“Give me a fine March day with the sound of flies and bees in the air and I’m on top of the world.”

Christopher Lloyd,
- “The Year at Great Dixter”

Normal March Weather
Weather Averages
For Asheville North Carolina
Courtesy of Wikipedia

Normal March Average High 57°F
Normal March Average Low 35°F
Normal March Precipitation 4.0”

Hours of Daylight for Asheville, NC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunrise</th>
<th>Sunset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>6:59 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 31</td>
<td>7:17 am</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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CELEBRATE ARBOR DAY

This year North Carolina Arbor Day is March 21. National Arbor Day is the last Friday in April.

We traditionally celebrate Arbor Day by planting a tree. But the day is also intended to remind us of the importance of maintaining healthy trees. Healthy trees are an asset to our natural environment, our urban setting, and the aesthetics and value of our home landscape.

Planting a tree is a great thing to do, but we also have a commitment to take care of the wonderful mature trees we already have. If you damage a 150 year old oak tree during a construction project or by topping, how long will it take to grow a new one when it is gone?

It is awesome to look at the old tree and contemplate that it was alive when my great, great grandfather was alive. If we plant a tree today, we can only hope that those who come after us will protect it so our great, great, great grandchildren can play in its shade.
CHORES FOR MARCH

LAWNS
- It will be time to crank up the lawn mower. Did you get the blade sharpened?
- Do not over-do the spring nitrogen application. Slow release nitrogen should be put out no later than the first week of March. Quick – release products such as 10-10-10 can be applied through the end of the month.
- Mid – March is a good time to apply a pre-emergent herbicide if crabgrass has been a problem. Remember, you can not use pre-emergent herbicide and plant grass seed in the same season.

ORNAMENTALS
- Winter weeds are thriving now. Get out there and pull the bittercress, henbit, chickweed and others before they throw off seeds.
- When purchasing bare root plants, unwrap the roots and soak them in water for up to 12 hours before planting, but no longer. Inspect the plants and cut off any broken roots or stems before planting.
- March is a good time to do severe pruning when overgrown shrubs need to be renovated.
- If tree branches have been broken by winter winds, make a clean cut at the branch collar for better healing. See: http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts./hort/hil/pdf/hil-602.pdf
- Cut back liriope and ornamental grasses.
- Rejuvinate hanging baskets and use cuttings to start new baskets.
- Check house plants for insect infestations. Plants can be taken outside on a warm day for spraying, but bring them in before temperatures drop late in the day.

FRUITS
- Plant all types of fruit crops.
- Prune fruit trees, grapes and brambles.
- The Extension office has video tapes on pruning grapes, blueberries and fruit trees that are available for loan.
- Fertilize all fruit crops.

VEGETABLES
- Let the planting begin! Turn over the soil for the early plantings as soon as the soil is not too wet to work without making clods.
- Plant English and edible-pod peas, onions, spinach, carrots, radishes and kale all month.
- Go ahead and seed some lettuces too. Keep some row cover fabric handy in case the seedlings need frost protection.
- Mid to late March set out potatoes and plants of cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower.
- Start transplants indoors for tomatoes, peppers and eggplants mid-month. They will need 6 to 8 weeks to be ready for the garden.
- Start shopping for seeds for the summer crops while the selection is good.

OTHER
- It’s lovely to have a bouquet of daffodils in the house. If you want to mix daffodils with other cut flowers, though, take an extra step first. The sap from daffodil stems can clog the stems of other plants. The recommendation is to let the daffodils stand in water by themselves for at least 6 hours before placing them in with other flowers.

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.
Serviceberry, shadbush, shadblow, juneberry, sarvis-tree – these are all common names for a small native tree, *Amelanchier arborea*. About the only time we notice this lovely tree in its natural habitat is in mid to late March when the airy white blossoms can be seen from afar in the otherwise bare woodland. This delightful harbinger of spring is worthy of a spot in many landscapes. Serviceberry can be found growing along woodland edges, stream banks or even on rocky slopes. It will grow in full sun or partial shade in most soil types and is pretty drought tolerant once established. It can be considered either a small tree or large shrub. There are a number of named varieties in the nursery trade, most of which are listed as growing 20 to 25 feet. In addition to the few weeks of beautiful spring bloom, usually a couple of weeks ahead of the dogwoods, serviceberry also offers great fall color. Fall color can vary from yellow to red, depending on the cultivar. They also produce edible fruit in June (hence the name, juneberry) which can be eaten fresh or used for pie – if you can beat the birds to them.

**GARDENING IN THE MOUNTAINS** – The second Tuesday of each month Extension Master Gardeners of Buncombe County offer a talk at the North Carolina Arboretum. Talks begin at 10:00 and last about an hour. Tuesday is free admission day at the Arboretum and you do not have to pre-register for the programs. Here are the topics for the next few months:

- **Growing Vegetables**  
  *March 11*

- **Gardening for Butterflies**  
  *April 8*

- **Growing Culinary Herbs**  
  *May 6*

- **Flowers for all Seasons**  
  *June 10*

- **Water-Efficient Landscaping**  
  *July 8*
ORCHARD MASON BEES

When honeybees are scarce, fruit and vegetable growers sometimes cultivate other pollinators. The Orchard Mason Bee is the common name of a nonsocial native bee (*Osmia lignaria* ssp.) that pollinates spring fruit trees, flowers and vegetables. This gentle, blue-black metallic bee does not live in hives. In nature it nests within hollow stems, woodpecker drillings and insect holes found in trees or wood. They are active for only a short period of the year. They are not aggressive and one may observe them at very close range without fear of being stung, which makes them excellent for enhancing our yards and gardens.

To learn more about orchard mason bees, go to:


Conserving Water Around the Home

*by Nancy Ostergaard, Family and Consumer Agent*

During this time of drought we all become aware that we should be doing our part to conserve water around our home. Here are some changes we can make to conserve this important resource.

Inside our homes the bathrooms account for 75% of our home’s overall water use, the kitchen is 20%, while cooking, drinking and miscellaneous is 5%. Because of this, start in the bathroom areas while making your observations and changes.

- Fix leaky faucets – a slow steady drip can waste over 350 gallons a month. A faucet with a steady stream can waste 4600 gallons a month.
- Install water saving showerheads. The older showerheads use between five to seven gallons per minute (gpm). A low-flow showerhead reduces the water usage to 2.5 (gpm) or less. The shower heads are available in most plumbing departments of hardware, discount or home improvement stores for less than $10.00.
- Shorten your showers. Even a one or two minute reduction could save 700 gallons a month.
- Capture tap water. While waiting for hot water at the faucet or shower, catch the flow and use in other areas such as watering plants. You could save 400 to 600 gallons a month.
- Check your toilet for leaks. Put a dye tablet or food coloring into the tank. If colored water appears in the bowl without flushing there is a leak that should be repaired. This could save you 400 gallons a month.
- Turn off the water while brushing your teeth and shaving. You could save up to nine gallons a day.
- In the kitchen, if you wash dishes by hand don’t leave the water running for rinsing. You can save 200 to 500 gallons per month.
PERENNIAL PLANT OF THE YEAR - *Geranium ‘Rozanne’*

The Perennial Plant Association’s 2008 Perennial Plant of the Year is *Geranium ‘Rozanne’*. It is described as a strong performing hardy plant with 2 ½ inch iridescent violet-blue, saucer-shaped flowers with purple-violet veins and radiant white centers. It grows about 24 inches tall and wide and is said to have one of the longest flowering periods of any of the hardy geraniums – from late spring to mid fall. ‘Rozanne’ should be hardy in USDA Zones 5 to 8 and performs best in full sun to part shade with moist well-drained soil. It can be used as a container plant, a perennial specimen, or even as a ground cover.

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**Almanac Gardener**

The popular Almanac Gardener program returns to UNC-TV on April 5 at 12 noon, and will run weekly through August 16. This production of North Carolina Cooperative Extension and UNC-TV will be celebrating its 25th season this year.

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**Garden Almanacs**

Our Gardeners’ Almanacs are once again available at the Buncombe County Cooperative Extension Center. This “Guide to Environmentally Friendly Gardening in Buncombe County” provides lists of garden chores for each month, a garden lesson each month, a guide to planting vegetables in western NC, a garden glossary, and references to lots of helpful leaflets. Pick up your copy for only $5.

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**Speakers Bureau**

Need someone to speak to your club or organization? The Extension Master Gardeners’ Speakers’ Bureau offers a number of garden related topics. There is no fee for this educational service. For further information on available programs, contact the Buncombe County Cooperative Extension office at 255-5522.
### COMING EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 8</td>
<td><strong>Organic Growers School</strong>, Blue Ridge Community College, Flat Rock, NC</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 11</td>
<td><strong>Gardening in the Mountains Series</strong>, “Growing Vegetables”, presented by Extension Master Gardeners, at The North Carolina Arboretum, 10:00 am. Free, no pre-registration required.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 28-29</td>
<td><strong>BBQ and Jamboree, at the WNC Farmers Market</strong>: Extension Master Gardeners will staff a garden information table and plant clinic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 8</td>
<td><strong>Gardening In The Mountain Series</strong>, “Gardening for Butterflies”, presented by Extension Master Gardeners, at The North Carolina Arboretum, 10:00 am. Free, no pre-registration required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 12 &amp; 26</td>
<td><strong>Plant Problem Clinic</strong>: by Extension Master Gardeners, WNC Farmers’ Market, 11:00 – 2:00 in the breezeway between the retail buildings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2-4</td>
<td><strong>WNC Herb Festival</strong>, WNC Farmers’ Market.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2-3</td>
<td><strong>Days in the Gardens</strong>, Botanical Gardens at Asheville.</td>
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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.**