“What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered.”
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Newsletter Mailing Restrictions

If you are receiving the Mountain Gardener Newsletter via US Postal Service, you are finding the August newsletter enclosed with the September issue. Due to a drastic reduction of our postage budget we can no longer mail the newsletter every month. If you would like to receive this newsletter every month, rather than getting 2 issues every-other month, you will want to convert to the electronic (e-mail) list.

To change your mailing, please call us at 255-5522, or email joyce.plemmons@buncombecounty.org

Normal August Weather

Normal August Average High 83°F
Normal August Average Low 62°F
Normal August Precipitation 4”

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>August 1</td>
<td>6:38 am</td>
<td>8:34 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 31</td>
<td>7:01 am</td>
<td>7:59 pm</td>
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Persons with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency may request accommodations to participate in activities mentioned in this newsletter. Please contact Linda Blue at 828-255-5522 during business hours at least 3 days prior to the event to discuss accommodations.
**Garden Chores for August**

**Lawns**
- Fertilizer can be applied to cool season lawns in late August if the grass is not drought stressed.
- Late August through September is a good time to seed fescue and bluegrass.

**Ornamentals**
- Weeds have been plentiful this year. Try to keep them pulled before they go to seed.
- It is OK to snip the occasional stray branch from shrubs, but this is not a good time to do sheering or drastic pruning.
- Do not apply nitrogen fertilizer to shrubs.
- Some plants will bloom until frost if you keep the spent flowers removed. Deadhead butterfly bush, purple coneflowers, phlox, and roses.
- Spruce up container gardens to keep them looking good through fall. Cut back and thin out over-grown plants. Apply some liquid fertilizer if you have not done so recently.

**Fruits**
- Prune blackberries and raspberries after harvest.
- Fertilize and irrigate the strawberry bed. The plants are forming next spring’s flower buds in September.
- Peach tree borers can kill peach, cherry and plum trees. To prevent infestation, spray the trunks of the trees in late August and early September with an insecticide labeled for borer (usually a type of pyrethroid). For more information see: [http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/O&T/trees/note141/note141.html](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/O&T/trees/note141/note141.html).

**Vegetables**
- As garden space is freed up by spent summer crops, fill the space with fall vegetables. Some things to plant now include: greens, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce, turnips.
- Insect populations are highest late in the season. Check regularly for cabbage worms, aphids, tomato worms and squash borers.
- Irish potatoes should be ready to dig.
- Submit a soil sample to prepare for next year’s garden. Turn-around time is fast this time of year and allows you to apply any needed lime in the fall.
- Don’t let the veggies go to waste. Have a neighbor check the garden if you are away.
- 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.

**Other**
- Check for standing water in plant saucers, clogged gutters and ditches. Dump and refill bird baths weekly. These are typical breeding sites for mosquitoes.
- While mowing and working in the yard, be alert for yellow jacket nests. Populations that have been docile all summer become very defensive of the nest, and therefore are very aggressive beginning in August. You can find more information about yellow jackets at: [http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/Urban/horn-yj.htm](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/Urban/horn-yj.htm).
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, pyrellin or pyrethrin. Several species of worms become prevalent on cabbage family crops. Bacteria sprays should be effective.

Spotlight: Sedums

“Sedum” usually brings to mind the pink flowers of ‘Autumn Joy’. There are other varieties and species of sedum that are also useful in the landscape. Sedums are sometimes referred to as stonecrop because of their ability to grow in very shallow soil. As a matter of fact, it is best not to over-fertilize or over-water these tough plants. Upright types can become floppy or brittle and break under the weight of the flowers if they grow too rapidly.

Low growing species can be used as a groundcover in areas that do not get foot traffic. They are ideal for tucking between rocks in a rock garden or between stepping stones. Though the evergreen foliage is the main reason for planting them, their flowers can be a bonus. The flowers of ‘John Creech’ form a little mat of pink in my garden in July.

About the only care needed for the low growing types is to prevent leaves from piling up on them in fall and winter. Spent flowers can be removed in summer to keep them looking good.

Tall varieties can be left standing for much of the winter as the dried flower heads add interest to the garden. Prune the dead stems to the ground before the new sprouts emerge in spring. The plants can be divided almost anytime spring through fall.

Slime Mold

In seasons with regular rainfall, it is not unusual for homeowners to be alarmed by the appearance of colorful slime molds growing on landscape mulch. The most common description is “something that looks like bright yellow dog vomit.” After wondering what their dog eats, we calmly explain that what they are seeing is a slime mold that grows on mulch (most often hardwood) and is harmless to people, pets and plants. Occasionally it will climb up a plant or even a structure.

There is no way to prevent or treat slime mold. The organism is a simple part of the natural cycle of decay. After starting out bright yellow, by the next day the color fades to a dull orange, then to tan. If the yellow blobs are objectionable they can be removed by scooping them up with a shovel, or dissolved with a good spray of the garden hose.
Vegetable Wilts

Several common problems can cause vegetable plants to suddenly wilt. Often only one out of a number of plants in the same garden will be affected.

Squash: Probably squash vine borers, a worm that bores into the center of the stem, eating away the stem tissue. Look for a hole in the stem with “stuff” coming out. If caught early, gardeners are sometimes successful in splitting open the stem with a razor blade, removing the worms, closing the stem, and then mounding soil up around the stem.

Cucumbers: Probably bacterial wilt, which can also affect watermelon and cantaloupe. This disease is spread by cucumber beetles when they chew on the plants. Once a plant is infected, it can not be saved. Remove it from the garden to reduce likelihood of spread to other plants.

Tomatoes: If plant wilts suddenly, without turning yellow, it is probable another bacterial disease, Southern Bacterial Wilt. In this case the bacteria is in the soil. Do not plant crops in the same family (pepper, eggplant, potato) in that spot for a few years.

Various plants: Tomatoes, beans, peppers, eggplant and many other vegetables can be affected by soil borne fungus, Southern Blight. Check the base of the stem, often below the soil level, for white cottony fungus growth on the stem. Corn is about the only vegetable not affected, so would be a good choice for planting in the location next summer.

Pressure Canner Testing

Pressure Canner Testing is done only by appointment this year. To have your pressure canner tested please call the Extension Office at 255-5522 and make an appointment.

Basic Home Maintenance

Are there repairs around your home that need to be done but you lack the knowledge and skill to do them yourself? The Basic Home Maintenance Course will give you those skills. This series of five two hour classes will be held from 5:30—7:30pm, September 23 through October 7th on Monday and Wednesday afternoons. 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 will be held at the Buncombe County Extension Center, 94 Coxe Avenue in Asheville.

Registration fee is $20 and includes all materials. You must register and pay in advance. To register please call the Buncombe County Center at 255-5522.

To receive this newsletter via email
Phone (828) 255-5522 or email: joyce.plemmons@buncombecounty.org
See you at the Fair

This year’s North Carolina Mountain State Fair runs September 11 through 20. It will take a little effort to find the Flower and Garden exhibits this year. We will be moving to a new building toward the back side of the fair grounds, below the livestock barns. See the map at: http://www.ncagr.gov/markets/fairs/mtnfair/map.html. We hope you find us so you can stop in and visit the Master Gardeners’ information table and view the wonderful flowers. 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 your entries. www.mountainfair.org.

BACK to BASICS$

Fall Vegetable Gardening
Successful Home Landscaping

Mondays and Wednesdays
August 3—12, 2009
5:30—7:30pm
NC Cooperative Extension
94 Coxe Ave., Asheville

Home grown vegetables are extra flavorful and nutritious. August is the time to plant those healthy fall vegetables. A home landscape should look good without requiring a lot of maintenance. 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 3  Planting A Fall Vegetable Garden
August 5  Six Steps To Landscape Design
August 10 Selecting The Right Plants
August 12 Planting and Maintenance

Pre-registration and pre-payment required. $5 per class. Call 255-5522
**EVENTS**

- **Aug 3-12**  **Back to Basics:** “Fall Vegetable Gardening and Home Landscaping”. 5:30 to 7:30pm, Mondays and Wednesdays, NC Cooperative Ext. Service, 94 Coxe Ave. Call 255-5522 to register.

- **Aug. 8 & 22**  **Plant Problem Clinics**, by Extension Master Gardeners at the WNC Farmers’ Market. 11:00am—2:00pm in the breezeway between the retail buildings.

- **Aug. 8 & 22**  **Backyard Composting Demonstration**, by Extension Master Gardeners at the WNC Farmers’ Market, beside Israel’s Garden Center, 11:00am—2:00pm

- **Aug. 11**  **Gardening in the Mountains Series**, “Growing Mushrooms”, presented by Extension Master Gardeners, NC Arboretum, 10:00am, Free, no registration required.

- **Sept. 8**  **Gardening in the Mountains Series**, “Growing Bulbs”, presented by Extension Master Gardener Volunteers at the North Carolina Arboretum at 10:00am. No pre-registration, Tuesday is free.

- **Oct. 3**  **Fall Garden School:**  *Projects for Fall, Planning for Spring*. Presented by Extension Master Gardener Volunteers. 9:00am—4:00pm at AB Tech. Campus. $10 pre-registration required.