

# ORGANIC GARDENS *TODAY*

SUMMER 2015

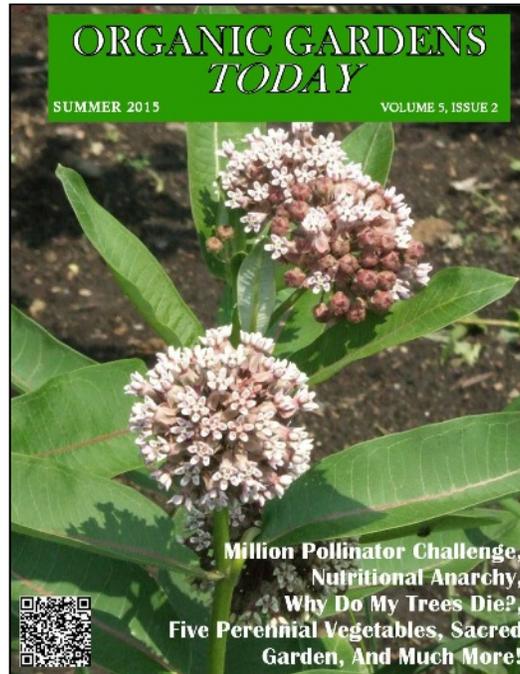
VOLUME 5, ISSUE 2



**Million Pollinator Challenge,  
Nutritional Anarchy,  
Why Do My Trees Die?,  
Five Perennial Vegetables, Sacred  
Garden, And Much More!**



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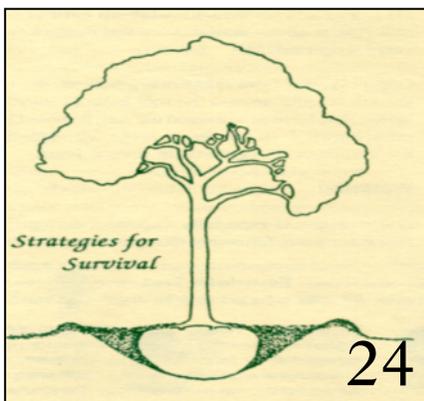
Now you can bring *Organic Gardens Today* with you no matter where you go and refer to to the articles *in your garden!*

*(A charge of \$3.99 per issue or subscribe for the year for only \$13.99 for four issues for the digital version applies. OGT would like to thank Magzter for including our magazine in their store.)*

*“Come Grow With Us”*



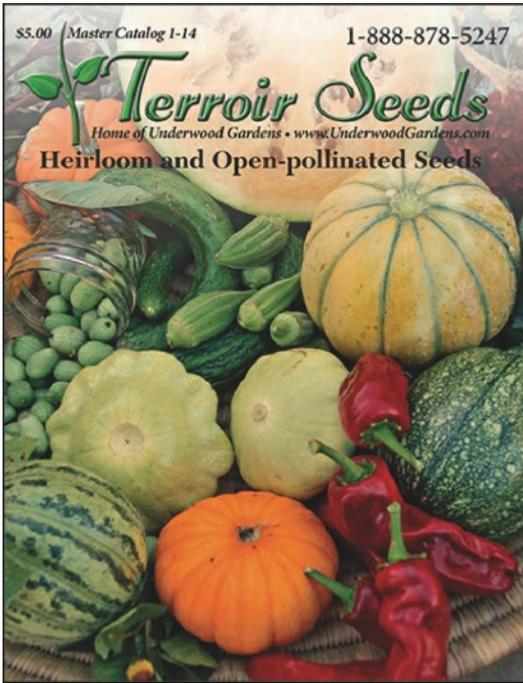
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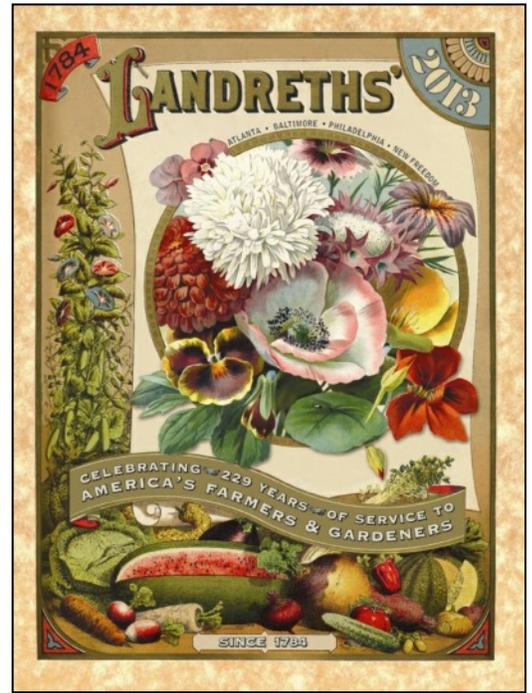
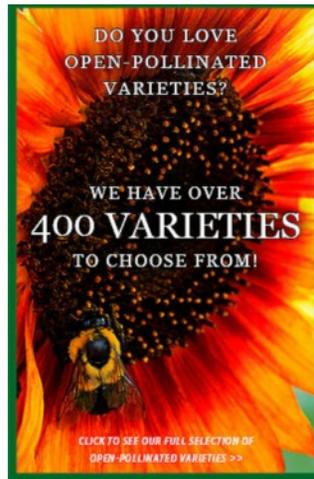
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## SUGGESTED GARDENING RESOURCES



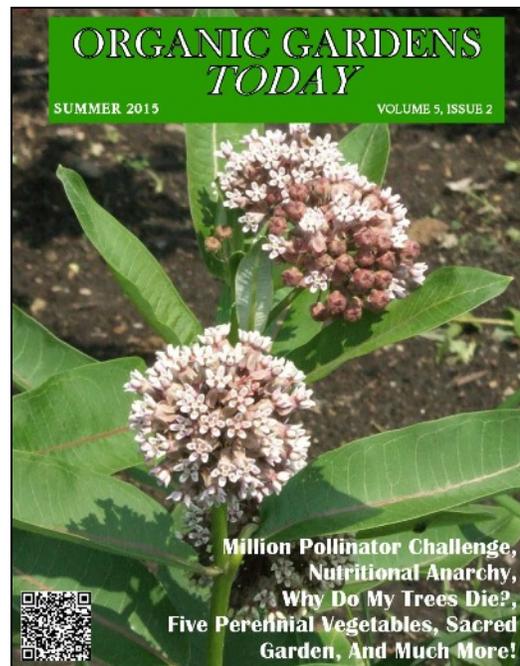
### High Mowing Organic Seed



Organic Gardens Today would like to thank

*Kim Daehnke*

For the back page photo.



The Summer gardening season is in full swing! Please remember that plants you make think of as weeds are actually beneficial plants for insects, such as milkweed.

Organic Gardens Today is a publication dedicated to gardeners who strive to garden the organic way. Articles are property of their respective authors. Views expressed in the articles are not necessarily those of the Editor or magazine. Please contact the writers directly for reprint permission.

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# From The Editor

Welcome to the Summer edition of *Organic Gardens Today!*



For anybody that thinks that *CLIMATE CHANGE* is a bunch of nonsense made up by scientists, this spring should definitely change your mind. California is starting it's fourth year of drought conditions, Texas was inundated the past couple of weeks with torrential flooding after an extended drought period, and now Northern New Jersey is 5 inches low of rain for the month of May. It is more about changing conditions than "global warming" (I hate that term, and I hated seeing the tons of snowy pictures on Facebook saying "What global warming?"). Things are changing and we, as gardeners, have to take the changing conditions into account when planning our gardens. Supplemental watering, adding more organic material to your soil to help moisture retention, choosing more drought resistant plants are just a few things we can do to offset these changing conditions. Change is here and we have to adapt.



The Summer Issue is dedicated to the memory of my friend and mentor Tom Niven. Tom was the Chief Engineer at WGHT where I have a radio show entering its' 21st year, and recorded the show for almost 20 years straight. He decided to retire at the end of January of this year and move to Florida, which was his second home. Sadly he passed away in May. He constantly taught me how to be more professional "on the air" by sharing his 50+ years of experience in the radio industry. Always willing to share, I attribute the longevity of the show to him. You will be missed my friend. I will continue to share my experience in the gardening world just as you shared your experience in the radio industry with me.

If you like what we have accomplished with *Organic Gardens Today*, *share us* with your family, friends, coworkers and fellow gardeners. *We rely on word of mouth to spread the word about the magazine*, and I thank you in advance for sharing us. If you go to our website, [www.organicgardentoday.com](http://www.organicgardentoday.com) and you can click the "Share" button to share the website with your friends on any social media platform. If you already have, I thank you. We have grown more than I could have ever expected.

Have a relaxing Summer, take time to explore other gardens and get new ideas for your own garden, and finally enjoy what you have created, aka take time to smell the roses!

David Daehuke, Editor



*PS: Like us on Facebook page and join our group. Type "Organic Gardens Today" in the search box or use the link below*

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/184728751568234>

*You can start a discussion, add your comments or follow useful links to like-minded articles and websites.*

## MEET OUR WRITERS



### DAVID DAEHNKE, THE GARDENING GURU, EDITOR

David is a seasoned gardener and lecturer, helping both the novice and experienced gardener. His fun and informative lectures are widely requested throughout the Northeast. Over the past 12 years, David has successfully managed three public gardens as Executive Director, but his true love is communicating proper gardening practices and creating gardens of beauty. He received his B.S. Degree in 1984 in Ornamental Horticulture at Delaware Valley College. David is widely known from his radio show “The Gardening Guru” on WGHT 1500 AM, beginning it’s 20<sup>th</sup> season in 2014. He is a horticultural consultant on his Internet Web page, [www.thegardeningguru.com](http://www.thegardeningguru.com).



### MAUREEN FARMER

Maureen Farmer is master gardener and the founder of The Farmer’s Garden website ([www.thefarmersgarden.com](http://www.thefarmersgarden.com)). The Farmer’s Garden is an online place to make in-person connections between gardeners across the US. Gardeners and want-to-be gardeners can search and post free classified ads to share excess homegrown produce, tools, or gardening space with people in their area. Food banks can post wanted classifieds for surplus food. She is an avid gardener and also a former Board member of Urban Oaks Organic Farm in Connecticut.



### DAISY LUTHER

Daisy Luther is a freelance writer and editor who lives on a small organic farm in the Pacific Northwestern area of the United States. On her website, [The Organic Prepper](http://TheOrganicPrepper), Daisy writes about healthy prepping, homesteading adventures, and the pursuit of liberty and food freedom. Daisy is also a staff writer at [The Daily Sheeple](http://TheDailySheeple), where she helps to “Wake the Flock Up”. You can follow her on Facebook, Pinterest, and Twitter, and you can email her at [daisy@theorganicprepper.ca](mailto:daisy@theorganicprepper.ca)



### RICHARD McCOY

Richard McCoy is the principal owner of Mercer county New Jersey based company Richard A. McCoy Horticultural Services Inc. Offering environmentally responsible fine-gardening design and organic lawn care that promote a healthy ecosystem at your home or business. Richard is a member of the Rutgers Organic Land Care Working Group and Board of Directors of the New Jersey Organic Land Care Association (NJOLA). Richard holds a certificate of organic land care through the Rutgers five day certificate course and is a certified Natural Turf and Landscape Manager through the New Jersey DEP.



### CINDY MEREDITH

Cindy Meredith is the owner of [The Herb Cottage](http://TheHerbCottage), a rural nursery in Lavaca County, Texas. In business since 1998, Cindy has a wide range of knowledge about gardening with herbs and adapted plants. The dynamic web site for herb and plant lovers is a handy source for growing information. Not just for Texans and other folks who live in hot, humid climates, the web site addresses all aspects of gardening.

## MEET OUR WRITERS



CLIFF WILLIAMS

Cliff Williams has worked 20 years in the frozen vegetable processing industry. He has been involved with everything from the dirt to the package you get at the store. He has also worked seasonally for 4 years in the fertilizer industry, as well as growing up gardening and gleaning. When you add in all the supporting research that went into creating Urban Crofting to his experience, you will find that few people have the unique insight into our food that he does.



STEPHEN SCOTT

Stephen is the co-owner with his wife Cindy of Terroir Seeds, an heirloom seed company that not only provides quality garden seeds but helps customers improve their gardens and skills with a wealth of information not found anywhere else.

From his experiences in gardening, rangeland and habitat restoration Stephen has found that it's not just about the seeds; the highest quality seeds are great, but there is room and need for more, much more.

Stephen has discovered a cycle to gardening that is not being addressed much today- soil education and awareness of its role and importance; the important role of quality seed and how they interact with the soil; the critical importance of micro-organisms that feed us all that many are not aware of; how to prepare the food grown from the garden and how it can all tie in together to markedly increase our health- all from our home garden. Visit their website at [www.UnderwoodGardens.com](http://www.UnderwoodGardens.com).



# *Home Grown Gardening Tips*

## *GARDEN TIPS FOR JUNE*

- \* There is still time to plant water lilies in pools or in tubs (which are easy to move). Make sure you add goldfish to the water features to help cut down on mosquitoes.
- \* Houseplants can be moved to summer quarters in a partially shaded section of the outdoor garden. Remember that they are in pots and need regular watering and feeding, especially if they are actively growing. Even better is to plunge to pots into the ground up to the lips of the pots.
- \* There is still time to plant dahlia roots, but make sure to set the stakes in the ground at the same time.
- \* When planting gladiolus corms, try to stagger the plantings by two weeks to create a succession of blooms.
- \* Early flowering garden plants which spread rapidly, including Phlox, should be divided soon after they have flowered.
- \* Portulacas a good old-fashioned, low growing flower for quick results in a hot, exposed situation. You can sow the seeds at this time or purchase flats at your local garden center.
- \* Softwood cutting of woody plants are readily made at this time of year.
- \* If grape hyacinths are permitted to go to seed, they will self-sow over a wide area, which is perfect for a naturalized setting.
- \* The foliage of all early blooming bulbs should be left until it is limp or yellow. These plants are storing the energy (food) needed for blooming next spring.
- \* The blooming stalks of irises should be removed once the flowers have faded. Do not permit them to go to seed.
- \* This is a good time to sow seeds of perennials, and can be directly sown into the bed you wish them to grow. Remember that not all perennials come true from seed.
- \* Break off the old flower heads from rhododendrons and laurels, taking care not to remove any of the branch.
- \* Bedding plants of all kinds can be planted out now. Be sure to water the plants as well as the soil in which they are being planted for better survival rates.
- \* Newly planted woody plants need an abundance of water to promote new top and root growth.
- \* Experiments have shown that flowers, in particular roses, keep best if they are harvested late in the afternoon or evening. They should be plunged into water ASAP.
- \* As you walk around your garden, take note of which plants need to be divided or moved in the fall and attach a small label to the plant to remind yourself.
- \* Sweet corn can be planted now, and it will make rapid growth. A second planting can be made in the middle of the month.
- \* When removing dandelions from your lawn by hand, remember that they are considered a fine eating green for your salad, and are actually grown for this purpose.
- \* Lettuce will bolt (go to seed) in the heat of summer, so continue to harvest as much as possible before the bolt. A second crop of lettuce can be started in late July for a fall crop.
- \* Peaches and plums can be thinned to one fruit to each six to eight inches of branch for peaches, less for plums, after their June drop.
- \* Prune duetzas, spireas, viburnums, and weigelas as soon as the blooming season is over. Japanese quince can also be pruned, but to a lighter extent.
- \* Lawns should be kept well watered (town drought warnings kept in mind) during the dry spells. Cutting heights should also be raised to help shade the bases of the plants from the strong summer sun.

# Home Grown Gardening Tips (continued)

## *GARDEN TIPS FOR JULY*

\* Bachelor buttons which have finished their first blooming period may often be made to flower again by shearing at least six inches from the tops of the plants.

\* Dahlias require little artificial watering in a normal season but should be given water enough to soak the ground deeply once a week starting in late July.

\* Keep the dead and dying foliage of hollyhocks cleared away from the base of the plants to help cut down on the transmission of diseases.

\* Columbines in many varieties can be grown from seed, which should be sown an eighth of an inch deep and firmly pressed into the soil. The seed take three to four weeks to germinate and can be collected when the seed pods dry out.

\* Most climbing roses are best pruned as soon as they have finished blooming. If they send up new shoots from the roots (not a grafted rose), you can prune most of the old canes out.

\* Cuttings should be made of coleus, geraniums, ever-blooming begonias and any other plants that may be needed for the house next Winter. Root them in moist sand. Geraniums will root easier if you let them dry in a shady, airy place for several hours before putting them in the sand.

\* Oriental poppies have become dormant by late July and can be divided with excellent success. Even if the roots are divided into 2 inch pieces and planted in a good soil, most of the will develop into new plants within a short period of time.

\* Bearded irises may be divided and new plants set out at any time during the next two months.

\* Peony seed pods should be removed. It will be beneficial to mix into the soil a high-phosphorous fertilizer which will help in making good strong eyes for next year.

\* Wisterias can be pruned now and will be benefited by a hard pruning instead of a lighter trimming.

\* It is not too late to start annuals for Fall blooming, including annual lupines, stock, godetias and Drummond's phlox.

\* Watch grafted plants to see that no suckers grow up from beneath the grafted area. Such sucker should be removed at once by hand picking.

\* Set your cutting height higher for your lawn during the hotter summer months. This will help shade the roots by keeping the ground cool, and give the plants more water storage area in the leaves.

\* July is usually a dry month and watering is most likely necessary. Do not merely sprinkle the surface of the ground, but soak it thoroughly for the most benefit. A light sprinkle will only draw the roots closer to the surface.

## *GARDEN TIPS FOR AUGUST*

\* To have forget-me-nots in bloom early next season, the seed should be sown this month. They make an attractive underplanting for spring bulbs such as tulips.

\* The Virginia bluebell, *Mertensia virginica*, can be divided at this time because the plant is in its dormant stage.

\* The foliage of bleeding heart, *Dicentra spectabilis*, which has died and become unsightly should be removed and disposed of in the garbage.

\* Peonies should be ordered now for September planting. Many Japanese varieties are choice and little known.

\* Cuttings taken from English ivy now will produce good houseplants this Winter.

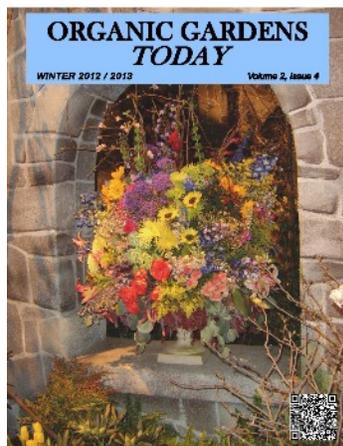
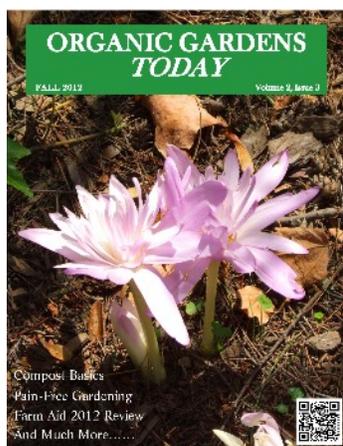
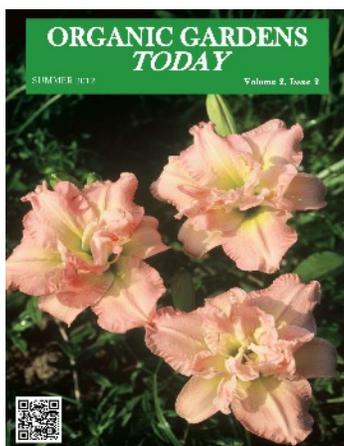
\* When dividing irises, make a careful inspection for the iris borer and destroy any infested roots.

\* Begin to order your Fall bulbs now. It is better to order early than to be disappointed when they are out of stock.

\* Potatoes can be dug as soon as the tops have died. You can dig them as needed for they store better in the ground than in your house.

\* Eggplants and peppers are now bearing. Keep the matured fruit picked so the younger ones will develop.

\* Tie up cauliflower heads now by pulling the leaves over the top and fastening with a string. Then they will blanch properly.



## Organic Gardens Today Magazine is Looking for Writers



Are you a gardening 'expert' that would like to write for us and help share the organic principles the magazine conveys? Whether you have a gardening degree from a college or you are "dirt" educated, send me an e-mail with the subject and article you want to cover. I will review and see if we can use it in the next issue. Please remember that the magazine will be online on or about the first day of the new season, so please address your article for the upcoming season and make sure it is sent at least two weeks before the publication date for formatting.

Send your requests to [editor@organicgardentoday.com](mailto:editor@organicgardentoday.com)

We look forward to hearing from you!

## ORGANIC NEWS and NOTEWORTHY

### Honeybees' Mysterious Die-Off Appears to Worsen

A prolonged and mysterious die-off of the nation's honeybees, a trend worrisome both to beekeepers and to farmers who depend on the insects to pollinate their crops, apparently worsened last year.

In an annual survey released on Wednesday by the Bee Informed Partnership, a consortium of universities and research laboratories, about 5,000 beekeepers reported losing 42.1 percent of their colonies in the 12-month period that ended in April. That is well above the 34.2 percent loss reported for the same period in 2013 and 2014, and it is the second-highest loss recorded since year-round surveys began in 2010.

Most striking, however, was that honeybee deaths spiked last summer, exceeding winter deaths for the first time. Commercial beekeepers, some of whom rent their hives to farmers during pollination seasons, were hit especially hard, the survey's authors stated.

"We expect the colonies to die during the winter, because that's a stressful season," said Dennis vanEngelsdorp, an assistant entomology professor at the University of Maryland who directs the survey for the bee partnership. "What's totally shocking to me is that the losses in summer, which should be paradise for bees, exceeded the winter losses."

Bees are not in danger of extinction, but their health is of major concern to agriculture, where honeybees' pollination services are estimated to be worth \$10 billion to \$15 billion a year.

Nobody knows with certainty why honeybee deaths are rising. Beekeepers once expected to lose perhaps 10 percent of their bees in an average year. But deaths began to spike in the middle of the past decade, when a phenomenon in which bees deserted their hives and died en masse, later named colony collapse disorder, began sweeping hives worldwide.

Those mass die-offs have abated somewhat in recent years, experts say, but colonies remain in poor health, and overall death rates remain much higher than in the past.

Source: [Organic Consumers Association](#)

### Starbucks in Alliance with Monsanto Sues State of Vermont

"Still no latte's for me folks. I am not going to support a company that actively tries to defeat the will of the people by fighting their right to know what is in the food they eat.

Contrary to the misleading information coming from Starbucks, the coffee company is in alliance with other Food Giants, including Monsanto, in suing the state of Vermont to overturn the GMO labeling laws voted for by the people.

An alliance is a pact, coalition or friendship between two or more parties, made in order to advance common goals and to secure common interests. Starbucks and Monsanto are members of the Grocery Manufacturers Alliance.

The Grocery Manufacturers Alliance sued the state of Vermont to overturn the people's will to mandate GMO labeling in Vermont.

In communications with Starbucks the company was unresponsive to the direct question on whether Starbucks' coffee product contained GMOs.

Neil Young  
California  
May, 2015

Watch Neil Young's new video, "*A Rock Star Bucks A Coffee Shop*" below from his new album "*The Monsanto Years*", which will be released June 29<sup>th</sup>. WAY TO GO NEIL!



## ORGANIC NEWS and NOTEWORTHY

(Continued)

### *World stands up against Monsanto: Over 400 cities protest GMOs*

Thousands of people across the world have joined together in a global movement, protesting against American biotech giant Monsanto. Activists from over 400 cities are speaking out against GMOs and Monsanto's monopoly over the food supply.

Saturday May 23<sup>rd</sup> marked the third global annual March Against Monsanto (MAM). According to the organizers, 48 countries were scheduled to participate in a massive global turnout.

A total of 452 rallies have been registered with the MAM organization.

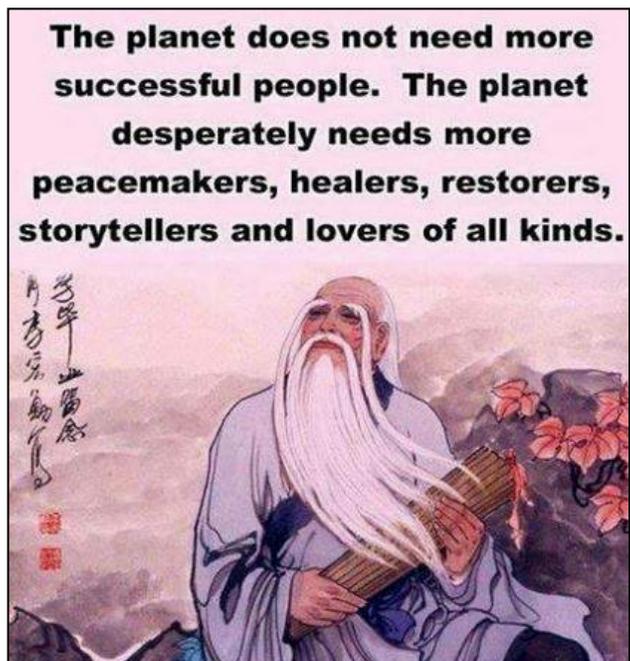
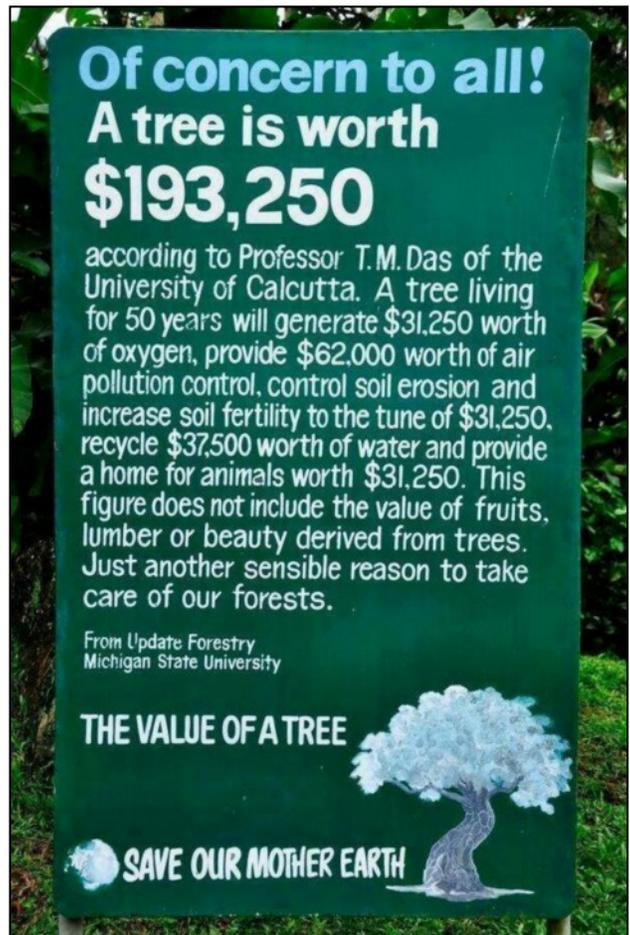
Activists accuse the agricultural corporation of selling toxic chemicals, which are bad for people's health, water supplies, vital crop pollinators and environment in general. The giant is also criticized for its attitude towards food safety regulations and a staunch opposition to GMO labeling. Meanwhile, small farmers blame Monsanto for monopolizing the seed market.

A wave of marches against Monsanto and GMO food hit the United States. Among the cities to join the protests were New York; Washington, DC; Los Angeles; San Francisco; Chicago; Indianapolis; Portland, Oregon; Oakland, California and dozens of others. Activists decried Monsanto's control of 90 percent of the US seed market.

In light of thousands of people opposing Monsanto on Saturday, a few individuals came out in support of the agricultural giant, gathering outside Monsanto's headquarters, with banners in favor of the use of GMOs. The pro-Monsanto demonstrators said protesters are spreading "myths" about genetically modified products.

(Editor's note: I'm sure the "supporters" were actual employees of Monsanto. Why would anyone support Monsanto? Oh, I forgot Bill Nye's amazing reversal after visiting Monsanto.)

Source: [RT NEWS](#)



# Introducing Nutritional Anarchy: At War with Big Food

By Daisy Luther



It's time for a revolution.

The enemy is a group of large corporations who have taken over the food supply of our country, aided and abetted by corrupt government watchdog agencies and paid-off politicians.

We're at war against Big Agri, Big Pharma, and Big Food.

It's time to commit acts of nutritional anarchy, in defiance of the "rules" that are making it increasingly difficult to take charge of our health.

With my friends Aaron Dykes and Melissa Melton (of Truthstream Media) and natural health and nutrition expert Lisa Egan, we have drawn our battle lines over at our new website, [Nutritional Anarchy](#).

Anarchy is defined as the non-recognition of authority. Since nutrition is regulated by a bunch of bureaucrats who don't really care about people, only about profits, you must have the plans and weapons in place to live a life of nutritional anarchy. Please join us as we discuss problems and offer solutions for peaceful anarchy against a system that would create a dumbed-down, sick, and lethargic nation.

*Banish processed foodlike substances from your life.*

Traditionally...and by traditionally I mean ever since there were humans on the planet eating stuff...food came from one of these sources:

*Plants or Animals.*

Food has been hunted, gathered, foraged, cultivated, and farmed.

But now, it's "manufactured".

[Dictionary.com](#) defines manufacture as;

- to make or produce by hand or machinery, especially on a large scale
- to work up (material) into form for use
- to invent fictitiously; fabricate; concoct
- to produce in a mechanical way without inspiration or originality

Sorry, but none of that should apply to the preparation of food.

Sadly, what many people buy at the store isn't actually food anymore. It is a collection of artificial substances that being created in a lab environment. From purely synthetic ingredients, compounds are formed. Sometimes a bit of the original food is present, perhaps a small bit of meat or vegetable or grain, and that item is stretched with chemicals to turn it into a food-like substance. The substance is shaped to look like food. It is artificially colored and molded into forms like some kind of semi-edible play-dough. Then scents and flavors, also artificial, are added. This makes the substances resemble food even more because now it tastes and smells like food.

Because it isn't immediately lethal to ingest, those noble guardians at the FDA slap a label on it that the substance is GRAS – Generally Recognized As Safe.

Then the substance is placed into little plastic trays, foil, bags, or cellophane. That is placed inside a box with an illustration on the outside. The illustration looks like the food that the substance inside all of the packaging is supposed to taste like. Perhaps it is a juicy roast beef dinner with mashed potatoes, savory gravy, and carrots. Your brain processes this visual stimuli and expects that the substance contained within is indeed "food."

But it isn't.

It's a scam. People go to the store to buy food, but

they are sold something else, something that only pretends to be food.

## 10 steps towards nutritional anarchy

The most important thing we can do for our health right now is to learn about nature's vitamins in preparation for the day that [choosing our own supplements is against the law](#). For example, did you know that a cup of rose hip tea contains staggeringly high amounts of Vitamin C? Or that a cup of dandelion greens contains three times the RDA for Vitamin A?

Take these steps to prepare for the day when real vitamins might be completely inaccessible without a prescription.

1. Educate yourself on which foods provide the most nutritional bang for the buck.
2. Plant nutrient dense flora in your garden.
3. Learn to identify edible plants and locate wild sources of nutrients, like a field of dandelions (make sure they are not sprayed with pesticides).
4. Learn small space gardening methods to make the most of urban locations.
5. Consider hydroponics and/or aquaponics.
6. Purchase heirloom seeds to put aside for the future, when they may no longer be available.
7. Learn how to properly save and store seeds from your own plants for future gardening endeavors.
8. Learn how to harvest and preserve the bounty from your own property.
9. Practice preparing delicious meals using the most nutritious foods available.
10. Experiment with multiple ways to use the in-season bounty from your garden to prevent boredom.

These are the actions that will provide our independence from those who would have the audacity to regulate good nutrition.

When you stock your pantry with vitamin-laden goodies straight from nature, you don't have to question whether you are providing your family with what they need or just buying into the Big Pharma marketing scam. Big Pharma executives are rubbing their greedy hands together, just waiting for the day that we have

been "food modernized" and can no longer purchase nutritional supplements without a visit to a physician, a trip to the pharmacy, and all of the costs (and risks) associated with those things.

In the case of Codex Alimentarius and the nutritional dictatorship the document portends, Mick Jagger had it right when he said:

*Anarchy is the only slight glimmer of hope.*

Join the battle!

Please join us over at our new site, [Nutritional Anarchy](#). Break the rules. Knock over the "food pyramid". Free yourself from shackles of the Standard American Diet (SAD is the most appropriate acronym ever!)

You can also find us on [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Pinterest](#), and [Facebook](#).



*Daisy Luther lives in a small village in the Pacific Northwestern area of the United States. She is the author of [The Organic Canner](#), [The Pantry Primer: A Prepper's Guide to Whole Food on a Half-Price Budget](#), and the just released [The Prepper's Water Survival Guide: Harvest, Treat, and Store Your Most Vital Resource](#). On her website, [The Organic Prepper](#), Daisy uses her background in alternative journalism to provide a unique perspective on health and preparedness, and offers a path of rational anarchy against a system that will leave us broke, unhealthy, and enslaved if we comply. Daisy's articles are widely republished throughout alternative media. You can follow her on [Facebook](#), [Pinterest](#), and [Twitter](#).*

# The Million Pollinator Garden Challenge



In an unprecedented collaboration, dozens of conservation and gardening organizations, including National Garden Bureau, joined together to form the National Pollinator Garden Network and launch a new nationwide campaign – the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge. Designed to accelerate growing efforts across America, the Network is launching the Challenge in support of President Barack Obama’s call to action to reverse the decline of pollinating insects, such as honey bees and native bees, as well as monarch butterflies. Representatives of the Network joined First Lady Michelle Obama at the White House garden, which includes a section dedicated to support pollinators, to formally launch the Challenge.

The Network is challenging the nation to reach the goal of one million additional pollinator gardens by the end of 2016.

Any individual can contribute by planting for pollinators!

To tackle these challenges, the Network is rallying hundreds of thousands of gardeners, horticultural professionals, schools, and volunteers to help reach a million pollinator gardens over the next two years.

Every habitat of every size counts!

From window boxes and garden plots to farm borders, golf courses, school gardens, corporate and university campuses. Everywhere we live, work, play and worship

can, with small improvements, offer essential food and shelter for pollinators.

It's easy to register your pollinator habitat!

“National Garden Bureau supports gardens of all types, done by any type of gardener for any reason and gardening for the health of pollinators is a priority for NGB and our members,” said Diane Blazek, executive director of the National Garden Bureau. “We are thrilled to be part of the National Pollinator Garden Network and look forward to the day we reach one million pollinator gardens registered in the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge.”

Click [here](#) to shop for pollinator-friendly plants from NGB Members.

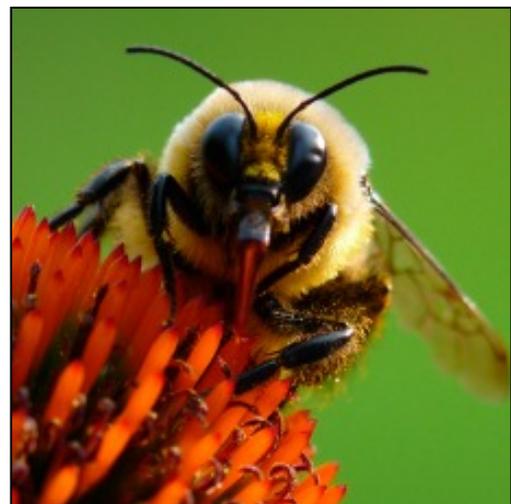
It's a simple two-step process:

- 1) Plant pollen or nectar rich plants
- 2) Register your pollinator habitat here.

Additional steps you can take to make your area more pollinator-friendly:

- 1) Provide a water source
- 2) Situate your garden and/or plants in a sunny area with wind breaks
- 3) Establish continuous blooms throughout the growing season
- 4) Minimize the impact of pesticides

Learn more at [www.millionpollinatorgardens.org](http://www.millionpollinatorgardens.org) and join the discussion on Social Media through the hashtag #PolliNation.



# Five Perennial Vegetables

By Maureen Farmer

Have you ever wished you could plant part of your vegetable garden just once and keep harvesting from it for years? Perennial vegetables are the answer to your wish.

## Advantages

- Low maintenance
- More resistant to pests, diseases, drought and weeds
- Create a healthy and intact soil food web
- No tilling necessary
- Require less water because of their established root systems

## Disadvantages

- Some are slow to get established
- Need to be carefully placed in the gardens since their location is permanent
- Can't use crop rotation to minimize pest and disease problems

Perennial vegetables are best planted in their own beds so that adjacent tilling and digging doesn't adversely affect their established roots systems. Here's a list of 5 easy to grow perennial vegetables.



### 1. Asparagus *Asparagus officinalis*

Asparagus should be planted during its dormant period. Purchase crowns (roots) and plant them in early spring

in cold climates and in the fall or winter in warmer climates. Crowns should be planted a foot deep and approximately 18 inches apart. Cover them with a few inches of soil and gradually fill in the hole or trench as they begin to grow.

Don't harvest any spears until the second year. Only harvest for a couple of weeks during the first harvest season. Every year you need to leave a few spears unharvested and allow them to grow tall and fern-like. Gradually extend your harvest season to 4 or 5 weeks.



### 2. Globe Artichokes *Cynara cardunculus var. Scolymus*

Artichokes are a perennial crop only in hardiness zone 6 or higher. They are usually purchased as bare-root stock or planted from divisions. They can also be started from seeds planted indoors 10 weeks before your last predicted spring frost. Plant artichokes 2 or 3 feet apart.

Harvest the buds when they're still tightly closed for the best flavor and most tender leaves. After harvest is complete, cut the stalks back to between 1 and 2 feet in height to try for a second same season harvest. Cut the plant to the ground in the fall and fertilize to provide nutrients to produce next year's crop.

### 3. Jerusalem Artichokes *Helianthus tuberosus*

Jerusalem artichokes are also known as sunchokes. These tubers are native to eastern North America and are related to sunflowers. Sunchoke are grown from tubers planted in the spring 4 to 6 inches deep and 12-18 inches apart.

Plant them in a dedicated bed that can be mowed or a large container since they reproduce rapidly and may become invasive. Their pretty yellow flower stalks can grow up to 10 feet tall. Harvest the tubers in the fall after the first frost. Leave a few tubers behind to produce the next year's harvest.

#### 4. Malabar Spinach *Basella alba*

Malabar spinach is a perennial crop only in hardiness zone 7 or higher. It is also called Indian spinach, Ceylon spinach, or vine spinach. Malabar spinach is a fast-growing vine with glossy, edible leaves. It's referred to as spinach because the leaves have a similar shape as those of spinach.

It needs consistent moisture to keep it from flowering and turning bitter. Malabar spinach is often grown on a trellis to keep it from spreading over the garden area. It can share a trellis with climbing peas. Direct sow seeds a couple of weeks after your last frost date. The seeds can take 3 weeks or more to germinate, so be patient.

#### 4. Rhubarb *Rheum x hybridum*

Rhubarb is generally added to the garden as crowns and not seeds in early spring or late fall. Rhubarb comes in red, pink and green varieties. Red varieties are more popular, but green varieties are generally more productive and do better in very hot southern climates.

You only need one plant to feed a family of four. Make sure you give each plant plenty of room since they can grow up to 3 feet wide and tall. Rhubarb can be used as a statement species in your garden.

*Maureen Farmer is master gardener and the founder of The Farmer's Garden website. The Farmer's Garden is an online place to make in-person connections between gardeners across the US. Gardeners and want-to-be gardeners can search and post free classified ads to share excess homegrown produce, tools, or gardening space with people in their area. The website also includes a weekly researched blog post to teach people about gardening. She is an avid gardener, horticultural instructor and a former Board member of Urban Oaks Organic Farm in Connecticut.*

*Website: [www.thefarmersgarden.com](http://www.thefarmersgarden.com)*

*Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Farmers-Garden/109649678942>*

*Twitter: <https://twitter.com/TheFarmersGardn>*

*Pinterest: <http://www.pinterest.com/thefarmersgarden>*



Do you love the taste of home-grown veggies?  
Do you enjoy gardening, but lack a sunny yard?  
Do you have doubles of some gardening tools?  
Do you grow more produce than you can eat?  
Do you wish you knew more local gardeners?



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**Building Community, One Tomato at a Time**

[thefarmersgarden.com](http://thefarmersgarden.com)

# Sacred Garden

*By Cliff Williams*

OK, so you've done all the cool stuff, you've done your soil preparations, and you've planned and planted your garden, but now it's time for weeding and watering. This can be a bit unglamorous, the doldrums between the planning and preparations of spring, and the joy of harvest, and sometimes you just need a little motivation when it comes to caring for your garden.

What a wonderful time to reflect on the sacredness of your garden and just how much there is to gain in something as simple as pulling weeds. Beyond the obvious peace and serenity we feel in our gardens, there is something deep and spiritual. I have eluded to this spiritual aspect in previous articles and now is a good time to look deeper into some of the hidden things that pull at us to spend our time pulling weeds. As organic gardeners we share a link to an amazing people that lived long ago.

To make a long story short, there was a society of gardeners with a lineage that reached back to the original garden. They lived what I see, is our intended way of life, a blueprint if you will, of how we were meant to live our lives and it involved each family growing their own food. These people were the Essenes, and their forgotten lineage was one that included being exceptional gardeners, to the point of having drip irrigation thousands of years ago. Besides their exceptional gardening abilities they also held the utmost of spiritual abilities, and this is one of the first clues into the sacredness of our gardens. Because of their health, many considered them to be almost superhuman.

You've probably already figured out that gardening is part of what the human aspect of each of us was created to do. We are hardwired for this, it is where we got our start, and the separation from it has been the cause of most of mankind's woes. For the moment, let's keep the sacredness out of the garden; it makes no difference whether you believe in

the Bible, evolution, or anything in between, the farther away from the garden you get, the more control over your life you give up to other people. Proof of this is in the end game we are seeing unfold right now, it is a chilling thought to consider that our giving up control of our food, could lead to the end of the human species. How far will science go in genetically modifying mankind and the world that was created for us, and at what point will we only look like humans? If mankind was getting the nourishment from food the way it was originally intended, there would be no need for genetics of any kind. We gave up control of our food, and we lost, we gave up much more than anyone considered. But, luckily the seeds are still there lying dormant in most of us.

It can be argued that commercialization of agriculture has allowed for specialization, which has allowed for both scientific breakthroughs as well as providing a life based on comforts. But it has also caused more blunders than good, the score doesn't add up, and we are sinking further into the hole. We are at a tipping point now in so many ways with global warming, pollution, food with little nutrition, our planet running out of water and other resources, "All the King's horses and all the King's men couldn't put Humpty together again." The bottom line is that despite the best of science's ways to create a new better world, the only way out of this mess is to go back and fix what we broke.

This starts by finding an example of something that actually does work. At one time we had the Owner's Manual for the Human Species and we knew what we were meant to do, and what worked and what didn't, but it has been gone for a long time. Luckily, that ancient society, the Essenes, that I spoke of at the beginning seemed to have that manual we've all been looking for. I have sought to emulate the Essene lifestyle, and my point is that we each should provide as much of our own food as we can, by our own hands. The real key is finding a way to do this in the 21st century. Although they were master gardeners, most of their time was spent in education, arts and sciences, as well as

spiritual ascension.

There is a correlation between organic gardening and leading a spiritual life, so now let's look at the loss of the spiritual aspect of our food and see just how deep this is. I am a very spiritual person and this is what drives me. We are spiritual beings that are in the midst of a human experience, and not the other way around. We each began our human time here with a specific goal and a specific reason, and I would like to share part of mine with you. Purity in our food, you are what you eat, and this is the foundation for purity in our human bodies which in turn is the foundation for our spiritual lives. You can only grow to a certain point if your foundation is built in sand, or eating what the world calls food today. There is a direct correlation to the way you feed and treat your human body with respect to the growth of your Spiritual body. And there is a limit to how far you can go eating what is currently available. Your organic garden is as much a temple as any structure because of the purity of the food you can produce and the spiritual growth that can result. America's agricultural topsoils have been depleted by half and are missing many of the nutrients that humans need. Clearly, achieving perfection will require not taking that same path, and rebuilding the soil.

I'll describe the Essenes more in a bit, but we need to stay focused on the reason for the pull to garden that we all feel, because that is what is under all of this. We are aligning ourselves with that Original Owner's Manual, the way things were meant to be when we garden. It feels good and right, because it is. Knowing the Essenes will only make us better gardeners as we notice all the little pieces start to fall into place. Gardening becomes part of something bigger, because it simply is.

If you have been following my articles, you notice that I look at food and gardening differently than others, and that is because I have a different mandate. One of the first things about the Essenes you will find if you pursue them, is that they are vegetarian and they eat all their food raw. You don't

have to be a food scientist to understand the enormous benefits this can bring to your life. When mankind strayed from this way of eating, we started a downward spiral that we are still in today. Nothing man has come up with can replace the health from freshly picked organic vegetables. We need our own fresh picked produce daily to maintain our human health in a fashion that provides for the best attainment of spiritual health. I have not reached the place where I grow all my food or eat all raw, but I am far enough towards that goal that I am convinced it is what was intended.

My mission, my calling, is to develop a lifestyle that emulates the health and habits of the Essenes 2000 years ago that is attainable in the 21st century. One of the first hurdles to cross is getting that fresh homegrown produce all year long, and this is only achievable with a greenhouse that is capable of growing all winter long, but very few are. Physical and spiritual health should not be seasonal.

As you delve deeper into these fascinating people, you come across another clue into the spiritual aspect of our gardens. You find the Essene Tree of life which is briefly described as unity between man (as an individual), and both male and female aspects of God. It takes years to understand the depths of this, but where we are concerned as organic gardeners, man is the tree and our roots extend down into the Mother Earth, which nourishes our human body, and our branches extend to our Heavenly Father which nourishes our spiritual body. Essenes meditate on this tree of life which promotes a completeness, and a balance that we have all been missing. It is a shame that the concept of the Earthly Mother is so foreign to us, because we are connected to the Earth. This is why it feels good to be in contact with the soil, you know what I'm talking about! How good does it feel to go bare foot in freshly tilled soil, and to work it with your hands? Many people only see spirituality as looking up to the creator, but we have completely lost the connection to the earth. One of the Essene parables says: "When we are young we stay with our Mother as she nourishes us, then as we

grow, we are able to go out into the fields and work with our Father.” Simply put, you don’t get one without the other, and we are more complete when we are in our gardens.

When you are out gardening, you are in the right place, doing the right thing at just the right time. You are feeding your human self and your spiritual self in a way that was predestined from before time. Now that you have an inkling of how your hobby is bringing you into a greater understanding and completeness, I hope you see pulling weeds as something of an honor and appreciate your chance of spiritual growth. Your organic gardening is making a contribution to mankind, setting an example that there is a better way. Yes, it really is that big of a thing.

I feel that pull and have sought to provide an example of a way to enjoy this type of lifestyle in today’s out of control world. I have a sanctuary, and a place to grow in health and spirit, and I want to share this with as many as possible. You can see more on my website, UrbanCrofting.com, and my book Urban Crofting”, by Cliff Williams.

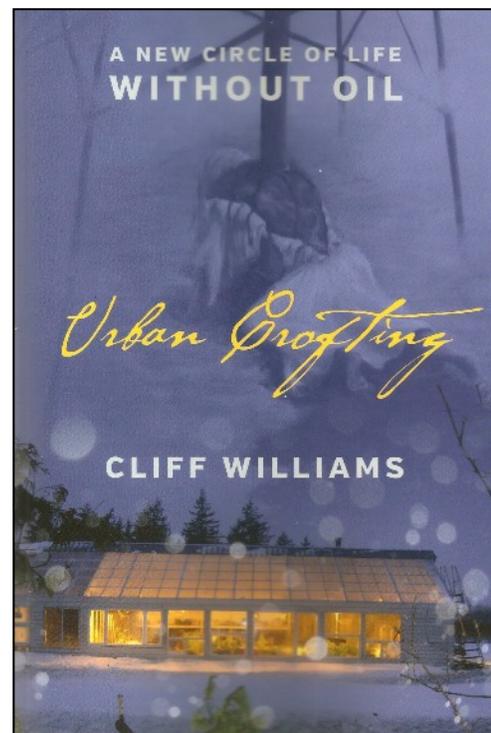
*Bless you in your Sacred Garden, in your Sacred Space, and may you feel the timeless attraction to your place between your Earthly Mother and your Heavenly Father. Cliff Williams*

The end of this article needs a brief simple explanation of Essene history:

Essene beliefs will always be embroiled in controversy because of Christianity’s beginnings and I feel this article should end with a little bit about that and why you’ve probably never heard of the Essenes. Briefly, Essenes began with Enoch but much of their history begins with Moses. Jesus was born and lived as an Essene and was considered the greatest Essene master and brought or established that Original Owner’s Manual that I spoke of earlier. Sometime after his death, there was a division in the church and the apostle Paul split from the other apostles or leaders, and began a group who believed most of the teachings but not about being

a vegetarian. It was this group that became the original Christians, and the reason why the Bible only contains passages of Jesus’ birth and the last couple years of his earthly life. Because of this split and conflict, most all of Jesus’ teachings, that Original Owner’s Manual, and the history of how he lived his life here, were discarded and eventually the Essenes were persecuted and driven underground. In the last 80 years or so, the Essene teachings have begun to resurface, first with the translations of Edmond Bordeaux Szekely, and then the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls. Buddhism also contains much of that Owner’s Manual. When Buddha left his father’s palace and disappeared into the wilderness, it was the Essenes who helped and taught him, so, many Essene traditions are incorporated into Buddhism.

*Cliff Williams has worked 20 years in the frozen vegetable processing industry. He has been involved with everything from the dirt to the package you get at the store. He has also worked seasonally for 4 years in the fertilizer industry, as well as growing up gardening and gleaning. When you add in all the supporting research that went into creating Urban Crofting to his experience, you will find that few people have the unique insight into our food that he does.*



## *The DARK ACT is Back!*

Ominous legislation is being quietly ushered through the halls of Congress as the mainstream media focuses nearly all of its attention on fomenting race wars throughout the U.S. If passed, House Resolution 1599, which has been dubbed the "Deny Americans the Right to Know," or "DARK," Act, will not only bar individual states and local governments from passing GMO labeling legislation but also restrict food manufacturers from practicing their First Amendment right to make voluntary non-GMO claims on their products.

This evil legislation is the antithesis of food freedom, and any legislator who supports it is literally guilty of treason. But if enough national attention can be diverted toward transgender Olympians, racial tension between blacks and whites, and the latest summer blockbuster comic book films at theaters, then these traitors just might get away with their devious plan to strip Americans of their right to know what's in the foods they eat.

This is no longer a joke, folks. The industrial food system and its puppets in Washington have declared war on the American people. And if we don't stop them now, they'll seize every last bit of our food freedom while we stay mind-dulled from the endless bread and circuses circulating the corporate media for the benefit of evil corporations like Monsanto.

Please take the time to contact your representatives to let them know that you're watching how they vote on the DARK Act. Explain how they will be held accountable if they betray the public by supporting this nefarious attempt to stamp out clean, organic food and replace it with genetically engineered poison.

The EWG has created a special Action Alert for H.R. 1599 that you can use to contact your representatives and let your voice be heard: [Action.EWG.org](http://Action.EWG.org).

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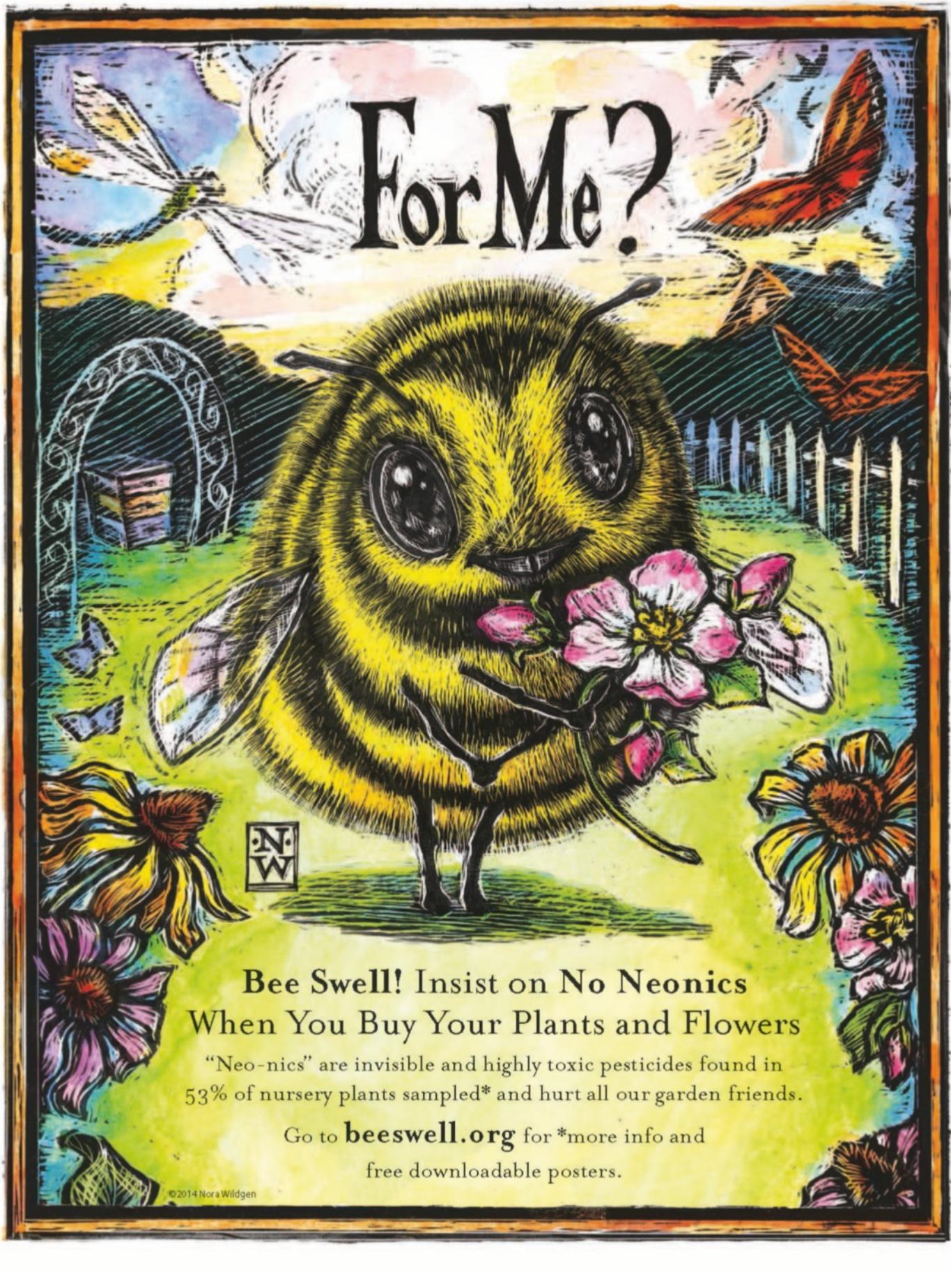
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Go to [beeswell.org](http://beeswell.org) for \*more info and  
free downloadable posters.

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# Making the Most of H2O

*By David Daehnke*

As we approach the driest time of the year, especially when plants are actively growing, our attention is directed to the amount of water we use in the garden. On average, plants need 1 inch of moisture per week to remain healthy and vigorous. In August we are lucky to get that in the entire month. Residential water use increases 40 to 50% during summer months due to outdoor water use. I know where I live there is a surcharge during the summer months for water usage, so not only do we need to conserve water for our own use, but it also makes sense dollar wise to conserve water.

One of my favorite ways to conserve water is to use a rain barrel on every downspout of my house. A rain barrel collects and stores rainwater from rooftops to use later for garden watering. Water collected in a rain barrel would normally pour off your roof directly or flow through roof gutter downspouts and become storm water runoff. Depending on your yard, this runoff can travel onto paved surfaces and eventually into a storm drain, not benefitting you or your garden.

The reasons for using a rain barrel (or better yet a series of rain barrels) is that they conserve water and help lower costs (a rain barrel can save approximately 1,300 gallons of water during peak summer months), they reduce water pollution by reducing storm water runoff, and my favorite thing, they are inexpensive to buy, easy to build yourself and easy to install. Rain barrels can also be arranged to slowly release the collected rain fall to areas that can soak up the water. To give you an example of just how much rain you can collect from your downspouts, if we have one inch of rain fall on a 1,000 square foot roof, you will collect 623 gallons of water!

Rain barrels should be drained and removed for the winter months to prevent ice damage. It is recommended that you remove the existing downspout and elbow intact and store for reinstallation in the late fall. You can then add another downspout section that will need to be custom cut to an appropriate height above your rain barrel. Two, connected downspout elbows (forming an S shape) or hinged extension should sit about two inches above the rain barrel inlet hole. Fine mesh screen should be used to cover any openings in the rain barrel to prevent mosquitoes and to trap debris. Rain barrels

can be installed upon blocks or wooden crate to provide height for gravity flow purposes.

Ready-made rain barrels range from \$89 to \$135 each depending on size, style and added features, and can be found on Ebay or you can do an internet search on rain barrels. For local suppliers, inquire at your local home and garden supply store, garden center, nursery, or hardware store. If you are adventurous, you can make them yourselves. Just purchase a heavy-duty garbage can (preferably 50 or 55 gallon), a small section of fine mesh screen for the inlet, a ½ inch brass water spout, downspout and 2 elbows, and waterproof silicone sealant. Cut a 5 to 6 inch hole about four inches from the edge of the lid and cover the hole with the fine screen mesh, adhering it to the lid with silicone sealant. Next drill a hole, usually 5/8 inch about two inches from the bottom of the can. Insert the spout, making sure to have silicone sealant on both the spout and backside of the spout to make sure it is properly sealed. Tighten the nut on the spout and wait 24 hours before using. Follow the directions above for the down spout and base, and voila, instant rain barrel for about half the cost on buying one.

The simple addition of rain barrels to your property will not only save water, but it will also save you dollars on your next water bill!



# Why Do My Trees Die? From Nursery to Landscape Proper Planting Practices

By Richard McCoy

In New Jersey we have a detrimental landscape process that has evolved into an epidemic and leads to the unfortunate and premature death of thousands of trees and shrubs per year. Whenever I present to a group of landscape professionals, I can't believe that there is even a need for a conversation that revolves around the topic of proper planting and mulching. Please bear with me for a moment as the first portion here will be a bit of a rant as this is a massive problem in our area and a very sore subject with me.

The first part of this problem originates from the nursery supply side. Right from the start of a tree's life, nursery tree liners are planted too deeply in nursery fields. Then rows are repeatedly tilled to keep weeds down. This practice in turn piles soil up onto the trunk and root collar of the trees and shrubs. (Tilling the rows is obviously better than applying herbicides however, steps should be taken to remove this excess soil when the plants are dug.) These two practices cause trees and shrubs to be dug with an excess of soil on top of the root ball. Now the root ball being buried in the nursery is only one part of this issue. The second part comes into play when a tree is dug mechanically by a tree spade. This scenario plays as follows; if you have an elevated grade around a tree (from improper planting or row tilling), then a tree spade is not digging to the correct depth, the tree spade will be digging too shallow. In this the case a portion of the root system is being cut and subsequently left behind underground in the nursery. In this situation if adjacent grades are correct when digging takes place, you would then have a tree with a greater portion of the viable root system intact as opposed to being left behind. The tree would also be removed from the ground at the proper depth.

The next set of issues arise when the tree or shrub is balled and burlaped (B&B), brought to a wholesale or retail nursery and sold with the root flare buried with soil, covered in burlap tied with nylon twine around the trunk and a diminished root system. Then lastly, planted "as is" without removing any portion of the galvanized wire cages, burlap and twine. This is truly a recipe for a failed planting and a death sentence for your plants.

This series of three images illustrates a red maple installed into a landscape. This was planted by a sub-contracted landscaper by a builder in a New Jersey. These photos display how poorly some plants and planting is carried out



Figure 1. From the onset it is obvious that this tree will be more than likely be compromised due to poor quality plant selection and poor planting practices. Surface mulch and soil has already been removed to expose the marred trunk and the top portion of burlap.



Figure 2. A portion of the burlap is removed to expose marred trunk the darker (wet) area is where mulch and soil buried the trunk. Already the plant is approximately 3 inches below grade and no visible root flare also shows presents of twine and burlap.

This is not an isolated incident.

This is an issue we encounter many times a year, almost daily. For every one of these conditions we see, I am sure there are thousands more under the mounds of mulch throughout the state.

Figure 3. This shows just the beginning of the root

Figure 3. This shows just the beginning of the root flare. The point of the hand pruners show the location and the development of a major girdling root. The darker damp lower trunk area and root flare is a 10-11 inches below grade. The final outcome here is that plant was removed with a very much diminished, almost non-existent root system and final root collar/flare depth 12 inches.



Container grown plants have similar issues as B&B plants. They may also be planted in the container too deeply and have girdling roots. Container plants also have some unique issues. Container plants may have circling roots or diving roots. Circling roots and diving roots are exactly what they sound like. Diving roots grow out from the center of the plant and instead of growing outward they grow straight down. Circling roots will extend out from the plant in the container until they run into the side of the container or pot and begin circling the container. If planted like this the roots will stay in the form of the pot and encircle and constrict until the plant dies. With the lack of lateral root movement in to native soil the plant lacks anchoring and stability and will eventually topple over.

The nursery issues explained above are then followed by the rampant inappropriate planting practices of trees and shrubs by low ball or just ill-informed landscape contractors as well as homeowners that are unaware of the issues mentioned previously and don't really know how to plant trees. Homeowners are instructed by well-meaning, however, ill-informed local nursery person on how to plant. Whether a big box store or mom and pop local nursery, the misinformation is handed out one by one. One neighbor talks to another neighbor and or sees the property next door, municipal or business complex or strip mall and assumes that all is right with the planting and mulching job that was just completed. Now on to the overzealous piles of dyed mulch on top of all the new plantings.

This detrimental practice of over mulching has been labeled a "mulch volcano" this involves the excessive dumping of mulch up over the root flare and on the trunk of the plant making trees and shrubs appear as if are erupting from atop Mt. St. Helens.

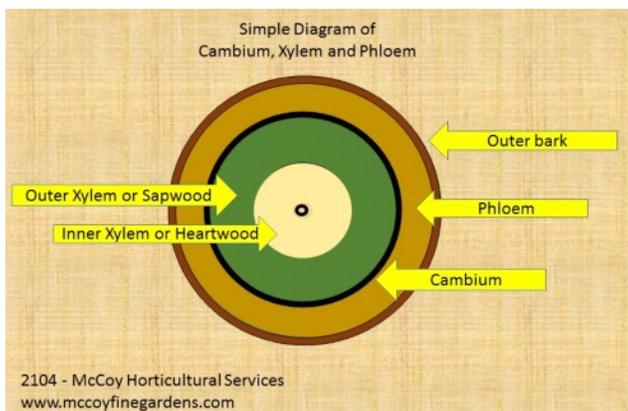
I couldn't point to one reason on how or why this practice of over mulching started. In short, my thoughts are that it started in the 1980's when building was a moving a fast pace. If a contractor realized that if a hole was only dug at  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the appropriate depth, then that would obviously mean less labor cost. Then said contractor would follow that up by not having to remove any excess soil from the site because that is being used as backfill up against the portion of the root ball that remained exposed and not underground. Then the remainder of the root ball is covered with mulch. If you add the contractor mark up on mulch, then the more mulch you dump the more money in the pocket of the contractor. Then if tree dies after a one year guarantee, the contractor gets paid again to remove and replace the dead plant with a new one. To some this may sound like a model for repeat business, but I don't see it that way. To me it is underhanded and unethical. The general public relies on so called professionals to do the right thing. It is unfortunate that unsuspecting consumer found this acceptable and bought into this idea. It is totally unacceptable for our company for plants to die once they are installed in the landscape.

So let's talk about the ridiculous notion that trees and shrubs should be guaranteed for a year. (*Perennial plants are a little of a different story as some can be a bit finicky and short lived in their nature. However, if all proper design and planting protocols are followed you should have great success with perennials also.*) You shouldn't even need to guarantee a plant to begin with. If a plant is dug properly, planted properly and planted in the right culturally appropriate place a plant will thrive. The idea that it is acceptable for a plant to die in a landscape only after one year of installation is ludicrous. So, we (our company) take this plant guarantee notion a step further only because people ask for a guarantee. We offer a three guarantee which is still senseless. I would guarantee that our trees will live beyond a 5,10 or 15 year guarantee. It's plain and simple due to the steps we take be-

send back down the excess nutrients and food to feed the microbes.

So let's talk about the ridiculous notion that trees and shrubs should be guaranteed for a year. (*Perennial plants are a little of a different story as some can be a bit finicky and short lived in their nature. However, if all proper design and planting protocols are followed you should have great success with perennials also.*) You shouldn't even need to guarantee a plant to begin with. If a plant is dug properly, planted properly and planted in the right culturally appropriate place a plant will thrive. The idea that it is acceptable for a plant to die in a landscape only after one year of installation is ludicrous. So, we (our company) take this plant guarantee notion a step further only because people ask for a guarantee. We offer a three guarantee which is still senseless. I would guarantee that our trees will live beyond a 5,10 or 15 year guarantee. It's plain and simple due to the steps we take before, as we plant, and the proper follow-up care given our plants do not die.

To understand why this is a problem we need understand how trees and shrubs work. There are three basic parts to a plants above ground vascular system. They are the cambium, xylem and phloem. The cambium is an internal layer of actively dividing cells between xylem and phloem tissues. Cambium is responsible for the growth of stems and roots. Cambium cells divide to produce xylem and phloem cells.



The xylem is plant vascular tissue that transports water and dissolved minerals up from the roots to the rest of the plant. As the plant ages primary or inner xylem cells will die and lose conducting function. Dead xylem tissues become the heartwood and will provide strong structural support for the plant. The function of water

and mineral uptake is the responsibility of the secondary or outer xylem otherwise called sapwood.

Phloem is the plant's vascular tissue that carries foods (sugars) or photosynthate made in the leaves to all other parts of the plant. Secondary phloem cells are toward the outer bark. The inner phloem consist of columns of cells and provide the channels in which food substances travel. As water and minerals are drawn up and food is produced the unused chemical compounds are pushed back out of the roots. Lastly and certainly no less important are the plant roots. Plant roots contribute biologically active chemicals into the soil environment known as root exudates. These sprawling root systems produce prolific amounts of root exudates. Root exudates contribute many types of organic compounds, simple and complex sugars, growth regulators, amino acids, organic acids, flavonoids, enzymes, and vitamins to the root zone or rhizosphere. This is where the amazing and wonderful world of soil biology takes off. It is this interaction between plant and soil, the communication between plant organisms and soil organisms that many take for granted.

Plant roots are genetically made to stay under ground and remain damp and in contact with moisture at some level. The buttress roots, the root collar or flare on upward is made to remain dry and above grade and should have no contact with moisture. So what happens when the root flare and trunk area is covered? By covering the root flare/collar you open up the plant to all types of root rot issues and insect attack. The woody trunk of a tree or shrub not only transports nutrients throughout the plant. It is porous and gasses like oxygen and carbon dioxide must be able to pass through for the tree or shrub to remain healthy and for the vascular system function normally.

Now, with all that said. Lets look at the steps we need to take to remediate these issues prior and during the installation of trees and shrubs in the landscape.

I would suggest that proper planting begins with a quality plant nursery selection. A plant should be chosen by a well-informed landscape architect, designer, landscape contractor who owns the company or a well-trained representative of the company that will be installing the plant(s). If a private home owner is selecting plants they should have some idea of what to look for as well.

Criteria for the selection of a quality Balled and Burlap (B&B) trees and shrubs:

## Nursery and Travel

*Become familiar with how the nursery handles their B&B stock*

- o Plants should be handled carefully, as not to dislodge soil from root balls and damage trunks or canopy

*Dense or solid root ball*

- o Individual movement of the root ball and trunk is unacceptable
- o The trunk and the root ball should move in unison. If the root ball and trunk move independently of each other, the structural integrity of the root ball has been compromised and should not be selected

*Good scaffolding branch structure with minimal to no conflicting limbs*

- o Minor conflicting limbs should be properly pruned immediately upon installation
- o If a multi-stem plant is specified one must be certain that at the union of a co-dominant leader is structurally sound

*Good leaf color and relative leaf size*

*Unmarred trunk*

- o A plant should not be chosen if scars, scrapes, cracks and/or other types of wounds to the trunk or major limbs are present

*Under no uncertain terms should any plant leave a nursery to be installed in a landscape with damage.*

*If plants are shipped to your location you should inspect and refuse plants damaged in transit. This is your responsibility and your reputation. No one will know who the wholesale nursery is after the job is completed*

*Prior to tarping, all trees and shrubs should be appropriately fastened in place to prevent movement during travel.*

*Once plants are secured in a truck or trailer all exposed areas should be covered tightly with a breathable mesh tarp.*

- o Solid poly tarps are not recommended – scalding or burning of leaf surfaces can occur in warm sunny weather conditions
- o Fastening a protective tarp in many locations will prevent damage from excessive wind conditions while in travel

## Planting

This is probably one of the most deliberated and broad ranging ideas in our industry. For example, should you add amendments, should you remove burlap, twine or galvanized cage, should you stake etc. Everyone has their own theories and applications for planting. After 30 years of involvement and twenty years of business in the green industry, this is an area in which I am very confident in and why we are willing to offer a three year guarantee on our trees and shrubs. We have an extremely low, almost non-existent percentage of plant mortality due to our planting protocols, a part of which would also be inclusive of the right plant right place design philosophy.

We take steps we take to ensure every one of our B&B plants are planted properly and given the best possible chance to thrive once installed. Beginning with planting hole size. When practical our B&B and container plants are placed in hole that has been dug 2-3 times wider than the root ball. I say when practical because we know that there are times when areas will not allow the oversized digging of hole. In this instance we would suggest downsizing the plant to one with a smaller root ball and allow the plant to grow into the space. The sides of the hole should be “roughed up” or scarified particularly in clay soils as not to create a bowl.

The depth of the hole should be the exact depth of the root ball. If you chose you may place the root ball just slightly higher than the existing grade. It is very important not to loosen the soil at the base of the hole. Over digging the depth will lead to settling of a plant once installed in the landscape. Consequently over time the root flare will end up underground.

Now bearing in mind my descriptions of how plants are grown and dug in the nursery, these next steps are extremely important. However tedious it may sound they are crucial to the success of your trees and shrubs. The first and perhaps the most important is the removal of excess soil that remained on top of the root ball from

nursery. The process I am about to describe adds approximately 5-10 minutes per tree but the payoff is huge. Once you have positioned the root ball close to the edge of the hole *but not in the hole* you can begin preparing the root ball for planting.

### Above ground planting preparation

#### *Cursory root collar excavation*

- o Begin by removing the twine and burlap covering only the top portion of the root ball. Save any reusable twine since you will need that again.
- o Bend back the top of the galvanized cage so that you may have unimpeded access to top of the root ball.
- o Next with a sharp spade scrape off any soil that is on top of the root ball. While doing this always move in motions away from the trunk as not to damage the trunk or root collar. Do this until you have exposed the root collar/flare.
- o Once the flare is exposed reposition the galvanized cage back on to the top of the root ball and retie the cage. Reuse the twine from earlier in this step. You could also keep nylon strapping in your truck to keep handy for this process. You will be removing it during the installation.
- o With bolt cutters remove approximately the lower third of the galvanized cage and burlap. With the lower cage and burlap removed some loose soil may be present, don't worry if this falls away. This loose soil is indicative that no roots are here to hold the soil in place.

### Now for actual planting

#### *Removal of galvanized wire cages*

- o Carefully roll the plant into the hole – *At this point it is important that your placement is spot on. Any movement of the root ball could compromise the integrity of root ball.*
- o Backfill to give the plant “some stability”. This is done only up to where the lower third of burlap and cage had been previously removed. This soil may be lightly tamped.
- o With bolt cutters cut up one side of the cage and remove the cage completely.

- o Now you can remove the twine or nylon strap that held the top cage in tacked.
- o Remove all burlap and twine treated or natural

### Backfilling

*If you decide to use any soil amendments at this point it is your choice. However, if you are not currently using any mycorrhizal products with your plantings I would suggest you consider it.*

- o Loosely backfill the around the plant. Do not step on or compact this soil around the root ball
- o Once backfilled to the top of root ball create a soil well or water well around the perimeter of the root ball to help retain water
- o At this point your plant should be stable and NO SOIL should be on the top of root ball

### Watering

*It is imperative that your plant get an initial watering at this point (watering in)*

- o Flood the water well and watch for air bubbles, repeat this watering until no air bubbles are present
- o Air bubbles on the surface show that air pockets are present in the backfill. This could lead to settling issues (plant shifting left or right) or the drying out of the roots once they reach these air pockets
- o At this time a gentle swaying of trunk could help ensure that all the air pockets have been filled

### Mulching

*If you are following an organic land care standard dyed mulch is a prohibited practice. Only organic mulch is allowed.*

- o Add a three inch layer of mulch around the outer perimeter (location of the water well you previously created)
- o Lessen the amount of mulch as you move in toward the trunk
- o NO mulch should come in contact with the root flare
- o NO mulch should be piled up on the root flare and be in contact with the trunk

- O additional watering may take place to be sure all soil and mulch have been thoroughly soaked

Now perhaps along the way you're asking yourself, what happens if the root ball falls apart? Well this has happened and inevitably this will happen to you. In which case you need to refer to a bare root strategy to planting just like you might plant mail order bare root roses, fruit trees etc. Make all your backfill like a slurry and completely flood the entire hole. The key here again is no air pockets. You must be sure that any and all air space is filled with your backfill/slurry. You may provide a gentle swaying of trunk as mentioned above this will help ensure that all the air pockets have been filled. If you resort to this option you will need to stake your plants. As a practice we do not stake our trees. The only time we may stake is when are planting large evergreen trees (to us large would be anything over 20') in an open unprotected area, or if planting large shade trees with a large canopy or sail. As with soil amendments I leave the "to sake or not to stake" question to the individual.

So this is how we plant every one of our B&B plants. It may sound exorbitant, you may think it's over the top. Nevertheless, as I stated earlier our trees don't die! This means no call backs for replacement, better-quality planting, a better company profile and most importantly a higher rate of customer satisfaction. Consequently a guarantee that our trees will be here for generations not just one year. They will still be here thriving long after we have hung our boots and shovels.

*Richard McCoy is the principal owner of Mercer county New Jersey based company Richard A. McCoy Horticultural Services Inc. ([www.mccoyfinegardens.com](http://www.mccoyfinegardens.com)). Offering environmentally responsible fine-gardening design and organic lawn care that promote a healthy ecosystem at your home or business. Richard is a member of the Rutgers Organic Land Care Working Group and Board of Directors of the New Jersey Organic Land Care Association (NJOLA). Richard holds a certificate of organic land care through the Rutgers five day certificate course and is a certified Natural Turf and Landscape Manager through the New Jersey DEP. Richard is available via email at [info@mccoyfinegardens.com](mailto:info@mccoyfinegardens.com).*





**Saturday and Sunday • July 25 and 26, 2015**  
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Garden Walk Buffalo is the largest garden tour in America. Each year, more than 370 private gardens are opened for a FREE public tour that takes place over two days on the last weekend of July. In 2011, an estimated 60,000+ “walkers” attended the event. The neighborhoods of Garden Walk are also Buffalo’s most interesting and eclectic shopping and dining districts, filled with unique gift shops and boutiques, as well as every ethnic food restaurant imaginable. Visit [www.gardenwalkbuffalo.com/](http://www.gardenwalkbuffalo.com/) and make plans to visit Buffalo!

A photograph of a well-manicured garden with a white lattice structure, a fountain, and various plants. The text is overlaid on the image.

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