

The Green Patch

October 1, 2012

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Fall Preparations

By Corrine Weihe , Madison County Master Gardener

Fall is coming too fast and I am not ready to lose my flowers. The summer birds will be missed as they fly south. Blue jays are calling for their young to come eat. The hummingbirds are mostly gone, with only a straggler now and then. Squirrels are so busy with their plantings. Walnuts must be planted, but first they clean off the outer cover carefully. The locust tree shading the patio was lost in the wind, so this year I will not need to pick up the locust beans, but I sure miss its shade. The nuthatches miss it. Their antics of coming down the tree head first and hasty retreat with a sunflower seed is to be no more.

My tulip bed in front of the house needs to be replanted. It was beautiful before the hailstorm, then the Stella lilies were overcrowded and were thinned. Later I put in five pink-double Knockout roses and burgundy petunias. I like to put the tulips and daffodils in with these flowers as this hides the foliage of the declining bulbs. The flower stems are all I remove so the bulb can be nourished.

Placement of the bulbs will be according to size on the plant package and color. I keep this bed with yellow and pink tulips, gold daffodils, and purple grape hyacinth as a border. Later the lilies, roses, and petunias will bloom as this will continue the purple, yellow and pink.

When planting the bulbs, I try to remember where other tulips were and their color by taking pictures. To prevent digging up existing plants, I plant near old annuals. It is best to plant the bulbs in groups of 3 to 5 and all the same color. The soil should be spaded and mixed with compost rather than peat moss. Place bone meal and a small amount of fertilizer in each site and water well. The depth should be about 6 inches for tulips. Follow this with organic mulch. The mulch will insulate the bulbs from extreme heat or cold, as both could prevent spring bloom. The site should be sunny and have good drainage to prevent bulbs from rotting.

Other causes of poor flowering are incorrect planting depth, too much nitro-



Corrine's flower bed

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A Good Year for Zeroscape

By Ellen Glanzer , Madison County Master Gardener

A few years ago I shared with our readers a "zeroscape" flower garden that I planted along the curb. Rain water was to be the only moisture. Since then, we have not had a year to test these garden plants' ability to survive without rain.

I had major surgery early June and did not return to my home and garden until late August. Early in June, our son mulched the garden quite heavily. Since that time, the plants were on their own and they survived.

The plants were not dead headed. That would have kept the garden neater but it may have been harder on the plants, forcing blooming and causing more stress on the plants.

The most hardy plants were the Nepita, Baptisia, Yarrow, Autumn Sedum, Red Juniper, White Juniper, Russian Sage, Silver Mound, Prairie Smoke plus more.

I believe in planting plants that grow naturally where they're planted where the climate and soil are suitable for their growing needs. This year I observed the benefit of that form of gardening.

Summer 2012 was a challenging summer for gardeners. Here in Nebraska, needless to tell this audience, we had Arizona type heat, not our usual heat at all. Normally we have gradual warming in the spring with many small rains. This year the early spring was wet, with the awful hail storm that blocked drainages, put water in many basements, made rivers of our streets, and flooded the hospital's emergency room. Even living near the top of a hill, we had massive streams of water flowing around both sides of the berm that is the boarder in our back yard. Then all went dry. I was told that we had only 0.25 inch of rain in June, and in Norfolk, no measurable rain in July. Early July into August was unlike any weather I have experienced in my life in Nebraska. I was born and raised in Norfolk, and returned 36 years ago, after training. Never did I ever experience the feeling of walking into an oven every time I went outdoors. I kept checking to see if I was in the right state.

We have a fescue lawn. With watering it stayed green. My 70 plus Hosta plants just sat there. I watered them about once a week, and only a few leaves went brown. Hosta flowers were sparse on fewer stalks than usual. The iris and the day lilies suffered the worst. Leaves on both species went brown and fell over, leaving a few straggling green upright leaves to refurbish the root. Flowers on both were few and



Milkweed (above) and Poppies (below) from Tom's Garden



smaller than usual. Watering did not seem to help. I fear the damage will hinder their growth into next year. The roses were not happy this year. They did not grow well, nor bloom much. I did not see fungus on them, but did check. I think it was the heat that hindered them. Even the sedums went dry and seeded early. My native grasses grew to only about ¾ of their usual height and had small heads on them. My front yard cone flowers are less than half their usual height. I am waiting to see if the asters will bloom this fall or not. Only the Husker Reds that were in watered areas looked good. The orange butterfly milkweed was

shorter than most years, but it is spreading across the beds from last year's seeds.

Even the weeds suffered. I have lots of bind weed. The leaves were small. The flowers were few. The vines just kind of came up and for the most part just curled around a little. The purslane and the white clover were the only plants that flourished in my yard this year. They formed huge mats. I kept pulling the purslane, and am poisoning the clover now. Even the dandelions, while lots grew, were mostly small with only a few heads.

Hopefully we get enough rain this fall to heal the plants and allow them to overwinter ok.

(Fall Preparations—Continued from page 1)

gen in fertilizer, and over-crowding. Over-crowding occurred this spring with my daffodils. This occurs as the bulbs multiply each year, so after poor flowering I dug up some and left some for next year. The extra bulbs I kept in the basement in a dry, cool area and I will plant these daffodils this fall.

When selecting bulbs, try to get large, solid, crisp ones with no dark spots, mold, or soft areas. The larger the bulb, the larger the flower will be. The packaging should allow air flow and include plant information as to height and bloom time. Store new bulbs in cool dark area until planting to prevent the bulbs from rotting.

I find that a narrow spade is a good tool to loosen the soil and make the correct planting depth. The bulb planters show the correct depth, but a great deal of time is spent emptying them of the soil. I bought an auger bit to use with a hand drill, thinking I could really plant fast. The soil flew all over, I did remedy this by using a large coffee can with both ends open to catch the soil. The old spade is still best.

This summer has been a real challenge in keeping everything alive. In the fall, cleaning up old flowers and finally putting the flowers to bed will be no easy task. The extra watering will be so necessary. I think I will apply more grass clippings to preserve the moisture in the beds. It really does improve the soil too. I had not intended to use grass clippings, as the voles I find like to construct their runways under it, but I guess we will just have to handle that problem next spring.

The lawn has been kept long this year and mulched to help the bluegrass. It has helped but still have brown spots.

Put Your Garden To Bed For The Winter

By Deb Daehnke , Wayne County Master Gardener

Hard to believe we have already gone from the HOT HOT HOT of summer to thinking about frost and protecting our plants for the winter. But it is time to prepare our yards and gardens if you have not already done so. A few extra hours this fall and early winter could save you time and money for next spring. It's even more important this fall with the stress the drought has placed on our plants. Plus your garden will look much cleaner. Once temps consistently drop to low 40's or mid-30's Fahrenheit, take some extra time to prepare your garden for winter.

In one article I read a great synopsis for winter garden preparation: "clean up and cover up". This is also a good time to evaluate your garden beds to determine what you want to keep or replace. Some plants transplant easily in the fall while others are better left to move in the spring.

Water trees, shrubs, and perennials. If you are not under mandatory water restrictions in your community, give plants 1" of water per week until the ground freezes, but don't saturate it. The roots need oxygen as much as they need water. Mulch when the ground freezes. This will help protect the plant from upheaval caused by the ground freezing and thawing from alternating temperatures throughout winter and early spring.

Protect small susceptible trees from winter sun scald by wrapping with tree wrap materials or caging them with burlap. Then monitor these materials closely in the spring as they can harbor insects or rodents. Best plan of action is to plant varieties that will acclimate to Nebraska's harsh weather.

Protect your trees and shrubs from deer and rabbits or any other critter that might use them as winter food or a scratching post. Cage them or use tree wrap. Do not fertilize because of the drought stress trees and shrubs are already experiencing. Trim branches only if they pose a danger or will cause more damage if you don't prune. Pruning may stimulate new growth right before the cold of winter sets in. Wait until trees are dormant to prune, usually late winter or early spring. You can also use spray on anti-desiccants to protect your trees and shrubs. But that will usually require more than one application throughout the winter. You may also want to test a small area on several trees to make sure they are not damaged by the spray.

Watch for signs of insects and treat only if appropriate at this time of year. Otherwise keep a watchful eye on them next spring.

Your turf should also receive regular moisture to help it green up. 1" per week is recommended. Do not use herbicides on turf or weeds that are dormant. Weeds or turf need to be green and actively growing for herbicides to work. Your lawn may need further renovation with over seeding and aeration this fall due to the drought. Go to turf.unl.edu to find a variety of lawn articles.

Remove all plant debris from your yard and garden. Many people like to leave grasses and some plants with seed heads for the birds, but clean up as much debris as possible, so insects have fewer places to overwinter. Debris can be thrown into your compost pile unless you know or suspect it is harboring disease or insects. If so dispose in a garbage bag away from your garden.

Dig non hardy bulbs and store. Clean, oil and sharpen your garden tools and store them in a dry place. Drain garden hoses, coil and store in a garage or shed if possible so they don't freeze and crack. Check outside spigots making certain they are turned off completely. Several years ago when we had three consecutive blizzards and massive snow falls in less than 8 weeks, the shrinking snow banks next to our house caused the handle on one outdoor spigot to move and water started flowing. Fortunately we could hear something running from inside the house. After digging through huge drifts to access the spigot we turned it off.

In Helpful Gardener.com, their advice was "don't garden hard, garden smart!" You will reap many garden benefits if you practice a little TLC (Tender Loving Care) this fall and properly put your garden to bed.

Deb Daehnke attended the Farm To Fork conference and this recipe was demonstrated. She liked it and wanted to pass it along.

From Alexi Groumoutis—Local Foods Coordinator, Health Supportive Chef and Restaurant Brat.

Watermelon Feta Salad with Arugula

Salad

Mix together in a large bowl:

- 8 cups, 1 inch cubes watermelon
- 1 cup arugula (rocket lettuce)
- 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 3/4 cup sliced purple onions

Balsamic Honey Dressing

Whisk together following ingredients and drizzle over salad:

- 2 TBS Balsamic
- 2 TBS Honey
- 1 TBS Olive Oil

Other ingredients that pair nicely with Watermelon Salad: Fresh tomatoes, fresh basil, fresh mint, fresh mozzarella balls.

Make meals more exciting and nutritious: Buy fresh, local ingredients! (*or plant your own*)

Color—Eat the rainbow by incorporating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables into your meals. Bright colors—tastier meals and more nutrition.

Balance these fantastic flavors when preparing a dish:

- Sweet: caramelized onions, honey, maple syrup
- Sour: lemon, lime, vinegar
- Salty: use sea salt in moderation to bring out natural flavor of food
- Bitter: kale, dandelion greens, olives, Brussels Sprouts
- Umami—"Pleasant, savory taste" Adds richness and meatiness to foods: Mushrooms, Parmesan Cheese, Tomatoes, sour cream, yogurt

Add layers of flavors by cooking onions, garlic, shallots, celery, sweet peppers, ginger or lemongrass at beginning of dish. Add citrus zest and fresh herbs toward end of cooking.

Add different Textures to your dish to please your palate: Crispy, Crunchy, Creamy, Chewy, Flakey.

Summer Observations

By Jane Jensen , Pierce County Master Gardener

Here are some observations I have made of this memorable year. May it not be repeated.

Since I record the temperature highs and lows each day, I recorded only six days that did not get above 100° F in the month of July. The highest I recorded was 115.5° F on July 30. With few cloudy days and the brown of our lawns and the gray of concrete, the sun just seemed more intense and hard on the eyes during this month.

The creeping charlie or ground ivy in my lawn appears dead. It looks like a dull green string on top of the ground. Dare I hope that it will wither and go away without chemicals? It will probably revive with the first good rain, but I have watered that section of my yard due to some burning bush I want to stay healthy into fall. The grass there is either hiding the ground ivy or I am just overly optimistic.

My favorite annual is the begonia and the ones I planted did not do well at all. Of the eight I planted in pots, only two or three are blooming. The rest grew only a few inches and still have not bloomed or even gotten taller. I am guessing that they just didn't like the intense heat day after day despite being highly shaded for most of the afternoon.

Some morning glories came up on their own and grew and grew and were so full of leaves. The flowers were very slow in appearing. Now that it did moderate some in regard to heat, they have begun blooming and are quite showy. They were near the begonias, which are heavy feeders, and probably got too much enriching. Morning glories are well adapted to more dull soil.

Early in the summer, I can attest to the fact that chiggers were abundant. As the weeks went by, I noticed fewer and fewer mosquitoes, beetles, flies or boxelder bugs. It was a welcome change but then the birds were fewer as well since there was nothing in the bug department for them to eat. I don't think I even saw swallows as I usually do in the summer swooping down and around for insects while on the wing.

I was given a tomato plant that just grew beautifully. It was tall, perfectly branched and bloomed and bloomed. I was puzzled as to why it never set fruit. I think it was because there were few bees to pollinate it. I saw a few in late spring, but once the heat came and intensified, they were not to be seen.

Admittedly, I lost interest in my little yard and some of it was sorely neglected. So I was amazed to one day look out and see my hardy Chrysler red rose blooming again where it had been nearly forgotten. My other hybrid teas bloomed well and grew taller with no black spot because of the low humidity.

A red mandevilla was the prize winner for beauty this year. It must love hot and dry as it started blooming in early July and has not stopped. It is babied along in a pot and gets frequent watering. Its shiny green leaves on the vines almost sparkle.

Fifteen feet of grape vines are producing very little fruit. Either it was a late frost, which I really doubt, but rather the intense heat during flowering I don't know that much about grapes but this is the first year in 15 that there is only enough grapes for snacking.

We all feel the relief with the moderating temperatures, but without significant moisture from above, there may be more unfavorable observations to be made. We're tough in Nebraska and while the main topic of conversation everywhere is the drought, I've not observed anger, just disappointment; sharing of ideas and giving advice, not resentment. Many gardeners are making their own observations, finding what worked and what didn't. Yes, we will remember 2012 very well, may the bad not be repeated



Good Soil

By Tom Surber , Madison County Master Gardener

So you have good soil. Congratulations. Now how do you keep your soil good?

First, a few definitions. Good soil is hard to define. An over simplification is good soil is what ever kind of dirt enables your favorite plants to grow. But plants vary in their demands on soil. Blueberries, azaleas and rhododendrons like acid soil. Many plants like a rich, soft, deep very black soil. Some plants actually do better in soils higher in clay. Some plants don't seem to mind. But most of those plants do have preferences and will do better in soil more suited to them. Plant soil preferences are a whole topic unto themselves. Just remember that you can not mix plants that have widely varying soil preferences.

As an exercise: Take a shovel and go out to natural areas that have been stable for many years, if not generations. Examples would be the gully sides at Yellow Banks WMA, the native prairie at Oak Valley WMA, near Battle Creek, and a river bottom land long wooded such as at Wood Duck WMA.

Also go out to recent road or dam cuts, a dryland field, an irrigated field, long established well cared for gardens, and your own garden. Slip you shovel in. Don't pull the earth clear up and out, making an erosion problem. Just raise the dirt so you can see and feel the soil. Then when done, tamp the lifted soil back in place. Each site will have specific soil characteristics.

The woodland or long wooded gully sides will be soft so you can easily get your shovel in. The soil will be black, moist, with a good healthy, pleasant mild odor. The grasslands will be harder to get your shovel in, partly due to the root masses of the grasses and forbs, and partly due to the heavier soil there. A recent trench or road cut, at least in our area, will be either pure yellow clay, with no organic material, sand or silt, OR sandy with sand grains, flowing out of your shovel. If you were in the Loess Hills, which form the bluffs on the east side of the Missouri River in Iowa straight east of us, the soil would be more of a fine silt. Loess refers to the fact that that soil is the silt and dust

that the winds blew off the Sandhills over the centuries, leaving the heavier sand be-



Tom's Forsythia

(Continued on page 6)

Got Leaves? Make Compost!

Fall is right around the corner, as well as the falling leaves that go with it. The old saying says "if life gives you lemons, make lemonade." An autumn adaptation might be "if life gives you leaves, make compost." Composting has a long list of benefits and minimal effort and patience are greatly rewarded.



Composting takes advantage of a natural process, nature's way of transforming plant "waste" into what gardeners often refer to as "black gold." The finished product is the perfect soil amendment for gardens, planting beds and even lawns. It adds valuable nutrients released safely over an extended time. Compost also does a wonderful job of improving the structure and increasing water-holding capacity, drainage and aeration of the soil, plus it serves as a buffer to soil pH. Another benefit is the addition of beneficial organisms that have been shown to improve a plant's ability to deal with insect and disease attacks. Compost simply makes the soil much more productive.

The list of environmental benefits is also long. If you don't compost it's likely you bag all the yard waste and pay to have it hauled away, then drive to the garden center to buy soil amendments and fertilizers. By composting you reduce or eliminate the substantial energy, pollution and packaging waste involved with those steps. Compost also serves as a carbon sink, keeping carbon in the soil where it is an asset, rather than in the atmosphere where it is a liability.

Composting works whether you are ambitious or... not. By putting in the extra work of precise mixing and frequent turning you can speed up the process, but if you'd rather not, patience is rewarded with the same final product. Either way, compost happens.

Any plant material can be used to make compost. Ideally you will have a 1:1 ratio of high carbon "browns" (dry leaves, wood chips, straw) and high nitrogen "greens" (kitchen and garden scraps, grass clippings, coffee grounds), all slightly damp. Warm weather speeds up the process while cold weather slows or stops it.

Short or long on materials? That's a perfect time to get to know your neighbor or even your local coffee shop. Also, if you have room, it's great to store leaves to use to mix with your kitchen scraps all year round.

As soon as you start your mix a whole range of critters go to work for you, including bacteria, fungi, millipedes, pillbugs and earthworms. The army of workers you get depends on the components and conditions of your mix. High volume, fresh mixes with plenty of nitrogen and appropriate moisture will get hot from bacterial activity. Smaller, older and high carbon mixes will be cooler with larger creatures, like pillbugs, doing most of the work.



Done properly, compost does not create unpleasant aromas. A sopping wet pile of grass clippings will stink (anaerobic bacteria), while a damp, not wet, balanced mix of "browns" and "greens" will not.

You can speed up the process by frequently aerating (mixing) your compost pile and adding water if dry. Taking these steps will get you finished compost in as few as two months. If you'd rather not go to the trouble – don't. Be patient and you will have compost in a season or two, again, depending on the components and condition of your mix. Chopped, damp maple leaves decompose rapidly while whole, dry oak leaves seem to last a lifetime.

Your compost is complete when it's broken down to mostly tiny, dark pieces with an earthy aroma. Put it to use by incorporating it into your garden soil or planting beds or using it as a potting mix. It can also be beneficial when used as a light topdressing on turfgrass. So consider avoiding the hassle and expense of bagging and trashing all those leaves this fall and instead look at them as the valuable resource they are.

(*Good Soil*—Continued from page 4)

hind.

As a second exercise: Take several small handfuls of soil from your garden. Put them into a glass jar with about an equal amount of water. Shake the jar vigorously and set upright. After one minute, most of the sand will have settled to the bottom. After about 2 hours, most of the silt will have layered on top of the sand. After about 2 days, the clay and organic material will have settled on top of the sand and the silt. You can measure the layers, and divide those numbers into the total height of the layers to determine the percentages of sand, silt and clay in your soil. You want about 35% silt, 35% sand and 15% clay. The remaining should be organic matter, or humus. This is loam, or good soil.

As an alternative, take a small amount of your slightly moist soil in your hand and grind it between your fingers. If it feels gritty, it is sandy. If it feels slick and smooth it is clay. If it crumbles as you roll it, it is silt. Loam will roll in your hand and make a cylinder that will hold its shape. The organic material is essential to holding the proper shape. Note: Clay will also make a cylinder, but its smooth, slick feel distinguishes it from loam.

As you examine your soil, remember that half of the soil as you dig it should be air and water spaces between the particles of sand, clay and silt. These air and water spaces are essential for good root growth. So if your soil is compacted or dense, most plants will not be happy. This is frequently a cause of plant failure or plants not reaching their advertised mature height and vigor. Compaction will vary across a yard or garden to a great degree. You can see this affect in some hedges or long native grass stretches, with the plants in the compacted areas smaller and less vigorous than their brothers and sisters in the looser soil.

Another important quality of soil is the pH, or acid balance. Most plants want a pH between 6.5 and 7.5. A few plants thrive outside these ranges. You can buy home kits to measure your soil pH or you can send your soil to a laboratory or Extension Service. You can adjust the pH of your soil by the plants you plant or by soil additives. But that's another whole article.

There are also lots of other nutrients that soil needs. Think of these as vitamins and minerals. This is another long discussion. Remember that in Northeast Nebraska, our soil is short of iron. Your pint oaks and your rugosa roses are examples of plants that need more iron than our soil provides.

As we garden, we harvest and take away the flower, fruit or root. We remove the upper parts of the plant and discard them.

Now think about the old natural areas you visited in the first exercise above. For years, for many years, the plants grew, died, and decayed in place. The leaves fell from the trees. The twigs, branches, trunks and bark fell from the trees and shrubs. The stems and leaves of the annuals and perennials fell back to the earth and decomposed back to humus. Each generation of plants took from the soil



Tom's flowers: Bottom left—Daylilly; Bottom right—Blazing Star; Top—Dark Tower

what it needed, and returned its body to the soil. Many microbes, bacteria, nematodes, fungi, insects, worms and small mammals lived in the soil and modified it, taking what they needed. They died in the soil, returning their bodies for the future generations. Gradually good soil was built. You can see this process in place by visiting road cuts of varying ages. The plants change with the age of the exposure of the soil. The appearance and feel of the soil changes with the age of the exposure of the soil. Gradually the plants add their organic bodies and condition the soil for their future generations and a wider selection of plant species.

Yes, good soil can be depleted by erosion, by extraction of nutrients, by compaction from our feet and knees or machines, by drought, by killing off the soil organisms with chemicals or over tilling, by becoming water logged due to poor drainage. Soil needs tender, loving perpetual care.

Generally it is not a good idea to add sand or clay to your soil. Neither will really achieve the good loamy soil you want. The exception is when your soil is extremely sandy. Clay is best managed with organic additives. You can add good soil to sandy soil to give it more body. Adding clay in a manner to make good soil is near impossible.

What your soil needs is a simulation of the natural process above. Your soil needs organic material added to it on a regular basis.

Compost is the absolute best way to add organic material. Good compost is good smelling, black, crumbly, and uniform throughout without evidence of the various plant parts that made it up and without any chemical residuals from pesticides or herbicides or other toxins (e.g. mercury). See the book "Composting for Dummies" (ISBN: 978-0-470-58161-2) for lots of guidance on making your own compost.

You can buy compost in bags or in bulk. Be sure of its source and quality. Look for a label that has the mark "OMRI Listed" or "certified organic" on it.

Manure that has aged over a year is also an excellent soil additive. But be sure of your source and its purity. Various animal's manures are of varying quality and odor. Human, cat, dog and pig manures can carry diseases, so avoid them. If you are going to sell your produce, check your local and state regulations on using manure on your plants.

The various organic mulches are excellent ways of slowly adding organic material to your garden. Rocks, rubber, or other non organic mulches really do not do much for your soil or plants other than appearance and slowing the weeds down. The microbes that decompose wood will take up the nitrogen from your soil. But the nitrogen is released back into the soil as the wood finishes decomposition and those microbes die.

You can till in your grass clippings and leaves. But be careful to avoid making these so thick that they mat, or rot unseemingly with offensive odors. Many gardens have excellent soil from properly applied over several years, grass clippings and leaves.

Lastly, manipulate your soil as little as possible. The amount of tillage, turning, rototilling and spading your soil needs is controversial. But the modern consensus is the less the better. You have to do some to get the various organic additives into the soil, and to plant, and to weed. But the idea of aggressively rototilling the soil in your garden every year is gradually falling into disfavor. Also rototilling tends to compact the soil at the bottom of the reach of the tines, decreasing drainage and making underground water pools. Soil is a living organism which develops and grows and improves with letting its natural components, living and inorganic, do their thing. Tilling disturbs the fungus structures, microbes, worms and insects that curry the soil for us.

So if are you fortunate enough to inherit good soil, take care of it, so your grandchildren can have good soil. Remember, we only live on the land for a short time. We borrow the land from our grandchildren.

Main Reference: Whitman, Ann and DeJohn, Suzanne. *Organic Gardening for Dummies*. Wiley Publishing, Inc. Hoboken, N.J. 2009. ISBN: 978-0-470-43067-5.



2012 American Garden Award Winners

<http://www.americangardenaward.org/>

Most Popular! Grand Prize Winner
Begonia 'Santa Cruz™ Sunset'

Begonia Santa Cruz™ Sunset lights up your garden with an abundance of scarlet/orange blooms. Its elegant softly cascading form is perfect for hanging baskets, urns or mass plantings in your garden. Surprisingly heat, drought and rain tolerant, this summer beauty thrives in any location from full sun to shade.



Second Place Winner
Gazania 'Big Kiss™ White Flame' F1

Gazania Big Kiss™ White Flame has huge white and rose striped flowers that cover full, bushy plants. This carefree, heat loving and drought tolerant annual loves the sun and thrives in tough conditions, all summer long. Extra large flowers and plants make high impact displays in garden beds or containers.

Third Place Winner
Petunia® 'Surfinia Deep Red'

Finally, the true deep red petunia gardeners have been searching for! For 20 years, Surfinia® has been the best-selling vegetative petunia series in the world, offering superior garden performance with no pinching or pruning needed. Enjoy 'Surfinia® Deep Red' in container gardens or in the landscape from spring through fall.



The six entries voted on this year were:

- Angelonia angustifolia 'Serena® Blue'
- Begonia boliviensis 'Santa Cruz™ Sunset'
- Gazania 'Big Kiss™ White Flame' F1
- Petchoa x hybrida 'SuperCal® Pink Ice'
- Petunia 'Surfinia® Deep Red'
- Sunflower 'Goldie' F1

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 Articles and information for the January issue of *The Green Patch* are due to Pam Greunke (pgreunke2@unl.edu) by November 30, 2012.

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Master Gardeners are people who love plants, gardening, landscaping, and teaching others.



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We're on the web at

<http://madison.unl.edu/mastergardenerhome>

What is It?? By Wayne Ohnesorg, Extension Educator

There were no guesses at the last *What is it?*. So that means no one is awarded the training hour or gets entered into the drawing. The insects in question were a large scouting party of honeybees. Seeing that many in one place indicates that a swarm of bees is considering moving into that location to begin a new colony there.



What is this???

This edition's critter is not an insect, but is commonly found in the fall. This was brought into my office one year in late September. What kind of arthropod is it and name the species (common and/or scientific name)? Be as specific as you can.

If you think you know, you can give me a call at (402) 370-4044 or shoot me an email wohnesorg2@unl.edu.

Your challenge is to correctly identify the insect and/or plant. The first person to contact me with the correct answer will be awarded one (1) training hour. Everyone that submits an answer will be entered into an end of the year drawing for a free Extension Circular such as the *Landscape Diagnostic Guide for Problems Affecting Woody Ornamentals*. For every *What is it?* column you provide an answer for, you will receive one entry. This offer is available for both the Platte County and Northeast Nebraska Master Gardener groups.

