

In the garden with Shobha Vanchiswar



Hearts of stone
February 19, 2010

I recently discovered three nature-related things that I'm very pleased to share with you.

I don't know about you but, I find it particularly exhilarating to learn something new and useful. Sometimes, it is one of those 'why didn't I ever know that?' and at other times, I'm just grateful to have stumbled upon the information. For a while afterwards I go around feeling rather smart and knowledgeable.



Greens steal nutrients from the carrot.

Did you know that when you buy or harvest carrots or beets, you must cut off the greens to about a couple of inches above the vegetable as soon as possible? Apparently, even when out of the ground, the leaves continue to take up nutrients from the root vegetables. Having no moisture rich soil around them, the vegetables start dehydrating very quickly. As handsome as the vegetables look with the leaves, it is

important to immediately give them a buzz cut. Remember, beet greens can be used just as you would Swiss chard and radish leaves are delicious in bread, butter and sea salt sandwiches. In fact, they work wherever watercress is used.



Don't bring home wood for your romantic fire that harbors the Asian long-horned beetle.

The first is that in the State of New York, it is illegal to get firewood from any place more than fifty miles from the its source. Carry the receipt with you as may be fined. This applies to all wood that has not been kiln dried. The law is in place to prevent the spread of the Asian Long Horned Beetle. Fifty million trees have been killed in neighboring states So, if you're going camping, leave the firewood at home. Do not take home any leftover wood from the campsite. Buy or take only wood that has been harvested local to the site where you will be burning it.



Don't water from above.

If you grow orchids and, some leaves on otherwise healthy plants start developing black spots, it is not a disease. The spots are because of certain minerals in the water. You can prevent this from happening by not watering from overhead.



Shobha Vanchiswar has been gardening all her life, the last 22 years in Chappaqua. She received the Golden Trowel Award for garden design in 2007 from Garden Design magazine. Her jewel-of-a-garden here in New Castle was on view in this year's Garden Conservancy Open Day program. She has a garden design business, Seeds of Design. Write her at seedsofdesign@verizon.net .