Inside This Issue

- April Chores, p. 2
- Almanac Gardener, p. 2
- Spotlight: Columbine, p. 3
- Buyer Beware, Plant Prob. Clinic, Compost p. 3
- Ask a Gardener, Gardening In Mtns., E-mail sign up, p. 4
- Garden Tour, p. 4
- All American Selections, p. 5
- Events, p. 6

Contact Us

Buncombe County Center, 94 Coxe Avenue, Asheville, NC 28801-3620 (828-255-5522)

Helping gardeners put knowledge to work.

“I love spring anywhere, but if I could choose I would always greet it in the garden.”

- Ruth Stout

INVASIVE PLANTS AWARENESS WEEK:
April 4-10

Governor Bev Perdue officially declared Invasive Plants Awareness Week for April 4 - 10, 2011.

Invasive plant species impair farmland and disrupt natural areas. They cause economic losses to crops, timber, farmland, landowners, businesses and government and non-government agencies. Invasive nonnative plants significantly decrease biodiversity, causing declines in native insect and animal species.

Normal April Weather

Weather Averages

For Asheville, North Carolina

Normal April Average High 66.8°F
Normal April Average Low 43.8°F
Normal April Precipitation 3.16 ”

Hours of Daylight for Asheville, NC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sunrise</th>
<th>Sunset</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>7:18am</td>
<td>7:51 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 30</td>
<td>6:40am</td>
<td>8:15 pm</td>
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Persons with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency may request accommodations to participate in activities mentioned in this newsletter. Please contact Linda Blue at 828-255-5522 during business hours at least 3 days prior to the event to discuss accommodations.
GARDEN CHORES FOR APRIL

Lawns
- April is too late to apply fertilizer to cool season lawns (fescue, bluegrass). Nitrogen that still is not used up by June is an invitation for brown patch fungus disease.
- Broadleaf weeds such as clover, dandelions and chickweed can be controlled with broadleaf herbicides while the weeds are actively growing.
- Mow fescue lawns 3 inches high.
- Leave grass clippings on the lawn unless rapid spring growth causes them to pile up too much.

Ornamentals
- Pull weeds before applying a fresh layer of mulch to landscape beds.
- Do not prune spring blooming shrubs until after they have finished blooming.
- Do not remove foliage from spring bulbs until the leaves have begun to die down on their own.
- Divide perennials as soon as they come up in spring. Consider dividing hostas, yarrow, chrysanthemums, phlox, daisies and daylilies.
- Do not plant tender annuals before May unless you are prepared to protect them from frost.
- This is a good time to repot house plants. Do not move them outdoors before May, when the night time temperatures are not dipping below 50 degrees.

Fruits
- Fertilize any fruit cops except strawberries. Spring nitrogen on strawberries can result in soft berries and increased disease problems.
- Plant both small fruit and fruit trees. Be sure to keep watered this summer.
- Pull weeds in the strawberry bed.

Vegetables
- Cool season crops can still be planted early in the month - broccoli, cabbage, lettuce and other leafy greens.
- Refer to your diagram of last year’s garden when planning this year’s planting plan. Try to rotate plant families each year to reduce disease carryover.
- Soil can be wet and difficult to work in the spring. When soil is not too wet to work, go ahead and get the soil tilled or turned so it will be ready for spring planting when you are. Work in lime and phosphate according to soil test recommendations.

Other
- Clean and fill hummingbird feeders. The first hummers arrive in western North Carolina around April 15.

ALMANAC GARDENER IS BACK

Almanac Gardener begins its 28th season as the most popular locally produced program on UNC-TV on Saturday, April 9 at noon.

Almanac Gardener is a half-hour home horticulture program airing for 20 weeks, from April through August. It is one of the longest running series on UNC-TV and is a co-production of UNC-TV and Cooperative Extension at North Carolina State University.
SPOTLIGHT: Columbine

Several species of columbine have been enjoyed in springtime gardens for centuries. Species of Aquilegia originate in North America, Europe and Asia. Illustrations of columbine appear in medieval paintings, and Thomas Jefferson grew the native Aquilegia canadensis at Monticello.

Columbine captures our attention because the flower structure is so intricate and unique. The “Aquila” derives from the latin for eagle, a reference to the similarity of the projecting petal spurs to the talons of an eagle.

The red and yellow flowered Aquilegia canadensis is native to western North Carolina and provides colorful blooms in the spring garden. It grows best in the partly shady garden and appreciates moisture. Individual plants are usually short lived, so allow some self-seeding to occur to retain replacement plants.

Hybrid plants are available in colors of white, yellow, blue or purple. If you have several different types in the garden, they hybridize readily. Allow seedlings to grow in desirable locations and enjoy the surprise of what colors they produce next spring.

BUYER BEWARE

For as long as we can remember springtime has brought a variety of advertisements to magazines and newspapers promoting miraculous plants. In the past we have mentioned plants like “mosquito plant” (supposed to repel mosquitoes) and supposedly miraculous lawn grasses. Here are a couple more you might wonder about:

Dwarf banana trees that purport to produce fruit year-round. Although they can make interesting house plants, they rarely produce fruit unless you can grow them in a greenhouse.

Tree tomatoes that claim: “Just stand back and watch your tree quickly zoom to full height and supply you with yummy fresh garden tomatoes.” Although this small tree is related to the tomato, if it does produce fruit for you, it tastes nothing like a tomato.

Don’t fall for too-good-to-be-true claims. Shop for plants suited for our area at local garden centers or through reputable mail-order nurseries.

PLANT PROBLEM CLINICS

Through the summer, Extension Master Gardener volunteers will be available to assist gardeners on Saturdays. Plant Problem Clinics will be available the 2nd and 4th Saturdays from April through October at the WNC Farmers market. You will find them in the breezeway between the retail buildings between 11:00am to 2:00pm. The first clinic for 2011 will be April 9.

COMPOSTING DEMONSTRATIONS

At the same times as the Plant Problem Clinics, Master Gardeners will be at the Backyard Composting demonstration across the street. They will talk about and demonstrate the techniques for backyard composting.
ASK A GARDENER TABLES

You will also frequently find Extension Master Gardeners staffing an Ask A Gardener information table at area events such as the Herb Festival, Days in the Gardens at the Botanical Gardens, Nature Center Events, Asheville Home Builders Expo and the Mountain State Fair. This year they will also be available to provide gardening information at the Asheville City Tailgate Market the 1st Saturday each month, beginning May 7.

GARDENING IN THE MOUNTAINS

Extension Master Gardeners of Buncombe County are again offering their monthly lecture series. Programs will be the 3rd Wednesday each month, 10:00 am at the Buncombe County Extension Center. The lectures are free and no pre-registration is required.

April 20 - Garden Folklore: What Works and What Doesn’t
May 18 - Roses and Friends—Companion Plants for Roses
June 15 - Pests and Pesticides—What You Need to Know
July 20 - Caring for Your Trees and Shrubs
August 17 - Food and Color in the Fall Garden
September 21 - Growing Shiitakes and other Edible Mushrooms
October 19 - Backyard Bullies—Dealing with Invasive Plants

SIGN UP FOR EMAIL

Extension Master Gardener Volunteers are trained by NC Cooperative Extension to assist with providing educational information to area citizens. They offer gardening information by staffing a Garden Hotline, conducting Saturday Plant Problem Clinics, staffing Ask A Gardener information tables at many local events and offering lectures and garden schools. If you would like to be included in a periodic email updates of coming educational opportunities offered by Master Gardeners, you can sign up by emailing: buncombemastergardener@gmail.com and enter ADD as the subject.

GARDEN TOUR

Mark your calendar for Saturday, June 25, the next Master Gardener Garden Tour. This year’s tour will feature five gardens within Asheville as well as an elementary school garden and a stream restoration project. Ticket sales will begin after April 15 so watch for more information here or on the Buncombe County Extension web page at: http://buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu.
ALL AMERICAN SELECTIONS

Each year the All-America Selections committee tests many new varieties of flowers and vegetables in trial gardens all over the US and Canada. Winners are selected based on unique or improved qualities and their performance across the many locations. Among this year’s winners are some interesting vegetable varieties.

Pepper ‘Orange Blaze’ F1

This variety proved itself a winner in AAS Trialing Grounds across North America due to early maturity, sweet flavor and disease resistance. It matured to a beautiful orange color earlier than the comparisons. Expect very sweet flavor at full orange color about 65-70 days from transplant.

Tomato ‘Lizzano’ F1

Compact plants grow 16 to 20 inches tall and produce bright red, baby cherry sized fruits. Judges noted better eating quality, yield and plant habit than comparisons. ‘Lizzano’ is the first Late Blight tolerant cherry fruited semi-determinate variety on the market.

Tomato ‘Terenzo’ F1

‘Terenzo’ produces lots of red cherry fruit on a tidy low growing, trailing plant. The round fruit is a standard size cherry having an approximate size of 1 1/4 inches. With a plant height of only 16 to 20 inches, this compact variety is suitable for growing in hanging baskets or containers as a patio type tomato.

GROW SOME HERBS

Increasing numbers of gardeners are growing herbs. It’s so handy to have fresh rosemary, parsley, dill and other favorites right outside the kitchen door. And most herbs are easy to grow. Almost all herbs should be grown in full sun for best development of flavor and fragrance. Try to locate them where they will receive a least 6 hours of sun. Well drained soil is also critical for most herbs. Many of the most popular herbs are native to the Mediterranean area where the climate is dry and the soil drains freely. When starting with a clay soil, amend well with pine bark soil conditioner or small gravel to improve the drainage.

Herb plants can also be tucked into landscape plantings, flower beds, or of course the vegetable garden. Plants such as fennel, lavender, rosemary and sage can be incorporated into perennial beds. Creeping thymes may work well as edging plants or to cascade over a wall. Golden creeping oregano makes a fine ground cover.

Many herbs are great container plants as well. Lemon verbena and scented geraniums are nice on the patio where you can brush leaves to release the fragrance.

Ready to get started? Visit the Spring Herb Festival at the WNC Farmers’ Market April 29—May 1. There is lots of information available as well as plants, seeds and products.
COMING EVENTS

- **April 9**  
  **Spring Garden School**, presented by Extension Master Gardeners of Buncombe County. For information see: [http://buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu](http://buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu) or [http://buncombemastergardener.org](http://buncombemastergardener.org).

- **April 9 & 23**  
  **Plant Problem Clinic**, by Extension Master Gardeners, WNC Farmers’ Market. 11:00 - 2:00 in the breezeway between the retail buildings.

- **April 9 & 23**  
  **Backyard Composting Demo**, by Extension Master Gardeners, WNC Farmer’s Market, 11:00am - 2pm beside Israel’s Garden Center.

- **April 20**  
  **Gardening in the Mountains Series**, “Garden Folklore: What Works and What Doesn’t” presented by Extension Master Gardeners, at the NC Cooperative Extension—Buncombe County Center, 94 Coxe Ave., Asheville. 10:00am, FREE, no pre-registration required.

- **April 29—30**  
  **Days in the Garden**. Botanical Gardens at Asheville  
  Friday, 1-6 pm, plant sales  
  Saturday, 8am - 3 pm, plants, food, crafts, entertainment, guided walks.

- **April 29—May 1**  
  **Spring Herb Festival**. WNC Farmers’ Market  
  Friday and Saturday, 9am—5pm, Sunday 10am—3pm  
  Plants, herbal products, crafts, garden information, educational programs.

- **May 14**  
  **Black Mountain Garden Show and Sale**, Local vendors will offer plants and products.  
  Master Gardeners will staff an Ask A Gardener information table, 9:00am—5:00pm.