 or 3 stakes placed evenly around the tree. Staking materials should be removed within one year of planting. Simply placing stakes around a tree may prevent it from being damaged by mowers and other equipment.

**8. Pruning.** The only pruning that should be performed at the time of planting is to remove any parts that are damaged, diseased, or dead. If you have selected a healthy specimen, pruning should be at a minimum.

**9. Watering.** Keep the root ball of the tree well-watered, but not standing in water. If



rainfall is insufficient, give the tree a slow drink every 2-3 days using a drip hose or a gator bag. You want to wet the top 4-8" of soil when you water without water running off and eroding the soil. Stick your finger or a screwdriver into the soil to tell how deeply you have wetted the soil. Most trees will need supplemental watering for the first 3 years after planting until they have begun to get their

root system established. You want any new trees to go into winter well hydrated, especially evergreens, so make sure you water them well in the fall before the ground freezes if rainfall has been scarce. If there has been little rain or snow during the winter, when you get a warm day give newly planted trees some water.



**10. Fertilizer.** Do not add fertilizer to the planting hole at planting time. Fertilization should not be done until the second fall after planting and only if a soil test indicates the need for supplemental nutrients.

***Happy planting! Carol Ivory, Loudoun County Master Gardener & Debbie Dillion, Urban Horticulturalist***



## Edible Plants — Cattails, *Typha latifolia*



Cattails, tall spikes standing tall and erect living in wetlands are a remarkably versatile wild edible.

**Where found:** Native to North America and Eurasia; found in swamps, marshes, edges of rivers and ponds, ditches, and is often a dominant plant in wetlands. Cattails should not be confused with *Phragmites australis*: this is a common reed, a look alike at first glance since it grows and takes over wetland type habitats. *Phragmites* is an invasive species especially found on the east coast and spreading.

**Parts Used:** young shoots and stalks, immature flower spikes, pollen, sprouts and rootstock.

Cattails are considered a versatile wild edible, with most parts used. The outer leaves on tender shoots can be tough like the skins of the corn and once peeled from the tender shoot they are discarded.

**Tender shoots and stalks:** gather in early spring about 12" high; peel and eat fresh or they can be cooked much like asparagus. They can also be stir fried, boiled and added to soups and other dishes.

**Immature flower stalks** can be cooked like corn on the cob; boil for a few minutes, peel then eat the tender inside.



**Roots** can be dug in the fall. Once gathered and cleaned, one can mash them and then set on a tray to dry. Once dry the mash can be ground into a fine power that can be used in baking breads, muffins, and cakes. While in Wilderness School we made a simple "cake" substituting the flour ½ and ½: ½ flour from cattails and ½ stone ground white flour. While cooking this cake sent a soft aroma of chocolate in the kitchen and it was a delicious addition to our supper. Hot from the oven, topped with fresh butter, its delicious taste was an unexpected treat.



The **foliage** can be used for rush seats, mattresses, and torches.

**Nutritional value:** very low in saturated fat; provides Iron, Phosphorus, dietary fiber, Vitamins K, B6 and Calcium, Magnesium, Potassium, Manganese. I have read that it contains sodium too which can be a tasty addition to a wild food stew.

Cattails from polluted water should not be eaten. Also take care to distinguish young Cattails from young Yellow Irises - which are poisonous.

If eating cattails is a new concept to you, just search on cattail recipes and you'll find dozens ranging from Cattail Stirfry, Cattail Wild Rice Soup to Cattail Pollen Pancakes and Cattail Banana Muffins.

*Note: I see many wetlands, small ponds in the countryside. If anyone has cattails on their property and would not mind me gathering some roots please let me know. I would be happy to share the results too! Email the Help Desk and they will be happy to forward the information.*

**Judith Dreyer, MS, BSN, RN, Fauquier County Master Gardeners**



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## Master Gardener Best Practices for the Fall

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- ❖ If you have a flower bed that you want to enlarge, or an area that you want to make into a flower bed, lay down at least 5 layers of newspaper, overlapping them as you go. Cover with mulch, and within a month or two, the grass (or weeds) will be dead. This is easier, cheaper and more environmentally friendly than using Round-Up.
- ❖ Plant pansies, ornamental cabbage and kale for color throughout the fall and into the winter. With some good fortune, your pansies will survive the winter to bloom in the spring.
- ❖ Time to transplant peonies or divide them if you wish to multiply your plants.
- ❖ Don't prune spring flowering shrubs such as azaleas. Wait until early summer, after they have finished blooming.
- ❖ For fall and winter color, try the native shrubs Virginia sweetspire, *Itea virginica* and oakleaf hydrangea, *Hydrangea quercifolia*. Both retain their colorful foliage into winter, even when planted in the shade.
- ❖ Stop fertilizing and cut back on watering late in September to allow your plants to slip into winter dormancy.
- ❖ Collect seeds from your favorite annuals that you put out this summer, then plant them in the Spring, after the last danger of frost. Free flowers!
- ❖ Before the first frost, collect your green tomatoes, wrap each individually in newspaper, and place single layer in a box. You will have fresh tomatoes for about 4-6 weeks longer.

### September Gardening Tips - Turf

- ❖ It is time to apply herbicides to your lawn for winter annual or perennial weeds that germinate or form rosettes in turf during the fall. Check herbicide labels before using, and select an appropriate chemical for the weed types and lawn type in your yard.
- ❖ Don't retire the lawn mower when the growth of your lawn slows down this fall. As long as the grass continues to grow, it should be mowed.
- ❖ Don't allow leaves to accumulate on the lawn. Rake them up regularly, and store in a pile for use as mulch in your garden next summer. You can also recycle them into your lawn and boost the organic matter in your soil by simply mowing over them several times to chop them into small pieces. If a large amount of leaves are allowed to accumulate on your lawn, they can become matted down by rain and may kill the grass.
- ❖ Early autumn is the best time of the year for the sowing of grass seed. Grass sown in spring is often killed by hot, dry, summer weather. For more vigorous growth, spread a very thin mulch of clean straw over newly seeded areas. The straw shades delicate seedlings from the hot sun and helps preserve moisture in the soil, yet lets enough light through for germination. By the time cold weather arrives, the grass is fairly well established and ready to grow and thicken early the following spring.



## Notes from the Help Desk:

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**Q: I had what seemed like hundreds of stink bugs in my house last year, is this year expected to be as bad? Is there anything I can do to help keep them out?**

**A:** The Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (BMSB) is indeed a foreign pest that has entrenched itself in our landscapes - ornamental, fruits and vegetables. As an adult, it is a harsh looking bug with a grayish brown shield-like back, white bands on the antennae and legs and black and white spots on the underside or abdomen. The nymphs look like little black ticks running around. The nymphs do not have wings and are easily squished whereas a tick is not! They got their name because when you squish the adults, they give off an odor.

There are currently studies being done and polls being taken to collect data on the infestations of the area. Once they are complete, the results will be published and we will put that on our website. For now, it is probably safe to say the infestations will be similar to last year. Here is information directly from the BMSB factsheet from Virginia Tech on control methods:

**Prevent stink bugs from getting inside:** Any home or structure with a history of having stink bugs over-wintering inside needs to have preventative measures taken during the summer to prevent re-infestation in the fall. Exclude stink bugs from the house by sealing up cracks around windows, doors, utility access points, chimneys, siding, trim, and fascia. Caulk can be used to seal many cracks, but attic and foundation vents, and weep holes will require wire mesh or screening. Do not seal cracks if the insects are already inside because they will be trapped and die indoors. BMSB congregate mainly on the south and westward-facing surfaces of buildings.

**Control stink bugs before they get inside:** Spot treatments using a microencapsulated or wettable powder insecticides can be applied in the early fall around windows, doors, attic vents and other locations on the south and west walls of the structure. Often the size of the building may prevent access points that are high off the ground from being treated, so screening and caulking from the interior will still be necessary. Note that all insecticide applications have to be carefully timed. Applying too early will allow the insecticide to degrade before the stink bugs begin to come in. Applying after the stink bugs have arrived will allow many stink bugs to still enter the interior of the buildings.

**Control after they get inside:** Caulk around baseboards and exhaust fans, light fixtures, and trim to prevent stink bugs from accessing interior rooms from basements, drop ceilings and attics. Vacuuming best controls individual insects. Spraying stink bugs with insecticide after they get inside still obligates you to vacuum up their dead bodies, so skip the insecticide and go straight to the vacuum. Avoid treating stink bugs you cannot reach with the vacuum with insecticide. If they die inside the wall-voids or attics dead stink bugs can lead to infestations of carpet beetles and other pests that feed on the stink bug carcasses.

Factsheet can be found at: [http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/2902/2902-1100/2902-1100\\_pdf.pdf](http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/2902/2902-1100/2902-1100_pdf.pdf)

**Q: There is a strange web-like sack in my tree full of worms. What is it and is it harmful? What should I do about it?**

**A:** Many of you have noticed something that looks like an Eastern Tent Caterpillar in your trees lately. The first thing you need to do is to determine just what you have in your trees. Is it an Eastern Tent Caterpillar or a Fall Webworm? How can you tell them apart? Here are a few ways you can distinguish between the two pests:

Eastern Tent Caterpillars appear in early spring. They form their tents in the crotch of branches, and they don't usually enclose foliage. A big give-away to identifying tent caterpillars is that they leave the tent several times a day to feed. They prefer trees in the Rosacea family, which includes cherry, apple, plum, peach, and hawthorn trees.



Fall webworms appear in late summer to fall. They form tents at the ends of branches, and they always enclose foliage within the tent. Because of this, the larvae don't leave the tent to feed. Instead, they expand the tent as needed to enclose more foliage. They are not picky eaters, choosing over 100 hardwoods trees as hosts, including fruit, shade, and forest trees. But the good news is that because the larvae are enclosed in the tent, an effective method of control on smaller trees is physical removal.

Both of these pests can damage trees. Eastern tent caterpillars feed early in the year, so trees may recover from the defoliation. However, when populations are high, trees can be completely defoliated, which puts trees in a stressed condition. If severe defoliation occurs for several consecutive years, the affected trees will be weakened and susceptible to secondary agents such as borers and cankers.

Fall webworms feed later in the year, when trees are preparing to go into dormancy. However, if the fall webworms are able to defoliate a tree early in the season, there is a second generation of webworms, and the tree has been under stress, greater injury may occur, making the tree susceptible to secondary agents.

Both types of pests can be controlled quite effectively by removing the webs (or tents) either by tearing them out or pruning them out. Removal of overwintering egg masses of Eastern Tent Caterpillars before spring will also help reduce natural populations. Various parasites also aid in naturally reducing populations.

Tent caterpillars can be controlled by applying insecticidal sprays as soon as the larvae are noticed. The tents of Fall Webworms are an effective deterrent to parasitic wasps, parasitic flies, and insectivorous birds that would attack the caterpillars. If you decide to use insecticide sprays, you must apply them with enough pressure to penetrate the webbing; otherwise, the spray will be ineffective in controlling the webworms.

**Q: I have some newly planted trees that suffered a little bit of damage last year due to an animal of some kind gnawing at it. What can I do to protect the bark this winter?**

**A:** There are several animals that will gnaw on the bark of trees, including termites, squirrels, voles, mice, rabbits, deer, beavers, even elephants! You probably don't have elephants gnawing on your trees, but that doesn't mean you're home free. Animals gnawing on bark can cause serious damage to a tree, even death. Several fruit trees in the Master Gardener Demonstration Garden in Ida Lee Park were fatally damaged by rodents that gnawed around the base of the trees, completely encircling, or girdling, these trees. When this happens, the tree is doomed. So how can you prevent this type of damage? Here are a few ways you can combat tree damage caused by animals gnawing on the bark:

- During winter, keep mulch pulled away from the base of the tree, and examine it frequently for the presence of mice.
- Use a mechanical guard such as galvanized screen or hardware cloth to wrap around the base of the tree.
- Use tree wraps, but remove them in the early spring to prevent damage to the tree.
- Paint the tree with ordinary whitewash.
- Some commercial fruit tree growers use a repellent wash recommended by the USDA, containing equal parts of fish oil, concentrated lime sulfur, and water.

For more information on seasonal problems see [Seasonal Alerts](#) on the Master Gardener website.

***Barb Bailey and Susan Lopez, LCMG***



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