



Petite Gardenscapes

Sensible designs for the weekend gardener

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Special Interest Articles:

- Good Bug /Bad Bug?
- Skills for better gardening
- Weed-whacking

Timely Tip:

Keep a pair of shower caps at the door nearest your garden to cover your shoes when coming in and out.

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

Ugh- it's a bug!

So you've spotted insects in your garden or on your plants. EEK! What to do? First, you need to decide if the offending insect/bug is a threat to your plant or garden area. This article will cover some of the beneficial insects that make their homes in our gardens, and some of the harmful insects. There are some chemical answers to these insect problems, but for the most part, we will attempt to find the most environmentally friendly way to deal with the problem bugs. First, bug or insect?

Insect- a creeping or crawling invertebrate with 6 legs, up to 4 wings, and a tough exoskeleton. They are the most diverse group of animals on earth, with over a million described species.

Bug- another name for insect, but usually used in a negative way.

THE GOOD GUYS: In alphabetical order of their common names:

Bumble Bee



commons.wikimedia.org

Pollinates plants

Needs: home in leaf litter or soil, native wildflowers

Centipede



www.en.wikipedia.org

Eats slug, worm, and fly pupae

Needs a garden that's tilled low, not deep

Dragonfly, Damselfly



howstuffwks.com

Eats aphids, mosquitoes,

Needs: wetland or pond

Green Lacewing



nathistoc.bio.uci.edu

Eats aphids, mites,

leafhoppers, small insects

Needs pollen- and nectar-producing flowers

Lady Beetle aka Ladybug



entnemdept.ufl.edu

Eats aphids, scale, spider mites

Needs dill or angelica to breed and feed

Parasitic Wasp



www.nikonsmallworld.com

Larvae are laid in and then eat aphids, whiteflies, harmful moth larvae

Can purchase or attract by having prey in garden

Garden Spider



Not the same species as house spider. Most important predator of all and very shy.

Needs a water source.



Ugh-it's a bug, contd.

THE BAD GUYS:

Aphids



www.cs.ualberta.ca-entom

Suck plant juices ; come in many colors; may transmit viruses

Cutworms



www.extension.umn.edu

Larvae of night-flying moths; cut down plants, killing more than they eat

Diatomaceous earth is solution (see end of article)

Earwigs



www.18669nobugs.com

Feed on soft tissue of plants

Flea Beetle



www.omafra.gov.on.ca

Beetles chew holes in vegetable crops.
Diatomaceous earth solution

Japanese Beetle



www.ent.iastate.edu

Both beetle and larvae are harmful. Hand-picking and drowning in soapy water.

Leafhopper



www.jic.ac.uk

Leafhoppers are the largest family of sap-sucking plant-feeders in world.

Slugs



www.shopping-gems.com

Slugs lay 80 eggs at a time, up to 6 times a year. Chew holes in leaves, fruit, citrus plants. Reducing humidity helps control.

Controlling the bad

guys: To avoid using chemicals, the first line of control should be **allowing the beneficial insects to feed** on the

harmful insects.

Knowledge is power, and knowing which to pick and drown is essential.

Birds, bats, and amphibians are another common source of control, although they really can't tell the difference between the good guys and the bad guys, and you may be distressed to see your good guys get swallowed up.

Planting herbs and vegetables that deter insects: Chives and garlic are said to repel aphids .

Care and feeding of the

Good Guys: Plant herbs and flowers that attract beneficial insects for a three season food source:

Alyssum	Fennel
Asters	Rudbeckia
Caraway	Yarrow
Columbine	Cilantro
	Dill

Diatomaceous earth is made up of the bodies of fossilized algae and can cause insects to dehydrate. Cutworms, flea and potato beetle,

Roaches, ants, and silverfish are all controlled by diatomaceous earth. Commercial names are Concern and Diasource DE

Skills for Good Gardening

Determining your soil drainage

From **Fine Gardening** magazine

Practically every plant wants "well-drained soil". So, do a **percolation test** on your soil to see if you have what your picky plant wants:

- 1) Dig a hole about a foot deep and 6 inches wide. Fill with water
- 2) Let the water drain completely, then fill the hole again to see how long it takes for the water to drain out.
- 3) Get out your watch. If the water drains less than half an inch per hour, you might have poor drainage; a drop of more than 2 inches per hour means your soil may actually be too well-drained.
- 4) You can modify either condition by adding a few shovels full of good compost.



Weed -whacking

By Elizabeth O'Connell,



www.downtowntomatoes.com
Wild parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*)

'The state Extension Service has loads of information online for Wisconsin gardeners.'

Elizabeth O'Connell,
monthly contributor and
Ozaukee Gardener
columnist for the
Ozaukee Press

In theory weeding seems pretty easy. The gardener gets out in the early spring and systematically removes any plant that's out of place. To the uninitiated weeding can be a Zen-like exercise that clears the mind and relaxes the body while restoring order to the garden.

Reality isn't that simple. When there's finally time and enough nice weather to get out in the garden it's hard to tell desirable baby plants from annoying baby weeds. And even small weeds can be tough little buggers. These bad guys spread in lots of different ways, too, spewing out scads of seeds or sending out shoots or running roots. Some are perennial and other don't pose a problem until years down the road when they're mature enough to bloom.

The worst regenerate if even tiny pieces are left in the soil. Rototilling something like a Canada thistle chews plant roots into pieces, turning a single plant into an infestation. You need to know the right control strategy to get rid of some of these villains.

Just charging in can hurt the gardener more than the weed. Poison oak and

poison ivy aren't the only plants that fight back. Wild parsnip, unfamiliar to most gardeners, can cause serious injuries. The *Pastinaca sativa* sap will cause severe burns if it comes in contact with skin that's exposed to sunlight. The tissue damage may not be apparent for days after exposure so there's risk of repeated contact before the source of the toxin is identified. This has happened to area landscape workers who used string trimmers to cut down wild parsnip patches while wearing shorts.

Now the Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Service is coming to the rescue with a new web site to help gardeners identify 280 of the most common Wisconsin weeds. The site asks some simple questions about the unknown plant. Each answer narrows the list of possible weeds. Once you have the name it's easy to find information on how to control the pest.

I tested the site by typing in characteristics of wild parsnips. By specifying broadleaf category, compound leaf (several leaflets growing on a single stem), and yellow flower the site narrowed the possibilities

to 11 plants. Each plant of the list has several close-up photos so confirming the proper plant is easy.

The state Extension Service has loads of information online for Wisconsin gardeners. Its web site has management information for invasive plants and information on insect pests. For more perplexing problems plant and insect samples can be sent to a local Extension Offices for identification.

There's a complete online store, too, stocked with home gardening and landscape literature. Many of these are free as downloads for Wisconsin residents or for just a dollar or two if you order hardcopies through the mail. Subjects cover a wide range of interests from vegetable and small fruit gardening and house plant care to planting a prairie or preserving the harvest.

The Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Service online information about gardening is available at:

learningstore.uwex.edu.

To identify common garden weeds checkout: **weedid.wisc.edu**. Both have helpful information to keep your garden in tip-top condition.

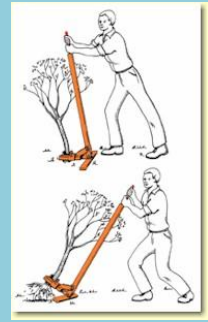


Cool Tool The Weedwrench

Here's a tool I've been searching for for years after seeing it demonstrated on a TV gardening show- problem was I didn't know its name. As an aid to controlling

weedy trees and saplings- for example, the infamous Buckthorn- the **Weedwrench** is a man or woman's dream come true! The jaws grip the tree trunk, case, the operator eases the lever back, and the tree and most importantly- its

roots -slide right out of the ground. The Eva Street woods may finally start to be cleared! See diagram (right). For information on operations, sizes and prices, go to www.weedwrench.com



Plant Disorder of the Month

Most of us in Wisconsin have pH levels of 6.8 and higher, due to living with a lot of limestone in our soils. Plants affected by **Chlorosis** induced by high lime contents have trouble absorbing enough nutrients, including iron.

Symptoms: Growth is stunted, leaves turn yellow, starting between the veins. Older leaves are affected first, and younger ones later. While any plant can be affected, the acid-loving ones will be the first to show symptoms, such

Lime-induced Chlorosis



as azaleas, pieris, and rhododendrons.

Prevention: Add well-rotted manure and acidic mulches, like pine bark to maintain a soil pH below 6.5

Control: Apply sequestered iron or flowers of sulphur (one brand name is Defender) sold at plant nurseries.

BULB OF THE MONTH

The startling blue blooms of *Camassia leichtlinii* (Quamash) will spark interest in any garden bed or border. This 3 foot tall plant has 10-40 flowers in early summer (June) in blue, blue-violet and white. This is one of the few bulbs to grow in poorly-drained clay soil. They tolerate drought in dormancy, but want moisture while growing. Look great with ornamental grasses which will hide the foliage after bloom is finished.