

# Gardening Tips and Tricks and Home Horticulture

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**Ricky's Gardening Tips and Tricks and Home Horticulture** is an online newsletter designed to provide citizens of Allen County and northeastern Indiana with up-to-date information about Horticulture and home issues, written in a lighthearted style! To subscribe, send an email to [kemeryr7@frontier.com](mailto:kemeryr7@frontier.com).

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## The Story of Jackman Clematis



Jackman Clematis is probably the clematis variety that is the easiest to grow and maintain for home gardeners. The reason is because it flowers on new growth, so all one has to do is to trim it back a foot or so above ground level in early spring. It will grow vigorously and produce flowers throughout the season. It is also quite cold hardy for our area. Jackman clematis has an interesting history.

The Jackman Clematis has large dark purple flowers with yellow centers..

The beginning of the year 1840 was a terrible time in the life of George Jackman. He lost his wife, Mary, in January and his father, William, in February. In twenty-five days, George (referred to as George I) and his 3-year-old son, George II, were alone. The Jackman nursery became the center of their world.

George I and his brother Henry were born into a nurseryman's family.

In 1810, their father, William, founded Jackman Nursery on 150 acres in Woking ("Woe-king"), Surrey. George I and Henry grew up learning the business alongside their dad.

By 1830, William had turned the business over to his sons. After a few years, Henry decided he wasn't interested in running the struggling nursery, and he left it for George I.

The start of Clematis hybridizing began five years before George I's life took such a dramatic turn.

In 1835, about 35 miles from the Jackman Nursery, London's Pineapple Nursery, owned by John Andrew Henderson, created the first Clematis hybrid. It was called Clematis Hendersonii - no doubt, George I took notice.

When George II was 13, the plant explorer Robert Fortune brought Clematis lanuginosa to England.

Native to China, the blooms on this Clematis were more significant than any ever seen before.

If Clematis blossoms were to be bred to get bigger, the lanuginosa was the linchpin.



By this point, George I employed 35 men and six boys at the Jackman Nursery.

George II shadowed every aspect of the business and grew to be a shrewd owner/operator.



As a young man, George II was energized at the thought of clematis hybridizing.

When he was just 21, George II crossed Fortune's lanuginosa with Hendersonii and the climber *atrorubens*.

In less than six months, they had 300 seedlings, and George Jackman II had an instant hit on his hands.

The plant was hardy; it quickly produced long-lasting impressive flowers, and the rootstock lasted for many years. The year was 1858, and *Clematis Jackmanii* was born.



George II wrote:

*"Seedlings about 300 — results of hybrids: very robust growers, abundant in flower of rich deep purple and maroon."*

*Clematis jackmanii* received the Award of Garden Merit from The Royal Horticultural Society.

George II co-authored a book about the bloom with Thomas Moore, the Secretary of The Royal Horticultural Society, called *Clematis as a Garden Flower*.

George II and Thomas Moore dedicated the book to HRH Princess Mary, the Duchess of Teck. The *Clematis* was one of her favorite flowers.

The *Gardener's Chronicle* said George I died at 68 on February 12, 1869 after a gout attack and was by all accounts a "beloved... kind-hearted, genial Christian." It went on to say that his "workmen (several of whom had been [with him] for 20, 30, or 40 years)" followed his coffin to the churchyard for burial.

In 1967, a Jackman descendant, Roland Jackman, sold the Jackman Nursery.



## Wascally Rabbits

Rabbits have an uncanny sense of smell-almost 360 degree eyesight, and incredible hearing. Unless your garden area is surrounded by an impenetrable fence or a flaming moat – rabbits will find their way-even in urban areas – to spaces where there is cover and food. Your garden is a mecca for rabbits.

In spring and fall, rabbits use a shelter- called a form - made from grass or weeds – or mulch – especially loose mulch like straw or grass.. The form is a cavity on the surface of the ground, usually made in dense cover. It gives rabbits some protection from weather but is largely used for concealment. It is also where rabbits hide their young. After around three weeks, a kit can care for itself and in

two or three months it is ready to start a family of its own. Often a rabbit mom will move her kits to a different place if it is disturbed.

It is a never ending battle to prevent rabbits from occupying a vegetable garden.

One can find all sorts of ways to control rabbits on the Internet. Taste repellants made of pepper or garlic, ultrasonic devices to repel them, predator urine to make the rabbits think there might be a wolf or coyote nearby and devices to spray water at them if they intrude. Unfortunately research shows that these methods are only temporary at best. Rabbits are clever creatures, and they will take up residence in a garden regardless of how hard one tries to keep them away.



In my opinion, one of the best ways to exclude pests like rabbits from a raised garden is to construct a cage to fit over the raised bed. Many folks make the cage out of PVC or wood that has netting, screening material, or hardware cloth to keep the critters out. The cages can be lifted off the raised bed to tend to the plants inside the cage. Others have sides that lift up for access. The Internet has tons of examples on how to construct cages.

I also like the idea of companion planting in a garden using herbs like lavender to help repel rabbits but these will not repel rabbits entirely. It is fine to plant an area with vegetables, but ultimately excluding the rabbits is the only way to deal with potential rabbit visits to your garden space.

## Head to the Clearance Rack



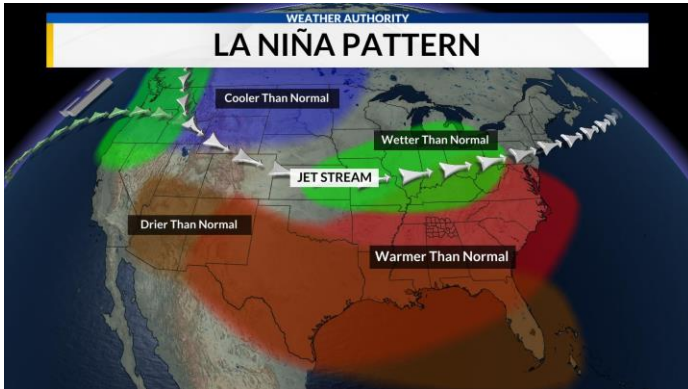
Now is a very good time to find bargains in the back of the Garden Center. Try to avoid being drawn in by the appetizing plants placed outside the front entrance and in the front sections of the store. These are the highest priced items and rarely are discounted. Instead head to the back sections of the store where the clearance racks are located. These are the underwatered, tired, disconsolate plants destined for the trash bins – unless you - the savvy purchaser - rescue them from their fate.

Many of the plants are not in the greatest shape. One has to determine if a little TLC can bring them back to form. Sometimes plants that are not perceived as the “newest and best” are placed on the rack. Recently we found a purple day lily (seven of them) on the clearance rack at \$4.00 each. An Internet search revealed that they sold for thirty dollars apiece online – and were considered a top performer – each plant producing over 80 flowers a season.

It is actually a decent time to plant perennials. The key is making sure they have enough time before the first freeze to get themselves settled. The plants can actually get a head start and develop more quickly the following spring. Some plants such as peonies prefer fall planting. Avoid over fertilizing late in the season.

Tell all your friends all the fabulous deals you made to make them jealous of your superb bargaining skills while sipping a vintage wine you found on the bargain rack at the grocery store.

# Frost Dates



Just as there are frost dates in the spring – low and behold – there are frost days in the fall. The fall frost date is when – after the date- there is a greater than 50% chance of a frost or freeze. The later the date – the greater the chance of a frost or freeze occurring – until Christmas arrives- and the year pretty much is over after one spends all the money and suffers the tension of a holiday with people- many whom you really don't prefer being around.

This year the farmer's almanac folks have predicted the frost date for our area to be October 16<sup>th</sup>. After that date, the world will end as we know it. Only the cockroaches will survive.

The Climate Prediction Center has forecast that we will probably see La Nina conditions appear beginning in November this year. They predict above average temperatures and precipitation from November through January 2025. Will the precipitation be ice, rain, or copious snow? Join their new “gamble on the weather” site to lose your life savings.. just kidding.

## Back To Eden Gardening

Back to Eden Gardening is the newest “movement” - educating gardeners, farmers, and homesteaders how to regenerate soils by practicing regenerative organic growing principles, eliminating the need for tilling and chemicals.

The organization envisions a future where people grow their own food. Where communities around the world are empowered to fight against hunger and reverse climate change for future generations.



Dana & Sarah are award-winning filmmakers who started the movement by producing a film that shared solutions to the global food crisis and climate crisis. In 2011, the visual storytelling duo produced and directed the viral documentary, Back to Eden. The documentary has garnered over 50 million views in every country in the world. It is currently the top viewed gardening video on YouTube and Amazon Prime Video. For the past decade, thousands of individuals and communities around the world have installed Back to Eden gardens. What started as a movie grew into an organic gardening revolution. Dana & Sarah envision a future where people grow their own food, and where communities around the world are empowered to fight against hunger and reverse climate change for future generations. The Back to Eden Gardening Project is educating gardeners, farmers, and homesteaders how to regenerate soils by practicing regenerative organic growing principles, eliminating the need for tilling and chemicals. The goal

is to facilitate a world where everyone has an organic garden to grow nutrient-dense food.

Back to Eden is a documentary film that shares the incredible story of American gardener and arborist Paul Gautschi and his lifelong journey learning how to get back to the garden of Eden. The documentary, streaming online for free, has received over 50 million views in every country in the world. The film ignited a world-renowned regenerative organic gardening movement that regenerates the soil and restores soil biodiversity which results in higher yields with less input, all while sequestering carbon.

Back to Eden Gardening is a regenerative organic gardening method that practices no-till and organic growing principles. The permaculture technique is simple -- cover the soil. Growing food and plants with industrial techniques has devastated our climate and planet. That's why Back to Eden empowers gardeners to practice regenerative organic gardening principles. These practices reduce greenhouse gas emissions and could help trap more carbon than conventional gardening and agriculture.

[Watch Back to Eden Film | Back to Eden Gardening Documentary - Back to Eden Gardening Documentary](#)

In essence, the gardening techniques involve the use of deep bark mulch used to completely cover the soil. The mulch breaks down and regenerates the soil with less weeding, watering, etc.

It is a permaculture technique. Is this a miracle method of gardening that will produce magical results with little work and effort? I have yet to find any method of gardening that doesn't require hard work. What I don't like about this movement is that it offers many books, movies, and products that are for sale.

When I worked at the Purdue University Horticulture Gardens, I had experience with deep mulching. Every year, bark mulch was added to the gardens, and over time the mulch was a few feet in depth. This resulted in a situation where the plants grew in the mulch, required more watering, and the mulch never completely broke down into rich organic soil. The mulch would heat up as it tried to decompose, and also robbed nitrogen from the plants in the process. It was a mess. Over time the mulch compacted, and the plants grew poorly. I finally burned up a tiller as I turned up the compacted mulch so the plants had room for root growth. The plants still needed copious fertilizer, and water and weeds still found their way into the area. Over time I switched from bark to pine needle mulch and tried to add compost and sphagnum peat moss to the area. So my experience with deep mulching ala Garden of Eden was less than satisfactory.

## Yellowjacket Season — *Some info compiled from Penn State University*



Recently, our neighbor was weed whacking an area in her front yard in preparation for planting the area with native plants. She did not see a yellowjacket nest near some rocks in the area. She was stung over 40 times by the wasps and had to take an epi-pen and visit the emergency room. She spent the night in the hospital. She was lucky to survive. Yellowjackets can be dangerous creatures, and this is the time of year when their numbers are high, and they are the most aggressive.

The eastern yellowjacket is a ground nesting species found throughout most of the eastern United States. It is very common in woodlands, pastures, parks and lawns. Occasionally, in urban areas, it has been recorded nesting within wall voids of various structures - including homes. Yellow

jackets will aggressively defend their nests and can sting repeatedly. The stings are painful and for sensitive/allergic individuals this can pose a serious health risk.



Yellowjackets are often mistaken for bees due to the similarities in their coloring. However, they do not have hairs like bees do. Their wings usually fold flat over their bodies, the abdomen is shiny, and yellowjackets lack pollen baskets on the legs like honeybees.

Yellow jacket colonies can house thousands of wasps and adults forage up to 300 yards for food. While adults mainly feed on plant nectar, they also seek protein-based sources, such as insects or human food, to nourish larvae. In the fall, yellow jackets intensify their search for protein before winter. Most yellowjacket species are carnivorous.

However, some of them are omnivorous to some degree. Some yellowjacket species solely capture live prey. Others, such as the eastern yellow jacket, scavenge. These scavengers are typically the species that fly around at outdoor events when food or drink cans are present. So one needs to be on the lookout for yellow jackets at picnics and outdoor events (such as Johnny Appleseed). Many folks are stung when a yellow jacket ends up in a pop can searching for sugar.

- There is a city in Colorado named Yellowjacket.
- The Georgia Tech mascot is a yellowjacket named Buzz.
- Some huge nests have been thought to exceed 100,000 wasps.
- Don't swat at a yellow jacket. This will just increase your chance of being stung.
- The males and workers die over the winter. Only the queen lives through the winter.

In Indiana, raccoons have been identified as the top yellowjackets predators.



Yellowjackets can be considered a beneficial insect because they reduce populations of unwanted insects such as earwigs and caterpillars. Therefore, unless the nests are located close to the entrance of a building, in the ground of a lawn that is mowed, or in any area where the public is likely to encounter them, the nests can be ignored. However, individuals with known sensitivities to wasp and bee stings should have all nests in close proximity to their homes removed by professional pest management personnel. Additionally, any nests located within the walls/attic of a home should be treated by professionals because of the

difficulties associated with this type of treatment. NEVER attempt to control yellowjackets in a wall by plugging the opening. This can result in the yellowjackets chewing through the interior sheetrock walls and entering the home.

Many species of yellowjackets are active predators. Like other predatory wasps, they use their mandibles to catch prey, frequently destroying their wings and legs to prevent escape. Yellowjacket workers are most active in the early morning and at midday. They typically forage within a few hundred meters of the nest.

Common wasp colonies gather food high in carbohydrates and proteins. Nectar and honeydew are significant food sources for them. Dead insects, caterpillars, little spiders, and bees also attract the wasps. Workers ingest fruit juice from ripe or damaged fruits as food.

Yellow jackets are social insects with a complex life cycle. Overwintered queens begin nest development in May or early June depending on the spring temperatures. Queens select nest sites in forest floors, rock walls, creek banks, lawns and occasionally within structures. Sometimes yellow jackets make nests in walls – any protected place. I have found nests in dryer vents. The most difficult nests are found under entry stairs or in the eaves about the entry area. The first brood of workers appear in June and from that point onward the founding queen remains within the nest. Males are produced in August/September, closely followed by a brood of new queens. Fertilized queens overwinter in protected locations such as under bark of dead trees or logs, in leaf/forest litter and other protected areas.



Yellowjacket nests are spherical with a paper-like texture. They're constructed from a mixture of chewed-up plant or wood fibers and saliva. The nest comprises several layers of paper cells that resemble the honeybee's comb. A colony of yellow jackets is made up of workers and the queen. The queen stays in the nest and lays eggs. The worker's job is to protect the queen, build the nest, and retrieve food for the queen and larvae. Nests grow over time to around the size of a soccer ball and can house 4,000 to 5,000 yellowjackets. Nests are usually lived in for one season as the colony dies off in the winter.

Most of the sting-related fatalities are caused by the toxic venom of yellowjackets. The wasp can repeatedly sting, unlike bees which can only sting once before dying. If you find a wasp colony, It is best to get rid of it as soon as possible. You should also get rid of queen wasps as soon as they emerge in the spring to look for a new nesting location .That is easier said than done.

## How to deal with Yellow jackets.

Once you have located a nest, you should keep an eye out for the entrance and take care not to spook them since they can sting you as a consequence. It is best to get help from an expert instead of trying to get rid of the colony yourself. The best time to remove a nest is early morning or night before sunset.

Many folks still try and control yellowjackets themselves.. sigh. There is much misinformation (per usual) on the Internet from folks who consider themselves experts on yellow jacket control. Their advice can be incorrect, incomplete, and often dangerous. For instance, never pour boiling water on a yellow jacket nest unless you can run at the speed of light. Do not take a can of wasp spray and stand over a nest and spray it in the entrance – unless once again you can run at the speed of light – or time travel instantly.

If one insists on handling the issue, then here is one method.

The nest should be scouted during daylight to determine the best approach that will not disturb the yellowjackets prior to introduction of an insecticide. **Do not** stand away from the nest and dust only the exterior of the entrance as this will anger the colony and increase the risk of stings during the next several days. Effective control can only be achieved by stealthy approach and then liberally dusting the material directly into the nest opening. Don't force the dust too far in the opening as that will alarm the wasps. It is advisable to wear long sleeved clothing, long rubber gloves, goggles and a dust mask to protect yourself from any insecticide that

blows back out of the opening. Products containing 5% carbaryl (Sevin) dust are currently labeled for this type of application. Several applications may be necessary. In essence the wasps will contact the dust and take it into the nest. Sevin is very toxic to bees and wasps. I have in the past filled a turkey baster with Sevin dust to blow it in and around the entrance. Please don't use the baster to baste a turkey at Thanksgiving.

Nighttime is the best time for the method, the cooler the better. Some sources suggest using a flashlight covered with red cellophane as this is less alarming to the wasps. Even then one has to be careful. If the wasps become alarmed, then run away as fast as you can. Angry wasps will travel long distances to attack – so endurance and speed are required. It is a risky business. Professional pest control workers dress in protective clothing and use a



spray that freezes the wasps so the colony can be destroyed and removed. If one has the resources, the hire the pros to control yellow jackets. Not all pest control companies will deal with yellow jackets, so one has to shop around.

There are traps available online (see photo to left) that one can hang near a yellow jacket nest. These traps use a sugar solution to attract the wasps into the traps where they drown. There isn't much research that I could find that suggests traps can completely control and eliminate a nest. Sometimes the traps are used to attract yellow jackets away from an area- a family picnic - for example.



## Hoggles – Demented Cat Logic

*To my caregiver: I do not find it humorous for you to suggest that I cover my fur with Sevin dust and “drop and roll” over a yellow jacket nest and then hide in a bush-while you laugh hysterically from a window.. Not funny -not funny at all.*

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