



**AUGUST 2014**



# The GREENLEAF

## NEWSLETTER

**HOURS: MON - SAT 8:00 A.M. TO 5:30 P.M.**  
**SUN 10:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M.**

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*By Jeff McCauley*

## Drip It!

**D**rip irrigation is the way of the future as far as watering goes. Here in Frisco, we are currently in Stage 3 Water Restrictions, allowing you to water with a sprinkler system only twice a month.

With drip irrigation one can water as frequently as needed! Some customers are switching to drip in their planting bed areas which have been enlarged. Other customers are drip irrigating their lawns as well. In order to do this you have to remove existing turf and put in new, allowing the drip to be underneath the turf. A drip system is not soaker hoses, but rather a grid of small drip-lines about 12"-14" apart with a drip hole every 12"-15" along the line. It is run by your sprinkler controller so you can program it to run when you like. The lines have pressure regulators that allow the water to be dispersed equally.

When a new landscape is first installed, the plants need supplemental hand-watering until new roots can make contact with moist soil. It's kind of tricky and will have to be adjusted by the controller until you get the length of duration the way the plants need it. Sometimes, at first, you may over-water or under-water until the drip duration is right. All in all, the drip is the way to go and you won't be breaking the Stage 3 watering rules set forth.

Shades of Green has an excellent sub-contractor that we use for drip irrigation for the new landscapes we install. This allows you to be able to landscape throughout the year. We will draw up a plan and then have our irrigator retro-fit the plan for drip irrigation. Give us a call to get more information for your new landscape!

# TIMELY HINTS

## Plant ...

- Wildflowers!! Now is the perfect time to put wildflower seed out. We carry a great selection of **Botanical Interests®** seed packets!
- Container grown plants, such as various Annuals, Perennials, Shrubs, and Trees. Remember to hand-water daily for the first 10-14 days to help get them established. And as a reminder – the larger container plants will continue to need hand watering as long as there is no measurable rainfall.
- Replace dead or worn-out looking plants in your containers. Just pull out the old one and pop in a fresh vibrant one to enhance containers until you do a fall makeover.

## Prune ...

- Trim spent blossoms, flower stalks, and ugly foliage on perennials. This will encourage another round of fall growth and blooms.
- Pick-prune to maintain shape on shrubs and shrub-roses, such as ‘Knockout’ and ‘Drift’ Roses.

## Fertilize ...

- Use **Osmocote**, **Colorscapes**, **Color Star**, and even **Superthrive** on container plants to keep them happy and blooming in the heat. Use **Palm Food** on palms to give them a boost during the warm weather.

## Pests ...

- For bagworms and webworms, use **BT (bacillus thuringiensis)** to take them out.
- Scale is a nuisance and **All Seasons Oil** is still one of the best we’ve found to control it, and it’s earth-friendly also! When temps are over 90°F, we suggest a non-organic systemic insecticide to control scale. We carry two product brands that can kill these pesky critters. Their active scale control ingredient is imidacloprid.

- **Serenade** is a great organic control for a broad range of fungal problems and we feel it is one of the safest products out there.

## Water ...

- **Continue to be ‘Water Wise’**. It seems Summer’s heat is finally here -- so be watchful. Check your landscape often and water if it is dry and needs it. Use a **Moisture Tester** and probe around if you’re uncertain. This handy gadget could save you hundreds of dollars.

## Other Bits and Pieces ...

- Maintain 2” to 3” of mulch in planting beds to conserve moisture and moderate soil temperatures. You should have no bare soil in beds.
- Now is a good time to plan for fall plantings. Fall has the best weather (and nursery stock!) so get those ideas on paper now.
- During August heat we all appreciate shade. Make note where to plant that tree to provide shade to your patio or home. Mark the spot so when you plant in the fall the tree will give you shade next summer. (Remember, the sun will have moved by fall, so make note now of the best location.)
- Check on your newly planted trees during summer’s heat. Download our **Summer Survival Tips for Trees** under the section **Plant Care** on our website:

[www.shadesofgreeninc.com](http://www.shadesofgreeninc.com)



# LEARN *as* you GO



By Veronica Brown

**W**hen I was first asked to write an article for this newsletter, I completely went blank. Not having a ‘green thumb’ like my mother and being brand new to the industry, I felt clueless and lost, and had no earthly idea what to write about.

I quickly started asking my co-workers at Shades of Green about which plants were good summer bloomers. I have to admit I got some pretty funny looks from them. The thing is, there are a LOT of great plants that continuously bloom throughout the summer months. Not having that green thumb I mentioned earlier, this was news to me!

So this article is for those out there, like me, that may sometimes feel clueless and green thumb-less at times! Instead of worrying myself about the article, I set out to concentrate on the plants themselves and learn about the important facts of each one. This meant asking a lot of questions! No matter how many eyes were rolled at me for asking the same questions over and over again, I kept asking. There is a lot to learn! I’ve never let that hold me back from learning and getting a job done. You just have to admit that you’re new, and take it all in. My fellow employees at Shades of Green were very helpful. As were some of my customers, who willingly shared their own knowledge of their favorite plants! I am very grateful to them all and appreciate all the advice given.

I learned which plants need more water than others, and which plants need less. Which plants need the sun, and which despise the sun. Which ones need pruning and plucking, and which ones prefer to be left alone and never touched. I personally favor any flowers that bring the butterflies to the garden, such as Milkweed, Asters, Bee Balm, Butterfly Bush, Catmint, Coneflowers, Day Lilies, Snap Dragons, Sage, Stonecrop, and Zinnias. (I do love butterflies!) I learned that planting Pipe Vine brings the caterpillars, too. Though they devour the Pipe Vine, you get to experience the Butterfly’s life cycle in the process.



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# LEARN *as you* GO

I've decided that my favorite shrub is the 'Rose Glow' Barberry. It is a versatile and colorful shrub that's perfect for beginner gardeners because it's so easy to grow.



Barberry is most vibrant in full sun. It can tolerate some shade, but its' color will be very different – mostly green with some pink and red accents. In early spring dainty yellow flowers appear. The contrast between the deep purple foliage and yellow blooms is dazzling. Even through the fall and winter 'Rose Glow' will not disappoint. Bright red seed pods remain on the shrub adding color and interest to your yard. I planted one in my own yard this past spring and can't wait to see it mature!

My favorite tree would be the Texas Bird of Paradise. I learned that this, too, is easy to grow when given suitable conditions and makes a nice specimen plant in a mixed border. It can be kept in a container, but you need to keep in mind its' overall size, which can reach up to 10' tall and about 6' wide. Texas Bird of Paradise is considered drought tolerant, and thrives in well-drained soils with plenty of sun. It can take some shade, but its' blooms will not be as profuse.



These plants require very little care once they become established. Planting a landscape and learning about each plant is just like anything else. The hardest part is getting started; while the rewards continue for years to come.



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