

## Gardening Newsletter

by Linda Gilkeson

September 23, 2014

Wind, rain, what a change!

I should have been more alert to the weather forecast and gotten this out yesterday, but my head is still drifting along in endless sunny weather mode. The storm predicted for today is for high winds and heavy rain in some areas of the coast so here are some things to do in the garden today.

Brace top heavy plants. Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cabbage are top heavy, also tomatoes still laden with fruit. Stake or brace these to make sure they aren't uprooted or broken by wind. Most soft fruit is off of trees but many pear and apple trees and some plums still have a load of fruit; the weight of fruit along with all those leaves that catch the wind make these trees very vulnerable to wind damage right now. You may need to stake or support branches to make sure they don't break. Dwarf fruit trees that still have a crop on their branches are also at risk of being tipped over by early fall storms, especially when the soil is soggy. So brace up, tie up or otherwise get some supports in place for high wind. One year my fig tree, still in full leaf, blew down in an early fall storm, so I am on my way out right now to put on extra ropes. Once the crop is off and the leaves fall, there is much less risk of wind damage to fruit trees.

Give cabbages a twist. If your cabbages are full sized, go out and give each head a bit of yank or twist--just enough to disrupt fine roots, but not to uproot the plants. We want to slow the uptake of water so the cabbages don't split with the sudden uptake of water.

Other things to do (or not) this time of year:

Pinch the Brussels sprouts. By the end of September is a good timing to pinch out or cut off the centre tips of Brussels sprout plants. This forces plants to put their energy into making plump sprouts along the stem. Don't worry if your plants haven't made sprouts yet--they should grow really quickly once you pinch out the tops.

Don't remove the bug covers: The number of carrot rust fly and cabbage root maggot adults are still high, given the long warm summer and they continue to lay eggs on unprotected roots until the end of October or until the first heavy frost, whichever comes first. So leave the insect netting or Remay covers in place until then.

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Reserve your place for a 2015 Year Round Harvest course: If you are interested in taking one of my 10-month gardening courses, it is time to get on the registration list. They run one day a month, from January to October and cover soil preparation and fertility, year round planting schedules, growing vegetables and fruit, preserving the harvest, seed saving, pest and disease management.

Classes for Victoria area gardeners are on Sunday afternoons at the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific, Quayle Road. If you are interested, contact the HCP immediately to get on the list. For more topics and to register see: <http://hcp.ca/events-functions/year-round-harvest/> (Note, the dates on their web site are for the 2014, but this should be updated soon). For the last 2 years there has been enough interest to run to full classes at the HCP.

The class for Salt Spring gardeners runs on Thursday evenings at the Farmer's Institute and is sponsored by the Salt Spring Garden club. If you are interested in this course, just send an email to me ([gilkeson@shaw.ca](mailto:gilkeson@shaw.ca)) and I will be happy to send you information on dates, topics and cost.

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See my web site <http://www.lindagilkeson.ca> for hundreds of colour photos of pests and diseases to help you ID problems, to order books or check my schedule for talks, workshops and gardening classes in your area. I am nearly booked up for 2015 so if you are interested in a workshop next year let me know soon.

Hard to think of it, but the gift season is coming soon: What about giving a gardening relative or friend one of my books or a registration for a Year Round Harvest course...just a hint!

All my previous gardening messages are archived on my web site Gardening Tips page:  
[http://lindagilkeson.ca/gardening\\_tips.html](http://lindagilkeson.ca/gardening_tips.html)