

I'On is Growing!

The homeowners' guide to gardening and landscaping in the I'On Community

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The Right Tools

For those of you who have taken to heart the advice given by our monthly to-do expert (*that would be Andrew Smith!*) in the past few issues, you may be ready to convert your garden into a swimming pool. But, for those hardy few who are hanging tough, I'd like to offer some advice I've put together from a few different sources on the importance of using the right tools, *specifically ... the right pruning tools.*

The most commonly used instrument is probably the **hand pruner**. As described, it fits nicely into one hand and is designed to cut branches approximately ¼-inch in diameter. There are two types of hand pruners: **anvil and bypass**. The anvil has one sharpened blade that dead-ends into a flat edge. Bypass pruners have one thin blade that slides past a thicker blade, much like a scissors. Anvil pruners tend to crush the branch, causing it to splinter. Bypass pruners are more expensive, but make a cleaner cut.

Unfortunately, a lot of us attempt to cut larger branches – over ½-inch thick – with hand pruners by using both hands. The end result can not only damage the tool but can really hurt the branch being cut. The bark can tear, tissue gets crushed ... all in all defeating the goal of a clean cut. Beyond ½-inch, you need a lopper.

Lopping shears have two long handles and are operated with both hands. They come with both anvil

and bypass blades (*again, bypass cuts cleaner*). The standard lopper can cut branches from ½- to ¾-inch. **Compound or double hinge loppers** can cut branches up to 1-inch. **Ratchet loppers** can get somewhat pricey, but cut branches up to 2-inches in diameter.

For reaching high branches, you might want to invest in a **pole pruner** (*they look like a lopper mounted at the end of a pole*). These allow you to reach high into a tree and cut branches up to an inch and ½ thick, using a pull rope. A curved saw is usually incorporated onto the end of the pole as well, for another cutting option. Needless to say, watch out for power lines when using a pole pruner.

For larger limbs, **pruning saws** are available. They are often curved with deeply cut teeth, angled back to cut on the backstroke. **Bow saws** are another option for cutting larger limbs (*they resemble a hunting bow, with a saw in place of the string*). Both saws have sharp, deep teeth that can quickly cut through fairly thick limbs (*and relatively thin fingers!*)

Shears (*manual, fuel or electric*) are used to trim bushes into little puff-balls (*watch the cord...*). And then there's the chainsaw, which I won't be giving you any advice about.

As with all tools, keep them clean, well oiled, and out of reach of fingers that don't know how to use them safely.

April To-Do's

by Andrew Smith

Continue to clean-up spent blooms from below **Camellias**.

Prune **Quince** after bloom, but do not destroy the basic shape of your plant.

Rake and destroy all spent blooms and mulch from under **Azaleas** and water from the base only (*do not splash leaves*). Spray early one morning with a garden fungicide.

Every ten days apply a light dose of fungicide over all of your **Roses**.

Prepare **Gardenias** for bloom by keeping well watered and fertilize with a cup of 6-6-12. Spray the stems, foliage (*including underneath*) and trunk with a dormant oil spray.

Fertilize:

Shrub Althea with a cup of 6-6-12

Oleander with a cup of 6-6-12

Hosta with 1/4 cup of bloodmeal

Cannas with a handful of 5-10-10 and scatter a handful of DE around the base of each plant as it emerges.

In mid-April fertilize **Butterfly Bush** with a half cup of 5-10-10 and a quarter cup of superphosphate.

Feed **Abelia** with a half cup of Sul-Po Mag or K-Mag.

Apply a dose of tankage to **Aspidistra** at the rate of 2 1/2 cups per 50 sq feet.

Mid-month, fertilize **centipede lawns** with *Centipede Plus Brand With Iron* fertilizer at the recommended rate; make one application of 5-10-30 fertilizer to your **St. Augustine lawn** at the recommended rate.

Toward the end of the month make a single application of 5-10-30 at the recommended rate to your **Zoysia grass**.

I'On Garden Club Update

Carolyn (CJ) Pelletier has graciously offered to host **the next meeting of the I'On Garden Club** at her home, Thursday, April 21, at 10:00 a.m. As those of you who attended the first meeting of the I'On Garden Club know, we are trying to get interested gardeners together to discuss whatever happens to be on their gardening minds. And truthfully, there's a lot!

In our first meeting (*last fall*), it became clear our primary motive was to learn more about planting in this South Carolina climate. We discussed several different approaches of educating ourselves, including lectures, planting demonstrations, tours and field trips as well as developing a bibliography of garden books to use as resource. We also talked about projects around

I'On, such as a tour of I'On gardens or a Holiday wreath competition that could be used as fundraisers. Other topics ... container gardening, herb growing, favorite trees, flower arranging, bugs and pests, soil quality ... all came up as material for further discussion.

If you are interested in participating in the club, or just want to hear more, I encourage you to come to CJ's (*90 Ponsbury Road*) on April 21. The meeting will last as long as people care to contribute. Hopefully enough interest will be generated that another meeting will follow at a date and time participants choose. If you plan to attend, please email CJ at cpelletier@equationresearch.com to give her an idea of how many people to expect (*or call CJ at 856-9224*). I hope to see you there!

Help Wanted ... for the Garden

On occasion, people are in need of help in the garden. This sort of help can range from the need for a complete, all-in-one professional garden and lawn service all the way down to a once-a-week/month walk through to make sure the water/weeds/pests ... are either functioning properly or under control.

We'd like to develop a list of people and services that I'On Residents can contact – with some level of confidence – when their own personal garden needs arise. From

the all-in-one professional services down to the periodic walk-throughs, we'd like to know which ones work.

Please contact me if you've had any experience along these lines and would like to recommend someone. Once we get a list established I'll publish it in this newsletter as well as post it on the website so all residents can take advantage, depending upon their needs. Please send your recommendation to me, Barbara Fry, at brbfry@comcast.net. Thanks for your help.

Looking for a good garden resource book?

Growing a Beautiful Garden: A Landscape Guide for the Coastal Carolinas by Henry Rehder and Henry Rehder, Jr. is a great resource book for many of the plants and trees we grow here in the Lowcountry. It's available at Amazon for \$23.00 (*probably at Barnes & Noble as well*).

Inside l'On ... Infrastructure Report ... *by Dave Rosengren*

The l'On Company, under Jeff Fort's leadership, is working to complete several projects that will improve the overall landscaping and infrastructure of the neighborhood.

- **Several erosion issues have been corrected** along the Marsh Walk with the installation of drainage pipes and/or 2 x 8 retaining barriers at walking bridges. The specific areas improved are the bridge on Hopetown Road near the playground, the bridge between Hopetown and Frogmore, the bridge between Frogmore and Isle of Hope, and the bridge between Isle of Hope and Saturday Road.
- **The island in front of the Creek Club** has been a chronic issue because of the difficult turning radius upon exiting from the parking lot. The island will be redesigned to allow a straighter exit from the parking lot to better accommodate cars with boat trailers. In addition, a raised edge of granite pavers will be installed and landscaping will be planted. The work will take place in April/May.
- **The western edge of West Lake** between the path and the lake has always been wet and soggy because of inadequate drainage. Fill will be added and drainage installed as appropriate. The work will take place in April/May.

We appreciate the l'On Company and Jeff's effort to improve these important areas of the community.

A note from l'On's Landscape Chairman – Dr. Alan Comen

With the onset of Spring and warmer weather upon us, you may have noticed some landscape projects and clean-up going on in the neighborhood. Most notable is the **East Lake project** which addressed an erosion problem as well as a general upgrade of the area. There have also been a variety of plant replacements and perennials added to improve the overall look.

We have **over seeded the slope with winter rye grass** to stabilize the bank until the resident grass comes out of dormancy. There may be a two or three week period of brown-out between the die-off of the rye and the other grass coming out of dormancy. We are also in the process of reviewing plans for the **upgrade to the island at Sowel and Ponsbury**. And, we would like **input from l'On residents** on possible improvements to the **main entrance of l'On** from anyone who would care to contribute (*I can be reached via email at AlanCChiro@cs.com*).

I have also received numerous comments on the weed situation in various areas. Lawn-O-Green has assured me that pre-emergent and spraying have been done properly. Second applications will be applied where necessary, but keep in mind it will take time to see the full effect depending upon the temperature.

Just a reminder that it is your responsibility to maintain your property. Warning letters may go out shortly to those who have let their yard go to the point that it effects the look and value of our neighborhood.

Local Attractions

Palmetto Gardening

Tuesdays at Noon. Live, call-in segment on "Your Day," Clemson Extension Service Educational Radio Network, WSCI 89.3 FM.

58th Annual Festival of Houses and Gardens,

through April 16. Presented by Historic Charleston Foundation. Self-paced walking tours in Charleston's Old & Historic District feature gardens, architecturally and historically significant houses and buildings in 11 historic neighborhoods. Cost: \$45. Call 722-3405 or visit www.historiccharleston.org

Charleston Horticultural Society

Monthly Lecture Series

April 11, 6:30 p.m.

Best Bulbs for Southern Gardens

Brent Heath of Brent & Becky's Bulbs. Charleston Museum Auditorium, 360 Meeting Street. Plant give-a-way. \$10 non-members. Call 579-9922.

PLANTASIA

April 30, 8 a.m.-noon.

Charleston Horticultural Society annual sale; Gaillard Municipal Auditorium front lawn, 77 Calhoun St. Plants, garden items, door prizes. Proceeds benefit society projects. Call 579-9922.

Farmer's Markets

Charleston –

Saturday's through December, 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Marion Square on Calhoun Street (*between King and Meeting*).

Mount Pleasant –

Tuesday's through October, 4:00 p.m. until dark. Moultrie Middle School on Coleman Boulevard.

(For more local events, check out the Post and Courier's Home and Garden Calendar of Events @ www.charleston.net.)

Contact us

Thanks go out to **CJ Pelletier** for offering to host the next meeting of the I'On Garden Club. I hope to see many of you there. Many thanks also to **Andrew Smith**, of *Landsmith*, for his wonderful monthly to-do's.

Laura Kasman would still like to find a home for **two medium-size Pampas Grass plants** that are free to anyone who wants to move them (*at 52 Sowell*). Laura can be reached at 216-1238 or emailed at kasman@juno.com. I also have **two, 2-year old Banksiae Roses** that could use a new home. My location is not sunny enough for them to bloom.

If interested, send an email to me, Barbara Fry, at brbfry@comcast.net (or call 216-0045). And as usual, I'd love to hear of any gardening input you'd like to offer. Thanks!

For questions or concerns regarding your home landscaping, contact **Pam Gabriel**, I'On Design Committee, at 971-1662, ext 216.

For common area landscaping questions or concerns, call **Cheryl Wilson**, AMCS, I'On Community Manager at 303-3586, or email cwilson@amcs-inc.com

Plant Profile ... *Carolina Jessamine*

Carolina Jessamine (Gelsemium sempervirens) is the state flower of South Carolina. In the open country it covers fences and trees in woodlands and along roadsides throughout the Southeast with its slender vines and bright yellow flowers. Here in I'On it can be seen outlining the south western tip of East Lake as well as on many fences and arbors.

Sweetly scented, golden yellow flowers cover the cascading, fine textured foliage from February to April. The trumpet-shaped blooms are 1- to 1½-inches long and are attractive to butterflies. The shiny evergreen leaves are 1- to 3-inches long. In colder areas, it may be semi-evergreen with leaves turning bronze in winter.

Carolina Jessamine grows to 20 feet or more when grown as a vine. It can also be grown as a ground cover, maintained with a yearly cutting in late spring after flowering to 3 feet or less. The vine's growth rate is



moderate, growing rapidly once established or with rich soil and adequate water.

Carolina Jessamine tolerates full sun or partial shade. Flowering is more prolific and foliage growth is denser in full sun. The vine is very adaptable and will grow in a variety of conditions. Moist soil is ideal, but the vine is able to withstand periods of drought once established.

Tip of the Month ... *Lawn care*

From Mike Carreira ... Lawn-O-Green

For residential lawns, April is the best time to fertilize and apply another application of pre-emergent (**Pre-M** or **Dimension**). For better absorption into the soil, it is recommended to aerate the lawn prior to these applications. Spray any broadleaf weeds that are present. April is also a great month to treat for insects, fire ants and mole crickets. As always, be sure to follow label directions carefully when using these products.

On the Web ...

www.orchardsedge.com not only sells quality pruning equipment, but also offers good advice on proper pruning techniques to achieve the desired result.

www.ext.vt.edu/departments/envirohort/articles/tools_and_equipment/prngtool.html gives more info on pruning tools from the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service.

<http://hgic.clemson.edu> is the site for Clemson Extension Home & Garden, our personal favorite for the unique horticultural environment in I'On.

www.charleston.net/stories/?newsID=18250§ion=garden is the Post and Courier's internet Home & Garden Calendar of Events.

www.yardcare.com offers a regional database of lawn care advice including how to's of planting, restoration, pest and disease control, watering, grass selection ...

www.scstatehouse.net/studentpage/flower.htm is the South Carolina Legislature Online page that describes Confederate Jessamine, South Carolina's state flower.