



Shaler Garden Club Horticultural Hints

August 2017

- 1) Bug zappers are useless against mosquitoes. Less than 1% of insects killed by zappers are biting insects. The devices attract and kill beneficial, or harmless, insects like moths.
- 2) You take out the muscle activity when you lock out your joints. If you lock your elbow, you put strain from your hand, up your arm, to your shoulder and neck. If you lock your knee, you put strain on your lower back. Leave your knees loose and use your legs, abs and glutes.
- 3) Repair a bald spot on the lawn with a teabag patch. Place a moist tea bag on the bare spot and sow with grass seed. The tea bag provides moisture and gradually decomposes. Some gardeners also soak grass seed in liquid tea before sowing it.
- 4) Leave a used tea bag (or tea leaves) in water overnight and serve the cold brew to azaleas, ferns and hydrangeas.
- 5) Take a bunch of bananas apart to prevent them from ripening too quickly.
- 6) Garden vegetables that become over-ripe are an easy target for some pests. Remove the vegetables as soon as possible to avoid detection.

Gardening is the art that uses flowers & plants as paint,
and the soil and sky as canvas.

~ ~ *Elizabeth Murray*

August Gardening Events

- 15 Adult “Create Your Own Fair Garden” at DJ’s Greenhouse in Transfer, PA
\$40 reservations required.
- 19 Garden in the Parks Field Day, 9am-1pm, North & South Park Demo
Gardens. North Park is the corner of Wildwood Road & East Ingomar.
- 26 Customer Appreciation Day, 9am - 5 pm at DJ’s Greenhouse Refreshments
and Specials
- 27 Red, Ripe and Roasted Tomato and Garlic Festival, 11am - 4pm at Phipps
Conservatory

To-Do List for Zone 6

- 1) Stop feeding roses this month so that there won’t be tender, new growth for
winter kill.
- 2) Keep picking or shearing faded flowers from annuals so they will not go to
seed and stop blooming.
- 3) Gather and save seeds of other annuals that you might want to use again.
Don’t bother saving seed from hybrids; they won’t come true to type.

Broken rake? No problem. Recycle and reuse as a place to store your garden tools.



American Burnweed (*Erechtites hieracifolia*)

Hard to describe because it's so generic looking, you will recognize this native member of the aster or sunflower families as soon as it's pointed out to you. It's everywhere and pulls very easily. I've never seen it in bloom--or more likely I have just not recognized it when in bloom. Though not listed in Weeds of the Northeast, PSU's William Curran named American burnweed the weed-of-the-week in July 2014 (see below). Amy knew it as pilewort, a common alias. Another is fireweed, because it is often first to take over on recently burned land.



Maureen Karl and Amy Dering, Penn State Master Gardeners

Weed of the Week – American Burnweed Posted: July 8, 2014

Just in case you've been wondering what that weed was...American burnweed seems to be spreading. *Erechtites hieracifolia* is a member of the Asteraceae or



sunflower family that resembles wild lettuce and the sow thistles. This plant is also known as pilewort and fireweed and seems to be increasing exponentially over the last few years in our area.

I have noticed it around my property in Central PA as well as other areas and have received quite a few inquiries about it from around the Commonwealth. I don't think it

is a particularly problematic weed in field crops, but more of a nuisance in disturbed habitats. My experience is that it's relatively easy to pull by hand or kill with glyphosate and other herbicides. However, if you "Let It Be", be prepared for the potential rapid increase in plant numbers that could require your attention.

This plant is a summer annual that seems to germinate from about mid-May through mid-June in our area, forming a rosette and eventually flowering in late July through September. The flowers are not particularly attractive and similar in appearance to the sow thistles or common groundsel, and like some other Asteraceace's, the seeds are wind-dispersed allowing them to quickly spread within an infested region. According to some references, it is native to the Americas and is very adapted to disturbance and particularly fire (hence the name fireweed). Like some other weeds, it is often one of

the earliest pioneer species in areas recently burned or disturbed. I have noticed this plant on the edges of hay fields, in disturbed woods, in flowerbeds, and other habitats that we influence with our management (or mismanagement).

Why the increase in prevalence? I don't really know, but it seems to be on a list with others that are quickly spreading. Some are native and others are exotic, so that's not necessarily the most important criteria.

William S. Curran, Ph.D. Penn State University, Professor of Weed Science