

# THE DIGGERS

Dorchester Garden Club

October 12, 2012

## Mark Your Calendars

### OCTOBER 2012

- 18 Four Seasons Garden Club presents "**Tart Wines and Crisp Apples**" a **Small Standard Flower Show**, Mallard Landing, 1107 Schumaker Drive, Salisbury, MD 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
- 19 11:00 a.m. **Ikebana International Baltimore Chapter 118** *public welcome* Greenhouse Classroom, Cylburn Arboretum 4915 Greenspring Ave. Baltimore, MD 21209
- 20 **Tricks & Treats: A Halloween Floral Workshop** Halloween designs will be presented and participants will make a fun Witch's Hat centerpiece for their Halloween Table. All supplies included. Linda Masland, State FGCMMD President, National Flower Show judge, and all around fun designer will be the presenter. Greenhouse Classroom, Cylburn Arboretum 10:00 a.m. – 12 Noon Fee \$25 Register by calling 410-367-2217
- 24 **Judges Council Meeting** at Chartwell Country Club Information: Dessie Moxley 410-442-1014
- 25 **Blue Star Memorial Marker Dedication** at the World War II Memorial, Annapolis, MD
- 27 through November 11 **The Dragon's Garden: Elements of the Chrysanthemum** Howard P. Rawlings Conservatory 3100 Swann Drive, Baltimore, MD 21217 **10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday**
- 27 **District II Horticulture Day** Our Shepherd Lutheran Church Severna Park, MD Information and Registration available at FGCMMD.org.

### NOVEMBER 2012

- 6 **Election Day**
- 9 Monthly Meeting – "**Brief History of Delmarva with an Emphasis on Agriculture and Gardening**" – at the Edward Nabb Research Center – Salisbury University details in your yearbook
- 10 Tim Farrell, AIFD, AAF, PFCI, presents **Fashionable Fall flowers for Homes, Holidays and Beyond** Vollmer Center, Cylburn Arboretum.
- 11 **Blue Star Memorial Dedication** sponsored by the Mountain Laurel GC Veteran's Park Oakland, MD
- 13 **State Board Meeting** hosted by District II at Our Shepherd Lutheran Church 400 Benfield Rd, Severna Park, MD
- 13 **Flowers for All Seasons with David Shover** hosted by Naval Academy Garden Club – registration information available at FGCMMD.org. Greenhouse Classroom, Cylburn Arboretum 4915 Greenspring Ave. Baltimore, MD 21209
- 17 **Home for the Holidays** featuring international designer Michael Hare presented by LaPlata Garden Club registration information available at FGCMMD.org.
- 22 Thanksgiving Day
- 27 **Holiday Workshop and Design Demonstration** - Zion Methodist Church 9:00 am- 3:00 pm. Pre-registration, order and payment is necessary. See handbook for details.

Note: registration information for all programs sponsored by other clubs can be found on the State Website: [http://www.fgcofmd.org/Calendar\\_of\\_Events.html](http://www.fgcofmd.org/Calendar_of_Events.html)

## New Tree Planting

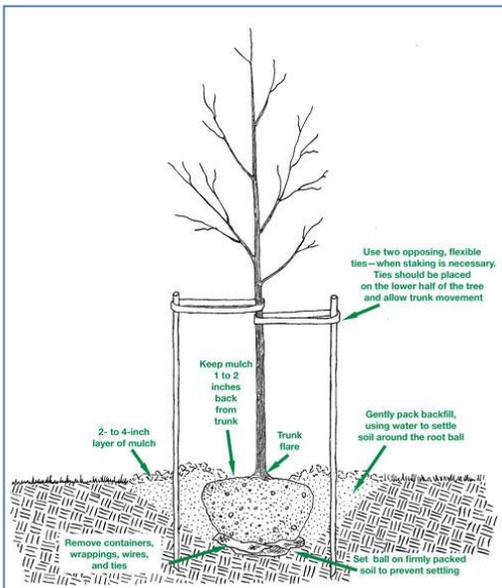
Think of the tree you just purchased as a lifetime investment. How well your tree, and investment, grows depends on the type of tree and location you select for planting, the care you provide when the tree is planted, and follow-up care the tree receives after planting.

### Planting the Tree

The ideal time to plant trees and shrubs is during the dormant season and in the fall after leaf drop or early spring before budbreak. Weather conditions are cool and allow plants to establish roots in the new location before spring rains and summer heat stimulate new top growth.

However, trees properly cared for in the nursery or garden center, and given the appropriate care during transport to prevent damage, can be planted throughout the growing season. In tropical and subtropical climates where trees grow year round, any time is a good time to plant a tree, provided that sufficient water is available. In either situation, proper handling during planting is essential to ensure a healthy future for new trees and shrubs. Before you begin planting your tree, be sure you have had all underground utilities located prior to digging.

If the tree you are planting is balled or bare root, it is important to understand that its root system has been reduced by 90 to 95 percent of its original size during transplanting. As a result of the trauma caused by the digging process, trees commonly exhibit what is known as transplant shock. Containerized trees may also experience transplant shock, particularly if they have circling roots that must be cut. Transplant shock is indicated by slow growth and reduced vigor following transplanting. Proper site preparation before and during planting coupled with good follow-up care reduces the amount of time the plant experiences transplant shock and allows the tree to quickly establish in its new location. Carefully follow nine simple steps, and you can significantly reduce the stress placed on the plant at the time of planting.



1. **Dig a shallow, broad planting hole.** Make the hole wide, as much as three times the diameter of the root ball but only as deep as the root ball. It is important to make the hole wide because the roots on the newly establishing tree must push through surrounding soil in order to establish. On most planting sites in new developments, the existing soils have been compacted and are unsuitable for healthy root growth. Breaking up the soil in a large area around the tree provides the newly emerging roots room to expand into loose soil to hasten establishment.
2. **Identify the trunk flare.** The trunk flare is where the roots spread at the base of the tree. This point should be partially visible after the tree has been planted (see diagram). If the trunk flare is not partially visible, you may have to remove some soil from the top of the root ball. Find it so you can determine how deep the hole needs to be for proper planting.
3. **Remove tree container for containerized trees.** Carefully cutting down the sides of the container may make this easier. Inspect the root ball for circling roots and cut or remove them. Expose the trunk flare, if necessary.
4. **Place the tree at the proper height.** Before placing the tree in the hole,

check to see that the hole has been dug to the proper depth and no more. The majority of the roots on the newly planted tree will develop in the top 12 inches of soil. If the tree is planted too deeply, new roots will have difficulty developing because of a lack of oxygen. It is better to plant the tree a little high, 2 to 3 inches above the base of the trunk flare, than to plant it at or below the original growing level. This planting level will allow for some settling (see

# THE DIGGERS

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diagram). To avoid damage when setting the tree in the hole, always lift the tree by the root ball and never by the trunk.

5. **Straighten the tree in the hole.** Before you begin backfilling, have someone view the tree from several directions to confirm that the tree is straight. Once you begin backfilling, it is difficult to reposition the tree.
6. **Fill the hole gently but firmly.** Fill the hole about one-third full and gently but firmly pack the soil around the base of the root ball. Then, if the root ball is wrapped, cut and remove any fabric, plastic, string, and wire from around the trunk and root ball to facilitate growth (see diagram). Be careful not to damage the trunk or roots in the process. Fill the remainder of the hole, taking care to firmly pack soil to eliminate air pockets that may cause roots to dry out. To avoid this problem, add the soil a few inches at a time and settle with water. Continue this process until the hole is filled and the tree is firmly planted. It is not recommended to apply fertilizer at the time of planting.
7. **Stake the tree, if necessary.** If the tree is grown and dug properly at the nursery, staking for support will not be necessary in most home landscape situations. Studies have shown that trees establish more quickly and develop stronger trunk and root systems if they are not staked at the time of planting. However, protective staking may be required on sites where lawn mower damage, vandalism, or windy conditions are concerns. If staking is necessary for support, there are three methods to choose among: staking, guying, and ball stabilizing. One of the most common methods is staking. With this method, two stakes used in conjunction with a wide, flexible tie material on the lower half of the tree will hold the tree upright, provide flexibility, and minimize injury to the trunk (see diagram). Remove support staking and ties after the first year of growth.
8. **Mulch the base of the tree.** Mulch is simply organic matter applied to the area at the base of the tree. It acts as a blanket to hold moisture, it moderates soil temperature extremes, and it reduces competition from grass and weeds. Some good choices are leaf litter, pine straw, shredded bark, peat moss, or composted wood chips. A 2- to 4-inch layer is ideal. More than 4 inches may cause a problem with oxygen and moisture levels. When placing mulch, be sure that the actual trunk of the tree is not covered. Doing so may cause decay of the living bark at the base of the tree. A mulch-free area, 1 to 2 inches wide at the base of the tree, is sufficient to avoid moist bark conditions and prevent decay.
9. **Provide follow-up care.** Keep the soil moist but not soaked; overwatering causes leaves to turn yellow or fall off. Water trees at least once a week, barring rain, and more frequently during hot weather. When the soil is dry below the surface of the mulch, it is time to water. Continue until mid-fall, tapering off for lower temperatures that require less-frequent watering.

Other follow-up care may include minor pruning of branches damaged during the planting process. Prune sparingly immediately after planting and wait to begin necessary corrective pruning until after a full season of growth in the new location.

After you have completed these nine simple steps, further routine care and favorable weather conditions will ensure that your new tree or shrub will grow and thrive. A valuable asset to any landscape, trees provide a long-lasting source of beauty and enjoyment for people of all ages.

Source: [http://www.treesaregood.com/treecare/tree\\_planting.aspx](http://www.treesaregood.com/treecare/tree_planting.aspx)

# THE DIGGERS

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October 12, 2012

## Pruning Hydrangeas

**PRUNING: METHOD ONE** USE METHOD I FOR: Mophead and Lacecaps (macrophyllas - usually pink or blue). For Oakleaf hydrangeas (white blooms, leaves shaped like oak leaves)

### *Summary of Method I:*

Prune these hydrangeas only in the summer BEFORE August (to be safe). Some experts believe these hydrangeas may be pruned even into August, but this might be risky. The hydrangeas may already have set their bloom buds for the next year.

Method I is for hydrangea types that bloom on OLD WOOD. ("Old Wood" are stems that have been on the hydrangea since the summer before the current season. "New wood" are stems that developed on the plant during the current season) This group of hydrangeas produce flower buds on hydrangea stems around August, September or October for the following summer's blooms. If those stems are removed (pruned) in the fall, winter, or spring, the bloom buds will be removed, and there may be little or no bloom the following summer (usually June/July for the northern hemisphere).



Note that pruning is not the same thing as removing the dead blooms. (See below "Removing Old Blooms.") There exists a small group of mophead hydrangea that will bloom no matter when they are pruned. ('Endless Summer' is this type of hydrangea). Your garden center can tell you when you purchase a hydrangea if it is in this special category called "everbloomers." But for the vast majority of hydrangeas, pruning after July will likely result in fewer blooms the next summer.

### THERE ARE CERTAIN INSTANCES WHEN PRUNING CAN BE HELPFUL:

- (1) All dead stems should be removed from hydrangeas every year.
- (2) After the plants are at least 5 years old, about 1/3 of the older (living) stems can be removed down to the ground each summer. This will revitalize the plant.
- (3) In addition, if it becomes necessary to prune a plant to reduce its size, it may be cut back in June or July without harming the next year's bloom. But it will return almost immediately to its former size. This is one reason why it's best to plant a hydrangea where it does not have to be pruned.

**PRUNING: METHOD TWO** Method II is USED FOR: H. arborescens (Annabelle types) and H. paniculata (PeeGee types) hydrangeas. These types of hydrangeas bloom on new wood (new stems). It is a joy to grow these type hydrangeas because they are determined to bloom every single year, no matter how they are treated. The only time they cannot be pruned is in the spring ('Annabelle') or in the summer (PG) when they are preparing to bloom.



# THE DIGGERS

## For paniculata (such as PG and 'Limelight') and 'Annabelle'

Many people grow hedges of Annabelle and cut them within a few inches of the ground each fall so they will not be an eyesore during the winter. They will still bloom beautifully in the spring/summer, however this drastic pruning may not allow stems to increase in size, and they may need staking to hold up the large heads. Go to the page on 'Annabelle' for a more detailed description of the pros and cons of pruning this hydrangea to the ground. While at the 'Annabelle' page, view a picture of Penny McHenry's 'Annabelle' hedge.



**Paniculatas (PG/Limelight types)** can be pruned in the fall, winter, or spring. However, it is not necessary to prune them every year. It is suggested that one trim out crossing branches and those that do not contribute to an attractive form whenever necessary.

Paniculata hydrangeas are the only hydrangeas that can be pruned into a tree-form. If one is attempting to grow a paniculata as a tree, the developing trunk and main top branches should not be removed. If a paniculata that is trained into a tree-form is cut or broken off close to the ground, it will grow back as a shrub unless the training and pruning is started again from the new shoots.

Source: <http://www.hydrangeashydrangeas.com/pruning.html>

## Seen in the garden.....creative ideas from the web!



A great idea for plant markers in your garden!



Got other ideas? Please share them!

# THE DIGGERS

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## Garden Chores for the Month of October

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### ***Vegetable garden***

- Enjoy the therapeutic value of putting the garden to bed. A bittersweet opportunity to reflect on the season – make notes of what did well and what didn't.
- Clean up plant remnants from the garden. Start a compost pile with all the leaves and garden debris.
- Till compost, manure or shredded leaves into the garden.
- Take a soil sample to a soil lab. Place a trowel-full of soil from 6-8 different areas in the garden into a clean bucket. Mix thoroughly and get the final one-cup sample from the mixture. If parts of the garden are specialized into blueberries or have different histories such as where the burn pile was, sample these areas separately. Add any recommended amendments this fall such as sulfur to lower the pH. Soil testing labs are listed in the yellow pages of the phone book.

### ***Trees and shrubs***

- Apply anti-transpirants such as Wilt Pruf to needled and broad-leaved evergreens in windy locations. These waxy spray coatings help slow down water loss through leaves and needles. Barriers of pine boughs or burlap can also be used.
- Erect barriers of poultry wire or hardware cloth to protect young trees and shrubs from rabbit and vole damage. Favorite plants on the menu include blueberries, roses, euonymus, fruit trees, and brambles.

### ***Flowers***

- Consider leaving plant remnants on the garden until spring to add winter interest, provide wildlife food and help hold mulch.
- Mulch perennial flowerbeds and roses with loose materials such as wood chips, pine needles, pine boughs or shredded leaves. Plants should be completely dormant before mulching, usually late November or early December. The unseasonably dry conditions may help perennials such as chrysanthemums that tend to die in winter due to wet soils.
- For a beautiful display of spring flowers, it is not too late to plant bulbs of tulips, daffodils and crocus. Ideally bulbs should be planted as soon as possible, but they can be planted until the ground freezes. To soften soil, water areas a couple days before planting. Also try bulb augers for easier planting. Make a sketch of planting locations. Only the squirrels will remember and they aren't talking.

### ***Lawns***

- Continue to mow lawns at 2 inches until grass is dormant. Fertilize a final time after the last mowing, usually in November.

Source: <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/cfiv/homeowners/041009.html>