

THE GRAPEVINE

August 20th, 2020

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Reminders

- o Avoid fertilizing ornamentals now so they harden off before winter
- o Take cuttings from geraniums and begonias for wintering indoors.
- o Turn compost pile and add water when dry

PAY ATTENTION TO "OTHER CROP" ON THE SEED LABEL

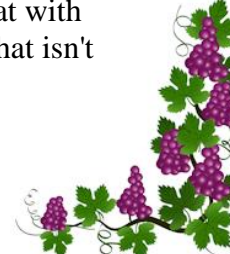
Fall planting time is close at hand, so it's time to talk about grass seed. Many people have the idea that all grass seed is basically the same. Big mistake! Choosing quality seed is one of the most important steps in successfully planting or overseeding your lawn. If you don't know what to look for, you may be introducing unwanted intruders into that new stand. In particular, we are concerned with seed contaminated with orchardgrass and/or rough bluegrass (also known by its Latin name, *Poa trivialis*, or *Poa triv* for short). These are both perennial grassy weeds that can't be selectively controlled once they are in a lawn. Orchardgrass is a problem because it is faster growing and lighter green than our turfgrasses. It is a bunch grass and so doesn't spread, but infested areas are still unsightly due to small tufts of this species pockmarking the lawn. Rough bluegrass is fine-textured and forms circular patches in the lawn. It blends in fairly well until summertime heat causes it to turn brown rapidly. If the rough bluegrass would just die in the heat, it would only be a temporary problem. Unfortunately, it usually just goes dormant, turning green again with cooler temperatures and rain. Buying quality seed starts with knowing how to decipher the seed label. One of the most important things to look for is listed as percent "Other Crop Seed" or "Other Crop." "Other Crop" refers to any species that is intentionally grown for some purpose. That would include turfgrasses (those species other than the one you are buying) and pasture grasses. Orchardgrass and rough bluegrass both are listed as "Other Crop" seed. Seed labels are required by law to show the percentage (by weight) of "Other Crop Seed" in the bag, but unless a species constitutes 5% or more, the label doesn't have to list each species by name.

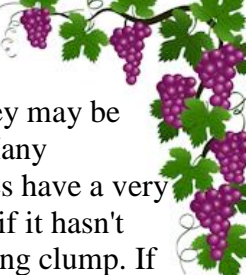
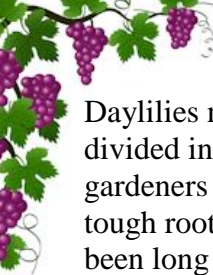
How much "Other Crop" is too much? That's a difficult question to answer, but the tolerance is very low. It depends on what the "Other Crop" actually is, and the quality expectations of the buyer. In practice, "Other Crop" may refer to something relatively harmless, like a small amount of perennial ryegrass in a bag of tall fescue, or it may refer to something bad, like rough bluegrass or orchardgrass. The homeowner really has no easy way of knowing what the "Other Crop" is, although there are some hints. If it is something bad, less than 1/2 of 1% can ruin a bag of seed. Obviously, if your expectations are high for the area you are planting, you would want the "Other Crop" to be as close to zero as possible. Good quality seed will often have 0.01% "Other Crop Seed" or less. "Weed Seed." should also be 0.01% or less.

Are Crabapples Safe to Eat?

Crabapples are safe to consume as long as you don't eat too many of them. Actually, the only difference between crabapples and apples is the size of the fruit. By definition, crabapples have fruit that are 2 inches or less in diameter, and apples are more than 2 inches in diameter. By this definition, most of the apples grown from seed will be crabapples. The fruiting apples are grafted. So did people ever plant crabapples from seed? Of course they did. Just think of Johnny Appleseed. But those apples were normally used for jelly, applesauce, and cider and not for fresh eating. Even in Johnny Appleseed's day, dessert apples were grafted. There is one other caveat with using crabapples from a tree in the landscape. Make sure the tree hasn't been sprayed with a pesticide that isn't labeled for fruit tree apples. If it has, then the fruit should not be used.

Dividing Daylilies





Daylilies need to be divided every three to four years to maintain good flower production. Though they may be divided in early spring before growth starts, it is more common to divide them at this time of year. Many gardeners cut back the tops to about half their original height to make plants easier to handle. Daylilies have a very tough root system that can make them difficult to divide while in place. Dividing in place is practical if it hasn't been long since the last division. In such cases, a spading fork can be used to peel fans from the existing clump. If the plants have been in place longer and are well grown together, it is more practical to divide them after the entire clump has been dug. Use a spade to lift the entire clump out of the ground. Although it is possible to cut the clump apart with a sharp spade, you'll save more roots by using two spading forks back-to-back to divide the clump into sections. Each section should be about the size of a head of cauliflower. An easier method involves using a stream of water from a garden hose to wash the soil from the clump, and then rolling the clump back and forth until the individual divisions separate. Space divisions 24 to 30 inches apart, and set each at its original depth. The number of flowers will be reduced the first year after division but will return to normal until the plants need to be divided again.

Spring Flowering Shrubs

August through September is the time period our spring-flowering shrubs set flower buds. Therefore, watering, as needed, at this time can help with next spring's bloom. Also avoid pruning at this time of year as it can reduce bloom for next spring. Examples of spring-flowering shrubs include Forsythia, Flowering Quince, Almond, Beautybush, Deutzia, Pyracantha, Lilac, Mock Orange, Cotoneaster, Weigela, Viburnum and Witchhazel.

Oak Lace Bug

We often associate lace bugs with sycamores and cotoneaster, but oaks can be affected as well. Actually the lace bugs that affect these three plants are separate species. Lace bugs are true bugs and therefore feed by sucking sap through straw-like mouthparts that pierce the leaf. These three species also are similar in appearance due to the lacy quality of the wings that lie flat over the back. Though lace bugs are found on the bottom of leaves, the symptoms will become apparent on top. Damage appears as a stippling effect from white to yellow spots. From a distance, the oak leaves often appear bronze. Even if you don't find living specimens, their presence is given away by small, shiny dark spots of excrement on the undersides of leaves. Lace bugs do not cause significant damage to oaks this late in the season, and control measures are not recommended.

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