

# MOUNTAIN GARDENER

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

Buncombe County Cooperative Extension Center

July 2015

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## Contact Us

### Alison Arnold

Extension Agent, Agriculture

Buncombe County Center  
94 Coxe Avenue  
Asheville, NC 28801

828-255-5522 (Phone)  
828-255-5202 (Fax)

<http://buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu>

Email to:  
[alison.arnold@ncsu.edu](mailto:alison.arnold@ncsu.edu)

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## Helping Gardeners Put Knowledge to Work

### Plan Now For Mountain State Fair Entries

Look to your garden now and make plans to enter the Standard Flower Show on September 9<sup>th</sup> or the Flower and Garden Show on September 15<sup>th</sup> at the North Carolina Mountain State Fair from September 11<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>. Buncombe County Extension Master Gardeners sponsors these shows and encourages amateur gardeners of **all ages** to enter the competition. Cash premiums are presented for Blue, Red and White Ribbons. Best of Show and/or the Judge's Choice can also be awarded.

Complete set of rules for submitting entries and other useful information can be found online at [www.mountainfair.org](http://www.mountainfair.org). Go to Mountain State Fair and then Competitions to find Exhibitor Rules and Entry Forms. Find Flower and Garden under Department M. **Entry Forms must be received by August 28, 2015.** Entry forms just show your intent to enter and may be emailed.

### Standard Flower Show sample categories include:

Cut Annuals  
Cut Perennials  
Dahlias  
Cut Foliage (no blooms or seed heads)  
Culinary Herbs  
Flowering or Berried Shrubs and Trees  
Ornamental Grasses  
Cut Roses  
Hanging Plants  
Container Grown Plants  
Wreaths (by hand)  
Design and Arrangements



**Persons with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency may request accommodations to participate in activities mentioned in this newsletter. Please contact Alison Arnold at 828-255-5522 during business hours at least 3 days prior to the event to discuss accommodations.**

### Normal July Weather Averages For Asheville, North Carolina

Normal July Average High 85.0°  
Normal July Average Low 65.0°  
Normal July Precipitation 3.35"

### Hours of Daylight for Asheville, NC

	Sunrise	Sunset
July 1	6:18 am	8:50pm
July 31	6:38am	8:35 pm

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## Garden Chores for July 2015

### Lawns

- If brown patch fungus disease has developed in the lawn, the best steps to reduce the spread of the disease are to avoid mowing or even walking on the lawn when it is wet, and do not irrigate.
- Mow the fescue and bluegrass lawns 3 inches high.
- There are not many Zoysia lawns in the mountains, but if you have one, the warm-season grasses can be fertilized with a half a pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet.

### Ornamentals

- Don't fertilize shrubs and trees and complete any pruning early in the month.
- Deadhead spent flowers to encourage continued blooming on annuals and re-blooming on some perennials.
- Container gardens require attention. Fertilize every few weeks with liquid fertilizer and cut back plants as needed.
- Don't forget to water newly planted trees and shrubs—weekly if needed.

### Fruits

- Prune fruiting canes from blackberries and raspberries after harvest.
- Prune the vigorous water sprouts on tree fruits to reduce excess growth.

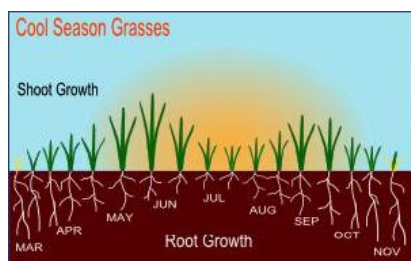
### Vegetables

- Consistent moisture is important for preventing blossom-end-rot on tomatoes (and sometimes squash or peppers). Mulch helps as well as attention to regular irrigation.
- Keep tall vegetables supported with stakes or cages to keep foliage and fruit off the ground.
- Keep a watch out for early or late blight on tomatoes. The best way to prevent these diseases is to maintain weekly fungicide sprays.
- Cut back basil, mint and oregano to keep them compact, encourage new foliage growth and prevent these herbs from blooming and going to seed.
- Harvest vegetables when young, tender and tasty.
- Dig potatoes when the foliage begins to die.
- Plan the fall garden. Brussels sprouts should be planted in July, most other cool-season crops in August.
- Start seeds in pots for plants such as broccoli, cabbage and collards.
- There is still time to plant late crops of squash, bush beans or cucumbers.

## Cool Season Grasses Slow Down

Cool-season grasses such as fine fescues, tall fescues, Kentucky bluegrass, and perennial ryegrass grow best in the moderate temperatures of spring and fall. They, however, tend to slow down or even go dormant (turn brown) during the summer, when heat and drought conditions may be prevalent.

Kentucky bluegrass and fine fescues (creeping red fescue and hard fescue) are the first to go dormant followed by the more tolerant tall fescue and perennial ryegrass. In a lawn with a mixture of grasses (most lawns) the result is a patchy or thinning appearance as grasses go dormant at different times. Irrigating lawns when grasses are dormant or under heat or drought stress runs the increased risk of disease and insect problems. Wait it out and give it time. Dormant lawns green-up when early fall rains and cooler temperatures arrive.



## Two Emerging Pests in WNC

The N.C. Forest Service is reporting outbreaks of two forest pests that have already had significant impacts on trees in the western part of the state.

“Oaks in Western North Carolina, particularly red oaks, are losing leaves as a result of oak leaf blister, a disease caused by a fungus,” said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. “In addition, foresters are reporting damage from yellow-poplar leaf mining weevil, which is causing widespread browning and defoliation on yellow-poplar trees.”

Most years, oak leaf disease is of minor consequence and fluctuations are typically associated with early spring weather, said State Forester David Lane. “Oak tree leaves will have light green, yellow or white leaf spots. As the disease progresses, the spots form yellow or brown puckered lesions or blisters,” Lane said. “When the infection is severe, the entire leaf yellows, curls and drops prematurely.”

Chemical control is not needed, as the disease affects only the leaves and, as with most defoliating pests, a single year of defoliation will not affect the long-term health of the tree, Lane said. Landowners are instead encouraged to maintain general tree health, such as watering during dry periods.

The yellow-poplar leaf mining weevil is damaging mostly yellow-poplars, but it can also attack magnolias and sassafras trees, Lane said. Adult weevils feed on leaf tissue in April and May. They then mate, lay eggs, and when the immature weevils emerge in early summer, they mine the leaf, or feed on the internal tissues. As a result, the leaves die and turn brown.

Most years, infestations are not widespread and are generally not considered a threat to yellow-poplar timber, Lane said. Outbreaks have been recorded in the Eastern U.S. since 1960. During the 1960s, outbreaks similar to the ones being seen now caused significant foliage loss on yellow-poplar in the Appalachian Mountain region, Lane said.

Foliage destruction temporarily reduces the aesthetic values of landscape trees. To manage the pest, promoting general tree health is best. The outbreak should subside on its own, especially with the help of native wasps, which destroy up to 50 percent of the weevil larvae, Lane said.

Press Release provided by Brian Heath, forest health specialist - N.C. Forest Service



Oak Leaf Blister on Southern Red Oak



Yellow Poplar Leaf Mining Weevil

## Gaps in the Garden

Utilize open spaces created between spring and fall crops to build organic matter. Although there are a number of short-season legumes and grasses, one broadleaf cover crop to consider is buckwheat.

Below is a description taken from the Horticulture Information Leaflet for Summer Cover Crops:

<http://content.ces.ncsu.edu/summer-cover-crops/>

**Buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum*)** - Buckwheat is a very rapidly growing, broadleaf summer annual that flowers within 4 to 6 weeks. It reaches 2.5 feet in height and is single-stemmed with many lateral branches. It has a deep taproot and fibrous, superficial roots. It can be grown to maturity between spring and fall vegetable crops, suppressing weed growth and recycling nutrients during that period. Buckwheat flowers are very attractive to insects, and some growers use this cover as a means to attract beneficial insects into cropping systems. Buckwheat is an effective phosphorous scavenger. It is succulent, easy to incorporate, and decomposes rapidly. The main disadvantage to buckwheat is that it sets seed quickly and if allowed to go to seed, buckwheat may become a weed problem in subsequent crops.



Buckwheat

The optimal time to incorporate buckwheat is a week after flowering, before seed is set. The seeding rate is 30 to 90 pounds per acre; higher rates are used when broadcasting. Seed should be drilled 1/2 inch deep, or broadcast and incorporated with a light disking. Buckwheat can be planted anytime in the spring, summer or fall, but is frost-sensitive.

## Heat in the Garden

Here are a few things that could be happening in your garden as a result to the summer heat:

- **Poor Fruit Set** – When temperature goes above 85 degrees flowers can drop off or not open for pollinators on garden plants like tomatoes, squash, peppers, melons, cucumbers and pumpkins.
- **Sunburn** - Exposure to strong sun can cause scorch or sunburn on ripening fruit.
- **Slow Ripening** – The maturation process of vegetables and their color development (especially in tomatoes) can be slowed when temperatures are outside of their ideal range.
- **Blossom End Rot** – Calcium uptake may not be quick enough to distribute it to expanding fruit. Uneven watering will also result in the same problem, as the plant needs moisture in order to take up and move calcium to the fruit.
- **Bitterness** – Both heat and dry soils can cause cucumbers to become bitter.

## Heat in the Landscape

During periods of hot, dry weather leaves on Japanese Maples and other tender or exposed plants can develop leaf scorch. Browning of leaf margins and/or yellowing or darkening of the areas between the main leaf veins is symptomatic of this condition. Over time leaves may dry, turn completely brown, and become brittle. Damage typically occurs to trees and shrubs in the upper portions of the plants where exposure is greatest to extreme sun, heat and/or wind.

Leaf scorch on narrow-leaf evergreens can also happen and appears as brown or purple-brown discoloration of the needle tips. If unfavorable conditions become more severe, browning of needles increases but should not be confused with the naturally occurring browning of older interior needles.

## Is it a Flying Termite or Winged Ant?

As with any problem-solving situation it's important to correctly identify the object of our concern. Typical concerns include weeds, diseases, and insects; it is especially important to know how to identify pests when we are talking about a destructive pest such as termites. What are often thought to be termites typically end up being winged ants. As you can see from the diagram below, the differences in wings, body and antennae help to more easily distinguish the two, ultimately helping us know what we are dealing with.

### Garden Precautions and Preventing Termites

Both home and garden maintenance is critical to eliminating and preventing conditions that are conducive to insect activity. An inspection by a pest control professional is the best way to head off these problems, but doing your own regular inspections and making small changes in your garden can also be very helpful.

### Modify the Habitat

Make changes to the area adjacent to the house to reduce desirable pest habitat. Keep mulch, leaf litter and vegetation at least 10-12 inches away from the house foundation. Definitely store piles of lumber, firewood, bricks, and stones away from the house.

### Protect the Siding

Siding should always be at least 6 inches (preferably higher) above the grade or soil line. Never allow plants to cover the siding and never dig up the soil up within 12 inches of the house, the area most likely treated for termites. Digging up the soil or putting new topsoil over this area allows termites and other pests to bridge the treated soil and access your foundation.

### Plan for Growth

Determine how large the plants will be in 10-15 (or more) years in terms of height and width, and then plant accordingly. Providing this space allows access for exterior house maintenance, good air circulation for house and plants and prevents damage to the siding and access by pests. Also prune shrubs so they don't block airflow through foundation vents.

For more information visit:

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/Urban/termites/prevent.html>

## Canning Adjustments for Higher Altitudes: From Cathy Hohenstein, FCS Agent

Remember to can safely in our mountains. As altitude increases, the temperature of the water in the canner is lower at a given pressure, so you need to adjust the pressure to get the required temperature. Call our office for more information on canning and preserving safely or for class schedule. Remember to have your pressure gauge checked each year. Call our office for a time to bring it in to be tested or for more food preservation information. (828) 255-5522.

### For dial-gauge processing changes:

- 0-2000 feet                      11 pounds pressure
- 2001-4000 feet                12 pounds pressure
- 4001-6000 feet                13 pounds pressure

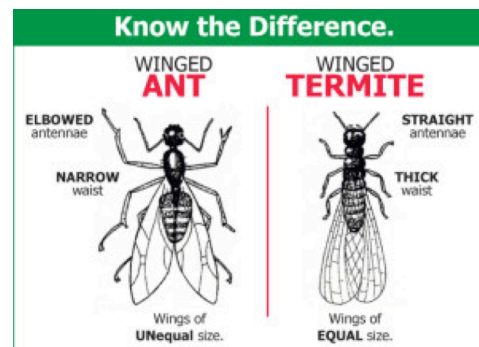
### For weighted gauge adjustments

- 0-1000 feet                      10 pounds pressure
- Greater than 1000 feet       15 pounds pressure.

### Boiling water canner adjustments

The processing time will increase because the water starts to boil at a lower temperature.

- 1,001 – 3,000                    add 5 minutes to time
- 3,001 – 6,000                    add 10 minutes to time





Buncombe County Center  
North Carolina Cooperative Extension  
94 Coxe Avenue  
Asheville, NC 28801-3620

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## UPCOMING NEWS

### **Gardening In The Mountains Series – July 16<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 am**

Join Debbie Green and Bob Wardwell, NC State Extension Master Gardener Volunteers, for their presentation titled “**Good Bug or Bad Bug?**” on July 16<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM. Do you assume that any insect you see in your garden is a “bad bug”? Or do you recognize that some insects are “good bugs”? If you want to learn how to decide which insects are harmful or beneficial and what you should—or shouldn’t—do, come learn the basics of insect identification and Integrated Pest Management. Bring insects (in a bug-proof container, please!), insect-damaged plant samples or photos if you have specific bugs you’d like to identify. Although this program is free, registration is requested. Call (828) 255-5522. Location: Buncombe County Cooperative Extension Center, 94 Coxe Avenue, Asheville, NC. Free parking is across the street (Lot 16). Please ask for a parking pass from the front desk.

### **Ask A Gardener Table at an Area Tailgate Market**

July 4 - always 1st Saturday of each month - City Market Tailgate on Charlotte and Eagle Street  
July 14 - always 2nd Tuesday of each month - West Asheville Tailgate on Haywood Rd  
July 18 - always 3rd Saturday of each month - North Asheville Tailgate on UNCA campus

### **Plant Clinic and Compost Demonstration**

July 11 and July 25 (11:00 am – 2:00 pm) – always the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of each month through October. Visit the plant clinic in the breezeway between the retail buildings, and the compost demo is at the entrance to Jesse Israel’s inside the WNC Farmer’s Market.

Did you know you could receive this newsletter via email? [Sign up on the website!](http://buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu/)  
<http://buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu/>

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