“The summer morn is bright and fresh, the birds are darting by as if they loved to breast the breeze that sweeps the cool clear sky.”
- William C. Bryant

Vegetable Gardening is Tops

The Garden Writers Association Foundation recently released results of a survey which confirmed that American gardeners are continuing to plant new vegetable gardens. According to the report, 44 percent of American households with a yard or garden plan to add or expand a vegetable garden in their yard this year. The second largest growth category was herbs. Over one third of the respondents say their primary reason for gardening is better mental health, nutrition or fitness.

Normal July Weather
Weather Averages
For Asheville, North Carolina

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normal July Average High</th>
<th>84°F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal July Average Low</td>
<td>63°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal July Precipitation</td>
<td>3.4”</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>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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 June

Lawns

- With all the rain, brown patch fungal disease is evident in many home lawns. The best approach is to avoid mowing when the grass is wet and to hope for drier weather.
- Do not fertilize cool season grasses until September.

Ornamentals

- Container gardens may need some attention by mid-summer. Besides regular watering, remember to fertilize every few weeks. Prune back overgrown plants and deadhead spent flowers to keep the garden looking neat. Don’t forget to have someone water if you are going to be away.
- Annual flowers that tend to get very tall can be cut back at least half way to get them back in bounds. Some to cut back are cleome (spider flower, cat’s whiskers), cosmos, orange cosmos and zinnias.
- Inspect needled evergreens, especially Leyland cypress and arborvitae, for bagworms. If possible, remove them by hand. In early July you can still control them with organic Bt spray (Bacillus thuringiensis). By late July stronger insecticides will be needed. In August the caterpillars enter the pupal phase and are not affected by insecticides.
- Finish any pruning or fertilizing of shrubs before the end of the month.
- Deadhead spent flowers to encourage continued flowering.

Fruits

- Maintain regular fungicide sprays on grapes, peaches, plums to prevent fungus diseases. Products containing Captain are most effective.
- Summer pruning of fruit trees can be useful. This is a good time to remove water sprouts from apple and pear trees.
- Prune blackberries and raspberries after harvest.

Vegetables

- To prevent diseases, maintain weekly fungicide sprays. The most commonly used garden product is chlorothalonil (Bravo, etc.). Organic gardeners may want to try Serenade, a new bacterial product. Copper or sulfur sprays are less effective, but offer a little help.
- Do not let basil plants flower as it will change the flavor. You can keep pinching out flowers, but the best approach is as soon as the flowers start to form, cut the plants back hard, right above a set of leaves low down on the branch. The stems will quickly resprout. Make a batch or pesto from the harvest.
- Harvest vegetables daily. Cucumbers, squash and beans are best picked while small and tender and can mature from flower to fruit in just a couple of days. Refer to the publication on Harvesting Vegetables: http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/hil-8108.html.
- 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.

Other

- 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 FoodBank. Take fresh fruits and vegetables to MANNA at 627 Swannanoa River Rd., M-F between 8am and 3:30pm.
**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; lace bugs on azaleas, rhododendrons, pieris, pyracanthas; bagworms on junipers, cedars, cypress, arborvitae; spruce mites on spruce, hemlocks, fir; spider mites on many flowers and shrubs; euonymous scale.

Fruits and vegetables: slugs, asparagus beetles, cucumber beetles, cabbageworms, tomato fruit worms, corn earworms, Mexican bean beetles, Colorado potato beetles, aphids, spider mites.

**Perennial Plant of the Year**

The Perennial Plant Association’s 2009 Perennial Plant of the Year is *Hakonechloa macra ‘Aureola’*, golden hakone grass. This ornamental grass is native to Japan and grows about 18 inches tall with an arching form that resembles miniature bamboo. The bright yellow color with thin green stripes turns to shades of pink in the fall. It is used as a bright accent in the garden.

Hakone grass is hardy in zones 5 to 9. It does best in well-drained soil so heavy clay will need to be amended with organic material. In western North Carolina it will probably do fine in the sun as long as it has adequate moisture. Partial shade is fine, but color will not be as vibrant in deep shade.

This grass does spread by underground stolons, but is said to spread slowly enough to not become invasive. If you want to divide a clump, do so as soon as it starts to come up in spring.

**Mosquito Control**

This will be a bad year for mosquitoes in many neighborhoods. Remember that most mosquito species breed in standing water. The best way to reduce mosquito populations is to make sure water does not stand around after a rain or watering. Check for clogged gutters on the house, or water in ditches. Empty plant saucers, bird baths, etc. every 3 to 4 days to prevent mosquito larva from maturing. Keep rain barrels covered or use a little of the Bacillus thuringiensis israelesiensis product (Mosquito Dunks, Mosquito Bits granules) every couple of weeks. Bti can also be used in ponds and water gardens.

Of course you can’t control mosquitoes coming from woodlands or neighboring areas. Since mosquitoes can fly from considerable distances, it does not help to spray the yard with an insecticide. “Bug zappers” have been found to actually kill relatively few mosquitoes. Your best bet is to wear long clothing and or use insect repellant when outside if needed.
Focus on Flowers

NC Cooperative Extension, Extension Master Gardeners and the North Carolina Arboretum are once again teaming up to offer this special day-long symposium. For registration information call the Arboretum at 665-2492 or visit: www.ncarboretum.org

Focus on Flowers: Your Own Back Yard
July 18, 2009
9:00 - 4:30

$44 Arboretum members, $50 non-members

Gardens of NC Peter Loewer
Great Plants for the Cutting Garden Judy Garry
Bulbs for Four Seasons Julie Vidotto
Saving Seeds From the Garden June Williams
Vines and Trellises Linda Blue and Alison Arnold
Habits for Pollinators Diane Almond
Functional & Fabulous Containers Renee Fisher

Upcoming “Hands On” Canning Classes

Canning and Preserving Made Easy –

Learn more about canning or just brush up on the latest information on food preservation from canning to freezing to drying by attending Canning and Preserving Made Easy. This workshop is an introduction to canning, pickling, jams and jellies, freezing, drying and storage and will be held on Wednesday, July 22nd from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at the Madison County Cooperative Extension Center, Marshall, NC.

Cost is $10 ($15 for couples who share materials). To register call Sue Estridge, Extension Agent, Family and Consumer Sciences, at (828) 649-2411.

Canning Low and High Acid Foods – July 30th 10:00 am to 12:00 pm.

Lecture and demonstration class that will review canning using the water bath and pressure canning methods. Class will be held at the NC Arboretum – call (828) 665-2492 for costs and registration information.

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.

To receive this newsletter via email
Phone (828) 255-5522 or email: joyce.plemmons@buncombecounty.org
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 9:30am and 11:30am, 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 course 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 Farmer’s Market, contains several different types of compost bins as well as informational signs and leaflets.

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 required. $5 per class. Pay at the door. Call 255-5522
EVENTS

• July 7  Gardening in the Mountains Series: “Backyard Composting”, Presented by Extension Master Gardeners, NC Arboretum, 10:00am, Free, no registration required.

• July 11 & 25 Plant Problem Clinics, by Extension Master Gardeners at the WNC Farmers’ Market, 11:00am -2:00pm in the breezeway between the retail buildings.

• July 11 & 25 Backyard Composting Demonstration, by Extension Master Gardeners at the WNC Farmers’ Market, beside Israel’s’ Garden Center, 11:00am -2:00pm.

• July 18 Focus on Flowers: Your Own Backyard, 9:00am-4:30pm, The NC Arboretum, For registration information call the Arboretum at 665-2492 or visit www.ncarboretum.org

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