

Garden Club  
**Horticultural Hints**  
June 2019

*Summer is around the corner!*



*Once its bloom is finished, cut back low growing perennials like candytuft and rock cress (*phlox subulate*) to encourage compact sturdy growth for next year.*

**Wasn't May supposed to be warm?** Gardeners have been vexed by too much rain and cold temperatures this spring. Instead of harvesting and replanting, we are still doing first plantings of many vegetables. As the soil warms, plant beets, carrots, corn, and squash. The soil must be warmer – think 80 degrees – before you transplant eggplant and peppers.



*You can definitely plant warm weather crops in early June – think beans, corn, and summer squash. Hold off on eggplant and peppers until soil temperatures are 80 degrees or higher.*

**Invasive Alert**

Black swallowwort – an invasive vine that has become entrenched across southern New England and is a danger to monarch butterflies – grows in sunny areas along fence lines and where lawns meet wooded areas. Pull it out by its shallow roots now to reduce its chance of reproducing. This is an insidious plant that will keep trying to grow back (and spread) unless it is repeatedly cut down or, better yet, pulled out. Be certain to send the plant and its roots to be incinerated.



Grape hyacinths permitted to go to seed will self-sow and provide many new plants in the area. Next year you will get only greens (which look like grass) but, in a couple of years, you will have greatly increased the number of hyacinth flowers. Daffodils, on the other hand, are best deadheaded after the flower has passed to put strength back in the strength back in the bulb. This way the bulb will produce bulbils that in a couple of years will produce more daffodil flowers.

*This is what black swallowwort looks like in early June. Plants may be only about a foot high, typically growing in clusters. Pull them out by their roots, bag them up, and send them to be incinerated.*





Tomatoes need to be grown on a trellis or in cages. Tomatoes on the ground will have more disease as well as more insect problems. The fruit is more likely to rot if sitting on wet soil. Mulching around the base of tomato plants will keep the soil evenly moist and reduce the incidence of blossom end rot.

**In the vegetable garden** Many vegetables grow very well in containers... and not just the ones advertised as for container gardens. Start with a larger pot than you think the plant needs: vegetables grow quickly once established. More importantly, a larger pot accommodates the reality that, on a sunny day, soil in a container will become quite warm; drying out and baking the roots. You may have to water twice a day during the hotter stretches. If the pot is outside and has good drainage, over-watering is almost impossible during hot spells. Use commercial soil mixes that are sterile so not to introduce disease, and vermiculite to keep the soil from compacting.



**Your iris need attention!** Once they have finished flowering, bearded irises that have been growing for three or more years should be dug up (they are shallow so it's easy) and divided. The ones in the center are the oldest and weakest. Discard those, add some compost to the area and replant the 'fans' that you have cut apart with a sharp knife. Because there will root loss, cut the foliage back by half. Place the rhizomes no closer than three inches apart — six to eight inches to allow for more growth, cover with two inches of soil and water well.



Now is a perfect time to prune shade trees. Though it can be done at any time, bark callusing (a good thing) around the pruning scars, will begin almost at once now.



Lawns that include weeds and wildflowers can be beautiful. This is a photo of the Berea College President's home, complete with a sign describing the benefits of allowing the "weeds" to thrive