

VOICE OF QUALITY

NEWSLETTER - SUMMER 2014



Owned & Operated by
Jeff & Debra Melmer

HELLO TO EVERYONE

In our last newsletter we discussed a lot about Spring cleanup for our landscapes, to some of us "our gardens". This is a busy time of year and can be very time consuming. With all the cutting back, trimming up, and then all the cleanup it can be exhausting. The end result is always worth the extra effort and in cases the agony of what it looks like until its grown back together.

By now most of, if not all, should be completed. It is not too late to get started, but as the days heat up it can be more stressful on the plant material and in some situations can really slow down recovery.

If it's a time issue, do the best you can to get to the project, the sooner the better to allow more of a growing season to recover; it may be best to wait until next Spring if timing is not good. Our landscapers have been putting in overtime to keep caught up on all the issues in our landscapes. With all the cutting back, cutting down and then throw in all the leaf drop, it is nonstop for them and a lot of debris removal. They may get a little break during the cooler months of November/February, but trust me in saying from March 1st through October 31st it is nonstop for these guys; make sure you let them know how much we appreciate their efforts!

TID BIT

This time of year your Magnolia are in the process of blooming; this requires a lot of energy from the plant. During this process your Magnolia may look sick; leaves drooping, some yellowing and leaf drop. Do not stress, this is completely normal.



The tree will bloom with a magnificent display and soon after it will reflush with fresh, new growth and once again look like a brilliant specimen that is our Magnolia Tree.



THE RAINY SEASON IS ALMOST UPON US!

It may not come soon enough or it may come too soon; either way we have no control over rain or no rain. What really matters is accumulation. I hear from a lot of you "with all the rain we got, it can't be water". The best advice I can give all of you is to monitor it with a rain gauge; this measures water/rain accumulation. It takes the guess work out of how much did I get. All areas receive different amounts when it rains. The weatherman said we got 2" of rain, I got 3" and others got 1". This is why it is important to monitor a gauge so we know exactly what we receive for our landscapes. This is when we can truly determine if we can skip a watering cycle to save on water and expense. Most of us have rain sensors, this does what it says, it senses moisture to a certain point and will not allow your system to come on. These are very beneficial at certain times of the year, but they are also somewhat unreliable.

On average, we need 1.5" to 2" of water per week. Ideally spread out through the week; 2" on Sunday does not get us to next Sunday. So frequency becomes the key issue.

With all this in mind, this all works under which we consider "Ideal Conditions". Some or many of us rarely have an issue, then there are the landscapes that just seem to be problematic and the challenge is constant to maintain landscape at a high level.

Many other factors come into play, soil type being a major issue. The following excerpt by Dr. Ed Brotak from Horticulture magazine explains the relationship between soil type and water.

Soil type has an important relationship with water and its availability to plants. When judging how much supplemental water your garden may need – or better yet, what plants are best suited to the typical moisture conditions in your garden – keep in mind your soil.

Sandy soils drain much of their water quickly. There is less soil moisture for the plants. Clay soils often contain large amounts of water and can be too wet for proper root development.

Loam soils, being a mixture of clay and sand tend to have the right amount of soil moisture for most plants.

Most of, if not all, our soils are sand and moisture retention is not something that this soil type can do. Evaporation is also a key component in overall success. Turf grass again is the challenge we face, as turf grass is always in need of frequency. Your shrubs usually can handle a little dry condition and is usually better to be this way, but because our irrigation systems water turf and shrubs together we water some things more than they need at times.

Watering, irrigating, and rainfall will always be at the forefront, the overall success and failures in our landscapes/gardens. Too much or too little or if I could have my way "just right".

qualityfirstlawnandshrub.com

MINUTE WITH

Mike



Hello to all family & friends of Quality First Lawn, Shrub and Home Services:

What a wonderful time of year. Temperatures warming, plants flushing out and turf grasses greening up and growing!

Today, I have the pleasure to finally announce we have on line bill pay up and running at www.Qualityfirstlawndandshrub.com. It has been somewhat of a trying experience as we continue to customize and integrate our routing and financial software.



Please look for the **Pay Now On-Line** on our website, click and fill in the required information to pay, it's that simple. We're always looking for ways to add convenience for our friends & family, any feedback with your experience is always welcome.

I also have the pleasure to announce the addition of Bob Armato to the Quality First Family. Bob is new to the lawn & shrub care industry and has begun his training in the Quality First way of doing things. Please help me in welcoming Bob to our family.

Finally, I'd like to thank all of our friends & family for the wonderful referrals you give to us. We continue to grow and add new members every week!

Have a great Spring/Summer all.

Mike

TURF

Zoysia

Our Zoysia grass has been very slow to get started this Spring. Cooler temps throughout March have stalled our green up or our grow-in. Fortunately, we did not have to cut down as many of our Zoysias as last year so many of us have just sat back and patiently waited for our green-up. By now we should be peaking at color and growth. If not we are probably aware of this and have applications set to correct any of these issues.



St. Augustine

St. Augustine peaks early so not much issue on this item. Some of us are still dealing with issues of Takes All Root Rot, but by now most of these should be growing back together.



SEASONAL THOUGHTS

May/June

We are incorporating into our program a possible Sod Web Worm seasonal prevention application; if it works **Great!** But until we make this application and go through our Sod Web Worm season, we will not know the success of this application. I have my fingers crossed, knock wood and all that stuff in hopes of very few or no Sod Web Worm issues this Summer.

Have a great Summer and thank you all for your continued trust in all of our services.

- Jeff

SECOND WITH *Scott*



In this article we will be talking about the *Codiaeum Variegatum*, also known as the Croton. This ornamental tropical shrub is mostly native to Indonesia and Malaysia. In the 1920's through the 1960's up to today these beautiful specimens became one of Florida's every day, normal landscape plantings.

The leaves vary from oval to narrow, small to large oak leaf type to semi oak, tri-lobed and corkscrew. The actual colors of the foliage are the main attraction of this plant. Leaf colors includes: reds, yellows, brown, corals, oranges, fuchsias, pinks, reddish purples, maroons, jet black, white, cream, blotched and streaked.

A good setting for these colorful ornamentals include areas in the landscape that receive partial shade, a full Florida sun is a little too much at first; however 50/60% sun is good. Once they are mature they usually can be transplanted to full sun areas. The soil they desire needs to be well drained with a Ph from 4.5 to 6.5. They are heavy feeders, so luckily if you have them in your landscape already, we do that part!

Remember, a Croton is a true tropical plant, so they perform their best at temps ranging from 50° to 90°. This also means at 32° and below they can experience freeze and cold damage. Mature heights and widths range from 4 to 6 ft. tall and 3 to 4 ft. wide. So please give them ample room to breathe and show off their beautiful color and size.

There are known to be upwards of 400 different varieties of Crotons, so I invite you to look them up and see how many you can find. Here are a few:

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Red Tortilla | Nestor | Bravo |
| Poppy | Fantasia | Rex |
| Batik | Excurrens | Mammy |
| Rooster Tail | General Padget | |
| Stoplight | Eleanor Roosevelt | |
| Petra & Yellow Petra | | |

Here is one website that may be handy in your search: www.peterscrotonnursery.com

As always thanks and good planting.

Scott

PLANNING... THE KEY TO LONG TERM SUCCESS IN OUR LANDSCAPE

Q: The number of tree species and cultivars available for planting is a bit overwhelming. So, what is a good way to narrow down the choices?

With planting season upon us, now is the time to select a tree to plant and there is definitely a tree for every location. To make your selection, you might want to start by looking at other trees in your community that are growing well and that appeal to you. And, of course, that fit the space you have available for planting. Some finer points to consider are crown shape, flower and foliage color, and your purpose for planting. Your personal objectives might include:

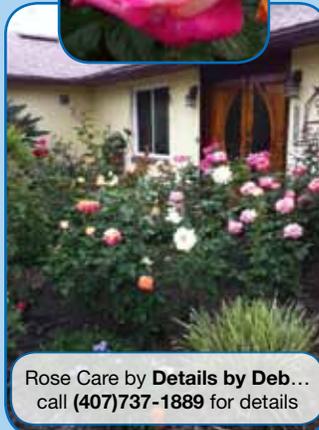
- Dense or light shade
- Fruit to eat
- Visual screening
- An appealing landscape
- Attracting birds
- Creating a windbreak

It has been said that buying a home is the biggest decision most people ever make. We suggest that selecting an appropriate tree is right up there with important decisions that have long-lasting consequences. Tree City USA Bulletin No. 4, *The Right Tree for the Right Place*, can help. So can the Arbor Day Foundation's 'Tree Wizard'!

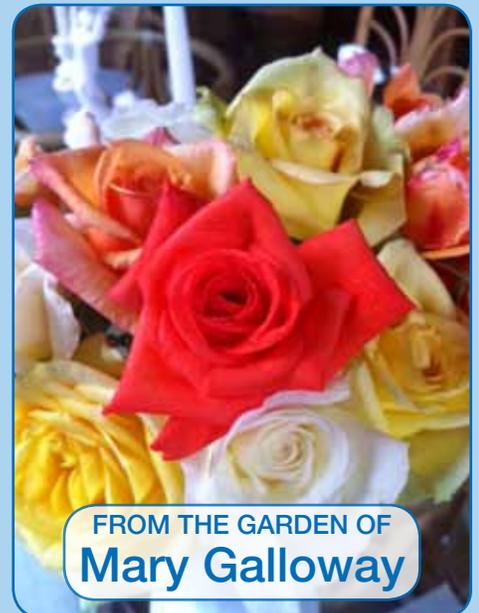
By answering a few questions about your planting site, this online tool at arborday.org/treefinder will take you to photos and descriptions of trees that match your needs.



Arbor Day, March/April 2014 p.7



Rose Care by **Details by Deb...**
call (407)737-1889 for details



FROM THE GARDEN OF
Mary Galloway

EMAIL THE EDITOR ~ Do you have a question or comment you would like addressed in an upcoming newsletter?
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Tips With Tom

UNDERSTANDING THE BROWN DOG TICK

The most common tick we deal with as pet owners is the brown dog tick (BDT). Ticks are not insects; they are more closely related to spiders and mites. BDT is a three host obligate tick with family dogs being their preferred hosts. This means that the larva, nymph and adult must acquire a blood meal from the host (aka dog) before proceeding to the next developmental stage.

Allowing one female tick carrying eggs into your home can result in 5,000 more ticks is left unchecked. The earlier you can catch an introduction of ticks into your home, the easier it will be to implement a control program. Here's why: movement of the family dog or the ticks...BDT can be distributed throughout your home and yard... essentially ending up anywhere the dog has access and the ticks spend over 95% of their time **off** of their hosts, which means they will be in the surrounding environment.

We recommend the following approach for BDT to homeowners, ideally to be done on the same day:

1. Inspect pets as they enter the home.
2. Shampoo pets to aid in inspection feel for ticks that may be attached and remove with tweezers. Areas to check are: head, neck, inside and outside of ears, between toes, under tail and around the rear-end.
3. Do a daily "tick check" and removal – combing a dog's coat with a metal louse comb may aid in finding small ticks.
4. Vacuum all carpet and area rugs daily.
5. On-pet intervention – owners should consult with their veterinarian for alternative on-animal treatment.

As a final recommendation, contact a professional pest control operator to evaluate the situation. Tick infestations can take six months to a year to eliminate, even with pesticide applications.

