

# GREEN TEAM QUARTERLY

Winter 2013

## Calendar of Events

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**Jan 14th - 17th Green and Growing Trade Show and Conference,**  
Greensboro, NC

**Jan 25th – Feb 15th Certified Turfgrass Professional Short Course.**  
Exam, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm on 2/15.

**Feb 11th – Private Pesticide Applicator Class (V credit)** Transylvania County Center, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

**Feb 19th - Nursery Management Workshop, Cover Crop Tour, Dinner, and Pesticide Credits,** Details to come out soon!

**Feb 21st - Private Pesticide Applicator Class (V credit)** Buncombe County Center, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

**Feb 21st - Private Pesticide Applicator Class (V credit)** Henderson County Center, 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

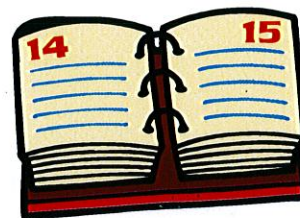
**Mar 9th - Private Pesticide Applicator Class (V credit)** Henderson County Center, 9:00 am - 11:00 am

**Mar 11th - Private Pesticide Applicator Class (V credit)** Buncombe County Center, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

**Mar 12th - WNC Turfgrass Conference,** Virginia Boone Building, WNC Agriculture Center, Fletcher NC, 8:30 am – 3:30 pm Details to come soon!

**Mar 15th - Landscape Management Workshop,** Crowfields of Asheville, NC 25 south of the Blue Ridge Parkway, 8:30 am - 3:30 pm Pesticide Credits.

**Mar 26th - Pesticide Class, Multi-category Workshop,** Transylvania Cooperative Extension Center



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## Social Media

Kerrie Roach, Extension Agent, Henderson County

Social media has significantly changed the way businesses market their products. Many green industry companies have created Facebook pages with hundreds of 'likes' or blogs with thousands of followers. But, is social media marketing worth it for the green industry? If so, how do you create a successful marketing plan that includes all these new ideas? And how do you keep up with it all?

To answer these burning questions, you need to know one key thing. Social media marketing is primarily for EXISTING customers. Social media helps build loyalty and engage your current customer base. Have you ever tried to fire a friend? Not easy, is it? Facebook is a great way to create that friend like relationship with your customers, pull them in, let them know what your company is working on, and keep them coming back. You might find that connections with current customers lead to new ones, but in general social media is the place to create repeats.

Using social media alone is NOT a good marketing plan. Social media should be utilized as a part of a larger scheme. Face to face contact at garden shows, phone contact, newspapers, television, radio programs, and others are all great ways to gain new customers. Companies with solid marketing plans will then point those customers to their social media for more information and potential promotions to develop that friendship like relationship.

If your business decides to add a social media component to your marketing plan, you MUST keep it active. Creating a blog and then not posting for months only gives your customer reason to search elsewhere for information. A Facebook page that has no pictures or posts in the last 3 months helps no one. Set aside 15 to 30 minutes a week to update your social media. Send out promotions, update photos to show a new job you have just completed, send pictures of a new plant you are growing, let your clients know that you have spent 3 hours out in the greenhouse scouting for insect and disease problems. Engage your customers on a weekly basis to keep them coming back to the site to see what is new.

In today's society of smart phones and tablets, making connections with customers has never been easier. Know that a Facebook page or Twitter account is not going to pull in thousands of customers, but will engage and create loyalty within your current customer base. Utilize social media as a part of a bigger marketing plan, not your entire plan. Keep your pages up to date, relevant, and fun!

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact Kerrie by e-mail at [Kerrie\\_Roach@ncsu.edu](mailto:Kerrie_Roach@ncsu.edu) or by phone at (828)697-4891.



## Pruning: Tips for Maintaining Healthy Trees and Shrubs

By Tim Mathews, Extension Agent, Haywood County

Like many decisions that you have to make as a landscape manager, pruning should be based on needs of the plant rather than simply doing it because “it’s the right time of year.” Trees and shrubs are pruned for various reasons. Some situations that would require pruning are; to remove dead, diseased, or storm damaged limbs, to thin the plant to allow for new growth and better air circulation, to reduce height or keep the plant inbounds, and for aesthetic purposes. The key point to remember is that we should always prune to promote plant health. Without a good reason for pruning it is better to leave the plant alone!

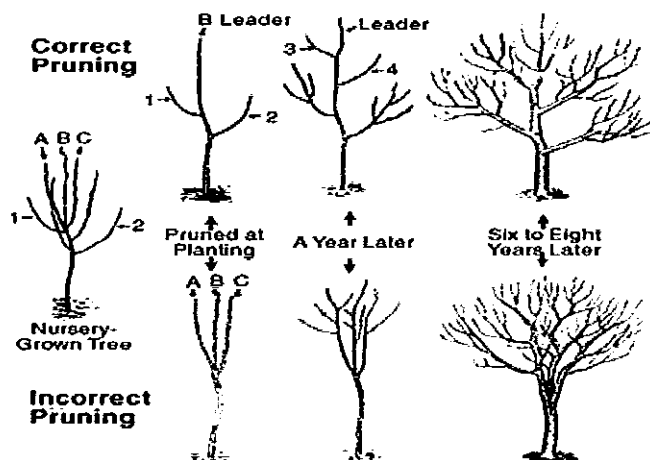
Although there are some exceptions, such as plants that bloom in early spring, the dormant season of late fall to winter is the best time to prune. Dead or diseased branches, however, can and should be removed at any time. Pruning during the dormant season minimizes stress to the tree and allows the tree to begin the compartmentalization process when growth resumes in early spring. It also reduces the risk of fungal or insect infestation because they are most likely in the dormant stage during this period as well. In the case of deciduous trees and shrubs, pruning when the leaves are off gives you a better idea of how pruning will affect the shape of the plants.

When determining how much to prune the answer is simple; as little as possible. While this may seem like a short, simple answer the reality is that every situation is different and requires the landscape manager to use sound judgment based on their understanding of the particular plant species. And since we don’t have space here to address every situation and species we will focus on general rules for trees.

Over the past several weeks I have witnessed acts of sheer terror when it comes to tree “pruning.” I wouldn’t actually call it pruning but that’s what the folks perpetrating these acts call it. Why do we refer to topping trees as pruning? It meets none of the standards or reasons for pruning and it is **unhealthy for the tree**. As more is learned about the long-term effects of tree topping, the more senseless this practice becomes. It is more than an assault on beauty, it causes unnecessary stress and increased risk to the tree’s health. It is also a self-defeating exercise usually not worth the expense and the results pose a danger from rot and weakly attached re-growth. In short, as one certified arborist put it, “Topping is the absolute worst thing you can do for the health of your tree.”

So here are some tips:

- Prune with the health of the tree in mind.
- Remove diseased, damaged, or dead branches first.
- Remove as little as possible to achieve your intended goal.
- Make proper pruning cuts. Don’t leave “stubs” or make “flush cuts.”
- Begin pruning early in the tree’s life to encourage proper branching.
- Keep your tools sharp.





## IPM Activities for Winter

Cliff Ruth, Area Extension Agent

Although, most pest are dormant during the winter, there are several pest management activities that need to be done during this season. Some of them have to do with preparing for the growing season so that your pest management activities will be easier to accomplish then. Here are some suggested activities:

### January

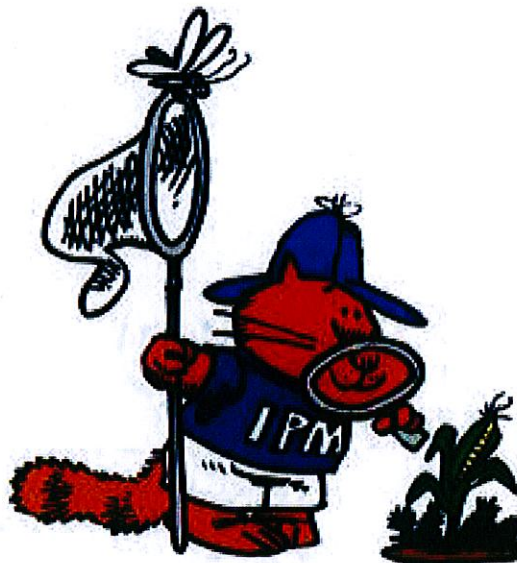
- Inspect beds and growing areas for voles and other rodent damage
- Inspect plants for any diseases or left over damage from pathogens
- Apply a fungicidal drench to containers plans if historically you have had a pathogen problem
- Review last year's IPM and pesticide application reports and plans
- Develop a calendar and new maps for the coming year's IPM actions
- Begin scouting for scale insects
- Check EC of containers in nurseries to determine if they are need fertility management
- Monitor temperatures in greenhouses and cold frames as well as in selected areas of the landscape
- Order pheromone traps for various insects

### February

- Begin scouting for weeds, mites and diseases
- Watch for vole and beaver damage
- Begin treatments for mites and some scale pests
- Put out alcohol traps for Granulated Ambrosia Beetle
- Put our insect specific pheromone traps

### March

- Monitor insect traps
- Apply first applications of pre-emergent herbicides
- Begin monitoring for downy mildew- particularly on roses in overwintering structures
- Continue putting out traps for specific insects
- Examine plants for various insects and treat accordingly as thresholds are reached
- Prune summer flowering plants
- Monitor conditions for pathogens and establish thresholds- spray preventative fungicides when needed.



## New Nursery Website Portal

Dr. Anthony LeBude

NC State Department of Horticultural Science has introduced three new information portals for commercial nursery crops (Fig. 1), landscape and floriculture. The sites are intended for growers and Cooperative Extension Agents in North Carolina. The portal covers the main areas of production, for example, water, substrates, IPM, cultural practices, diagnostics, plant choices for problem areas and more. News and upcoming events are kept current and there are wholesale prices listed for common green and hard goods in the green industry to gauge their average in the state. Use the portal to learn about a new challenge to the green industry at your own pace. For example, there are primary documents that tell the whole research story about a new production practice but that may be too technical for you, instead you might read an extension article that makes the information more practical for North Carolina growers, or read a similar article in a trade publication that might be more broad-based for the southeast, but contain many of the same concepts. There are photos to describe the practices and in some cases videos and podcasts to show you some of the concepts being used in production. As always, there are links to other relevant information on important topics.

To access the information visit:

nurserycropscience.info  
floriculture.nurserycropscience.info  
landscape.nurserycropscience.info  
Thank you!!

*This project received support from the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services as part of the Specialty Crops Block Grant Program.*

## New Addition to Green Team

With the new year comes a new addition to the Green Team! Meghan Baker is the new Small Farms Extension Agent for Buncombe County. No stranger to NC Cooperative Extension, she worked for seven years in Watauga County as the Commercial Horticulture and Christmas Tree Agent. For the past five years she also managed the Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program and the Consumer Horticulture Program in Watauga County.

Always a plant lover, Meghan realized her path in college while working one summer at the John C. Campbell Folk School as a work-study. All summer long she tended and cultivated the organic garden there, and that developed a true appreciation and passion for the art of growing. After graduating from Appalachian State University with a degree in Appalachian Studies, Meghan was a full-time farm apprentice at Full Sun Farm in Leicester and then went on to garner valuable experience working at Country Road Farms in Dillsboro, NC. In 2005, Meghan completed a Master's of Science degree from Clemson University in Plant and Environmental Science. While at Clemson she studied Sustainable Agriculture and worked on the on-campus organic farm.

These days Meghan is happy to return to the Southern Mountains. In her spare time, she's working towards completing both the NC Environmental Educator and the Southern Appalachian Naturalist certifications. She's looking forward to working with area growers on pollinator conservation projects and becoming part of the vibrant agricultural scene in Buncombe County. Contact Meghan at [meghan\\_baker@ncsu.edu](mailto:meghan_baker@ncsu.edu) or at 828-255-5522.



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Due to county budget restrictions this newsletter will only be sent out on a quarterly basis. Information will continue to be sent to all green industry individuals on a regular, weekly basis—electronically should you wish to subscribe by e-mail.

If you have an e-mail address please send it to me at [cdruth@ncsu.edu](mailto:cdruth@ncsu.edu)

**Meghan Baker** M.S. Small Farms Agent, NCSU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Buncombe County Cooperative Extension.

**Anthony LeBude**, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Nursery Crops Specialist, NCSU Department of Horticulture Science, NCSU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

**Tim Mathews**, M.S. CPP, CTP, NCRLC, Extension Agent, Horticulture, NCSU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Haywood County Extension Center

**Kerrie Roach**, M.S. Extension Agent, Commercial and Consumer Horticulture, Henderson County Extension Center

**Clifford D. Ruth**, M.Ag., NCRLC, CPP, CTP, LICM  
Extension Area Agent, Agriculture, Commercial Horticulture NCSU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences NC Cooperative Extension, Buncombe and Transylvania Centers

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For assistance, contact an agent of North Carolina Cooperative Extension.

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in any of these activities, please contact Cliff Ruth at 828-255-5522 during business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations at least 5 days prior to the event. Also if you need a Spanish Interpreter either for you or employees please let me know at least a week in advance so I can request one and provide them the materials.

Thanks,



Clifford  
D Ruth -  
editor