

Gardening Articles for week ending 25th OCTOBER 2014

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GARDENING TIPS FOR LABOUR WEEKEND

Labour Weekend is our big gardening event of the year and seeing the weather has been favorable recently with rain and sun, let us hope it continues for Labour Weekend.

Gardening over the weekend is historically recommended from past weather conditions showing that there is only a small likelihood of frosts between now and Xmas.

Frost tender plants such as tomatoes, pumpkins, capsicums, impatiens etc can be planted out and with any luck will not be harmed by a late frost.

How much gardening you achieve over Labour Weekend will depend largely on the weather and your desire to garden.

Let us assume that we wake up on Saturday the 25th to blue skies and light breezes; then taking a look outside we can see a lot of things need doing which automatically puts a damper on our mood.

So the best thing to do after your morning ritual is to start up the lawn mower with the catcher on and mow the lawns. Once this is completed have another look around and if by magic everything looks ten times better than our original look.

A freshly mowed lawn transforms the outdoors from shabby to promising and gives you a lift to tackle the gardens.

You should also have a nice pile of lawn clippings that you can use later on as a mulch if you have not applied a lawn herbicide to your lawns in the last 18 months.

Lawn weed killers that kill weeds but not the grasses don't just disappear over night.

A common one such as Turfix can have residues for about 6 months, Yates Hydrocotyle Killer which has the chemical Triclopyr and sold under brands such as Grazon, Brush Off, Scrubcutter and Victory has; I was told recently, that it can be active in areas sprayed for up to 14 months!

You would not want to put compost made from herbicide affected lawn clippings around your roses and tomatoes!

I prefer to be completely chemical free so when it comes to weeds you may choose to use the same methods as I do.

A Weed Eater fitted with a disk attachment called Pivotrim Pro which eliminates those dreadful spools of trimming line which makes the use of a weed eater a frustrating chore.

The Pivotrim Pro are available from Mitre10 Mega stores and maybe Mitre 10 as well.

There are 4 slots which you easily tread the Premium Replacement Lines making 8 cutting lines

about 12cm long on their swivels. Because the lines fold away when they encounter a solid object they do far less damage to trunks of shrubs and trees and last much longer than the frustrating trimming lines.

Weeds in gardens where it is not advisable to use a weed eater without damaging preferred plants can be weeded by hand.

Small weeds recently germinated and up to a few centimeters in height can be cut off just below ground level with a sharp carving knife or by scrapping the knife across the soil surface.

Larger weeds can also be treated the same by cutting through the root system a couple of centimeters below the soil surface.

Leave the cut weeds on the soil surface where in sunlight and with microbial action they will break down quickly feeding the soil life.

When I am hand watering with a wand, I often wet down the soil, pull out weeds growing between plants and because of the wet soil they come away easy. Then I wash the soil off the roots and lay them onto the soil to break down.

Watering daily keeps raised gardens and containers moist and progressively weed free.

In areas where there are cobbles, cracks or waste areas where you do not want any thing to grow, use salt.

(Ocean Solids from Garden Gloves will do this job nicely)

Salt can be used to kill Wandering Jew in areas with established trees and shrubs. Also I am told that sprays of Baking Soda (likely at rates of 3 tablespoons per litre water) will also kill Wandering Jew.

Gorse can be killed over time with heavy applications of garden Lime.

Vinegar and cooking oil are two cheap products that can also be used to spray weeds safely but not preferred plants.

Here is a suggestion for those that have recently purchased triple grafted fruit trees.

It is difficult in the early days of establishment to have all three grafts grow with the same vigor. Often one of two will leap ahead to the demise of the other which may remain stunted or even die.

The secret is to keep all three (or two) growing at the same rate till they are well developed.

Now if you were to cut back the dominate branches they will just re-branch and become more vigorous.

The key is to increase the growth of the inferior branch and a simple way to achieve this would be to spray its foliage with Vaporgard.

This will allow the leaves to gather more energy from the sun and become stronger. Do not spray the dominate branches with Vaporgard which would defeat the purpose.

A further method could be applied by removing some leaves off the dominate branches reducing their energy collect from sunlight.

Talking about gardening and sunlight this is your chance to obtain your bodies vitamin D requirements while working in your garden. The thing is to be sensible, starting with short periods of exposure while protecting your exposed skin with Virgin Coconut oil. After showering apply the same oil to nourish your skin.

Sun Screens are good except they block the ability of your body to create Vitamin D and as we are told people with cancers have low levels of Vitamin D and worst cases down to no Vitamin D.

Lastly, many of you will be purchasing punnets, cell packs and pots of plants for planting out.

If you want to give them a great start to establish then spray the foliage all over with Vaporgard. This reduces moisture loss out of the foliage and takes the stress out of the transplanting. Then leave for a few hours to dry in a shaded spot.

Next soak the container by plunging into a bucket of non-chlorinated water till it stops bubbling.

This prevent damage to root system when removing from the container.

Place into the bottom of the planting hole some Rok Solid, Neem Granules and a few sheep manure pellets. This will help root development and protect roots from soil insect pests as well as feed the plant..

Have a great Gardening Labour Weekend.

Vapourgard, Rok Solids and Neem Granules are available from this Web Site