



## GARDENING TIPS FROM BLUE WILLOW AND LANDSCAPE ONTARIO

MAY-JUNE

### Gardening in the Spring

1. Plant roses, vines, evergreens, trees, shrubs and perennials.
2. Feed established trees, fruit trees and evergreens with fertilizer spikes inserted into the ground at dripline of each specimen.
3. Fertilize established roses and perennials with granular Parkwood™ Garden-all 4-12-8.
4. Place peony ring over emerging herbaceous peony when it flowers in June.
5. For Mother's Day give Mom a special gift like a hanging basket, a potted rose, a magnolia, or a gift certificate she can use for her garden.
6. Treat broadleaf weeds in the lawn with Parkwood™ 21-6-12 Weed & Feed.
7. Plant annuals, vegetables and herbs Victoria Day weekend or whenever all risk of frost is past in your area. Tomatoes, peppers, basil, impatiens, begonias and coleus are all very sensitive to wind and cool temperatures. DO NOT plant out before May 24.
8. Sow Morning Glory, nasturtium, love-in-a-mist and larkspur seed directly into warm soil.
9. Plant tender summer-flowering bulbs like dahlia, canna and gladioli directly into warm soil.
10. Hang a finch feeder and fill it with niger seed to attract American goldfinches to your garden.
11. Prune forsythia, flowering almond, lilac, quince, purpleleaf sand cherry, mock orange, bridal wreath spirea, honey suckle, deutzia and beautybush when they've finished flowering.
12. Remove spent flowers on rhododendrons by pinching them off just above where new growth is emerging.
13. Stake delphiniums and bearded iris.
14. For Father's Day give Dad a quality garden tool, a hammock, a chaise or a Garden Centre Gift Certificate.
15. Keep all garden beds well mulched to minimize weeds, keep roots cool and maintain moisture.
16. Lawns need 5 cm (2") of water per week. If rainfall is insufficient supplement with deep watering 2 to 3 times a week.
17. Remove daffodil and tulip foliage when it comes away from the buried bulb with a slight tug.
18. Fertilize annuals, hanging baskets and containers ever 10 days to 2 weeks for continuous bloom.
19. Deadhead annuals and perennials regular.
20. Add more fragrance to your garden this year with new fragrant annuals like nenesia, Jasmine patio tropical and any of the fragrant roses - the choices are endless!



## Great Perennials for Your Garden

Fifteen years ago perennials didn't occupy a lot of Space in a garden centre, but all that has changed dramatically. Now, everyone wants perennials for a lush, flowering border, in a mixed planting, even for containers. There are so many new varieties each spring; it's hard to keep up. But let's try. Shade is not a boring place anymore. There is no end in sight to the proliferation of interesting hostas, for example: Blue Angel Hostas has large, pointed, blue leaves with a heavy texture. It flowers white in midsummer and attains a stately size of 122 cm (48") in height and spread. Raspberry Splash lungwort (Pulmonaria) is a spring stunner with raspberry-pink flowers and large, light green, pointed leaves with a creamy-white margin. They only grow 30 cm (12") high and 30-45 cm (12-18") wide.

Fumitory (Corydalis) is excellent in partial shade with its delicate ferny foliage and bright blooms above. A golden foliage perennial that shimmers in shade is Gold Heart bleeding heart (Dicentra). It flowers pink just like the old fashioned bleeding heart An ever-green English ivy with gold and green variegation is Goldheart. Use this as a fast spreading ground cover, vine, or in containers to trail. An incredibly versatile perennial for sun or shade is coral bell (Heuchera). It's memorable for the colour and texture of it's foliage that often remains on the plant through winter. One to mention is the Autumn Haze which is burgundy pink and silvery grey. All are perfect edging plants that mound gracefully. They contrast vividly with green and lime green, in particular.

Another perennial that blooms over a long season is threadleaf tickseed (Coreopsis). Two new additions include Limerock Ruby and Sweet Dreams.

Daylilies (Hemerocallis) continue to amaze and enthrall. Happy Returns is a dwarf variety with pure yellow flowers. It's much easier to work with than Stella d'Oro.

The list could go on and on. It really comes down to what you like. And we're so lucky now to be able to work with perennials that have handsome, often striking foliage all season. We don't need to rely simply on flowers for a showy presentation. By interspersing perennials with ornamental grasses and annuals such as cosmos, larkspur, cleome and old fashioned dahlias, we can create an imaginative and unique border. And if we accidentally get it wrong - two colours desperately dash or the flower form is too similar - perennials are marvelously forgiving. Just move the offender and pretend it never happened.



### Simple guidelines for a medium maintenance lawn:

- Resist cutting the grass until the end of May. Cutting too early (and too short) jeopardizes strong root growth. For the first cut, raise the mower blades to three inches.
- Fertilize in May, June and September using a spreader. Bags are usually marked with the proper application times. And remember, numbers on fertilizers stand for:
  1. nitrogen (green growth)
  2. phosphorus (strong root growth)
  3. potassium (general lawn well-being)
- Water the grass only in the morning - before sunrise - and give it a thorough soaking. A simple way to test when you have watered enough is to put an empty 5 oz. can on the

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grass within sprinkler range. When the can is full, your lawn has received two inches of water, which is a good soaking. Avoid frequent, light watering as this increases the chance for disease and fungus.

- From July to August set mower blades to leave the grass at roughly 2 to 2 1/2 inches. Longer blade length allows the plant to devote more of its energy to root growth. A strong healthy root base helps the lawn withstand weeds, pests and drought. Height keeps the roots shaded and helps protect them from drought. Do this and you can reduce watering frequency to as little as every 10 days, depending on type of soil, weather and the amount of shade.
- Keep an eye out for infestations of Crabgrass and act quickly to remove it -- do not let it go to seed. A strong root-base will help to prevent weed grasses like Quack and Crabgrass from flourishing. The growth of broad leafed weeds such as Creeping Charley, Clover and Dandelion is also minimized. And fewer weeds mean a reduction in the need for chemical deterrents. With only a few weeds present, you can easily remove them manually.

Remember, limited use of some garden chemicals is okay provided the warnings and instructions are carefully followed. But careless or excessive use is not only bad for the environment, it can be hazardous, especially for children and pets. Many of the chemicals used (Diazinon, a pest killer; Maneb and Sulphur, both fungicides) release toxic fumes both when you apply them and afterward. If you plan to use chemicals on your lawn, or anywhere in your garden for that matter, wear protective clothing during the application. And because of possible chemical residue, keep children and pets away from the treated area for at least 48 hours.

Having a medium maintenance lawn does not imply that your lawn has to be an eyesore. Quite the contrary. In fact, your lawn will probably still be green when others have dried up. Also, with a good grass blend, you can step up your maintenance program at any time to improve the look of your lawn.

### **Feature Plant: Dwarf Lilac - Tinkerbell**

This is a colour-breakthrough. Trusses of burgundy flower buds open to deep pink blooms with a spicy fragrance in late spring. It has been known to bloom off and on throughout the season! Dwarf compact rounded growth to about 1.5m. x 1.5m. (5' x 5') in a well-drained sunny location. Hardy to zone 4. Tinklerbell is a new dwarf lilac that's available this spring. It boasts the same shrub size and hardiness but its wine coloured buds open to deep pink. It has a spicy fragrance that promises to make it memorable like the other members of this delightful family.



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