

Patty's Plants

June Newsletter 2010

Summertime and The Weather is Easy or Is it?

I know the song goes and the livin' is easy, but we're talkin' plants here. The summer weather can be easy on our plants or severely hard. It is us that will help our plants though those easy as well as hard weather days. From the early stages all the way into the late summer we must be aware of everything that is going on in our gardens. If we don't keep a watchful eye on our plants they can develop infestations of insects so horrifying (there's a reason aphids are called "Plant Lice") or diseases that have gotten so bad the plants won't be able to be saved (Late Blight). Isn't it our goal when we first plant our gardens to have the healthiest flowers and vegetables in the neighborhood? In this newsletter I will give a few summer gardening tips so that you may be able to say "We do have the healthiest and prettiest plants in the neighborhood!" I want you and myself to have a happy stress-free gardening season.

Patty :)



Water Thoroughly



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Water regularly

If vegetable plants dry out, many will stop producing, the quality of the harvest will suffer; tomatoes, peppers and eggplant will get blossom-end rot, cucumbers will be bitter-tasting, ears of corn will not properly fill out and beans will be tough and stringy. We know what flowers will look like-nasty. So you must keep the soil evenly moist, especially during hot spells. Water deeply, a good rule of thumb is to give at least 2 to 3 inches of water a week in the months of July, August and September. **Remember:** It is much better to water the garden well once a week rather than to sprinkle it daily. You'll have stronger longer roots this way. Light, frequent waterings are not recommended because it creates shallow roots that won't be as strong in summer storms and high winds. The garden may be watered by using sprinklers (I don't care for this way because I believe it spreads more diseases). Soaker hoses, letting water run between rows slowly or by cutting a large bottle or milk jug, tipping upside down, place it next to the base, fill it with water and let it water slowly. If you have a small garden use a water wand and get close to the base of the plant. With a container garden or hanging basket soak it so the water runs out of the bottom. They may even need it twice a day when it is really hot.

Tips:

- Never let your tomato plants dry out while they are in bud-set. Inconsistent watering during this time can lead to blossom-end rot.
- Release Lady Bugs at night so they stay home. They will eat hundreds of Aphids a day.
- If you must use a spray for insects control, try to find the safest one for you and beneficial insects.
- Basil leaves rubbed on your skin while gardening will help keep mosquitoes from biting.
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Mulch, Mulch, Mulch

I don't like to weed, not to mention I just don't have time to. When I come home from work I like to just sit out in my backyard and enjoy my gardens. The less I have to weed the better. I put a 2 to 3 inch layer of organic mulch down. You can use grass clippings (as long as it hasn't had any weed killer on it), compost or straw around the base of plants to keep the soil cool, reduce evaporation and best of all keep the weeds down. Mulching around the plants in the garden can keep soil borne diseases from splashing up on the leaves of your plants. Happy Frog Soil Conditioner has a dual purpose. It can be used as a topdressing as well as fixing poor soil. **Note:** Straw

has less clippings, you want put the first to let plants.



With and Without

weeds seeds than hay. I have used grass hay and straw. Hay is awful to use unless to harvest it. I like grass clipping the best. I fresh grass around the edges of the garden it dry slightly, then place it around the

Paper Mulch between rows in the veggie

garden is also an option. We have bio-degradable- "Weed Guard". Of course pulling weeds is always an option if you don't use a mulch. Don't let the weeds get the upper hand, though. They compete with vegetable plants for light, water and nutrients. There is no reason to waste fertilizer on weeds. And they usually win the competition, especially when it gets hot and dry.



Fertilizing will keep your Vegetables and Flowers at their Best

Fertilize your flowers weekly, at least once a week. Use a good organic liquid fertilizer for your container gardens. For your vegetable and flower gardens "Peace of Mind Fruit and Flower" would be my choice to sprinkle on. It is a slow release organic fertilizer. To keep your late ripening vegetables growing at their best put down an occasional application of a good organic fertilizer, like "Peace of Mind Tomato and Vegetable", this is one of my favorites. With all that said, don't overdo it with the plants that are already producing. Over-fertilizing vegetables such as tomatoes can reduce yields. Herbs do better with less fertilizer. They have more volatile oils with harsher conditions. There are many fertilizers out there. If your soil isn't feeding your plants then adding fertilizer will help whether it is organic or not. Although you know I prefer organic.



Harvest Often– and Keep Planting

If you planted some cool weather annuals in your containers you may need to replace some of them with plants or flowers that can take the heat of the summer. Clean up your flowers by **deadheading**, (removing spent flowers and stems) this will keep them blooming longer during the season. With **harvesting** vegetables, most plants, including beans, cucumbers, squash, peppers, and eggplant will stop producing if not harvested frequently. Harvest every 2 or 3 days. Freeze or can at this time. Share your bounty with neighbors or if you have more than you need, donate to your local food pantry. You can **keep planting**. Mid to late summer there's still time to make another planting of quick maturing summer vegetables like, beans and squash. Towards early fall, sow seeds of cool-season crops like broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce, spinach and radishes. All will mature in before the snow flies. That said, this is Wisconsin so just watch the weather. IT could change in a minute!



Radishes planted late in the season can sometimes be more flavorful.



Control Insects and Diseases

Plants under stress can develop insects and diseases much faster than healthy plants. Keep a close eye out for build-ups of insect pests and diseases. If you have a few insects, you can hand-pick and destroy (stomp on them or drop in a jar of soapy water) tomato hornworms, cucumber beetles and grasshoppers whenever you see them. Veggie Pharm and Neem oil, are natural insecticide, miticide and fungicide products. Monterey Garden Insect spray is OMRI approved. Made with Spinosad a natural occurring soil microbes. Rotenone and Copper Sulphate is also natural, not OMRI approved. With any products even organic and natural, they still need to be used with caution. Live lady bugs eat hundreds of Aphids a day. Patty’s does carry these, if you choose not to use organic or chemical products.

Veggie Pharm works on contact.
Spinosad has to be ingested



Just a Note on Late Blight

Tomatoes. Late blight is not seed borne (however, it is tuber-borne in potato), so tomato plants started from seed locally should be free of the disease. Growing your own transplants from seed or purchasing from a reputable local grower will ensure a healthy start to the season. In addition to late blight, each year tomatoes can also become infected with early blight and Septoria leaf spot, which look very similar.

Early blight



Septoria leaf spot



Late Blight



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Natural & Organic Garden Supply

You're Invited To Patty's Plants And Northleaf Winery's 2nd Annual Wine and Garden Party!

Patty's Plants is having an "Open House" Saturday, May 29 from 8:30am-6pm to kick off the gardening season. The event is free to the public and will include outdoor music, activities for the whole family, Grillin' Out Demonstration's 11:00-3:00 with P. Dickey and their Famous Mushroom Seasonings, food samples and much more! Patty's Plants Natural and Organic garden supply store at 220 S. Janesville Street in Milton. There will be many plant specials. For questions about the event, please contact Patty at 580-0066.

Easy Herbal Butter Recipes

Basil Butter~

Soften butter

Combine 1/2 cup butter and 1/2 cup shredded leaves. Refrigerate at least 3 hours. Use on vegetables, chicken or fish. You can also use it in making scrambled eggs.

~Sage Butter~

Soften butter

Cream together 1/2 cup butter and 1/2 cup minced sage leaves. Refrigerate at least 3 hours. Wonderful on seafood or chicken, on fresh green beans or hot biscuits.

~Cilantro Butter~

You will need:

2 garlic cloves, unpeeled
1/2 cup butter, soft
1/2 cup minced cilantro
1 tsp. lemon juice

Blanch garlic in boiling water for 10 minutes, remove, cool and peel, then mince. In small bowl cream the butter and add other ingredients. Pack into small container and refrigerate. This has many uses such as spreading on fresh warm tortillas, mini corn muffins or baguettes.

~Fines Herbs Butter~

You will need:

1/2 cup soft butter
1 Tbls. chives
1 Tbls. parsley
1 Tbls. Tarragon
1 Tbls. Thyme

Chop the herbs fine, mix with butter. Place in container. This is great on most vegetables, fish or French bread.

~Special Butter for Fish~

You will need:

1/4 cup butter
2 tsp. lemon juice
dash of salt and pepper
2 Tbls. chopped fennel leaves

Combine and refrigerate. Can be used on baked fish.

Happy Gardening!!!