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Contact Us

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Check out Buncombe County Center’s website at:
http://buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu

Helping gardeners put knowledge to work.

“An addiction to gardening is not all bad when you consider all the other choices in life” - Cora Lea Bell

MASTER GARDENERS’ GARDEN TOUR

The Extension Master Gardeners’ Garden Tour only happens every other year, so you don’t want to miss it on June 25.

Five private gardens will be opening their garden gates to the public for this one day, with the theme of “LOOK AND LEARN IN OUR GARDENS”. All gardens are within Asheville. They will include a lush cottage style perennial garden, and a beautiful garden designed around the needs of the maturing gardener, planting ideas for vegetables and herbs that maximize the potential of compact spaces and water thrifty design, a private oasis of conifers and groundcovers that create low maintenance and year round interest and a garden site that highlights the challenges of gardening on a hillside.

Tickets can be purchased in advance for $15 at the Buncombe County Cooperative Extension Center at 94 Coxe Ave, Asheville, or from the Buncombe County Master Gardeners’ web page at http://buncombemastergardener.org.

Tickets will be $20 the day of the tour, if still available.

Normal June Weather

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal June Average High</td>
<td>81°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal June Average Low</td>
<td>60°F</td>
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<tr>
<td>Normal June Precipitation</td>
<td>3.24&quot;</td>
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Hours of Daylight for Asheville, NC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sunrise</th>
<th>Sunset</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>6:16 am</td>
<td>8:40 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 30</td>
<td>6:18 am</td>
<td>8:50 pm</td>
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</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 June

**Lawns**

- Try not to mow grass when it is wet. If brown patch fungus disease occurs, mowing when wet will spread the disease.
- Mow frequently enough to remove no more than 1/3 of the blade at a time.
- Do not fertilize cool season lawns (fescue or bluegrass) until September.

**Ornamentals**

- Prune spring blooming shrubs if not already done—azaleas, rhododendrons, forsythia, spirea.
- If your Joe-Pye-weed, asters or chrysanthemums have tended to get too tall before they bloom in late summer, you can cut them back by half this month.
- Container gardens will perform best with regular fertilizing and occasional trimming.
- Weeds have thrived with this spring’s regular rains. Remove all weeds before applying a fresh layer of mulch.
- You can still scatter seed of zinnia, cosmos or small sunflowers for late season blooms.
- Check needled evergreens for small bagworms. At this point they can be controlled with organic bacteria (B.t) spray. By July you will have to use a more toxic insecticide or remove them by hand.

**Fruits**

- So far this spring has provided excellent conditions for development of fungal fruit diseases such as brown rot on peaches and plums and black rot on grapes. Fungicides will be important to prevent fruit loss.
- Fruit trees that do not have fruit this year may tend to produce overly vigorous growth, especially water sprouts in apples and pears. You can save yourself some pruning next winter by removing water sprouts now.

**Vegetables**

- Continue planting warm season vegetables. Beans, squash and cucumbers can be seeded through July, so plan succession crops.
- Prevent blossom end rot on tomatoes, peppers, squash and melons by maintaining consistent soil moisture.
- Vegetables need a regular supply of fertilizer. Apply light doses of nitrogen containing fertilizer 5 or 6 weeks after planting.
- Keep records of when you fertilize so you do not over-do it. Some vegetables, especially beans and peppers will not bear fruit if excess nitrogen is used.

**VISIT SOME GARDENS**

For many gardeners favorite vacation stops include visiting public gardens. If you are sticking close to home this summer, look up some of the wonderful gardens right here in North Carolina. Find an on line list of many of North Carolina’s arboreta, gardens and parks at: [http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/pgpages.html](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/pgpages.html).

SPOTLIGHT: SUNFLOWERS

What could be a more cheerful symbol of summer than the sunflower? Sunflowers include several species of *Helianthus*. Although some, like swamp sunflower and Maximillian sunflower are tall growing perennials, most gardeners are probably more familiar with the giant annual *Helianthus annus*.

The huge sunflowers like ‘Mammoth Russian’, are fun to grow, but there are many new hybrid varieties that make better garden plants. Some can still reach heights over 6 feet, but you can find dwarf varieties that only reach 3 feet. Most are branched, producing multiple smaller flowers. Gardeners are now selecting from varieties with flowers of pale yellow, orange, red and mahogany. If you enjoy cutting flowers to bring indoors, you might like the pollenless varieties like ‘Moonshadow’ and ‘Lemon Sorbet’ which will not shed pollen on the table.

True to their name, sunflowers do like to be planted in the sun. The less sun they receive, the more likely they are to grow taller and need staking to keep them from falling over. Seeds can be sewn directly into the garden soil in May and June, but I have found I have to start the plants in containers because the squirrels dig up the seeds.

Keep the plants watered to get them started, once they are growing well they are quite drought tolerant. Give them a little fertilizer early, during the first few weeks. After that too much nitrogen will only encourage them to grow taller and may delay flowering.

Avoid Blossom End Rot

For some gardeners blossom end rot is a regular problem on tomatoes. It can also affect peppers, squash and watermelons. Although the sunken, black area on the bottom of the fruit (blossom end) may look like a disease, it is actually a physiological disorder caused by a calcium deficiency in the developing fruit.

If you have tested your soil and brought the pH and calcium levels up if needed, the problem is probably either irregular watering or the fertilizer being used. Avoid using high nitrogen fertilizer, especially ammonium nitrate. Use calcium nitrate or a more slowly released organic fertilizer instead.

If the plant does not have enough water, it does not take up enough calcium even if plenty is in the soil. Although blossom end rot is usually most severe during dry weather, fluctuating soil moisture can cause it as well. To avoid this, mulch the garden to retain moisture and water deeply when needed. Do not allow plants to wilt between watering.
DEADHEADING RHODODENDRONS

Do you need to deadhead the rhododendrons? It is often recommended that the spent flowers should be removed from rhododendrons and mountain laurels, with the idea being that removing the seed capsules allows the plant to put more energy into developing more flower buds. In reality it probably does not make a lot of difference.

But carefully removing those spent flowers may allow those new shoots at the base of the flowers to begin to grow more rapidly, producing more branching. And, besides, the plant will look better without the dead flowers and seed capsules. So if you have the time to do it, carefully break out the faded flower truss while holding the branch firmly with the other hand, being careful not to break the emerging shoots at the base.

HANDS-ON CANNING WORKSHOPS THIS SUMMER

Hands-on canning workshops are great ways to learn the safest techniques for canning and preserving our summertime bounty. This summer we have four hands on classes scheduled. All require pre-registration and registration is confirmed when payment is received. The cost for each class is $10.00 and all classes will be held at the Buncombe County Cooperative Extension Office, 94 Coxe Ave. Asheville.

Let’s Start with Jams! - Thursday, June 2, 9am to 1pm
It’s Pickling Time! - Tuesday, July 12, 9am to 1pm
Canning Beans Safely! - Tuesday, July 26, 9am to 3 pm
Putting Tomatoes By! - Thursday, July 28, 9am to 2pm

Call our office to register or for more information.(828) 255-5522.

BASIC HOME MAINTENANCE COURSE

Neglecting the minor repairs around your home will lead to more expense and lessen a home’s value in the future. Have you wanted to make those basic home repairs but didn’t know where to start? This five-class series will show you how.

Beginning Tuesday, June 7 from 5:30—7:30pm. The remaining dates for the course are June 9, 14, 16 and 21. 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.

To receive this newsletter via email
Phone (828) 255-5522 or email: joyce.plemmons@buncombecounty.org
Focus on Flowers:  
**Going Green in the Garden**  
**Saturday, July 16, 2011**  
**9am - 4pm**

Garden writer, lecturer and photographer Pam Beck is the keynote speaker, and will kick off the day with “Change How You Garden”, with an eye towards common sense, sustainability and developing a deeper understanding of your garden. Beck says that “it is time to reevaluate your landscape and your relationship with it. Let’s plan for sustainable urban landscapes filled with healthy plants. It is time for realistic gardens that are maintainable, water wise, nature friendly, and food producing, and created with a holistic approach.” This lecture with slides is filled with practical suggestions to apply to your own outdoor habitat.

Ms. Beck will be joined by such speakers a Randy Burroughs, Debbie Wood and Linda Blue addressing such topics as “drought tolerant plants” and “common sense container garden displays.” Additional breakout sessions have been added to this year’s agenda to allow for more specialized topics; participants receive handouts and resource information from all presentations.

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.

**Sign Up for E-News**

Here is an opportunity to sign up for notices of coming events offered by Buncombe County’s Extension Master Gardener Volunteers. Extension Master Gardener Volunteers are trained by NC Cooperative Extension to assist with providing educational information to area citizens. They offer gardening information by staffing a Garden Hotline, conducting Saturday Plant Problem Clinics, and staffing Ask a Gardener information tables at many local events, as well as providing Garden Schools and other events. If you would like to be included in periodic email updates of coming educational opportunities offered by Master Gardeners, you can sign up by sending an email with “ADD” in the subject line to buncombemastergardener@gmail.com.

Please note that this address is only for signing up for the e-news. For gardening and other questions, please continue to call (828) 255-5522 for the Master Gardener Hotline, which is open M-Th 8:30—4:30 and Friday 8:30—12:30.

**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, aphids, and spider mites.
EVENTS

- **June 11 & 25**  
  **Plant Problem Clinics**, by Extension Master Gardeners at the WNC Farmers’ Market, 11:00am - 2:00pm in the breezeway between the retail buildings.

- **June 11 & 25**  
  **Backyard Composting Demonstration**, by Extension Master Gardeners at the WNC Farmers’ Market, beside Israel’s Garden Center, 11:00am - 2:00pm.

- **June 15**  
  **Gardening in the Mountains Series**: “Pests and Pesticides, What you need to Know”, Presented by Extension Master Gardeners, Extension Office, 94 Coxe Ave., 10:00am, Free. No registration required.

- **June 25**  
  **Garden Tour** - “Look and Learn in Our Gardens”, 9am-4pm, Starting at Vance School, 98 Sulphur Springs Rd., West Asheville. For more info see front page of this newsletter.

- **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 the Arboretum at 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.