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Contact: Diana Paul
414-727-1818 / diana@melindamyers.com

MELINDA MYERS OFFERS GARDENERS SOME SAGE ADVICE WHEN IT COMES TO DEALING WITH FLOOD DAMAGE

June 11, 2008 – As the flood waters recede and homeowners move their attention from wet basements to their landscapes, they may find themselves a bit overwhelmed. Nationally known gardening expert, TV Host and Author Melinda Myers is here to help with important to dos and garden tips to help you along the way. Myers recommends the following:

Assess the damage, manage hazards, and wait for the soil to dry. Then always be sure to manage early plantings of food crops safely by washing produce exposed to flood waters. And play it safe by discarding any garden produce exposed to raw sewage as it can be hazardous to your health. Then repair damaged soil, and watch for signs of flood damage induced problems that may appear later in the season such as root rot or pest infestations.

Assess the damage and manage hazards immediately. Look to certified arborists (tree care professionals) to help with pruning and removal of hazardous branches and trees. They have the skill, equipment and expertise to do the job safely and properly.

Most trees can usually withstand a week or less of flood conditions. More than this and you will start seeing leaves yellow and curl, branches die and extended periods of standing water can cause death for some trees.

In the garden, seedlings and young transplants may have been killed or washed away. If this is the case, wait for the soil to dry before replanting. Early season crops such as leaf lettuce, spinach and radishes should be washed before eating and no garden produce exposed to raw sewage should be consumed.

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Soil will also have an impact. When it is caked on the leaves of plants, it can block sunlight, preventing the plants from photosynthesizing (making needed energy) and the leaves can eventually yellow and die. Once the landscape dries out a bit, you can gently wash off any soil stuck on the leaves. Additionally, soil has been adversely affected by the floods. The water logged soil kills many of the micro organisms that help create a healthy soil foundation. The pounding rains and dislodged soil particles can add to soil compaction. Be sure to wait for the soil to dry before you start the rebuilding process. Adding organic matter such as peat moss and compost will help add needed micro-organisms and start the rebuilding process.

“If your new plantings were washed away and gardens flooded, the good news is that there is still time to plant. If the damage is more extensive, try containers this summer as you rebuild the landscape,” said Myers. “And if you were lucky enough to escape damage – help a friend. A few flowers can bring a smile in less than 15 seconds and your waterlogged gardening friends may just need a bit of garden relief.”

For additional gardening tips, garden podcasts, videos and more, visit www.melindamyers.com

Myers, best known for her practical, gardener-friendly approach to gardening, has more than 25 years of horticultural experience in both hands-on and instructional settings. She has a master's degree in horticulture, is a certified arborist, and was a horticulture instructor with tenure. Myers shares her expertise through a variety of media outlets. She is the author of numerous gardening books, including *Can't Miss Small Space Gardening*. She hosts “Great Lakes Gardener,” seen on PBS stations throughout the United States and “Melinda's Garden Moments,” which air on network television stations throughout the country. She also appears regularly as a guest expert on various national and local television and radio shows. She writes the twice monthly “Gardeners' Questions” newspaper column and is a contributing editor and columnist for *Birds & Blooms* and *Backyard Living* magazines. In addition, she has written articles for *Better Homes and Gardens* and *Fine Gardening*. Myers also hosted “The Plant Doctor” radio program for over 20 years.

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