

# Currituck Garden News



September 2013

## Caterpillars in the Landscape

### PLEASE SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER

The Garden News is published to provide you with educational information, upcoming programs and opportunities on gardening issues. Feel free to share with others.

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There are over 1400 kinds of moths and butterflies in North Carolina. Some of these lay eggs from which destructive caterpillars hatch. But not all caterpillars that feed on our trees and shrubs are considered pests. It is important to properly identify the caterpillars in our landscape before we treat with insecticides.

This time of year we see severe infestations of fall webworm. Fall webworms primarily cause cosmetic damage to shade trees because of the large webs they form around the foliage on which they feed at the end of tree branches. Because they are most abundant in mid to late summer after the tree has had some time to store food the tree's health is rarely in danger. Fall webworms can be easily destroyed or disrupted by pulling down the webs if the webs are within easy reach using a stick or pole. This will expose caterpillars to birds and wasp for a natural form of control. If spraying is warranted, only spray the foliage closest to the web mass. Spraying the web itself does not give good contact with the caterpillars.

Another caterpillar found this time of year is the orange striped oakworm. Willow oak and pin oak tend to be their preferred hosts but they will feed on other hardwoods. These green-colored caterpillars feed on leaves consuming all but the midrib. Fecal pellets on sidewalks or car hoods are often an early clue that oakworms are present. As the caterpillars grow they become black with yellow or orange stripes. These caterpillars have a prominent pair of spines or slender horns sticking up behind the head. As the caterpillars mature, in late August or early September they drop to the ground and are often seen crawling across sidewalks and driveways, yards, etc. If chemical control is deemed necessary, treat young caterpillars for best results.

The garden webworm can often be found feeding on rosemary. Much smaller in size, the garden webworm has a yellowish green body and a yellowish brown head. The body is characterized by distinct black spots, six spots occurring on each abdominal segment, and a pale-green mid-dorsal stripe. These caterpillars can be found in clumps of dead rosemary leaves stuck together by webbing.

Treating large trees is not practical for homeowners and usually not necessary. On smaller trees and shrubs, if many caterpillars are present you may need to spray to prevent serious damage. Two organic insecticides commonly used to control caterpillars are B.t. and Spinosad. B.t. (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) is a type of bacteria that only effects caterpillars. It is the active ingredient found in Dipel and Thuricide. Spinosad is another type of bacteria used to control caterpillars and some other pests. Spinosad is the active ingredient in Conserve .

For more information on caterpillars see: <http://go.ncsu.edu/caterpillars>





## Pruning Calendar

Pruning most trees and shrubs is not recommended during August, September and October. Limit pruning activities to dead heading faded flowers, correcting damage, removing dead branches and fixing structural defects.

For a more comprehensive list of plants and the best time to prune them, see:

[http://go.ncsu.edu/pruning\\_calendar](http://go.ncsu.edu/pruning_calendar)

## Forcing Daffodils

Selecting the right cultivar is very important when forcing daffodil bulbs to bloom indoors out of season. Not all cultivars are suitable for all flowering periods. If chosen carefully, gardeners can have a steady supply of daffodil blooms indoors from late December to late April. After the bulbs are purchased, store them in open paper bags or on trays to allow maximum air movement. The bulbs should be kept at 45 to 50° (not over 65°). Plant the bulbs anytime between mid September and December. For blooms in late December, bulbs must be planted by mid September. For blooms in February, bulbs should be planted by mid October. If the bulbs are planted in mid November, blooms will open in March and April. Plant 3 to 4 daffodils in a six inch pot so the nose of the bulb will be even with the top of the soil. Use a good mixture of 1 part loamy soil, 1 part peat moss and 1 part sand. The soil will supply moisture and keep the bulbs anchored. Fertilizer should not be added to the soil. After planting, label each pot with the name of the cultivar, date of planting and the date to be placed in the house. Water the soil thoroughly and make sure the pots have adequate drainage. Place pots in a refrigerator at 35 to 45° and keep the soil moist through the rooting and cooling period. Do not store fruit in a refrigerator being used for bulbs. In 5 to 6 weeks the bulbs should have roots. After 13 weeks of cold storage, the first pots may be placed indoors. In the house, place the plants in direct sunlight. The bulbs will flower in about 3 to 4 weeks. Once the flowers begin to open take the plants out of direct sun. It is not necessary to fertilize the plants. Other bulbs suitable for forcing include hyacinth, paper whites and amaryllis.

For a list of recommended cultivars see: [http://go.ncsu.edu/forcing\\_bulbs](http://go.ncsu.edu/forcing_bulbs)



## Lawn Care

To minimize Spring Dead Spot, do not over fertilize Bermuda lawns. Use a low nitrogen, high potassium fertilizer like 5-10-30. For Centipede and Zoysia lawns do not apply nitrogen at this time. Use a potassium fertilizer such as 0-0-50 instead. Do not fertilize St. Augustine lawns after August 31. Check for thatch in September. If the thatch layer is 3/4" thick, plan to dethatch in the spring.

For more information about lawn care see:

[http://go.ncsu.edu/nc\\_lawns](http://go.ncsu.edu/nc_lawns)

## Vegetable Garden

As the summer comes to an end, we have one last opportunity to plant crops for a fall harvest. In September we can plant kale, kohlrabi, lettuce, mustard, onions, radishes and turnips. To find specific planting dates for these crops see:

[http://go.ncsu.edu/fall\\_veg\\_guide](http://go.ncsu.edu/fall_veg_guide)

## Northeast North Carolina Daffodil Society

The Northeast North Carolina Daffodil Society Membership Meeting will feature American Daffodil Society member Brent Heath the noted garden and daffodil presenter, garden writer, and co-owner of Brent and Becky's Bulbs from Gloucester, VA. Mr. Heath will speak on the subject of '**Undaunted Daffodils**' and how to create your own collection of daffodils for garden and show. The speaker will be followed by our bulb exchange and a pot luck lunch. The public is invited.

The meeting and bulb exchange will be held at the NC Cooperative Extension Currituck County Center on Saturday October 26, 2013 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.



## Fall Plant Sale

The Currituck Master Gardeners Fall Plant Sale will be held on Saturday, September 28th from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm at the NC Cooperative Extension, Currituck County Center in Barco. The Extension Center is located off of Hwy 158 next to Central Elementary School and the YMCA. A large variety of trees, shrubs, and perennials will be available at great prices. There will also be a large variety of mums and pansies.



Concrete Leaf Casting



Hypertufa Workshop



Hypertufa Pots



## Master Gardener Workshops

Currituck Master Gardeners Doris Flattum and Shelly Murray will be teaching two workshops September 13th and October 11th at 9:30 am. The workshops will be held at 101 Forbes Lane in Harbinger, rain or shine. The cost for each class is \$10 to cover materials. Call 252-491-2390 to pre-register. On September 13th participants will create concrete stepping stones. The workshop on October 11th will be a combination of Hypertufa pots, concrete leaf castings and stepping stones for anyone who missed a previous workshop or if you want to have double the fun and take a class twice.

## Growing Cold Hardy Citrus

Have you ever wondered if oranges, lemons or limes will grow in Currituck? Join us on September 16, 2013 at 1:00 pm to learn more about growing cold hardy citrus. Guest speaker, Ozzie Coor will be teaching the class at the NC Cooperative Extension, Currituck County Center off Hwy 158 in Barco. The class will cover which varieties will grow in our climate and how to care for them. After the class, cold hardy citrus trees will be available for purchase. The class is free and open to anyone who loves a good orange and wants to learn more about growing them at home.

For additional information on any of the contents of this newsletter call or e-mail Debbie Kelso at 232-2262, [deborah\\_kelso@ncsu.edu](mailto:deborah_kelso@ncsu.edu)

Deborah E. Kelso  
Agricultural Technician

#### **MISSION, VISION AND GOALS**

North Carolina Cooperative Extension partners with communities to deliver education and technology that enrich the lives, land and economy of North Carolina.

For accommodations for persons with disabilities, contact the Currituck County Center at 252-232-2262 no later than five business days prior to the event.

## **Coastal North Carolina Daylily Society**

The Coastal North Carolina Daylily Society will meet on  
September 10, 2013 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm  
at the Currituck County Extension Center.

### **Don't Wait Too Late!!!**

There will now be a \$4 fee for soil samples analyzed by the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for the period from December through March. The fee is an attempt to lessen the backlog associated with the busy season when the lab is routinely inundated with tens of thousands of samples. The rest of the year — April through November — NCDA&CS will continue to analyze soil samples without a fee. Wednesday, November 27<sup>th</sup>, will be the last business day of the month for the soil-testing lab. Any soil samples arriving after 6 p.m. on November 27<sup>th</sup> will be subject to the peak-season fee because they will not be logged in and processed until December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

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