

Ricky's Gardening Tips and Tricks *(and Gnome Tales)*

January 2018 Issue

The Plant Medic - Ricky D. Kemery, Allen County Extension Educator Retired, phone: 260-431-6893

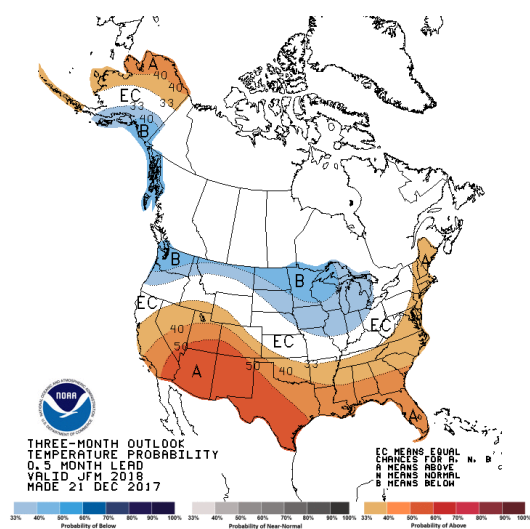
Ricky's Gardening Tips and Tricks is an online newsletter designed to provide citizens of Allen County and northeastern Indiana with up-to-date information about Horticulture, written in a lighthearted style! To subscribe, send an email to kemeryr7@frontier.com stating: "Please add me to the email list for **"Ricky's Gardening Tips and Tricks."** (Or your own words to that effect.)

Thanks for all the continued support and kind comments for this newsletter.

If you need a speaker for neighborhood association meetings, business groups, or other organizations, I will be glad to come and talk about gardening, landscaping or turf, the environment, sustainability. I also do home visits for a small fee and phone consultations (free). Just contact me at 260-431-6893

Weather and Winter Damage *(reprinted and edited from my Journal Gazette article)*

We have experienced some cold weather recently in our area. The trend and predictions for the rest of the winter are generally cooler with more precipitation heading into the spring. We are currently under the influence of a weak La Nina. Based on expert opinion from the National Weather service, and my own observations over the years – a weak Nina means several things.

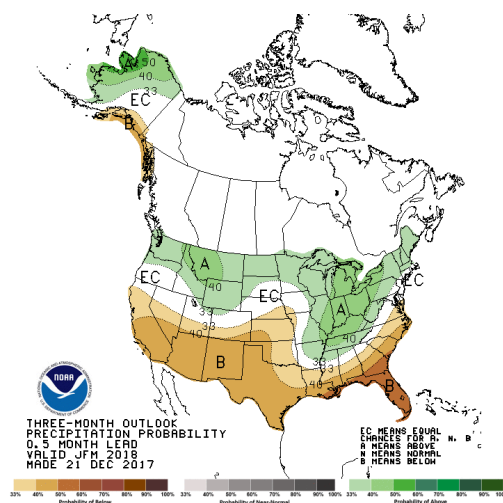


More snow (lots of it) for New England. This certainly has come to pass, and one might expect more nor'easters to dump snow in this region.

More rain for California. This trend is just beginning. It is either feast or famine for this state.

The jet stream usually splits in a la Nina. One can expect more snow and ice events in the southern states.

In our area clipper systems will dump snow and or mixed precipitation – based on our relationship to the northern jet stream.



I have found over the years that several factors come into play when it comes to winter damage to plants.

The first factor is how cold hardy the plant is. Even though we are listed in USDA zone 6, it is probably more prudent to still think zone 5 when it comes to our area. Some plants listed as hardy to zone 6 can take a real hit when temperatures dive down in the subzero range.

There isn't much one can do to protect those plants either. If the plant is only cold hardy to minus 10 degrees; and it dips to minus 15 during the winter – the plant is probably toast.

Another factor that relates to cold damage is the wind. The brutally cold winds we have experienced can draw moisture out of plants; especially evergreen plants. It is always a good idea to wrap exposed boxwood, holly, dwarf spruce, rhododendron, and arborvitae to prevent damage to the foliage. Otherwise the plant can exhibit what I refer to as brownchitus –browning or death to the foliage caused by the wind.

It is also important to protect lace cap and mop head hydrangeas from the cold. These plants can dieback to the ground during severe winters if not protected.

The foliage on many shrub roses could potentially suffer from the cold. I have noticed that these roses tend not to harden off as the winter approaches. This means these plants will most likely once again take a hit with dead foliage appearing in the spring. Wait to see how much of the plant is damaged, and prune away the dead foliage. These plants often recover quite nicely as the spring progresses.

The flower buds of hydrangeas are sensitive to late spring frosts and freezes -another reason to wrap those plants. Cut leaf Japanese maples are especially sensitive to cold snaps and wind during the spring. Put a wind barrier made of cardboard or burlap to help protect them.

Some fruit plants - especially peaches - can be greatly affected by cold. It is one reason why peaches are not a particularly reliable crop to grow in northern Indiana,

I have generally found that insects are remarkable at withstanding cold temperatures. Insects seem to innately know not to be fooled by warm spells in the spring. So for the most part, insect development can be delayed by the weather, but I have not seen rampant death of insects due to cold weather in our area. Rather the reverse seems to be true. Insects such as scale and bagworm seem to be increasing due to the generally warmer conditions overall.

Cold winter weather can cause damage to particular plants. One can only wait for the warmth of spring to find out how much damage occurred.

2018 Gardening Trends source : Garden center news

During Cultivate'17 in Columbus, Ohio, The Garden Media Group introduced its trends for 2018, giving attendees a preview of the direction gardening is expected to take in the coming year.

The big picture for this year's trends is "Nature's Rx For Mental Wellness" - a theme focusing on how gardening has several benefits for mental health and how everyone in the industry can utilize them for sales, promotion, design and more.

"People are gardening in a changing climate," which can be stressful. Trees are being used to reduce heat in urban environments. A trend centered on creating a social network for plants and promoting symbiotic relationships was discussed. The future is in learning how these plants work together.

Hmm – I have always found that gardening can be both a stress reducer and a stress creator – especially when the expensive tomato transplants are eaten by a hungry rabbit. I do worry about whether my plants are



participating on Facebook. It explains why the plants seem to be lacking attention in order to grow properly. As far as learning how plants work together, I would say we need to work on how people work together first (grins).

2018 Trends

Imperfect Gardening: Promoting the spirit of the Japanese term "Wabi-Sabi," which means to embrace imperfection and transience. Making mistakes and aging gracefully are among life examples, and in the garden, perfectly-maintained lawns are getting less common and sought-after. (*Ricky's note: There is no way to really age gracefully*)

Breathing Room: Emphasizing the importance of disconnecting and relaxing. This trend is driven by people giving themselves spaces to renew. Gardening is becoming more about creating relaxing spaces.

Make a Splash: A trend all about water - using water in beautiful, colorful ways. Water in landscapes is expected to be a big demand. Millennials are also spending more on water gardening.

Grow Your Own Protein: The "flexitarian" trend is in full swing now, with many people choosing to eat less meat and substituting with plant-based proteins more often. The question is how to get these consumers to buy our products and/or grow them at home? This trend focuses on a unique challenge and opportunity.

Purple Reign: Purple is a very trendy color this year, especially in edibles, according to DuBow. Purple foods and ornamental are big draws as is blending flowers and edibles in displays and landscapes. Beets, berries, acai, purple cabbage, goji, eggplant, plums and more are among examples given. *I might also suggest playing Prince's "Purple Rain" in the garden.*

Stranger Things

Stranger Things is an American science fiction-horror web television series (Netflix) created, written, directed and co-executive produced by the Duffer Brothers. Set in the fictional town of Hawkins, Indiana in the 1980s; the first season focuses on the investigation into the disappearance of a young boy amid supernatural events occurring around the town including the appearance of a girl with psychokinetic abilities who helps the missing boy's friends in their own search. The second season, titled Stranger Things 2, is set a year after the first, and deals with attempts of the characters to return to normal and consequences from that first season. If you watched the series; then you know that was an impossible dream.



The Duffer Brothers developed the series as a mix of investigative drama alongside supernatural elements with childlike sensibilities, establishing its time frame in the 1980s and creating a homage to pop culture of that decade. Its main plot also appears to be based on fictional monsters from the role playing game Dungeons and Dragons. It received critical acclaim for its characterization, pacing, atmosphere, acting, soundtrack, directing,

writing, and homages to 1980s genre films. It is an interesting blend of horror, small town drama and comedy, coming of age, and relationships in the 1980.s.

Stranger Things appears to have developed a cult following, and is strangely addictive. Millennials and Gen-Exers (with a few Boomers) tend to binge watch all the episodes at once, until they emerge bleary eyed but strangely satisfied.

Stranger Things – In the Garden

The setting: Hawkins Indiana. A group of people gather at the front flower bed of Will's house. The group includes: teenagers Mike, Dustin, Lucas, Nancy and Jane (nicknamed eleven) Also present are Jonathan (Will's older brother), and Steve (Nancy's vain boyfriend). Adults present include Police Chief Jim Hopper, and Joyce Byers, the overacting mother (played by Winona Ryder) of Will Byers (best friend to Mike, Dustin, and Lucas. Will has been strangely missing. Mr. Clarke, the boy's overly enthusiastic nerdy science teacher - has also been summoned to the scene.

Joyce: *"Have any of you seen Will?? I know something is wrong. He never is gone for so long without calling. Will! Will! Come home! Please send me a sign if you hear me! (No one in the neighborhood acknowledges her presence)"*

Police Chief Jim: *Everyone calm down! I am sure there is a logical explanation why Will has been gone for a week without calling home!*

Lucas: *"I wonder if this has anything to do with the strange flesh eating Demogorgon creature we summoned at our last Dungeons and Dragons marathon session." Shakes his head--- Nah.....*

Dustin: *"Guys! Look at this strange growth taking over the flower bed here. I bet this is the reason Will disappeared. I bet this stuff was grown at the government facility outside of town where weird mind control experiments have happened for years!"*

The group examines a lime green threadlike growth that is taking over the flower bed.

Mike: *"I bet this alien life form is what has taken Will! I bet this comes from the UPSIDE Down!"* (Will is referring to the alternate dimension accessed by the mad scientists at the government facility) ---seemingly a part of every town in rural Indiana.



Steve: (after admiring his coiffed John Travolta hair in a small mirror) "Hey, Mike, why don't you have the weirdo girl who has been living in your basement unbeknownst to your clueless parents destroy this stuff with her super mind powers?"

Joyce wanders around still frantically- hysterically - calling for Will.

Eleven steps up to the flower bed. She closes her eyes and concentrates with all her mind power on the strange growth. Blood drips from her nose.Nothing happens..... She slumps to the ground in exhaustion.

Police Chief Jim: Perhaps if I wander off in the forest late into the night I will find the answer.

Nancy: *Pulls out a mirror to check her makeup and wonders if Steve, Jonathan, Police Chief Byers, or even Mr. Clark notice how beautiful she is.*

Mr. Clarke: *"Uh... everyone,this growth on the plant is just dodder - a parasitic plant that sometimes appears in flower beds. While the dodder must be removed and destroyed (thrown in the trash) it is not the reason Will is missing".*

Dustin: *"I knew it! A parasite!... It must be from the UPSIDE Down!"*

Mr. Clarke: *"No NO."*

Just then a van pulls up to the house filled with young teens. Out jumps Will who waves goodbye to the bus as it drives away.

Will: *"What are you all doing here! Is there something wrong? Boy I can hardly wait to tell you all about summer camp!! It was great...."*

Police Chief Jim: *"Uh... Mrs. Byers, it appears as if you completely forget Will went to summer camp.."*

Everyone begins to walk away from the flower bed

Mike: *"Maybe she forgot because of the weird creatures running around at night ... what about the summoned MIND Flayer that takes over our thoughts?"*

Strange eighties music plays as the group fades off in the distance...

New Stuff for the Garden

I am always interested in new gardening products. This year technology once again enters the scene in gardening products – but also a return to nature in its almost pure form.

In the past the Master gardeners at the Extension office used natural stumps and wood containers to showcase plants. Gardeners.com has taken that idea to create fabricated stumps as planters. Great idea people – a little behind on the curve. But..



Gardeners have always protected plants from winter conditions using materials such as burlap to protect the plants from cold and wind. Take a look at the cute little snuggly cocoon that is also featured by gardeners.com. It will probably protect plants very nicely, and I suspect it might be a little more expensive than burlap.

Look at these cute little planters that use suction cups to fasten on to walls and glass doors.

Here is the promo article: Short on space, but still want to bring the outdoors in? This adorable little pot feels as much like a pet as it does a planter. Each of its four "palms" is made of micro-suction cups that adhere to windows and other smooth, vertical surfaces, such as your refrigerator. Fill the included 2 1/4-inch pot liner with herbs, succulents or annuals, and use the enclosed pipette dropper to water plants (or remove excess drained water). Originally launched on Kickstarter, Livi is now \$18.95 at gardentrends.com in aqua, lavender, lime, sunflower (yellow) or jasmine (white).



Gardeners.com



Photo Credit: CREO - Design Innovation Lab/Damiano, Jessica

The famous TV carpenter Bob Villa's website newsletter also features some innovative techy garden products.

The gadget to the right is a good example – if one has resources. See how your flowers grow—or see what critters may be causing them not to—with the Brinno Garden WatchCam. This 1.3 megapixel time-lapse digital camera can be set to snap photos at intervals from 1 minute to every 24 hours. Just stick the camera in your garden and watch your garden grow. Available on Amazon; \$230.



Also available on amazon is the Infragram. A DIY camera for your DIY garden, Infragram uses infrared technology to analyze the health of your plants and garden. Fun for kids and adults, novices or pros, this tool educates while illuminating the secret life of your garden.

Infragram

Here's the go-to gadget for gardening connoisseurs looking to fine-tune their craft. The VegiBee imitates the high-frequency vibrations of a bee's wings during pollination. The vibrations release pollen onto a spoon, which the gardener can then use to hand-pollinate other plants. The reward? A 30 percent increase in crop yield and the satisfaction of giving Mother Nature a helping hand. Available on Amazon; \$29.



My Favorite: This realistic-looking Garden Defense Electronic Owl takes the original stationary garden decoy a big step further by adding movement and sound. Not only does it look like a great horned owl, but when its sensors detect that garden pests are near, it will turn its head in that direction and hoot, scaring the critters away. Available on Amazon; \$45.

Hoggles'

Demented Cat Logic



To Bob Villa: *I must first say I have been a fan of your TV show for decades. As a famous Cat couch potato once said- "To eat and watch carpentry shows on cable is my purpose for this earth". Anyway, I would like to offer my likeness (for a modest fee of a lifetime supply of cat food and misc. products) to use a realistic high tech deterrent for critters in the garden. Ignore my PR photo – I can look as mean as a mind flayer and as hungry as a fierce lion. I suggest a fearsome "cat clawing motion animation", along with a stalking, waving tail pose, and finally the fearsome and realistic "cat pounce" I am looking forward to striking fear in the hearts of rabbits, raccoons, and chipmunks everywhere.*

Donations to support the cause are accepted – any amount in the form of checks is fine to cover some expenses. Send to Ricky Kemery 5929 Lorman Court Fort Wayne, Indiana 46835

Ads for businesses are also accepted a small fee / donation will be gratefully accepted.

Tell a your friends this newsletter is available for all who want it- just send an email to kemeryr7@frontier.com - Or text 260-431-6893 I will not share personal information with others.

Ricky Kemery will not knowingly discriminate in any way based on race, gender etc....