

“It’s a Fall Thing”

Presented by: Stacey Hickman



Smart
Gardening

Niagara  **Region**

www.smartgardening.ca

Outline

- **Healthy Lawns**
 - Lawn Maintenance for Fall
 - Lawn Pests
- **Healthy Gardens**
 - Native Plants
 - Mulch
 - Composting
 - Unwanted Friends
 - Ice Melting
- **Questions**



Slide 2

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rorison, 2008-03-04

Healthy Lawns

- **Lawn Maintenance for Fall**
 - Cutting grass
 - Fill in bare patches
 - Fertilizing
 - Weeding
 - Clean-up lawn



Slide 3

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Healthy Lawns

- **Mowing your grass**
 - Keep mowing until growth has slowed
 - Set mower high (3 to 4 inches)
 - Shade your weeds
 - Shade your soil
 - Short grass grows faster....
 - Don't leave grass longer than 4 inches for the winter
 - Snow molds



Healthy Lawns

- **Seed before the weeds fill your bare spots.**
 - Mix seed with topsoil (1 part seeds to 3 parts top soil).
 - Use cool season grasses and blend more than one type.
 - Good grass mix: perennial ryegrasses, annual ryegrasses (germinate quickly), tall fescues (high traffic) and Kentucky blues (full sun).
- **Environment Friendly Lawn (low mow, fertilizer and water).**
- **Wildflower farm has lawn blend of fine focuses**
<http://www.wildflowerfarm.com>.

Healthy Lawns

- **Weeds: Pull in Fall, Less Work in Spring**
- Dandelion: a misunderstood weed!
 - Take a look at the soil. Add some lime.
- Crabgrass
 - Soil is nutrient deficient, aerate (up to 3 times per season) and add some compost
 - Mowing too short, blades up
 - Hand pull as much as you can
- Common Plantain
 - Soil is compacted and nutrient deficient, aerate and add some compost
 - Soil too wet causing thinning grass, water less.

Healthy Lawns



Crabgrass



Common Plantain

Healthy Lawns

- **Fertilize in the Fall**
 - **Organic Fertilizers**
 - No risk of burning
 - Health and vitality of grass and soil
 - Lengthening and strengthen grass roots
 - Help fight pest and disease
 - **Best time to Fertilize**
 - When grass stops growing (think about Halloween)

Healthy Lawns

- **Corn gluten: Weed Control and Fertilizer**
 - Corn gluten is byproduct of milling progress
 - Stops germination of any emergent broad leaved plant
 - Early Spring application and second or third week in August to stop weeds
 - Do not overuse (try to use only three seasons)
 - Spring and Fall

Healthy Lawns

- **Keep your lawn clean**
 - Remove Fall leaves
 - Get grass growing straight and prevent matting of grass over winter



Healthy Lawns

- **Just a few other thing to keep in mind for Fall**
 - **Aeration**
 - Allows nutrients to reach the roots
 - Plug aeration only, not spike
 - **De-thatching**
 - Mat of undecomposed plant matter on surface of soil
 - Use thatch rake or mower
- **When should it be done?**
 - Fall and follow-up with a topdressing of compost

Healthy Lawns

- Fall Bugs for Lawns
 - Lawn Grubs
 - European Cranflies



Healthy Lawns



Grub damage



“Lawn Grubs”

• Grubs

- Gradual thinning and weakening of turf
- Large patches of dead turf
- Grass wilting with sufficient watering
- Spongy sod
- Bird and animal activity
- Sod easy to lift

Healthy Lawns

Natural Alternatives:

The “Beneficial
Nematode”



The perfect nematode application

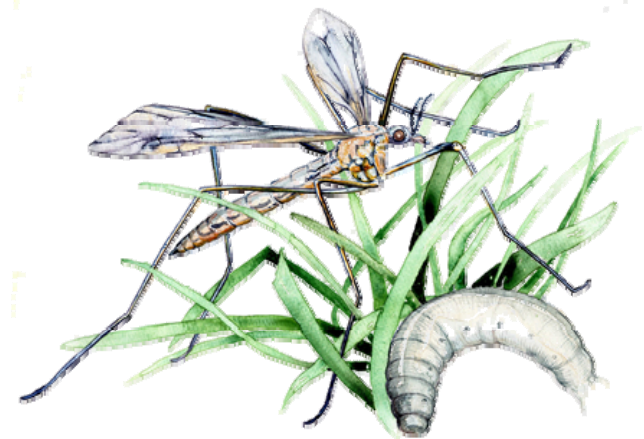
Healthy Lawns

- **Beneficial Nematodes**
 - Tiny microscopic roundworms
 - shallow searchers/deeper searchers
 - A mixture works the best
- **Nematode Application**
 - Pre, during and post application



Healthy Lawns

- European Crane flies
 - Adults are large mosquitoes and larvae are brown and leathery looking
 - Healthy lawn, detach and aerate
 - Water deeply in morning to allow to dry before night (they like fungus)
 - Raking
 - Nematodes treatments



....Just before we leave our lawn

How about saving some time in the fall?

- Leaf Mulching
 - Why and How



Leaf Mulching

- Better Leaf Management for your lawn
 - Leaving leaves on your lawn does not effect colour, growth, thatch, pH, weeds or disease.
- When to leaf mulch
 - Anytime in the Autumn.



Leaf Mulching

- How to leaf mulch
 - Rake dry leaves evenly over lawn to 1 inch.
 - Use mulching lawnmower with blades set at 3 inches.
 - Mow slowly over leaves and repeat.
 - Bagged leaf mulch can be used in gardens.
- Tips for leaf mulching
 - Use sharp blades and check air filters.
 - Safety first, remove branches before.

Leaf Mulching

- Benefits of Leaf Mulching
 - Nutrients readily available
 - Retains moisture during droughts
 - Insulates during winter
 - Reduces Weeds



Healthy Gardens

- Dreaming of Spring
 - Great time to plan to plant some native plants



Native Plants

- **Native plants**
 - Evolved in North America over thousands of years
 - Adapted to the environment which they grow to rainfall patterns; to the creatures that live around them; to the soil and climate.
- **Benefits**
 - Saves energy and reduce pollution
 - Provides a diverse landscape
 - Helps animals
 - Saves Money
 - Conserves water

Native Plants

Showy Plant for Fall

• Coneflower



Coneflower
(*Echinacea pallida*)



Purple Coneflower
(*Echinacea purpurea*)

- Member of sunflower family
- Grows 3 to 5 feet tall with flower ranging from purple to lavender.
- Drought tolerate and adepts well to many soil types.
- Butterfly attractor
- Divided every few years in the fall.

Native Plants

For sunny spots



Black-eyed Susan
(*Rudbeckia hirta*)



Bergamot
(*Monarda fistulosa*)



Butterfly milkweed
(*Asclepias tuberosa*)

Native Plants

For shady spots



Canadian anemone
(Anemone canadensis)



Eastern columbine
(Aquilegia canadensis)

Foamflower
(Tiarella cordifolia)



Native Plants

Native shrubs



Serviceberry
(*Amelanchier spp.*)

Red-osier dogwood
(*Cornus sericea*)



Highbush Cranberry
(*Viburnum trilobum*)

Using Native Plants

- **How can I tell if a plant is native?**
 - Not all plants that grow in the wild are native.
 - NPCA lists native plants/trees and shrubs on their website (www.conservation-niagara.on.ca) under Water Management.
 - Check with local garden centres.

Healthy Gardens

- **Fall Activities:**
 - Mulch it and Forget about it.
 - Ultimate Backyard Recycling
 - Unwanted Friends
 - Ice Melting Products



Mulch

Mulch it and Forget about it



Mulch

- **Mulch is...**
 - Term used for layers of organic material that is added to soil
 - Leaf mulching: process of shredding leaves with a lawnmower and using it in your yard
 - Process of recycling releases nutrients into the soil



Mulch

Benefits

- Returns nutrients to soil
 - Require less fertilizers
 - Forms humus source of nitrogen, phosphorus and trace elements
- Retains soil moisture
 - Lowers exposure to sun and wind
- Suppress weed growth
 - Reduces need for herbicides
- Acts as insulating barrier
 - Protects roots of perennials from freeze thaw cycles.
- Prevents soil compaction and erosion



Mulch

Material

- Compost, grass clipping, wood chips and leaves
- No leaves from Walnut family produced chemical (juglone)

How much?

- Average layer of mulch 3 inches (7.5cm)
- In fall use 6 inches to protect perennials and soil conditioner
- When to apply
- Maximum mulching: last thing to do before “putting garden to bed for Winter”
- During Spring and Summer leaves can used as a soil shade or saved
- Don't mulch when ground is cold or waterlogged

Composting

Ultimate Backyard Recycling



Composting

- **Composting is...**
 - Biological process that converts organic material into compost or humus.
 - Soil amendment that improves soil structure, aeration and water retention.
- **Benefits**
 - Increases soil's organic matter and moisture holding capabilities.
 - Improves soil porosity and prevent soil erosion.
 - Enhances plant and flower growth and develops strong roots.
 - Diverts large amounts of household waste from landfills.

Composting

- **Getting started**
 - Place in sunny location and turn soil
 - Add layer of branches
 - Wet/green layers then Dry/Brown layers
- **Tips**
 - Keep it small
 - Dig in food waste
 - Not too thick
 - Keep an eye on moisture
 - Turn your composter
 - Don't forget about the winter



Healthy Gardens

- **Unwanted Friends**
- **Moles**
 - Feed on grub on the soil
 - Damage is done by tunneling in soil
 - Solution get rid of grubs
- **Rabbits**
 - Eat young plants
 - Solution: small fence
- **Squirrels**
 - Feed on your bulbs
 - Solution: cat litter around the area to convince the squirrels that a hungry cat is around

A Quick Review



- Lawn and Garden Care Calendar
 - Early Autumn (September and October)
 - Activities: Mowing, water deeply (if necessary), dethatch (if needed), fertilizing and over seed
 - Hand-pull weeds
 - Treat for White grubs and Crane fly controls
 - Planning native plants for spring
 - Mulching gardens
 - Composting

Ice Melting

- **Ice melting products**
 - Most common product is rock salt (sodium chloride)
- **Why should you reduce?**
 - Salt can:
 - Soil: Destroy soil's natural structure.
 - Vegetation: Damage and kill plants.
 - Wildlife: Danger to fresh water ecosystems.
 - Humans: Seep into groundwater.
 - Corrosion: Damage structures.
 - Alternatives to rock salt
 - Potassium chloride, Calcium chloride and Magnesium chloride
 - Corn processing byproducts
 - Calcium magnesium acetate (CMA)
 - Careful of the type of deicers, all can be harmful.
 - Simply reduce the amount that is used.

Additional Information

- More information on Smart Gardening can be obtained from:
 - Niagara Region's Waste Info-line:
(905) 356-4141 or 1-800-594-5542, or visit www.smartgardening.ca
- If you're practicing Smart Gardening, let the world know!
 - Call Niagara Region's Waste Info-line to order your Smart Gardening Lawn sign.



Questions and Open Discussion

