



Lycoris squamigera

Petite Gardenscapes

Sensible designs for the weekend gardener

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Special Interest Articles:

- Dog Days
- Late Summer Allergies
- Plants for Fall Color
- Ultimate Weeding Tool

Timely Tip:

Build or install a rain barrel to use rainwater. See a video at www.finegardening.com

Monthly features

- >Plant disorder of the month
- >Bulb of the month
- >Timely Tip

Questions or comment? Contact Pat at pbaganz@voyager.net or at 262-353-6555

Dog Days of Summer

Charles Walsh of the Connecticut Paper describes “dog days” as that time of the summer when we start to whine and say really stupid things like “Geez, I can’t wait for winter.” He also clarifies that this year, since we’re still wearing two sweaters to bed, we might not be THAT stupid. It seems dog days refer to the dog star Sirius rising into the late July and August skies, but we usually equate it with hot, muggy, annoyingly sticky weather. Even if this summer doesn’t get *that* bad, what we are whining about is the lack of rainfall.

We need to keep our green investments healthy- who can afford to replace those perennials and shrubs that die of thirst? I’m writing this article on good watering habits with the hope that, like leaving your truck windows open, a box of clothes for Goodwill on the porch, or washing your car, the

rains will catch us napping and you can ignore this advice. Keep your fingers crossed.

Watering 101

Don’t water in the middle of the day. We’ve all heard that, but who wants to be up at 5 am? The answer? A timer similar to the one below attaches to your hose, and is programmed to turn itself on and off. Cost ranges are \$20-65 and are available at most nurseries and places like Target and Walmart.



Also, mid-to-late August is the time to reseed the lawn or start new lawn areas. Keeping the seed moist is easy if the automatic timer is set for daily watering.

Water the roots, not the leaves- water that bounces off the leaves is wasted, and if you’re still watering during the

daytime, the sun can use the drops of water to act as a magnifying glass and burn the leaves. Get a sprinkler that throws water in a low pattern, not overhead. In addition, watering in the dog days will mean more water loss due to evaporation. Below are two suggestions for getting the water to where you want it.



The **Noodlehead Sprinkler** lets you bend the heads in the directions you want.



Better yet, a **Drip Irrigation system** puts the water in the right place, and at the right time. www.irrigation.learnabout.info tells how to get started.



Sneezin' Season

It's time to bail out one of the most maligned plants growing around us : **Goldenrod** (**Solidago** species).



[flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/12500000000/12500000000/)

Poor goldenrod is blamed for seasonal allergies, rhinitis or hay fever. The real culprit is Ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*), of which a single plant can produce up to a ONE BILLION pollen grains! The reason Goldenrod gets the blame is its similarity in structure to the real villain, below, and because Ragweed is growing in ditches and abandoned lots and manages to get those billion pollen grains everywhere!



www.britannica.com

So, try Goldenrod in your garden for great late season punch. One nice variety is **Solidago 'Fireworks'**, so named because its arching sprays of yellow bloom remind us of Fourth of July fireworks.



arboretum.unl.edu

Another cultivar is **Zigzag Goldenrod** (*Solidago flexicaulis*) with its bright golden heads.



www.pwrc.usgs.gov

And while I'm talking about late summer blooms, I'll recommend adding some little known plants: Aster '**Professor Kippenburg**', a dwarf (10 inches) with a really great blue flower,



www.mywebgarden.com

Chelone 'Hot Lips' whose common name is Turtlehead (when you see the bloom up close, you'll see why. It tolerates some shade and has a deep pink blossom that lights up darker areas, and the



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Anemone species- we love the Japanese Anemone with their snow-white blooms in May, but these sturdier cousins will cheer you up when all the plants around you are drying up and keeling over. These plants tolerate shade and can grow between 2 and 4 feet with a spread of 2 feet. Blossoms are a big 2-3 inches across in white or pink. This plant doesn't like drought, wind, or wet winter soil.



www.plantsafari.com

Have you got a '**Sweet Autumn' Clematis**?

When you get one (you have to get one) plant it near the house so you can catch the spicy-sweet fragrance as it blooms September-November (one Thanksgiving, we stood on the back porch inhaling the wonderful scent) – now that's a treat a month from Christmas!



www.prairielandherbs.com

And of course, **Autumn Joy Sedum**



and **Chrysanthemums** (you did remember to pinch them back the way I told you, right?) are the sturdy workhorses in the late summer and autumn gardens.





Weeding with Cool Tools

by Elizabeth O'Connell

Putting new plants in the ground or harvesting beautiful flowers and flavorful fruits gets you moving, but for a real workout nothing beats weeding. Hours of bending, stretching, and pulling costs plenty at the spa but you can get it all for free just tending your garden. Yep, weeding's great exercise but frustrating unless you have the proper tool to do the job.

My favorite garden tool is one that makes weeding a breeze - a Japanese farmers' knife called a hori hori. We were introduced to hori horis years ago when a friend brought one to Rotary Park on a community work day. It felt like Rambo had arrived to save the park.



blithewold.com

His hori hori's concave blade was an inch and a half wide and about 7 inches long with serrations down one side. It had a comfortable wooden handle and uprooted dandelions and sow thistles with a flick of the wrist. When not in use, the hori hori was holstered in a macho scabbard hanging from his belt. I knew at a glance this was the tool for me.

My husband immediately bought two of these weeding machines, stainless steel models complete with carrying holsters. If clothes make the man, then tools make the gardener. Hang one of these babies from your hip and you know the local weeds are going down.

Hori hori knives were developed in Japan by farmers who hunted trees to turn into bonsai. The long blade let them gently loosen the seedlings from the craggy mountain soil. Stubborn roots could be cut with the serrated edge and piles of tools didn't have to be hauled up the heights.

In our garden, tree seedlings are a major problem and the hori hori makes short work of them, sliding into the soil and freeing tap roots up to 18 inches with little effort. Even tuberous roots like those on burdock come out of the soil without a struggle.

The hori hori goes with me on every trip to the garden. Using it as a trowel I can plant small annuals and perennials with ease and the serrated edge is good for rough deadheading jobs or cutting back the occasional straying rose cane or broken stem. It's even good for planting bulbs since the blade on mine has inch increments etched in the steel blade.

Nobody wants to spend

time weeding no matter how great the tool. The best way to avoid the job is to tackle the weeds when they first appear. This prevents them from maturing and setting seeds that grow into a whole new crop of work. Take the extra effort to get the complete weed root out of the ground the first time you tackle it, too. Many common weeds can sprout vigorous new shoots from the energy stored in roots deep in the soil. Leaving the root behind means you'll be pulling the same weed over and over again.

Weeds aren't just an aesthetic problem. They hog the water and nutrients that are needed by your garden plants. Removing young weeds allows good plants to thrive and grow large enough to cover bare areas where weeds get their foothold. Vigorous plants result in less weeding and more time enjoying your garden.

So strap on a weeder and get out there and tackle those weeds. The exercise is free and your garden will reward your work .

"If clothes make the man, then tools make the gardener."- Elizabeth O'Connell, monthly contributor and Ozaukee Gardener columnist for the Ozaukee Press



Before/After Gardens



Barb's year three

Barb's house in November 2002. I laid newspaper, black plastic and a few rocks to hold it all down over the winter. In spring, Barb reported rich black dirt (it was an experiment- and to my surprise, it worked!) Two summers later, Barb's gardening skills are obvious.

Plant Disorder of the Month

This month's sad disorder is Blossom End Rot, which affects all those tomatoes and peppers you've been so anxiously awaiting. This is caused by poor or erratic watering/rainfall (such as we've had this summer) and/or a lack of available calcium in your soil or compost. The result is a blackened patch that develops at the base of the fruit as they mature. To prevent this, keep the plants well-watered (see advice on page one) and be sure there is

Blossom End Rot



enough calcium in the compost. To control this disorder, be sure to water at the same time each day to reduce the fluctuation of water levels within the plant. For more information on calcium deficiency, go to www.pubs.caes.uga.edu "What's Wrong With My Plant?" By Steven Bradley

BULB OF THE MONTH

Naked Lady Lily or Resurrection Lily are both names for *Lycoris squamigera*, August's bulb of the month. It starts out as a fan of green leaves which dies away to the ground in early summer, then emerges as a two foot stalk with gorgeous pink fragrant blooms. Plant the bulbs five inches deep in fall; they will grow in full to part sun, with medium moisture needs so this is considered a low maintenance plant.

Picture courtesy of home-and-garden.webshots.com