




MEMBERS AREA EVENTS PIX CLUBS **KidzKorner** ARTICLES BOOKS SUPPLIERS LINKS HELP

LATEST FROM BY CATEGORY FEATURE ARTICLES HOT HORT ISSUES

ARTICLES

Documents: Latest From: **Art Drysdale:**

Wisteria, Lawns and Sevin

How to make a Wisteria vine into a tree; some new lawn basics for sandy areas; and a response to criticism of the insecticide Sevin!
by *Art Drysdale*

by **Art Drysdale**

email: art@artdrysdale.com



Art Drysdale, a life-long resident of Toronto and a horticulturist well known all across Canada, is now a resident of Parksville, British Columbia on Vancouver Island, just north of Nanaimo. He has renovated an old home and has a new garden there. His radio gardening vignettes are heard in south-western Ontario over two radio stations: Easy 101 FM out of Tillsonburg at 2 PM weekdays and CD98.9 FM out of Norfolk County at 11:40 AM weekdays.

Art also has his own website at <http://www.artdrysdale.com>

October 8, 2006



Above, my lovely Japanese Wisteria on my Toronto (East York) home back in 2001, just a year before we sold; and below, Pierre Bourque, then director of the Jardin Botanique de Montréal, and since then a Mayor of Montréal, talks about the same plant growing in Montréal. Author photos.



Though the season is slowing down, my e-mailed questions are not as yet. Here's a selection from recent weeks. The first from Bev Danyluck somewhere within my Shaw Vancouver Island TV mini programmes: "My elderly Dad and I spend a lot of our time enjoying the wonder of our gardens and tonight I saw you on the television talking about dahlias, you were wonderfully informative! You mentioned that people could e-mail you with a gardening question and here I am doing so. I saw a picture in a gardening book showing a wisteria that had been trained into a tree. I would love to be able to do such a thing, would you have any advice for someone wanting to try doing so? Thank you very much."

Training a standard of a vine or shrub is not a difficult task, though with some not-so-vigorous shrubs it would be more difficult than it will be with a *Wisteria*. Though it can be done with an established (i.e. not young plant) vine, it is likely best attempted with a young plant from a garden centre. Choose a plant next spring that is already showing a flower or two, for two reasons; one so you know the plant is capable of blooming, and two so you get the colour you prefer. You might check several different nurseries. There are two types of *Wisteria* sold generally, the Chinese type (*Wisteria sinensis*) and the Japanese ones (*Wisteria floribunda*). The former are slightly less hardy than the latter although both are easily hardy throughout Vancouver Island, and I grew a very nice Japanese one on my home in Toronto. Generally it is thought that the Japanese cultivars are less of a problem in how fast they grow. For training as a tree, try to choose a young potted plant with just one major strong-growing stem, and in any case, prune away all the smaller, finer growths when it is planted. Continue to prune away all other shoots coming up from the ground, as well as all side shoots until the main stem reaches your desired height (possibly between one and 1.5 metres), then prune it just above a node (where a leaf or another branch begins to grow, and then keep pruning the side branches to encourage more and more of them. Do not let the central leader grow any more, but prune to promote growth of the side branches.

That is about all there is to it! You should see some bloom at least by the second year, but if you do not, do not be disappointed as *Wisteria*, despite their tremendous growth, are often stubborn, in not blooming for many years after being planted. That is why it is best to buy one that is already in bloom at the time of purchase at the garden centre.

And, from nearby Nanaimo, Patrick Beaton wrote about a lawn problem that could apply equally literally across Canada: "I'm hoping you might be able to help me out? I'm trying to help my brother work on his front lawn, it is mostly sand, we've removed the old dead lawn as it was mostly moss and ...well, a mess. We're in Nanaimo, and I was hoping you might have a suggestion or two, do we put fertilizer down, is there a better seed for sandy lawns, is it too late for seeding? Any help would truly be appreciated Art, my brother is always quite busy, and I know next to nothing on lawns but would really like to help him out, I'd be grateful. Thanks so much."

We too have two lawns on pure sand here, and when we moved in both were in pretty sad shape. We got rid of the moss by applying de-moss in the early spring, and then liming the lawn (spring and fall) with dolomite lime. The key to a good lawn on sand is fertilizer, fertilizer, fertilizer. On sand, the nutrients are washed through the soil very readily. Now would be a good time to seed, even in colder climates such as Ontario. No particular seed cultivar is best on sand, although I would go for a good (higher priced) mixture, perhaps in bulk from your garden centre. They will make a good recommendation but do make sure it is a good mix, not a bargain one which will likely include weed grass seeds such as bentgrass or clover.

After sowing the seed, it is as well to cover it slightly with weed-free topsoil or something like loose peat moss. You will have to keep it wet constantly until the grass is up several centimetres, and the first cutting should be done, if possible, when the soil is dry, and cut it high (at least 5 cm). I am fertilizing about five, possibly six times per year (not necessary on a clay soil), using the BioTLC product, Liquid Growth Lawn Kit. Availability in Ontario is good, but here on









Ads by Google

How to make Electricity
\$49 kit has energy co's execs calling for a ban on its sale.
www.Power-4-Homes.co

Small-group garden tours
We specialise in small-group garden tours, throughout Britain.
www.adderleytravel.com

RELATED

articles

- Managing Lawns & Slug Control
- Burdock Hydrangea Canna Calla Grub Control
- Wollemi Pines Wisteria & Compost
- A Tale of Two Lawns
- Lawns & Vegetables

Vancouver Island not so. Try Wal-Mart, they did have some.

A recent letter published in the Parksville Qualicum Beach News criticized the use of naphthyl methylcarbamate insecticides, such as Bug-B-Gon. The specific insecticide in Bug-B-Gon is carbaryl—a useful, relatively non-toxic insecticide for well over two decades. The only restriction on its use should be not to use it on fruit trees etc. when they are in bloom as it is toxic to bees.

I thought you might be interested in my response to the letter: "The letter writer states that one of the sponsors of Communities in Bloom is the maker of products "including Killex, Deritox and Bug-G-Gon." He makes no comment on Killex so I shall refrain from commenting though I have an unbelievable library of information confirming its safety, or Deritox (though I must remind him that it is made of the natural ingredient Rotenone that comes from ground roots—that should interest him because of his negative mention of any plant that is not native). He saves his most damning comments for a pesticide which I have used for over 25 years—"a naphthyl methylcarbamate"—specifically carbaryl. A good friend who is a Masters graduate in horticulture from Cornell could find no current reference coming from Cornell that carbaryl (or Sevin—its trade name) "poses a mutagenic risk to humans" as the letter writer claims.

"What we did find on the Cornell University Pesticide Management Education Website, was a broad-ranging re-view of carbaryl by Winand K. Hock, extension pesticide specialist with the renowned Penn State University. He states, among other facts: "Extensive evidence indicates that carbaryl does not cause cancer or genetic changes in animals. Carbaryl has also been extensively tested for its effect on reproduction and the occurrence of birth effects (we call this teratogenic potential). Experiments have been conducted on various strains of rats and mice, and on hamsters, gerbils, guinea pigs, rabbits, dogs, sheep, and monkeys. Adverse effects have occurred only in dogs."

"Mr. Hock also stated, "Human volunteers have orally ingested carbaryl at 2 mg/kg of body weight with no observed effects." Further, he also indicates that human birth defects (as a result of carbaryl) are non-existent!

"As regards organic fertilizers, may I remind the letter writer that the direct cause of the recent spinach e-coli crisis in California was the 'organic' application of liquid sludge to the fields, something that does not happen with the superior chemical fertilizers? There remains absolutely no proof the fertilizers from organic sources are better for plants than their chemical counterparts or specifically, that plants themselves can tell the difference.

"Finally, if he is looking for a cause that might directly help Vancouver Island, he should check the September 25 online edition of the scientific magazine, Nature, for its report on "More plants make more rain" about satellite observations suggesting that any vegetation [native, non-native, veggies or ornamentals] encourages rainfall in Africa."

[ABOUT US](#)
[MEMBER LOGIN](#)
[PRIVACY POLICY](#)

[MORE](#)

books

1. Plant Protection
2. The Garden Plants of China
3. Lawns for Canada
4. What the 'Experts' May Not Tell You About Growing the Perfect Lawn
5. Flora: Over 20 000 Plants and their Cultivation Requirements

[MORE](#)

products

1. Taylor's Weekend Gardening Guide to SAFE AND EASY LAWN CARE: The Complete Guide to Organic Low-Maintenance Lawns by Barbara Ellis
2. Rodale's S.O.G. series LAWN GRASSES & GROUNDCOVERS by Lewis & Nancy Hill

links

1. Lawn Sprinkler System
2. Garden Lawns
3. Yardbirds.ca
4. Classic Lawns
5. Doktor Doom

classified

1. Perennial seeds to trade

forum

1. Ok to feed wisteria?
2. RE: Ok to feed wisteria?
3. RE: Ok to feed wisteria?
4. Wisteria hasn't bloomed yet
5. RE: fast growing vines

[MORE](#)
[Ads by Google](#)

Sunshine Grounds Care

North America's
Grounds Care Team
We Care, All Year!
www.SunshineLandscap

Gardening and Landscaping

Learn gardening and
landscaping at home
with ICS Canada.
www.icslearn.ca

