



ORGANIC GARDENS *TODAY*

WINTER 2012

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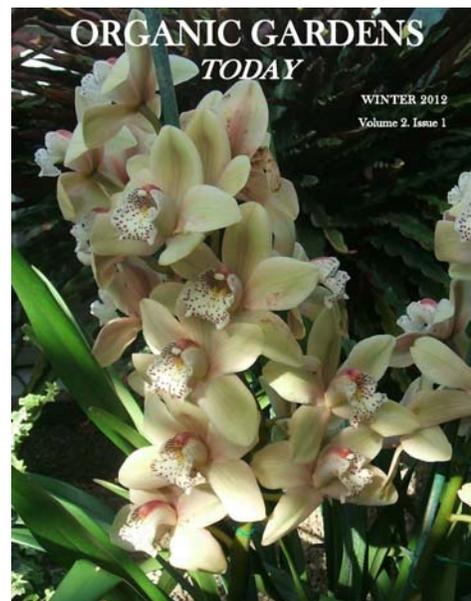
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Winter 2012

On The Cover



Orchids make a colorful, long-lasting display during the dreary winter months.

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From The Editor

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

Winter is a time to slow down and do our homework, if only for a short time. We will grab a new book or magazine and read how we can not only better our gardens, but also better ourselves *in* the garden. We will delve into our Garden Journals and take into account what was successful and what was not, and learn why. If you don't have a Garden Journal, now is the time to create one (you can read more about Garden Journals in my article on page). Our attention will also turn to our houseplants, making sure that the dry, arid conditions of our homes do not destroy the only color from plants we have during the winter. Once we have looked back, then we can begin to look forward. Our mailboxes will soon be full of gardening catalogs of plants, tools and gadgets to make us drool in anticipation of the upcoming gardening season. As winter begins to lose its' harshness, we will begin planting our seeds and watch as those tiny little seeds become sprouts, and then quickly become plants. Even though it seems as though winter can be long and dreary at the beginning, before we know it we will be out in our gardens enjoying the springtime weather. Remember, the shortest day was December 21st, so everything will look brighter going forward!



OGT magazine is a resource for you to be the best gardener you can be. If you want to see an article on a particular subject, let me know by sending an e-mail to editor@organicgardentoday.com and I will do my best to make sure it will be in a future issue. 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 "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 one month before the publication date for formatting.

If you like what we have accomplished with *Organic Gardens Today*, please share us with your family, friends, coworkers and fellow gardeners. We rely on word of mouth advertising to spread the word about the magazine, and I thank you in advance for supporting us. You can "like us" on Facebook and all of the social media web sites with one click on our homepage. The more you spread the word, the more writers will want to be part of this new creation, meaning even more information for you, our reader.

Good Luck, have a great winter, and more importantly, take a few minutes to learn and expand your personal horizons in horticulture. A garden is an ever-changing palette from one season to the next, one day to the next, so ENJOY!

David Daehne, Editor

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. Previously David was the landscape supervisor at the James A. McFaul Environmental Center where he was responsible for the management and operation of a ½-acre nursery, chief grant writer for horticultural projects, and educator of programs for public and private groups. David also developed and produced the park's first horticultural newsletter, The Horticultural Harbinger, and designed new gardens and created the largest public collection of ornamental grasses in New Jersey. David was also general manager of Ramapo Landscape Supply, a wholesale/retail/distributor of horticultural supplies, increasing sales 42% in his three year tenure. Previously David owned his own successful landscape design, maintenance and build firm for over 10 years. It was in this experience that he decided to communicate to people the joys of gardening and how they could accomplish the same results on their own, assisting the growing DIY segment of homeowners in New Jersey. He received his B.S. Degree in Ornamental Horticulture at Delaware Valley College. He was an advisory board member and adjunct professor for the Horticulture department at Bergen Community College in New Jersey. David is widely known from his radio show "The Gardening Guru" on WGHT 1500 AM, and can also be heard monthly on Martha Stewart's Sirius Radio program "Morning Living with Betsy Karetnick". He is a horticultural consultant on his Internet Web page, www.thegardeningguru.com. Contact David through his web site for current lecture schedule and to make arrangements for your own presentation.



JUDY NAUSEEF

Judy Nauseef, APLD has designed gardens for over 20 years and has gardened for many more. She specializes in residential landscapes and has a strong interest in native plants. She served on the board of directors of the Association of Professional Landscape Designers for eight years. www.judynauseeflandscapedesign.com



JANINE PATTISON

Janine Pattison MSGD is an award-winning UK garden designer and horticulturalist who trained with English Heritage at Eltham Palace in London and at Kingston Maurward College in Dorchester. A Registered Member of the Society of Garden Designers, the British Association of Landscape Industries and the Garden Media Guild, Janine is also a highly qualified RHS horticulturalist. Her practice is fast gaining a reputation for creating stylish, contemporary gardens often on difficult sites. www.janinepattison.com

MEET OUR WRITERS (continued)



LORRAINE FOLEY

Lorraine Foley is a professional gardener with many years experience working with organic methods. She attended the Salesian College of Horticulture in Warrenstown, County Meath and was awarded a science degree in horticulture. She is participating in a Masters course in Rural Conservation and Management in University College Dublin. This course increases awareness of the conservation value of various rural habitats and ecosystems. Her lifelong interest in nature is coupled with her passion for gardening and plants, in particular wildflowers. Her college thesis researched wildflowers of the market town of Trim in County Meath and revealed life in medieval times by the amount of unusual herbs identified. This is now published as a booklet by Meath Heritage, called "Medieval Plants of Trim". Lorraine also has a passion for botanic illustrating and uses many of her own drawings in her publications.



STEVE BATES

Steve Bates is a veteran writer and editor. He is a lifelong gardener who has visited gardens in the U.S. and abroad. He hopes to become a certified landscape designer and to work toward designation as a master gardener. While Steve was in college, he received a scholarship from the Virginia chapter of Sigma Delta Chi, the Society of Professional Journalists. Steve received a bachelor's degree from the College of William and Mary and embarked in a career in newspaper, magazine and web journalism, starting with small local papers and including a 14-year stint at *The Washington Post*, where he was an editor and a staff writer, covering government, politics, education and transportation. Steve has met two presidents and has won numerous individual writing awards for news, features and editorials. His articles at *The Post* ranged from investigative reporting to features about people. In 1990, he shared a Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild award for public service for coverage of the roots of a race riot in Virginia Beach, Va. His favorite article was the story of a rural U.S. family and a Bolivian family who bonded while a Philadelphia surgeon performed a desperate, life-saving operation simultaneously on one child from each family by dividing an adult donor's liver in half and transplanting a piece into each child. In addition to these awards, Steve received many handwritten notes from then-*Post* Publisher Donald Graham praising the quality and impact of Steve's work.

Steve has appeared on local television programs, such as the *Fox Morning News* in Washington, where he discussed his interviews with survivors of a headline-making plane crash in the Potomac River. He has been a panelist on locally televised political debates and has made presentations to professional associations, hosting two awards ceremonies for the Virginia Press Association.

Steve currently works as a web news editor. His site, www.shrm.org/hrnews, was honored in 2009 as the best news site of any U.S. not-for-profit organization. The same year, he and his team won a prestigious Jesse H. Neal award for producing the best department in a business publication (*HR Magazine*) in the country.

Steve has served on his homeowner association's Open Space Committee and is an avid baseball fan. He grew up in Arlington, Va., and lives in Ashburn, Va., a Washington suburb near Dulles International Airport.

MAUREEN FARMER

Maureen is creator of The Farmer's Garden web site. This web site is a surplus garden produce exchange where you can buy, sell, trade, or give away your excess backyard produce.

<http://www.thefarmersgarden.com> She is also on the Board of Urban Oaks Organic Farm in New Britain, Connecticut.

Plant a Row For The Hungry



The logo consists of a stylized green figure with a white sign on its chest. The sign has a red heart on it. The figure is standing on a small patch of green grass. The text 'Plant a Row' is in a green, serif font, and 'For The Hungry' is in a larger, green, serif font. The figure is positioned to the right of the word 'Row'.

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HOME GROWN GARDENING TIPS



Do you have a gardening tip that can save time and money?

Way that you can recycle and reuse items from around your house in your garden?



Have an organic way of deterring animals and pests from your garden without the use of dangerous chemicals?

We want these tips, organic in nature, that you can share with your fellow gardeners. Whether it is something that has been handed down from generation to generation, or a tip that you found the other day, let us know!

Send an e-mail to:

HGGT@ORGANICGARDENSTODAY.COM

We look forward to hearing from you!

Creating a Garden Journal

By David Daehnke



Keeping a garden journal may seem sensible, and it's certainly recommended by garden teachers and writers. But often the practice gets lost in busy spring days, and the fancy journal stays untouched.

What form should a garden journal take? Choose one that will be most useful for your own interests and tendencies. Some gardeners enjoy using computers to produce effective logs and charts, and there are plenty of journal programs available. For others, the beautiful, hardbound journals with art reproductions are soul-satisfying. Others will grab a spiral-bound notebook from their local office supply store. You might need something you can pick up with a muddy hand

and write in during wind and rain. I use a notebook called "Rite in the Rain"®, which I purchase from a company called Ben Meadows (www.benmeadows.com) for the year.

At the beginning of the year, I get a monthly calendar, without pictures, and make a divider for each month with the calendar page included. Additional pages include graph paper sheets and some see-through plastic page holders. Finally I purchase a spiral-bound notebook to hold all of these items.

The calendar pages serve for short notations: "Snowdrops in bloom," or "transplanted sarcococca." At the end of each month, on back of the page, I paste the weather chart for the month. Local newspapers often print these on the first day of the new month. After keeping these records for over 10 years, I can document the lowest temperatures, the deepest snow, and the highest winds. If your garden equipment includes a minimum-maximum thermometer and a rain gauge, you can also record unusual deviations in your own microclimate. Weather records help in diagnosing plant difficulties: Is the rainfall high or low? Did we have a late freeze that ruined the plants' buds? Weather records can prove invaluable when plants begin to have problems.

In addition to weather records, records of the time of growth and blooming and the appearance of insects and animals also help gardeners make plans. Keeping weather records helps with prediction of bloom times. When the lilacs are in bloom, do the apples usually flower? More importantly, how can I plan to incorporate similar flowering times for a more spectacular show?

Other valuable journal entries include reordering new trees and shrubs and their proposed locations. In the pleasure of the chase for more garden production, timing and planning vegetable and fruit plantings must be done. The specific cultivars that perform best in your own garden may not be those recommended by catalogs or even by other gardeners. Keeping track of the yield of the plant is especially useful, since vegetable gardens are, after all, about growing food.

Monitoring problems in the garden can also be satisfactory. Many gardeners have heard of the concept of "Integrated Pest Management" but aren't sure how this term, which originated in agriculture, applies to their garden practices. The phrase means adopting a careful management strategy that identifies pests, figures out what level of damage can be tolerated, chooses control if needed and works with the least-toxic control. This relates to journal keeping because records are vital for pest management. When did the aphids first appear on the rose leaves? How much of the plant is affected? Are beneficial insects present to reduce the problem? Which method of control is needed if the problem continues? What was applied, and when? Did it work? Records including this pattern of reasoning and observation will assist in helping all gardeners reduce unnecessary pesticide use and learn to use pest control methods properly.

Other bits that may wander into the yearly journal are soil test results, addresses needed for nurseries, or garden visits and sketches of garden layouts. Informal photos are fun and can help you see what blooms when and with other types of plants. Some gardeners get into keeping a "clean hands" scrapbook to supplement the working notes in the daily or weekly journal.

Keeping a garden journal can be fascinating and one of the most useful garden tools possible, valued right along with waterproof gloves and a sharp spade. As the years go by, you will have a resource that will impart as much useful information to you as the best gardening book on the market!

David Daehnke is widely known as "The Gardening Guru" and can be heard on WGHT 1500 AM (www.ghtradio.com). David is also available for lectures and landscape consultations. Please visit his web site, www.thegardeningguru.com for more information. If you have questions for Dave, please e-mail them to dave@thegardeningguru.com.

"Flowers always make people better, happier, and more helpful: they are sunshine, food and medicine to the soul." – Luther Burbank



The Joys of Winter

By Steve Bates



Gaze outside your window. What do you see?

Unless you live in the Sun Belt or have an unusually mild winter, chances are you are viewing a landscape that is brown and barren—or else white and frozen. Not the kind of sight that energizes most gardeners. Not the sort of view that we hope for, and dream of, through these tough winter months.

Other than fiddling with house plants and possibly starting seeds in sunny windowsills or under plant lights—tasks for which, over the years, I have lost or willfully abandoned the time and patience to do properly—we have two choices: pull into our shells and try to ignore the

winter until it is vanquished, or dream wonderful, warm, green dreams.

Alas, I seem to lurch back and forth between the two. I bet that you do as well.

It starts in late December and early January when the seed catalogs start arriving in the mail. I pity my poor letter carrier, who begins delivering pound after pound of holiday-related catalogs in September and keeps stuffing them into my mailbox six days a week right up until about the 20th of December. Then, with maybe one or two days of relief, the seed, plant, bulb and supply catalogs start. And for the next several months, they accrue in my mailbox in nearly equal measure.

With almost no exceptions, I refuse to start looking through the seed catalogs until mid-January. Before then, it's just way too early. It's too early because the moment that I start gazing at those brilliant new zinnia cultivars, compact zucchini plants and monster blackberry bushes, I'm champing at the bit to get out there and dig and plant. I don't know if this is true of gardeners in general, but I have poor impulse control when it comes to some things. Planning my garden for the coming year, including what goes where, is a big deal. We need to rotate certain annual crops, such as tomatoes and beans, to minimize disease and spread nitrogen-fixing properties. And to ensure that tall crops don't shade short ones—unless we want them too, such as with tomatoes or dahlias offering late-spring respite for late lettuce and pea crops.

That takes time and mental energy. That's fine. I have a lot of the former, and, despite my age, still a little of the latter. But what's really at issue here is the emotional energy that I invest into the planning of my garden. I just really care about getting it right. That investment of hope, dreams, caring and all those other wonderful emotions makes me extremely restless to put these plans into action.

Anyone other than me feel a little frustrated about this time of year? If not, you need to go find your inner gardener and have a little heart-to-heart.

Sometimes, though, such as when I'm shoveling my driveway or sitting in the office plunking away on my keyboard, I'll gaze out that window and the browns or the whites of



winter and see something else than lifeless bushes and lawns or dirty snowdrifts and icy sidewalks. I'll see a vision of the future, of the yard and garden and everything else, come spring, summer or fall.

In that vision, lettuce seedlings are growing by the second, elbow to elbow with other lettuce seedlings and spinach and the first peas and onions, so infused with infinite hues of green and red that it seems that God's paint palette has spilled all its contents onto my raised beds.

Or I'll see a vision of green pepper transplants soaking up sunlight with leaves so glossy they almost require sunglasses to view. Or the first fat buds on dahlia plants teasing me with the brilliant hues of late summer splendor. Or the tendrils of bean plants reaching over each other to shake hands in silent affirmation of the brotherhood of all living things.

Funny thing about these visions: I don't seem to recall one that involves Japanese beetles, or the blight that afflicted by raspberry plants this past year, or the weeds that sometimes grow more than a foot high amid asparagus foliage or plantings of purple coneflowers or through my deer fence—seemingly attaining a massive height overnight when I'm not looking.

I don't envision earthquakes or hurricanes or lightning strikes or the massive tree that fell on my garden plot in late summer last year, taking out about 20 percent of my fence, smashing several blueberry bushes into mush, and generally amazing me with its sheer mass and power.

And, if I did envision all these bad things, a few of you would likely—and properly—suggest that I check myself into some sort of rehab or other medical facility.

So, if you don't mind, I'll keep those pleasant, almost supernaturally pleasant garden dreams in my mind as we trudge through the cold, wet, mind- and body-numbing days and nights until, at long last, we can garden again.



Steve Bates is a journalist and gardener who lives in Ashburn, Va. He is the author of "The Seeds of Spring: Lessons from the Garden" (Create Space/Breaking Ground Books, 2010).



A Motivation for Rotation!

Keeping your vegetables moving will keep them growing well.

By Janine Pattison

Avoiding the quick fix of chemical fertilizers and insecticides means that organic gardeners need to be creative to get the best out of our vegetable gardens. In this article, experienced organic gardener Janine Pattison explains a simple organic method of improving your crops.

There are two main things that you must do to maintain the productivity of your kitchen garden. The most important is to maintain the fertility of your soil and the second is to control pests and diseases. If these areas aren't considered then all the watering and weeding in the world won't prevent a gradual decline in the amount and quality of produce you'll be able to harvest from your veg patch.

The soil in our veg beds is precious and if we are expecting to grow and harvest large amounts of produce year after year, then we need to take good care of it. If we want to garden organically then we can't just reach for the chemical fertiliser to give our plants extra feed. We need to understand what the plants need and how to give it to them. The old mantra of 'feeding the soil not the plant' is still as valid as ever.

Different vegetable crops have different nutrient needs from the soil. If we grow the same crop in the same place every year then those nutrients would soon be used up and our plants would suffer. If we grow our crops in different areas each year we can balance the demands on the soil and make sure it never becomes exhausted. This process is known as crop rotation and has been practiced by gardeners for decades.

Some crops can actually cause an increase in soil fertility of nutrients required by another group of plants. A good example of this is the legume family (peas and beans). The roots of these plants can actually fix nitrogen into the soil so that a follow on crop of nitrogen-heavy plants like cabbages will benefit as nitrogen is needed for leaf growth. Making sure that legumes are included in your rotation plan will ensure a subsequent healthy crop of brassicas.

The other important reason for practicing crop rotation is that it can help prevent the build up of pests and diseases in the soil which will attack your plants and reduce your yields.

Moving crops around your plot on an annual rotation basis will make it much harder for pests and diseases to sustain their presence in your soil as certain pests and diseases are specific to one plant or group of plants. For example; potatoes are susceptible to eelworm and scab while root crops are vulnerable to root fly and canker.

The best method of crop rotation is a four-year system based on four crop groups - potatoes, legumes (peas and beans), brassicas (cabbages) and roots crops. The system is best followed in that order because; the potatoes exhaust the soil, the legumes feed the soil by replacing the nitrogen which then nourishes the brassicas. The onions and root crops follow because they do best in soil that is not too rich. To add to the confusion, some roots are also brassicas (eg turnips and swedes). These are vulnerable to brassica pests and diseases and so should be included in the brassica rotation rather than root group.

Of course running a veg patch is not just about following rules and there always needs to be flexibility to accommodate those extra plants that have to get planted when they are ready rather than in strict accordance with a 'system'. 'Catch' crops of salads, blocks of sweetcorn and of course members of the squash family will all need to be squeezed in somewhere.

So before you forget, write down what was growing where last season and use that to help you plan next years planting. Your plants will thank you!

What vegetables are included in the four different crop groups?

Group 1 - Potatoes

Group 2: Legumes + others - Peas, Beans, Tomatoes, Celery

Group 3: Brassicas and leafy greens - Cabbages, Cauliflower, Broccoli, Kale, Brussel Sprouts

Group 4: Root Crops - Carrots, Parsnips, Swedes, Turnips, Beetroot

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
BED 1	Group 1 Potatoes	Group 4: Root Crops Carrots Parsnips Swedes Turnips Beetroot	Group 3: Brassicas and leafy greens Cabbages Cauliflower Broccoli Kale Brussel Sprouts	Group 2: Legumes + others Peas Beans Tomatoes Celery
BED 2	Group 2 Legumes + others Peas Beans Tomatoes Celery	Group 1 Potatoes	Group 4: Root Crops Carrots Parsnips Swedes Turnips Beetroot	Group 3: Brassicas and leafy greens Cabbages Cauliflower Broccoli Kale Brussel Sprouts
BED 3	Group 3 Brassicas and leafy greens Cabbages Cauliflower Broccoli Kale Brussel Sprouts	Group 2: Legumes + others Peas Beans Tomatoes Celery	Group 1 Potatoes	Group 4: Root Crops Carrots Parsnips Swedes Turnips Beetroot
BED 4	Group 4 Root Crops Carrots Parsnips Swedes Turnips Beetroot	Group 3: Brassicas and leafy greens Cabbages Cauliflower Broccoli Kale Brussel Sprouts	Group 2: Legumes + others Peas Beans Tomatoes Celery	Group 1 Potatoes

Janine Pattison MSGD is an award-winning UK garden designer and horticulturalist who trained with English Heritage at Eltham Palace in London and at Kingston Maurward College in Dorchester. A Registered Member of the Society of Garden Designers, the British Association of Landscape Industries and the Garden Media Guild, Janine is also a highly qualified RHS horticulturalist. Her practice is fast gaining a reputation for creating stylish, contemporary gardens often on difficult sites. www.janinepattison.com

The Dormant Garden

By Lorraine Foley

The autumnal displays of russets and butter-yellow tones announced the slow decline of the garden this fall. Within a short time the branches are blown bare by the winter winds. The garden is now dormant. Yet on closer inspection, there is much going on.



Bulbs planted during autumn will establish by growing a network of roots throughout winter, hardy annual seeds germinate under the leaf litter and some plants positively thrive and come to life in winter. The Hellebores bear shy pink and green open flowers alongside the fragrant flowers of *Viburnum x bodnantense* 'Pink Dawn'. The vibrant berries of *Pyracantha* and *Sorbus acuparia* trees provide colour as well an important food for birds throughout the winter. Holly springs to mind when considering colorful berries, but there are so many other interesting fruit and seed heads that positively dazzle.

Cotoneaster is unrivalled for its big show of red berries throughout the winter. Other colorful berries include the bright blue berries of the low growing *Viburnum davidii*. Shocking purple berries of the *Callicarpa* can look bizarre, but nothing can compare to the garish pink and orange fruit of the spindle tree (*Euonymus europaeus*)!

Although many deciduous trees are bare by now, there are variegated evergreen shrubs that provide color and focus in the winter garden. I recommend *Elaeagnus pungens* spp. for its green and gold color and fragrance at this time of year. It is a large shrub that can be clipped and is a great back-drop to other planting. However, the real stars of the winter garden include the brilliant red coral stems of dogwood (*Cornus alba sibirica*) contrasting with the haunting white trunks of the Himalayan birch (*Betula jacquemontii*).

Yet, such stars still need some care at this time, so apply a layer of leaf mold as mulch at their base. This free mulch can be created by raking leaf litter to a discreet corner of the garden and allowing it to break down slowly over the year. This will eventually become organic leaf mold. It can be used as compost, mulch or simply dug into the soil to improve its texture. Throughout the winter this leaf litter heap may also provide a home for hibernating hedgehogs!

Insects take shelter in this undergrowth of leaf litter and organic mulch. Among the community of insects are the typical garden pests like aphids and slugs. However, included are also their predators; ladybirds, beetles and frogs. By providing the right conditions to shelter over the



winter, the natural controls of garden pests will be on hand in early spring to reduce their numbers.

Finally seed heads provide interest to the winter garden as well as valuable food for seed-eating birds, such as finches. The teasel globes are defiantly tough to the touch but very architectural in appearance. This contrasts with the softness of the brown seed head of Rudbeckia.

Walking along hedgerows and in woodlands at this time of year illustrates the diversity of plants more clearly with reds of haw berries and rosehips bunched together with deep blue sloes and green crab apples. So, wrap up well and enjoy the best of the winter garden!



Lorraine is a professional gardener who specializes in creating sustainable gardens and promoting wildlife havens. www.wildlandscape.com



Winter in the Garden

By Judy Nauseef

Late fall and early winter offer clear views of the landscape. The noise of summer is gone. Flowers and foliage with their richness of color and texture have left behind the solid forms of the dormant season in my part of the hemisphere. The crisp, cold clean air invigorates me. No pollen to irritate my nose. It's best to go into winter with enthusiasm. I hear a lot of lamenting going on around me. I try not to be influenced.



My major complaint with winter is that when working outside in the garden or taking care of chores my fingers seem to freeze. No gloves can keep them warm. I have drawers full of gloves which promised protection. Each year I acquire new ones with the hope that they will be better than the last. Mittens with warmers inside come close to a solution until I end up pulling them off when in need of manual dexterity.

As a landscape designer, I use the winter season to take a closer look at land forms, tree forms, and various nuts and

seeds. I love being able to see through my gardens to what is beyond them. The pine, spruce and hemlock really get to shine. They are no longer just the backdrop for the gardens.

The first frosty mornings are stunningly and fleetingly beautiful. The frost sits in low areas and defines the undulations of the ground. Footsteps make distinctive sounds. During the deepness of winter the garden collects snow and ice creating beautiful scenes and showcasing spent flowers and seed heads. It becomes an art to choose those plants to leave standing in the garden all winter. I try to edit the view during fall cleanup, imagining how the dried plants will catch the snow. Objects, as well, left in the garden will collect snow in striking ways.



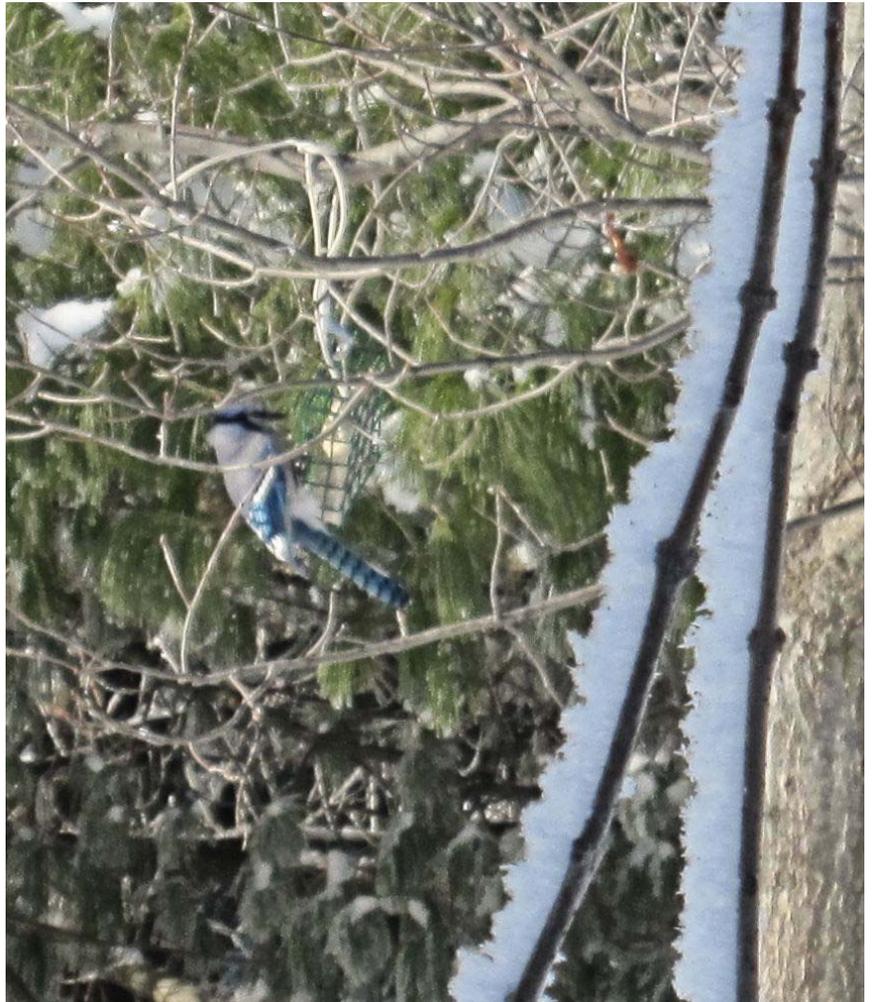
Objects, as well, left in the garden will collect snow in striking ways.

The garden that fed returning birds in the fall no longer offers sufficient food to maintain these visitors. They look for my feeders and delight us with their activity. Who does not exclaim when the common cardinal lands on the feeder? I figure that for all of the insects eaten during the summer by the birds, I can offer them meals in the winter in exchange.



Winter does give us the opportunity to look out at the garden from the warmth of the home without seeing some chore we need to do now. We put the chore on the list for the spring. We can enjoy the view and then bury our heads in books on gardening.

Judy Nauseef, APLD has designed gardens for over 20 years and has gardened for many more. She specializes in residential landscapes and has a strong interest in native plants. She served on the board of directors of the Association of Professional Landscape Designers for eight years. www.judynauseeflandscapedesign.com



SO YOU HAVE DEER TROUBLE?

By Ruth Clausen

Of all the problems gardeners face today, deer top the list. These beautiful but permanently hungry creatures consume huge quantities of food daily and have no more respect for the expensive and fancy borders of formal manicured landscapes than for the most humble cottage or vegetable garden. Indeed a nice mouthful of succulent lettuce or cucumbers is just perfect on a summer evening.

This is why I wrote *50 Beautiful Deer-Resistant Plants* (Timber Press, 2011). Deer are all over my neighborhood, but I manage to have a garden in spite of them. When we moved, I vowed to have a "deer-tolerant" garden, not fenced in or relying on commercial deer deterrents. This works most of the time. Realistically the only *guaranteed* way to avoid deer damage is to erect a 10' high fence. You must be diligent to check that the fence does not develop gaps or the gate is not accidentally left open. But fences are not always practical. For example, local town or county regulations may forbid them or the expense may be just too high. And anyway I don't want to be an exhibit in a zoo. Of course products to discourage deer abound, both chemically and organically based. Furthermore there are countless home remedies that gardeners swear by . . . until the night that the bar of Dial soap or the bag of human hair is ignored and the herd has a party!

Tips and tricks for discouraging deer without depending upon deterrents are included in *50 Beautiful Deer-Resistant Plants*. These come from my own experience and that of others. For example, raise bird feeders higher than the deer can reach; a pulley system is good. Raise hanging baskets out of reach too. Rake up any fallen acorns, crab apples, or other inviting fruits before the local herd discovers them. Don't leave foliage wet after irrigation during droughts: direct the water at ground level. Thirsty plants mean thirsty deer.



these decisions. If you must grow "deer candy" such as lilies, roses, tulips, hostas, or daylilies, plant them in large containers and enjoy them on a deck or patio close to the house where they are protected.



Individual gardeners must decide their level of tolerance for damage from deer. Can you put up with occasional nipping of soft young growth? on garden phlox for example? Can you tolerate a little browsing of young Lady's mantle foliage but become desperate when hostas are eaten to nubbins? Only you can make

Personally, I try to avoid the whole issue by planting species that deer do not care for. Don't believe naysayers who tell you " . . . I can't grow anything. The deer eat it all". The list of deer-resistant plants is long.

Each entry in *50 Beautiful Deer-Resistant Plants* includes a deer resistance rating based upon the usual extent of damage, along with culture and design tips for companion plants. A good starting point for plant selection could be the two major groups of plants that deer ignore. These are the ornamental grasses, including our native switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*), grass look-a-like Japanese sweet flag (*Acorus gramineus*), and fountain grasses (*Pennisetum* species). Likewise ferns are left alone. Think of cinnamon fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*), Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), and Japanese painted fern (*Athyrium niponicum*).

Among flowering shrubs consider spring-blooming weigela (there are plenty of cultivars, some with dark, variegated, or yellow foliage for long term interest after bloom time). Bush cinquefoil (*Potentilla fruticosa*) is another good choice along with bluebeard (*Caryopteris x clandonensis*), butterfly bush (*Buddleia*), and English lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) for later color. Unpalatable evergreens include Siberian cypress (*Microbiota desussata*) and boxwood (*Buxus* species). The soft new growth of the latter sometimes must endure a very light "haircut" before the deer decide it tastes disgusting!



Unappetizing perennials, native and exotic, are plentiful. Large groups include hardy geraniums, euphorbias or spurge, hellebores, coral bells (*Heuchera*), and ornamental and common sages and their hybrids. Try ornamental forms of familiar herbs: *Oregano laevigatum* 'Herrenhausen', lemon thyme *Thymus x citriodorus* 'Hi-Ho Silver', and ornamental onions (*Allium*). Some bulbs and annuals resist deer as well: snowdrops, daffodils, grape hyacinths, and summer snowflake are popular spring-blooming bulbs; sweet



alyssum, spider flower, and floss flower are valuable in summer displays;. Mix and match your choice of plants to provide as few tasty treats as possible.

With careful plant selection you will find that deer damage is minimized and you can enjoy your garden again. For further information, check out the Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/50-Beautiful-Deer-Resistant-Plants/143440742396814>

Ruth Rogers Clausen was trained in horticulture at Studley College in England, and received her MS in Botany from Kent State University, Ohio. Since 1976 she has freelanced as a teacher, lecturer, and author in the US and Canada. In 1989 she co-authored the award-winning Perennials for American Gardens with the late Nicolas Ekstrom. Dreamscaping was published by Hearst Books in 2001. Her most recent book is 50 Beautiful Deer-Resistant Plants (Timber Press, 2011). She was Horticulture Editor for Country Living Gardener magazine for 7 ½ years, and currently contributes to horticultural professional and consumer magazines. Check out this Facebook page for ongoing posts about deer-resistant plants: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/50-Beautiful-Deer-Resistant-Plants/143440742396814>

Easy to Grow Microgreens

By Maureen Farmer

What Are Microgreens?

Microgreens are tiny plants grow from seeds in soil. Microgreens are not the same as sprouts. Sprouts are smaller, less developed (usually without leaves), grown in water and eaten whole. The roots and seeds are left behind when microgreens are harvested. They also tend to be more flavorful than sprouts.

Microgreens can be grown outdoors or indoors in shallow containers during colder months. They take up little space, since they are harvested when they are only an inch or two tall.

Growing Microgreens

For outdoor planting, scatter the seeds about 1/8 to 1/4 inch apart over loosened garden soil and cover them lightly with 1/8 inch of soil. Then gently water. The seeds can be placed close together because you will be harvesting them in approximately ten to fourteen days. For indoor growing, choose a shallow container at least two inches deep and fill it with an organic potting mix. Sow the seeds and water as directed above for outdoor growing conditions. Place the container near a sunny window.



Check the soil daily and water if necessary to prevent the soil from drying out. Fertilizer is not needed since you will be harvesting the plants when they are very young. In ten to fourteen days, use scissors to cut the microgreens just above the soil level. Your microgreens will not grow back after harvest, so you need to plant more seeds and start again for additional harvests. For continuous harvest, plant seeds every seven days.

Microgreens are usually eaten raw in salads or sandwiches. They can also be added to stir fry dishes during the last minute of cooking time or used to garnish soup. Harvested microgreens can be stored in an airtight bag in the refrigerator

for a few days.

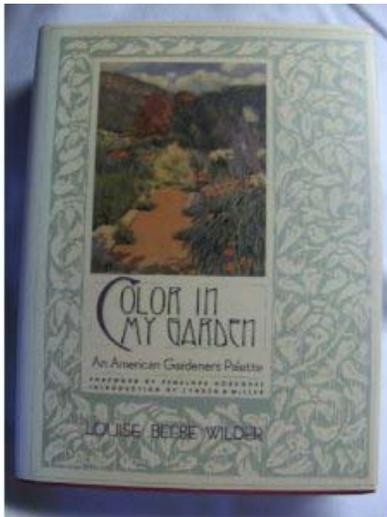
I usually plant pea and sunflower seeds to harvest as microgreens, but you can also try planting amaranth, radish, beet, or cabbage seeds. Some people also grow greens such as mustard, arugula and mizuna to harvest as microgreens. They cost very little to grow yourself and are very expensive in the grocery store. Try a few different varieties to determine which ones you enjoy the most. They're all delicious and easy to grow.

Maureen Farmer is master gardener and the owner and creator of [The Farmer's Garden](http://www.thefarmerwsgarden.com) website. The site is a free surplus garden exchange location where you can buy, sell, give away or trade your excess backyard produce. www.thefarmerwsgarden.com She is also a former Board member of Urban Oaks Organic Farm in New Britain, Connecticut.

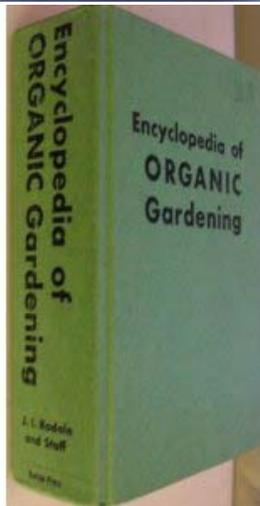
Education Begins Now!

By David Daehnke

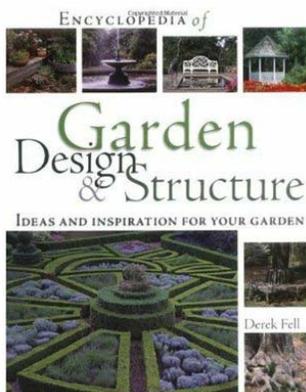
Even though winter has settled in on us in New Jersey and our gardens are far from being colorful, there is no need to despair. To me winter has always been the season of anticipation and planning, and to sit on the couch with a warm quilt and read a good gardening book. Much is to be learned from a good gardening book, but it doesn't have to be a new book to be very informative. Gardening seems to be going back to the "old-fashioned" way of doing things, with more emphasis on composting, the use of organic fertilizers and less toxic pest controls. Some of my favorite gardening books are older than I am, but there is a lot of useful information contained within their covers. Some of my favorites are listed below.



Louise Beebe Wilder – She has to be my favorite author of all time, simply for the fact that she writes like she was sitting right next to you, explaining what was happening in her garden on that given day. She was the Director of the New York Botanical Garden and wrote between World War I and World War II. Even though you may not find a fresh, off-the-shelf copy, her books are still available used, and are a tribute to American garden literature. Start off with *Colour in my Garden*, and you will be instantly hooked. Others such as *The Louise Beebe Wilder Gardener's Library*, which is a collection of three of her works and the all-important garden journal in one convenient book, and *Adventures in a Suburban Garden*, will impart to you a great wealth of gardening knowledge communicated in an readable format.

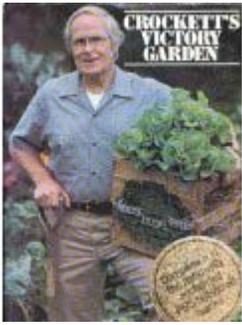


J.I. Rodale – Everyone is familiar with the 1959 *Organic Gardening*, which is a worthwhile reference for gardeners everywhere, but check out *Rodale's All-New Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening: The Indispensable Resource for Every Gardener*. It has been updated with current information, such as I.P.M., vermiculture, xeriscaping and the environment. Even though this may not be a book that you read from cover to cover, it will be one that you constantly go back to find the organic answers to problems which may arise. I have used this book so often that the spine is starting to tear, but even though it may be in disrepair, it will always have a front and center position on my bookshelf.



Derek Fell – Many gardeners have heard of Derek Fell from his award-winning photographs of gardens and plants, but he also has the gift of writing. He has many books available, from gardens (Cezanne's and Van Gogh's) to plant types (annuals, perennials, bulbs and roses), the book I recommend is *Encyclopedia of Garden Design and Structure: Ideas and Inspiration for Your Garden*. Filled with tremendous gardening information as well as great pictures, this book will definitely get your creative juices flowing for the upcoming garden year. When I am out lecturing to various garden

clubs throughout the Northeast, I always tell them that the best way to improve their garden is to see what other people have done in their gardens and choose what they like or dislike, and incorporate the best ideas into their garden. This book will definitely give you plenty of ideas to improve and enhance your garden.



James Underwood Crockett - As a youngster, I knew what I wanted to be when I was grown up. Unlike most children at that age, Saturday mornings didn't mean cartoons – Saturday morning was for PBS and watching the *Victory Garden* with Jim Crockett. There was a very simple way about this man, and the main point of the show was to communicate *how* to garden and the primary skills you would need to get started that afternoon. There was no flash, lots of humility, and lots of love for getting your hands dirty and enjoying a sunny day in the garden. Even though these versions of the Victory Garden books are not currently in print, you can easily find used versions on Amazon or Ebay. To this day he still remains THE king of garden communicators to me and how a gardening show should be produced.

Even though this is only a short selection, please take time and visit your local library and see what interests you. Even if you only pick up one horticultural book to read, your garden will benefit. One of my favorite things to do is to go to used book shops or sales and see what they have in gardening books. Sometimes you will find so many books your arms will be tired when leaving, and others you will leave empty handed, but a fun time will be had searching for that gardening treasure. With the brave new world of kindles and E-books, there is still nothing like having a book in your hands, sipping a coffee and learning something new.

As we know enter 2007 and begin a new gardening year, I will leave you with this quote from Robert Rodale with the hope that it will inspire you.

“Gardens are places to renew yourself in mind and body, to reawaken to the truth and beauty of the natural world, and to feel the life force inside and around you. And the organic way to garden is safer, cheaper, and more satisfying. Organic gardeners have shown that it's possible to have pleasant and productive gardens in every part of this country without using toxic chemicals. They make their home grounds an island of purity.”

David Daehnke is widely known as “The Gardening Guru” and can be heard on WGHT 1500 AM (www.ghtradio.com). David is also available for lectures and landscape consultations. Please visit his web site, www.thegardeningguru.com for more information. If you have questions for Dave, please e-mail them to dave@thegardeningguru.com.



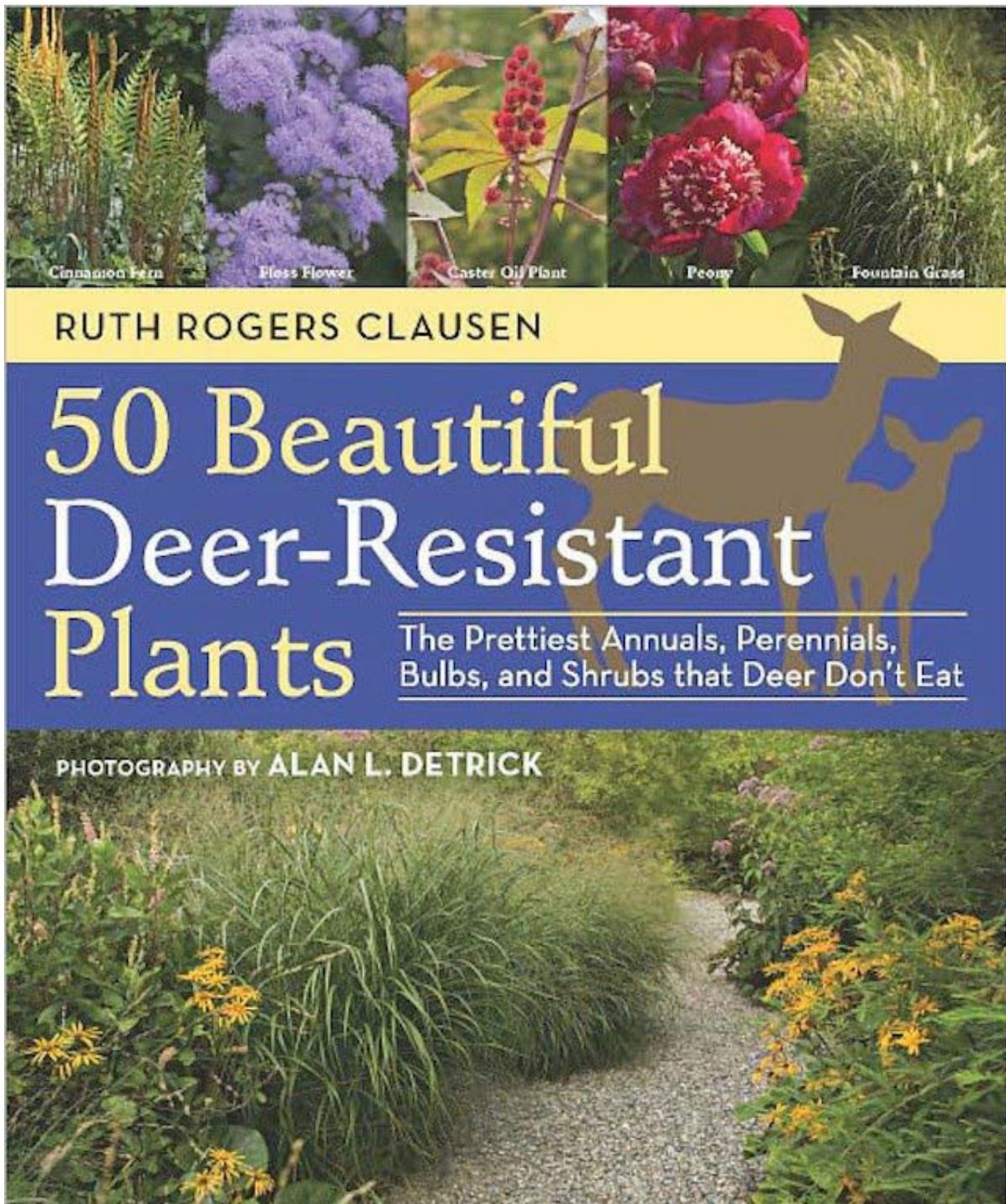
Special Contest for the Winter OGT Issue!

It is simple to enter, easy to win. If you would like a signed copy of Ruth Clausen's book,

“50 Beautiful Deer Resistant Plants”

Send an e-mail to editor@organicgardentoday.com with “CONTEST” in the subject line, and your name and mailing address in the body of the e-mail. One winner will be selected.

Our thanks to Ruth and Timber Press for this contest!



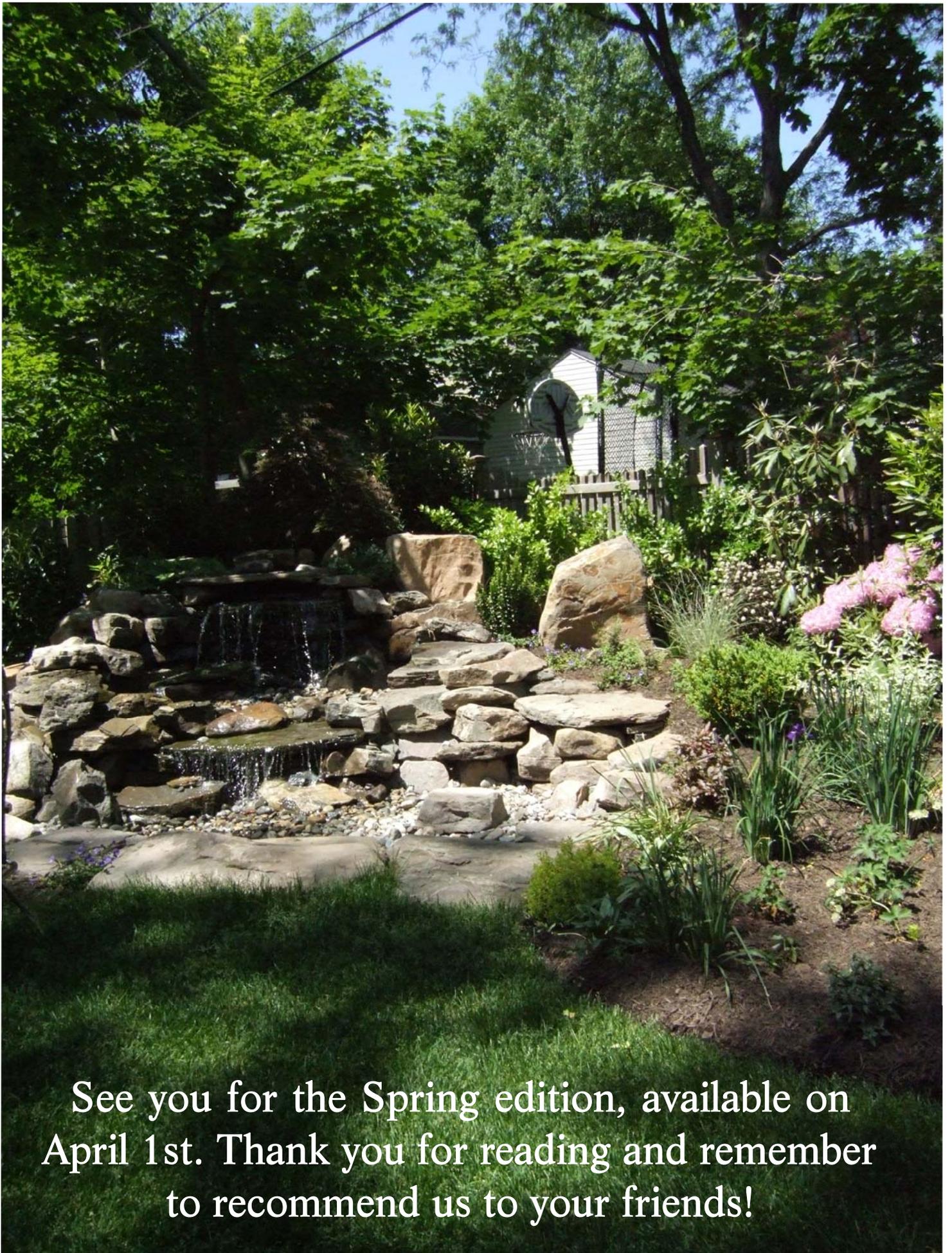
Your Photos



Send us photos of your garden, special plants or prize-winning fruits and vegetables to

photos@organicgardentoday.com

WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE THEM!!



See you for the Spring edition, available on April 1st. Thank you for reading and remember to recommend us to your friends!