



HOME ECOSYSTEM CONSULTATION

GARDENS

Growing conditions: dappled shade, more sun in some areas, 3-4 hours sunshine in front, some soil compaction, some plants (e.g., *Heuchera*) eaten by garden critters, dead branches on most trees, some shrub overgrowth

Could the unidentified shrub in front of your home be a *Leucothoe*? To aid identification, please describe the flower color, size, shape, and season.

Recommendations:

- Remove weeds, trim plants, and apply mulch.
- Add compost and work in to top 2" of soil to balance organic matter, improve soil structure, and improve drainage. Working into the top layer of soil will also aerate it.
- Install new perennials in front gardens to add more color (from flowers and foliage) throughout the growing season.
- Transplant perennials that are overgrown or growing in areas that are inappropriate.
- Add variegated liriopse to space between street and sidewalk. Trim all liriopse to 1-2" long in early spring before regrowth (every year). The plant will fully grow back and be more healthy.
- When transplanting shrubs (or trees), trim roots that have grown up toward the surface of the potting mix in order to encourage roots to grow deeper into the ground. Container-grown plants are often pot-bound and roots grow up to the surface when there is nowhere else for them to go.
- Consider acquiring a garden knife called a hori-hori. Some models have depth markings, a serrated edge, and a sleeve to carry the knife on your belt.
- Supplement soil around birch tree with topsoil/compost, perhaps a soil amendment like Bumpercrop. Be careful not to cover root flare. Could add low edging (aluminum, brick, or stone) to create container for supplemental soil. Plant additional *Galium oderatum* (sweet woodruff).
- Install larger rectangular containers on the balcony to include larger plants. Secure to existing posts. Repot balcony plants as needed to rejuvenate potting mix and support plant health. Repot if soil doesn't drain, if plant is pot-bound, or if soil is dusty and devoid of organic matter. Consider using an organic fertilizer. Typical recommendations for potted plants: at least once per month during growing season.
- Install a trellis and climbing vines to provide screening from neighbor's debris pile.
- Consider installing decorative fencing or other methods to discourage animals from nibbling on your plants.
- Reset hardscape materials including pots, stones, and benches, as needed.
- Collect compost into bins and arrange for best decomposition.

NATIVE SHADE-TOLERANT PERENNIALS

BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	FLOWER COLOR	BLOOM SEASON
<i>Iris crestata</i>	Crested iris	Blue	Spring
<i>Tiarella cordifolia</i>	Foam flower	Varied foliage options	Summer
<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	Columbine	Multiple	Spring
<i>Chrysogonum virginianum</i>	Green-and-gold	Yellow	Summer/Fall
<i>Geranium maculatum</i>	Cranesbill	Pink, purple	Summer
<i>Lilium michiganense</i>	Turk's cap lily	Orange	Summer
<i>Spigelia marilandica</i>	Woodland pinkroot	Red and lime yellow	Summer
<i>Tricyrtis spp.</i>	Toad lily	White, purple, pink	Summer/Fall
<i>Ceratostigma</i>	Plumbago	Blue flowers, orange/red fall foliage	Summer/Fall
<i>Aster cordifolius</i>	Heart-leaf aster	White, blue	Fall

TREES AND SHRUBS

Remove dead branches from trees and shrubs to preserve long-term health and appearance. This can be done any time of year. Do structural pruning as needed on shrubs and smaller trees to support healthy growth, balance shape, and improve overall appearance. Remove suckers and waterspouts. Most structural pruning should be done in late winter or early spring. Spring flowering shrubs should be pruned after blooming. Consider applying organic fertilizer for trees that have not been fertilized in recent years.

COMPOSTING

To generate sufficient heat for thorough decomposition (including killing weed seeds and disease organisms), compost piles should be at least 3 cubic feet in size, with a blend of more browns than greens. On the other hand, a slow "cold" compost pile provides a low-maintenance option for disposing of kitchen waste and garden weeds. Common problems with low-maintenance compost bins include bad smells (too many greens like kitchen scraps) or no decomposition (too little moisture). When applying cold compost to garden beds, it is important to remember that weed seeds and disease organisms may persist.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- *The Complete Compost Gardening Guide*, by Barbara Pleasant and Deborah L. Martin
- *Rodale's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Perennials*, by Ellen Phillips and C. Colston Burrell
- *Small-Space Container Gardens: Transform Your Balcony Porch, or Patio with Fruits, Flowers, Foliage & Herbs*, by Fern Richardson
- *Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants*, by Douglas W. Tallamy
- Trees are Good, Resources provided by the International Society of Arborists, <https://www.treesaregood.org/treeowner>

- Missouri Botanical Garden Plant Finder database, <http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/plantfinder/plantfindersearch.aspx>
- Soil testing by Penn State Extension, <https://extension.psu.edu/dont-guess-soil-test>

SERVICES EFTE COULD PROVIDE

- Remove weeds by root
- Deadhead spent blooms and trim back overgrowth
- Divide and transplant perennials (this task best done in fall)
- Apply premium mulch by hand
- Install new perennials, shrubs, or trees
- Install custom containers on balcony
- Prune dead branches from trees
- Structural pruning of trees and shrubs
- Build/repair compost bins
- Install trellis and train climbing vine(s)