

Time to prep for winter

The gardening season is ending, albeit slowly with the warm temperatures we've had lately. The end of the season is the perfect time to examine your gardening tools for any concerns. For example, any long-handled tools that have been inadvertently left out in the rain might have handle problems. Using wet tools or getting your wooden tool handles wet tends to wear away the soft wood in the handle and can make the handle more liable to split. Working hard with your tools, especially using a hoe for digging a hole, for example, can also lead to splitting the handle.

If you have a tool with a split handle, you can repair it temporarily during the season by taping over the split. It's not the best of repairs, but it will allow you to use the tool until season's end. At the end of the season, however, you should replace the handle. Most handles cost just a few dollars at Jamestown Hardware and replacing a handle is relatively easy. Remove any screws or rivets holding the handle onto the tool. You may have to drill out a rivet, so use a drill bit slightly smaller than the rivet for the first pass. Then, re-drill using a drill bit the same size as the rivet. Use a nail set to pop the rivet remains out.

If the handle is broken off close to the tool head, first cut it flush with the tool head, then use a drill bit about 3/8" diameter and drill into the broken wood. This should break up the wood in the tool head and allow you to remove it. If that doesn't work, use a blowtorch and burn the wood out. However, this is not the best method to use because you can burn things other than the handle pieces and you alter the temper of the tool.

You may have to reshape a new handle to ensure that it fits into the existing tool head. If you do have to reshape it, make sure you gently



The Island Garden

By Roger Marshall

taper the insert so that there are no hard spots that might break easily.

Hammer the new handle into the tool, insert a new screw or rivet, and the tool is ready to go again. If you install a new handle, you might want to apply a little linseed oil to it to help protect it the next time you leave it outdoors.

A good way to remind yourself that you have left tools outside is to paint the top inch or two with a luminescent paint. Bright pink or orange is a good color – although I prefer my tools to look like garden tools, not safety beacons in the garden landscape, even if I do occasionally forget that they are outside.

Hoes, spades and other sharp-edged tools can often use a few swipes with a file to keep their edges keen. A nice sharp hoe cuts through weeds easily and makes the job of hoeing so much easier. After you have sharpened the edges, wipe the blades with an oil-soaked rag before putting your tools away in the shed for the winter. With sharp, well cared-for tools, your gardening will be much more pleasurable.



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Piano concert to be held this Sunday

The Jamestown Community Piano Association will present the second concert of its 2009-2010 season this Sunday, Nov. 8, at 4 p.m. at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church.

Students currently studying under Manabu Takasawa and Grace Urrico, who are on the piano faculty at URI, will play selections from their latest juried repertoire. Among the performers is islander Samuel Hollister, who won the Bach Award at Piano Extravaganza! 2009.

The concert is free to the public. Call 423-0515 for more information.

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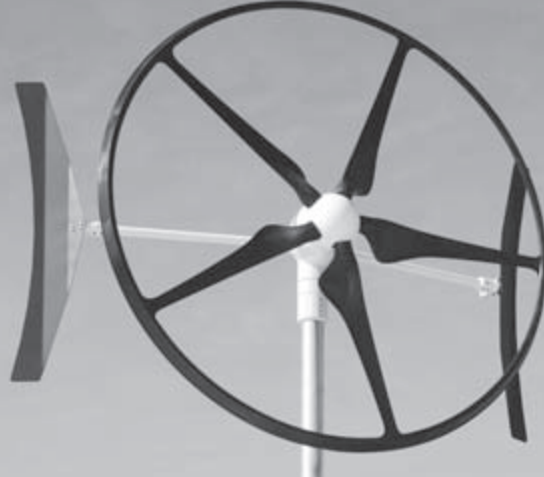


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 Former counsel & deputy chief of staff to U.S. Sen. John H. Chafee (R-RI)

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