



Pumpkin Brook Organic Gardening, Inc.

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Greetings,

Although the official first day of spring was March 20th, for me it really doesn't feel like winter has finally shaken off its old coat until April. There are so many holidays this April that seem to remind us of the dawn of spring and new beginnings: Passover, Easter, Earth Day, and Arbor Day.

Let's Celebrate Arbor Day by Planting a Tree

When Nebraska politician and journalist Julius Sterling Morton decided that Nebraska needed to plant trees to improve Nebraska's landscape and economy, Arbor Day was born. Celebrated on April 29th, Arbor Day provides us with an excellent opportunity and reminder to take note of the trees on our property and put in place any new plans for tree plantings. Take a walk around your property to inspect the trees and look for any diseased or damaged areas. During your walk imagine where new trees may look good or provide habitat or shelter from heat and wind. Visit [Arnold Arboretum](#) or [Tower Hill Botanic Garden](#) to get inspiration and to see majestic trees at their mature size. Most importantly - plant a tree!



Newly Planted Trees



PBOG Crew Install
a New Tree

Pumpkin Brook Organic Gardening would be happy to help you celebrate Arbor Day by planting trees and shrubs on your property or helping you to organize a community tree planting project. Send us an [e-mail](#).

Earth Day Celebrations

Pumpkin Brook Organic Gardening will be participating in Earth Day Celebrations this month.

Julie is volunteering her time to complete a habitat assessment in Groton on new conservation land. Lisa is volunteering at [Garden in the Woods](#) in Framingham for their Earth Day Celebration on Saturday, April 23rd.

Susan is on the committee planning for the Townsend Earth Day Celebration on Saturday, April 30th from 10:00 am - 3:00 pm on Townsend Common (rain date, Sunday, May 1, 12 pm - 5 pm). Estelle and Carmine with Priscilla joining in the morning will be manning the booth. Carmine will be performing a compost tea demonstration, complete with microscope to search for micro-organisms.



Join us in Townsend,
Concord or Groton
for Earth Day Events
on April 30th
and Framingham
on April 23rd.

Stop by our booth at the Musketaquid Earth Day Celebration in Concord on Saturday, April 30th from 11:30 am - 2:30 pm and visit with Brianna, Lisa, Paul, Sarah, and Marjorie. Priscilla will be in Concord in the afternoon. A highlight of this event is the parade where giant puppets representing Concord's fauna and flora parade through Concord Center, along with diverse groups of musicians, dancers, masked and costumed children, floats created by local organizations, and more. Watch for our crew members as they participate in the parade. (The parade begins at approx. 10:45) After the parade visit our booth on the front lawn of the Emerson Umbrella. For more information and a schedule of events, click on this [link](#).

At both these events, we will provide attendees with information on organic gardening practices and the importance of using native plants to support local ecosystems. We will also have plants for sale and offer pruning demonstrations, along with seed starting for children.

You can also join Peggy at the [Mass Audubon Work for Wildlife Volunteer Day](#), Saturday, April 30, from 9 am - 12 pm at the Rocky Hill Wildlife Sanctuary in Groton. Help get Rocky Hill ready to open to the public.

We are looking forward to seeing you at these events!

Winter Damage Report



Wooden Shrub
Protector

As we make our rounds, we notice a higher amount of winter damage than usual to trees and shrubs. Most has been caused by the deep levels of ice and snow over the winter, or from this material falling off roofs. Four to five-year-old plants have bark chewed by mice or voles that tunneled even under the snowdrifts. Japanese maples have cracked branches. Arborvitae and Boxwood show nasty breaks or have fallen open. We are keeping our pruning equipment sharp to deal with this damage as soon as we see it.

What to do in the future to prevent these troubles? A variety of strategies can be employed now to help next season.

First, keep vulnerable species well thinned to avoid breakage under a heavy snow load. If you are at home just after a snowfall, use a corn broom to gently shake excess snow off the plants. Site woody plants at least three feet from foundations to avoid falling snow and ice. Or consider planting "cutback" shrubs such as Buddleia, Caryopteris, certain Hydrangeas, and perennials at the foundation. Utilize wooden shrub protectors on those woody plants that lie within or close to the "fall zone." For thin barked species such as Magnolia and fruit trees, we will install biodegradable trunk protectors in the fall, or the traditional gravel and hardware cloth barrier used by orchardists.

Wildlife Habitat Garden Design Service Offered

With Earth Day right around the corner, this is a good time of year to reflect on how "green" our gardens grow. While many of us have gone organic by not using



pesticides and synthetic fertilizers, we still have to ask the question "What am I doing to actively benefit the environment through my gardening practices?" As property owners, we can make a difference by providing habitat to encourage native plants and animals to settle in.

To quote the native plant expert and entomologist, Doug Tallamy, "Chances are, you have never thought of your garden -- indeed, all of the space on your property -- as a wildlife preserve that represents the last chance we have for sustaining plants and animals that were once common throughout the U.S. But that is exactly the role our suburban landscapes are now playing and will play even more in the near future."

We are fortunate to have Julie Lisk on our staff to guide the wildlife habitat garden design process. Her background includes work as a wildlife biologist, and she also holds the Design Certificate from Radcliffe Seminars (now the Landscape Institute).



Julie

Visit our [website](#) for more information and feel free to contact us with your questions. When you see Julie during her ongoing role as a Crew Supervisor ask her about it!

April Is the Time For

- Finishing spring cleanup, including dormant season pruning
- Checking woody plants for winter damage and pruning it out
- Pruning and fertilizing roses* when they begin to leaf out
- Pruning and training clematis*
- Pruning hydrangeas* as they leaf out
- Spreading compost on the vegetable garden to replenish lost nutrients (turn in as you plant)
- Planting cool season crops such as kale, broccoli, lettuce and chard
- Weeding beds while cool season weeds are small
- Transplanting and dividing perennials, particularly late season bloomers
- Transplanting shrubs
- Beginning planting season!

*Ask us about "the rules" for different varieties of these plants



After this particularly long winter it's certainly time to celebrate and herald in spring with as much color and life as we can bring. I find that nothing helps me celebrate spring more than seeing a beautiful display of spring bulbs and flowers. Whether it's a simple container of pansies or a planting with drifts of hyacinths and daffodils, spring flowers seem to lift my spirit more than any other kind of flower. If you are interested in getting a spring container planting or a garden bed installation featuring spring flowers, [let us know](#).

We are here to help you make your landscape something to look forward to. Please give us a call if we can be of any help.

Sincerely,
Priscilla

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