

# Tips and Techniques

by Margaret Helliker

*Margaret attended this year's District Annual and found the following tips and techniques very useful. She would like to share them with you.*

Anne Kerr introduced speaker Mary Ann Van Berlo – Past President of Gloucester, Assistant Director of District #2, Master Gardener, and Horticultural Judge.

## **Tips, Tricks and Techniques**

### **A Series of Frequently Asked Questions and Answers**

Be aware of the difference between USDA Zone and Canadian Zone. For example Ottawa –USDA Zone 4a = Agricultural Canada Zone 5a.

Determine soil and exposure; add organic matter to improve soil, compost, black gold and mulch.

Solarization – use plastic to kill weeds and grass prior to planting.

Cutworm prevention - use toilet rolls or sticks around the stem or hot drink holder and place one inch into the soil.

## **Mulch**

Newspaper makes a great barrier under mulch.

Don't bury plants – use a pot to cover plant while applying mulch.

Rocks can be high maintenance as a mulch.

Pinecones can be used as mulch.

To make leaf mulch, use a whippersnipper in a barrel.

## **Slugs** (how to fight them)

Ammonia – 1 part to 10 parts water.

A safer option is soap bait.

Diatomaceous earth (crushed coral).

All bran.

Wood ash - use with caution as it can change the soil ph.

Copper.

Egg shells.  
Hand pick.

### **Earwigs**

Traps work well as earwigs like to shelter in dark cool areas.  
Use rolled up newspaper.  
A grapefruit rind upside-down.  
Yeast or beer in a tuna can partially placed in the earth.  
Drain pipes or sections of garden hose - you can trap and collect them and then dispose of them.

### **Red Lily Beetle**

Hand pick on the first sunny day.  
Neem Oil.  
Diatomaceous earth.

### **Weed Control**

mulch  
plant density  
hand pick weeds  
a shallow hoe  
whippersnip  
boiling water  
salt  
torch  
vinegar 20% (Horticultural) *Recipe: 4 cup white vinegar, ¼ cup salt, 2 tsp. dish detergent, Mix in a spray bottle, may need a barrier when applying.*  
Cornmeal – causes weed seed to burst early in the spring – use when the forsythia blooms

Common Diseases (powdery mildew, fungal problems)

use baking soda  
Bordo  
copper spray  
sulfur dust  
1 tsp Safers Soap mixed with 40 oz of water

Please note that even home remedies can cause problems. ALWAYS READ LABELS!

"In spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt." Margaret Atwood.