

MOUNTAIN GARDENER

Buncombe County's Extension Newsletter for Home Lawn & Garden Enthusiasts

Buncombe County Center, 94 Coxe Ave. Asheville, NC 28801-3620

October 2014

HELPING GARDENERS PUT KNOWLEDGE TO WORK



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Support EMGV's with 'Bloomin Buck\$'

Did you know that there is a way to financially support Buncombe County Master Gardener educational programs AND order great Spring-flowering bulbs, gardening books, tools, soil supplements, (and even gift certificates for such delights)? Brent and Becky's bulbs in Gloucester, VA has a fundraising program called "Bloomin Buck\$" that is designed to earn participating non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations cash from orders that specify one of the organizations by name. Three hundred and eighty two organizations benefit from this program, including Buncombe County Extension Master Gardeners.

It is so simple. This fall, before mid-November, all you have to do is one of the following:

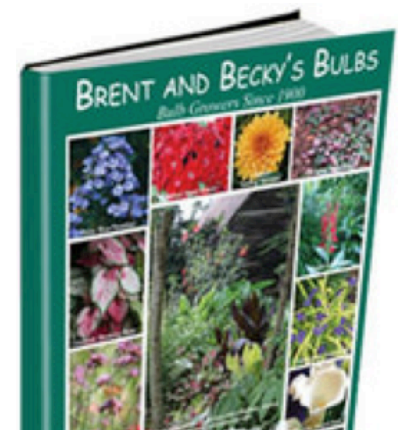
Go to www.bloominbucks.com and select Buncombe County Master Gardeners as the organization to benefit from your online order. **Or - Mention** Buncombe County Extension Master Gardeners when placing phone orders through Brent and Becky's toll-free line: 877-661-2852 – **Or - Download** a 2014 Fall catalog from www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com or pick one up from the Extension office, at 94 Coxe Avenue. On your mail order form and below the Total Due line write in "Buncombe County Master Gardeners".

Normal October Weather Weather Averages For Asheville, North Carolina

Normal October Average High 68.1°
Normal October Average Low 44.6°
Normal October Precipitation 2.91"

Hours of Daylight for Asheville, NC

	Sunrise	Sunset
October 1	7:25am	7:15pm
October 31	7:51am	6:37pm

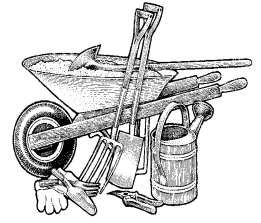


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October Garden Chores

Lawns



- This is a good time to core aerate compacted soils. Use a plug aerator rather than a spike to allow air and water to better penetrate the soil.
- If you have reseeded the lawn, it's important to keep the tree leaves from accumulating. The leaf blower is easier on the seedling grass than a rake.
- This is a good time to fertilize the cool season lawn (fescue, bluegrass) if you did not do it last month.

Ornamentals

- Fall is a good time to plant trees and shrubs. Pull roots loose on container grown plants and do not plant too deep. Dig the planting hole only as deep as the root ball is tall and twice as wide. Water thoroughly and mulch.
- Purchase spring blooming bulbs and begin planting late in October and November.
- Plant pansies, violas, johnny jump ups, kale and ornamental cabbage for cool season color in containers or garden beds.
- Remove spent annuals and shake out seeds if you want zinnas, cosmos, clemome, and similar reseeding annuals to return next year.
- Leave seed heads on some perennials for the small birds to finish off.
- Clean up houseplants. Inspect carefully for insect infestations. Treat before bringing the plants indoors.

Fruits

- Practice good sanitation if diseases were in the gardens and orchards. Be sure to rake leaves, remove any fruit left in the trees and pick up all fruit from the ground.
- Attend to the strawberry bed and pull weeds, fertilize and water if needed.

Vegetables

- Good sanitation is important here as well. Remove spent plants to the compost pile and 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 herbs before a hard frost. Make pesto with Basil or freeze leaves of others for later use.
- Consider planting a cover crop to turn under in early spring. Be sure to leave some open space (mulched with leaves) for early spring planting.
- Spray all crucifers (cabbage family crops) with organic B.t. (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) every 7 to 10 days to manage the various caterpillars that eat the plants.
- Harvest sweet potatoes, pumpkins and winter squashes before frost.
- Plant garlic.
- Buy row cover and make preparations to overwinter fall vegetables.

Other

- Leave hummingbird feeders out for late migrating birds.
 - Clean out birdhouses. Songbirds will often use them on cold winter nights.
-

Gardening in the Mountains – “Building Soil – October 21, 10am and 5:30pm

Fall is the perfect time to develop productive soils and prepare beds for spring planting. Explore the development of the soil food web through such topics as mycorrhizae, bio char, sheet composting and heugelkultur and the creation of plant-ready, no-till beds for the spring.

Hard Frost Around the Corner

Any day now the first frost will bring an end to the summer garden season. Although the "average" first frost occurs in mid-October we know that can shift from year to year. Buncombe County has had frost as early as late September and as late as early November.

It is also common to have temperatures dip as low as 32 degrees for a couple of nights and then return to warmer temperatures for several weeks. For this reason many gardeners will protect vegetable crops during this time to get a little more out of the summer garden. Summer crops however tend to slow down with cooler temperatures as well as lower light levels.

Gardeners who have planted a fall garden can set up a small hoop house or tunnel made from plastic tubing bent over into hoops covered with both a sheet of floating row cover and a sheet of clear plastic. This offers double protection – the row cover for when temperatures dip and stay at or below freezing and the plastic for when temperatures go lower for longer periods of time.

This approach is most useful for really cold-hardy greens such as kale, chard, or mustard greens. Be sure not to close it up too tightly and to pull the plastic back especially on really midwinter sunny days to provide ventilation and to avoid burning the plants.



Take Notes Now, Rotate Crops Later

As you pick the last of your few remaining peppers and squash or pull late blighted tomatoes take time to grab a note pad and make a few simple notes about the location of the plants you grew and how they performed. This will help when it comes time next year to lay out the garden. Rotating where you plant your plants is important in preventing crop-specific pest and diseases from building up and carrying over from one season to the next.

Ideally, it's best to rotate related vegetables or vegetables in the same family so they grow in a particular spot only one year out of three. Which can be a hard thing to do if you have a small garden – but do the best you can. Doing this can be crucial for instance if you grow both potatoes and tomatoes. Any little piece of potato that remains in the garden and is infected with late blight can infect your tomatoes the following year.

Landscape Mountain Home Site Class Offered

Planting on slopes, preventing erosion, managing storm water runoff, selecting the best plants, identifying and controlling invasive plants, dealing with wildlife and fire protection are issues common to many of our mountain home sites.

Buncombe County Extension Master Gardener Volunteers are offering a special 2-day program "**Analyze and Landscape your WNC Mountain Home Site**" is good for anyone who is new to gardening in the area, wants to develop a landscape plan, is building a house, or simply seeking solutions to existing problems.

Classes are scheduled for **November 15th and 22nd, 9:00am – 1:30pm both days** and will be held at the Botanical Gardens at Asheville on Weaver Boulevard. Cost for the program is \$30 for BGA members and \$45 for nonmembers. **Reservations are required.** Contact the Botanical Gardens of Asheville for additional information and/or register at (828) 252-5190.



What's Wrong with my.....Red Oak Tree

The best way to investigate tree health is to look and be observant for symptoms that indicate good health or decline. Rarely do we see the cause but more often see the symptoms long after the injury or stress occurred which leads to a decline in vigor and health, allowing insects or disease to enter. For instance with red oaks, we've seen drought over a number of years lead to their decline (more than white oaks). Construction damage, usually in the vicinity of the tree, especially in the root zone area can be very problematic.

Symptoms of decline (or health) can be apparent by the amount of leaf coverage in the canopy. If more than 50% of the canopy is dead (or leafless) then the tree is in major decline and more likely will not recover. Also if the tree sends up sprouts or shoots from the main trunk area, the tree is experiencing stress. For older trees a dead branch here and there is common and not so much a concern. Be sure to inspect the trunk and the exposed roots at the base and look for holes or areas of decay where insects have opportunity to enter and feed or where the bark might be coming off and revealing soft wood or decay underneath.

There are many reasons why large trees are so important to the urban garden and to the plants, animals and people that live in and under them and as many reasons why we need to do all we can to take care of them.

Unfortunately Master Gardeners are not in the position to come out and look at trees but are available to help you learn more about taking care of trees and looking for a tree professional to help you. Please don't hesitate to call 828-255-5522 or visit: <http://www.isa-arbor.com> to see how to best care for your trees.

Fall Color in the Garden

Now is a great time to be on the look out for fall color additions to the garden. No matter the prediction or your location up or down or around the mountain there is always good color somewhere in the Asheville area. Below is a list of trees and shrubs that can be added to the garden to extend the color season close to home.

<u>Common name</u>	<u>botanical name</u>	<u>color</u>
TREES		
Japanese maples	<i>Acer palmatum</i>	varies by cultivar
Red maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	yellow, red
Sugar maple	<i>Acer saccharum</i>	yellow, orange, red
Black gum	<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	scarlet or yellow
Sourwood	<i>Oxydendrum arboretum</i>	dark red
SHRUBS		
Fothergilla	<i>Fothergilla gardenia</i>	yellow to red
Witch Hazel	<i>Hamamelis</i> spp.	yellow to red
Blueberry	<i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i>	red
Viburnum	<i>Viburnum</i> spp	some have red berries
Virginia sweetspire	<i>Itea Virginica</i>	crimson

Master Gardener Plant Sale – October 4 – rain or shine – 9am-1pm

Extension Master Gardener Volunteers will sell plants, gently used garden tools and garden related items. There will be an information table and a lot of EMG volunteers on duty to answer your garden questions. This event helps deliver great information about plants that will thrive in Western NC and also provide funds to sustain the ongoing activities of the EMGV program here in Buncombe County. Please join us at **135 Coxe Ave.** Asheville, at Mike Byer Auto and Truck Repair – across the street and approx. one block south of the NC Cooperative Extension Service office at 94 Coxe Ave.

Mountain Gardener Newsletter Update

If you are currently receiving a paper version of this newsletter and would like to change over to email please let us know by emailing Joyce Plemmons at joyce_plemmons@ncsu.edu
Put “**Mountain Gardener Email Sign Up**” on the subject line.

Preserving Herbs for Cold Winter Meals

Now is the time to preserve fresh herbs for those cold winter meals. Although drying is good for some, freezing works for others to better lock in flavor. Mint, Rosemary and Sage for instance dry easily and retain flavor nicely. Be sure to cut just enough to get you through the winter since pruning too much in the fall can make the plant more susceptible to cold damage. Make sure herbs are thoroughly dried before storing in a sealed container and place on a dark cool shelf.

Basil leaves easily bruise and are best processed with a little olive oil for a premade pesto base. If you have the ingredients (garlic, cheese and nuts) go ahead and make it all up. Ice cube trays are good but also smearing a thin layer in a shallow sheet and freezing it works well too. This can then be broken up into smaller pieces, dropped into a zip lock bag so when it comes time to cook, you can pull out what you need and presto – pesto! Chives, Tarragon, Parsley, Fennel and Cilantro are a few herbs that can be snipped up into small containers and put in the freezer for later use.

Fall Plant Spring Bulbs

It's fall and THE time to plant spring flowering bulbs. Although they are dormant when we buy and plant them many bulbs will come back year after year providing that much needed color after a long winters nap. Like any perennial plant, bulbs have their own growth cycle. Following a fall planting (or anytime before the ground freezes), a period of cold temperatures and they've grown roots and become well established bulbs are triggered into growing foliage and then flowering. Once they flower they store nutrients back into the bulb via the foliage, the foliage gradually dies back through the season and the bulb goes dormant again until the following spring when it does it's thing all over again.

Bulbs are a great addition to any garden, container or natural woodland meadow or lawn. They can be used in large sweeps or as companions with other seasonal perennials. Smaller bulbs like snow drops or crocus go well in low groundcovers, lawns or in rock gardens. Larger ones like daffodils go well with daylilies or hostas where after the bulbs have flowered the daylilies or hostas grow and cover the dying bulb foliage. You can also mix or plant in layers. For instance plant Darwin hybrid tulips 8” deep with crocus directly on top at 4” deep. The crocus will bloom in the spring followed later by the tulips.

Daffodils, Tulips and Crocus are great for those who might be new to gardening with bulbs. Even within the daffodil group there are many different types to choose from and work with. There are 12 different divisions of daffodils everything from the large King Alfred trumpet types to the smaller yet fragrant Poeticus types. Tulips can offer early color with some types such as the Species tulips that are known to perennialize better than most. And with the crocus – again – many colors and types to choose not only for spring color but fall too! For the more advanced bulbs grower be sure to try Fritillaria, Eremus, Allium, Cyclamen, etc.

Take advantage of the season and make one last push to bring more seasonal color into your garden. You will be greatly rewarded later by doing the work now.

For more information check out this link:

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/quickref/flowers/spring.html>

Also check out Brent and Becky's Bulbs online catalog for a wealth of information on selecting, purchasing and growing bulbs of ALL types. They are a 4th generation bulb supplier in Gloucester Virginia offering high quality bulbs and a passion for sharing their knowledge and experience. Check out their online catalog and their web pod casts through the 'Bloomin Buck\$' fundraising program.

EVENTS

- Oct. 4 - EMG Fall Plant Sale**, 9-1, Mike Byers Auto lot, 135 Coxe Ave. Asheville
- Oct. 4 - City Tailgate Market**, 8:30am – 12:30pm, info table, 161 S. Charlotte St., Asheville
- Oct. 11 - Plant Clinic, and Compost Demo.**, WNC Farmer's Market, 11am-2pm.
- Oct. 21 - Gardening in the Mountains**, 'Building Soil, Ext. Office, 94 Coxe Ave. Asheville – 10am and 5:30pm, pre-register, Free.

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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 828-255-5522 during business hours at least 3 days prior to the event.

Recommendations for the use of agricultural 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 North Carolina Cooperative Extension nor discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned. Individuals who use agricultural 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 regulations and examine a current product label before applying any chemical. For assistance, contact your county Cooperative Extension agent.