“If you truly love nature, you will find beauty everywhere.”
-Vincent Van Gough

Rain Barrels Available

We never know when Mother Nature will turn off the rain. Many gardeners like to be prepared for future watering needs with full rain barrels.

Due to continued requests for reasonably priced rain barrels, the Buncombe County Cooperative Extension office will be trying to keep a few in stock. As in the past, the 80 gallon barrels will be available for $110 + tax. See more information inside.

Normal July Weather
Weather Averages
For Asheville, North Carolina

Normal July Average High 84.3°F
Normal July Average Low 63.5°F
Normal July Precipitation 2.97”

Hours of Daylight for Asheville, NC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sunrise</th>
<th>Sunset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>6:18 am</td>
<td>8:50 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 31</td>
<td>6:37 am</td>
<td>8:36 pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 July

Lawns

- Recent wet weather has induced brown patch fungus disease to start developing in many lawns. The best steps to reduce the spread of the disease are to avoid mowing when the grass is wet, and do not irrigate. If the weather gets dry and the grass goes dormant, the disease will stop developing.
- Maintain the 3 inch mowing height, and in most cases leave clippings on the lawn. If you have brown patch you may want to use a bagging attachment to remove clippings for a while.

Ornamentals

- Finish any pruning or fertilizing of shrubs before the end of the month.
- Don’t forget to water newly planted trees and shrubs—weekly if needed.
- Irises and daylilies are typically divided now. If you have several varieties of daylilies it is often helpful to divide while they still have some blooms if you want to keep the varieties separated.
- Some tree species bleed sap readily when pruned in winter—elms, maples, birches, dogwoods. That is not really harmful to the trees, but if you would rather not have the dripping sap, remove branches during the summer.

Fruits

- Early summer rain has produced perfect conditions for lots of black rot to develop on grapes, as well as brown rot on peaches and nectarines. At this point, if you have not been applying fungicide sprays on a regular basis, you probably already have problems. Products containing Captan are most effective.
- For best flavor, leave peaches on the tree until the background color changes from green to yellow.
- Prune blackberries and raspberries after harvest.

Vegetables

- This is definitely the season for diseases in the vegetable garden—early blight and late blight on tomatoes, mildews on squash and cucumbers, rust on beans. The best way to prevent these diseases is to maintain weekly fungicide sprays. The most commonly used garden product is chlorothalonil (Bravo, Daconil, etc.). Organic gardeners may want to try Serenade, a new bacterial product. Copper or sulfur sprays are less effective, but offer a little help.
- Do not let basil plants flower as it will change the flavor of the leaves. You can keep pinching out flowers, but the best approach is to “harvest” as soon as flowers start to form. Cut the stems back hard, right above a set of leaves low down on the branch. The stems will quickly resprout.
- Start planning for the fall garden. Brussels sprouts should be planted in July, most other cool season crops in August. You can start seeds in pots for plants such as broccoli, cabbage and collards.
- You can also still plant late crops of squash, bush beans or cucumbers.

Other

- Protect honeybees. If you must use an insecticide (even organic), spray late in the evening when few bees are active in the garden.
- Surplus produce can be donated to the Plant A Row For The Hungry collection at Manna Food Bank. Take fresh fruits and vegetables to Manna at 627 Swannanoa River Road, Monday—Friday between 8am and 3:30 pm.
Insects to Watch For

Inspect plants periodically so you can tackle pest problems before they get out of hand. Pesticides should never be applied randomly “just in case” there might be some insects in the garden. You may end up killing off more beneficial insects than pests.

Ornamentals: slugs; lacebugs on azaleas, rhododendrons, pieris, pyracanthas; bagworms on junipers, cedars, cypress, arborvitae; spruce mites on spruce, hemlocks, fir; spider mites on many flowers and shrubs; euonymous scale.

Fruits and vegetables: slugs, asparagus beetles, cucumber beetles, cabbageworms, tomato fruitworms, corn earworms, Mexican bean beetles, Colorado potato beetles, squash beetles, aphids, spider mites.

Rain Barrels Available

Buncombe County Cooperative Extension has a limited supply of rain barrels available. The 80 gallon barrel measures 37 inches high and 28 inches wide. It is made of 20% recycled high density polypropylene. The heavy concave lid channels water flow into the barrel. The screened entry blocks leaves, debris and insects and the dark green color discourages algae growth. There are two overflow ports to move water away from your home. It comes complete with fittings and installation instructions.

Barrels are available for $110 + tax. To purchase your barrel, come to the NC Cooperative Extension, Buncombe County Center, 94 Coxe Ave., Asheville, NC 28801. To check availability call 255-5522.

Hands-On Canning Workshops This Summer

It’s Pickling Time! Tuesday, July 12, 2011 - 9am to 1pm
Come learn how to make a simple dill pickle and preserve those little pickling cucumbers for the long fall and winter months. This class will also discuss how to make relishes and other pickled products. Cost $10.

Canning Beans Safely! Tuesday, July 26, 2011 - 9am to 3pm
One of the most popular foods to can is beans, but it can also be one of the riskiest to eat if not canned safely. Come, can beans together with us and learn the latest recommendations for canning your beans to use later in those wintertime casseroles. This class will cover using weighted and gauge pressure canners as well as discuss the importance of adjusting pounds of pressure for canning at higher altitudes. Cost $10

Putting Tomatoes By! Thursday, July 28, 2011- 9am to 2pm
One of the best foods for learning how to can is tomatoes. In this hands-on class we cover canning tomatoes with a water bath canner and a pressure canner. Because we cover both methods of canning, this class allows you to experience both techniques. We will also discuss freezing and dehydrating tomatoes as other options for preserving them for future use. Cost $10

If you are planning to use a canner that hasn’t been used for awhile. Please have us check your gauges, etc. Call for an appointment at 255-5522.
Spotlight: Crape Myrtle

For years mountain gardeners have yearned for a great summer blooming tree like crape myrtles (*Lagerstromia indica*). Though a valued southern landscape plant, most crape myrtle varieties are not reliably cold hardy in western North Carolina’s zone 6.

In the 1950’s another species, *Lagerstomia fauriei*, was brought to the U.S. National Arboretum from Japan and has proved to be more cold hardy. The species and its hybrids appear to be suitable for zone 6 gardens. Another plus is their resistance to powdery mildew which often plagues their southern cousins.

The crape myrtle commonly seen in Asheville now is ‘Natchez’, a hybrid with white flowers and beautiful cinnamon-brown peeling bark. Other varieties released from the National Arboretum include ‘Muskogee’ (light lavender), ‘Tuscarora’ (pink), ‘Tuskegee’ (red) and ‘Hopi’ (pink). Two *L. fauriei* varieties, ‘Townhouse’ and ‘Fantasy’, have been introduced by the J.C. Raulston Arboretum. Both have the white flowers and cinnamon bark.

If you want to plant a crape myrtle, the most important requirement is full sun. The plant will not flower well with less than 8 hours of sun. They are tolerant of most soils as long as kept well watered the first year or two. Once well established, they are quite drought tolerant. Fertilize lightly in the spring.

Plant the crape myrtle where the beautiful bark can be enjoyed to best effect. Retain 3 to 5 stems, removing the lower branches to reveal the trunks, and allowing the tree to attain the traditional vase shape.

Focus on Flowers: Going Green in the Garden

July 16, 2011, 9am-4pm
NC Arboretum

This popular annual event is back this year with a focus on Going Green in the Garden. This program is a co-sponsored event of the NC State Cooperative Extension Service, the Buncombe County Master Gardeners and the North Carolina Arboretum Society.

Parking fee, lunch and beverages are included in the program fee. $49 for NC Arboretum members/$55 for the general public. Topics are:

- Change How You Garden
- Ikebana Floral Design
- Water Harvesting
- Drought Tolerant Natives
- Sustainable Container Gardens
- Water Wise Landscaping
- Small Space Garden Design

Pam Beck
Patti Hill
Linda Patterson
Randy Burroughs
Debbie Wood
Linda Blue
Pam Beck

To receive this newsletter via email
Phone 255-5522 or email: joyce.plemmons@buncombecounty.org
**Nutritious Vegetables**

Can’t get enough fresh vegetables? It will soon be time to plant the fall vegetables, including all those healthy crucifers—cabbage family crops.

Here is a look at what some of your favorite vegetables supply:

- **Asparagus**: vitamin C, potassium
- **Broccoli**: vitamins C, A, B, potassium, calcium, iron
- **Brussels sprouts**: vitamins, C, A, iron, calcium
- **Cabbage & greens**: vitamins, C, A, iron, calcium
- **Carrots**: vitamin A, beta-carotene
- **Green Peas**: protein, vitamin A, thiamine, riboflavin, iron
- **Sweet peppers**: lots of vitamin C, vitamin A
- **Tomatoes**: vitamin C, potassium
- **Winter squash**: phosphorous, vitamin A, riboflavin, minerals

**Harvesting Vegetables**

Garden fresh vegetables not only taste better, they are also higher in vitamins and minerals than than store bought produce. To preserve the most flavor and nutrition harvest vegetables at their prime and store correctly. Most should be refrigerated promptly. The exception is tomatoes, which deteriorate in cold temperatures.

- Cucumbers: check daily and pick early in day. Pick small.
- Yellow squash & zucchini: 4 - 7 inches, while young & tender.
- Tomatoes: allow to ripen on vine for best flavor & nutrients.

Find more information on harvesting vegetables at: [http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/hil-8108.html](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/hil-8108.html)

**Basic Home Maintenance Course**

Neglecting the minor repairs around your home will lead to even more expense in the future and lessen a home’s market value. Have you wanted to make those basic home repairs but didn’t know where to start? This five class series Basic Home Maintenance Course will show you how. Beginning **Tuesday, August 16, from 5:30 – 7:30pm**. The remaining dates for the course are **August 23, 30, and September 6 and 13**. Some of the topics to be covered are: saving on your heating and cooling bills, basic plumbing repairs, interior and exterior maintenance, landscaping and lawn care, indoor air quality, common household pests, etc. The **fee of $20.00** includes all materials and handouts for this five series course.
EVENTS

- **July 2 & August 6**  
  **Extension Master Gardener’s “Ask a Gardener”** information table at the Asheville City Tailgate Market. 8am—1pm.

- **July 9 & 23**  
  **Plant Problem Clinics**, by Extension Master Gardeners at the WNC Farmers’ Market, 11:00am -2:00pm in the breezeway between the retail buildings.

- **July 9 & 23**  
  **Backyard Composting Demonstration**, by Extension Master Gardeners at the WNC Farmers’ Market, beside Israel’s’ Garden Center, 11:00am -2:00pm.

- **July 16**  
  **Focus on Flowers: Going Green in the Garden**, The NC Arboretum, 9:00am-4:00pm. For more information or to register, visit [www.ncarboretum.org](http://www.ncarboretum.org), or call 828-665-2492.

- **July 20**  
  **Gardening in the Mountains Series, “Caring for Your Trees and Shrubs”**, presented by Extension Master Gardeners, Extension Office, 94 Coxe Ave., 10:00am, Free. No registration required.

- **August 4**  
  **Tomato Field Day**, MHCR&EC, Mills River, for more info call Jim Walgenbach at 684-3562.

- **August 17**  
  **Gardening in the Mountains Series, “How to Enter the Mtn. State Fair Flower Show”**, presented by Extension Master Gardeners, Extension Office, 94 Coxe Ave., 10:00am, Free. No registration required.