Let’s Go To The Fair

It is hard to believe it is almost time once again for the Mountain State Fair.

- Start evaluating your flower and vegetable gardens now for possible entries.
- Entry forms should be submitted to the fair office by August 27 to ensure your space.
- Pre-registering also significantly speeds up your entry process when you deliver your specimens to the show as your tickets will already be prepared.
- The 2007 Fair will run September 7 thru 16.

For a Fair catalog and forms contact the NC Mountain State Fair office at 828-687-1414 or to access the catalog on line, visit the website at:

http://www.ncagr.com/markets/fairs/mtnfair/ and click on “competitions”.

“Whatever lofty things you might accomplish today, you will do them only because you first ate something that grew out of dirt.”

Barbara Kingsolver

Normal August Weather
Weather Averages
For Asheville, North Carolina

Normal August Average High            81.7°F
Normal August Average Low  61.8°F
Normal August Precipitation        4.30”

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Hours of Daylight for Asheville, NC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sunrise</th>
<th>Sunset</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 1</td>
<td>6:09 am</td>
<td>8:35 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 31</td>
<td>6:34 am</td>
<td>8:00 pm</td>
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</tbody>
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Inside:

Garden Chores for August…………………………. 2
Spotlight: Sunflowers……………………………. 3
Visit Our Demo Garden……………………………. 3
Insects to Watch For……………………………. 3
Insecticidal Soap………………………………… 4
Pruning Raspberries…………………………….. 4

See you at the Fair…………………………………. 4
Enter the Flower Show……………………………. 4
Get Your Canner Gauge Checked…………………. 5
Basic Home Maintenance Course…………………. 5
Design & Maintain a Healthy Landscape………. 5
Events…………………………………………… 6
CHORES FOR August

LAWNS

- Frequent evening thunder storms can be conducive to brown patch fungus disease developing in the lawn. If you find you have brown patch, do not mow when grass is wet, and do not irrigate. Hot dry weather will stop the spread of the disease.
- Cool season lawns can be seeded and fertilized late in the month. But if the weather is very dry, hold off for a while.

ORNAMENTALS

- Check hemlocks for hemlock woolly adelgids. September through November is the best time to treat for this pest.
- Dead head. Removing spent flowers from butterfly bush, purple coneflowers, phlox, roses, and other perennials will encourage continued bloom.
- This is a good time to divide cannas, daylilies, black-eyed Susans, peonies and irises. Replant as soon as possible and water well.
- Some shrubs that can be propagated from semi-hardwood cuttings include abelia, arborvitae, hollies, junipers and roses.
- Some evergreens have numerous dead branches as a result of the spring freeze. Go ahead and prune out any dead areas. Do not do severe over-all pruning this time of year.
- Start preparing houseplants to move back indoors next month. Inspect for signs of insect infestations and treat if needed. Repot overgrown plants.

FRUITS

- Prune blackberries and raspberries after harvest.
- Control weeds in the strawberry bed.

VEGETABLES

- Start planting for fall: greens, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower. It’s already a little late for Brussels sprouts.
- If you still have squash, pumpkins or cucumbers in the garden, you may have to spray for pickleworms, which bore into the fruit. Spray options include esfenvalerate(Asana), pyrellin(organic) and spinosad(Conserve)(organic).
- Dry weather may slow down your garden, but some how weeds seem to keep going. Keep weeds under control by hoeing, pulling, tilling and mulching.
- Harvest onions and garlic when tops have died down part way. Place them in a well-vented area out of the sun to dry.
- Don’t let veggies go to waste. Have a neighbor check the garden if you are away.

OTHER

- Remember that surplus produce can be donated to the Plant A Row For The Hungry collection. Fresh fruits and vegetables; in good condition; are always welcome. Deliver to MANNA Food Bank at 627 Swannanoa River Road, M-F, 8:00 – 3:30.
SPOTLIGHT: SUNFLOWERS

What could be a more cheerful symbol of summer than the sunflower? Sunflowers include several species of Helianthus. Although some, like swamp sunflower and Maximillian sunflower are tall growing perennials, most gardeners are probably more familiar with the giant annual Helianthus annus.

Although the huge sunflowers like ‘Mammoth Russian’, are fun to grow, there are many new hybrid varieties that make better garden plants. Some can still reach heights over 6 feet, but you can find dwarf varieties that only reach 3 feet. Most are branched, producing multiple smaller flowers.

Gardeners are now selecting from varieties with flowers of pale yellow, orange, red and mahogany. If you enjoy cutting flowers to bring indoors, you might like the pollenless varieties like ‘Moonshadow’ and ‘Lemon Sorbet’ which will not shed pollen on the table.

True to their name, sunflowers do like to be planted in the sun. The less sun they receive, the more likely they are to grow taller and to need staking to keep them from falling over. Seeds can be sewn directly into the garden soil in May and June, but I have found I have to start the plants in containers because the squirrels dig up the seeds.

Keep the plants watered to get them started, once they are growing well they are quite drought tolerant. Give them a little fertilizer early, during the first few weeks. After that too much nitrogen will only encourage them to grow taller and may delay flowering.

VISIT THE DEMONSTRATION GARDEN

If you want to learn more about growing vegetables, visit the volunteer crew at the Extension Master Gardener demonstration garden at MANNA Food Bank on Swannanoa River Road. The garden shows examples of methods of building raised beds and growing vegetables and herbs in small spaces. The volunteers are at work every Thursday morning, as long as it is not raining, from 9:30 until 11:30. Stop by to see what they are doing and ask questions.

INSECTS TO WATCH FOR

Ornamentals: Bagworms on all needled evergreens. It is too late to spray, so remove bags by hand. Thrips on roses and other flowers; spider mites on flowers and shrubs; lacebugs on pyracantha, pieris and azaleas. All may need to be treated with appropriate insecticide if significant damage occurs.

Vegetables: Bean beetles, squash beetles and squash bugs can be especially prevalent this time of year. Control measures include hand removal (drop them into a bucket of soapy water), or spraying with carbaryl (Sevin), malathion, pyrethrin or pyrethrin. Several species of worms become prevalent on cabbage family crops. Bacteria sprays should be effective.
THE ORGANIC WAY: INSECTICIDAL SOAP

One of the safest choices for controlling certain insects in the garden is insecticidal soap. This product, potassium salts of fatty acids, is considered organic because it’s toxicity to humans and animals is so low. It is safe for many beneficial insects, except for the small larva of things like ladybugs and syrphid flies.

Insecticidal soap is effective in controlling small, soft bodied insects such as aphids, adelgids, whiteflies and mites. It will not help with other insects except the very early (newly hatched) stages of caterpillars and beetle grubs (like squash beetles and bean beetles).

Soap works only by contacting the pest directly. Once it is dry it has no effect. This means it is imperative to get thorough coverage of both tops and bottoms of leaves, where many of these little insects will be hiding.

Use caution when using soaps during hot summer weather as they can burn foliage. Avoid spraying when the temperature is above 85 degrees. Purchase an “insecticidal soap” product and follow mixing instructions. Also check the label for plants to avoid treating. Some plants are sensitive to soap even if it is not hot. Plants under stress can also be burned, so make sure plants are well watered before treating.

Concocting a homemade formula with dish soap is not recommended because household cleaning products are not formulated with the intent for use on plants. Every product is different so it is impossible to know what strength will kill the insects without burning the plants.

PRUNING RASPBERRIES

The trickiest part of growing brambles (blackberries and raspberries) is probably pruning. All bramble canes live 2 years. The first year the stems (primocanes) come up from the ground and grow. The second year those stems (floricanes) flower and produce fruit. After fruiting the cane dies.

For most varieties of blackberries and raspberries pruning is done twice a year. In the summer, after harvest, the spent canes are removed. Then in spring the tall canes are cut back and some excess stems removed.

In Western North Carolina many gardeners grow the everbearing red raspberry ‘Heritage’. This variety will produce 2 crops on each cane: a spring crop on the floricanes and a fall crop on the primocanes. However, there is another option for managing this variety. Many growers simply cut all the canes close to the ground in the fall. This will eliminate the spring crop, but will produce a larger fall crop in August and September. You may miss the early berries, but the pruning is certainly faster and easier.

SEE YOU AT THE FAIR

This year’s NC Mountain State Fair runs September 7 through 16. Thanks to a lot of hard work by a group of Extension Master Gardener volunteers, the flower show at the Fair has also continued to grow. Look for the Flower and Garden tent close to the Heritage Village. Be sure to stop in and visit the Master Gardeners’ information tables. Volunteers will be available to answer your gardening questions.

ENTER THE FLOWER SHOW

With two flower shows at the Fair, how can you resist the opportunity to show off your prettiest flowers? There are more than 150 categories for entries. Order a catalog now so you can start planning.
GET YOUR CANNER GAUGE CHECKED HERE!!!!

Canning season is just around the corner and it’s time to get prepared. You want to check your equipment to make sure it is ready for use. Buy new lids to replace the lids used last year. Check your bands and jars to see that they are in good condition. Check your gaskets and pressure gauges as well. If you would like to have your gauge tested, call our office to set up an appointment. We will be testing most Friday mornings but may be able to fit in testing at other times.

BASIC HOME MAINTENANCE COURSE

The Buncombe County Center of North Carolina Cooperative Extension is offering a five-series Basic Home Maintenance Course beginning September 27. The two-hour class will be held Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 5:30 – 7:30 pm on Sept. 27, Oct. 2, 4, 9 & 11. Some of the topics to be covered are: saving on your heating and cooling bills, basic plumbing repairs, interior and exterior maintenance, landscaping and lawn care, indoor air quality common household pest, etc. The course also offers "hands-on" which include repairing faucets, drywall and screens.

The course will be held at the Extension Center, 94 Coxe Ave. Asheville, NC.

The fee of $20.00 includes all materials. Space is limited so pre-registration is necessary. To register, call 255-5522.

DESIGNING AND MAINTAINING A HEALTHY LANDSCAPE

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:00 to 8:00 pm
NC Cooperative Extension Center, 94 Coxe Ave. Asheville, NC

Everyone wants a home landscape that not only looks good, but also is low maintenance and environmentally friendly. Start by learning the basic steps to selecting and growing healthy plants. This series will include the steps to designing your home landscape, evaluating your site, selecting good trees, shrubs and perennials for your site; soil preparation, planting correctly and best maintenance practices.  Cost: $20 for the series.  
Paid pre-registration is required

Program Agenda

August 21
Six Steps to Landscape Design
August 23
Selecting the Right Plants
August 28
Planting it Right
August 30
Maintaining the Landscape
September 4
Home Lawn Planting and Maintenance

The Mountain Gardener is a newsletter produced by the Buncombe County Center of North Carolina Cooperative Extension. The purpose of this newsletter is to inform and educate Buncombe County residents about issues related to home lawns and gardens.

Editor:

Linda G. Blue

Extension Agent – Agriculture – Urban Horticulture

Check out Buncombe County Center’s website at…..

http://buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu
August 11  Plant Problem Clinic – By Extension Master Gardeners at the WNC Farmers Market, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm in the breezeway between the retail buildings.

August 14  Gardening in the Mountains Series, “Water Gardens”, Presented by Extension Master Gardener volunteers at the North Carolina Arboretum at 10:00 am. No pre-registration. Tuesday is free admission.

August 25  Plant Problem Clinic – By Extension Master Gardeners at the WNC Farmers Market, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm in the breezeway between the retail buildings.

September 7 - 16  WNC Mountain State Fair -- Look for the Flower and Garden tent close to the Heritage Village.

September 29  Fall Garden School -- Presented by Extension Master Gardener Volunteers at the Folk Art Center. More details next month.

Individuals with disabilities who would like to participate in any program mentioned in this newsletter, but who need special assistance to do so, should call the Extension Center at 828-255-5522 at least five days prior to the event.