“I wandered lonely as a cloud, that floats on high o’er vales and hills, when all at once I saw a crowd, a host of golden daffodils” - William Wordsworth

Celebrate Arbor Day

This year North Carolina Arbor Day is March 16. National Arbor Day is the last Friday in April, the 27th.

Arbor Day is a good time to think about the importance of maintaining healthy trees. Healthy trees are an asset to our natural environment, our urban setting, and the aesthetics and value of our home landscape. To keep trees healthy it is critical to remember the importance of a healthy root system. Roots must be protected from construction injury and soil compaction (like parking cars under the tree). And of course NEVER top a tree!

See the article in this newsletter for more information on tree planting.

Normal March Weather

Normal March Average High 58.8°F
Normal March Average Low 35.5°F
Normal March Precipitation 3.82”

Hours of Daylight for Asheville, NC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Sunrise</th>
<th>Sunset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>7:00 am</td>
<td>6:25 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 31</td>
<td>7:18 am</td>
<td>7:51 pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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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 March**

**Lawns**
- If you have some bare spots in the lawn, early March is a good time to scratch in some tall fescue or bluegrass seed.
- If you had a lot of crabgrass last year, you may want to consider applying a pre-emergent herbicide to prevent crabgrass seeds from germinating. This is most effective when done before the end of March. A good reminder is when you see the Bradford pear trees blooming.
- Slow release nitrogen fertilizer should be applied in February. If you did not get it down by the first week in March, consider just using a quickly released material, such as 10-10-10 this month, or skipping the spring fertilizer all together.

**Ornamentals**
- This is a good time to treat hemlock trees for Hemlock Woolly Adelgids for information see: [http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/O&T/trees/note119a/note119a.htm](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/O&T/trees/note119a/note119a.htm)
- Do not prune spring blooming shrubs until after they have bloomed, unless you do not mind removing the flower buds.
- Plant trees, shrubs and perennials if the ground is not too wet.
- On a warm day, take house plants outside to check for insects, hose them off, and cut back leggy plants. This is a good time to root cuttings and start new baskets.

**Fruits**
- Prune fruit trees, blueberries and grapes. The Buncombe County Extension office has videos available for loan on pruning blueberries and fruit trees.
- If you covered the strawberry bed with straw or row cover, plan to remove the cover when plants begin to flower.
- Also check the strawberry bed for weeds that need to be pulled before they go to seed.
- This is still a fine time to plant all fruit crops.

**Vegetables**
- Place seed orders soon so they arrive in time for planting.
- In early March we can plant green peas, kale, spinach, turnips, carrots, beets, radishes and onions.
- In the middle of the month you can direct seed lettuce and plant potatoes.
- Transplant broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage mid to late month.
- It takes about 6 weeks to grow transplants for tomatoes, peppers and eggplants. The last week in March gives you about the right amount of time to plant seeds to be ready to plant the second week in May.

**Other**
- Part of the spring cleanup should include removing all of the dry leaves that have accumulated under decks, steps and in landscape beds around the house. Dry leaves can serve as tinder during fire season.
- Check tools and equipment. Sharpen and make repairs before the equipment is needed.

Recommendations for the use of chemicals are included in this publication as a convenience to the reader. The use of brand names and any mention or listing of commercial products or services in this publication does not imply endorsement by the North Carolina Cooperative Extension nor discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned. Individuals who use chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conforms to the product label. Be sure to obtain current information about usage and examine a current product label before applying any chemical. For assistance, Contact an agent of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension.
2012 Perennial Plant of the Year

The Perennial Plant Association’s Perennial of the Year is Brunnera macrophylla ‘Jack Frost’. Brunneras are treasured for their shade tolerance and early baby-blue, forget-me-not like flowers. ‘Jack Frost’ is especially valued for its silver and green leaves that shine in the shade garden from spring through fall. The plant grows about 18 inches tall and 8 inches wide in a mounded form. This hardy perennial grows well in hardiness zones 3 to 8.

Planting a Tree

The Chinese proverb says: “One generation plants the trees; another gets the shade.” If anyone is to enjoy the shade, the tree must be well planted to begin with, and protected from abuse for years to come.

1. Select a good tree species for the site. Choose a disease resistant variety and make sure the site will have space for the mature tree.
2. Plant correctly. Dig the hole just deep enough for the root ball to sit slightly above the ground level. Dig the hole or loosen the soil to be three times the width of the root ball so the first root growth can begin to establish quickly.
3. Remove any containers from the root ball. Cut away any strings and wires. Fold burlap down into the hole or remove non-burlap containers.
4. Fill the hole with the soil that was removed from the hole. No amendments should be added unless a soil test called for lime or phosphate.
5. Do not cut branches unless they were damaged or a poor branch angle needs to be removed.
6. Water thoroughly at planting. Then give it a good soaking once a week through the first growing season whenever rainfall is lacking.
7. Mulch around the tree, but do not pile mulch against the stem. Mulch should be no more than 3 inches deep and should cover an area at least three times the diameter of the root ball.
8. Do not stake the tree unless it is in a windy location or otherwise requires support or protection.

Almanac Gardener

The popular Almanac Gardener program returns to UNC-TV on April 7 at 12 noon, and will run weekly through August. This production of North Carolina Cooperative Extension and UNC-TV has been providing timely gardening advice for North Carolina gardeners for 29 years.
**Gardening in the Mountains**

The Extension Master Gardeners’ popular Gardening in the Mountains programs will resume this month and run through October. The lectures will be the third Wednesday each month from 10:00 to 11:00. They will be at the Cooperative Extension office, 94 Coxe Ave, Asheville. The programs are free and no pre-registration is required.

- **March 21** Growing Orchids
- **April 18** Gardening with Children
- **May 16** Planting for Pollinators

**Master Gardener Hotline Opens:**
The Extension Master Gardeners’ Garden Hotline will open for the season March 12. The hours for March will be 8:30 to 12:30, extending to afternoon staffing in April. To ask your gardening questions call them at 255-5522.

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**Home Grown Fruits and Vegetables**

Each class is 5:30 -7:00 pm at the Buncombe County Extension office. Pay $5 at the door, but you **MUST** pre-register by calling 255-5522 because space is limited.

- **March 12. Backyard Small Fruits.** Many small fruits are not difficult to grow in western North Carolina. Learn about strawberries, blackberries, blueberries and grapes suitable for backyard production.

- **March 19. Starting a Vegetable Garden.** The freshest, most nutritious vegetables come from your own garden. You don’t need a lot of space to grow your own vegetables.

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**WE HAVE RAIN BARRELS!**

The NC Cooperative Extension, Buncombe County Center, has rain barrels available for sale. The 80 gallon barrels come complete with fittings and installation instructions. Barrels may be purchased for $110 + tax at the Extension office at 94 Coxe Ave., Asheville. For more information call 255-5522.

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To receive this newsletter via email
Phone (828) 255-5522 or email: joyce.plemmons@buncombecounty.org
Pruning Fruit Trees

Although pruning fruit trees may seem intimidating, it is important that fruit trees be pruned every year. Proper pruning is important to developing a strong structure and maintaining good production. Training must be started as soon as the trees are planted. Developing good branch structure and selecting the strongest branches can only be accomplished by training each year for the first few years. If you wait 3 or 4 years, you are already stuck with the branch arrangement and angles you have.

The best time to prune fruit trees in Western North Carolina is March. If necessary, mature apple trees can be pruned in January or February, but it is important not to prune young trees or peach trees too early.

Why do we train and prune fruit trees?

1. To keep the canopy open so sunlight can enter and air can circulate. The sunlight is necessary to develop fruit buds in the interior of the tree and to ripen fruit. Air circulation is important for disease management.

2. To select strong branches that are not too close together. A well trained tree will be less prone to branch breakage under a heavy fruit load.

3. To keep the tree to a manageable size for spraying and harvesting.

For more information on pruning fruit trees, download this leaflet on “Training and Pruning Fruit Trees” or pick it up at the Cooperative Extension office.

http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/ag29.html

Central leader system for apples and pears

Open center system for peaches
EVENTS


• March 12  Backyard Small Fruit, 5:30 -7:00pm at the Buncombe County Extension Office. $5. Pre-registration required. Space is limited. 255-5522.

• March 19  Starting a Vegetable Garden, 5:30 -7:00pm at the Buncombe County Extension office. $5. Pre-registration required. Space is limited.

• March 21  Gardening in the Mountains, Growing Orchids, 10:00 - 11:30am at the Buncombe County Extension Office. Free, no registration required.

• April 7 & 21  Plant Problem Clinic, by Extension Master Gardeners - WNC Farmers’ Market, 11:00 - 2:00 in the breezeway between the retail buildings.