



GREAT GARDENS GAZETTE

Summer 2005

Great Greetings!

“Wherever man exists, he finds the need to redesign, to recreate the world. A more beautiful world, purer, sweeter smelling and more colorful. A garden is probably the spot where the hopes for civilization are best captured. In fact, man defines himself by his garden.” -

The Enchanted Gardens of the Renaissance

Welcome to Summer!!! Spring has been an exciting and exhausting time here at Great Gardens. We have seen a tremendous increase in installations. Between March and May of this year we have installed a record twenty-one landscapes!!! This is compared to fourteen last year during the same time period. All of this took place while we were busy doing color change outs at over one hundred homes and businesses. As you can see Elizabeth, Roger and the crews have been incredibly busy. Needless to say, this has put somewhat of a strain on our manpower. And while adding on two new drivers and two new vehicles has helped to relieve the strain, we appreciate all of our customers who have patiently waited for their installation jobs to be finished. Thanks to all of our loyal and new customers, Great Gardens has had a truly great spring filled with creating beautiful places for you to enjoy.



Spring made us all a little crazy this year!!!!

Great Garden Guests

Due to our warm climate in North Texas, one of our most common summer birds are hummingbirds. Their season here extends from late March to late September. These tiny birds are truly marvels and extremely beneficial.

We normally think of bees as the pollinators but hummingbirds can serve the same purpose. They feed on the nectar of flowers and therefore pollinate the flowers. Additionally, hummingbirds feed on gnats, mites and other small insects.

Although there are 300 species of hummingbirds in the world, we rarely see more than two types here in North Texas. The Ruby-throated and the Black-chinned Hummingbirds are the most common ones here and in all of the eastern United States. As is common in most bird species, the males are the more showy ones. For example, in the Ruby-throated variety, the males have ruby-red throats but young males do not have this red nor do the females.

If you are fortunate enough to attract hummingbirds to your garden, they are exceptionally loyal birds returning year after year.

The following are some amazing facts about hummingbirds:

- *On average the hummingbird flies about 50 miles per hour (compared to 20 miles per hour for other birds) and can fly faster with the wind and when migrating.
- *Due to their wing structure, they are they only birds who can fly in any direction, even backwards!
- *Their hearts beat 600 time per minute, up to 1200 times per minute during exertion.
- *They need to eat at least every 10 minutes.
- *The female makes a nest the size of a large thimble and only lays two or three eggs per season.
- *Hummingbirds live alone, the opposite sexes only come together during courtship and mating.

If you want to attract hummingbirds plant columbine, daylilies, coralbells, hostas, bee balm, garden phlox, salvia, lantana and verbena. If using a feeder, be sure to clean it every 2-3 days as the mold that develops can make the hummingbird sick.



Great Garden Recommendations

Aeration - Soil aeration is beneficial to the clay based soils that are prevalent in North Texas. These clay soils will become packed down under normal rainfall and in particular when they get walked on a lot. This will limit the amount of oxygen that can penetrate into the soil which is required to keep the turf roots healthy. If you have noticed that your lawn is not thriving despite being watered and fertilized, you could benefit from having it aerated. The aerator punches holes in the soil every few inches which allows water, oxygen, and nutrients to penetrate into the soil faster and deeper. Lawns that see a high amount of traffic and have a high clay content should ideally be aerated once a year.

Horticultural Cornmeal – Cornmeal isn't just for cooking anymore. Recently we have begun to use horticultural cornmeal to treat some common problems in North Texas. This product can be used for root or soil borne fungus problems such as black spot on roses or powdery mildew on crape myrtles. Cornmeal works by providing and stimulating existing beneficial microorganisms in the soil that feed on pathogens. One application of the cornmeal may be all that is needed, but multiple applications are okay if necessary because it serves as a mild organic fertilizer and soil builder. The cornmeal requires moisture to activate, so make sure to water this product in.

Great Garden Ornaments

Sundials are one of the most ancient methods of telling time. The oldest sundial known is one in Egypt built around 1500 B.C. But the Romans were the ones who perfected the sundial as it is known today and they even invented portable ones for traveling. Some sundials did more than tell time. There were ones which indicated the seasons, the signs of the Zodiac and even those that determined the time of high tide at specific ports.

Today sundials are used more for decorative purposes. Like the Romans, we place sundials in our gardens often as a focal point in the middle of a herb garden or along a walkway of roses.

The most common type of sundial is the horizontal variety which are often perched on a pedestal. The principle behind a sundial is simple. As the Earth rotates and our position to the Sun changes, the shadow of the gnomon (the raised projection that casts the shadow) moves around the sundial in accordance with the sun's movement. You read the time on the sundial by noting the hour line closest to the edges of the shadow. Make sure you position the sundial in a sunny, level spot with the gnomon facing north.



Great Guy & Gal

You may have noticed some new faces around your property lately. Tim Ball is now our Maintenance Manager and comes to us with over 20 years of experience in the landscaping industry and is responsible for overseeing all maintenance crews and for monitoring customers' properties. Melissa Crist is our new Landscape Coordinator. She has a degree in Horticulture from Texas Tech University and is responsible for visiting clients' properties to assess the condition of the property and address any needs or problems they might have.

Great Gardens Services

Yard Renovations
New Construction Landscape
Seasonal Flowers
Courtyard and Container Gardens
Retaining Walls
Flag Stone Patio Construction

Total Lawn Maintenance
Fertilization
Aeration
Weed and Pest Control
Irrigation Repair
Landscape Design

SUMMER 2005

GREAT GARDENS MANAGEMENT

Elizabeth Smidt, Landscape Architect
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Laura Camarillo, Office Manager
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