



Master Gardeners of Burlington County Newsletter

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Master Gardeners of Burlington County Newsletter

Welcome

By Brooke McMinn – Burlington County Horticulturist

The weather outside may be frightful, but there's still plenty of gardening related tasks to be accomplished during the winter season. Here are some things that can be done over the next few months in order to prepare for a successful gardening season next year.

- Help prevent damage to outside plants by gently brushing snow off of heavily laden shrubs and trees to prevent breakage and avoid burying shrubs and perennials when shoveling or blowing snow.
- Prune dead, diseased, or damaged wood on trees, shrubs & vines as soon as it is observed. A few minutes of tidying up now can save time later and give you some winter exercise.
- Add organic material to the compost pile or bin.
- Avoid walking on frozen lawns as it can break grass blades and damage crowns of the plants. Stick to driveways, sidewalks, and walking paths.
- Bare soil invites winter weeds into the garden. Cover bare areas with mulch and pull any weeds that appear to prevent them from going to seed in the spring.
- Monitor evergreens for bagworms sacks and remove them if found. Clip them off and bag them up to be disposed of with your household trash. Do not compost them. Bagworms can be highly destructive to trees such as arborvitae, spruce and cypress so clip the 1-2" sacks now to prevent the hundreds of eggs from hatching in the spring.
- Provide food and habitat for winter wildlife by keeping bird feeders and birdbaths filled throughout the season. You may even consider a birdbath heater which will keep the water just above freezing and available to wildlife that will desperately need it. Wait to cut back shrubs and perennials until the spring so that wildlife will have some winter cover. This will also increase the visual interest in your garden throughout the season.
- Read gardening books and magazines and plan for next year's garden designs.
- Plant bulbs until the ground freezes or during a thaw or store in the refrigerator.
- Cut evergreens for fresh, indoor decorations.



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- Keep firewood outside until 1-2 days before burning to prevent critters from waking up inside your home.
- Order seeds for next season.
- Clean & disinfect pots & containers.
- Have your soil tested before purchasing or applying any fertilizers or soil amendments.

Also, don't neglect your trusty tools! Here are some tips on caring for your tools this winter so they'll be at their best when you need them next season.

- Check hoses and sprinklers for leaks. Small leaks can result in large quantities of wasted water and higher utility bills. Drain, coil & store hoses in a dry, protected area where they will not freeze.
- Remove any soil, vegetation, or rust from all tools using a strong stream of water, a wire brush, or scraper. Grill cleaning brushes work great for this task.
- Lubricate all tool pivot points and springs.
- Sharpen hoes, spades, loppers, pruners, and saws.
- Check all tools thoroughly for loose screws or nuts and tighten them accordingly. Replace or repair broken handles and other bent or broken parts.
- Spray all bare metal parts and cutting edges with a penetrating oil to prevent rust.
- Sand wooden handles smooth and wipe with boiled linseed oil to help prevent wood from cracking and drying or paint handles a bright color for quick and easy location in the garden.
- Repair or replace any tools with bent blades or teeth.
- All sprayer parts should be thoroughly washed and rinsed before storing. Most pesticide labels recommend a triple rinsing of sprayers. Oil any moving parts as instructed in the owner's manual. Store sprayer upside down to allow it to drain and dry thoroughly.
- Store any chemicals out of the weather where they will not freeze. Check chemical labels for expiration dates. If expired, dispose of them as hazardous waste.
- Clean wheelbarrows, carts, and wagons thoroughly and remove and rust before touching up paint chips with spray paint to prevent rust in the future. Check tire pressure, inflate if



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needed, and grease wheels to keep them rolling smoothly and prevent squeaking. Store in a dry area.

- Clean and service lawn mowers and other power equipment such as tillers, chippers, trimmers, or weed eaters according to the instructions in the owner's manual and store in a dry area.
- Avoid storing gasoline over the winter as old gasoline does not ignite easily, making the machines using it work harder, and often leading to frustration getting them to start. If you do store fuel, be sure it is in a well ventilated area away from your dwelling space.

Calendar

Education Opportunities:

2014 RMGBC Training Program

All classes are 9:00 AM-12:00 noon unless otherwise noted.

If you are interested in attending a class, please let Brooke know so that we can be sure we have enough handout materials for all attendees.

| Date | Title | Location | Speaker |
|----------|------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|
| 01/16/14 | Intro & Botany | RCE BurlCo | Brooke McMinn / Joann Szeliga |
| 01/21/14 | Soils | RCE BurlCo | Bill Bamka |
| 01/23/14 | Plant Nutrition | RCE BurlCo | Bill Bamka |
| 01/28/14 | Plant Taxonomy | RCE BurlCo | Brooke McMinn |
| 01/30/14 | Tree & Shrub Pathology | RCE BurlCo | Ann Gould |
| 02/04/14 | Evergreens | RCE BurlCo | Jason Grabosky |
| 02/06/14 | Plant Propagation | RCE BurlCo | Larry Kuser |
| 02/11/14 | Entomology | RCE BurlCo | Joe Mahar |
| 02/13/14 | Small Fruits | RCE BurlCo | Gary Pavlis |



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|----------|---------------------------------------|------------|----------------------------|
| 02/18/14 | IPM | RCE BurlCo | Steven Rettke |
| 02/20/14 | Vegetable Crops | RCE BurlCo | Ray Samulis |
| 02/25/14 | Weed ID | RCE BurlCo | Bill Bamka |
| 02/27/14 | Organic Farming (9-10:30) | RCE BurlCo | Jenny Carleo |
| 02/27/14 | Gardening with Chickens (10:30-12) | RCE BurlCo | Toni Price |
| 03/04/14 | Houseplants | RCE BurlCo | Michelle Casella |
| 03/06/14 | Urban Forestry | RCE BurlCo | Ken Taaffe |
| 03/11/14 | Pinelands Water Issues (9-10:30) | RCE BurlCo | Rich Bizzub |
| 03/11/14 | Climate Friendly Gardening (10:30-12) | RCE BurlCo | Brooke McMinn |
| 03/13/14 | Earthwise Lawn Care | RCE BurlCo | Bill Hlubik |
| 03/18/14 | Pesticide Safety | RCE BurlCo | Patricia Hastings |
| 03/20/14 | OPEN | | |
| 03/25/14 | Herbaceous Plants | RCE BurlCo | Barbara Bromley |
| 03/27/14 | Horticultural Therapy | RCE BurlCo | Madeline DiNardo |
| 04/01/14 | Wildlife (10:30-12) | RCE BurlCo | Brian Marsh |
| 04/03/14 | Pruning | BCCAC | Rich Weidman |
| 04/08/14 | RMGBC General Meeting (10:00-12) | RCE BurlCo | |
| 04/10/14 | Mentor Training | RCE BurlCo | RMGBC Mentors |
| 04/15/14 | Composting (9:30-10:30) | EcoComplex | Brooke McMinn |
| 04/15/14 | Landfill/Greenhouse Tour (10:30-12) | EcoComplex | Pat Evans / Russell Wright |

Tree Identification

Mid May 2014 (~ 2 CEC's)

Rutgers Master Gardener Educator and State Forester Ken Taaffe will lead us on a field trip where he will explain how to identify trees commonly found in our area.



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[Multiple Rutgers Courses in Pest Management and Landscaping](#)

Multiple courses from the Rutgers Office of Continuing Professional Education are open for registration. Certified RMG's now receive a 10% discount on every OCPE landscape class! Visit www.cpe.rutgers.edu or call 732-932-9271 for more information.

[Community Volunteer Opportunities:](#)

[RMGBC Project Weekly Workdays](#)

All regular project workdays have ended for the season and will resume in the spring. Contact Brooke if you are interested in starting a new project or joining an existing one.

[Burlington County Master Gardener Newsletter](#)

Submit articles for the April Newsletter by Friday, March 14th.

[MG Speaker Bureau](#)

If you are interested in being a part of this group which is responsible for arranging and conducting RMG presentations to other community groups within Burlington County, please let Brooke know.

[Rutgers Master Gardeners of Burlington County General Meetings](#)

Quarterly General Meetings

2 Academy Dr., RCE, Westampton NJ

Tuesday, 01/14/14, 10:00 AM-12:00 noon

Tuesday, 04/08/14, 10:00 AM-12:00 noon

Tuesday, 07/08/14, 10:00 AM-12:00 noon

Tuesday, 10/14/14, 10:00 AM-12:00 noon

Articles

[Gardening with Arthritis](#)

By Marilyn Fishman

Last issue of the Newsletter, we looked at applying some lessons from ergonomics, the study of how workplace design and equipment used there can contribute to comfort and safety in the workplace. This issue we are looking at issues specifically related to dealing with joint pain, swelling, and stiffness while working in our gardens.



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The Arthritis Foundation Northeast Regional Reporter, who is planning on writing an article on gardening for early spring publication, shared some of her materials with me. Many helpful articles can be found in the “every day solutions” section [of the Arthritis Foundation website](#) and [Brown County WI Extension Service](#).

Design the garden for ease of use:

- Lower the maintenance level:
 - Select plants that require less pruning, picking, deadheading, weeding, and watering.
- Raise the bed:
 - The walls should be 16 to 24 inches high, and the bed should be narrow enough to reach across comfortably. Raised beds are not just for vegetables. As with the raised beds at the Burlington County Community Agricultural Center, the beds can be planned with small trees and shrubs as well as perennials. Many kits are available for constructing a raised bed. Hardscaping could also be used to create retaining-walls. If built securely, the retaining wall can serve as a safe seat for tending the garden.
 - Vertical Gardens. Boards stacked on bricks or concrete blocks or repurposed storage units can house plants in pots. Vines can be trained up the supports.
 - Temporary gardens. Place lightweight fiberglass or foam containers on porch or patio. The container should be half the height that the plant is expected to grow and filled with lightweight potting mix. Or plant directly into a bag of top soil.
- Be kind to your body:
 - Know your limits. Make a list of chores and decide which ones are within your capacity and which may require the help of others.
 - Take frequent breaks; change tasks regularly to reduce repeated strains on the same joints
 - Check your posture. Stand or sit up straight while you work, and change positions often. Use your larger joints do the work when possible. For example, instead of using your fingers to lift an object, try using the flat palm of your hand, your forearms, or even your elbows. Keep items close to your body as you carry them.
 - Wrapping tool handles to add cushioning can help prevent hand and wrist fatigue.
 - Light weight long handled tools or those with a vertical grip may also be helpful.
 - Wear gloves but do not wear splints unless they are prescribed by a doctor.