



Pumpkin Brook Organic Gardening, Inc.

Priscilla Hutt Williams

35 Turner Road, Townsend, Massachusetts 01469

(TEL) 978-597-3005 (FAX) 772-264-7886

phw@seedlingspecialist.com

Volume 1, December 2011

In This Issue

[Look How Far We've Come](#)

[Winter Weeds](#)

[Cleaning Up After Winter Storm Alfred](#)

[December Is the Time For...](#)

Seasons Greetings!

Celebrating our 10th Year!

It's hard to believe that we have been in business for 10 years now. I have learned so much from each client, your properties, and from all my colleagues and many staff members! Thank you for being a part of it. I am so grateful to each and every person. It's also been thrilling to watch the growth in demand for organic services and to be part of the NOFA Organic Land Care Program (also founded in 2001).

Look How Far We've Come in 10 Years

We can mark time by witnessing the growth of plants we installed in certain years. Another way is by the people who were there for the designing, planning, planting and maintaining. Yet another is by our vehicles that helped bring it all together on each property.



Priscilla pots up plants in the early years.

Here are some highlights of our ten years that we thought you'd enjoy:

2001: Priscilla and Rich Williams found PBOG, with a core list of 18 clients from the retiring designer Natalie Del Vaille of Reading, where Priscilla had worked for two years. The company vehicle is a 1998 green Subaru Outback station wagon. The garden shed at Turner Road, Townsend is built to accommodate materials. A rudimentary website is built by Rich.

2002: The 2000 Toyota Tundra pickup truck is acquired (still in service today). Colleague Deborah Judson-Ebbets moves to Virginia, leaving us two key clients. Cell phone use begins as there are now two crews working most days.

2003: Rich succumbs to prostate cancer, leaving a big gap. Priscilla slowly adjusts to life without him. Hires new part-time office manager. Crews continue gardening.

2004: A brutal winter without snow cover decimates many plants, resulting in a lot of work doing replacement plantings and getting a



Our first crew

property ready for a large wedding reception. Extra staff hired. Lettering on vehicles, company T-shirts and job tickets appear. Turner Road has a makeover with nursery space created for holding plants near the shed and drive.

2005: New 2002 Subaru Outback, dark blue. We acquire more clients from colleague Christina Campbell who moves to Canada.

2006: Priscilla spends 6 weeks of winter in California, visiting gardens, wild areas and studying permaculture design. Three crews operating daily.

2007: We venture into the world of Plant Health Care and compost tea brewing when a subcontractor leaves town in the middle of the season. The first brewer is assembled from hardware store parts and installed behind the shed at Turner Road. Our first leaf shredder and chipper are purchased. The coming of winter requires the leasing of storage space for this equipment.



2008: We sign a lease to rent our own commercial space in West Townsend for storage of equipment, materials and trucks. The 2006 Ford F-350 dump truck is acquired.

A nursery manager, Estelle James, was hired in 2006.

2009: The downturn in the economy and loss of a few key clients make it a challenging year. We regroup and keep a positive focus, ending the year in good shape. Priscilla begins researching and lecturing on the history of the Lowthorpe School of Landscape Design for Women (Groton, 1901-45).

2010: Stephanie White Stanton joins the company and brings her client base in the Harvard/Bolton/Stow area. Sales rebound with three to four crews working daily. A second pickup truck, the 2010 Ford F-150, is added to the fleet. Our permanent greenhouse is set up. We begin nutrient dense soil testing and amending work.

2011: We expand the Plant Health Care Program to include natural spraying for ticks and mosquitoes. Our e-newsletter begins, coordinated by a new full-time office manager. Priscilla trades in the old Subaru for a 2011 Ford Transit Connect. With the help of our landlord, we build two bulk storage bins for compost and mulch in West Townsend.



Carmine and Al and our 2011 fleet outside our commercial space in West Townsend

2012 - ??: The future is bright, and spring will come again! We

look forward to some winter rest like the plants we tend, and then to seeing you in late March/early April.

I would like to recognize and commend our employees for their loyalty and long terms of service. Listed below are the years each began with Pumpkin Brook:



Our 2011 crew starts the season

*Brianna Asbury - 2006; 2009

*Sarah Benoit - 2010

Tyler Ewen - 2010

Doris Huxley - 2010

*Carmine Imbriglio - 2007

Estelle James - 2006

*Jarrod Joyce - 2010

Julie Lisk - 2010

*Peggy Liversidge - 2002

*Lisa Mattei - 2010

Al Newman - 2010

Marjorie Offield - 2007

*Susan Shaine - 2003; 2009

*Russell Stafford - 2007

*Stephanie White Stanton - 2010

Steve Hallquist - 2011

*denotes NOFA Accredited Organic Land Care Professional

Winter Weeds

When we look outside at our gardens this time of year, at first glance all growth appears to be in a dormant state until spring. However, if we go out and look closely we can notice lots of tiny cool season weeds springing up throughout the garden.

Cool season weeds, or winter weeds, have a different life cycle than most other annual weeds. They germinate in the fall, grow throughout the winter, and flower in the spring. They set seed and die in late spring to summer. Right now, these weeds are young and without deep roots. This makes it an ideal time to weed them out of the garden. It's crucial to get a handle on these weeds before they set seed and multiply their numbers. The spring can be a busy time in the garden and there never seems to be enough time to get it all done. The more that can be done now, the less chaotic things will be come spring. Efforts put in now will result in fewer weeds this year and in years to come. Here are some common cool season weeds to be aware of:

Ground Ivy a.k.a "Gill Over the Ground"

(Botanical Name: *Glechoma hederacea*)

This perennial evergreen creeper is a member of the mint family. It is often found creeping throughout lawns, forming dense mats that spread by stolons or seed. It does very well in shady areas with rich wet soils, but it can also be found in sunny spots. Small patches



Ground Ivy

can be controlled with hand pulling. Repeated weeding will be required as bits of root or stem that are left behind will continue to grow and spread. If the plant is edging into garden beds from the lawn, it can be dealt with by creating a sharp edge between the lawn and garden bed.

Hairy Bittercress (Botanical Name: *Cardamine hirsuta*)

This weed is a winter annual belonging to the mustard family.

The small white flowers will eventually produce seeds that are notorious for bursting when touched sending the seeds flying far away from the mother plant. For this reason it is best to weed out this plant in late winter to very early spring before it goes to seed and inevitably becomes invasive. It grows best in moist and recently disturbed soils.



Hairy Bittercress

Chickweed (Botanical Name: *Stellaria media*)

This winter annual gets its name from the fact that chickens will often use this weed as a food source. It can form dense mats of foliage with fibrous and shallow roots. The plant will flower and set seeds at the same time, so if you are seeing a flower, it's already too late to prevent future germination. It is best to hand pull in the middle of



Chickweed

winter before flowering can take place. It prefers cool damp environments and can be found growing on the north facing side of a property.

Corn Speedwell

(Botanical Name: *Veronica arvensis*)

This plant can be easily identified by its small purple flowers, stalk-less leaves, hairy stems, and tap root. It prefers full sun and dry, poor soils. It flowers from mid-spring to mid-summer later producing seed from a heart shaped capsule containing a plethora of seeds.



Corn Speedwell

Cleaning Up After Winter Storm Alfred

[Karen Bussolini](#), writer, photographer, garden coach & NOFA Organic Land Care Program colleague, wrote a column in the Lakeville (CT) Journal after Winter Storm Albert about storm damage. One of the major goals of organic land care is to use natural waste and reduce off-site inputs, which is why I especially liked Karen's post-storm "to do" list. Some time has passed, so you probably have checked a few of these things off, but think about

how to use your storm debris in your yard! Click this [link](#) to read the entire article.

- Review homeowner's insurance policy
- Inventory what I can clean up myself, what requires brawn and power tools and what requires an arborist
- Call arborist to get on the long list of people who need estimates
- Start cleaning up the small things; it will make me feel better
- Look up and note where branches have broken but not yet fallen, and stay clear
- Get used to imperfection
- Prepare a place to pile next year's firewood
- Read up on the cultivation of mushrooms in wood chip beds
- Drag branches up into the woods. Coarse woody debris - branches less than 2" in diameter are the most biologically active - is crucial to forest health.
- Make some new brush piles to shelter wildlife
- Lay branches across the slope to slow water runoff and encourage infiltration
- Stockpile logs to build raised beds, edge paths
- Trim branches for garden stakes and trellises
- Make a stump garden
- Save some of the most treasured trees to make something special - a walking stick, towel racks, curtain rods, shelves - and heat my home with gratitude next winter.



A pile of branches or a natural habitat?

Thanks again to Karen for sharing her column with us! You may know her as the co-author, with JoAnn Gardner, of *Elegant Silvers: Striking Plants for Every Garden* (www.timberpress.com/isbn.cfm/0-88192-703-1) To contact Karen click [here](#) or e-mail her at kbgarden@charter.net.

December Is the Time For...

- Protecting tender hybrid tea and David Austin roses ONCE THE GROUND HAS FROZEN by dropping cones of compost over their root system
- Cutting back any remaining leaves on rose canes that otherwise fall during winter and thus spread black spot and other funguses through the soil
- Laying salt marsh hay or evergreen boughs ONCE THE GROUND HAS FROZEN over exposed or newly planted perennial beds
- Placing a layer of pine needles 6" deep then a cover of evergreen boughs ONCE THE GROUND HAS FROZEN over heaths and heathers
- Collecting evergreens, bright twigs and cones for holiday arrangements inside and out
- Organizing, sharpening and repairing garden



Quick Links

[To Unsubscribe](#)

[PBOG Website](#)

[Click here to respond](#)

- tools
- Checking any plants brought in from the garden for pests and spraying with insecticidal soap if found
 - Finalizing winter protection programs for deer control - let us know if we can help or if you feel a second application is warranted this winter
 - Shaking snow off young trees and shrubs that bend during storms using a corn broom (don't pull bent branches out of snowbanks as they are brittle now and break easily)
 - Checking the tree canopy for additional broken hanging branches from the October storm and planning removal if these threaten buildings, cars or people (many became evident in the recent windstorm and others will appear this winter)
 - Resting and enjoying time inside looking out at the garden



Yum! No deer protection in this yard.

Our thanks again for your support in 2011. Wishing you the happiest of holidays and a happy, peaceful New Year.

Sincerely,
Priscilla

[Forward email](#)



Try it FREE today.

This email was sent to office@seedlingspecialist.com by phw@seedlingspecialist.com | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Pumpkin Brook Organic Gardening | 35 Turner Road | Townsend | MA | 01469