



Organic Newsletter

Fall Edition, 2009

Turning Over a New Leaf

With the summer slowly slipping away, we begin to think of pencils and books, mums and pumpkins, we begin to think of autumn. Perhaps what we most associate with fall is the changing of the leaves; the brilliant reds, the dusky russets, the vibrant yellows, the audacious oranges and all the shades in between.

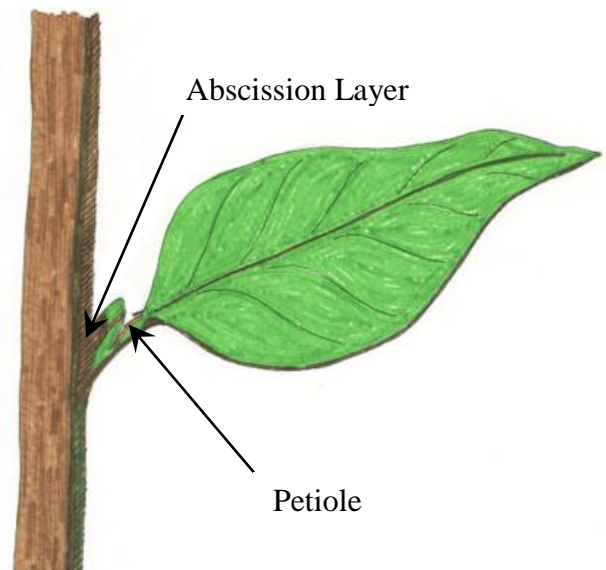
Have you ever wondered what causes these strong color contrasts and variations in the previous uniformly green leaves?

The process of autumnal color begins when we reach the summer solstice, immediately after we begin to lose a few minutes of daylight each day until we reach the winter solstice when the cycle begins again as we gain daylight. This loss of a few minutes of daylight signals deciduous trees, shrubs and even perennials that



winter is approaching and the storage of food for next spring begins.

Once the plants have gathered their needed reserves, there is no need to keep their leaves. Between the branch and the petiole (or stem of the leaf), a layer forms called the abscission layer



(See Diagram). This layer prevents the leaf from gaining anymore nutrients and water as well as preparing for the leaf to drop and heal over the opening left behind.

Inside the leaf are chloroplasts, these organelles contain pigments such as chlorophyll (green), carotene (yellow) and xanthophyll (pale yellow). During the growing season the chlorophyll masks the other pigments, when they start to break down in the fall the other pigments are revealed. Also responsible for fall color is the accumulation of anthocyanin-a red pigment- in another cell structure called the vacuole.

Depending on the combinations of these and other pigments, the color can vary in leaves on the same tree as well as varying in the same species of tree in different locations.

When the leaves begin to change in a few weeks knowing their little secrets will help you to further appreciate their theatrical display.

Fun Fact:

Variegation on leaves is actually a genetic mutation!

The cells are actually unable to produce the green chlorophyll; this lack may also allow other pigments such as pink or yellow to be seen. Variegated plants are thought to be slower growing or weaker than a plant that is completely green due to its reduced ability to produce food.



Revved for Renovation

During the summer you may have noticed an increase in the amount of weeds present as well as an overall lack of vigor in your lawn. These conditions combined with fall's cooler temperatures make your turf a perfect candidate for a lawn renovation.

Lawn renovation begins with a de-thatching. Thatch is the accumulation of dead or decaying plant material in between the roots and living tissue of the lawn. Most lawns have some thatch but it is only when the thatch layer reaches $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch or more that it can be a serious problem. However, it seems that most lawns on Long Island don't have much of a thatch problem but this process is essential to rip out old weeds and turf.

Step two involves core aeration. Core aeration (or hollow tine aeration) is the removal of small "plugs" of soil and lawn. The hole that is



left behind allows water and oxygen to penetrate compacted soils which in turn promotes deeper root growth.

Aerating in the fall is recommended for a few reasons. The first is that during the winter months the freeze and thaw process that takes place will further help the breakdown of compacted soil. Secondly, the cooler fall temperatures reduce the stress placed on the turf. Aerating in the spring can promote weed seed germination and if done in the summer can expose the roots to the harsh temperatures and increase the chance of burning.

After de-thatching and aeration you then top dress the lawn.

Top dressing entails spreading about a $\frac{1}{4}$ " inch layer of compost (using compost inoculated with beneficial fungi and bacteria is



best) evenly over the area to be renovated.

The final step is over-seeding. For this step you need to select site specific seed. Once the seed is distributed over the compost top dressing, you need to water 15 to 20 minutes three times a day until germination.

Watering until germination is very important because even in the fall we can have the occasional warm day and if the seed dries out it will more than likely not germinate. Consequently, you can't keep it sopping wet as the seed will rot. So it is important to monitor the irrigation system to keep the soil as evenly moist as possible.

Following these steps will help you on your way to a beautiful, healthy, organic lawn.

Fun Fact:

In the time of the colonists, they sliced off pumpkin tops; removed seeds and filled the insides with milk, spices and honey. This was baked in hot ashes and is the origin of pumpkin pie!



**Hearty Autumn Greetings
To You and Yours!**

The Organically Green Team

"No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, and no culture comparable to that of the garden."

~Thomas Jefferson

Organically Grown

Vegetable Paella

Prep Time: 30 min; Cook Time: 1 hr 0 min; Serves: 6 - 8

Ingredients

- 8 vine-ripened plum tomatoes
- Kosher salt
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 1/2 teaspoons paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon saffron threads
- 1 large bulb fennel, cut into 8 wedges
- 8 baby artichokes trimmed and halved (see below)
- 1 large Japanese eggplant, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 4 ounces shiitake mushrooms, stemmed
- 2 cups dry white wine
- 2 1/2 cups short-grain paella rice
- 4 ounces haricots verts or string beans, halved if large
- 1/4 cup capers, drained
- 1/4 cup piquillo or roasted red peppers, cut into strips
- Chopped fresh parsley, for garnish (optional)

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Core the tomatoes, cut into wedges and place in a medium bowl; season with salt, drizzle with a bit of olive oil and toss. Set aside. Heat 1/4 cup olive oil in a 12-inch ovenproof skillet or a paella pan over medium-high heat. Add the onion, garlic, paprika, cayenne and saffron and season with salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion softens, about 5 minutes. Add the fennel wedges and cook until lightly browned on one side, about 5 minutes. Flip the fennel and add the baby artichokes and eggplant to the skillet; cook until slightly tender, about 4 more minutes. Add the mushrooms and cook for 1 to 2 minutes. Pour in the wine and simmer until reduced by about one-third. Stir in the rice and 1 3/4 teaspoons salt; add just enough water to cover the rice completely, 2 1/2 to 3 cups. Increase the heat to high and boil for 2 to 3 minutes. Scatter the haricots verts and 2 tablespoons capers over the rice. Remove the pan from the heat and arrange the tomatoes on top; drizzle with any tomato juices. Transfer the paella to the oven and bake, undisturbed, for 20 minutes. Scatter the remaining 2 tablespoons capers and the piquillo peppers over the paella. Turn off the oven but leave the paella inside to continue cooking until the rice is tender, 15 to 20 more minutes. Garnish with parsley, if desired.

Note: If you are trying to achieve an organic lifestyle we recommend using certified organic ingredients, when available, in all recipes to maximize flavors and nutrition while minimizing your risk of exposure to pesticides, chemicals and preservatives.

We offer the following services to help increase the enjoyment and beauty of your property:

Tree / Shrub:

- ❖ Shrub & Tree Spraying / Fertilization Programs
- ❖ Integrated Pest Management
- ❖ Soil Restoration
- ❖ Plant and Soil Stimulation Program
- ❖ Deep Root Feeding
- ❖ Root Growth Enhancement
- ❖ Mature Tree Restoration
- ❖ Air Spading
- ❖ Radial Trenching
- ❖ Vertical Mulching
- ❖ Anti-Desiccant Spraying
- ❖ General Tree and Shrub Maintenance Removal

Turf:

- ❖ Lawn Renovation
- ❖ Fertilization
- ❖ Overseeding
- ❖ Core Aeration
- ❖ Estate / Property Purification

Organic Pest Control:

- ❖ Flying Insect
- ❖ Deer / Geese
- ❖ Rodent Repellent
- ❖ Organic Tick & Flea Control

New for 2009!

We are now offering Outdoor Holiday Décor.

Call (631) 467-7999 for a free estimate!



