



Horticulture **Spring Pruning**

Gardeners in warm climates can treat fall, and sometimes even winter, as supplemental growing seasons. But for gardeners who experience hard winters, fall is a great time to get a head start on garden clean-up. We hear a lot about four seasons of interest in the garden, but this rarely applies to perennial plants. Most perennials turn ugly as temperatures drop. However there are a few that remain evergreen, especially in milder areas. These can be left standing for interest as well as to fuel the vigor of the plant. And there are perennials that simply don't fare well if they are pruned too late in the season. The following list recommends plants that are best pruned in spring. There will, of course, be exceptions, since any plant that is diseased, infested, or otherwise in poor condition, should be pruned in the fall.

Asters Fall blooming asters are generally pinched and forced several times throughout the growing season. Once they are finally allowed to bloom, they appreciate being left alone until spring to recuperate. **Astilbe** Fall clean-up is unnecessary and may weaken the plant's tolerance for cold. Minimal spring clean-up is required. **Black-eyed Susan** (*Rudbeckia fulgida*) Although not particularly attractive in winter, the seed heads will feed the birds. **Butterfly Bush** (*Buddleia davidii*) To lessen winter kill, wait for signs of green at the base and then cut back to 6 - 10 inches. **Coral Bells** (*Heuchera*) *Heuchera* are prone to heaving in soils that freeze and thaw. Leaving the foliage intact helps to mulch the plants through winter. **Foxglove, Perennial** (*Digitalis purpurea*) Since perennial Foxgloves are usually pruned back after flowering and produce a rosette of basal growth, nothing more is needed until a light cleaning in spring. **Fringed Leaf Bleeding Heart** (*Dicentra formosa / eximia*) Although the crowns like to be high enough in the soil to be protected from dampness, the foliage is slight enough to leave for the winter and almost disappears by spring. **Globe Thistle** (*Echinops ritro*) Much like cone-flowers, *Echinops* will respond well to a pruning in July, producing more flowers and sturdier plants that will stand for the winter and feed the birds. The plant's winter survival seems improved if not cut back hard in the fall. **Hosta** Although *Hosta* foliage gets ugly over winter, some *Hosta* varieties can be damaged by spring frosts and benefit from the protection of the collapsed foliage.

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March 6 Soil Chemistry with Carole

What is soil? How do nutrients from air, water and soil work together? Why does PH matter? How do fertilizers work? Is there really a difference between organic and commercial fertilizers? Carole Ward, a former member of WNGC (and plant sale chair) will address all these questions and give us insight into how it relates to a beautiful, abundant garden. This evening Carole will share with us her knowledge of biochemistry and gardening. Her career was in biochemical product R&D, from

research to marketing, and her passion is gardening. Business meeting will be at 7:00 pm.

Hospitality will be provided by chairs **Ginger Selman** and **Liz Scheld**, with Clover Nally, Nancy Perkins, and Sandi Preble



Photo: Priscilla Styer

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The many great gardens of the world, of literature and poetry, of painting and music, of religion and architecture, all make the point as clear as possible: The soul cannot thrive in the absence of a garden. If you don't want paradise, you are not human; and if you are not human, you don't have a soul.

— Thomas Moore

Lady's Mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*) Lady's Mantle doesn't really like to be sheared back often. Occasional shearing or selective deadheading may be necessary because of sun scorch, but Lady's Mantle will over-winter better if left intact and cleaned up in the spring. **Lamb's Ear** (*Stachys byzantina*) There's no point in trying to clean up Lamb's Ear for the winter. Let it be and remove winter damage when the leaves perk up in the spring. **Lavender** (*Lavandula*) Don't prune lavender late in the season, as new growth is extremely cold sensitive. Wait until new growth appears in the spring before removing winter die-back. **Mums** (*Chrysanthemum*) Leave the foliage intact to protect the plant's crown, all the better to let the flowers bloom well into the fall. **Oriental Poppy** (*Papaver orientale*) Poppies appear to be ephemeral, disappearing or declining after the blooms fade. However a new flush of foliage will emerge in the fall, and can be left on the plants over winter, to act as a mulch. **Purple Coneflowers** (*Echinacea purpurea*) Coneflowers don't look terribly attractive in winter, but they do attract and feed birds. If you'd like both birds and aesthetics, you can always prune your coneflowers in July and get squat, sturdy plants that will provide seed and remain standing. **Russian Sage** (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*) Like its cousin Lavender, wait until new growth appears in the spring and then cut back to about 6 - 8". If the only new growth is from the base of the plant, the entire top woody section has died back and it can be pruned to the ground. **Sedum** Many of the tall Sedums can remain attractive throughout the winter, even holding caps of snow on their flower heads. 'Autumn Joy', in particular, holds up very well. The basal foliage appears very early in spring, so Sedum can be one of the first plants you prune in the spring. **Tickseed** (*Coreopsis*) Like Chelone, most coreopsis seem to fare better if allowed to stand during the winter and is then cleaned up in the spring. **Valarian, Jupiter's Beard** (*Centranthus ruber*) To be honest, I don't have much luck keeping this plant alive through winter. But I'm told that cutting it back to about 6 - 8 inches in late summer and then leaving that new growth to over-winter increases the plant's chance of survival. I'll let you know. [Source and more info at http://gardening.about.com/od/maintenance/a/Spring_Pruning.htm](http://gardening.about.com/od/maintenance/a/Spring_Pruning.htm)

Club News **WNGC Donates Historic Sign to Town**

*This just in from WNGC stringer **Nora O'Neil**:*

On Monday, February 11, the West Newbury Garden Club presented an historic sign from the Cherry Hill Nurseries to the town of West Newbury as part of the club's 70th anniversary commemorations. The sign was officially accepted by Selectmen Richard Cushing, Glenn Kemper, and John McGrath on behalf of the town. The sign hangs on the left side of the elevator at the top of the stairs in the entryway of the 1910 Town Office Building.

The sign was given to the West Newbury Garden Club through the generosity of town residents Ann and Terry O'Sullivan. The sign represents years of work by the Thurlow family in founding and developing Cherry Hill Nurseries to become a nationally known and well-regarded grower of ornamental shrubs and trees, such as Norway spruce, laurels, lilacs, and rhododendron. The nursery also cultivated and hybridized peonies, which were famous throughout the world. Founded in 1832 as T.C. Thurlow & Sons, the nursery operated under the name of Thurlow & Stranger from the 1920s through the 1940s and later became the Cherry Hill Nurseries until November 1999. The thriving business was even able to survive the years of the Depression.

The O'Sullivans purchased the sign at auction when Cherry Hill Nurseries closed in 1999. It was their intention to find an appropriate West Newbury organization to which to donate the sign. On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the West Newbury Garden Club, the O'Sullivans decided to give the sign to the WNGC. Without a permanent location to display the sign, the Club determined that the sign should be dedicated to the town of West Newbury so that it

could be hung in the 1910 Town Office Building for all to appreciate and in honor of the years of service provided to the town by the Thurlow family.



*WNGC President **Linda Schaeffer**, Terry O'Sullivan, Ellen and John Thurlow, Richard and Dorothy Thurlow (former owners of Cherry Hill), Ann O'Sullivan, **Dianne Faulkner***

The dedication of the Cherry Hill Nurseries sign is part of a year-long celebration of the Garden Club's longevity. On September 6, 2007, the WNGC hosted a formal celebration which was attended by Senator Bruce Tarr and Representative Harriet Stanley. In October, the WNGC held a spring bulb beautification giveaway in West Newbury. 1000 daffodils were given away to townspeople who agreed to plant them in their front yards to share with passersby. We hope to see the blooms soon throughout town.

Events

Newburyport Horticultural Society
Tues Mar 11 7pm (6:30 bus. mtg) **Free**

From the Garden to the Dining Room Table with Doug Morris

Newburyport Library, State Street

Info: Floreen Maroncelli 978 463-9923

Merrimac Garden Club

Tues Mar 4 7 pm Free

Jump Start to Spring Tim Lamprey from Harbor Garden Center tells what seeds to start now, and conducts an in-depth Q&A session

Merrimac Senior Center, 100 East Main St, Rte 110, Merrimac, MA

Info: Nancy Sinton 978 346-8607

Tower Hill Botanic Gardens

Sun March 30
10am-5pm Free

Annual Spring Open House

11 French Drive, Boylston MA

Info: 508 869-6111



Learn How to Reduce Your Carbon Footprint

Wed thru Sun, Mar 28-Apr 19 10-4 \$15

Tour an energy efficient, resource friendly house featuring environmentally friendly, occupant healthy products. Attend a lecture series (\$5 each) to learn about going green, & shop at the on-site green boutique.

Info: Kim Knowlen 207 865-3985

March's Hot Website

[Garden Planner's Q&A](http://www.accentmagazine.com/Accent/Gardens-Gardening/Garden-Planners-Q-A/)

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Federation and Club News

Annual Lunch, Volunteers

Northern District Annual Meeting and Luncheon will be held Monday, **April 14th** at the Haverhill Country Club, 9am to 3pm This year's theme is *Nurture the Earth- Plant Natives*. Morning Guest Speaker: Cathy Felton, NGC Horticultural Chair. Luncheon Program: Robin Murphy, Floral Designer "Quilts in Bloom" The cost is **\$38.00**, and if you wish to attend, you must **RSVP by March 31st**. A few people on the board expressed interest in going. If anyone else is interested they can call President Linda Schaeffer for a ticket. We can carpool.

Mass Gardens on Tour is Looking for Volunteers The tour runs from **Friday June 6th to Monday June 9th**. Friday and Saturday it is based in the Metrowest Region; Sunday and Monday it's based in the Northeast Region. Four volunteers are needed at each property each morning and each afternoon every day. Volunteer slots will be filled on a first-come basis. Linda will have a sign-up sheet at the March meeting for anyone who is interested, and more details are at www.gcfm.org

WNGC Plant Sale **May 17th** 8:30 to 11:30 Sign up on March 6th

New England Spring Flower Show Trip Wednesday, **March 12th** 3:00 to 9:30 pm. **\$39** includes bus, ticket, gratuity. Check payable to WNGC Meet behind the Annex in parking lot at 3 pm *sharp*. Carol Hurn 374-1238



Ask Peony
from p.4

March, cont.

Daphne odora 'Aureomarginata': Easy daphne with lily-scented pink flowers and yellow-rimmed green leaves. Wide rather than tall. Warm shelter.

Brunnera macrophylla 'Jack Frost': Heart-shaped silvered leaves dramatically edged and veined in green, finished off with dainty blue flowers. Good soil, part shade.

Erythronium 'Pagoda': Pallid, yellow Tiffany lamps and mottled foliage make this a woodland essential. Divide after flowering to encourage more. Leaf-litter, humus-rich soil.

Viola cornuta 'Alba': Cushion of green foliage topped by wispy pansy flowers. May. Superb under roses.

Anemone nemorosa 'Vestal': This pristine white anemone has a neat, double centre and long-lasting flowers that spread. Woodland shade.

Dicentra 'Bacchanal': Delicate, apple-green ferny foliage topped by claret-red bleeding hearts on long stems. More persistent than many. Part shade.

Euphorbia polychroma: A mound of acid yellow flowers throughout spring. Brightens up a dark corner or shows off vibrant tulips. Easy anywhere.

Polystichum setiferum 'Grandiceps': These elaborate polystichums look almost mossy in spring and this form has upright crested fronds. Shade but not too dry.



WNGC

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*Gardens for beauty,
learning, and sharing*

The West Newbury Garden Club was founded in 1936 to encourage and cultivate an interest in gardening, to aid in protecting and conserving our natural resources, to further the study of horticulture and flower arranging, and to promote civic beauty. For more information, please contact President Linda Schaeffer at 978 363-5251 or at linda-schaeffer@verizon.net

Next Board Meeting
March 13, 2008 at 7:00pm



Ask Peony **March**

Dear Gardening Friends,

*Oh stop! Stop! All of those letters are killing my mail-person! But if you must, call in your questions to: 978-363-2610. And if a man answers- hang up. Well, here comes March; lead me to that good smelling dirt and something pretty to plant! I have found a list of some of the very best flowering plants for our gardens this spring. The site is: www.Telegraph.co.uk/gardening/index.jhtml. Look for these at the Flower Show, in a friend's garden and at your favorite nursery. Spring forward!
Perennially Yours,
Peony*

SPRING BLOOMERS

Pulmonaria 'Diana Clare' : Long silvered leaves with an apple-green cast, deep violet flowers, make this pulmonaria perhaps the best of all. Part shade.

Epimedium x versicolor 'Sulphureum': Graceful wiry stems, two-tone yellow flowers above heart-shaped, shiny green leaves. A toughie. Part shade.

Erysimum 'Bowles' Mauve': In flower from spring until late autumn, this bushy wallflower produces sprays of purple flowers above grey-green foliage. Sun and good drainage.

Dryopteris wallichiana: Black bristly hairs contrast against bright green fronds when this handsome upright fern unfurls its croziers in late April. Good soil, shade.

Cyclamen coum: Swept-back flower with a magenta nose. Full sun or under trees. Self-seeds. Good drainage.

Clematis macropetala: Scrambles over a wall and, given time, it produces ragged, soft-petalled flowers with cool green middles. Good drainage.

Viburnum x burkwoodii 'Park Farm Hybrid': Early spicy, sweet fragrance as deep pink buds open to apple-white flowers that show up well against the shiny green leaves.



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