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Helping gardeners put knowledge to work.

“The maple wears a gayer scarf, the field a scarlet gown, lest I should be old fashioned; I’ll put a trinket on.” - Emily Dickenson

MAILING LIST UPDATE

If you have been receiving the Mountain Gardener newsletter for a few years, you know that we are required to update our postal mailing list every year. The annual newsletter survey routinely goes along with the update. We must receive your renewal by December 1 to stay on the mailing list.

For those receiving the newsletter by email, you do not need to renew (No postage budget involved). But we would still like your feedback on the survey. Just click this link:

http://harvest.cals.ncsu.edu/surveybuilder/form.cfm?testid=10972

After answering a few questions, hit Submit, and you’re done.

Normal October Weather
Weather Averages
For Asheville, North Carolina

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normal October Average High</th>
<th>67.7°F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal October Average Low</td>
<td>45° F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal October Precipitation</td>
<td>2.4”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hours of Daylight for Asheville, NC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sunrise</th>
<th>Sunset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>7:24 am</td>
<td>7:15 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 31</td>
<td>7:50 am</td>
<td>6:36 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 October

Lawns

- After the hot dry summer, many lawns have bare areas in need of reseeding. October is getting late to plant, so try to get seed down as soon as possible.
- It’s been dry, so if you have planted grass seed, remember to keep it watered.
- This is a good time to fertilize the cool season lawn.

Ornamentals

- Fall is a good time to plant trees and shrubs. Pull roots loose on container grown plants and do not plant too deep. Water thoroughly before mulching.
- Purchase spring blooming bulbs. Plant late in October or in November.
- Plant pansies and ornamental cabbage.
- Clean up the flower bed. Remove spent annuals. Shake out seeds if you want zinnias, cosmos, cleome, and the like to reseed.
- When you cut back the perennials, you might want to leave seed heads for the small birds to finish off.
- Clean up house plants before moving back indoors. Take the time to cut them back and remove dead leaves and flowers. While you are at it, inspect carefully for insect infestations and treat before bringing the plants indoors.

Fruits

- There have been a lot of diseases in the gardens and orchards this year, making good sanitation especially important. As you rake leaves, also remove any fruit left in the trees and pick up all fruit from the ground.
- Tend the strawberry bed if not done in September, pull weeds, fertilize and water if needed.

Vegetables

- Good sanitation is important here as well. Remove spent plants to the compost pile or turn them into the soil to rot.
- If tomato plants were infected with late blight, it is best to destroy those plants by burying deeply or bagging them and sending them out in the trash.
- Harvest basil before frost zaps it. Make pesto or freeze the leaves for later use.
- Consider planting a cover crop to turn under in early spring.
- Spray all crucifers (cabbage family crops) with organic B.t. (Bacillus thuringiensis) every 7 to 10 days to kill the various caterpillars that eat the plants.

Other

- Fall is a great time to start a new compost pile. You can build a bin or just pile all that yard waste in the corner. For more information on back yard composting: [http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/pdf/ag-467.pdf](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/pdf/ag-467.pdf).
Insects to Watch For

Ornamentals: Check evergreens for bagworms. Half of those bags contain eggs which will hatch in the spring, so remove and destroy them. Spruce mites are cool weather mites that become active now. Shake a branch vigorously over white paper to check for them.

Vegetables: Aphids and several species of caterpillars can be a problem on broccoli, cabbage, collards and other cabbage family plants.

Spotlight: Fothergilla

Trees are not the only plants that can provide wonderful fall color in the landscape. Among the native shrubs, two species of Fothergilla stand out in the fall.

*Fothergilla major* is a larger plant, growing 6 feet or more if not pruned. *Fothergilla gardenia* only grows 3 to 4 feet. Both provide fragrant bottle brush-like white flowers in spring. In the fall leaves often produce a combination of yellow, orange and red. *F. gardenia* varieties tend to produce suckers. *F. major* is a multi-stemmed shrub but does not sucker.

Fothergillas will thrive in the same conditions as azaleas—well drained soil with an acid pH. For best flowering and fall color provide at least a half day of sun. It is most important to note that they are not very drought tolerant, so plant them where they can be provided with some water when the soil gets dry.

There are a number of cultivars of Fothergilla available at nurseries. ‘Blue Mist’ has leaves with a blue tint. ‘Mount Airy’ is an excellent selection for flower and fall color production. It does have a tendency to produce a lot of suckers, however, which can become a problem in some situations.

Treating Hemlocks

If you have hemlock trees, inspect them for signs of hemlock woolly adelgids. This is a good time of year to treat smaller trees with insecticidal soap or horticultural oil. Fall is also a good time to apply a systemic soil drench treatment on larger trees. 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)
Garlic Planting Time

Garlic is easy to grow in western North Carolina gardens and October is the time to plant.

Plant garlic in fertile, well drained soil, high in organic matter. The pH should be 6.0 to 7.0. Break the bulb into individual cloves. Plant cloves 1 to 2 inches deep, pointed end up, about 3 inches apart. Do not fertilize now.

This fall you will probably see several small leaves begin to grow. Don’t worry about them, they won’t mind the cold. If you like, you can put an inch or two of straw mulch around the plants to help keep down weeds and prevent winter soil heaving. In spring when you see the first signs of new growth, apply a light dose of 10-10-10 fertilizer, or a complete organic fertilizer.

Harvest your garlic next summer when the tops begin to die down. Hang bunches of bulbs in a dry, shaded location to dry thoroughly before storing. For more information on growing garlic see: http://polk.ces.ncsu.edu/content/GarlicProduction

Fall Invasions

The bugs are coming, the bugs are coming. At least that’s the way some home owners may feel in the fall. There are now at least three insects that can become a big annoyance when they show up in large numbers on the side of the house, often finding their way inside. It’s not that any of these bugs are really “trying” to get into the house, they are just attracted to a warm sunny spot when the temperatures get chilly.

Since they are just hanging out, not feeding on the house, insecticides are of little use. They will kill insects directly sprayed today, but will not have much effect in preventing more from congregating in a few days. The best advice is to use weather striping or caulking where needed to seal around windows and doors to prevent the bugs from squeezing into the warm house. Use a hose or broom to knock them off the side of the house. Indoors carefully sweep or vacuum. Be careful not to squish them as some can produce an odor or leave a stain if crushed.

**Boxelder bugs** have long been an irregular occurrence for folks with a boxelder tree in the yard. Occasionally maples or ash will attract them as well. The insects feed on the seeds of these tree species. For more information: http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/O&T/houseplants/ort040e/ort040e.htm

**Multicolored Asian ladybeetles** have been common in western North Carolina for more than ten years. Other than their fall “congregating” behavior, they are considered beneficial insects as they eat aphids and other small pests. See: http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/Other/goodpest/note107.html

The newest invader, the **marmorated stinkbug**, showed up in North Carolina a year or two ago. Like some other species of stinkbugs they do feed on plants and could cause damage to fruit crops. For more information: http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/O&T/trees/note148/note148.html
Fall Garden School—**Getting a Grip: Making the Most of Your Outdoor Space**

The morning session, 8:30—12:00, will cover fall landscape topics while the afternoon, 1:00—4:00, will cover vegetable gardening.

Enrollment is limited and attendees must pre-register through NC Cooperative Extension’s Buncombe County Center at 94 Coxe Ave., Monday—Friday from 8:30am-5:00pm. Checks or cash will be accepted. For more information, go to [buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu](http://buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu) or call the extension office at 255-5522.

**Trees and Construction**

The recent down turn in home buying and new home construction means more people are choosing to stay put and do some remodeling. Among the popular upgrades are installing new landscaping and adding patios and decks. Here are some tips to help keep existing trees healthy during landscaping and construction projects.

1. Never top a tree. Topping introduces decay, eventually leading to heart rot.
2. When planting a new tree select an appropriate species for the location. Consider sun/shade, soil moisture and tree size.
3. If possible, minimize the amount of turf sharing the root zone. Mulch is best. Shade tolerant ground covers or other plantings are less competitive with the tree roots than lawn grass.
4. To avoid soil compaction, do not park vehicles or have play areas under trees. If soil has been compacted, aerate and apply mulch.
5. Prune out broken or damaged branches as soon as possible. Make correct pruning cuts at a branch collar or near a side branch.
6. Do not damage bark with mowers or weed trimmers.
7. If possible irrigate during drought. It is not uncommon to see red oaks and some other species dying 2 or 3 years after a severe drought.
8. Protect tree root zones during any type of construction or soil disturbance. The area under the spread of the branches is considered the minimum area in which no disturbance should occur.

For excellent guidance we have a publication on Construction and Tree Protection. Find it online at: [http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/forestry/pdf/ag/ag685.pdf](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/forestry/pdf/ag/ag685.pdf)

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**2011 Extension Master Gardener Training**

Applications are being accepted through November 19, 2010 for the Extension Master Gardener volunteer training program for 2011. Classes will be held on Thursdays, 12:00 noon until 4:00pm from January 20 through April 21.

If you want to learn more about this volunteer training program, plan to attend the Introduction to the Master Gardener Program on Thursday **October 14**, 1-3 pm, at the Buncombe County Extension Center, 94 Coxe Ave. Asheville.

For an application call 255-5522 or email joyce.plemmons@buncombecounty.org

The application is also available on our website: [buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu](http://buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu)
• October 9  **Plant Problem Clinics**, by Extension Master Gardeners at the WNC Farmers’ Market. 11:00am—2:00pm in the breezeway between the retail buildings. (Last of the year)

• October 9  **Backyard Composting Demonstration**, by Extension Master Gardeners at the WNC Farmers’ Market, beside Israel's Garden Center, 11:00am—2:00pm. (Last of the year)

• Oct. 9  **Hey Day at WNC Nature Center**, 10am-4pm, visit the Extension Master Gardener information table

• Oct. 14  **Introduction to the Extension Master Gardener Program**, 1—3pm at Buncombe County Cooperative Ext. Office, 94 Coxe Ave., Asheville.

• Oct. 16  **Extension Master Gardeners’ Fall Garden School**, 8:30—4, Ferguson Auditorium, AB Tech.

• November 19  **Deadline for applications for 2011 Extension Master Gardener training.**