

Patchogue Garden Club's

Garden Gazette

"All the dirt you need to know . . . and a whole lot more!"

September 2007

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Garden Gazette

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Submissions must be received two weeks before the general meeting in order to appear in that month's edition.

Greetings from the President

Fall is slowly creeping into the garden. The sugar maples along South Country Road are slowly showing some color, and the summer perennials are finished with their show. Now is the time to think of fall color; try something different this year, decorative cabbages and kales which will last through the fall and winter until a hard frost. The purples, greens, and whites are a nice contrast to asters and chrysanthemums, the usual fall offerings. They look great as either a mass planting or as a border. Now is also the time to work on your lawn if it needs seeding or patching. The crabgrass was more invasive than usual this year. I am on my third round of trying to get rid of it and to establish a better lawn, but I'm not having much luck! I guess I will just keep cutting the beds wider and wider.

Please watch your e mail for the location of September's meeting. Work is being done on the Swan Lake clubhouse, and we may not be able to use it this month. The back up plan is to come to my house. We will meet at the regular time and inside, as it is getting too cool and dark too early for an outdoor meeting.

Thanks for all the garden worker bees for keeping their little plots of the community garden in tip-top shape this season. We will be putting the garden to bed in the next few weeks and will need lots of help from all our members.



Mark the Date

- Tuesday, September 25, 7:00 PM at the Swan Lake Park Civic Association Club House, 86 Lake Dr., Patchogue.
- October, Harvest Dinner, date to be determined.
- Sunday, December 9 "Homes for the Holidays" Christmas house tour. More details to come.

Book Review

"Foliage: Astonishing Color and Texture Beyond Flowers", Nancy J. Ondra with eye-catching photos from Rob Cardillo, encourages the gardener to take more advantage of the shapes and hues of foliage, which can often be more varied and striking as design elements than blooms. It also supplies hundreds of plant profiles for sun or shade. It is, as always in this review column, available in the Suffolk County Library System.



Hostesses for the
September Meeting

Thadine Balsamo
Babette Bishop
Gladys Heimburger
Guy Vitale

Please arrive at the
Swan Lake meeting
place at 6:30 PM.
Thank you.

September

The breezes taste
Of apple peel.
The air is full
Of smells to feel-
Ripe fruit, old footballs,
Burning brush,
New books, erasers,
Chalk, and such.
The bee, his hive,
Well-honeyed hum,
And Mother cuts
Chrysanthemums.
Like plates washed clean
With suds, the days
Are polished with
A morning haze.
- John Updike

Plant of the Month



Also known as sweet pepper bush, common white alder, pink spire, or summersweet, the native *Clethra alnifolia* is a delight. Growing 5'-8' tall and 4'6' wide, this upright deciduous shrub is most commonly founded in moist woodlands, especially near water, along the entire eastern seaboard and is fully hardy to Zone 4. It is prized for its headily fragrant flowers and glowing gold fall leaves, ignored by deer, but loved by butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds. Recent trials have rated many new dwarf cultivars. The most outstanding was white *C. alnifolia* 'Tom's Compact', aka 'Compacta', only 3 ½' tall. Five-foot 'Ruby Spice', whose flower detail is shown at left, received the best rating of the pinks for the darkest pink flowers and handsome foliage. Other good pinks were 'Pink Spire', 'Hokie Pink', 'Rosea', and 'Fern Valley Pink'. Other good ratings were given to the old-fashioned 'Paniculata' with extremely fragrant 6" flowers; 'Chattanooga'; 'September Beauty', notable for its late bloom; and 'Cottondale, notable for late bloom and 14" flowers. Trials of other species showed the Chinese *C. barbinervis* to be a garden aristocrat. It has fine foliage, exfoliating bark, very fragrant 8" flowers several weeks earlier than *C. alnifolia*. All grow in full sun to part shade. Steer clear of 'Hummingbird', 'Sixteen Candles', 'White Dove', *C. acuminata*, and *C. macrostachya* for various reasons.

Hate Raking Leaves?...

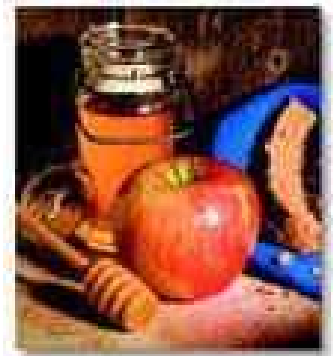
Check out *Fine Gardening's* October issue, page 25. Instead of raking, mow your leaves as they fall. They will decompose readily and build healthy soil and a better lawn. Build planting beds from shredded leaves too, and use them to mulch existing beds. Leaves shred best when slightly damp.

Serious Dirt from Richard Waldman 'Best in Bloom'



While on vacation recently in Cheltenham England, a city in the Cotswold region about 100 miles northwest of London, I came across signs and banners promoting an ongoing countrywide 'Best in Bloom' competition. Annuals all in flower were in beds and borders in the towns, parks, and open spaces, in hanging pots along street lamps and traffic circles, and in window boxes in the residential side streets, and throughout the commercial districts. It seemed that you were never far away from marigolds, cosmos, or geraniums, not only in Cheltenham but also in the various outlying towns and villages that make up the picturesque thatched roof cottage Cotswold region. Plaques are proudly displayed noting the years they have been awarded the 'Best in Bloom' since this program was instituted 25 years ago to bring attention to the communities' floral heritage and to celebrate each town's beauty. With local horticultural societies' and business and governmental cooperation floral displays are everywhere as you walk or drive throughout. As I walked through the 'Imperial Gardens' across the street from my hotel I noticed that all of the annuals displayed could also be found back here in Patchogue. But nowhere did I see a sign asking not to pick the flowers (I took only one sprig of lavender). Isn't this a competition that could easily be transplanted here in Patchogue and all through our neighboring villages in Suffolk County? And why shouldn't it start with us?

Tilling and Toiling in October



- ☀ Right now spring may seem a long way off. Remember the feeling you got as you went into your garden last spring, and there it was, the first new growth of the year? Felt great, didn't it? PLANT BULBS!
- ☀ Tender plants should be brought indoors or moved to a cold frame before the first frost.
- ☀ Mulching fall planted perennials will keep the soil warmer longer, allowing root growth to continue. Spread a thin layer of mulch after fall planting, and then add a thicker layer once the ground has frozen.
- ☀ Throughout the fall and winter months you can plant or transplant both evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs. During these months of dormancy you can do your shrub and tree moving with only minimal shock to the plants.
- ☀ One last effort at weeding will help to improve the appearance of your garden throughout the winter. Any weed which you can eliminate from the garden this fall will prevent thousands of weed seeds from sprouting in the garden next spring! And keep on mowing while grass is growing...

Did You Know?

'Honeycrisp', shown above, a cross of 'Macoun' x 'Honey Gold' made in Minnesota in 1997 is now the top-selling apple at farmer's markets and pick-your-own orchards. Many say it is the most delicious apple ever.



Going Turfless

Almost commonplace out west, the turfless garden is spreading to other parts of the country. An informal survey by a Colorado landscape designer found that lawns are thought to waste time, money, and resources. There is also a growing understanding that chemicals and emissions associated with lawn care are major contributors to local pollution. While trees and shrubs may require a larger initial investment, in the long run they require less than 25% care than lawns. The survey also showed that gardeners enjoyed their gardens more and noted that in at least some cases, the lack of a lawn added considerably to resale value. And while the survey participants gave various reasons for giving up their lawns, every one of them agreed they'd never go back.



Patchogue Garden Club

P.O. Box 3030

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"Come grow with us"

Founded 1996

Next Meeting: Tuesday, September 25, 7:00 PM at the Swan Lake Park Civic Association, 86 Lake Dr., Patchogue. See <http://www.swanlakepark.org/Contact.htm#Map> for a map.



But now in September the garden has cooled, and with it my possessiveness. The sun warms my back instead of beating on my head ... The harvest has dwindled, and I have grown apart from the intense midsummer relationship that brought it on."

- Robert Finch

