



Annual Welcome Back Newsletter

Spring 2010, Edition 2

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All you can eat

GARDENING WORKSHOPS



Once again Cam Mather will be back to talk about vegetable gardening. He is fresh from authoring and publishing a new book called *The All You Can Eat Gardening Handbook*. Cam's style is not what you would call subdued – he's passionate about what he does and loves to share his knowledge with others. He is refreshing to listen to because his content is a result of his lifetime of gardening. His workshops will be held at the greenhouse on:

Saturday May 22 at 11:00
and Sunday May 30 at 2:00.

“IMAGINING” SEASON

“You cannot depend on your eyes when your imagination is out of focus.” – Mark Twain

We hope that you have had a wonderful winter and fully enjoyed the beginning of what is known as “imagining” season. Gardening is made up of several stages, most of which are commonly known. Spring is when planting takes place. Summer is the time when plants do most of their growing and the majority of maintenance work gets done in the garden. Fall is the time of harvest when we get to reap the rewards of everything that has come before. Perhaps the most important time is the “imagining” season. This is when planning takes place and we anticipate what could be. It is often done when no plants are in the ground, sitting next to the fire surrounded by seed catalogs and books. Or in this day and age perhaps sitting at a computer screen with several windows open to gardening sites. But it can happen at any time. When you plant a seed or transplant in the garden it



is impossible to be simply in the moment – you are also anticipating the crop or flower that will grow from that seed. It is the opposite of “staying in the moment”. Gardening makes everyone an artist, imagining what will come from the creation that they and nature are initiating.

MITIGATE GLOBAL WARMING WITH TERRA-C

The best way to lose an argument is to engage in an argument. We aren't going to try to convince you one way or the other whether global warming is a problem or not. It is a complicated topic and we will leave it at that. Biochar, and in particular our own brand called Terra-C, is made from a careful processing of wood leaving much of the carbon in it in a fixed form that is highly resistant to breaking down.

“Man is a complex being: he makes deserts bloom - and lakes die.”
– Gil Stern

Why would we do that? There is very strong evidence now that biochar, when added to soil, has a number of wonderful benefits. It acts similarly to other organic matter you might add such as peat moss

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CUSTOM PLANTERS



As you know, each year we sell many planters that have been planted with a group of plants that can stand alone on your patio (that must be why they are called patio planters)! What you may not know is that we can custom plant those planters for you. It is best to contact us early so that we can plant the plants and allow them to grow in our greenhouses to become established. We can plant them and you can pick them up on the same or the next day if you wish.

“You can complain because roses have thorns, or you can rejoice because thorns have roses.”

– Ziggy, character in comic strip by Tom Wilson

LEARNING HOW TO WATER PROPERLY

“Those who dwell among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life.” – Rachel Carson

What is the most common question that we are asked? How often do I water? Our answer is always the same, and to some, not as satisfactory as they might like — “it depends” — and it does depend on many conditions. If you try to water on



a schedule you will be ignoring those conditions that determine the actual need for water. So you are asking “what do I do?” It’s easy, you simply become a better gardener! That may sound glib, but the fact is that by checking your plants on a regular basis and only watering them when you see that they need water, you will become a better gardener, getting better in touch with your plants. So back to the question, you should check your plants on a daily basis. Water when you see that the soil is dry using a combination of colour of soil and feeling the soil at depth (and weight if it happens to be a pot). As you become more experienced and more in tune with your plants it will become easier and easier. It is best summed up by this phrase from Yogi Berra “you can observe a lot by just watchin”.

GROWING YOUR OWN VEGETABLES

“An idealist is one who, on noticing that roses smell better than a cabbage, concludes that it will also make better soup.” – Henry L. Mencken

Everyone predicted that vegetables would sell really well last year because of the economic times. While it is true that vegetables did sell well last year, they were not off the charts. What has happened is that more and more people are learning about the joy of growing and preparing their own food. We sold sweet potato cuttings in the spring and we are still getting stories from people about their favourite sweet potato recipe or how they cured and stored them after harvest.

There have always been compelling reasons to grow your own vegetables. Those reasons are just as valid as ever but are now augmented by the work of thousands of enthusiasts all over the world working to



preserve and distribute seeds of heritage varieties with qualities well beyond what gardeners are used to having access to. Of course, current breeding programs are not stagnant so new varieties continue to be introduced, thus making the selection quite overwhelming.

annuals and perennials

OUR FLOWERS

Top to Bottom: Rose, Straw Flower, the back beds at the greenhouse in Odessa, Black Eyed Susan.

continued from page 1 (Mitigate Global Warming with Terra-C)

or compost. It helps sandy soils hold onto water and nutrients. Because it is filled with millions of little holes, it provides a



home for the helpful soil organisms which make your plants thrive. Remember how it is very slow to break down? Thousands of years! You don't have to keep adding it year after year. This is our first year to sell Terra-C for the home gardener. We have given it to Ken Allan who does vegetable garden research and his results are very encouraging. You will be on the cutting edge of a new wave in gardening and taking a bit of CO2 out of the air while you are at it.

RAVENS WATCHING OVER GREENHOUSE

A simple pleasure that we enjoy at the Greenhouses are the company of a pair or ravens nesting in one of the barns. It is really hard not to anthropomorphize these creatures. They seem to command the area, and rather than you observing them, the distinct impression is often that they are overseeing their domain and keeping an eye on all that happens. As they fly over the area you can see them land in virtually any location and just "chill". One of their favourite locations is our pile of wood chips, likely because it is a source of both water and easily transported building materials!

Although most of the time appearing quite laid back, whenever a perceived threat to the nest appears, one of the ravens will go into defense mode and it is anything but relaxing, especially for the target. Many times we've seen a red-tail hawk soaring above the barn with one of the ravens in hot pursuit. Despite being a large bird, they are amazingly dexterous as fliers, even executing barrel rolls. The hawk, which is considerably larger, may not be under mortal threat, but it definitely disturbs its patterns enough to eventually give up and leave the area, no doubt breathing a huge sigh of relief as it flies off.

Once the eggs hatch and the babies fledge, the real fun begins. The children must learn the ropes and they start by following, or being herded by mom and dad over



the kingdom. While the adults have a slow grace to them (albeit sometimes loud!) the babies are the physical comedians. Often you can see them land on a building. The adults land effortlessly on the most precarious perch. The babies will try to land, miss the spot, and start a noisy slide down the roof until they recover.

When you are at the greenhouse, make sure to check out the ravens . . . you can be sure they will be checking you out.



Dangerous propaganda enclosed . . . may cause you to insist on getting dirt under your fingernails and stains on your knees. Burt's Greenhouses will not be held responsible for your behavior after reading the contents.

VICTORIA DAY SPECIAL!

Free 4-pak of annuals or vegetables with any plant purchase!

Available from May 20th – 25th.

A wide selection of plants to choose from.

Limit is 1 per customer.

FOLLOW US:

search for Burt's Greenhouses on [facebook](#)

twitter:
[twitter.com/BrianBGH](#)



SIX LOCATIONS FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE

Our plants are available at the greenhouse in Odessa, plus our five other convenient locations.

1 *Burt's Greenhouses*
539 Maple Road, Odessa
613-386-3426

2 *Grant's No Frills*
1192 Division Street
Kingston

3 *Metro Bayridge*
775 Bayridge Drive
Kingston

4 *Food Basics*
1225 Princess Street
Kingston

5 *Belleville No Frills*
211 Bell Boulevard
Belleville

6 *Hibert's No Frills*
450 Centre Street North
Napanee

