

*Prepare for winter
November special offer
grit - see page 2!*

LAWN CARE
& GARDEN SERVICES



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... an environmentally friendly way

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Winter time 2012 Newsletter.

Welcome to the winter newsletter. In this newsletter we look at environmentally friendly gardening and how things have changed in the past 30 years or so and changes we plan to implement in 2013.

For the 2013 season we plan to invest in **zero emission** grass cutting and hedge trimming cordless electric equipment to **reduce carbon emissions** and **reduce noise**. Battery cordless lawn mowers for commercial use are still relatively in their infancy of development, with higher cost and short battery life proving to be the main challenges. However, we plan to explore the possibility with a gradual move towards battery powered equipment, where appropriate, to pilot their usage.

Having undertaken the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) – Horticulture level 2 training programme, it has been interesting to see the changes since I apprenticed as a nurseryman and undertook City & Guilds in Horticulture in the late 1970's – early 1980's. Thankfully we have seen a significant move away from reaching for a chemical product at the first sign of a pest or disease. We now know that herbicides and pesticides are harmful to the environment and can in fact make the problem they are trying to treat worse in the long run. Pesticides, for example, may kill the pest but also kill the predators, for example ladybirds are a natural predator for greenfly, but a greenfly pesticide may kill both the greenfly and the ladybird. This then has a knock-on effect up the food-chain hierarchy, if there are no insects then birds and hedgehogs will move away from that habitat. Birds and hedgehogs add beauty and companionship in our gardens but also provide pest control by feeding off insects, slugs and snails. Consequently, if a chemical is used, should the pest return there will be no natural predators and the pest problem can be worse than ever before!

Today, understanding a little about plant biology and the life cycle of pests and diseases plays a major part in deciding how to tackle pests and diseases. Using disease resistant plant varieties, organic and biological controls all help to reduce chemical use. An '**integrated pest management**' or **IPM** is an approach to pest control which aims to encourage natural pest control whilst recognising a need to use chemicals where a natural method does not exist. By understanding the pest's lifecycle and considering natural controls with chemicals solutions being a final option. Any use of chemicals is undertaken in a thoughtful manner so as not to kill any natural organisms or predators which are being used as part of the IPM.

I have attached an example at the end of this newsletter of an Integrated Pest Management plan .It is a plan I produced for my RHS coursework on a lawn problem which is caused by a particular pest.

Frost and Ice – ‘a man with True Grit?’

**Special offer
Grit!*

I have a limited quantity of rock salt grit in 25kg bags (about the size and weight of a bag of cement). Offered at a **Special Price £6** per bag with **free** delivery for existing Clients in early December. Please place your order by phone, text, or email by the end of November for delivery first week in December. Please note this is a one-off offer only available until 30th November 2012.



What's new!



Not having used a chainsaw in 30 years! I have undertaken the LANTRA Chainsaw maintenance and cross cutting course and gained the industry standard certification for chainsaw use. The intensive course included risk assessment, safe usage, maintenance, use and practical experience and assessment. The course was delivered by the Head Forrester at Cragside in Northumberland which was a truly inspirational setting. Next, I'll progress to the 'Felling small tree' course timber!



(Just in case you're wondering, that's not me up the tree! It's a tree surgeon I captured clearing some large trees at Greenwich ready for the Olympics. The other picture is however from the chainsaw course I undertook – with feet firmly on the ground!)

Fencing



Here's an example of a new fence we installed earlier this season. The existing 5ft high panel fence was replaced with 4ft high fence panels topped with a 1 foot high trellis. Still giving a 5ft high fence but the overall result is less obtrusive, more pleasing to the eye allowing more light onto the borders and provides trellis for climbing plants to cling onto!

Garden Handrails

A handrail can provide a practical addition to a garden. Here's one example of a wooden handrail we securely installed using pressure treated timber posts set in concrete. This is a beautiful raised garden and the handrail provides easier access up the stone steps into the garden.



Hedgehogs.



This lovely creature was a topic of discussion following the Autumn Newsletter. One Client explained some of the fascinating work which is being done to protect hedgehogs by the British Hedgehog Preservation Society. The work includes the Uist Hedgehog Rescue to relocate hedgehogs from the Scottish Island of Uist, where the hedgehogs feed on birds eggs, to the Scottish mainland. Thereby saving the birds and protecting the hedgehogs. Further information can be found using this internet link to the Society:-

<http://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/>

And then, to my surprise in October the BBC programme 'Have I got News for you' featured an article on the BHPS newsletter!

Gift vouchers.



An ideal gift for a special occasion for any garden lover or better still non- garden lover!

HAPPY GARDENING!

Tony

An example of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Integrated Pest Management plan for the control of leatherjackets in lawns.

With an IPM it's important to first identify the problem correctly before implementing an IPM.

The problem – damage to the lawn.

A key indicator of the turf pest 'leatherjackets' is a brown patches of lawn in spring to early summer time.



Damage to lawn

The cause of the problem - the European Cranefly (*Tipula paludosa*) (picture to the right) lays its eggs / larvae in turf. The larvae are commonly called 'leatherjackets' and are dull gray, legless, and up to 3 cm long when they reach full size. They feed in the top 2-3 cm of soil among the roots of grasses. In severe infestations their feeding damages the turf and leaves ragged brown patches in the turf. The adult cranefly is a large two-winged insect with extremely long, fragile legs. To implement an IPM it's important to understand the pest lifecycle and the plant which it may harm. In the case of leatherjackets, the females lay eggs in turf in August-September and the tiny larvae feed for a month or two in the autumn. At this stage, however, they are so small that they do very little damage. The larvae over-winter in the soil, where many are killed by natural enemies and winter weather. Those that survive, start feeding again in early spring. They grow to full size by mid-June, then stop feeding for a few weeks and pupate in early July. The adults emerge in late August to September.



Cranefly



Leatherjacket

Prevention:- The IPM plan for leatherjackets involves cultural and biological controls during the season. A key part of an IPM is to create an environment which discourages the pest and promotes healthy growth in the plant. Another key component of an IPM is to consider if there are any disease resistant varieties of the plant, in the case of grass I have not been able to find any which are resistant to leatherjackets. Ensuring the turf is aerated and encouraging birds into the garden as natural predators of the larvae is important. Harsh winters can also help to kill-off any larvae.

Treatment:- the application of a parasitic nematode (*Steinernema feltiae*) in autumn or early spring when the larvae are actively feeding will also help to attack and kill the larvae. Application of the nematode at any other time will be ineffective. Finally, the application of the chemical diazinon can be used for leatherjacket control where high larval counts justify treatment, however, chemical treatment should **not** be applied in autumn as a cold winter may kill off the larvae, chemical treatment should therefore **only** be considered in the spring / early summer time.