July 2008

“The love of gardening is a seed once sown that never dies.”
―Gertrude Jekyll

Normal July Weather
Weather Averages
For Asheville, North Carolina
Courtesy of Wikipedia

Normal July Average High  80°F
Normal July Average Low  58.3°F
Normal July Precipitation  4.38”

Hours of Daylight for Asheville, NC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sunrise</th>
<th>Sunset</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>6:18 am</td>
<td>8:49 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 31</td>
<td>6:37 am</td>
<td>8:35 pm</td>
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</tbody>
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RAIN BARRELS AGAIN

Because we have had so many people continue to ask about rain barrels, Buncombe County Extension Master Gardeners are offering another sale.

Orders must be placed by July 25 and barrels must be picked up on August 2.

See pg. 5 for more information.
**CHORES FOR JULY**

**LAWNS**
- Zoysia lawns can be fertilized with a half pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet.
- Mow fescue and bluegrass lawns at least 3 inches high. Shorter grass will become drought stressed sooner and will be more subject to weeds.
- Do not fertilize cool season grasses until September.

**ORNAMENTALS**
- July is the normal time to divide and transplant irises. A mass of irises can be separated by digging a large clump and pulling apart rhizomes or prying them apart with a tool. Replant large rhizomes with at least one healthy leaf fan. Discard sections that are rotting or damaged. Replant so that the top of the rhizome is exposed above the soil.
- Mid-summer is a good time to remove branches from “bleeders”, trees that readily drip sap when pruned in winter. These include maple, birch, dogwood, and elm.
- Pay close attention to container gardens. They are using a lot of water by now and it may be time for some supplemental fertilizer.
- Finish any pruning or fertilizing of shrubs before the end of the month.
- Deadhead spent flowers to encourage continued flowering.

**FRUITS**
- Peach and plum trees should be sprayed with fungicide every 2 weeks to prevent brown rot.
- For best flavor, leave peaches on the tree as long as possible – until the background color changes from green.
- Grapes should be sprayed to prevent black rot.
- Prune blackberries and raspberries after harvest.

**VEGETABLES**
- To prevent blossom-end-rot on tomatoes (occasionally squash and peppers), mulch and maintain watering. Drought stress or water fluctuations are the most common cause of this malady.
- The vegetable garden needs one inch of water per week. Monitor rainfall and supplement as needed.
- Plan the fall garden. Brussels sprouts should be planted in July; most other cool season crops in August. You can start seeds in pots for plants such as broccoli, cabbage and collards.
- You can also still plant late crops of squash, bush beans or cucumbers.
- For best flavor and nutritional value, harvest vegetables when young and tender. Refer to the publication on Harvesting Vegetables: [http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts./hort/hil/hil-8108.html](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts./hort/hil/hil-8108.html).
- Protect honeybees. If you must use an insecticide (even organic) spray late in the evening when few bees are active.
- Surplus produce can be donated to the Plant A Row for the Hungry collection at MANNA Food Bank. Take fresh fruits and vegetables to MANNA at 627 Swannanoa River Road, Monday – Friday between 8:00 am and 3:30 pm.

*Recommendations for the use of chemicals are included in this publication as a convenience to the reader. The use of brand names and any mention or listing of commercial products or services in this publication does not imply endorsement by the North Carolina Cooperative Extension nor discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned. Individuals who use chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conforms to the product label. Be sure to obtain current information about usage and examine a current product label before applying any chemical. For assistance, contact an agent of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension.*
INSECTS TO WATCH FOR

Inspect plants periodically so you can tackle pest problems before they get out of hand. Pesticides should never be applied randomly “just in case” there might be some insects in the garden. You may end up killing off more beneficial insects than pests.

Ornamentals: slugs; lacebugs on azaleas, rhododendrons, pieris, pyracanthas; bagworms on junipers, cedars, cypress, arborvitae; spruce mites on spruce, hemlocks, fir; spidermites on many flowers and shrubs; euonymus scale.

Fruits and vegetables: slugs, asparagus beetles, cucumber beetles, cabbageworms, tomato fruitworms, aphids, spider mites.

SPOTLIGHT: Clethra.

_Clethra alnifolia_, also known as summersweet or sweet pepperbush is a lovely native shrub for the landscape. It is a multi-stemmed shrub with glossy dark green leaves. The clusters of white or pale pink flowers add lovely fragrance to the garden in July and August. In autumn the leaves are generally pale yellow to golden brown. After the leaves fall, the seed clusters add some winter interest.

As it grows naturally along streams, Clethra is a good choice for rain gardens or moist sites. But this low maintenance shrub will tolerate sun to medium shade and will withstand dry soil once the plant is established. After a few years most plants begin to form a colony by putting out shoots around the base of the plant, so it may be a better choice for the informal border than a formal foundation planting. Butterflies, hummingbirds and bumblebees enjoy the flowers.

Although the standard Clethra plant can reach 8 to 10 feet in a moist shady location, there are several cultivars available, most of which reach about 4 feet. Some varieties include ‘Hummingbird’, ‘Sixteen Candles’, ‘Pink Spires’, and ‘Ruby Spice’.

FOCUS ON FLOWERS: The 4 Season Landscape

NC Cooperative Extension, Extension Master Gardeners and the North Carolina Arboretum are once again teaming up to offer this special day-long symposium. This year’s theme will be planning the landscape for year-round interest. For registration information call the Arboretum at 665-2492.

Focus on Flowers: The 4 Season Landscape

_July 19, 2008_
9:00 am – 4:00 pm

Designing the Year-Round Garden Pam Beck
The Summer Garden Hunter Stubbs
The Fall Garden Linda Blue
Winter into Spring Pam Beck
Flower Arranging Becky Lance
TIPS FOR THE WATER WISE GARDEN

An easy way to save water is not to water the lawn. Unless the lawn was just planted this spring, cool season grasses can be allowed to go dormant in the summer. Recent research at NC State University has shown that the crown of a healthy tall fescue plant can survive 40 to 48 days without water. After that time the crown can die from dehydration. So during an extended drought, if you can apply a half inch to an inch of water once a month, that should be enough to ensure that the grass will survive to green back up in the fall.

Of course grass with a good healthy root system is best equipped to withstand dry conditions longest. Some steps you can take to make your fescue or bluegrass lawn the most drought-tolerant include:

1. Maintain the mowing height of at least 3 inches.
2. Make sure the soil pH is 6.0-6.5.
3. Also make sure the soil phosphate is adequate (soil test).
4. If soil is compacted, aerate in the fall.
5. Do not apply nitrogen fertilizer after early March. Feed again in September.

Growing In The Mountains
Designing and Maintaining A Healthy Landscape
And Fall Vegetable Gardening

Tuesdays and Thursdays
6:00 – 7:30 PM
Lord Auditorium
Pack Memorial Library

No pre-registration required.
Doors open at 5:30. Lecture begins promptly at 6:00 pm.

Home grown vegetables are extra flavorful and nutritious. August is the time to plant those healthy fall vegetables. Maintain an environmentally friendly landscape 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 and planting correctly and best maintenance practices.

August 12  Planting A Fall Vegetable Garden
August 14  Six Steps To Landscape Design
August 19  Selecting The Right Plants
August 21  Planting It Right
August 26  Maintaining The Landscape
August 28  Home Lawn Planting and Maintenance
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 you gauge tested, call our office at 255-5522 to set up an appointment.

VISIT OUR DEMONSTRATION SITES
You can also learn more about gardening by visiting our demonstration sites. Extension Master Gardeners of Buncombe County maintain three demonstrations in Asheville.
On Thursday mornings, between 9:30 and 11:30 am, you can visit with the Master Gardener Volunteers at the Plant A Row Demonstration garden at MANNA Food Bank. They will be happy to answer your gardening questions or explain their vegetable growing techniques while they take care of the garden. Of cours, you can drop by to take a look and pick up a leaflet at any time.
If you are visiting the WNC Nature Center; don’t miss the Heirloom Garden. Inside the picket fence you’ll see old fashioned varieties of herbs, flowers and vegetables and can pick up a leaflet while you are there. These volunteers also usually work on Thursday mornings.
The Composting Demonstration, located at the WNC Farmers’ Market, contains several different types of compost bins as well as informational signs and leaflets. Volunteers will be at the site to talk about composting from 11 am – 2 pm the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month.

RAIN BARREL SALE
The 80 gallon barrel measures 37 inches high and 28 inches wide. It is made of 20% recycled high density polypropylene. The heavy concave lid channels water flow into the barrel. The screened entry blocks leaves, debris and insects; and the dark green color discourages algae growth. There are two overflow ports to move water away from your home. It comes complete with fittings and installation instructions.

80 Gallon Barrel: $110
Payment by July 25 to the Master Gardener Project Fund

PICK UP DAY
August 2, 2008
9:00 – 1:00
WNC Farmers Market

To order your barrel, call Buncombe County Cooperative Ext. at 255-5522 or mail you payment to: NC Cooperative Ext., 94 Coxe Ave. Asheville, NC 28801 or print the order form from our web-site at buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu

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
**July 8**  
**Gardening in the Mountains Series**, “Water-Wise Landscaping”, presented by Extension Master Gardeners, at the NC Arboretum, 10:00 am

**July 12 & 26**  
**Compost Demonstration** by Extension Master Gardeners at the Compost Demo. Site next to Israel’s Garden Center at the WNC Farmers Market  
11:00 am to 2:00 pm.

**July 12 & 26**  
**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. If you can not bring plant problem samples to the Extension Office during the week, Extension Master Gardeners staff a Plant Problem Clinic at the WNC Farmer’s Market the second and fourth Saturdays each month.

**July 19**  
**Focus on Flowers**: “Four-Season Gardening”. NC Arboretum 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

**July 25**  
**Rain Barrel Sale**, deadline for placing orders.

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**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.**