Our annual meeting is going to be an extra special event this year. The dinner will be prepared by Culinary Arts students at Plattsburgh State and will feature local food. See page 10 for the invitation and details.

We will be thanking our many volunteers and recognizing this year’s Friends of Extension: Professors Jonathan Slater and Colleen Lemza from Plattsburgh State University. Their students have been helping us on a variety of marketing projects and we’ll have a special presentation from them.

2012 is the 100th anniversary of Cornell Cooperative Extension in Clinton County. Please join us on November 1st!

Amy Ivy
Executive Director,
Horticulture Educator

Garden Clean Up

Almost every gardener has commented that this summer was one of the worst for insect pests. There is speculation that the mild winter allowed more to survive than usual, and the hotter, drier than usual weather this summer allowed them to thrive. For whatever the reason, there were a lot of pests this year!

Leafhoppers, squash bugs, stink bugs, spider mites, cucumber beetles, flea beetles all seemed to appear in record numbers this summer. Gardeners are asking if there’s anything they can do now to reduce problems next year.

It’s always a good idea to remove infested tissue from your garden. Not all diseases and pests overwinter in plant debris, but enough do that it helps. Do not add materials to your regular compost pile; start a separate pile instead, away from your garden area. If you don’t have the space for this, bag them up or invest in a chipper/shredder that will reduce the heap to something more manageable. But be aware that most pests just move over to weeds, wildflowers and brush to spend the winter, so even though you clean your garden out, they can just move back in next spring. Even so, a good garden clean up helps, and it makes everything look better.

Amy Ivy

Flea beetles and the damage they cause.
I tried a new variety of bush bean this year, and I wasn’t satisfied with it. Darned if I can remember just what one it was…I took care of my tomatoes this year just the way I did last year (well, I’m not 100% sure, but I think I did!) and they bombed before the season was over…Did I really divide my Echinacea last year, or was it the year before…? Who was it last fall who said she wanted some of my Nepeta when I divide this spring…?

I’m sure you can relate to these gardening dilemmas, especially if you’re like me and think “I really don’t have the time to take notes right now, but I’m sure I will remember”. Or, “I’ll just save the seed catalogue or the seed packets and mark on them what did and/or didn’t do well”… And then your well-intentioned spouse or child will “tidy” up the shed and toss out all the catalogues and packets...

So in the end, you spend more time and energy fretting and not getting much if any gardening done. Take heart! There is an antidote - keep a Garden Journal, and START NOW!

There truly is an advantage of keeping some kind of record of your gardening exploits, both the good and the not-so-good. Keeping records in writing and/or pictures or both serves not only as a memory keeper of past plantings but is also a useful resource for planning future gardens. In some cases, taking a note could be as simple as using a marked Popsicle stick beside a plant; in others, nothing but careful documentation will do. But, DO SOMETHING! It’ll grow on you...

Whatever your situation is, let me encourage you to keep some kind of record of your garden work each year. Not every entry into your journal has to be an extensive treatise – sometimes just a word or two will suffice. The following are some suggestions you might want to consider documenting:

### Keep track of the weather
Was it an unusually hot and dry one like this past year? When did you plant, and what was the weather like at that time? When was the last killing frost in the spring? When was the first hard frost in the fall? The weather is extremely important to plants as well as to the inevitable pests and diseases that rear their ugly heads and scatter their insidious spores.

The weather will affect wildlife, too. This hot dry summer meant less fruits and forage materials in the woods for the deer and the bears. Fortunately, we only saw one young black bear wander through the back yard early one morning, but the deer were a permanent fixture. Until now, I have been reluctant to put up a deer fence. Our flower and vegetable gardens are so near the house I thought for sure the proximity and our dog would keep the deer at bay. Alas, no. And so went the Swiss chard, the beet tops, the green beans, some of the squash blossoms, the ninebark, the lady’s mantle, the columbine...rats! Fence: top of the “to-do” list for next year!

### Keep track of the birds, butterflies, beneficial insects, and other wildlife in and around your gardens
Our flowering, fruiting crops depend on pollination – by a host of insects as well as some birds and bats. A diversity of wildlife in and around your gardens will also tend to keep insect pests at bay: toads, snakes, bats, ladybugs, and dragonflies to name a few will keep many insect pest populations down to a dull roar. And there’s nothing more soothing to the spirit that watching butterflies flitting in your gardens.

### Keep track of your perennials in bloom
When did they bloom, and for how long? What colors were they? (You’d think you couldn’t forget color, but trust me, you can!) Did they complement the other flowers around them? Which ones bloomed early, which ones late? Which ones have interesting foliage that looks good all season, and which ones need a mid-summer pruning to look good – and, even better, bloom again?
You know what they say, “A picture is worth a thousand words”...so have at it! Cameras are so small and portable nowadays there’s almost no excuse. Perhaps the kid next door would like to help with the technology, and in the meantime, perhaps he just might get interested in what goes on in a garden...

Include a map showing where your vegetables are planted. You’ll want to rotate crops like tomatoes, potatoes, and squash to mitigate the build-up of common fungal diseases as well as pesty insects like Colorado potato beetles and squash bugs. You may see that – oops! – all your brassica crops (kale, cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, etc.) were planted together thus providing a veritable smorgasbord for the imported cabbage worm (child of the ‘darling’ white cabbage butterfly!). Also keep track of any diseases that occur so that next year you can possibly select more resistant varieties.

Jot down recommendations for the future. Should you plant that variety (of vegetable) again? How about mixing some of your perennials up at division time in the spring (you know, divide and conquer and all that...) Perhaps something taller in back of the bed would be attractive... And shade – happens! When we moved into our house 17 years ago, most of both our front and back yards basked in sun, thanks to all the trees we sacrificed (we live in a forest). And the years, like old underwear, creep up on you until you’re in the dark about how much sun your yards actually do get. Time to spend a few whole days at home to pay attention to where the sun really tracks!

Keep track of when and how you amend your beds, both vegetable and flower. How much composted manure did I use? Where did I get it from? And that “topsoil” that had compost blended in that was supposed to grow vegetables that would make even Jack (in the Beanstalk) jealous but honestly didn’t amount to a tiny hill of beans – well, I certainly won’t go back there any time soon...now, where was that?...

Maintain a “To-Do” List. While an item is fresh in your mind, write it down. It might be a “to-do” for later this year or perhaps next year. It might even be an item you’ll need help with so you’ll need to plan ahead.

Keep your journal on the breakfast table or somewhere you’ll see it every morning. Wait until you’ve had your first “cup-a” and those mental cobwebs have lifted. Don’t hesitate to doodle, or draw diagrams – just get in the habit of having a pen or pencil in hand and the book nearby...

Journals make great winter reading. Garden journals can provide a realistic “brake” on some of the wild fantasies that may romp through your mind as you thumb through the colored pages of those garden catalogs that seem to arrive just when the Holiday dazzle has sizzled and everything everywhere is cast in shades of grays, browns, and sort-of-whites. Just revisit your Journal and you may find you’ll be able to “say no” to most of the eye-candy gardening items and “yes” to success in the next gardening season!

North Country Gardening
You’re Not Done Yet!

By Jolene Wallace

I read somewhere that although fall marks the end of this growing season; it also marks the beginning of next year’s. That stuck in my head because it is so true. In the spring we are anxious to get growing. Since our growing season is limited, do you really want to spend every weekend for a month cleaning up your old garden plots and flower beds before you can get in there and plant when the weather is nice again?

I’ve not always been conscientious when it comes to cleaning up my garden but this year I am going to do myself a favor and get it done. In fact, I’ve already begun! My first step was taking photos and making notes of what I have planted where, which plants need to be divided in the spring, where to move them, and places where I may want to put some new plants. I’ve also removed some of my annuals that are way past their prime, roots and all. I’ve decided which perennials I will leave for the birds to munch seeds from and which ones I will cut back. I have a few mounded and a couple tall perennials that I enjoy seeing the snow on, so those will stay. As an added bonus, they provide shelter for wildlife.

I didn’t plant vegetables this year so I don’t have any clean-up to do there, but I have added the vegetables that I missed growing this year to my list of plants for next year and before it gets too cold I will get the area where I will plant them ready; a pH test, weeds pulled, and organic matter added.

Cleaning up your garden area not only freshens it and makes it look better as we go into winter, but is essential for reducing the number of pathogens and pests that can winter over in the debris we leave behind. If you have had a problem with mildew, early blight, septoria leaf spot, insect pests, and any number of other things that break a gardener’s heart, you don’t want to leave a place for those heartbreakers to spend the winter. You don’t want to compost infested debris though as your compost pile may not get hot enough to kill everything off.

I will be checking the integrity of the branches on my trees and cutting any that are diseased, damaged, or dead. I don’t want to spend any sleepless nights during a winter storm worrying that a limb is going to come down on the house, cars, or power lines.

We haven’t done the fall feeding of the lawn yet, but we have time. As a general rule, wait until 2 weeks after the last time you mow to apply lawn food. Remember that you need to use a lawn fertilizer that has no phosphorus; it’s the law and your lawn doesn’t need it anyway. If you have questions about this, please contact our office.

In the past, I haven’t emptied the containers that I put plants in and have plenty of cracked planters to prove it. This year I will empty them or move them into the garage where it’s warmer and they are protected from the elements.

My biggest job will be weeding. I don’t have a ton of weeds in my flower beds, but the grass has encroached into the beds. It takes so long for the soil to dry out enough to work it and then to get it cleared out in the spring that I get frustrated that I can’t get anything else done. This year, while the temperatures are cool and the ground is soft I will dig
out the grasses and go into winter with clean beds.

If we don’t have plenty of rain before winter comes, give your shrubs, trees, and evergreens a deep watering. Wind and cold temperatures speed transpiration, the loss of water from your plants. A good soaking will help them winter well.

Once everything is cleaned up and the ground has begun to freeze, it will be time to mulch. Be sure not to mulch right up to the trunk of trees and shrubs. Keep in mind that you are mulching to keep the ground frozen, not to keep it from freezing. The cycle of warming and freezing of your soil can cause your soil to heave, breaking roots and possibly even knocking your plants out of the ground. Once the soil has begun to freeze, the voles, mice and other moochers will hopefully have found somewhere other than your mulch to spend the winter.

I must confess that when it comes to cleaning and sharpening my garden tools, one of the last fall chores, I get an “F”. I know it’s important and I know it will make it easier come spring, but I have not been able to make myself do this in the past. I get sidetracked with other things but this year I will try harder. No guarantees mind you, but I will try. In fact, I am putting that chore on my list right now. Maybe I better mark it on the calendar too!

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**Planting Garlic - Be Choosy!**

October is garlic planting month. Garlic used to be known as a relatively trouble-free crop, with few insect and disease problems. But unfortunately a variety of diseases and problems are becoming more common. Whether you are planting garlic you grew yourself or bought in, check it carefully before planting and don’t plant anything that looks funky. By this I mean anything with streaks or staining, soft spots, brown patches, shriveled up parts, anything that looks abnormal. This won’t guarantee you won’t have problems next year, but it can at least avoid some potential problems.

Just before planting break the heads apart into individual cloves and plant only the biggest. Set each clove 1-2 inches deep, 5 inches apart in loose, well prepared soil to which plenty of organic matter has been added. Be sure to use a well drained site; if drainage is a problem plant the garlic into raised beds.

Early October is the best time to plant. Cover the row with six inches of straw immediately after planting - the idea is to develop a good root system in the fall with no top growth. In the spring, pull back some of the mulch but leave a few inches to discourage weed growth. Try to maintain an even supply of water throughout the summer.

Towards the middle to end of July the leaves will start to yellow. Harvest the garlic while there are still 3-4 green leaves. Each leaf corresponds to one wrapper leaf around the bulb and these wrapper leaves extend the storage life of your harvest. Store garlic either at room temperature or just above freezing. Forty degrees is the worst storage temperature for garlic because it induces the most sprouting. 

*By Amy Ivy*
My diet always shifts with the seasons. Once fall arrives I remember the comfort foods that I left off the menu last spring, like soups and chili. These can be really nutritious foods and a great dish to add lots of vegetables to, but they can also contain a lot of fat and sodium, especially store bought varieties.

Canned soup is certainly convenient and if you are a careful label reader, it can be a healthy choice. Beware of claims on the front of canned soups; words like “natural” and “healthy” are not regulated. For example, a soup made with natural sea salt may contain just as much sodium as a soup made with ordinary salt and if it does, it will have the same health impact. If a label claims to have reduced sodium or fat, it should contain 25% less than the standard product. But if a can of soup contains 72% daily value of sodium per can (remember to see how many servings per container!) it would still have 54% daily value of sodium, a lot of salt for one meal.

For me, the best attribute of homemade soup is that it tastes better the next day. Be sure to make enough to use for meals or sides for the next few days, or freeze individual sized portions in freezer safe containers for future meals. Be sure to label anything you freeze. I sometimes do not add pasta to soups until I am ready to serve them, since they will soak up the broth and become mushy. If I am planning this I just refrigerate the cooked pasta alongside the soup and combine later.

Enjoy the cool weather and a hot bowl of soup!

**Portuguese Kale Soup**

1 clove garlic
1 carrot (1/2 cup sliced)
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
8 cups water
1 teaspoon salt (omit if preferred)
½ teaspoon hot pepper flakes
1 pound potatoes (3 cups cubed)
½ bunch kale (4 cups chopped)
¼ pound reduced-fat turkey kielbasa sausage (1 cup sliced)
¼ teaspoon pepper

Yields about 6 servings

**Directions:**
Chop onion. Mince garlic. Peel and slice carrot.
Heat oil in large pot on medium. Add onion, garlic, and carrots. Sauté 10 minutes.
Add water, salt, and hot pepper flakes. Cover and bring to a boil.
Wash and peel potatoes. Cut into ½ inch cubes. Add potatoes to boiling water. Cover and cook 10 minutes.
Wash kale, remove tough stems, and chop finely. Slice sausage.
Add kale and sausage to soup. Cook uncovered 5 minutes.
Add pepper to taste.

Source:

See page 7 for nutrition facts about this recipe.
Are you wondering why you are seeing large numbers of insects around your home right now? We get a lot of phone calls and jars of bugs being brought in at this time of year by folks who are alarmed by the great number of insects on and around their homes. As creepy as it may seem, the bugs are not harmful to you, your plants, or your homes. The bugs that most of you are seeing, the charcoal gray and red ones, are boxelder bugs. This is the time of year that the boxelder bug seeks shelter from the dropping temperatures. They are frequently found on the sunny south side of your home or patio. They are looking for a dry, protected place to overwinter and may choose your rock wall, firewood pile, or even under the siding of your house or buildings. The boxelder bug is a nuisance but the numbers we usually see them in are hard to ignore. Fortunately, you can use a garden hose to wash them off, although they may return to that warm, sunny spot.

If they get inside, vacuum them up and then remove the vacuum bag outside.

Another insect that we will be seeing in quantities soon is the Ladybird Beetle (Ladybug). They also are looking for a warm spot to spend the winter and your windowsill will do just fine. If you find a number of them inside, sweep or vacuum them up and take them outdoors. Try to avoid squishing them inside as they can leave an orange stain and some insects emit a foul odor.

The best solution is to be sure that your windows close tightly, and that all cracks and crevices around your home are sealed. This will keep cold air from coming in this winter too. Insects have ways of surviving the cold winter temperatures that are as varied as they are. Some, like the Monarch Butterfly migrate to warmer climes. Others overwinter as larvae in leaf litter or garden debris, or in the case of grubs, burrow deeper into the soil to avoid the cold. Dragonflies, mayflies and stoneflies nymphs overwinter in water, sometimes even under the ice. They continue to feed and grow and emerge as adults in the spring.

Tree holes, leaf litter, woodpiles, eaves, attics, under logs and rocks are all areas that insects spend the winter. Insects that are inactive during the coldest time of year enter a state of diapause, where their metabolic rate is just high enough to keep them alive, but growth, development, and activities are suspended.

Honeybees have a unique way of surviving the winter. They stay somewhat active in hollow trees by clumping together and generate body heat by consuming honey. The worker bees then circulate the heat by fanning their wings.

**Note:** Facts in this article taken from the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History.
New Energy Savings Initiative

By Peter Hagar

Recently, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Clinton and Essex County joined an effort to help local residents access energy savings programs and incentives. Cooperative Extension has long provided energy saving workshops and training to local residents and this new program has been specifically designed to meet the needs of our region.

RenewNorthCountry.org is a website for residents, businesses and organizations located in the State's northern counties to identify energy saving incentive programs. These are programs offering money to help you with energy saving upgrades - in homes and in commercial buildings – and rebates to encourage the purchase of energy efficient products.

Incentives covered by RenewNorthCountry.org include programs from the electric and gas utility companies with customers in the North Country, programs offered by NY state agencies, and Federally funded programs. RenewNorthCountry.org also has a collection of informative material and interactive tools to explore energy and cost savings. If you are responsible for the utility cost of your household, business or organization, or are interested to learn about ways to cut energy use, RenewNorthCountry.org will benefit you.

RenewNorthCountry.org also showcases energy conservation and renewable energy projects implemented by governments and by residents, businesses and organizations in the North Country. These projects demonstrate the benefits of adopting energy efficiency products and renewable energy sources. You can choose to buy green energy from the "Incentives for GREEN HOMES" page of the RenewNorthCountry.org website. This is an easy way to use renewable energy without installing solar panels or wind turbine at your property. Each green kilowatt-hour is certified that it is generated from a renewable energy source.

For more information, you can contact Peter Hagar, Energy Program Educator at the Clinton County cooperative extension office. Phone 561-7450 or email phh7@cornell.edu.

Attention: All Gardeners!

Let’s “Plant a Row for the Hungry” (PAR)

PAR is a national public service organization that encourages gardeners to grow another row of produce to supply local food banks, soup kitchens, and service organizations. PAR supplies the support and start-up kits, we supply the local organization for launching a PAR campaign in our own community. PAR is sponsored by the Garden Writers Association Foundation.

To read more go to: www.gardenwriters.org

Step 1: Enlist a network of volunteers to help organize a PAR campaign in Clinton County for the 2013 growing season. Interested?

Send your email or contact information to: Beth Dixon, dixba@verizon.net

North Country Gardening
Bounty of Leaves

By Amy Ivy

Leaves will be dropping from trees in earnest this month. The higher elevations are the first to go but in much of the Champlain Valley oak and maple leaves really pile up on home lawns in October.

I have to admit that I harbor a bit of leaf envy. I live in an open, rural area so in most years my leaves blow away across the surrounding fields before I can gather them. For me, leaves are a rich resource for my garden and compost pile.

I realize for some people living in town with a small yard and neighbors all around, a foot deep layer of leaves on their lawn is more of a nuisance than a delight. But here are some ways to make good use of that bounty.

Different Types
Not all leaves are alike. Ash and honeylocust leaves are relatively small and quickly curl up into a manageable size. Maple leaves, definitely the most abundant type in yards and along city streets, can range from a few inches across to six inches across or more. This large size makes them prone to matting down and forming an impenetrable layer if not managed properly. But they’re definitely worth the trouble. Oak leaves contain tannin that makes them very resistant to decomposition. This is fine if used as a mulch under trees and shrubs but not such a good trait if you want to use them in your garden.

Mulch
There are many ways to use mulch around your yard and garden, and many types of mulch. If you have an abundance of leaves you can save yourself a lot of money by using them as mulch. Instead of buying large garbage bags, filling them with leaves for trash pick-up, and then buying bags of bark and wood chip mulch each spring, why not turn those leaves into your own mulch?

The smaller leaves of ash and honeylocust can be raked right over your gardens and flower beds in a two inch layer to serve as a winter mulch. You can also till them right into your garden soil and then rake a fresh layer over the top. It’s nice to keep any open soil covered with a natural mulch over the winter to reduce erosion and contribute to the soil as it breaks down.

As I mentioned earlier, maple leaves tend to pack down when wet. All you have to do to avoid this is run over them with your lawn mower before raking them over your garden or flower bed. The chopped up leaves will decompose much more quickly than whole leaves and provide a lot of good organic matter to your garden soil.

Bearing in mind that oak leaves are very slow to decompose, try to keep them out of your gardens and flower beds. A few are okay but don’t add them on purpose. Mow the large oak leaves first and then spread them under permanent plantings of trees and shrubs where the soil is not likely to be disturbed for a while.

Compost
One of my favorite uses for fallen leaves is as an addition to my compost pile. I’ll write a whole article on composting later but in the mean time, make a place close to your compost bin to stockpile leaves and pine needles. Adding a variety of materials to your compost pile is a key to success, and layering leaves between layers of kitchen scraps is ideal.

Are you curious about all that’s going in our 4-H program? Check out the Clover Express at the link below! Call our office if you’d like to find out more about how you can get involved.
http://www.ccecc4hce.blogspot.com/
Please join us for our
2012 Annual Meeting
and Dinner

Thursday, November 1st   6:00 pm
Plattsburgh State University - Angell Hall

The meeting, also open to the public, will begin at 7:15 pm
Committee members, Master Gardener and 4-H volunteers will be recognized, staff will give brief program highlights.
There will be an election of directors and appointment of program committee members.
Plus a special presentation by a team of Plattsburgh State Students.

Join us in recognizing this year’s Friends of Extension:
Plattsburgh State Professors

Colleen Lemza and Jonathan Slater

Dinner cost is $22 per person
Special menu prepared and served by students in the Culinary Arts Program
featuring locally grown food

Please return this portion by Wednesday, October 24th with your check made payable to:
Cornell Cooperative Extension, 6064 Route 22, Plattsburgh, NY 12901   561-7450

Name(s)______________________________________________ Phone: ______________________________
Number attending _________@$22 each             $______________
Additional donation to support CCE and Local Food Programs:   $______________
Total amount enclosed:     $______________
Events and Happenings

The Adirondack Coast
Wine, Cider and Food Festival
at the Crete Center
Plattsburgh, NY
October 6, 2012

Join them for a day filled with food, wine and festivities. For more information visit the official festival website at www.acwcf.com or their facebook page at http://www.facebook.com/2012AdirondackCoastWineCiderFoodFestival

Looking for Locally Grown Food?
Pick up a copy of our free Guide to Local Food 2012
 Featuring maps and food products grown in Clinton, Essex & Franklin Counties.

Available at any CCE office
Feel free to take extras to give to friends

Christmas Tree Farming
Field Meeting and Workshop
Date: Oct. 12, 2012
Time: 10:00 am - noon

Location: Red Barn Christmas Tree Farm in Brainardsville, NY about 15 miles east of Malone
For more info contact Richard Gast, CCE Franklin Co 483-7403 or rlg24@cornell.edu
Free and open to the public

Save the Date!
Wreath Making with Natural Materials

With Jolene Wallace
Saturday, December 1st
10:00 am to noon
More information next month

This newsletter is also available on our website:
http://blogs.cornell.edu/cceclintoncounty/under Gardening: News

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North Country Gardening

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