

# MOUNTAIN GARDENER

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

Buncombe County Cooperative Extension Center

August 2015

## Helping Gardeners Put Knowledge to Work

### Inside This Issue

- August Garden Chores, p.2
- Garden Tour Sponsors, p.3
- Shedding Bark, p.3
- Mountain State Fair, p.4
- Late Blight Disposal, p.4
- Preserving Tomatoes, p.4
- Clethra 'Ruby Spice', p.5
- 2016 EMGV Training, p.5
- Lady Beetle or Mexican Bean Beetle, p.5
- Gardening in the Mountains, p.6
- Ask A Gardener, p.6
- Plant Clinic. P.6
- Backyard Composting Demonstration p.6

### 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)

Distributed in furtherance of the acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University commit themselves to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, or disability. In addition, the two Universities welcome all persons without regard to sexual orientation. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.

### Thank You For Supporting 2015 Extension Master Gardener Garden Tour

It is through the outstanding support of the 2015 Garden Tour sponsors, donors and participants that the work of the EMGVs and their educational outreach initiatives such as grants for local school gardens can continue. Thank You!

#### Sponsors:

Ace Hardware  
AgCare Products, Inc.  
Air Vent Exteriors  
Appalachian Creek Garden Center  
Arborcare of Asheville, Inc.  
Artisan Café  
Asheville Blue Ridge Rose Society  
Asheville Mulch Yard  
B.B.Barns Garden, Gift & Landscaping Co  
Biltmore  
Blue Ridge Daylilies  
Earth Fare  
Greater Scapes Landscape and Lawncare, Inc.  
Jesse Israel & Sons Garden Center  
K-2 Irrigation Services, Inc.

M.E. Gray – Keller Williams  
Oppenheimer & Co., Inc.  
Painters Greenhouse  
Reems Creek Nursery  
Snow Creek Landscaping  
Spa at Biltmore Village  
Sow True Seed  
Thyme in The Garden  
Tupelo Honey Café  
Western North Carolina Daylily Club

#### Friends/Donors

Friends of the Earth  
Sandy Mush Herb Nursery  
Asheville Garden Club

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

|                             |       |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Normal August Average High  | 84.0° |
| Normal August Average Low   | 63.0° |
| Normal August Precipitation | 3.43" |

#### Hours of Daylight for Asheville, NC

|           | Sunrise | Sunset |
|-----------|---------|--------|
| August 1  | 6:38am  | 8:34pm |
| August 31 | 7:01am  | 7:29pm |

**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.**

**NC** State University  
A&T State University  
**COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION**

Empowering People • Providing Solutions

---

## **Garden Chores for August 2015**

### **Lawns**

- Wait to seed and fertilize cool-season fescue or bluegrass lawns until the very end of August and even later if the heat continues. Cool-season grasses won't respond when the weather is hot and dry.
- Now is a good time to examine turf for the presence of white grubs. With a heavy-duty knife or a spade, cut a 1 square-foot flap of sod and roll it back. Examine the soil and roots in the top 3 to 4 inches. Repeat this process in several locations. If you find an average of five or more grubs per square foot, treatment may be justified.

### **Ornamentals**

- Stay on top of weeds and remove them before they go to seed.
- Reinforce supports on tall varieties of Dahlias and remove lateral flower buds to increase size of the one remaining flower.
- Monitor trees or shrubs planted last year and provide a deep watering once a week when rainfall is insufficient.
- Deadhead garden perennials by removing faded flowers and dying stems to improve the appearance and possibly encourage a second bloom.
- Container gardens may need some late summer TLC and could benefit from grooming and a dose of liquid fertilizer.
- Now is NOT the time to fertilize shrubs and trees as they slow down growth and move towards fall leaf drop and winter dormancy. One exception is fall or reblooming roses where a quick release fertilizer can provide a late season boost.
- Also HOLD OFF on major pruning of shrubs and trees until late winter. This stimulates tender new growth that can be killed by our first hard frost.

### **Fruits**

- Continue fungicide treatments on tree fruits. Follow label directions for pre-harvest intervals.
- Watch for peach tree borers on peach, cherry and plum trees.

### **Vegetables**

- Late blight on tomatoes and mildews on squash and cucumbers have arrived. Continue fungicide treatments to prevent disease development. If blight appears, remove plants immediately to protect remaining plants. Avoid working in the garden when the plants are wet. It's easy to spread diseases during this time.
- Start planting fall vegetables anytime in August. Look for starts of cool-season crops like cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower at tailgates and in garden centers.
  - Sow seeds for lettuce, kale, spinach, turnips and beets. Keep seedbeds consistently moist as seedlings emerge.
  - Practice good sanitation. Remove spent plants from the garden as soon as harvest is complete. Also remove diseased plants as soon as possible.

### **Other**

- Watch for yellowjacket nests while mowing and working around the outside of your home. This is the time of year they become very aggressive in defending their nest.
- Browning leaves on Black Locust trees are a result of the Locust Leaf Miner. Early in the season the larvae eat into the inner layer of the leaf tissue and later the adult beetle skeletonizes the undersurface of the leaf causing them to turn brown.
  - Early yellowing and leaf drop on ornamental Cherries typically happens this time of year and is caused by either bacterial or fungal disease. Both are seen annually in our region and usually are not problematic. Best approach is to maintain good plant health.
- Reports continue to come in about browning leaves on Tulip trees and is the result of the Yellow Poplar weevil. For more information see [http://www.ncforestservice.gov/news\\_pubs/newsdesk\\_2015.htm](http://www.ncforestservice.gov/news_pubs/newsdesk_2015.htm)

### **Think Before You Spray**

Resolving a plant problem starts with diagnosing the "problem". Which begins with an accurate identification of the plant and the pest (if there is one). From there a treatment can be developed. Careful consideration of what, when and if a spray is needed can save money and the lives of many beneficial insects.

---

## 2015 Tomato Field Day August 13, 2015



### Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center

Mailing Address:  
455 Research Drive  
Mills River, NC 28759

Field day to be held at:  
74 Research Drive  
Mills River, NC 28759

Registration\*: 8:00 am

Field Tours: 9:00 am -12:00 pm

Complimentary Lunch: 12:00 pm

Optional Tours: 1:00 pm

(Apples, Ornamentals, Field Crops, Hops)

\*Please pre-register at: <http://go.ncsu.edu/tomatofieldday>



Sponsorship opportunities are available.

For more information please contact Jessica Edney at [jessica\\_edney@ncsu.edu](mailto:jessica_edney@ncsu.edu) or 828-684-3562.

NC Pesticide Credits applied for.



### Make Plans To Attend Field Day

This is an excellent way to learn the various areas of research and development that is taking place in partnership with NCSU, Extension and local industry. All in your own back yard!

For directions, schedule and more information go to...  
<http://go.ncsu.edu/tomatofieldday>



*If you have a disability or desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact the NC Agricultural Research Service at 919.515-2717 during business hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at least two weeks before the event to request accommodations.*

## Watering the Garden

When you hear that vegetable gardens need at least 1 inch of water each week but aren't sure how to accurately measure this, it's always best to examine the soil to determine when to water. Generally, if the soil is dry when scratched to a depth of 1 to 2 inches, watering is necessary. If there's adequate moisture watering can be delayed a day or two.

Watering often and for short periods of time promotes shallow root development, in the top 1 to 2 inches of soil rather than at a greater depth. When the weather gets hotter and the top few inches of the soil dries out, we often have to water more frequently just to keep the plants from wilting.

Providing a slow, deep soak is a good practice for all plants – vegetables, perennials and trees. This encourages deep root development that maintains plant health and helps them withstand dry periods. After a time it becomes easier to know how long it takes for water to reach the desired depth. The best way to check is to dig into the soil with a long trowel or shovel to see how far the water has actually penetrated, hopefully into the root zone.

If you use a lawn sprinkler, be sure to keep the application rate low enough that water does not run off site. Water applied too fast will not soak in. Also make sure that the vegetable plants do not interfere with the application pattern. Often this requires mounting the sprinkler on a small platform above the plants.

A variety of drip and trickle irrigation systems are available through garden centers and mail order catalogs that operate at low pressure and deliver small amounts of water to the soil slowly, allowing a good slow soak. A soaker hose is the least expensive and maybe easiest to use but they can provide uneven water distribution if they get clogged or lie on uneven ground. Also they can be easily cut when digging in the soil.

## It's Totally Normal

You may wonder if it's OK for the bark to be peeling off your crepe myrtles and falling to the ground nearby. The answer is YES – it's normal. Some crepe myrtle varieties seem to shed more bark and in larger pieces than others. The multi-colored patterned bark is one of the attractive features of these trees and this shedding contributes to those patterns. This can cause great concern since for most trees shedding bark is not a good sign. For crepe myrtles, however, it is completely normal and happens every year. Simply rake up the bark and figure it is probably a sign of active growth and a healthy tree.

## **Mountain Fair! Mountain Fun!**

Extension Master Gardeners of Buncombe County sponsors are responsible for setting up, taking entries and judging two flower shows at the Mountain State Fair. The District 1 Garden Club of North Carolina, Inc. and the National Garden Club, South Atlantic Region are cooperating organizations that help judge the 1<sup>st</sup> show (standard flower show); local horticulturists help judge the second show.



### **Adults and Youth Can Enter**

Pre-registration is required and must be received by August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Check out the NC Mountain State Fair catalog online at <http://www.mountainfair.org>. There you will find the information you need. Look under "Mountain State Fair" and then under "Competitions". Look under Dept DA for Fruits and Vegetables and Dept M for Flower and Garden.

Look around your garden to see what you can enter to win a blue ribbon or two. These come with cash premiums!



## **Tomatoes Come and Go – Dealing with Late Blight**

Despite good tomato variety selection for disease resistance, a low lying garden site with a minimum of 6 hours direct sun and no preventative fungicide treatments did nothing to prevent the arrival of late blight on July 19<sup>th</sup>.

Late blight can occur at anytime during the growing season when the weather is cool and wet. The disease is slowed down by a return to hot, dry weather. But Infections occur when the late blight pathogen and host plants (tomato and potato) are present in the same place, AND weather conditions are cool and wet. Spores are spread short distances by rain and very long distances by wind.

Late blight is brought into the garden from infected transplants and seed potatoes or it may be blown in from neighboring areas. However, more virulent strains of the late blight fungus may over-winter in soils and plant residues. Remove weeds in the tomato/potato family (e.g. horsenettle, Eastern black nightshade, jimsonweed) because they can also be infected.

Immediately remove plants with late blight symptoms. This will protect your neighbors' gardens and local farmers. Put plants in a large plastic bag, seal the bag and leave it out in the sunshine to "bake" for a few days before putting it in a trash can. This will help to kill the pathogen and prevent it from infecting your garden next season. Do not attempt to compost infected potato or tomato plants.

### **Get Prepared to Can Summer Harvest**

Check equipment to make sure it is ready to use. Buy new lids and check bands, jars and gaskets to see that they are in good condition. Call our office at 828-255-5522 to set up an appointment for checking the pressure gauge.

If you had success growing or plan on purchasing tomatoes from the tailgate or simply want to learn about preserving tomatoes, make plans to attend **Putting Tomatoes By! Thursday, August 13, 2015, 10am to 3pm.** This hands-on class will cover canning with a water bath canner and a pressure canner and freezing and dehydrating tomatoes for preservation. Cost \$10. Pre-registration is required. Call Buncombe County Cooperative Extension Center at (828) 255-5522 or the Madison County Cooperative Extension office at (828) 649-2411 to register or for more information.





### **Ruby Spice in Late Summer**

Just when you think there's little color in the shrub border a selection of one of our own native shrubs comes into view. 'Ruby Spice', a cultivar of the native Summersweet (*Clethra alnifolia*) and a sport of *C. alnifolia* 'Pink Spire', is valued for its fragrant rose-pink flowers.

It is a densely-branched, rounded, suckering, deciduous shrub that typically grows 4-6' (less frequently to 8') tall and features narrow, bottlebrush-like, panicles (up 6" long) of extremely fragrant rose pink flowers (attracting butterflies and bees) that bloom on new growth for approximately 4-6 weeks in July and August.

This lovely plant prefers part shade and consistently moist, acidic, sandy soils. Although it tolerates clay and can grow in full sun, the soil should not be allowed to dry out.

Gardeners allow this plant to spread out if there is room and the naturalized look is desired, otherwise removing root suckers will keep this plant contained.

### **Extension Master Gardener Certification Training Class for 2016:**

N.C. Cooperative Extension, Buncombe County Center, **will not be offering** an Extension Master Gardener Certification class in 2016. Positive changes to update and streamline the EMGV training curriculum statewide are underway and more than likely will not be completed in time for the 2016 class deadlines. In addition, NC Cooperative Extension is implementing a strategic plan that affects budget, staffing, resources and programming on the local level, making it difficult to fully manage the many aspects and activities of our current master gardener group.



It is important that we have the program support and curriculum resources needed to provide a great experience for our all of our volunteers. Please be patient as we revamp the program and make sure the class of 2017 has the best EMGV experience possible.

Please call 828-255-5522 to register your name and be notified about the 2017 EMGV Certification application period.

### **How To Tell The Difference**

#### **Good Bug: Lady Beetle**

With 5,000 species worldwide and more than 450 native to North America lady beetles are usually yellow, orange, or scarlet with small black spots on their wing covers; the size and shape of the spots indicate the species of the beetle. They are drawn to home vegetable gardens in search of food, primarily soft-bodied insects such as aphids and scale, which find these voracious eaters anything but ladylike.



#### **Bad bug: Mexican Bean Beetle**

This notorious garden pest, one of the few harmful members of the lady beetle family, is copper in color with eight black spots on each wing. Young pupae are yellow and covered with large spines. Adults lay yellow eggs in groups of 40-60 on the surface of lower leaves. These beetles are drawn to legume crops such as garden and snap beans where adults and larvae feed on the undersides of leaves.

Photo: **Lady beetle** (left) by Lance & Cromwell  
**Mexican bean beetle** by Stephen Ausmus

## **Information for Small-Flock / Backyard Chicken Owners**

A recent press release from NCDA C&S and State Veterinarian Doug Meckes announces additional precautions that are being put in place to help North Carolina prepare for a possible introduction of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI).

The N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is requiring all poultry owners, regardless of the number of birds, to register with [NCFarmID](#).

This will facilitate the department in alerting poultry owners about an outbreak, especially owners in close proximity to a positive farm. Anyone already part of the National Poultry Improvement Plan is exempt from this requirement.

Information gathered through NCFarmID registration is used solely for animal health purposes and is confidential. This critical data will provide animal health officials with necessary contact information in case of an animal health concern, and help identify animals and premises that may have been affected.

For more information visit [www.ncagr.gov/avianflu](http://www.ncagr.gov/avianflu).

## **FREE USDA Webinar and Twitter Chat**

**“Practice Backyard Bird Biosecurity: Learn from the experts. Thursday, August 6, at 7 PM EDT**

Learn to recognize and protect your birds from devastating diseases like the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). Get expert tips to keep your birds and your bird-loving family safe and healthy!

For more information and to register <https://goto.webcasts.com/starthere.jsp?ei=1069188>

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Gardening In The Mountain Series – August 20th 10:00 am**

Join us on August 20th at 10:00 AM for "**Cool Weather Crops**" presentation by Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Alan Wagner Love vegetables? Love to garden? Learn how to extend your gardening season with the right plants and the right strategies. Successfully grow crops in early spring, fall and maybe even winter. This program is free but 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) but **please ask for a parking pass from the office.**

### **Ask-a-Gardener Information Tables**

Aug 1 Asheville City Market, 161 Charlotte St. 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

Aug 11 West Asheville Tailgate Market, 718 Haywood Road 3:30 pm - 6:00 pm

Aug 15 North Asheville Tailgate Market, 8:30 am - 12:30 pm

### **Ask-A-Gardener Plant Clinic**

Aug 8 & 22, WNC Farmers' Market Retail area, 11:00 am - 2:00 pm. Free.

### **Compost Demonstration**

Aug 8 & 22, Jesse Israel's Garden Center at WNC Farmers' Market, 11:00 am - 2:00 pm. Free

### **Garden Helpline and Office Hours**

Daily. Monday thru Thursday 9:30 am - 3:30 pm and Friday 9:30 am - 12:30 pm.

Receive this newsletter by email

[Sign here up on the website!](http://buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu/) Or go to <http://buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu/>