

Gardening Newsletter

by Linda Gilkeson

March 22, 2020

Gardening Info Wants to be Free

I am getting emails from first-time gardeners wanting to grow food in this year of the pandemic, yet my gardening classes, workshops and talks in the region have been cancelled or postponed indefinitely. SO, I am making my Year Round Harvest gardening course slides available to everyone. These are pdf files of the PowerPoint slides that I show in my two 10-month gardening courses and are normally only accessible by the people registered in the classes. The two courses are sponsored by the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific [<https://hcp.ca/>] and the Salt Spring Garden Club [<https://ssigardenclub.ca/>] and I appreciate their support for releasing these presentation to anyone who wants to see them.

You will need to use the class password to view these files, which will be available until December 2020. Here's how:

Go to: <http://www.lindagilkeson.ca/coursenotes.html>

Use this password: honeycrisp

Click on SUBMIT (hitting ENTER doesn't work)

Around the middle of each month from January to October I put up a new module on a different topic appropriate to the season. So far, there are 3 files:

1. Garden Plans and Seed Starting
2. Soil, Nutrients and Amendments
3. Spring Garden

If you have questions about the material in these presentation, there is much more detail in my book *Backyard Bounty*. If you have access to a copy, please try to find your answers there first: I am becoming overwhelmed by emails. My priority is to answer questions for people in this year's gardening classes and from Master Gardeners in BC and I will try to answer others as I have time.

Other notes for this week:

I was shocked, I tell you, shocked! at how many big fat cutworms I shook from the sod I was trimming from edges of my garden beds today. [see: http://www.lindagilkeson.ca/leaf_chewers.html#25] I think I will just let the peas I started indoors grow for a little longer before sending them out to face such monsters (plus, it is still pretty cool at night to be planting vegetables, anyway).

And while I am on peas: If you saw tiny notches in the edges of leaves on peas or broadbeans last year, that is pea leaf weevil, which is becoming more widespread [for damage, see: http://www.lindagilkeson.ca/root_feeders.html#74] While the tiny adult weevils chew notches in the leaves, it is the weevil larvae, which feed on the nitrogen nodules in the roots that cause the worst damage because infested plants can't make their own nitrogen. These weevils have one generation a year and only lay their eggs in the spring. There is no [legal or safe] way to kill them in the soil, but using two strategies you can avoid damage. First, start early plantings of peas (March-mid-May) in vermiculite indoors to avoid the main egg-laying period of pea leaf weevils. Peas planted after mid-May, after the egg laying period is over, usually escape damage. My second strategy is to enrich the soil for early peas with nitrogen sources, such as fish compost, blood meal, alfalfa meal, as for a heavy feeding crop. The pea plants use this nitrogen and grow beautifully. Peas planted after mid-May (I sow peas until the end of June) can make their own nitrogen and don't need a nitrogen boost from fertilizers.