

# Garden left in natural state yields benefits

From page 15.

autumn, the better it is for the plants. But the point of a garden is to be attractive after all, so gardeners feel compelled to tidy.

Yet, again, it is being discovered, or, perhaps, rediscovered the immense wisdom of nature's cycles offers the best guidance for gardeners.

Successful gardening is about learning to work with nature cycles and events, not trying to dominate them.

Leaving debris on the garden over the winter may be a hiding spot for diseases and pests, but it is also the nurturing environment for friendly bacteria and beneficial insects.

Old stems protect young buds from frost damage and seed heads attract birds who contribute droppings and foraging activity to contribute to soil structure and pest control.

As more becomes known about plant and soil structure, opinions on our traditional routine of cleaning away autumn debris have changed. It is now

recognized the battle waged between good and evil in the garden stays in a fair balance if we don't interfere too much.

The more you can leave in place and still feel proud of how it looks, the better. As with many things in life, it's about compromise.

This year, instead of cutting and cleaning down to bare soil, remove only what is really unsightly or diseased and leave at least a few inches of old flower stem. Powdery mildew or apple scab are examples of spore-borne diseases that stay in soil over winter.

Burn or trash this debris, don't compost.

The benefits of leaving your garden in a more natural state for the winter are numerous.

Old flower stems hold seeds above the snow where birds can find them. Frost damaged stem fibres disintegrate at the base by spring, making them easy to just tug away for cleanup. Stems left standing and foliage flopped to the ground act as a mulch, protecting plants from frost heave

by evening out extreme winter temperature fluctuations.

The ground won't freeze as deeply as it otherwise would, which means it will thaw quicker in spring, bringing plants into an earlier growth period.

Seed heads, such as the almost-black coneflower or the lovely plumes of ornamental grasses, look gorgeous poking up through the snow.

The flat heads of yarrow and sedum collect little poofs of snow and contribute to a charming winter scene.

In very early spring, when the view everywhere is still brown and dull, take a peek under the layer of debris in your garden and enjoy the sight of fresh green growth that is already emerging.

At this point especially, the benefits of your new relaxed attitude toward garden neatness will be the most evident. The excruciatingly long wait is almost over.

*Evelyn Wolf is a local gardening expert and owner of Garden Possibilities Bookstore on Main Street. She can be reached at newsroom@erabanner.com*

**GRAND & TOY**  
**CORRECTION NOTICE**  
 TO OUR VALUED CUSTOMERS:  
 We regret to inform you that due to a manufacturer's delay, the **Miniature Digital Camera (000023)** advertised on the Front Cover of our Holiday Gift Flyer is currently unavailable.  
 We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

**CORRECTION NOTICE**  
 To our valued customers: We apologize for any inconvenience caused by an error in our flyer dated November 21 - November 27.  
 Product: D-Link Wireless Router (SKU:10020391). This item was inadvertently advertised without rebate information. The listed price of \$69.99 is the net price after a \$50 Mail-in Rebate. The in-store price for this item is \$119.99. SKU:10020391.

**HSM Canada**  
 A Promotional Products Company  
**Corporate/Team Wear**  
**Hockey Supplies**  
 Tel: 905.640.0969  
 www.hsmcanada.com

**EVERGREEN HOSPICE**  
 provides supportive care for people of all ages in Markham and Whitchurch-Stouffville who are experiencing the impact of life-threatening illness and loss.  
**Phone (905) 472-5014**  
 www.evergreenhospice.org  
*This message brought to you as a community service of the Economist & Sun/Tribune.*

**Thomas Cook** **Marlin Travel**

**CHARMING ASIA**  
 16-day fully escorted tour on **May 15, 2004**  
 Cruise the Yangtze River, visit Beijing, the Great Wall, Forbidden City, new look of the 3 Gorges, Chongqing, the Terra-Cotta Warriors, Suzhou and Shanghai.  
 from **\$4,299** p.p. cad.  
 Based on twin share. Includes round trip air from Toronto, sailing on the 5 star cruise, domestic flights in China, accommodations and meals. Taxes additional.  
 Call or visit your travel professionals at:  
 Marlin Travel - Markville Shopping Centre  
 Information // Dinner Evening  
 Tuesday, December 2 • 6:30pm • \$15 p.p.  
 Times Dynasty Chinese Restaurant.  
**RSVP: (905) 477-6700**

**Learn More to Earn More!**

Unemployed? Worked in the following sectors:  
 • Retail Sales • Administrative & Accounting  
 • Customer Service • Hospitality?

**Call SHIFTING GEARS**

Find out how you can access training to secure a higher-paying job in these or other sectors!

**1-888-254-0909**

For residents of York Region and Bradford West Gwillimbury.

SHIFTING GEARS at Job Skills is funded by the Government of Canada.

**WHAT'S ON**

**Holiday Sunday Brunches**  
 Every Sunday  
 'Tis the season... to bring your family and friends to Angus Glen for a traditional Christmas Sunday Brunch.  
 11:30am - 2:30pm. Adults \$20. Children \$13.95. Kids under 5 are free.

**Breakfast with Santa**  
 December 14th  
 Join in the "reindeer" fun, enjoy breakfast with Santa while singing along to favorite Holiday Carols. \$20 per person.

**Holiday Luncheons**  
 Treat your family, friends and colleagues to a festive lunches in a perfect holiday setting.  
 11:30 am - 2:30pm. Menus start at \$17.95.

**New Years Eve Party - Las Vegas Style**  
 5 course gourmet experience followed by Live/DJ in the great hall.  
 \$150 per person. Reservations only.  
 OR Join the party at 9 pm. \$100 per person includes beverages, live band/DJ & champagne at midnight.

**Annual Proshop Blowout!**  
**10-65% off**  
 Open 7 days a week.

**ANGUS GLEN GOLF CLUB**

call **905-887-0090** ext 266  
 Log on to [www.angusglen.com](http://www.angusglen.com) for more information on all of our exciting events.

**Unemployed? Don't know where to start? Looking to upgrade skills?**

**Call an Employment Assessment Centre to find out about training and job search services!**

<b>Bradford Northern Lights</b> 905-778-9058	<b>Keswick Job Skills</b> 905-476-8088	<b>Markham Job Skills</b> 905-948-9622
<b>Newmarket Seneca College</b> 905-898-6199	<b>Richmond Hill YMCA</b> 905-780-9622	<b>Vaughan COSTI</b> 905-669-6967

Services are available to unemployed residents of York Region/Bradford West Gwillimbury at no cost.

Employment Services at the service providers are funded by the Government of Canada.