Greetings!

One tomato, two tomato, three tomato, four...
I've planted my tomatoes and I'm going to plant some more!

How about you? Did you get any veggies into the ground this Memorial Day weekend? There were nice days and rainy days and so many activities pulling us in every direction. I devoted four hours on Sunday to planting. It felt good, but it still seemed a bit cool for these warm loving crops. Not to worry- we are completely stocked with tons of organic vegetable plants. If you didn't get around to planting, or, like me, you are STILL planting, Natureworks is your happy place.

Boy oh boy do we have beautiful basil!

Memorial Day has come and gone and planting season continues unabated. Why did
We have the best selection of roses including 'Cinco de Mayo', one of my favorites. What an unusual color.

Memorial Day become the "holy grail" of planting for all of us? First of all, it is pretty safe to say that in Connecticut, the danger of killing frost is over by the last Monday in May. BUT, in the old days, plants weren't grown in containers. Instead, plants were dug from the ground in the spring—this included perennials, trees, and shrubs. The anxiety about getting it all done by Memorial Day had to do with the fact that many plants would be too far along in their growth cycle to be dug up in June. BUT, we are in a totally different world now. Most plants are produced in pots. They move easily from grower to garden center to your garden. Planting continues full force in June and beyond. All of my crews basically leave Natureworks every morning with plants to be installed all summer long. So, if you didn't get it all done last weekend, just KEEP ON PLANTING. Let that be your mantra.

A scene from my garden this week. Doronicum pardalianches (Greater leopard's bane daisy) forms a glowing backdrop for purple columbines and pink Silene

Along with the standard fare, I am trying some new crops this year and you should too. I have added two dwarf tomatoes to a new planting area in front of my sunny back garage. They are planted in an old wheelbarrow! Dwarf tomatoes only get 3-4' tall and are bred to have that rich heirloom flavor on compact plants. I planted a few hills of 'Honey Butternut' baby butternut squash. Next I am adding Syrian pumpkins that have seeds with no hulls. We LOVE pumpkin seeds in our house and this makes it so much easier. I also planted Tulsi or sacred basil. A client gave me a cup of Tulsi Tea this winter when I had a cold and I fell in love with it. This is the sacred basil of India, used for medicinal purposes. I love the fragrance and the flowers. I am actually planting it in a container of hummingbird-attracting annuals.
Speaking of mixing edibles and ornamentals, that is our major theme this week. My Saturday morning garden walk is called **Edibles Everywhere**! We will gather a wagon load of tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, herbs, and edible flowers. I will then bring you out into our gardens and show you how to incorporate these plants into our perennial borders. We will also be planting up some containers, mixing edibles in with our flowers. Thursday evening we are going to offer two sessions of **Facebook Live**. At 5:30 we will focus on **Hummingbird Flowers in June**. At 6:00 we will have a **Vegetable Potting Party**. I will demonstrate all different ways to plant edibles into containers- pots, old wagons, crates, hanging baskets, windowboxes, pretty much anything that holds soil. I want to inspire you to get super creative this year and really up the number of edibles you grow, no matter what size yard you have and especially if you don't really have a dedicated veggie garden. New to our educational lineup is a workshop that we are offering 4 times- this Saturday and Sunday AND next Saturday and Sunday: **3 Dimensional Planting with Smart Pots**. You will be guided by Jillian on Saturday and Kassie on Sunday to plant up your own Smart Pot. This is a hands-on workshop and it will be lots of fun. So check out the details below and register yourself and a friend.

Grow food organically and you will know what you are eating. Plus, you will get the thrill that all of us at Natureworks understand-going outside and eating from your yard is so rewarding. **Grow your own food!**

As we segue from May into June, the classic, old fashioned flowers are coming into their own. It is interesting to work with a staff of younger folks who are just, **finally**, beginning to understand the value of the classics in garden design. I love watching them fall in love with peonies, mock orange shrubs, columbines, lupines, poppies, irises, foxgloves and all of the other plants that old timers like me have been growing for years. Yes, most of these bloom now and they only bloom for 2-3 weeks. BUT, they are simply amazing. Take peonies, for example. You plant them and they live forever. At first you get one or two flowers and you think "that's nice". But after a few years you get **armloads** of flowers and you can't help but cut them and fill vases with them. I swoon over irises, and I have tons in my yard but I always want more. Lupines and foxgloves and columbines move around, seeding into beds where they have never been before.
Lupines are on sale for the next two weeks.

They teach us that the garden sometimes has a mind of its own and the combinations that appear are often way more interesting than what we could dream up. Mock orange (Philadelphus) is just so fragrant and pure white. I have one in one of my backyard borders and, as it blooms, I make sure I walk down there and inhale its intoxicating perfume every evening. It is basically a carefree plant; a little pruning in June is all I ever do to keep it happy. When I was in England last year, mock oranges were everywhere, a part of so many borders. The fragrance speaks of England to me.

Before I sign off, I would like to share with you a helpful hint about Allium flowers. These big, bold orbs are so incredible in our gardens right now. After they finish flowering, it is so tempting to leave the seed pods up as they are so architectural. Don't do it. As these flowers go to seed, they steal a lot of energy from the bulb, which is busy underground building up a store of energy to form next year's flower buds before the bulb goes completely dormant. Instead, feed the Alliums with a handful of Pro Gro to keep the leaves green as long as possible and then cut off the stalks and jam them right back into the ground! They will ripen in place and no one will ever know they aren't attached to the plant.

May is gone, June is here and it is one of the prettiest, and busiest, months of the growing season. The pre-Memorial Day urgency is over. We can now just relax and work on our gardens and make them absolutely beautiful and productive. We have been blessed with lots of rain. As uncomfortable as it may be for parties and picnics, the plants are rejoicing. So KEEP ON PLANTING people. We will do our part by keeping our benches overflowing with all of the plants you know and love and many that you won't even know that you need until you see them.

Stop by this week. I'll see you soon...

P.S. On sale this week:
-all Delphiniums and Lupines
    20% off
Sale runs from 6/1-6/14/2017
A Riddle for You

Question: What do cherry, plum, pear, kumquat, currant, and grape have in common?

Answer: They are all a type of tomato!

I was perusing the Incredible Edibles benches on Saturday and realized that we have tomatoes in all of these shapes and sizes.
Our peppers also span a wide range. On Facebook Live! last week, I described how peppers are classified according to the amount of heat. That is called the Scoville Unit scale. Bell peppers (green, yellow, red, and orange) have ZERO Scoville Units of heat. Carolina Reaper peppers have over 1,500,000 units of heat! Yet, I see customers buying them, I assume to eat them. It takes all kinds.

**We still have literally thousands of organic veggie seedlings for sale on our benches. Not only is NOT TOO LATE, it is actually just the right time to plant as it is taking a really long time for the weather to warm up this year.**

Here are a few of my favorite tomatoes that we have on our benches:

**Iron Lady** tomato was bred at Cornell University to be late blight, early blight, and septoria leaf spot resistant. A few years ago the seeds were nearly impossible to find. Now, we have contracted to have many flats of Iron Lady grown for us. It is a beautiful red slicing tomato and fairly early, mature in 75 days.

**Cherokee Purple** is one of the most delicious tomatoes you will ever taste. It won't win a tomato beauty contest, but that's not why you grow it. As it ripens it turns a dark ruby purple color. According to Craig LeHollier, author of my new favorite book *Epic Tomatoes*, "Cherokee Purple exploded in our mouths in a symphony of flavors and nuances." The story behind the name is that the seed had descended from a purple tomato given to a Tennessee man by a neighbor’s friend who had gotten it from the Cherokee Indians over a hundred years ago.

**Brandywine** tomatoes have that wonderful heirloom flavor by which all tomatoes are now judged. Originally from the late 1800’s, these tomatoes were grown for taste unlike today's "modern" tomatoes that have been bred for shipping across the country. We have red and yellow varieties. Both have what is called potato leaf foliage—much more rounded than other tomato varieties. No garden is complete without at least one Brandywine.

**Beefsteak** tomatoes are actually a giant class of really large slicing tomatoes. The Beefsteak variety we are offering is the classic, old fashioned favorite that can be sliced and stuffed into tomato sandwiches in the summer. Read all about one of my favorite beefsteak types,
Super Sweet 100 tomato is so named because each cluster of cherry tomatoes can have over 100 fruits per cluster! Super Sweet is actually an improved form of Sweet 100, which makes it one of the sweetest cherry tomatoes we grow. Plant this and Sungold and you will have red and yellow cherry tomatoes by the bowlful.

Goose Egg eggplants are exactly that- small, white eggplants about the size of a goose egg. If you are one of those people that think that eggplants all have to be purple, think again! Some of the dishes that we make with eggplant look so much better without the purple skin. Plus, they have absolutely no bitterness and are tons of fun to grow.

'Mortgage Lifter' is a cross with old fashioned Beefsteak. Read the story of how it got its name!

What's Bugging You this Week?

Check your Viburnums for the Viburnum Leaf Beetle that is feeding now.
Man, let me tell you, the faster the garden grows, the more pernicious pests I find eating my plants. I came into work Tuesday morning, complaining of asparagus beetles and gypsy moths. Diane chimed in with photos of disgusting Viburnum leaf beetles and slugs. I guess it comes with the territory. What's an organic gardener to do? At Natureworks, we offer organic solutions to all of your pest problems. We first want to know exactly what's bugging you. Then, and only then, can we understand its life cycle and suggest a safe solution. Here are the featured pests this week and what we do about them:

**Slugs** - Yuck! Could Mother Nature have conceived of a more disgusting creature? Covered with slime, they slither out of plant debris at night and chew holes in your plants. You can easily spot them on rainy days, but otherwise, you have to know they are *night feeders*. We use Sluggo (iron phosphate) which kills the slugs without hurting us. I also sprinkle my used coffee grounds around the plants they are eating. Many folks sink shallow cat food cans of stale beer in the ground near the plants in the evening and collect and dump out the dead, drowned slugs in the morning. They are attracted to the yeast in the beer. Don't waste your good microbrews on them!

**Viburnum Leaf Beetles** (seen above) attack lots of viburnum shrubs right now. Unfortunately, their favorites are also our favorite native viburnums such a cranberry bush (V. opulus) and arrowwood (V. dentatum) as well as others. Spray at dusk with Pyrethrin. Be sure to spray the entire plant, including the undersides of the leaves. Don't wait or all of the leaves will be filled with holes. Click on this link to read all about the life cycle of this destructive pest.

https://www.massnrc.org/pests/linkeddocuments/ViburnumLeafBeetlePestAlertFactSheet.pdf

I took a picture of the asparagus beetles and saw, to my surprise, a ladybug in the photo! So, I donned my gloves and started squishing rather than spraying as the ladybug was already at work eating the larvae and I didn't want to spray her. That is how we strive for balance in an organic garden.

**Asparagus beetles** are in full force in my yard. Last year they basically defoliated my asparagus before I noticed. This year I am totally paying attention. They are tiny and quick to fly away. A spray of Neem in the evening, a couple of times 10 days apart, will control them. If they have already done a lot of damage before you discover them, be sure to feed and...
mulch your asparagus plants to build up the foliage which will feed the roots and help you have a successful crop next year. That's what I did last summer and it really worked well.

**Gypsy moths** are also out in full force right now. I think it is SO rude that my lilies (that I have been protecting from lily leaf beetle so successfully by daily scouting and squishing) are now ALSO being eaten by gypsy moths. Roses? The rose sawfly seems minor in comparison to the gypsy moths which seem to prefer the flower buds. Small caterpillars can still be controlled with B. T. Larger ones should be controlled with Neem. I have been scouting and squishing on my roses, lilies, and dwarf peach tree. I am keeping an eagle eye on my giant walnut tree. Last year, there were no walnuts due to the late freeze. This year, the walnuts flowered beautifully. Spraying a big tree is not something I would do myself, nor something I would take lightly.

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**Got Poppies?**

All during the late winter and fall we urged you to plant breadseed poppies on cold soil. Many of you did that. Now they are starting to sprout and we want to be sure you know what they look like so you don't accidentally weed them out! They have blue-green leaves with ruffled edges. Some people say they look a bit like baby lettuce plants.

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**Got Milkweed? We do! Come and get it...**
Upcoming Events

Saturday, June 3rd

**Edibles Everywhere! 10-11am**
You don't need a dedicated vegetable garden to grow food, small fruits, and delicious herbs. Learn how to incorporate edible flowers and beautiful, delicious edibles into your already existing gardens, patio pots and anywhere else! It's time to turn the landscape into a yummy paradise. **FREE**

**3 Dimensional Planting with Smart Pots**
Don't have much space to grow? Find out how to maximize your planting area with a Smart Pot! $50 gets you a 20 gallon Smart Pot filled with the perfect blend of organic soil and compost, our favorite fertilizer, and the best hay mulch around! Plants are additional, so you can pick the perfect ones for your yard.

**Saturday, June 3rd 1pm**
**Sunday, June 4th 1 pm**
**Saturday June 10th 1pm**
**Sunday June 11th 1 pm.**

This hands-on workshop is being offered 4 different times, two weekends in a row. Pre-Registration is required. Please visit our Events webpage by [CLICKING HERE](#) to register for a session or call 203-484-2748.
Saturday, June 10th
Double Your Color with Half the Work 10-11am
June is THE time to practice the important perennial pruning techniques described in our bible The Well Tended Perennial Garden. Learn how to pinch perennials to double (or triple) the color AND dramatically reduce staking. Timing is everything. Nancy says "if you are not walking out of the garden in mid-June with tarp loads of debris from this technique then you are not brave enough!" FREE

Thursday, June 15th 5-6pm and
Saturday, June 17th 10-11am -THE JUNE PRUNE
Don't miss our most famous garden walk! June is the time to prune all of your spring blooming shrubs such as lilacs, rhododendrons, weigelas, and forsythias. Join Nancy and learn how to: time your pruning so you don't cut off next year's flowers, renewal prune for overgrown plants, as well as shape plants to increase the amount of flowers for years to come! We'll be well stocked with sharp pruners, sickles and sharpening stones for all your pruning needs! FREE

Sunday, June 18th
Kassie's Crash Course for Feeding Your Veggies 1-2pm
Learn all about why it's so important to keep your veggie beds, containers and other planted areas well-fed in June. Kassie will show everyone our very favorite and always successful fertilizers and amendments for keeping your plants happy and healthy as they head into the hot summer months. FREE

CLICK HERE to view/print our Events Flyer

Click a Quick Link for more Information
RETAIL SHOP HOURS
Monday - Wednesday  8:30 am - 6:00 pm
    Thursday  8:30 am - 7:00 pm
    Friday - Saturday  8:30 am - 6:00 pm
    Sunday 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Natureworks Horticultural Services  (map)
518 Forest Road, Northford, CT  06472
Business Reg. #B 3307  |  CT. License #0569208
naturework.com  |  nature@iconn.net

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