“Now every field is clothed with grass, and every tree with leaves; now the woods put forth their blossoms, and the year assumes its gay attire.”

- Virgil

Hotline is Open

The Extension Master Gardener Hotline is open for the season. Volunteers are available to answer your gardening questions on the phone, or you may bring problem samples into the office for diagnosis.

Call 255-5522 or visit 94 Coxe Ave., Asheville
Monday - Thursday: 8:30 - 4:30
Friday: 8:30 - 12:30

These volunteers are also available to answer questions at the Saturday Plant Clinics, the second and fourth Saturdays each month until October. You will find them set up at the WNC Farmers’ Market, in the breezeway between the retail buildings, 11:00 - 2:00.

Normal May Weather

Weather Averages

For Asheville, North Carolina

Normal May Average High: 74°F
Normal May Average Low: 52°F
Normal May Precipitation: 3.5”

Hours of Daylight for Asheville, NC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Sunrise</th>
<th>Sunset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>6:38 am</td>
<td>8:15 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 31</td>
<td>6:16 am</td>
<td>8:39 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 May

**Lawns**
- Do not fertilize fescue and bluegrass lawns.
- Mow cool season grasses 2 1/2 to 3 inches high.
- Keep an eye out for small plants of crabgrass and other summer weeds so you can pull them while they are small. Small broadleaf weeds can be spot treated with a squirt of selective broadleaf herbicide (such as 2, 4-D) if they are difficult to pull.
- Try not to mow when grass is wet as you can spread disease problems.

**Ornamentals**
- Start planning your flower bed color scheme while visiting garden centers. It is safest to wait until the second week in May, though, to plant tender bedding plants.
- It is fine to go ahead and sprinkle seeds in the flower bed for zinnias, cosmos, nicotiana, love-in-a-mist and other easy annuals.
- When planning the flower bed or container garden, don’t forget about foliage plants. Add color and texture with plants like purple sword, coleus, sweet potato vine, croton, elephant ears, dracaena and grasses.
- Organic mulch is the best tool for maintaining soil moisture and reducing weeds in the landscape. Mulch should be 2 to 3 inches deep, including the old layer. More than that is not only a waste of money, it can be detrimental to plant growth.
- Prune spring blooming shrubs soon after blossoms fade.
- Summer bloomers like butterfly bush, rose of Sharon and crape myrtle can still be pruned, even though it is a little late.
- If you move house plants outdoors for the summer, wait until nighttime temperatures are above 50 degrees. Do not place plants in direct sunlight.

**Fruits**
- Fruit trees may have set a good crop this year. But too many fruit on the tree is not a good thing. Thin apples, pears and peaches to about 6 inches apart when the fruit is the size of a nickel.
- Pick strawberries regularly. Pick and discard any moldy berries.
- Begin fungicide sprays, especially on peaches, plums and grapes.

**Vegetables**
- Plan the vegetable garden on paper. Keep the plan from year to year so you can plan crop rotations.
- Allow the recommended space between plants, whether you are seeding or transplanting. Good air circulation is important for disease control and plant development.
- In our climate, tomatoes need to be supported off the ground to prevent fruit rot. Most gardeners find it best to use cages for determinate (bush) types and stakes or trellises for indeterminate (vine) types.
- Soil temperature should be warmed up to at least 65 degrees before planting beans, melons and okra - after May 5.

**Other**
- Hummingbirds are here and hungry. Make a sugar solution for the feeder by dissolving 1/4 cup of sugar in 1 cup boiling water.
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. Here are some insects to be on the look out for:

Ornamentals: slugs; lacebugs on azaleas, rhododendrons, pieris, pyracanthas; spruce mites on spruce, hemlocks, fir, euonymous scale; hemlock wooly adelgids.

Fruits and vegetables: slugs, asparagus beetles, cucumber beetles, cabbageworms, aphids.

Spotlight: Green and Gold

One of my favorite native plants for the shady area is the native Green and Gold, also known as Goldenstar, Chrysogonum virginianum. This adaptable ground cover will grow and spread in a wide range of conditions.

Green and Gold will be happiest in loamy soil where it receives morning sun and afternoon shade. But it will adapt to a sunny location if provided adequate water. It will grow in dense shade but will not flower as well without a little sun.

This plant is semi-evergreen, meaning it may lose most of its leaves, depending on how cold the winter weather is. The yellow, one inch wide, flowers appear atop the green foliage beginning in late April or early May. Sporadic flowering can occur all summer, depending on the location and the plant selection. It spreads by stolons, like strawberry plants. The roots are shallow which makes it easy to start new plantings and share starts with friends.

As with most woodland plants, Green and Gold does not need a lot of fertilizer and is not too particular about the soil pH. A pH of 5.5 to 6.5 is probably best. It seldom needs irrigating unless it is growing in a sunny area or becomes obviously drought stressed.

Selections of Green and Gold can be found at many garden centers.

Planting for Hummingbirds

Hummingbird feeders are a fun way to attract hummers to an area where you can watch their acrobatics. But natural nectar sources provide better nutrition for the birds and help to keep the birds in the area. Most flowers with trumpet, or tubular, shape will attract them. They are especially drawn to red or orange flowers, but will go to other colors as well.

Plan to work some of their favorite flowering plants into the landscape:

Shrubs: azaleas, abelia, clethra, red and bottlebrush buckeyes.
Vines: trumpet honeysuckle (coral honeysuckle), cross vine, trumpet vine
Perennials: columbine, salvias, red hot poker, beebalm, penstemon.
Annuals: fushia, salvias, petunias, nicotiana, cypress vine morningglory, foxglove, hybiscus
Natives for the Shade

A lot of you folks who responded to the Mountain Gardener survey last year requested more information on native plants. Western North Carolina is blessed with an abundance of native plants that are adaptable to growing in the home landscape. They will thrive if you locate them in conditions as close to their natural environment as possible. Critical factors are soil type and the amount of sunlight.

If you are planting in shaded areas—an area that receives up to 4 hours of morning sun or no more than 3 hours of afternoon sun—there are many native plants to consider.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perennials</th>
<th>Shrubs</th>
<th>Vines</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Columbine</td>
<td>Virginia sweetspire</td>
<td>Dutchman’s pipe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodland phlox</td>
<td>Flame azalea</td>
<td>Virginia creeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green and Gold</td>
<td>Spice bush</td>
<td>Coral honeysuckle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwarf crested iris</td>
<td>Rhododendron</td>
<td>Crossvine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foam flower</td>
<td>Leucothoe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coral bells (alum root)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ferns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild ginger/bee balm</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native pachysandra (Allegheny spurge)</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Food Preservation Classes

Four hands-on classes on canning and preserving are scheduled this summer.

Each class is only $5 and does require **pre-registration** and registration is confirmed when payment is received. All classes will be held at the Buncombe County Cooperative Extension Office at 94 Coxe Avenue in Asheville.

- **June 2—9am to 1pm**    Let’s Start with Jams
- **July 7—9am to 1pm**    It’s Pickling Time
- **July 28—9am to 3pm**   Canning Beans Safely
- **Aug. 11—9am to 2pm**   Putting Tomatoes By

Call our office to pre-register at (828) 255-5522.
CONGRATULATIONS, 2010 GRADUATES!!

Congratulations to the newest graduating class of Buncombe County’s Extension Master Gardener volunteers! These enthusiastic gardeners have completed more than 40 hours of training and are ready to join the 97 veteran volunteers to help answer your gardening questions.

This year’s graduates are:

Lisa Anderson                                  Rene Moore
Joyce Carpenter                                Roger Parkin
Ellen Freck                                    Laura Perry-Hipps
Kyle Gilgis                                    April Peterson
Jill Hurd                                      Donna Sapp
Eileen Kennedy                                 Jim Sleeva
Renee Cassano Lampila                          Mary Ann Snedeker
Nancy Lesher                                    Cheryl Thomson
Kay Malchow                                    Melissa Volker
Patsy McNatt                                   Jeanette Williams
Gary Merrill
Kim Moore

Vegetables in Small Spaces

Growing vegetables and herbs does not have to require a lot of space—just plenty of sun. If you have a spot that receives 6 to 8 hours of sun, you can enjoy at least a few fresh vegetables.

Some vegetables are not unattractive when worked into a flower garden. Parsley, Swiss chard, kale and most herbs can fit in just fine. Consider trellising a cherry tomato plant in the back of the bed. Even peppers and eggplants can be incorporated.

No flower bed? Do you have room for some containers on a sunny patio or deck? Small cherry tomatoes and bush-type cucumbers are fun to grow in hanging baskets. Window boxes and hanging baskets can grow lettuce, chard, radishes, kale, or a variety of herbs. Larger containers can accommodate tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, squash and cucumbers. Containers can be inexpensive things like 5 gallon buckets with holes drilled near the bottom for drainage.
• April 30 - May 1  **Days in the Garden:** Botanical Gardens at Asheville  
  Friday, 1 – 6pm  
  Saturday, 8:30am - 3pm, sales of plants and other items.

• April 30 - May 2  **Spring Herb Festival:** WNC Farmers’ Market  
  Friday and Saturday, 9am - 5pm, Sunday, 10am - 3pm  
  Plants, herbal products, crafts, garden information.

• May 8 & 22  **Extension Master Gardeners’ Plant Problem Clinic,** In the breezeway between the retail buildings at the WNC Farmers’ Market. 11am - 2pm.

• May 15  **Black Mountain Garden Show and Sale,** 9am-5pm, Sutton Ave. (near the train depot). Local vendors will offer plants and products. Master Gardener information table.

• May 19  **Gardening in the Mountains Series,** “Growing Hostas”, presented by Extension Master Gardeners, NC Cooperative Extension - Buncombe County Center  
  94 Coxe Ave. Asheville, 10:00am, Free.