“How beautifully leaves grow old. How full of light and color are their last days.”
- John Burroughs

Time for Frost

Any day now the season’s first frost will bring an end to the summer garden season. Although the “average” first frost occurs in mid-October, we know how fickle Mother Nature can be. Occasionally the first frost has arrived in Buncombe County in late September, other years not until early November.

Although it is quite common to have one or two nights at or near 32 degrees, and then remain above freezing for a few more weeks, protecting warm-season crops like squash and cucumbers in the garden is usually not worth the effort. With cooler temperatures and short days, they usually will not produce any more fruit. Instead put your efforts into cultivating the crops that thrive in cool weather.

Normal October Weather

Weather Averages
For Asheville, North Carolina

Normal October Average High 68.2°F
Normal October Average Low 44.5°F
Normal October Precipitation 2.9”

Hours of Daylight for Asheville, NC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sunrise</th>
<th>Sunset</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>7:25 am</td>
<td>7:15 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 31</td>
<td>7:51 am</td>
<td>6:37 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 October

**Lawn**

- This is a good time to core aerate compacted soils. (See September Mountain Gardener).
- If you have reseeded the lawn, it will be important to keep the tree leaves from accumulating. A leaf blower would be gentler on the seedling grass than the rake.
- This is a good time to fertilize the cool season lawn (fescue, bluegrass) if you did not do it last month.

**Ornamentals**

- 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)
- Purchase spring blooming bulbs. Plant late in October or in November.
- Plant pansies and ornamental cabbage.
- 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.
- Do not fertilize anything other than the lawn.

**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.
- Most blackberries and raspberries produce fruit on second year canes. An exception is ‘Heritage’ red raspberry, which produce two crops each season if pruned in the traditional manner. But they can also be managed by simply cutting all of the canes to the ground in late fall to produce one larger crop in late summer.

**Vegetables**

- Good sanitation is important in the vegetable garden as well. Remove spent plants to the compost pile or turn them into the soil to rot.
- Spray all cabbage family crops with organic B.t. (Bacillus thuringiensis) every 7 to 10 days to control the various caterpillars. Also check plants regularly for aphids, which can be controlled with insecticidal soap.
- Pick green tomatoes before frost. Set them on the kitchen counter to ripen or use them green.
- Harvest sweetpotatoes, pumpkins and winter squashes before frost.

**Other**

- Leave hummingbird feeders out for late migrating birds.
- Clean out bird houses. Songbirds will often use them on cold winter nights.
**Bugs and More Bugs**

Just when homeowners were getting used to dealing with boxelder bugs and multicolored Asian lady beetles invading the house in the fall, now we have more company. The latest additions (more nonnative introductions) are the brown marmorated stinkbug and the kudzu bug.

The **brown marmorated stinkbug** was first detected in the US in 2001, and in NC in 2009. This Asian stink bug feeds on a variety of plants in the landscape, vegetable garden and fruit trees. Perhaps the biggest problem for homeowners is the overwintering behavior in which the bugs may collect in large numbers, seeking shelter in homes and structures, similar to the multicolored Asian lady beetle. They don’t harm people, but can give off an unpleasant odor when crushed or vacuumed. They may start collecting on the side of the house when the weather begins to cool in late September, through October.

The **kudzu bug**, also known as the bean plataupid, lablab bug, or globular stink bug, was reported in Georgia in 2009. By 2011 it was found in most of North Carolina. They feed on plants in the legume family, including kudzu, and are a potential pest to soybean crops. Homes near large patches of kudzu or soybean fields will be most likely to experience the home invasions in the fall.

Unfortunately, for all of these bugs, pesticides are of limited use. Outdoor pesticides, containing a pyrethroids, sprayed on a house may be somewhat helpful, but the residual effectiveness of the chemical will be short. Creating a physical barrier to their entrance into the house is the best preventative.

For more information on these new invaders see:


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**Fall Plant Sale “Garden Gala, Plants and More”**

Buncombe County Master Gardeners are planning their second Fall Plant Sale on Saturday, October 6. The sale will include favorite plants from Master Gardeners’ gardens as well as some garden related items. Extension Master Gardeners will be on hand to assist and answer gardening questions.

The sale will be in the Cooperative Extension parking lot at the corner of Coxe and Hilliard Avenues in Asheville, 9:00am - 1:00pm.
Spotlight: Reblomming Hydrangeas

We usually think of hydrangeas as blooming only once a year, in early to mid summer. But there are some varieties that will put on a second set of blooms in late summer or fall. This is useful not only for a longer bloom season, but to increase the chances of flowering in those years when a cold winter or late spring freeze kill many hydrangea bloom buds.

Several varieties of *Hydrangea arborescens*, or smooth hydrangea are available. This species, including the popular white flowered variety ‘Annabelle’ blooms on new wood, so it can be cut back severely in spring. If the first set of flowers are removed as soon as they fade, they should rebloom in late summer. A popular new pink variety ‘Invincebelle Spirit’ was developed by Dr. Tom Ranney right here at the Mountain Horticulture Crops Research and Extension Center.

The most common garden hydrangea is probably *Hydrangea macrophylla*, or bigleaf hydrangea, which sets its blooms on “old wood” the previous summer. The reblooming varieties actually form a second set of blooms on “new wood” during the summer. Varieties such as ‘Endless Summer’ can be expected to rebloom if spent flowers are removed after flowering, or if they lose the buds in early spring to frost or pruning. For the reblooming hydrangeas to rebloom dependably, they need to be established in the garden and pruned back right after flowering so that about eight weeks of good growing weather exists for new flower buds to develop and open.

The table below lists varieties that happened to be in a test plot at the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center during the winter of 2000 when all of the plants froze to the ground. These still bloomed twice the following summer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CULTIVAR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Summer Beauty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kluis Superba</td>
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<td>Altona</td>
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<tr>
<td>LaMarne</td>
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<td>Blue Boy</td>
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<td>Lanarth White</td>
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<td>Blue Danube</td>
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<td>Lilacina</td>
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<td>Blue Prince</td>
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<td>Marechal Foch</td>
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<td>Coerulea Lace</td>
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<td>Nikko Blue</td>
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<td>Decatur Blue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revelation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mme. Emile Mouillere</td>
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<td>Souv. Pres. Doumier</td>
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<tr>
<td>Europa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veitchii</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geisha Girl</td>
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<tr>
<td>White Wave</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Cultivars of *Hydrangea macrophylla* that were flowering in July as well as in October 2001 at MHCREC, Mills River, NC
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 2 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://www.caes.uga.edu/publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=6972

Backyard Composting

When the fall leaves begin to drop many people are inspired to start a compost pile. You can build a state-of-the-art compost bin, or use a simple enclosure, or just make a pile. The process requires some carbon sources (brown stuff), nitrogen sources (green stuff), moisture and air.

For a leaflet on composting, see: http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/pdf/ag-467.pdf

If you would like to learn more about backyard composting, Extension Master Gardeners maintain a compost demonstration at the WNC Farmers’ Market. They will be holding the last demonstration for the season on Saturday, October 13, between 11:00am and 2:00pm. Drop by for a visit.

Pumpkin Trivia

- The top pumpkin productions states are Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania and California.
- Pumpkins contain potassium and vitamin A and can be used to make soups, pies and breads.
- Pumpkins originated in Central America and are members of the cucurbit family.
- The largest pumpkin grown, so far, weighed 1,818 pounds and was grown in Ormstown, Quebec, Canada.
EVENTS

- **October 6**  
  **EMG Plant Sale: “Garden Gala, Plants and More”**, 9am - 1pm, rain or shine, Extension Parking lot, corner of Coxe and Hilliard Avenues in downtown Asheville

- **October 6**  
  **“Hey Day”**, at the WNC Nature Center, 9:30 - 4:00, EMG Heirloom Garden info table.

- **October 6**  
  **Plant Problem Clinic**, 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 13 & 27**  
  **Back Yard Composting Demonstrations**, by Extension Master Gardeners at WNC Farmers’ Market, 11am – 2pm.

- **October 17**  
  **Gardening in the Mountains: Effortless Edibles in the Landscape**, presented by Extension Master Gardener volunteers at the Buncombe County Cooperative Extension office, 94 Coxe Ave. Asheville, 10am. No pre-registration, Free.