PLANT FALL VEGETABLES

It is difficult to think about fall vegetables when August often brings the hottest days of the season. But many of our favorite fall crops should be planted by the end of the month. Set out plants for cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower and Asian greens. Plant seeds for kale, onions, spinach, turnips, lettuce and beets.

Stay on top of keeping seed beds constantly moist as seedlings are trying to come up. Transplants may benefit not only from daily watering, but from providing some shade for the first couple of weeks. Row cover fabric supported on hoops, frames, or just sticks can serve this purpose.

Normal August Weather

Weather Averages
For Asheville, North Carolina

Normal August Average High 81.7°F
Normal August Average Low 61.8°F
Normal August Precipitation 4.3”

Hours of Daylight for Asheville, NC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Sunrise</th>
<th>Sunset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 1</td>
<td>6:38 am</td>
<td>8:35 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 31</td>
<td>7:01 am</td>
<td>8:01 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 August

Lawns
- The best time for reseeding cool season lawns (fescue and bluegrass) is mid August through September. If the weather is very hot and the soil is very dry, it is probably prudent to wait a bit.
- The same goes for fertilizing. Although you can start applying fertilizer in late August, don’t rush it if weather is not good for growth of cool season grasses.

Ornamentals
- This is not a good time for general pruning of shrubs. Restrict trimming to removing a few stray shoots.
- Do not apply nitrogen fertilizer to shrubs.
- Deadhead butterfly bush, purple coneflowers, phlox, roses and other perennials to encourage continued flowering.
- Don’t forget about those trees or shrubs planted within the last year. They still need a deep watering once a week.
- Remove weeds before they go to seed.
- To keep those beautiful container gardens looking good, trim leggy plants as needed and give them a dose of liquid fertilizer every 2 or 3 weeks.

Fruits
- Late summer is a good time to check on the strawberry bed. Pull weeds if needed. If weather has been very dry, consider an inch of irrigation as plants will soon be forming next season’s buds.
- This has been a bad year for black rot on grapes and brown rot on peaches. Regular fungicide sprays are the only way to prevent these infections.
- Prune blackberries and raspberries after harvest.

Vegetables
- Frequent rain showers invite fungus diseases like early blight and late blight on tomatoes and mildews on squash and cucumbers. Apply fungicides every 1 to 2 weeks to maintain healthy plants. Organic gardeners may want to try Serenade (Bacillus subtilis).
- Insect populations can be high late in the season. Check regularly for cabbage worms and squash vine borers. Regular applications of B.t. (Bacillus thuringiensis) will prevent the caterpillars from devouring everything in the cabbage family.
- Irish potatoes should be ready to dig soon.
- Practice good sanitation. Remove spent plants from the garden as soon as harvest is complete. Also remove diseased plants as soon as possible.

Other
- Empty and clean bird baths weekly. Not only will it keep the water cleaner, it will prevent mosquitoes from breeding.
- Remember that surplus produce can be donated to the Plant A Row For The Hungry collection. Fresh fruits and vegetables, in good condition are always welcome. Deliver to MANNA Food Bank at 627 Swannanoa River Road, M-F, 8:00—3:00.

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.
Insects to Watch For

Ornamentals: Bagworms on all needled evergreens. It is too late to spray, so remove bags by hand. Thrips on roses and other flowers; spider mites on flowers and shrubs, lacebugs on pyracantha, pieris and azaleas. All may need to be treated with appropriate insecticide if significant damage occurs.

Vegetables: Bean beetles, squash beetles and squash bugs can be especially prevalent this time of year. Control measures include hand removal (drop them into a bucket of soapy water), or spraying with carbaryl (Sevin), malathion, pyrellin or pyrethrin. Several species of caterpillars become troublesome on cabbage family crops. Bacteria sprays should be effective.

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 request 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.

Call the Cooperative Extension Office at 828-255-5522 for more information.

Spotlight: Dahlias

If you visit the Flower and Garden building at the Mountain State Fair next month you'll likely find dozens and dozens of dahlias. The array of flower colors, sizes and shapes is astounding.

The American Dahlia Society now recognizes 18 classifications of flower form and 15 different colors or color combinations. They can be found in almost any color: white, shades of pink, red, yellow, orange, shades of purple and various combinations of these colors. And some of the flower forms are truly amazing - from the charming single, daisy-like flowers to the popular double varieties which can range from the 2 inch pompons to 12 inches across. Some of the most spectacular are the peony and cactus forms.

Any garden that can provide fertile, well-drained soil and lots of sun can become a home to dahlias. Since all garden dahlias are hybrids, they are most often planted as tubers. Seeds are available for mixed small-flowered types. The plants are sensitive to frost so the tubers or plants should not be planted into the garden until about the time of the last frost. Varieties that get taller than 2 feet may need stakes or other supports.

Dahlias may languish during the heat of summer. But keep them mulched and provide plenty of water, and they will reward you with a show from late summer through fall. Dahlia tubers cannot be counted on to survive the winter in the ground in western North Carolina. So be prepared to dig roots in the fall to store during the winter. Or you can take a chance and just mulch the garden area heavily and hope for the best come spring.
Growing in the Mountains
Thursdays
September 1—29, 2011
5:30 – 7:30 PM
NC Cooperative Extension
94 Coxe Ave, Asheville

Maintain an environmentally friendly landscape by learning the basic steps to selecting and growing healthy plants. This series will include the steps to designing your home landscape, evaluating your site, selecting good trees, shrubs and perennials for your site, best planting and maintenance practices, and planting and maintaining a home lawn.

September 1       Home Lawn Care
September 15      Six Steps To Landscape Design
September 22      Selecting The Right Plants
September 29      Planting and Maintenance

Pre-registration required due to limited seating. $5 per class, pay at the door

Pressure Canner Testing
Pressure Canner Testing is done only by appointment this year. To have your pressure canner tested please call the Extension Office at 255-5522 and make an appointment.

Basic Home Maintenance

Neglecting the minor repairs around your home will lead to 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, 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 pest, etc. The course will be held at the Extension Center, 94 Coxe Avenue in Asheville.

Registration fee is $20 and includes all materials and handouts for the five series course. Space is limited so pre-registration and pre-payment is necessary.
To register please call the Buncombe County Center at (828) 255-5522.

To receive this newsletter via email
Phone (828) 255-5522 or email: joyce.plemmons@buncombecounty.org
See You At The Fair
This year’s North Carolina Mountain State Fair runs September 9—18. The Flower and Garden Exhibits are in the new “Expo Building” toward the back side of the fairgrounds, below the livestock barns. We hope you will find us so you can stop in and visit the Master Gardeners’ information tables and view the wonderful flowers. Volunteers will be available to answer your gardening questions.

Enter The Flowers Show

With two flower shows at the Fair, how can you resist the opportunity to show off your prettiest flowers? There are more than 150 categories for entries! Entry dates are September 7 and 13th. You can find all of the information at: http://www.mountainfair.org. Find it under the “Mountain State Fair” tab as “Competitions”.

Pruning Hydrangeas

The best timing for pruning of blooming shrubs is a constant cause for confusion. Among the worst are the hydrangeas. The subject gets confusing enough as there are several species of hydrangeas and they are not all pruned at the same time. Now there are so many new varieties, some of which are exceptions to the rules.

So, to start with, you need to figure out which type of hydrangea you have. Sometimes that calls for taking a long stem and flower cutting to a garden center to match up or to find a match on the internet. If that doesn’t work you may just have to be very observant for a season to figure out if your plant is blooming on old wood (last season’s growth) or new wood (new spring growth). Otherwise, take your chances and see what happens. You won’t kill the plant; you just may lose a season of blooms.

The easiest are the Hydrangea paniculata (Pee Gee) and H. arborescens (including the new pink ‘Invincibelle Spirit’). These types flower on new wood, so can be cut back as far as you want—even to the ground—in late winter, like you might do butterfly bush.

The other category includes the H. quercifolia (oakleaf) and H. macrophylla (bigleaf and lacecap). These types bloom on old wood. So the usual recommendation is to prune after bloom, usually meaning before August. The safest approach to ensure the most flowers is to prune only if needed, and then to only remove about 1/3, those being the oldest stems.

As I said, there are exceptions. Some of the new H. macrophylla varieties, such as ‘Endless Summer’, will put on a second flush of blooms on new growth. You’ll have the greatest opportunity for the most flower production by pruning back stems that have just flowered in mid-summer. But if you were to prune them in late winter like H. arborescens, you will still get late season flowers.
COMING EVENTS

- **Aug. 13 & 27**  **Plant Problem Clinics**, by Extension Master Gardeners at the WNC Farmers’ Market. 11:00am—2:00pm in the breezeway between the retail buildings.

- **Aug. 13 & 27**  **Backyard Composting Demonstration**, by Extension Master Gardeners at the WNC Farmers’ Market, beside Israel’s Garden Center, 11:00am - 2:00pm.

- **Aug. 17**  **Gardening in the Mountains Series**, “How to Enter the Mtn. State Fair Flower Show”, presented by Extension Master Gardener Volunteers at the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Buncombe County Center at 10:00 am. No pre-registration, Free.

- **Sept. 1-29**  **Growing in the Mountains Series, Thursdays**, 5:30 -7:30 pm, with Linda Blue, NC Cooperative Extension Buncombe County Center, 94 Coxe Ave. Asheville, $5 per class, pre-registration required.

- **Sept. 9-18**  **North Carolina Mountain State Fair**, Fletcher.

- **Sept. 21**  **Gardening in the Mountains Series**, “Growing Shiitakes and other Edible Mushrooms”, presented by Extension Master Gardener Volunteers at the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Buncombe County Center at 10:00 am. No pre-registration, Free.