

Weed, weed, weed, that's the biggest garden job this week. I find that I weed carefully throughout the garden, turn around, and more weeds are growing. Weeds compete for nutrients and sunlight in the garden so you want to make sure that you get rid of them regularly. Once you've weeded, put down mulch. I use grass clippings or home-made compost as mulch in the garden beds. It rots down fairly quickly and can be dug in at the end of the season to provide more nutrients for the soil. If you are gardening organically, using mulches and weeding by hand is all part of the organic experience.

Composting

This is the time of the year that you start to accumulate grass clippings, dead weeds, plant residues such as old pea plants, and other detritus from the garden. Find a disused corner of the garden and make a compost pile. I run everything through a shredder, but you can put the bits and pieces on the ground and run over them with a lawn mower. By chopping everything into little pieces, it will rot down and become compost faster. After the compost pile has warmed up (it should reach about 150 degrees) it will cook any seeds and other undesirable plant life, leaving a pile of compost. Turn the pile as soon as it cools so that the edges of the pile are now in the center and let it cook again. Many people turn the pile a third time, but you can put it right on the garden if you wish.

Vegetable garden

You should probably stop harvesting asparagus now and let the shoots grow into ferns. That will give the plants time to store nutrients for next year's stalks. Check your potatoes to see if there are any potato beetles on them. If so hand pick (organic) or treat with a pesticide (non-organic). Water tomato plants regularly to avoid blossom end rot. Blossom end rot can happen if the plant is watered inconsistently. If you are growing brassicas (cabbage, broccoli, brussel sprouts), transplant them as soon as possible before it gets too hot and water them in well. Put a mulch around the plants and check regularly for slugs and snails. (Have you noticed that we seem to be having an explosion of snails lately? They're everywhere!)

In your flower garden

If you can, leave daffodil leaves to grow for another week or two. Check the new growth on dahlias for slugs and snails. You might



The Island Garden

By Roger Marshall

also want to spray with Deer Off to keep deer from eating the shoots. Jamestown Hardware has it in stock. Deadhead flowers as they grow and water with a flower promoting fertilizer such as Bloom to keep flowers coming.

Lawns

Growth is slowing (finally!), so you probably don't have to cut your lawn weekly. Try spacing the cuttings to every eight or 10 days

to cut down on stress to the lawn. Cut high as the summer dry season approaches to help shade the roots and keep them moist.

Soft Fruit

Pick strawberries. Put bird netting over blueberries, elderberries, and redcurrants if you want to keep your share of the fruit. Fertilize with compost tea (put a bag of compost in a large tub of water and let it sit for three or four days) to help get larger fruit.

Greenhouse

If you haven't already done so, put melons, peppers, tomatoes, and other heat loving crops in the greenhouse now. If you want to have vegetables this fall, buy some seeds now before they disappear from stores. I regularly grow spinach, Chinese greens, lettuce, green


beans, snow peas and regular peas right up to Christmas and occasionally into January. These vegetables will survive some frost so you can harvest them right through until February if you cover them with fleece inside the greenhouse. Pot up any bulbs or other plants that need to be potted.

Indoor plants and hanging baskets

Feed with liquid fertilizer to

help growth. If you normally put them outside, put them in a shaded area so that they get light similar to the light they get indoors. Repot plants as needed. If you have hanging baskets, you need to water them daily. It's best to water them in the evening so they'll stay moist all night. Try not to get the leaves wet which promotes mildew, but moisten the soil. Have fun and enjoy your garden!

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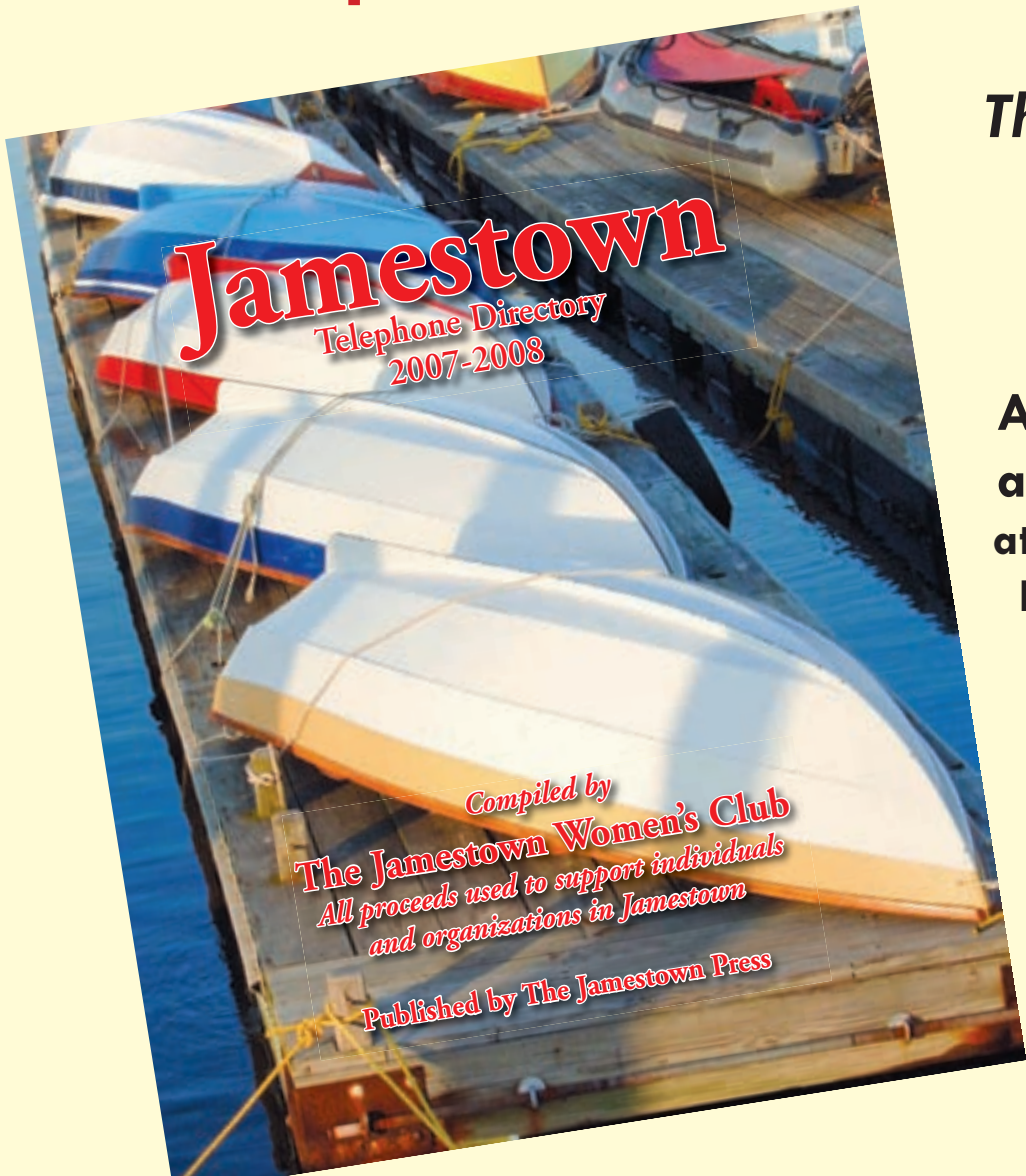
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