



Organic Newsletter

Spring Edition, 2010

Watering Guide

During these next few months keeping your lawn, trees, and gardens properly irrigated becomes a main focus for most of us. Here are a few tips to help.

65°-75°

Lawns:

Need one to one and a quarter inches of water a week. During the spring if we have several days of above average temperatures -with no rain- then your irrigation system needs to be turned on at least one day for a half hour to 45 minutes.

*****This is a general guide on how to irrigate your lawn. If your turf has shaded areas or clay soil- where drainage could be an issue- you must monitor and adjust accordingly*****

Newly planted trees/shrubs:

Smaller trees and shrubs should receive a few inches of water every two weeks for the first three years. (larger more established trees will make do with rainfall)

Garden beds (trees, shrubs, perennials):

Need one inch of water a week.

Vegetable gardens:

Need one and a half to two inches of water a week.

75°-85°

Lawns: Irrigation one to one and a half hours of watering twice a week (if there has been no significant rainfall)

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Need one inch of water a week.

Vegetable gardens:

Need one and a half to two inches of water a week.

85°and above

Lawns: Irrigation one to one and a half hours of watering twice a week (if there has been no significant rainfall) **plus syringing daily.** (Syringing is when during the hottest portion of the day you soak the lawn for 15 minutes. This short watering will help the grass plant cool itself and maintain its vigor.)

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Vegetable gardens:

Need one and a half to two inches of water a week.

Lastly, as with turf you must monitor your landscape. If you see signs of drought such as crusting on the soil, dust blowing or the plants themselves are wilting, you may need to turn on the system to give the plants a little extra water.

Fun Fact:

In Holland in 1633 during the Tulip-mania the Semper Augustus tulip was so highly valued it's said that one bulb was to have sold for 6,000 florins!

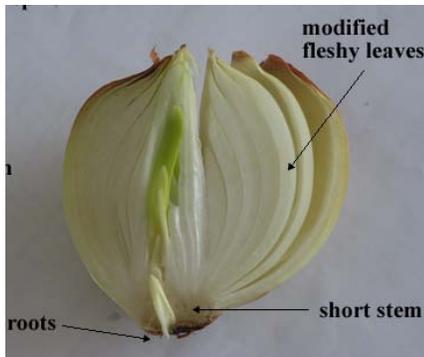


During this time in Holland, the average yearly income was around 150 florins. The tulip mania was the result of high demand of tulip bulbs which eventually burst in 1637 leaving them destitute. The most famous tulip of all was the Semper Augustus, a white tulip with red strokes. This “break” as it's called was the result of a virus and had Dutch growers wild to create similar color patterns, so much so they would pour paint on the ground to try to achieve the desired effect!

Spring Bulbs

The early harbingers of spring such as crocus, narcissus and hyacinths have a secret life below the soil.

Their first secret is that they are not all bulbs as is sometimes commonly thought. There are actually several forms of underground storage organs;



Cross-section of a true bulb

bulbs, corms, rhizomes, tubers and tuberous roots.

True bulbs such as tulips and lilies are actually composed of modified leaf tissues (scales) and enclose shoot and/or flower buds. Each year the plant uses its stored reserves in the fleshy scales and replaces it

while creating little bulbuls. Corms however, such as crocus and gladiolus form new corms on top of the old every year and are actually modified fleshy underground stems.

Rhizomes are stems that grow horizontally at or below the ground; for example in iris. Along the rhizome are leaf scales and axillary buds. Plants such as the common potato are tubers or stem tubers. Tubers are typically the swollen end of a slender rhizome.



Stem tuber (potato)



Tuberous roots of dahlia



Corm of a crocus



Iris rhizome

Tuberous roots are swollen, modified roots that also produce stems and store food such as in dahlias.

Their next secret is that bulbs have actually evolved due to their native homes weather patterns. For instance, some spring blooming “bulbous” plants have evolved from areas of the world where there are alternating periods of wet and dry. Their evolution in these harsh climatic conditions allows them to store water and energy until favorable conditions

return for growth. Other bulbs also require a period of cold temperatures; an adaption from areas with cold winters. This cold requirement prevents the premature growth and death of foliage during a winter warm spell.

However not all bulbs bloom in spring. One region in the Himalayas is prone to plentiful summer rainfall and winter droughts. This has caused bulbs, such as the Himalayan lily to grow during the summer months. In central Asia-where we have been given certain species of tulips and fritillaries-these bulbs require baking summer temperatures and cold during the winter to stimulate flower bud formation. Finally, spring blooming bulbs native to the Western Cape of South Africa are actually used in North America as summer and fall blooming bulbs (gladiolas and agapanthus).

However these “bulbous” plants evolved and wherever they originated from one thing is certain we are glad to be able to include them in our garden palettes.

Hydrangea Color Change

Hydrangeas, by far one of the most widely loved plants continue to astound us with all the new cultivars available-from re blooming to variegated foliage. However, some people still prefer to manipulate their own hydrangeas by changing the colors of the blooms.

With some hydrangeas you can see multiple colors of blooms on one plant. This is due to the roots absorbing different nutrients or uneven fertility. Color change although labor intensive, is possible with some varieties of *Hydrangea macrophylla*- except white. In order to change the color of your blooms you have to manipulate the soil pH to make aluminum more or less available to the plant, as well as adding a higher concentration of certain elements found in a typical fertilizer.

To begin you must start your color changing quest just after bud break. To achieve a pink coloration you must block the uptake of aluminum by raising your pH to 6.0-6.8. The first way to accomplish this is by adding dolomitic lime several times throughout the year. The second step is to add

a fertilizer high in phosphorus (the middle number) preferably with a 2.5-1-1 ratio, for example a 25-10-10. The phosphorus antagonizes the aluminum, helping to block it. As a side note, if your hydrangeas are planted next to a concrete foundation or sidewalk, it may also lead to pink blooms as the lime that leaches out will also raise the pH.

For blue hydrangeas we need to lower the pH thus allowing more aluminum to be available in the soil and absorbed by the plant. The pH generally required for blue is 4.5-5.5. However with this low of a pH you have be careful not to cause aluminum toxicity in the neighboring plants. Also a concern is the pH itself, lilacs for instance would suffer from the low pH because they tend to prefer a pH of 7.0 or above.

First for blue you can the addition of organic matter, coffee grounds pine needles etc. As the materials decay they naturally acidify the soil.

The second step for blue is a fertilizer high in potassium (the last number), at a ratio of 5-1-6 or 25-5-30.

Another solution for color changing is growing your hydrangeas in containers using a soil-less mixture. In this somewhat controlled

environment it will be easier to manipulate the color changes.



Why did the
tomato turn red?
~ * ~

Because it saw the salad dressing!

Organically Grown

Frittata with Pea Shoots and Feta Cheese

(Serves 4)

Ingredients:

6 extra-large organic eggs
2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro or mint leaves
Salt and freshly ground black pepper (to taste)
3 tablespoons organic cultured butter, divided
1/3 cup finely chopped spring onions
4 cups chopped pea shoots
1/3 cup crumbled feta cheese
2 tablespoons chopped Kalamata olives (optional)
Pea shoots sound like a rarity but they are merely the pruning's of early pea vines. Tender and delicately delicious, they give us a surge of nutrition and feed our springtime craving for something green and *good*.

You can pluck them from your own garden or buy them by the bunch at many farmers' markets.

1. Beat the eggs in a bowl with the cilantro or mint, salt and pepper. Set aside.
2. Melt 1 1/2 tablespoons of the butter in 9- or 10-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high flame. When butter begins to foam, add the spring onions and cook, stirring often, for a minute or two. Add the pea shoots; cook, stirring often, until the greens wilt and soften (but are not mushy), 2-4 minutes. (If there's any liquid in the pan at this point, raise the heat to high and cook, stirring, until it has evaporated.)
3. Add another tablespoon of the butter to the pan and stir to distribute the butter evenly. Reduce heat to medium-low. Stir in the beaten eggs, cover the pan and cook until the eggs are mostly set, 8-10 minutes. (The top will still look a little wet at this point.)

4. Use a spatula to shape and smooth the outer edges of the frittata and round them attractively. Lay a towel on a counter. Slide the spatula underneath the frittata to loosen it from the pan. Carefully glide the frittata onto a platter, guiding it with the spatula. Place platter on the towel.
5. Add the remaining 1/2 tablespoon of butter to the pan and tilt pan to distribute the butter. Wearing oven mitts, invert the hot pan over the top of the frittata. Grasp the pan-platter construction with both hands to hold it together and then flip it upside down, set it back onto the towel. The frittata will now be back in the pan (and on its second side). Sprinkle the top with feta and return it to the heat to finish cooking a moment or two.
6. To serve, loosen the frittata from the pan and slide it back onto the platter. Sprinkle with chopped olives, if desired. You can serve this hot, warm or at room temperature.

Note: If your 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.

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**Wishing you a wonderfully warm
spring!**

The Organically Green Team

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*“Give me odorous at sunrise a garden
of beautiful flowers where I can walk
undisturbed.”*

~Walt Whitman

Services for 2010:

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

We also offer Outdoor Holiday Décor.

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

