

Garden Club
Horticultural Hints
September 2018

The Downside of a Wet Summer

The downside of rain. The rains of August kept most of our gardens and lawns green without need for watering. Only southeastern Massachusetts (including Cape Cod) and central New Hampshire show any dryness according to the Drought Monitor. The downside of rain is that downy mildew and diseases that thrive in wet conditions are showing up in the garden. Phlox, monarda (shown at right) and dogwood should be checked for infections. The simplest way to control powdery mildew is to spray it with a solution made from one tablespoon of baking soda in a gallon of warm water. It's perfectly safe and harmless to you and your plants (after all, you put it in your cakes...).



Our wet August also produced **an explosion of weed growth**. Poison ivy enjoyed a nice growth spurt in August and is everywhere. Be on the lookout for it as it gets more potent as the season goes on. Be aware that pets can transfer the irritating oils to you after they've had a romp through the fields and woods, or your garden

Poison ivy becomes more potent in September and October as the active ingredient that causes skin irritation becomes more concentrated.

And, 2018's wet and humid summer yielded **a snail and slug explosion**. They, too, appreciated the wet weather. They're hungry and ready to lay eggs for next year. Fortunately, there is a safe, effective solution. Purchase only products that contain the chemical iron phosphate. It doesn't hurt the environment, animals, your plants or anything *except* slugs and snails. Luckily the bad guys find it appealing and fatal. Reducing their numbers in the fall means fewer will hatch next spring to eat your hosta, your tomatoes and just about anything else they find.



Iron phosphate tablets will take care of your slug problems

Lawn care starts with a soil test. If you didn't do one in the spring, do it now. An inexpensive state soil lab test tells you what your soil needs to grow what you want to grow. They give you specific recommendations for improving lawns, gardens, whatever you ask about. Do it now and you'll have plenty of time after you get the results back to add lime, or fertilizer or whatever is recommended by the experts in October or November.



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USE THIS FORM FOR HOME GROUNDS AND GARDENS

Visit our website to download a copy of the Sampling Instructions sheet which includes a description of routine, and optional soil tests offered. Send your sample(s), completed submission form and payment to the address listed above. Enclose check payable to UMass for \$15 for each sample plus additional fees for optional tests requested below.

Main contact:		Send copy to:		Method of receiving results <input type="checkbox"/> US Mail (please include \$2 for postage & handling) <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail
Name:		Name:		
Business Name:		Business Name:		
Street Address:		Street Address:		
City, State, and Zip:		City, State, and Zip:		
Phone:		Phone:		
E-mail address:		E-mail address:		

LAB # (Leave blank)	Sample ID (You create this)	Approx. area represented by sample (sq ft. or acres)	Crop Code, limit of 3 (See reverse side of this form)	Routine analysis (\$15.00)	Organic matter (\$6.00)	Soluble salts (\$6.00)	Nitrate (\$6.00)
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Order Total \$ _____



Support migrating pollinators and other birds as they travel through your backyard on their way to a winter home. Here are a few tips on how to help them on their way:

Hummingbirds may travel up to 2,000 miles to Central America. A **hummingbird feeder** in your garden is a welcome refueling stop for them.

Monarch butterflies are heading south toward Mexico and southern California, flying up to 3,000 miles. If you don't have them already, plant native milkweed and late blooming nectar plants such as goldenrod and asters to feed them.

Migratory songbirds need you to plant trees and shrubs to provide them with a place to roost and to refuel on berries or insects during their travels.



If your vegetable garden is in a protected area, plant cool season vegetables seeds such as lettuce, spinach, arugula, kale, or even peas. You have a very good chance of eating fresh vegetables from your garden into November – or even for Thanksgiving if you use row covers or a cold frame to protect plants on cold nights.



Vegetable gardens are starting to wind down now. As crops finish, remove plants from the garden in order to reduce the number of pests that can overwinter. Whether it's bean beetles, corn borers, tomato hornworms or something unknown, sending your spent plants to the local dump or transfer station is worth the effort. You are preventing eggs or other forms of the insect from wintering over in (or near) your garden, which gives you fewer problems from the start next season. NEVER compost any plant material that has had insect or disease problems