

# The Window

Volume 1, No. 8

## ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

### *A Well-Tended Garden*

*Autumn Pruning and Maintenance*

*by Christina J. Selvek, Heritage Area Director*

This is the time of year when homeowners begin thinking about putting their garden to bed for the winter. This is especially important in upstate New York.

With the present home landscaping trend, i.e. towards more expensive perennial and ornamental flowering plants in place of evergreen shrubs and trees, there is a real need for maintenance shortcuts. For those homeowners that enjoy gardening as a hobby, here are a number of techniques to improve fall clean up of your garden.

Start prepping your plants in mid-summer for the long winter season. Applying a 'winterizer' fertilizer rich in potassium and low in nitrogen will aid the plants. Late applications of fertilizers heavy in nitrogen promote new growth which doesn't have a chance to fully mature before heavy frosts.

During this time of year there is a strong temptation to get out the pruning saw and sheers and start fighting back the jungle that has been growing all summer long. While

pruning may make your yard look tidier, you may be killing your trees and shrubs with kindness. September is one of the worst months to do major pruning of woody plants for several reasons. First, pruning has an invigorating effect on woody plants and stimulates late growth that will be more susceptible to winter injury. Another problem associated with fall pruning is that woody plants begin moving minerals and carbohydrates from the foliage to the stem and roots. If a significant portion of the plant is removed, these nutrients are discarded before being stored for the winter season.

There are a number of plants that do require late summer and fall pruning, such as hydrangeas, clethra, roses, and daylilies, just to name a few. Here are a few general guidelines to follow when pruning your plants:



## *Through The Window*

Through *The Window* above we can see the Perkins Grocery Store as it appeared in 1960, located at 61 State Street on the corner of Chapel Street, now the home of Cat & Dragon Games. Once upon a time, nearly every neighborhood had its own neighborhood grocery store, before the advent of the big supermarkets. Even some of the chain groceries, such as IGA and A & P, were represented by the neighborhood stores. They were convenient, the owners knew their customers, and customers knew the owners and clerks. Walking to the corner grocery store to pick up a loaf of bread and something for dinner was common place.

*Photograph Courtesy of the Seneca Falls Historical Society*

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# ARCHITECTURAL STYLES, PART 6



State Street



highly decorative with turned posts and spindles.



Cayuga Street

## Queen Anne Style

Between 1880 and 1900 the Queen Anne style of architecture became quite popular in Seneca Falls. A steeply pitched roof of irregular shape with a dominant front gable most often distinguishes Queen Anne houses. In contrast to some of its architecturally symmetrical predecessors Queen Anne features asymmetrical façades, often with full-width porches. Towers or turrets are often incorporated into a front corner or within the ell of a cross-gabled house. Bay windows, towers, wall projections and insets, overhanging gables and upper stories

Differing exterior wall textures and materials are primary decorative techniques used to avoid broad expanses of flat walls. Queen Anne houses contain wood shingles with many varying patterns, paneling and half-timbering. In masonry houses, differing brick patterns and colors are often incorporated into the façades. A combination of materials may also be found on different stories, with shingle over clapboard or brick occurring most frequently.



Fall Street

Door and window surrounds are generally detailed in a simple manner. Larger windows can often be found with a border of smaller panes of tinted glass and the doors themselves are delicately detailed with a single large pane of glass set into its upper portion.



Johnston Street

all contribute to the irregular massing and architectural free form that is characteristic of this style.

Extensive one-story porches are very common and often wrap around the entire front façade. Porches may also extend along both sides of the house and may be present on the second story or recessed into the gable. Porch supports are often



Mynderse Street

1) Prune trees, including fruit trees in late winter;

2) Prune spring flowering shrubs immediately after bloom;

3) Prune late flowering shrubs in late fall to early winter;

4) Prune evergreens in late winter to early spring. What else is okay to prune in the fall? It is okay to remove dead or diseased branches anytime of year, especially in the fall so they are not lingering on the shrub or tree over the winter.

To protect delicate plants from heavy snowfall and wind damage, wrap trunks of smooth barked trees to prevent frost cracking and construct windbreaks around plants such as rhododendrons and evergreens that are particularly susceptible. To protect the plants, drive four wooden stakes around the plant, wrap burlap and staple at the corners. For larger shrubs, creating a V-shaped windbreak may help.

Evergreens such as arborvitae have the potential to split or lose branches due to wet snow or ice. Wrapping the plant in burlap is a good way to protect it. Garden netting often used to protect fruit trees

from birds also works well.

Flower and vegetable gardens require more maintenance. Cut the stalks off spent flowers and discard any diseased plants. After cleanup let your garden air for a week or so. Mark the location of young plant material that may need to be transplanted in the spring. Spread an inch of compost, mulch or hay to



help keep the temperature around your plants even. This helps to keep plants from starting growth too early in the spring. Keep in mind not to mound mulch too high around the base of trees or shrubs. This often encourages fungus, rot and rodents.

Although there seems to be a lot of chores in fall, this time of year is one of my favorites. It gives homeowners a chance to be outside enjoying the last weeks of nice weather before the long, snowy winter.

## Meeting Results

The Seneca Falls Heritage Preservation Commission met on July 25, 2006. The Commission reviewed the following applications:

- APPROVED the application to re-roof; to replace the gutters with seamless aluminum gutters and downspouts; to remove foundation shrubbery; to replace in-kind damaged wood trim elements; and to change the paint scheme at 69 State Street.
- APPROVED the application to repair original decorative wood window caps, and construct wood two-piece storm windows with interchangeable lower storm/screen panels at 8 East Bayard Street.
- APPROVED with stipulations the application of the House of Concern to install a freestanding wood sign, reading "House of Concern Entrance"; to be painted with either green or maroon letters on a white background at the driveway entrance to the property at 33-35 State Street.
- APPROVED an application to

paint the trim ivory and the shutters cinnamon red at 6 Washington Street.

- APPROVED an application to re-roof the house at 20 Clinton Street with brown asphalt shingles.
- APPROVED an application for the installation of vinyl replacement windows at 14 Clinton Street, matching the size and configuration of the existing windows. It was noted that there are already many vinyl windows in this house and that all of its windows have been altered.
- APPROVED to extend for one year the Certificate of Appropriateness for a color change, issued July 26, 2005 for the house at 71 State Street.

The Commission inquired about the status of filling the two vacant seats currently existing on the Commission.

The next scheduled Commission meeting is Tuesday, August 22nd at 7:00 pm at Village Hall. Procedural training will be available at 6:30 pm.



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# NEWS & NOTES

## *Choosing A Contractor...*

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When homeowners choose not to perform repair work themselves, then it is necessary to hire a professional tradesperson, or “contractor,” to do the work. When hiring a contractor, there are three major areas to consider: contractor reliability, the bidding process, and how to keep track of what the contractor is doing once he/she is hired.

A good professional contractor should have years of experience in his/her trade. Homeowners should closely examine the contractor’s qualifications, previously completed jobs done in the vicinity, and reputation. Check the local business bureaus, and make sure the person who is eventually hired can furnish a Certificate of Insurance.

The bidding process allows homeowners to get a good comparative overview of costs, and also provides an opportunity to assess each contractor asked to bid. Three bids are usually sufficient for any job. When the contractor is finally chosen, it is important to negotiate a contract that is best suited for the size of the job. When homeowners are unsure about the type of contract they are being asked to sign, they should seek legal advice.

Once the contractor is on the job, homeowners should discreetly keep in touch with the work by observation after hours, and then consultation with the foreman when workers are not present. It is generally not a good idea to mingle with the workers at the job site, since they usually work best without interference. If problems with the quality of work occur, the homeowner should not hesitate to stop the work and correct the problem.



## *Where Am I?*

This photo depicts an architectural detail found somewhere in the Seneca Falls Historic District.

Can you identify the building?

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**ANSWER to the July Where Am I?: porch pediment at 87 Cayuga Street**

## *The Window*

ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Village of Seneca Falls

60 State Street

Seneca Falls, NY 13148