

SOME TIPS TO GET YOUR GARDEN IN SHAPE

REMOVE DEAD FOLIAGE AND WATCH FOR MUSTARD PLANTS, WRITES JENNIFER MIROSOLIN



JENNIFER MIROSOLIN
Column

Now that the forecast is a little warmer, it's the best time to get outside and tidy up any perennials that were left in the fall.

Cut back perennial grasses, remove the dead foliage of seed-bearing perennials you left for the birds and, if the soil is thawed, pull out twitch grass - there is nothing more satisfying than pulling a small tuft and having

the long trailing roots come with it.

As well, watch for garlic mustard plants, the bronze leaf rosettes, which smell like garlic, come up early and must be removed before they hide in the foliage of other plants. This plant has a long tap root, an inconspicuous flower and many seeds. It can take over gardens in a couple of years if left unchecked. A dig and pull now will prevent many problems later on this season.

Prune clematis and roses in mid- to late-April. Cut

back clematis according to what type they are, but if you've forgotten the name or type, leave them alone and observe the month they flower. This gives you a guide to when and how heavily to prune next year. Early flowers are pruned for shape after they flower.

Double-flowered types flower on last season's growth, so only remove the dead foliage. Mid to late summer bloomers can be pruned in the spring as they flower on new growth, and the viticella and texensis varieties, which produce rampant growth each year, should be cut almost to the ground in early spring. Raymond Evison provides tons of advice on pruning in his various books, but also offers tips on planting and maintenance.

Prune your roses just as the leaves start to emerge. As with trees and shrubs, remove any dead, diseased or crossing growth. Open up the centre of the bush to promote good air circulation and take off any branches smaller than a pencil's circumference.

Prune to a strong outside bud and don't worry if you have to cut the bush almost to the ground, it will come back! The exception to this general rule are

climbers and certain shrub roses which flower on last year's branches, again, if you are not sure, do the minimum and watch the plant for a season to determine what it needs.

When the daytime temperature is reliably above freezing, apply organic dormant oil spray to fruit trees, shrubs and roses to kill overwintering pests. Don't apply to leafed out plants as you will kill

them! Add lime sulphur to the mix to prevent fungus disease later in the year.

For some great, locally grown, mature plants at great prices, come to the Milton and District Horticultural Society's Annual Plant Sale & Silent Auction at the Fairgrounds on May 11 from 8 a.m. to noon.

Jennifer Mirosolin is a member of the Milton and District Horticultural Society.

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Message from Mark Williams

Earlier this month, we kicked off our *Celebrating Stories* program at MPL!

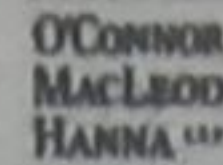
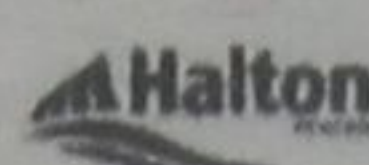
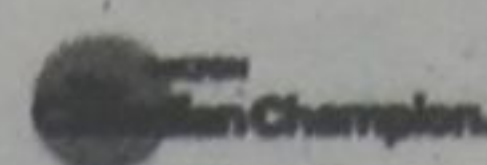
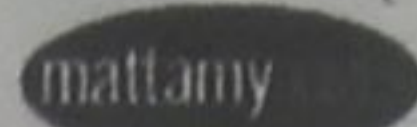
Celebrating Stories is a series of free family literacy events that offer a unique opportunity for children and families to meet Canadian authors, illustrators, and storytellers live and in-person through interactive presentations and workshops.

This year's exciting lineup of authors and illustrators includes Ted Staunton & Kevin Sylvester, Rebecca Bender, Joanne George & Sunny the Dog, The Learning Tree, Suzanne Del Rizzo, Sylvia McNicoll and Janet Wilson.

Join us for a series of events from April until November!

To find out more information, please visit: www.mpl.on.ca/CelebratingStories

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Halton Housing Help

Safe and affordable housing is an urgent concern in Halton Region. Join Halton Housing Help for a free workshop on finding housing support. If you need assistance but cannot attend the workshop, please call 311 and speak to Halton Housing Help directly.

Monday, April 29 | 1:00 pm-2:30 pm | Main Library
Please register online or in-person.

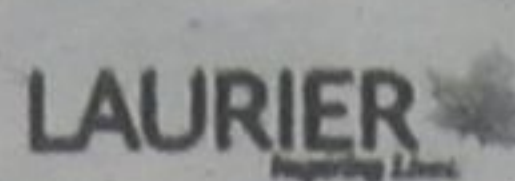
Laurier Lecture Series

The Changing Face of Canada's Boreal Forests
Dr. Jennifer Baltzer, Department of Biology, Faculty of Science

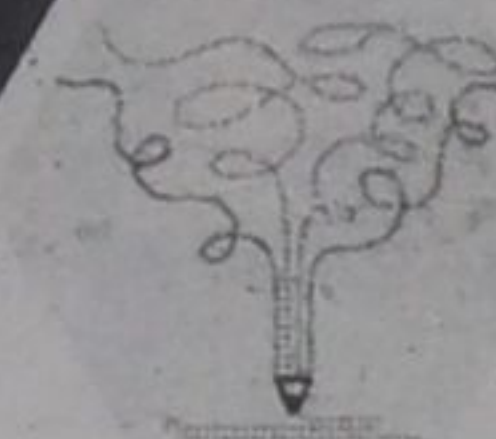
During this lecture, Jennifer will discuss the boreal biome, recent advances in our understanding of how boreal forests are changing in the face of climate warming and the impacts of these changes for ecosystem services.

Wednesday, May 8 | 7:00-8:30 pm | FirstOntario Arts Centre Milton

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