



# Alpha Nursery & Garden

## Center Newsletter

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

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### Fall is Here!

Straw Bales, Flowering Pumpkins, Ornamental Gourds, and Cornstalks for all your fall decorating needs.

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## Fall is the Best Time for Planting

### Fall Planting – The Best Time to Plant!

Spring is typically the busy gardening season here in Valley County but you can benefit greatly by planting in the fall.

You can plant anytime that you can stick a shovel in the ground and get water to the plant from spring to fall, but the best time for planting perennials, shrubs, and trees is fall for many reasons.

#### **Planting Perennials, Shrubs, and Trees in the fall gives them time to establish healthy root systems.**

New perennials, shrubs, and trees planted in the spring must survive summer heat and stress with very young root systems while still producing enough nutrients to support months of growth and flowering. By planting perennials, shrubs and trees in the fall, roots have a chance to grow during autumn. Autumn is when plants are going into dormancy, thus the newly planted plants do not have to supply nourishment for new growth. Roots of plants will continue to grow as long as ground temperatures are 50 degrees or above. This can give them a good head start on establishing a good root system before spring growth begins.

#### **Perennials, shrubs, and trees planted in the fall need less water to establish.**

All plants need plenty of water while they are being established and growing strong root systems, however planting in the fall will conserve water without the heat of summer stressing the plants and transpiration of water through the leaves is greatly diminished. Plants also demand less water due to slowed photosynthesis due to shorter days. Evaporation of water from the soil is also slowed down during the fall due to cooler temperatures.

#### **Perennials and bulbs can be planted together without damaging established root systems.**

Instead of digging through the roots of perennials next fall of perennials that were planted in spring, you can plant them together in the fall. This will save transplant shock on your perennials and you won't have to guess where you planted your bulbs the previous fall.

Take advantage of the fall sales on plants, the wonderful fall weather, and the fabulous fall color that will brighten up your yard and you will save yourself some work in the spring!

## 2011 Fall Harvest Festival was enjoyed by all.

Alpha Nursery held its second annual Fall Harvest Festival on October 1st, 2011. There were 80 to 100 that attended the festivities. It was a fun time for all.



Music played by Tom Moody of Moody Bluegrass.



Sam St.Claire drove her Clydesdales and took several Hay Ride trips down Alpha Lane.



George Wisbey, Chef for the day cooking up Lunch for everyone.



All ages joined in the Festivities.

## Got Voles?



Voles are very destructive in Valley County. Voles are very similar to a mole in shape and size. They can be active at night or during the day. They feast on our yards, bulbs, perennials, shrubs and trees and even our gardens. I have seen whole tomato plants disappear down their holes. Voles will typically live in the fields and areas of little traffic during the summer and will move into our yards under the cover of snow during the winter causing their havoc. Some will stay in your yards through the season creating mounds and destroying your plants. There is hope. We have been testing a number of products to test their effectiveness and have gotten tips from our customers on what works for them.

## Got Voles? Continued

Last fall we began testing Biosol as a vole repellent. Biosol is an organic fertilizer that works extremely well. On a tip from a nursery owner in Truckee, California which has the same battles with voles that we do, we tried the Biosol as a vole repellent and it worked.

In almost all of the yards that it was tested on, there was 80% to 100% reduction in vole damage. In a few yards, there was damage, but the damage was reduced and the voles did not eat the entire root system of the grass which allowed the grass to recover faster. All in all, there was a definite improvement.

A Master Gardener stated that she had no vole damage to a lawn that she was trying to protect. Another customer placed Biosol down vole holes in her perennial beds and they vacated the area. She has not seen any since. This is good news to gardeners that wish to stay away from poisons.

There is also a product that is produced by Sweeney that is a Mole and Gopher Repellent. This product contains Castor Oil which repels the voles. We have had good reports from customers using this product. Using a combination of Biosol and this repellent will give the best results. And the best thing is that both are organic and safe to use.

Trees and shrubs with single stems can be girdled by voles. The best protection for these plants are vinyl tree guards. They wrap around the trunk and prevent voles from reaching the bark.

Another item that has been successful with some customers is the product that puts out vibrations. We carry both Solar and Battery operated. They should only be used when it is not freezing weather.

And then of course, we have the bait that poisons them. This you want to be careful with so that pets and wildlife can't get to it. Usually, placing it down the holes is most effective. We have also used it around the outer perimeter of the property that adjoins wild areas or fields. We place this down within 24 hours of a snowfall to prevent animals or birds from getting to it. Snow comes in, covers it up, and the voles eat it when they reach it traveling onto your yard.

A good product to use when planting new bulbs is actually a deer repellent but it also works for voles. It is a tablet that you plant with the bulb. When the bulb absorbs the tablet, the bulb becomes bitter. When the vole then bites into the bulb, they are repelled by the bitter taste.

Cats are also a great vole deterrent. They will catch and kill voles until the snow covers the ground. Once we have snow on the ground, cats can't get to them. I have watched my cats sit on the snow staring down into the snow knowing that those pests are under there but no way to get to them unless they surface.

Feel Free to email me any successes or failures that you have experienced trying to combat these pests. We'll bring these tips to you in future newsletters.

*A Proven Organic Treatment that is Non-Toxic and Safe*

**Biosol**

100% Organic

- Reduces or eliminates voles by 80%-100% \*Proven\*
- Safe for children, pets, and wildlife
- Easy to apply using a spreader
- Listen- you are going to fertilize in the spring anyway – Fertilize now and get the added vole protection and you won't have to fertilize in the spring.
- Apply right before the snow flies (and stays).
- One bag covers 2,000 square feet
- Priced at \$57.99 per 50 lb bag
- Save an additional \$5.00 with this coupon



Are there specific articles or information that you would be interested in reading about? Please email your requests or comments to Sue Patterson at [alphanursery@hotmail.com](mailto:alphanursery@hotmail.com)