“The holly and the ivy, Now both are full-well grown, Of all the trees that are in the wood, The holly bears the crown.”
-Old French Hymn

Normal November / December Weather
Weather Averages
For Asheville North Carolina
Courtesy of Wikipedia

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal November Average High</td>
<td>57.4°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal November Average Low</td>
<td>35.3°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal November Precipitation</td>
<td>3.82”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal December Average High</td>
<td>49.3°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal December Average Low</td>
<td>28.8°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal December Precipitation</td>
<td>3.40”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hours of Daylight for Asheville, NC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sunrise</th>
<th>Sunset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov 1</td>
<td>7:51 am</td>
<td>6:36 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 30</td>
<td>7:19 am</td>
<td>5:17 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 1</td>
<td>7:20 am</td>
<td>5:17 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 31</td>
<td>7:39 am</td>
<td>5:26 pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Treating Hemlocks

Although fall is normally the best time to apply the systemic soil drench chemicals for hemlock woolly adelgid control, this year if you applied soil chemicals in October, it has not moved out of the soil yet due to lack of water moving into the tree. So if you have not treated yet, you haven’t missed anything.

To ensure maximum effectiveness of the treatment it is best to treat only when there is good soil moisture. You can apply soil drenches into December as long as the ground is not frozen. Otherwise, wait until February or March to treat.

Lack of water movement in the trees also means it is going to take longer for the material to work. Don’t be alarmed if it takes at least a year before you no longer see white fluff in the tree.
CHORES FOR NOVEMBER

LAWNS

- Continue leaf collecting efforts. Leaves can be chopped up with a mulching mower and left on the lawn up to a point. As long as the chips mostly filter down into the grass canopy rather than piling up on top, it should be fine.
- Once we get enough rain to soften the soil enough to run an aerator, it is still a good time to aerate if the soil has become compacted.

ORNAMENTALS

- Cool autumn days can be ideal for cleaning up garden areas. Cut back perennials, pull weeds, thin out groundcovers, trim a few unruly shrub branches.
- November is the best time to plant spring flowering bulbs. Plant bulbs to a depth equal to 3 to 4 times the diameter of the bulb.
- Plant trees and shrubs. Water thoroughly, mulch, then check soil moisture around the plants weekly.
- Some woody plants can be propagated from cuttings this time of year, including boxwood, holly, juniper and yew.
- Keep leaves removed from evergreen ground covers. Matted leaves can cause the plants underneath to rot.

FRUITS

- Do not prune fruit trees until March.
- Pull weeds in the strawberry bed.

VEGETABLES

- Leafy greens should be ready to harvest. Pull whole plants if the bed needs to be thinned. Otherwise pull lower leaves and allow the plant to continue growing.
- Don’t forget the garden when planning Thanksgiving meals. Kale, collards, cabbage, turnips, beets, carrots, lettuce, leeks and a few other cold weather crops should be at their best.
- Cuttings of rosemary will often root in water. Pot up the rooted cuttings to grow on a sunny windowsill, convenient for winter cooking.

OTHER

- Concrete or clay containers or ornaments are best brought in out of the weather to protect from freeze damage.
- Check pesticide labels stored for winter. Many should not be allowed to freeze.
GARDEN CHORES FOR DECEMBER

LAWNS

• Take a break for a while, as long as the last of the leaves have been raked and the grass has been mowed that last time.

ORNAMENTALS

• Once the amaryllis is in bloom, the flowers will last longer if it is not in direct sunlight.
• Check the water level in the cut Christmas tree daily.
• A balled and burlapped tree should be kept indoors no more than 10 days.
• If the ground is not frozen, it is still fine to plant trees, shrubs and groundcovers.

FRUITS

• After nighttime temperatures are regularly below freezing, the strawberry bed can be covered with straw or row cover fabric. Pull weeds first.
• Grape vines may be pruned. Use vines for wreath making.

VEGETABLES

• Remove asparagus ferns now that they have died.
• Carrots, parsnips, beets and turnips can be dug all winter if the ground does not freeze. You may want to cover the bed with a few inches of straw to prevent freezing.
• Greenhouses and cold frames can overheat quickly on a sunny day. Check them regularly if they don’t have automatic vent openers.

OTHER

• When cutting holiday greenery, keep good pruning practices in mind. Use an antitranspirant spray to preserve cut greenery longer.
• Start flagging your wish lists in the garden catalogs that will start filling you mail box

PLANTS AND DROUGHT

This has not been a good year for plants. Plants damaged by the spring freeze have had a difficult time recovering during the drought. And some that have made it this far could succumb this winter if they go into extremely cold weather stressed by drought. By October we were seeing signs of drought stress in a number of woody plants – wilting leaves, browning needles, scorched leaves, and dieback. Normally the recommendation would be to irrigate plants to make sure they are well hydrated going into winter. But with water restrictions and low well supplies, most plants are having to fend for themselves. Time will tell what the consequences will be.

Many home lawns are still showing the effects of drought. If you planted grass seed in September and were not able to keep it watered, you will likely have to try again in spring. The next best opportunity to plant grass is late February to early March.
SPOTLIGHT : DECIDUOUS HOLLIES

As a group, hollies are probably among the most popular and common landscape plants. While the many evergreen varieties are familiar to most gardeners, the deciduous hollies go largely unnoticed and under used. In locations where an evergreen plant is not required, a deciduous holly may be appreciated during the fall and winter months when the red berries provide a splash of color and, eventually, food for hungry birds.

Both winterberry holly (*Ilex verticillata*) and possumhaw (*Ilex decidua*) are native North American plants. Possumhaw varieties are generally small trees and winterberries are shrubs. There are also some excellent hybrids of *I. verticillata* and *I. serrata*, a native of Japan.

All of the deciduous hollies will do well with at least a half day of sun and average soils. They are also a good choice for wet sites, even tolerating occasional flooding.

Like most hollies, male flowers and female flowers are borne on separate plants. Therefore, a male plant should also be planted to assure good berry production on the female plant.

The most popular variety of *I. verticillata* is “Winter Red.” The best known *I. decidua* is probably “Warren Red.” Some good hybrids include “Sparkleberry”, “Bonfire”, and “Carolina Cardinal.” There are also some yellow berried varieties for those looking for something different.

STORE PESTICIDES SAFELY

Pesticides left over from summer gardening activities should be stored safely for use next year. Check labels. Many products should not be allowed to freeze, and therefore, will need to be moved from the garden shed into a heated area. The following recommendations are provided in accordance with the North Carolina Pesticide Storage Regulations:

1. Store pesticides in original, non-leaking containers, with a tight closure.
2. The label should be on the container and visible when container is placed on a shelf.
3. Pesticides should not be stored in any food, feed, beverage or medicine container that has been used, or is designed to contain those products.
4. Avoid contamination of foods, feeds, beverages, and eating utensils by storing pesticides in a separate location.
5. Pesticide storage area should not be used for storing combustible materials such as gasoline, kerosene, or petroleum solvents. Also keep area free of debris such as waste paper, rags, or cardboard boxes.
6. Storage area should also be fireproof, well ventilated, dry and not allowed to reach freezing temperatures.
7. Storage area should not be accessible by unauthorized persons, especially children.
OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS

Extension Master Gardener volunteers have helped thousands of Buncombe County gardeners to improve their gardening practices and to resolve plant problems. Without their time and energy many of your questions would have gone unanswered. We thank all our hard working volunteers for their dedication to urban horticulture education in Buncombe County. On November 15 our outstanding volunteers were recognized for their contributions in 2007.

2007 Volunteer of the Year award was presented to 2 outstanding volunteers.

Sandee Yost has been an active volunteer for 14 years, participating in numerous activities and serving in leadership roles on several projects.

Donna Forsse has contributed 1,000 + hours in only 2 years, serving valuable roles in many program areas.

The New Sprout award was presented to the outstanding member of the Class of 2007. This year’s recipient is Mary Reeves who enthusiastically participated in numerous activities.

2007 Extension Master Gardener volunteers receiving certification after completing training and more than 40 hours of service were:

- Henry Anderson
- Tom Bailey
- Sherry Berman
- Bobbye Bridges
- Jan Cantrell
- Nancy Ackerman Cole
- Judy Deutsch
- Cynthia Drew
- Don Farver
- Ann Forbes
- Blaine Grindle
- George Hess
- Beth Hill
- Mary Hugenschmidt
- Jackie Itzkovitz
- Ross Jones
- Janice Kennedy
- Christy Larson
- Len Pardue
- Mary Reeves
- Sarah Rubin
- Sharon Sasse
- Clint Smoke
- Elizabeth Swann
- Brenda Thomas
- Sally Wheeler
- Debbie Wood

Basic Home Maintenance Course

The Buncombe County Cooperative Extension Center is offering a five class Basic Home Maintenance Course from 1:00 to 3:00 pm, November 27 and 29, December 4, 6, and 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 fee of $20 includes all materials. The course will be held at the Extension Center, 94 Coxe Ave. Preregistration is required by calling 255-5522.

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
COMING EVENTS

November 13  Gardening in the Mountains: “Firewise Landscaping”, presented by Extension Master Gardeners at the North Carolina Arboretum at 10:00 am. Tuesday is free admission. No registration required.

November 16  Extension Master Gardener application deadline.

December 11  Gardening in the Mountains: “Holiday Plants”, presented by Extension Master Gardeners at the North Carolina Arboretum at 10:00 am. Tuesday is free admission. No registration required.

December 8  The Botanical Gardens at Asheville, Garden Path Gift Shop closes for the season.

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.