

**Franklin County Center  
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## Table of Contents

The Infamous Bradford Pear .....	1 - 2
Local Foods Thrive .....	2
Healthy Cooking with Herbs .....	3
Spring Colors .....	3
To Prune or Not to Prune .....	4

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Triangle Area Landscape School .....	April 6
Poultry Orientation .....	April 24
Canning Workshop .....	April 26
FUN 4-H Livestock Show.....	April 27
Strawberry Festival .....	May 4
Couponing Workshop .....	May 5
Malting Barley Field Day .....	May 8
Hunter Safety Class .....	May 16-17
Livestock Interest Meeting ....	May 22
Poultry Training .....	May 24
Summer Sessions Signup ....	May 24
Forestry/Hunting Mgmt Mtg ..	June 5
Horse Farm Tour .....	Aug. 3

## MEETINGS

Beekeepers meetings .....	last Wednesday monthly
Ag Board Meetings .....	first Tuesday monthly
Young Farmers & Ranchers .....	last Tuesday monthly
Women in Agriculture Meetings...	first Monday monthly
4-H County Council Meetings .....	last Tuesday monthly
T-2 Diabetes Class .....	Tuesdays
Young Farmers & Ranchers .....	last Tuesday monthly

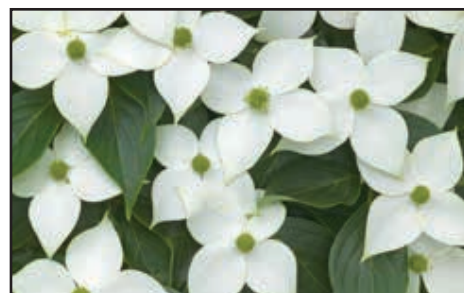
## The Infamous Bradford Pear



**BY: Colby Griffin  
Horticulture Extension Agent**

The mild winter season this year caused many plants that should have had at least another 4 weeks of rest to emerge from their winter sleep. Several plants you may have noticed that bloomed early are Forsythia or yellow-bell, eastern red-bud, flowering quince, ornamental cherry, and ornamental pear.

Of the plants mentioned only one stands out with the smell of rotten fish – the ornamental pear. Most ornamental pear trees originate from *Pyrus calleryana* or the Callery pear. This pear is native to China. As with many plant species that originate in the Orient, it tends to spread around the landscape with ease. Birds, especially starlings enjoy eating the small fruit that develops and in turn scatter the seeds as they fly. One of the oldest cultivars of ornamental pear is 'Bradford' which made its debut into our landscapes in the early 1960s. This tree was planted in abundance due to its ability to withstand many types of soils conditions, its maroon fall color, rapid growth rate, and abundance of white flowers in spring. However, Bradford pears have a horrible structural shape to them. The crotch angles of the limbs are extremely narrow which makes them susceptible to breaking in moderate wind and ice storms. The Bradford pear is sterile and not able to bear viable fruit. However, later cultivars such as 'Cleveland Select' and 'Chanticleer' were bred that had wider crotch angles. Unfortunately, these were able to cross pollinate with 'Bradford' and viable fruit were formed. While looking around the landscape in early spring it's easy to spot the escapes of these trees along roadsides and fencerows. To make things even worse the invasive offspring of these ornamental pears have large thorns along its limbs making removal even more difficult. I would suggest refraining from planting this tree in your home landscape. Unless, of course, each spring you want to be the neighbor who's yard smells of last weeks' garbage.



**Kousa dogwood flowers**

Some alternatives to the noxious Callery pear include flowering dogwood, kousa dogwood, fringe tree, and Carolina silver bell. *Cornus florida* or flowering dogwood grows to 15 – 25 feet in height and has 4-inch white bracts in early April. There are also pink and red color cultivars. Flowering dogwood has red berries that attract birds and has maroon fall color. *Cornus kousa* dogwood blooms two to three weeks after flowering dogwood and has pointed white or pink tapered bracts, red fruit in late summer, and



**Fringe tree flowers**



**Carolina Silverbell**



**Flowering Dogwood**



**Hydrangea**



**Hydrangea**



**Kouse dogwood fruit**

## **Pear (continued)**

scarlet fall color. It can reach upwards of 25 feet tall and grows best in sun to partial shade. *Chionanthus virginicus* or fringe tree is a showstopper with loose clusters of fragrant white flowers that cover the entire tree in spring. Fringe tree is adapted to a variety of growing conditions and prefers moist, well-drained soil. *Halesia tetraptera* or Carolina silverbell blooms in late spring with white, bell-shaped flowers that hang in clusters on year-old branches. Upon maturity, Carolina silverbell can reach over 30 feet in height, so its smaller cousin of two-winged silverbell, *Halesia diptera* which reaches around 25 feet would be better suited for a smaller area. Both are outstanding trees in the landscape that thrive in well-drained soils rich in organic matter. Regardless of what you choose to plant within your home landscape be sure to always assess the site where you intend to install shrubs and trees. It is essential that you give plants the adequate space they need to grow and flourish.

Colby Griffin is the horticulture agent for the Franklin County Center of NC Cooperative Extension. If you have any questions about this article or other gardening issues, he can be reached at [colby\\_griffin@ncsu.edu](mailto:colby_griffin@ncsu.edu) or 919-496-3344.

## **Local Foods Continue to Thrive in Franklin County**

**BY: Martha L. Mobley**  
**Local Foods Coordinator**



With 3.86 people per day moving into Franklin County, which was equivalent to 1,203 people in 2017, the need for quality fresh food has increased. There are several ways we can get locally produced, "just picked" foods in our area. One being the Franklin County Farmers enter of the county, Louisburg, and it is open three days per week for the convenience of our citizens and farmers. We have an estimated fourteen local Franklin County farmers who are gearing up for another successful year of producing and marketing farm fresh products to you the customer. Many of them have attended meetings and conferences during the winter months to learn about new vegetable and herb crops that are popular across the region. Many who participated in our conferences were given free seed to try new crops that will end up on a customer's dinner table this spring and summer. We have had classes at the Cooperative Extension on how to "add value" to their vegetables, such as proper canning and freezing procedures, and even how to set up a commercial kitchen on their farms. Other ways you can get fresh vegetables are to grow them yourselves. This winter, a gardening series is being conducted by our new Horticulture Agent, Colby Griffin, and it has been well attended. There is nothing better than to walk out your back door and pick a vine-ripened tomato and eat it on the spot! Vegetables can be easily raised in beds, rows, mats, etc.

You can have an agreement with an area farmer to have a CSA, or community supported agricultural agreement. You pay ahead of time for a box delivered to your home of vegetables or meat (or both). It is generally convenient for the customer.

Franklin County is now home to a state-of-the art mobile poultry processing unit, owned and operated by a group of women farmers, Tar River Poultry Initiative, LLC, who lease their unit out to others in need of processing both chicken and turkeys. A second training for area poultry producers on how to correctly process poultry focusing on food safety will be Thursday, May 24th at the Cooperative Extension Center in Louisburg. It will be an all day, "Backyard Poultry Conference and Demonstration" with state experts and regulators teaching the sessions.

My advice is to develop a relationship with one of our Franklin County farmers, visit their farm, see how they grow the best food in the world, right here in the county. For more information on Local Foods, contact Martha Mobley at [martha\\_mobley@ncsu.edu](mailto:martha_mobley@ncsu.edu) or 919-496-3344.



## Healthy Cooking with Fresh Herbs

By: Dominique Simon

NC Cooperative Extension-Family & Consumer Science Agent

How often have you explored the robust flavor that herbs can add to many dishes? Herbs not only add flavor to your dishes, they also add a pop of color along with many health benefits. Cooking with herbs can help with cutting back on salt, fat, and sugar which could lower the chances of developing High Blood Pressure and Diabetes while also protecting against diseases such as Cancer and Heart Disease. So, what is an herb, an herb is a seed-producing annual or perennial that does not develop persistent woody tissue but dies down at the end of a growing season. Common annual and perennial herbs include; basil, dill, parsley, cilantro, rosemary, oregano, mint, tarragon, thyme, and sage.



Herbs can be purchased at your local grocery store or farmer's market, and if you would like you could grow your own. When purchasing herbs, you should purchase close to the time that you plan to use them. When growing herbs in your own garden the ideal time for picking is in the morning after the dew has dried but before the sun gets hot. This helps ensure the best flavor and storage quality. Herbs can be stored in an open or a perforated plastic bag in your refrigerator crisper drawer for a few days. If you don't have access to commercial perforated bags, use a sharp object to make several small holes in a regular plastic bag.

Herbs should be washed right before use. Wash smaller amounts of herbs thoroughly under running water. Shake off moisture or spin dry in a salad spinner. Pat off any remaining moisture with clean paper towels.

Unlike dried herbs, fresh herbs are usually added toward the end in cooking dishes to preserve their flavor. More delicate herbs such as basil, chives, cilantro, dill leaves, parsley, marjoram and mint should be added a minute or two before the end of cooking or sprinkled onto food immediately before serving. The less delicate herbs, such as dill seeds, oregano, rosemary, tarragon, and thyme can be added about the last 20 minutes of cooking. Fresh herbs can be added to refrigerated cold foods several hours before serving. Allow time (at least a couple of hours, if possible) for cold foods with herbs to chill, this helps with the blending of flavors.

Herbs can turn quickly transform ordinary meals into extraordinary meals. Herbs provide a unique flavor, comes with health benefits while also adding a pop of color to your dish. Take some thyme to explore and cook with herbs. Below is a chart which gives popular herb and food combinations, and also be on the lookout for an upcoming *Cooking with Herbs* class. For more information contact Dominique Simon at 919-496-3344, dominique\_simon@ncsu.edu. References: *University of Nebraska Lincoln Extension*

### Popular Herb and Food Combinations

<b>BASIL</b>	a natural snipped in with tomatoes; terrific in fresh pesto; other possibilities include pasta sauce, peas, zucchini
<b>CHIVES</b>	dips, potatoes, tomatoes
<b>CILANTRO</b>	Mexican, Asian, and Caribbean cooking; salsas, tomatoes
<b>DILL</b>	carrots, cottage cheese, fish, green beans, potatoes, tomatoes
<b>MINT</b>	carrots, fruit salads, parsley, peas, tabbouleh, tea
<b>OREGANO</b>	peppers, tomatoes
<b>PARSLEY</b>	The curly leaf is the most common, but the flat-leaf or Italian parsley is more strongly flavored and often preferred for cooking. Natural for parsley include potato salad, tabbouleh, egg salad sandwiches
<b>ROSEMARY</b>	chicken, fish, lamb, pork, roasted potatoes, soups, stews, tomatoes
<b>SAGE</b>	beef, chicken, potatoes, pork, carrots, summer squash
<b>THYME</b>	eggs, lima beans, potatoes, poultry, summer squash, tomatoes



### Spring Colors from Drab to Bloom

BY: Pat Walker

Franklin County Farmers Market Manager

The "Come Back Salad" ushers in the first sign of Spring. With almost certainty, the early bird at The Franklin County Farmers Market is seeking the tender greens. Even through hard freezing temps and long nights of winter the turnip puts forth new growth of leafy greens and fills our pots full. Just when you think the weather is all set for planting, nature sends a clear message... it's not the right time yet. Strawberry plants look like bouquets of white blooms. They give way to green berries and for just the right time to harvest, as they turn bright red. Then they will fill the farmer's table at the market bringing assurance that yes, Spring has arrived. One of the most uplifting feelings is when you pull up to the farmers market and see the red strawberries for the first time of the season. As shoppers look for fresh and locally grown there's no better place than a farmer's market. All produce at The Franklin County Farmers Market located in the Shannon Village Shopping Center, Louisburg is grown right here in Franklin County. Many of the farmers love sharing their knowledge of how and when to plant and harvest. The first tomatoes are the measurement that the growing season is well on its way. According to most folks, there is nothing any better than a Franklin County grown tomato.

## To Prune or Not to Prune

By: Colby Griffin  
Horticulture Extension Agent,  
Franklin County



**Gallery Pear thorn**

It seems there is always the conundrum in the gardening world this time of year about when to properly prune your plants within the landscape. One question you should always ask yourself is why you are wanting to prune in the first place. It is preferable to err on the side of not pruning rather than prune a plant improperly or for no reason at all. There are several basic rules to follow when pruning an ornamental plant. The three "D's" – Dead, Diseased, and Damaged branches need to be removed whenever you notice them. If a plant has outgrown its intended space, then pruning may be beneficial. However, you should strive to install plants where they have room to reach their mature size. It becomes a futile effort in trying to force a plant that is naturally 6-foot-wide into a 3-foot area of space. There are many plants such as boxwoods and Japanese hollies that are grown for a particular aesthetic attribute where pruning would be warranted. The health of the plant could be another reason for pruning. Pruning allows more air and light to circulate within the canopy which can help decrease potential disease and insect problems from occurring.

Of course, you can't properly prune without proper tools. You can start by purchasing at least two pair of

hand pruners, one anvil style and the other a by-pass or scissor style. You'll want to have a pair of loppers that can cut 1 to 2-inch branches and also a pruning saw. They should be kept sharp and rust free. Use a standard solvent to wipe the blades after each use. It is recommended to disinfect your pruners after each cut especially while pruning roses or fruit trees to prevent the spread of diseases.

Flowering shrubs and trees bloom on one of two types of wood: new growth or old growth. A rule of thumb is any plant that is summer-flowering can be pruned in late winter or early spring prior to bud break. These plants flower on new growth that will develop the current growing season. Some examples are Abelia, Hibiscus, Callicarpa, hollies, roses, and butterfly shrub. Likewise, any plant that is spring-flowering should be immediately pruned after they complete their show of blooms in the spring. These plants bloom on old growth which developed and hardened the previous year. Some examples of these plants are Rhododendron (includes azaleas), blueberry, Forsythia, Viburnum, Barberry, and Magnolia. Hydrangeas, however, follow a slightly different set of rules. Hydrangeas that bloom on new spring growth are the earliest to flower. These are the smooth and tree hydrangeas - *Hydrangea arborescens* and *Hydrangea paniculata*, respectively. Late winter is the perfect time to thin out excessive growth. More severe pruning will produce a smaller plant with larger blooms while not pruning at all will produce a larger plant with smaller blooms. Oak leaf hydrangea or *Hydrangea quercifolia* bloom on old growth and shouldn't need excessive pruning. You can, however, remove flower stalks on any hydrangea after blooming to the nearest bud as a way to tidy up the plant. Oak leaf hydrangeas have wonderful peeling bark and brilliant maroon and purple autumn leaves. The big leaf varieties of *Hydrangea macrophylla* also

bloom on old growth. These include both the mophead and lacecap hydrangeas. Any pruning done to these in late winter will remove the flower buds for the summer. If you



**Hydrangea**



**Hydrangea**

must prune these only remove half of all the older stems at ground level after flowering. This will encourage new growth and increase the size of flowers the following year. This group of hydrangeas also includes the cultivar of 'Endless Summer' which has the ability to bloom on both old and new growth giving it a longer and more floriferous season.

Colby Griffin is the horticulture agent for the Franklin County Center of NC Cooperative Extension. If you have any questions about this article or other gardening issues, he can be reached at [colby\\_griffin@ncsu.edu](mailto:colby_griffin@ncsu.edu) or 919-496-3344.

## Suggestions for Planting Vegetable Gardens

Produce Types	Suggested Planting Dates	Distance Between Plants	Planting Depth	Days to Maturity
Asparagus (crowns)	Nov 15-March 15	15 inches	6.0 inches	2 Years
Beans (Snap)	Apr 15-July 15	3 inches	1.0	50-60
Beans (pole)	Apr15-July15	6 inches	1.0	65-70
Beans (bush lima)	May1-July1	6 inches	1.5	75-95
Beans (pole lima)	May1-June15	6 inches	1.5	75-95
Beets	March15-Apr15 July15-Aug1-15	2 inches	0.5	55-60
Broccoli	March15-31 July15- August1-15	18 inches	0.5	70-80
Brussel Sprouts	July1-15	20 inches	0.5	90-100
Cabbage (plants)	Feb1-April1-Aug1-15	12 inches	0.5	70-80
Cabbage Chinese	March 15-Apr1 Au- gust1-15	12 inches	0.5	75-85
Cantaloupe	April20-June1	24 inches	1.0	85-99
Carrots	Feb15-Mar1 July1-15	2 inches	0.25	85-95
Cauliflower	Mar15-31 August1-15	18 inches	0.5	55-65
Collards	July15-August15	18 inches	0.5	60-100
Corn sweet	Apr15- June1	12 inches	1.5	85-90
Cucumbers (pick- ling)	Apr20-May15 Aug1-15	10 inches	1.0	40-50
Cucumber (slicing)	Apr20-May15 Aug1-15	10 inches	1.0	40-50
Eggplant (plants)	May1-31	24 inches	0.5	80-85
Kale	Mar1-Apr1 Aug15-Sept1	6 inches	0.5	40-50
Kohlrabi	Mar 1-Apr15 Aug.1-Sept 1	4 inches	0.5	50-60
Lettuce (leaf)	Mar1- Apr1 Aug1 Sept1	6 inches	0.25	40-50
Lettuce (head)	Feb 15-Mar15 Aug15-31	10 inches	0.25	70-85
Mustard	Mar1-Apr1 Aug1-Sept15	2 inches	0.5	30-40
Onion (seed)	Jan 15 –Mar31 Sept1-5	4 inches	0.5	130-150
Onion (sets or plants)	Feb1-Mar15 sept1-15	4 inches		60-80
Okra	May 1-31	12 inches	1.0	60-70
Peas (edible pod- ded)	Jan1-Mar1	1 inch	1.0	60-70
Peas (garden)	Jan1-Mar1	1 inches	1.0	65-70
Peas (southern)	May1-July1	4 inches	1.0	55-65
Peppers Sweet (plants)	May1-31	18 inches	0.5	75-80
Peppers Hot (plants)	May1-31	15 inches	0.5	75-80
Spinach	Feb 15-Mar15 Au- gust1-15	6 inches	0.5	50-60
Squash Summer	Apr15-May15 August1-15	24 inches	1.5	50-60
Squash Winter	Apr15-May15 Aug1-15	36 inches	1.0	70-95
Sweet Potatoes	May15-June15	10 inches		95-125
Swiss Chard	Mar15-May1	6 inches	0.5	60-70
Tomatoes (plant)	Apr20-July15	18	0.5	75-85
Turnips	Feb1-Apr15 Aug 1-31	2 inches	0.5	55-60
Watermelons	Apr15-June1	60 inches	1.5	90-100

## Vegetable Gardening in North Carolina!

**BY: Colby Griffin**  
**NC Cooperative Extension**  
**Horticulture Agent Franklin County**

Since we are slowly transitioning from winter to spring it is time to start thinking about planting your vegetable garden. The following chart provides you with planting dates, plant spacing, planting depth, and days to plant maturity. Soil sampling is also important to consider before planting your garden. Most often low soil pH, low phosphorus and low potassium are challenges that most gardeners face. The Extension Office has soil testing boxes for you to submit samples in. If you have gardening questions feel free to contact your local Cooperative Extension Office for more information 919-496-3344. You can also find a wealth of gardening information on our website <http://franklin.ces.ncsu.edu/> and our Facebook page.



**Turnips**



**Greens**



**Sweet potatoes**

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