



Woodbridge Horticultural Society Newsletter



www.woodbridgehorticultural.weebly.com

May 2022, issue 67

There is nothing like pruning a grapevine for training oneself to think like a plant.

--Hugh Johnson, The Garden Magazine (April 1997)

SPEAKER May 16

Joan Nieman-Agapas, on Pruning.

GARDENING CHORES

Pruning the garden needs to be done several times throughout the year, depending on the plants and how they are growing. It is essential that gardeners have the correct tools, including a pair of long loppers for hard to reach areas, a pair of sharp bypass shears and a saw. According to Gardeners' World, pruning at the wrong time of year, or in the wrong way, can lead to problems.

Most plants can be pruned in winter, when dormant, but there are exceptions. Prune flowering shrubs immediately after blooms are spent. Pruning too much is also often a problem, as it can be hard to know how much to take off a certain tree or shrub. Always prune at an angle with clean, sharp tools at the node; the small swelling that is the part of the plant stem from which one or more leaves emerge.

Removing too much material at once can cause dieback of the roots, which could result in several years for the tree or shrub to recover. If the leader (known as topping) is cut off, the plant can go into shock. Unless you've been directed to conduct a hard prune, make sure you prune less, more regularly.

Most hydrangeas should be pruned in late winter or early spring, just before they start growing. From March onwards, old blooms should be removed to make room for fresh growth to appear.

For most hydrangea shrubs, it is best to reduce the stems to the first strong, healthy pair of buds just below where the faded blooms previously sat. A deeper prune will work well on a neglected or drying shrub, but it will delay flowering until the following year. Climbing hydrangeas will benefit from a hard pruning in spring with extensive cutting back all in one go. While this will delay flowering, it will rejuvenate the plant to increase its longevity once it begins to bloom again. Tackling all aspects of the plant will open up the growing space for intertwined stems and make your hydrangea look healthier when the clustered flower heads reach full bloom.

Why you should NEVER kill dandelions. While dandelions are seen as a troublesome weed by most gardeners, they have many benefits to your lawn and garden by increasing the amount of





Woodbridge Horticultural Society Newsletter



www.woodbridgehorticultural.weebly.com

May 2022, issue 67

nitrogen available for surrounding plants. They pull up calcium from the soil via their long taproots, making it more accessible to other plants - including grass.

It wasn't until the 20th century that people began to pull dandelions from grassy areas. Main Organic Farmers and Gardeners explain, "Before the invention of lawns, people praised the golden blossoms and lion-toothed leaves as a bounty of medicine, magic and food. Thanks to their wide-spreading roots, dandelions loosen packed soil, aerate the earth and help to reduce erosion. Gardeners often weeded out the grass to make room for more dandelions...until humans decided that the dandelion was a weed."

Dandelions also provide essential nutrients for important insects buzzing through your garden, making them an excellent food source for butterflies, moths and bees; the original pollinating plant, and they look so pretty and sunny!

At this time of year, it's easy to add instant color to a patio or garden with just one container of pansies. Garden centers and nurseries will have a good choice of bright, inexpensive pansy plants from March to May. Pansies are versatile and ideal for growing in pots, containers, window boxes, alone, or mixed with other plants.

They do best in full sun to partial shade. Their pretty little faces are a vibrant option for filling bare or neglected patches in the backyard. They partner well with tulips and daffodils, as the bulbs grow up through and between the flowering pansies and help disguise the dying back foliage of spring bulbs.

NEWSWORTHY!

The Vimy Oak tree, originally planted in the Wallace House garden, was successfully re-planted in Veterans' Park by the City of Vaughan's Forestry and Horticulture operations. It will have more room to grow, thrive and soar to the sky as it honours the memory and legacy of Canadians who fought in the First World War.

[Canada's "Vimy Oaks" Soldier | Vimy Oaks Legacy](#)

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

If you have anything you'd like added to the newsletter, please call or email Mary no later than one week before the next meeting.

Editor: mary.cicchirillo58@gmail.com



Page 2 of 2