There has been a great deal of publicity surrounding the remarkable exhibit, Mosaicultures Internationales, which is headlining the summer program at the Botanical Gardens in Montreal. Due to the interest in this spectacular display of living sculptures, we have organized a bus trip to enjoy these sculptures first hand. As a bonus, we will also see the Gardens of Light, a popular limited time event. For more information, turn to page 2.

Going “Green”

By Jordy Kivett

Did you plant any greens this year? Are you a CSA member? Maybe you have been eating greens, like spinach, chard and kale already. If you have not, I urge you to try them. They are usually pretty inexpensive, while packed with nutrients and really low in calories.

Chard and kale are great and grow locally but I do not think they are as widely familiar here as spinach or cabbage. Swiss or rainbow chard can be substituted in any recipe that you would cook spinach in and rainbow chard has beautiful stalks that are pink and yellow. Usually we sauté these greens with a little oil, or use some white wine, or beer, or broth to braise them. If they still taste a little bitter, try drizzling on a very small amount of maple syrup before you finish cooking them. I love cooking them with carrots and apple slices as a side, which is a great way to make half of your plate vegetables and fruit.

Last fall we made kale chips. To make a crispy kale “chip” you just tear your kale into bite size pieces, rub them with oil, spread onto a baking sheet and sprinkle with desired seasoning (I added my favorite hot sauce to the oil) and bake at 300 degrees, turning once, until they are crispy. Warning: these do not taste like potato chips, but they are much healthier. They did not keep long, as they are pretty crumbly, but we ate the whole batch. Any dark leafy green like this also tastes great added as a layer in lasagna, to a pot of spaghetti sauce, or into any soup. If all else fails, add these greens raw to a fruit smoothie; combined with banana and milk it makes a sweet green drink.

Get adventurous with greens! If you have tried one type or only one cooking method, try something else. Some dishes will have stronger tastes than others and if you or your family is not ready for that, try them in mixed dishes. They are sure to add nutrition to your meal.

Inside this issue:
- Bus Trip to Montreal
- September Tips
- Lousy Lawns
- PAR Drop-off points
- Lousy Lawns cont...
- Soil pH
- Lousy Lawns cont...
- Stress Causes
- Helicopters
- Tips cont..
- Events

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September 2013
Botanical Gardens Bus Trip

By Jolene Wallace

The Master Gardener Volunteers of Cornell Cooperative Extension are pleased to invite you to join us September 25th on a bus trip to see a remarkable exhibit.

Headlining the summer program at the Botanical Gardens in Montreal is a spectacular exhibit of living sculptures that make up Mosaicultures Internationales. This international competition is held every three years in a city chosen by the International Committee, which also chooses a theme to inspire the participating countries. The theme for 2013 is “Land of Hope” and emphasizes the importance of protecting the biodiversity of our planet.

Mosaiculture is a horticultural art form that creates living artwork from plants. As opposed to topiary, which involves pruning shrubs into various shapes, mosaiculture uses plants, usually annuals, to create 3-dimensional sculpture. These huge botanical sculptures have been created by mosaiculture artists from around the world. Montreal last hosted this larger-than-life exhibit ten years ago.

BONUS! We have timed our trip to allow our participants to enjoy the Gardens of Light event as an added bonus. At dusk the Japanese Garden will be enhanced with a fine and subtle lighting design and the Chinese Garden with its traditional colored lanterns and lit pathways will make a lasting impression to further enhance our garden experience.

When: Wednesday, September 25, we will ride in style in a Premier motor coach from Plattsburgh to the Botanical Gardens in Montreal. We will leave Plattsburgh at 12:45 pm, arriving at the Botanical Gardens at approximately 2:10 pm. We will depart from the gardens at 8:00 pm for a 9:30 pm arrival in Plattsburgh.

SPACE IS LIMITED SO REGISTER EARLY!
The last day for registration is September 10th.

Your pre-paid registration fee of $63 covers Round-trip transportation, admission to the Botanical Gardens, Mosaiculture Internationales, the Gardens of Light, the greenhouses and pavilions, and the Insectarium.

Note: This tour will take place rain or shine. Your registration fee is non-refundable unless we are forced to cancel this event. You must have a passport or enhanced driver’s license to board the bus and cross the border.

For more information or to register, contact Cornell Cooperative Extension Clinton County at 561-7450 or Jolene Wallace at jmw442@cornell.edu
Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal employment and programming opportunities.
September Tips

By Amy Ivy

It’s not over yet!

September may mark the end of summer but it is not the end of the growing season. While some crops may have finished (more about that later) there are several that thrive during the cooler weather of early fall. Lettuce, spinach, arugula, carrots, leeks, mustard greens, parsley, kale, Brussels sprouts and broccoli (see picture) are some of the cool season plants that you can harvest well into fall. Brussels sprouts and kale actually taste sweeter after they have been through some frosts. The only problem is you have to have already planted them by now.

You may still have luck with planting seeds of some of the leafy crops in September such as lettuce, spinach and arugula, but the others need to be started earlier. If you find yourself wishing you had more of these fall crops in your garden, make a plan to get them started next summer.

Even for some of the warmer season crops, tomatoes and peppers in particular, can be protected through a cold spell and continue to grow on for a while. We often have either a near frost or a light frost some-time in September for a night or two, followed by a few weeks of gorgeous growing weather. Hauling out old sheets and blankets and large cardboard boxes to protect them on those frosty nights can be well worth the effort. Put the protection on in the early evening and leave it in place until all the frost has melted the next morning. The coldest temperatures are often right at sunrise, so don’t be in too much of a rush to remove those protective coverings in the morning.

Garden Clean Up

A lot of crops either have a short season or succumb to various pest and disease pressures so by September a good chunk of your vegetable garden may need cleaning out. Bush beans and cucumbers don’t produce for too long, it’s best to make new plantings every couple of weeks to keep a fresh supply coming. Cucumbers can have a number of problems that shorten their productive lives so the best approach for home gardeners is to remove the plants as they succumb rather than trying to fight the pests with lots of sprays.

Septoria leaf spot (see photo) has been terrible in some tomato plantings this year. As long as your plants are still producing decent fruit (tomatoes) you can leave them, but once the disease weakens the plants enough, you’re better off just

.....Continued on page 10
Lousy Lawns?

By Emily Selleck

It’s been a banner year for crabgrass – have you noticed? Instead of that pleasing deep green hue attributable to great grass you are seeing a sea of pale green, then you, too, are the not-so-proud owner of a ‘lousy lawn’.

Recalling that crab grass is an annual and doomed to die in the near future, that sea of green will soon become a bed of brown, unfortunately a perfect set up for broadleaf weeds to take up residence. If more than 50 percent of what you see in your lawn is other than good lawn grasses, it might be time to consider renovation.

The very first step to take is to determine why you have a lousy lawn:

Compaction

Have you had recent construction around your home during which the lawn received more than its share of heavy equipment for too long a time? Even several lawn parties for “casts of thousands” or a series of season-long neighborhood baseball games - will drive your lawn into the ground. Remember, good growing soil – for any crop – should ideally resemble chocolate cake: nice big crumbles of dark (nutrient-rich) soil with plenty of air spaces in between. All plants, like people, need oxygen to survive. Prolonged compaction literally squeezes the air out of soils leaving weak and dying plants in its wake.

Poor Drainage

Are there low spots in the lawn where rainwater stands for lengthy periods of time? There may also be moss growing in these areas (moss also prefers nutrient-poor soils and is by itself not an indication of acid soils, a common misconception). Again, consider the suffocation factor. Standing water will accumulate in the air spaces and the grass roots will drown.

Shade

Shade happens. What may have been a sunny yard ten years ago may well be partially to fully shaded now. If the lawn had been planted mostly with sun-loving grasses (Kentucky bluegrass and Perennial Ryegrass), those grasses will suffer. (We’ll come back to this later in the seed selection discussion.)

Other culprits.

Dogs have a tendency to “go” in the same areas. Over time, this will kill the grass.

The next step is to determine how you would like to use your lawn:

Would you like to have the lawn as a place for children – big and small – to play? Would you rather have the lawn be an “extra room” for you and your family to sit and relax? Would you be willing to consider something else other than a lawn? Sometimes grass may not be the best choice – especially if there is too much shade and/or heavy foot traffic?

Late summer or early fall (mid-August to the third week in September) is usually the best time to establish or renovate cool-season grass lawns in most of New York State. The “dog days” of summer are down to a dull growl - temperatures are moderating, weeds are less competitive, the days are still long, the nights are cool, and rainfall is usually adequate. Even as early as the first week in August this year the Turfgrass gurus at Cornell and around the state have been encouraging folks to renovate or establish their lawns. Most years, August is a hot, sultry month when most North Country grasses grow very little or go dormant altogether.

Continued on page 6....
Plant a Row for the Hungry—Update

Gardeners
Do You Have Too Much Kale, Squash, Onions, or . . .?

Harvest your produce for Plattsburgh PAR, a local volunteer group whose mission is to distribute fresh vegetables and fruit to underserved populations in our local community, including food shelves and free meal programs.

Where Should You Take Your Extra Garden Produce?

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For more information about Plattsburgh PAR: http://www.plattsburghcommunitygarden.org/Home.
And now it’s September. If you are thinking about renovating or establishing a new lawn, here are some basic steps to consider:

1. Control Perennial Vegetation. The most effective way to eliminate existing weeds and undesirable grasses is with a non-selective herbicide such as “Round-up” which contains the active ingredient glyphosate. Keep all traffic off the area until the herbicide dries on the plant materials. Glyphosate will kill any plant that is green and growing but it won’t kill weed seeds. Once in contact with the soil, glyphosate is inactivated. This allows planting the new lawn just 5 to 7 days after application. When the treated vegetation becomes yellowed (in one or two weeks), you can till it into the soil.

2. Protect and Test the Soil. Apart from the above, try to minimize cultivation and compaction to maintain good soil structure (aka “chocolate cake”). Prior to establishing a final grade with topsoil, have new topsoil tested (you may take it to your local CCE and they will help you). The report will tell you how much fertilizer, organic matter and other amendments are needed to establish a healthy new lawn.

3. Establish a Rough Grade. Take care of grade problems before you replant. Now is the time to eliminate low spots and take care of other drainage issues.

4. Amend the Topsoil. Whether the new topsoil is clayey or sandy, you can amend both by incorporating composted materials such as aged animal manures (cow, horse, sheep, chicken – no meat-eaters, please!). Plan to cover the subgrade with at least 4 inches of this amended topsoil. Ideally, the interface between the subgrade and the new topsoil should be gradual so you’ll want to till a few inches of topsoil into the existing subsoil, then add the remaining topsoil to the surface.

5. Choose the Right Grasses. The cool-season grasses that do best in the Adirondacks are not all the same! It’s important to select the ones that are appropriate for your situation. You’ll want to end up with a mixture of our cool-season grasses - Kentucky bluegrass, Perennial Ryegrass, and Fescues (fine and Turfgrass tall).

Some things to consider:

Shade Tolerance – grasses are sun-loving plants. They need an absolute minimum of 4 hours of direct sun a day. Areas that get much traffic require at least 6 hours. If your light is marginal, the fescues tolerate shade better than bluegrass or ryegrass.

Drought Tolerance – both fine and Turfgrass tall fescues will withstand periods of drought better than either perennial ryegrass or bluegrass.

Wear Tolerance – fine fescues do not stand up to traffic. Choose a mixture heavy on bluegrass and perennial rye. But remember, these grasses need lots of sun.

Establishment – perennial ryegrass is the quickest to germinate and provide cover to protect the soil from erosion. Kentucky bluegrass is the slowest, and the fescues fall in the middle.

Growth Habit – bluegrass spreads by underground stems called rhizomes. It forms a tough sod (it is what most sod farms sell as “sod”). When damaged, the rhizomes creep back into the bare spot and “knit” it together. Perennial ryegrass and the fescues are bunch grasses that don’t spread as well or form as dense a sod.

Leaf Texture – fine fescues have very thin, fine leaves. Turfgrass tall fescue’s leaves are courser, but the newer varieties are beginning to approach the look of Kentucky bluegrass.

Two factors you should consider prior to renovation or establishment of a lawn are time and money. Another is how good you want the lawn to look. Fine fescues are a good choice for low-maintenance lawns that you won’t have to mow and fertilize often. At the other end of the spectrum, Kentucky bluegrass makes a wonderful-looking lawn but it requires high-end maintenance to keep it looking good if not great. You’ll have to be more diligent fertilizing and mowing, and it is more susceptible to drought and pests.

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October 2013
Page 7

Fall is the time to check your pH

By Jolene Wallace

The four words none of want to hear right now are “summer is almost over”. Are you cringing? I know I am. Although it seems that summer has just gotten underway, in truth, the 22nd of September is the first day of autumn. There’s no denying that we are already seeing signs of fall.

The time for fall clean-up is right around the corner. In addition to cleaning up your flower and vegetable beds, spending some time and effort enriching your soil will put you ahead of the game in the spring. How you put your garden ‘to bed’ makes a real difference in how it ‘wakes up’ in the spring.

Start by making notes about how your plants fared this year. Allow for the very wet spring we had and how your gardens were delayed for a period of time. Once the weather cooperated, how did your plants do? If there were problems, what were they and why did they occur? Is there something you can do now that would prevent a reoccurrence of the problem next year?

If your garden was superb, my congratulations! Most of us have not shared that experience. However your garden turned out, you may want to do a few things that will give it an advantage in the spring.

The most vital component of your garden is the soil. If you have not had a pH test done in the last couple of years, or if your garden is not producing the way you think it should, you may want to consider a pH test.

pH is a measurement of hydrogen ions in a solution, which means nothing to most of us. What is helpful to know is that the pH of your soil affects the availability of nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium to your plants. If you pH is too high or too low, some of these nutrients, which are essential for the health of your plants, may be “locked up”. At the proper pH level soil microbes are more active. These microbes break down organic matter, enriching the soil, and help with aeration.

You can’t change the basic property of your soil. Amending the pH of your soil is an ongoing process. Fall is the time to check your pH because if you need to raise or lower the pH by adding lime or sulfur, this is the time of year to do it. It takes months for slow-acting additives to “work their magic”. If you are interested in having us do a pH test, call for instructions on how to take a soil sample. We do charge $2 to offset the supplies we use to do your test and we also tell you what kind of soil you have and whether you need to add organic matter. Test kits are available in numerous retail outlets if you prefer to do your own, although some expertise may be required to get an accurate reading.
READ THE LABEL on the bag of seed before you buy it to see which species of grass are included. BUYER BEWARE: if the label says “variety not stated” (“VNS”) DON’T BUY IT!! Mixes that include unknown varieties are inferior and will result in a poor quality lawn. When the sweet taste of a low price wears off, the bitterness of a poor product lasts. In addition, avoid mixtures containing Annual Ryegrass – ryegrass in a home lawn seed mix must be PERENNIAL, not annual. Annual ryegrass germinates very quickly and provides a quick cover but it will not persist in our climate.

6. Seed at the Right Rate. Studies show there is no benefit from seeding more than the recommended rate. Excessive seeding rates create too much competition between the grass seedlings. Using a drop spreader or rotary “spin” seeder calibrated to deliver half of the recommended seeding rate, apply the seed in one direction. Then apply the second half of the recommended seeding rate in a different direction (at right angles to the first application). This will result in more uniform coverage.

7. Rake lightly. Mix the seed and the soil so that the seed is covered no more than 1/16 to 1/8 inch deep.

8. Firm the soil. Light rolling assures good seed-to-soil contact needed for the seeds to take up water and germinate. Heavy rolling (overfilling the roller) may crush the seeds and cause compaction.

9. Mulch. Use weed-free straw to conserve moisture and help prevent erosion. It also acts as a visual barrier to keep people off the newly-seeded area.

10. Water. Germinating seeds and young grass seedlings will quickly die if allowed to dry out. Keep seedbeds moist at all times until seeds emerge. Water only enough to moisten the surface. Do not overwater causing runoff. Gradually reduce water after emergence to encourage deeper rooting. Once grass covers about 60% of the ground, the surface should be allowed to dry.

11. Fertilize. About 2 – 3 weeks after emergence, apply about 1 pound Nitrogen/1000sq feet. This will increase shoot density and the seedlings’ ability to withstand diseases such as rust.

12. Mow. Once more than 60% of the grass reaches the recommended mowing height (at least 3 ½ inches), start mowing. Mowing encourages later shoot development, increases stand density, and helps the turf outcompete weeds. Make sure your mower blade is sharp – dull blades will tear young seedlings from the soil. Leaving the clippings on the new lawn will be beneficial provided there are no dense clumps. These may be spread out after mowing.

If you are willing to spend the time and money it takes to get a great lawn started, you will be amply rewarded by spending less time and money on it in the future.

Plan ahead reminder: Early October is the time to plant Your garlic!

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

North Country Gardening
This spring and early summer, Mother Nature presented us with a bouquet of tree flowers on a superlative scale. While allergy sufferers didn't appreciate the April “pollen bomb” of flower-laden willows, elms and maples, the stunning white tresses of black locust flowers in late May and early June were as heavenly to behold as they were to smell. Hawthorn and shrub dogwood flowers lit up fencerows and pastures with particular brilliance, as nannyberry, arrowwood and other members of the Viburnum clan are doing as we speak. Or read.

Now we’re beginning to see the results of this shameless excess, the seeds. For several reasons, maple seeds are of special interest. Generally it's their aerodynamics that grab our attention. Known to botany geeks as “samaras,” maple seeds have a broad wing that makes them spin as they fall, prolonging their flight and allowing them to travel some distance.

In most cases it’s a one-way flight, although many children, mine included, go through a phase where they'll scoop handfuls of these winged seeds—along with the requisite amount of dirt—and fling them aloft, delighted with their helicopters. But maybe there’s an app for that now.

This year it's the quantity of seeds that caught my eye. The spent flowers that dropped from sugar maples filled gutters and clogged storm drains like great clots of seaweed. And even though not every flower resulted in a seed, some maples are sporting more seeds than leaves.

Heavy seed production following severe stress, known as a distress crop, is well-documented, especially in forest stands attacked by pests or disease. It appears to be a bid to keep the species going at the expense of the current generation of trees. Although there’s no way to prove it, it's widely believed that the heavy seed crop on maples—and on most other woody plants as well—is a result of stress induced by last year’s drought.

Due to a confluence of conditions, last year we had the driest soil ever recorded; our part of the state was below the first percentile in terms of historic average soil moisture. In other words, trees less than a hundred years old have never gone through a drought like 2012. It's in the middle of the growing season that trees “choose” how many flower buds will bloom the following year, based on how much energy they have “banked” in the form of stored starch. A distress crop is different in that the accounting department is left out of the loop. Last year, many trees decided they needed to spend their life savings on a mountain of seeds.

Continued on page 11....
removing them. Both Septoria and early blight are common leaf diseases of tomato and they overwinter in the soil and on plant debris. I visited one grower who carefully located her tomatoes to an entirely new field this year, but used the same stakes as she had the year before without disinfecting them. She ended up bringing Septoria to the new field and lost the crop by the end of August. She was able to get a decent yield until then, but the season was shortened on these infested plants.

To disinfect stakes and any trellis material that you plan to reuse, soak them in a 10% bleach solution for about half an hour (1 part bleach to 10 parts water). You don’t need to rinse them since the chlorine in the bleach will dissipate over winter. This 10% bleach solution is also good for disinfecting trays, pots and cell packs that you plan to reuse.

When cleaning up your vegetable garden, remove infested plant material to a separate pile well away from your garden if you have the room. Most plant debris can be tilled into the soil and buried, the main thing is to not leave it lying on the ground over the winter. You can till under infested tomatoes if you can rotate away from that location for three years. Septoria will not bother and of the squash family, broccoli/mustard family, etc.

**All in the Family**

When cleaning up your vegetable garden, remove infested plant material to a separate pile well away from your garden if you have the room. Most plant debris can be tilled into the soil and buried, the main thing is to not leave it lying on the ground over the winter. You can till under infested tomatoes if you can rotate away from that location for three years. Septoria will not bother and of the squash family, broccoli/mustard family, etc.

To discourage disease and pest build up in your garden, try to rotate by family. With a disease like Septoria you need to rotate away for three years. Other families can be grown there, just no Solanaceous crops.

**Cover the Soil**

As you clean up your garden this month consider planting a cover crop. It will crowd out weeds, prevent soil erosion from wind and rain, and add organic matter to the soil. In September with winter approaching you can plant oats or winter rye. Oats are the easiest since they die over the winter and are simple to incorporate into the soil next spring. Winter rye can be planted into mid October in our area, the latest of all the cover crops, but its vigorous growth the following spring can be daunting for new gardeners to manage. Till or turn it under next spring before it gets more than 6 inches tall for the easiest control, and wait a full 2 weeks before planting seeds into that soil.

A newer cover crop to our area that some of our Master Gardener volunteers have tried and liked is crimson clover (Trifolium incarnatum). This is very different from the perennial red clover seen in some meadows and hayfields around here. It is a winter annual that does best in cool weather. If you plant it in September you should get some good growth before winter and, depending on the weather, most of that
Events and Happenings

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS:**

**Putting Your Garden to Bed  September 19, 2013**
6:00-7:30 PM at the Peru Free Library, 3024 Main St. (Rte 22) in Peru.
How you put your garden ‘to bed’ at the end of the season, makes a big difference in how your garden ‘wakes up’ in the spring! Free program, open to everyone. For questions or to RSVP call 561-7450 or email Jolene at jmw442@cornell.edu

**Bus Trip to Montreal Botanical Gardens Sept. 25**
We are sponsoring a bus trip to the Botanical Gardens in Montreal to see the remarkable Mosaicultures Internationales, as well as the other wonderful gardens and attractions. See Page 2 for complete information or contact Jolene at 561-7450 or jmw442@cornell.edu.

**A Day on the Farm  Saturday, September 7,**
11 am to 3pm at Adirondack Farms, 193 Brown Road, Peru offering family fun. Farm tour, hay rides, bounce house, maple tasting and treats, McCadam and Cabot Cheese Samples, BBQ lunch available for purchase. Suggested donation $5 per adult, kids free. Benefits the Clinton County Farm Bureau. For more information email kim@adirondackfarms.net

### September Tips, continued...

You may have already noticed the plethora of small “helicopters” shed by our native red maples (not to be confused with the red-leaf variety of Norway maple). Well, get ready for more, and larger models at that. In addition to Norway maple, we have four native species of overstory (large) maples: sugar, red, silver, and boxelder (yep, that’s right). Of these five species, four have yet to drop seeds.

Don’t be alarmed if your maple (or ash or locust) tree browns up a bit in the next few weeks; that’s just the seeds maturing. Then, move over Sikorsky: it’s going to rain helicopters in the North Country. Before you break out the shop-vac and power broom, though, I recommend you get out with the kids in the non-virtual world and fly some helicopters.

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<tr>
<th>Silver maple seed</th>
<th>Sugar maple seed</th>
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You may have to mail order the seed so act quickly if you want to get seed in time for planting this month.
This issue made possible thanks to donations from:

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