I won’t complain about all the rain we’ve had since there is so much drought across our country but there are those among us who have had to plant some seeds a second time because the first ones rotted in the ever wet ground. One of my favorite sayings is “you get what you get”. Hopefully what we get soon is some sun and warmth for our gardens..... Jolene

Caring for your Trees

By Jolene Wallace

If you have ever purchased a tree you know that it is a substantial investment and one that you hope to benefit from and enjoy for your lifetime and perhaps that of your children and grandchildren. Therefore, you should take care to choose and plant your trees correctly in order to maximize their ability to thrive. Once the tree is planted and growing well your work has not ended. Proper tree maintenance is more about what not to do than what needs to be done.

Trees are hardy, especially once established, but many of the problems they may have are caused by us. Due to their hardiness, trees can be in decline for a number of years before they reach a point where we notice that something is wrong. Unfortunately, it is often too late to undo the damage.

Think of a tree’s bark as it’s skin. If your skin was severely abraded, punctured, or cut infection would be a real possibility. A tree doesn’t get an infection per se, but any opening in its bark is a door for insects, fungi, and disease to come in, and if deep enough can impair the trees ability to supply nutrients to the sections above and below the wound. We don’t intentionally damage the bark of a tree, but hitting a tree with a lawn mower or string trimmer can open the bark over a period of time and subject the tree to insects and disease.

Another mistake people make is in the mulching of trees. While it’s true that mulch keeps the weeds down and even makes it possible to mow without getting too close to the trunk, improperly mulching, such as seen in this photo of a mulch “volcano” keeps moisture in contact with the bark all the time. This moisture penetrates the bark and suffocates the living tissue that supplies food and nutrients to the rest of the tree. Insects and fungi can

Continued on page 4...
Keep it Up!

Here’s your monthly pep talk: Don’t give up on weeding yet! You can do it! A little bit every few days will keep you ahead of them! Your plants will thank you! You’re almost done with this row. Go, gardener, go!

I recently took an exercise class and the instructor kept us going with lines like these. If you’re feeling daunted by all the weeds in your garden, you can play a mental tape in your head of me shouting these encouragements to you as you weed. Whatever it takes to keep you at it!

For many of us, weeding is our least favorite gardening chore. But really, if you do a little bit every day or so, you can keep ahead of them and it will truly make a difference. I like to tackle one section at a time and do a thorough job there so I can see the difference. The first 8 weeks are the most crucial for the success of your vegetable or flower garden. If you do a good job now your plants will be able to develop a good root system and then you can slack off in August if you want, since those strong plants will be able to fend for themselves pretty well.

But until at least the middle of July, keep after those weeds! Pull them, chop them, mulch them, just don’t let them compete with your young garden plants.

Pinch for More Flowers

I realize it may seem counter-intuitive but pinching off flowers on your annual plants actually produces more flowers. The more you pinch, the more you’ll get, within reason. It is especially helpful to pinch out the growing tip of the tall-growing varieties of zinnias, marigolds, snapdragons, sweet peas, and ageratum. The growing tip is dominant and if left alone you’ll get one tall zinnia shoot topped by one large flower. If you pinch out that growing tip to the first pair of side shoots, you’ll direct the plants energy to those shoots and the ones below them.

It is also very helpful to regularly pinch your hanging baskets, planters, and window boxes. This keeps them nice and bushy and encourages those side shoots for more flowers. Even the plants you chose to spill over the sides and trail down will look better with occasional pruning. Think of it like cutting hair. Use scissors and cut back a few of the most straggly stems to encourage them to fill out as well.

And don’t forget to regularly feed any of these flowering planters. The plants are crowded on purpose, to give a full effect, but they are competing with each other for food and water. Plan to give your planters liquid fertilizer at least every couple of weeks to keep them looking their best.

Leek Moth Lookout

If you grow any of the alliums: onions, garlic, leeks, chives, shallots, or scallions, please check those...
characteristic windowpane damage to onion leaf

plants throughout the summer for signs of leek moth damage. We are monitoring the spread of this recent invasive species and I would greatly appreciate hearing about any new infestations. There is lots of information and photos showing damage to each of these crops on this website: http://web.entomology.cornell.edu/shelton/leek-moth/ or you can just type “leek moth cornell” into your search engine and this will be the first site in the list.

If you notice damage but are not sure, please get a sample to your local CCE office or email a photograph. Thanks very much for helping us track this pest.

Cut Back the Floppers

Delphinium and baptisia are two of my favorite perennials. They are large and dramatic and bloom early in the season when I’m eager to have some color in my garden. But both tend to flop over as they finish blooming. Delphinium are easy – just cut the flowering stalk all the way to the ground as soon as the last flower falls. It seems drastic but the plant will push out new growth that will bloom again in late summer. The sooner you cut out the old flower stalks, the sooner that second bloom will come.

Baptisia takes a little more nerve. It’s a beautiful plant, even when not in flower. But it’s large and tends to flop over on top of all its neighbors. My single plant takes up a full six foot diameter circle in my garden. One year I got frustrated with it and chopped most of it to the ground in July. Much to my relief, it reacted like the delphinium by quickly pushing up lots of fresh, new growth. This secondary growth on both plants is
more compact and orderly than the original so it fits nicely into my garden for the rest of the summer. Baptisia won’t bloom a second time but its beautiful foliage makes an excellent backdrop for the rest of the summer show.

**Water**

June was an extremely wet month and most gardens were too wet and soggy. But all bets are off for the rest of the summer. When the season starts out wet, plant roots stay shallow to reach for some oxygen that the water-logged soil lacks. But then if a dry spell occurs later in the summer, these shallow-rooted plants are not well suited for getting by. During a normal year the roots grow down and out, anchoring the plants well and making them better able to seek out pockets of water during dry periods. A dry period is bound to occur sooner or later this summer, so be ready to help your shallow-rooted plants through. Pay attention to them as the soil dries out. There’s no easy answer for how much water they need. It all depends on the soil type, plant spacing, wind and so on. Watch your plants for cues and when in doubt, dig a hole to check the soil moisture a few inches down where most roots grow.

**Tree Care continued...**

quickly follow. If you look, you will see these mulch volcanoes all over the place. If you have one on your property remove the mulch taking care not to damage the bark. Any excess can be removed with a stream of water from the hose. You can apply new mulch around the tree, to the dripline if possible, no more than three or four inches deep. Brush the new mulch away from the trunk leaving the trunk and trunk flare clean. Not only will this allow for air circulation, but will discourage rodents who may nest in mulch volcanoes and eat the bark of your tree.

As you can see from the diagram, proper tree mulching should more closely resemble a donut than a volcano.

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*Amy Ivy is a regional vegetable specialist with the Eastern NY Commercial Horticulture Program of Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE). Home gardening questions are handled by each county’s CCE office. Office numbers are: Clinton Co 561-7450, Essex Co 962-4810, Franklin Co 483-7403.*

North Country Gardening
Have You Seen These Signs?

Have you seen our garden plot signs in the neighborhood? These signs advertise a growing commitment to make fresh produce available to underserved populations in our local community. Plattsburgh PAR is a volunteer group in Plattsburgh started in spring 2012, and we are on a mission. The Plattsburgh campaign of Plant a Row for the Hungry (PAR) is gearing up for the 2015 growing season, connecting those of us who grow fruit and vegetables, and those of us who want and need fresh, nutritious food—that’s close to everyone. But not everyone has access to this rich harvest produced by backyard gardeners, community gardeners, and local farmers. The broad mission of Plattsburgh PAR is to provide fresh produce to underserved populations in the local community.

We’ve already identified a number of agency partners who enthusiastically said “yes” to receive produce from our 2015 Plattsburgh PAR campaign. These agencies include: Interfaith Food Shelf, JCEO Food Pantry, Senior Citizen’s Council of Clinton County, Salvation Army Soup Kitchen, St. Peter’s Soup Kitchen, and St. Alexander/St. Joseph’s Church Soup Kitchen.

The need is great:
- Over 50 million Americans live in households that experience hunger or the risk of hunger daily.
- Almost 17 million people facing hunger each day are children.
- 14.9 percent (17.9 million) of U.S. households were food insecure at some time in the past year.
- In Plattsburgh, 500 households per month receive emergency food from the Interfaith Food Shelf.
- In Plattsburgh, 50-100 individuals (including families and children) request a meal from a local soup kitchen each week.

Plattsburgh PAR hopes to inspire local gardeners and farmers to plant an extra row of vegetables and to donate this produce to one of our partner agencies. We provide the infrastructure and volunteer labor to ensure that your harvest finds its way to those who need it most. How do I donate my produce? Check our website for places and times to donate: www.plattsburghpar.org.
Cloud Dough

By Chelsea Baxter, Youth Development / Health & Wellness Educator

Summer is finally here and year after year I try to spend some time outdoors partaking in one of my oldest (and favorite) pastimes. Watching those big puffy white clouds pass over my head would create some of the most vivid fantasies in my head. I’d see ships and castles, giant ice cream cones and big elephants. Our summer season has been a rainy one thus far, limiting time for our kids to gaze up to the sky and create their own imaginary cloud sculptures. This activity will bring those clouds inside the house for the little ones to enjoy without the worry of rain to ruin their summer day.

What you’ll need:
- All-purpose flour
- Vegetable oil
- Oil based food coloring (powder food coloring will work also)
- A bowl for mixing
- A sensory tub to play in (ziplock containers for the table work good too)

What to do:
You want a 1:8 ratio for your oil and flour.
- In large bowl, add 8 cups of all-purpose flour.
- Mix in 1 cup of vegetable oil to the flour mix.
- Mash the contents together with your hands to distribute the oil as evenly as possible.

To color the cloud dough:
- If using powdered food coloring mix the color with the flour before adding the oil
- If using oil based food coloring, premix the food coloring with the vegetable oil then add it to the flour mix

You can make multiple batches and add them together! The cloud dough feels air-like in your hands and is easily manipulated. The kids can play with it like sand or like play dough and shape it into any crazy shapes they can imagine.

To see this full activity or others like it go to:
http://www.powerfulmothering.com/how-to-make-cloud-dough-recipe/
Why Isn’t My Squash Producing?

By Jim Cayea, Master Gardener Volunteer

A frequent question that comes into our Grow Line each year is about flowers on squash plants that fall off without setting fruit. Squashes are not the only vegetable to do this. Squashes belong to the family Cucurbita, and this family includes winter and summer squashes, pumpkins, cucumbers, melons, watermelons, and zucchini. All these vegetables produce both male and female flowers on the same plant.

Cucurbita family members produce male flowers first. A flush of male flowers precede the female flowers by several days to several weeks so you may lose the plants’ first flower flush without setting fruit. Male flowers produce pollen and nectar to attract honey and squash bees. These insects will continue visiting the plant when the female flowers start blooming thus insuring pollination.

To learn what the flower’s gender is, look at the stem directly behind the blossom. The male cucurbit flower characteristics include the following: a two-inch or more stem that is straight and narrow. A female cucurbit flower blossoms have a swollen shorter stem resembling a miniature version of the mature fruit (ovary). Note that cucurbits produce more male flowers than female flowers. Male and female flower blooming begins to overlap once the plant is actively in full flower, which allows for pollination and fruiting.

Knowing which flowers are males and females allow you to do two additional things: (1) if you harvest squash blossoms to eat, it is best to choose only more common male blossoms so the females can set fruit. (2) Determining the flower gender will allow you to hand pollinate if your squash is fruiting poorly.
July 2015

Tis the Season...

By Jordy Kivett, Nutrition Educator

**Tis the season**... to eat more vegetables! Eat more vegetables is, as far as I can tell, the bottom line in nutrition science. Sure there are more nuanced messages and recommendations for different food groups and variations for specific audiences, but the easiest to implement change with the biggest health impact is to simply make half your plate vegetables. That said, this is really the season to start. When you can find a wide variety of fresh produce, it can be fairly easy to eat more vegetables. Many things taste great raw this time of year. So if you are wondering what you can serve alongside of your chicken and rice for dinner, it can be as simple as sliced tomatoes or cucumbers. Not only do the fresh vegetables have amazing flavors, but cool, crisp, raw vegetables are extra appealing on muggy summer nights.

While finding elaborate recipes for vegetables appeals to some, you truly can keep it simple with fresh produce. If a plain sliced tomato seems a little too simple for a side, turn it into a tomato salad with a little olive oil and torn basil leaves or add vinaigrette and some chopped cucumbers. If it’s yet another rainy day and you want to cook, try roasting vegetables. Tossing most vegetables in a little olive oil and roasting them in a 400 degree oven until the edges begin to brown will make most vegetables taste great, even those typically eaten raw like scallions or radishes.

**Some ideas for using summer produce:**

- Make or buy a dip you enjoy and eat it with cucumbers, snap peas, cherry tomatoes, radishes, broccoli, cauliflower, kohlrabi, carrots or peppers.
- Make cold salads by adding fresh herbs and flavored oil or vinegar or both to any combination of vegetables. Tomatoes and corn are delicious with oil, cilantro, and minced garlic.
- Roast a large quantity of any combination of vegetables that you enjoy, like eggplant, tomatoes and zucchini or broccoli and cauliflower and carrots and use the leftovers as a sandwich filling or to top cooked grains for an easy lunch or dinner.

Save the fancy recipes for the cooler months when you are inside more and for now just get into the habit of filling your plate with even more delicious produce. For more ideas, follow the CCE blog: blogs.cornell.edu/clintoncountyeats or like Cornell Cooperative Extension of Clinton County on Facebook or give me a call at 561-7450.

This newsletter is also available on our website:
http://blogs.cornell.edu/cceclintoncounty/ under Gardening: News

North Country Gardening
Corn, Tomato, and Cucumber Salad

Ingredients:
4 ears of corn, cooked (to equal about 2 to 2½ cups corn kernels)
2 large ripe tomatoes
2 medium cucumbers
½ cup lime juice (or white wine vinegar)
½ teaspoon sugar
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon black pepper
1 medium red onion, diced
6 tablespoons parsley

Directions:
1. Cut kernels from corn and place in medium bowl.
2. Seed and dice the tomatoes and cucumbers and add to the bowl.
3. In a smaller bowl, whisk together lime juice, sugar, oil, salt, and pepper. Stir in red onion and set aside.
4. Toss corn, tomatoes, and cucumbers with dressing.
5. Season with additional salt and pepper, if desired. Add chopped parsley or cilantro just before serving.

Yields about 8 servings

Source:
Vegetable of the Month Club

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* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

40.9% calories from fat

Nutrition Facts based on lime juice

Have a garden or agriculture related business?
This space is available for your business card!
Contact us at 561-7450

North Country Gardening
Kent-Delord House Museum

25th Secret Gardens Tour

Saturday July 11, 2015
12 pm to 4 pm  Rain or shine

Advance Tickets $10
at Cook & Gardener
& Kent-Delord House Museum

Day of Tour Tickets $15
Tickets & Maps at
Kent-Delord House Museum & Conroy Organics
July 11th from 12 pm until 1:30 pm

Complimentary Refreshments Served
For more information
Call Nancy 561-6793 or Dotte 561-4823
AN AFTERNOON TASTE OF ENTAYANT GARDENS
SUNDAY AUG. 30 Tour ENTAYANT GARDENS featuring several thousand new plants, an over 13,000 gallon water course, fountains, water falls & lily pond, a rebuilt 170-foot boardwalk with addition of seating areas over the new pond. Visit a store full of Christmas garden art gifts from paintings to black fly houses & Adirondack chairs. Plus garden movies, musical entertainment, & of course, Yvonne’s Taste of Entayant. For information, e-mail or call: Dons2dy4@gmail.com or 518 891 3690.

Editors note: If you are not familiar with Entayant Gardens, it is the private home of Don and Yvonne Busch who have spent many years creating a unique, extensive collection of plants. Their gardens range from breathtaking to humorous. If you have not had the pleasure of seeing these gardens, give yourself a treat and call or email Don for information.

Grow-Line Update
Our Master Gardener Grow-line volunteers processed 130 requests for information between May 1st and June 30. We appreciate your confidence in our ability to help you with problems in your home or garden. As always, we need a good sample or clear photo to insure that we give you the correct research-based information. Because we recognize that your needs and priorities are individual to you, we give you options and you decide how to proceed. For insects, a sample consisting of one or more insects in a jar or plastic container is adequate. The samples do not have to be live, but do need to be whole. For plants, a sample showing the damage as well as an undamaged part of the same plant is all that is usually needed. A good photo can be emailed to me at jmw442@cornell.edu. We are also at the Farmers Market on Saturdays from 9:00am until noon. This is no charge for this service!

Swimming Pool Owners:
The New York Department of Environmental Conservation is asking swimming pool owners to participate in a monitoring program for the invasive Asian Longhorned Beetle, which has destroyed tens of thousands of trees in New York City and in Massachusetts. It now threatens New York’s forests. You are being asked to help with the monitoring by participating in a pool filter survey. If you are willing to help, contact DEC by emailing:
foresthealth@dec.ny.gov
For more information about the Asian Longhorned Beetle and the pool survey:
http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7255.html

Our office, located at 6064 State Route 22, Suite 5, is open from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday. 561-7450

North Country Gardening