



REDENTAS GARDEN

FALL  2002

AN EXPERIENCE IN GARDENING THE WAY IT WAS MEANT TO BE

Notes from Ruth



Wow! Have we ever come a long way since 1992 . . . and yet . . .

I know that many of you have come to know and understand organic gardening. You have picked your favorite products, know how easy they are to use and would not think of gardening any other way. Until a recent conversation with my ladies at one of our stores, I was assuming most of our gardeners now understood the basics of organic gardening. Apparently, that is not the case. They reported that every day someone comes in to the store who has not heard of liquid seaweed, bagged compost and ready-to-use organic fertilizers. They convinced me that we needed to work harder with each and every one of our gardeners to make sure that everyone is well versed in "Organic Gardening 101."

Organic Gardening 101
Greensand
Texas greensand contains the remains of microscopic pre-historic aquatic life forms. It provides a natural source of iron (20%), potassium, silica and lots of trace minerals.

It is so important to me that each of our gardeners has a successful gardening experience. In North Texas, gardening is more than digging a hole and

Continued on next page

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Mrs. **MEYER'S**
CLEAN DAY

I can tell you that doing laundry is not one of my favorite activities. But a couple of months ago I tried a new product that has put a whole new spin on washing clothes for me. I discovered Mrs. Meyer's Clean Day Laundry Detergent and Fabric Softener. I must admit it was the packaging that captivated me, but after using it the first time I was completely hooked. I found I enjoyed the simple action of measuring just two ounces of detergent and pouring it into the machine. And the resultant fragrance in the laundry room as well as the lingering fragrance in my clothes has been very invigorating. There are two fragrances – I am hooked on the lavender – Michael and Lorie (they have since started using it as well) prefer the lemon verbena.

Since we were having problems finding the product, we just decided to start selling it. We think you will like it as much as we do!



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Notes from Ruth
continued

planting a plant. That may be the case in other parts of the country, but I can tell you that when we moved to the metroplex 22 years ago, we could not even dig the hole! Our soils need lots of organic matter. Compost, earthworm castings, dried molasses, lava sand, Texas greensand and corn meal are the bagged, easy-to-use organic amendments we use each time we prepare new areas for planting. Each and every plant and planting hole is soaked with liquid seaweed (organic root stimulator). All bare soil is covered with three inches of shredded hardwood or native cedar mulch.

With time (and patience!) tiny microbes will start thriving on these rotting organic materials. Earthworms will begin to appear, aerating the soil and leaving behind their own fertilizer. Your soil will come alive!

So . . . the next time we ask you if you have your liquid seaweed, remember we just want you to experience gardening the way it was meant to be.

Organic Gardening 101
Compost
<p>We sell more compost than anything else in the stores. It is the first step (a 4-inch layer) in preparing a bed for planting along with organic amendments to encourage microbial activity so that the plants will always be able to find the nutrients they need. A half-inch of compost can also be added to lawn areas that need a boost and a one-inch layer is usually added to mature planting beds before re-mulching.</p> <p>Compost is made up of naturally occurring materials that are in the process of decomposing and yielding a constant stream of nutrients and microorganisms that are readily available to the plants.</p>

Organic Gardening 101
Lava Sand
<p>Some of the richest soil in the world is found where there has been a lot of volcanic activity in the past. Lava sand does not in and of itself increase microbial activity but studies have shown that plants grow more vigorously when crushed volcanic material is included. In addition to the paramagnetic energy that seems to encourage growth, lava sand absorbs water so that soil does not dry out as quickly. Lava sand is used in bed preparation as well as in lawn areas.</p>

Weed control

Recently one of our regular organic fertilization customers called to complain about weeds. Her husband was threatening to use weapons of mass destruction on the yard, if necessary, if we didn't immediately eliminate the weeds. Here are some hints on keeping the weed population down:

1. Mow at least once a week. This prevents weeds from developing seeds and making more weeds.
2. Pull them out. This method has the least negative effect on the environment.
3. Spot kill with a solution of vinegar/citrus oil (we have a couple of pre-mixed products in the stores). Use a squirt bottle so you can direct the solution to the weeds and minimize the temporary burn back of the turf.
4. Use Corn Gluten Meal in the late fall and especially in the early spring as a preemergent to discourage any weed seeds getting ready to germinate.
5. Get over it! Great grandmother's front yard was a healthy, bio-diverse mix of clovers and native grasses.

The fall webworm is back in action and in particular is attacking pecan trees, fruitless mulberry and other ornamental shade trees.

A little history...the adults are one-inch white moths that lay their eggs (as many as 200 to 500) on the leaves during April and May. The larvae hatch, build their webs over the leaves and feed inside these webs. The mature larvae crawl to ground and over winter as a pupa.

At the first sign of an outbreak, prune out the nests. The best control at this point in time is to try to break open the webs and spray *Bacillus thuringiensis* into the webs, covering as much foliage as possible. Spray at dusk – that's when the worms are busy feeding.

If you have very large trees this may not be possible. Just break open the nests with a stick and let the birds and other predators feast on the worms. The damage fortunately is only cosmetic. Next April and May, release trichogramma wasps when the moths are laying their eggs – this is the best control.



Organic Gardening 101
Mulch
<p>A 3-inch layer of finely shredded hardwood or shredded native cedar mulch is a must in North Texas to protect plant roots from extremes in temperature and to help conserve the moisture in the soil. In addition, as mulch slowly decays over time, it adds even more nutrients to the soil. Mulch should be added each year to insure a 3-inch layer of protection.</p>



redenta's landscape design

The bones of the garden
by Michael & Lorie Kinler
Principal Designers

Since fall is the best time to plant, we are all anxious to get back into the garden to add perennial or annual color. However, remember when considering your overall layout that the tree and shrub “structure” of the garden is at least equally important. Structural planting does not mean eliminating perennials and annuals from your garden but allows the opportunity to showcase these plants when it is their time to perform. Using plants as structure extends the architecture of the house into the landscape. Lines and shapes can be repeated in the garden that create a connection between the outdoors and indoors.

Don't limit yourself to shrubs up against the house. Pull them away and let them sweep through a planting bed, adding texture and interest or creating edges that define space and direction. The shape of shrubs can be loose or hard. It is not always necessary to turn them into shapes or hedges. Sometimes it is best to let them take on their own natural growth habit.

There are so many different shrubs that lend themselves to a variety of applications. Low growing shrubs such as dwarf yaupon holly or green gem boxwood can be used as a hedge to define space. Ground covers can also provide structure. Liriope and mondo grass can edge planting beds and walkways.

When perennials die back in winter, the evergreen border or hedge can create pockets for winter color. Screening can be accomplished with taller shrubs such

as wax myrtle, cherry laurel or Nellie R. Stevens holly.

Single shrubs or small trees can act as focal points or as specimens for visual interest. With the right lighting they can become dramatic elements in the garden at night. Groupings of tall shrubs can be an evergreen backdrop to the garden creating a “living” wall or fence. Shrubs are not the only structural plants. Evergreen herbs and perennials such as rosemary and germander provide a looser, less formal alternative.

Ornamental grasses add a softer, flowing effect even though they are not evergreen. They become an unusual specimen in the winter with their dormant golden color and texture. Plant bulbs in the late fall and when you cut back the grasses in late winter the bulbs will just be popping up to fill the void until the grasses come back.

There are many options to consider when using structural planting to create the “bones” of the garden. With a little planning and forethought, your garden can be a place that provides year-round interest and enjoyment.

Organic Gardening 101
Molasses
Sugars such as dried molasses are the number one recommended product for increasing microbial activity. When sugars are present, microbes multiply at a much higher rate. Dried molasses is used in bed preparation and on lawns. It is also a source of sulfur, potash and other trace minerals.

Organic Gardening 101
Corn Meal
Corn meal is a disease fighter, stimulating existing beneficial microorganisms that feed on pathogens.

Organic Gardening 101
Worm Castings
Worm castings are extremely rich in organic material and a source of beneficial bacteria, trace minerals, humus, and earthworm eggs. Earthworms in the soil help aerate the soil as they burrow and also leave behind material rich in organic matter.

Consultations

Do you need some help deciding what to do with that problem area of the landscape? Could you use someone who knows plants and design to get you started?

Redenta's has four full-time consultants that visit gardeners at their homes. These are folks who have been with us for some time now and know their plants and have over the years developed a keen eye for plant and bed placement.

We charge \$50 for a one-hour visit. Often, the gardener is able to get enough ideas from the visit to get them started on their project. The consultants can also do a sketch and, of course, Redenta's would be happy to bid the work if the gardener isn't going to do it themselves. If the gardener wants the consultant to stay for a second hour on the same visit, there is only an additional \$30 charge. Call the main office (817.469.6786) to set up an appointment.

Organic Gardening 101
Organic Fertilizer
Organic fertilizer gives the organic gardener a product that they can apply several times throughout the year to maintain the soil health of beds and turf. Redenta's Organic Fertilizer contains dried chicken manure, fish solubles, feather meal, alfalfa meal, humates and Sulfate of Potash.

Free organic information

Next time you are in the store, pick up one of our organic gardening handouts. As a result of answering gardeners' questions, we have over the years put together a group of our own informational handouts. Some of the most popular are:

Planting Guide

Organic Lawn Care

Tree & Shrub Planting Guide

We Promise you a Rose Garden

Redenta's Rose Picks

Container Gardening

Butterfly Gardening

You can also print out our handouts from our web site, redentas.com.



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FAX: 214 828-2955

Hours: Monday through Saturday 9-6
Sunday 10-5

It's time to plant

Even though our urge to get something in the ground usually happens in the spring, the fall is actually the best time to plant in North Texas. Planting within the next few months will allow the plants to become adapted and the root systems to develop before facing the next Texas summer.

Organic Gardening 101
<i>Redenta's Bed Prep</i>
We have packaged all of the soil amendments discussed in the boxes in this article in our Redenta's Bed Prep. Now when preparing a planting bed, you only need to add the prescribed amount of Redenta's Bed Prep to the compost and mix into the soil.

Redenta's Garden is published seasonally by Ruth and Dick Kinler. We welcome any comments or suggestions.

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