

# Garden Club Horticultural Hints June 2023

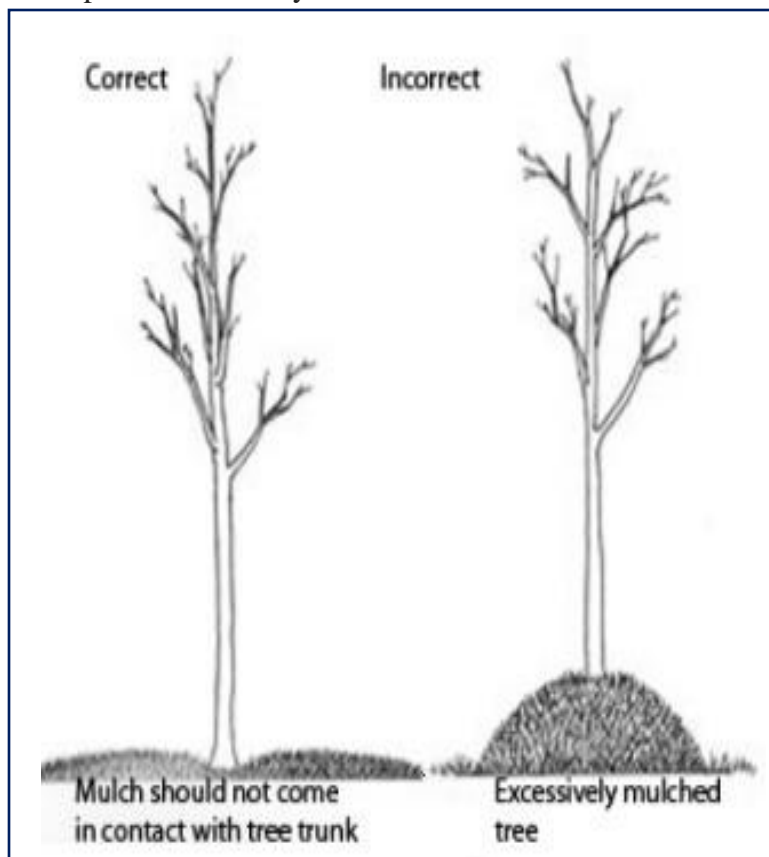
So much to do, thank goodness the days are longer!

## Invasive Alert

**It's swallowwort season.** Be aware of the growing colonies of invasive weeds such as black swallowwort. It looks like a vine as it grows, then a pretty purple flower appears and finally a pod full of seeds. While the seeds look somewhat like milkweed pods, they will kill monarch larva that hatch from eggs laid on these plants. Cut down the vines before the flowers ripen into seeds. Weed whackers, or clippers for small stands, mower for larger ones. But beware-- they will re-sprout. Just keep cutting them until they don't return. Or in your garden, dig out the root mass, bag it and leave it in the sun to kill. Do not compost or throw any swallowwort into other areas



*Swallowwort grows anywhere the ground is disturbed. Below; the tell-tale flower will be visible in just a few weeks*



**Putting down too much mulch** is bad for plants because it excludes oxygen from reaching the soil. Yes, roots need oxygen to do their work. Keep mulch at two inches and it still excludes virtually all weeds, holds in water on hot days — and lets the garden breathe



**Avoid the temptation to treat your lawn now.** We all want to keep our grass looking lush and green for June, but adding fertilizer this month will give a leg up to any weeds that have sprouted, and they grow faster than grass. Herbicides and pesticides will kill beneficial insects (those who eat other insects!) and earthworms in your turf grass, accelerating any pest outbreaks



**Use row covers to exclude pests** such as Mexican bean beetles, Colorado potato beetles and on other vegetables that do not need to be insect pollinated. Put covers over squash plants to protect them from squash borers and other pests, but remove them when you see the first flower blooms, they need the bees to produce squash.



**Now that Memorial Day is past**, plant warm weather vegetables — tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, and basil; as well as the warm weather annuals in your flower beds. Marigolds, petunias, zinnias, salvia, and coleus will appreciate the hot weather. The bees visiting will pollinate your fruits and vegetables helping you have a summer full of produce.



**What's the best mulch** for your vegetable seedlings? A layer of heat-treated straw, shredded leaves, newspapers or grass clippings placed around your vegetable seedlings will conserve soil moisture without introducing weed seeds. Untreated straw contains weed seeds that will happily germinate in your garden.



**Weed, weed, weed** because some weeds are already setting flowers and (then seeds) in order to multiply by the thousands. Pulling, digging or cutting weeds off at ground level is worth all the time you put in to it. Never ignore weeds. They are weeds because they steal light, water and nutrients from the plants you want to grow.



If you are **growing vining plants** — cucumbers, tall (indeterminate) tomatoes, pole beans or flowering vines, construct and install sturdy supports now. While seeing a small tomato plant inside a large cage may seem strange, training the vines to the cage while they are young is relatively easy. The plants will resent you trying to weave them through the supports as they get older and less flexible. Velcro strips are an easy way to attach the plant quickly without damaging the stems. And if you buy supermarket lettuce, they come with Velcro-like strips that can be trimmed to an appropriate length do the job for free.

*Written and created by Betty Sanders. For more horticultural suggestions for June and throughout the year, please visit [www.BettyOnGardening.com](http://www.BettyOnGardening.com)*