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Helping gardeners put knowledge to work.

“Come, ye thankful people, come. Raise the song of Harvest - home. All is safely gathered in. Ere the winter storms begin.” - Henry Alford, 1844

Mailing List Update

If you have been receiving the Mountain Gardener newsletter in the mail for a few years, you know the routine - we are required to update our mailing list every year. And as long as you are returning the renewal form, you might as well fill out the survey.

As you have no doubt noticed the reduced mailing, this would be a good time to make the change to receiving the newsletter electronically if you can.

For those already receiving the newsletter by email, you do not need to do the renewal. (No postage budget involved.) But we would still like your feedback. All you have to do is click this link: [http://ceres.cals.ncsu.edu/surveybuilder/Form.cfm?testID=9127](http://ceres.cals.ncsu.edu/surveybuilder/Form.cfm?testID=9127). Answer a few questions, and hit SUBMIT.

Normal Nov./Dec. Weather

Weather Averages

For Asheville, North Carolina

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Normal November</th>
<th>Normal December</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average High</td>
<td>57.4°F</td>
<td>49.3°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Low</td>
<td>35.3°F</td>
<td>28.8°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precipitation</td>
<td>3.82”</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>November 1</td>
<td>6:51 am</td>
<td>5:35 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 30</td>
<td>7:19 am</td>
<td>5:17 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>7:20 am</td>
<td>5:17 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 31</td>
<td>7:39 am</td>
<td>5:26 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.

Distributed in furtherance of the acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University commit themselves to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status or disability. In addition, the two Universities welcome all persons without regard to sexual orientation. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.

Contact Us

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Asheville, NC 28801

Linda Blue
Extension Agent
Agriculture-Urban Horticulture

Check out Buncombe County Center’s website at:

[http://buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu](http://buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu)
Garden Chores for November

Lawns
- Continue to mow cool season lawns as needed. A mulching mower is a good way to chop up the leaves and recycle them onto the lawn as long as there are not enough leaves to pile up.
- Another alternative is to use a bagging attachment to chop and collect leaves. Dump them into the compost pile or use them as mulch.
- Nitrogen fertilizer can still be applied if you have not put out the fall application yet.
- It is still fine to aerate with a core aerator, but it's too late to reseed.

Ornamentals
- This is a good time to move landscape plants that need to be relocated. Replant immediately and plant at the same depth (assuming it was planted correctly to begin with).
- November is the best time to plant spring flowering bulbs. Plant bulbs to a depth equal to 4 times the diameter of the bulb.
- This is a good time to check landscape beds for small winter weeds—chickweed, annual bluegrass and bittercress are among those growing now.
- Now that the heat is running, check house plants frequently for water needs until you figure out what their winter schedule will be. They may need watering more frequently, or less frequently, depending on their location and the type of heating system.

Fruits
- Do not prune fruit trees until March.
- Pull weeds in the strawberry bed. Mulch with straw when nights are regularly falling below freezing.

Vegetables
- Remember to use the herbs still in the garden—parsley, rosemary, sage and chives should still be green.
- Don’t pull up the broccoli after harvesting the central head. Plants will continue to form side shoots until temperatures dip into the teens.
- Lettuce and Swiss chard are hardy to about 25 degrees. Light weight floating row cover will often extend that below 20 so you can continue to harvest much of the winter.

Other
- Disconnect and drain garden hoses and store rain barrels.
- This is a good time to do a soil test. The soil should be easy to dig and results will come back quickly so you can make adjustments needed for spring planting.

Caring For The Cut Christmas Tree

1. Purchase a fresh tree with needles that do not fall off when shaken.
2. Recut the base of the stem and get it in water as soon as you get it home.
3. Store the tree outdoors, standing in a bucket of water, until it is brought inside.
4. Avoid exposing the tree to heat sources and warm drafts. Use an antitranspirant spray to help slow the drying out of needles.
5. Be sure your tree stand is large enough to hold adequate water. Check the water level daily and keep the cut surface covered with water at all times. A cut Christmas tree will absorb between 2 pints and one gallon of water per day. Use plain water, no additives.
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
• Small Dwarf Alberta Spruce trees are often sold as table-top Christmas trees. These are actually landscape trees which can be planted outdoors. If you plan to do so, try to keep the tree in the house no more than a couple of weeks and plant it outside the first warm day after the holidays.
• To enjoy the poinsettia as long as possible, give it very little direct sunlight, keep it away from heat vents and cold drafts, and water regularly.
• Trees and shrubs can be planted in the landscape any time the ground is not frozen and the soil is not too wet to work.
• Inspect house plants, especially any that spent the summer outdoors. They often carry in small insects such as scale, mealybugs, whiteflies and spider mites.

Fruits
• Grape vines may be pruned. Use vines for wreath making.
• The strawberry bed can be mulched with straw when nights are regularly falling below freezing.

Vegetables
• Monitor greenhouses, cloches and cold frames daily. Temperatures heat up quickly on a sunny day.
• Collards, kale and some other related crops may still be doing fine without cold protection.
• If the ground has not frozen, you can still dig parsnips, carrots, beets and turnips.

Other
• Clean garden tools before storing. Sharpen pruning tools.

Soil Testing Goes Paperless

Beginning November 1, the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services will no longer routinely mail out paper copies of agronomic reports. This policy will apply to reports for soil tests and nematode assays, as well as plant tissue, waste, solution and soilless media analyses.

All these reports are readily available through the NCDA&CS Agronomic Division’s web site: [http://www.ncagr.gov/agronomi](http://www.ncagr.gov/agronomi).

“By making the switch to electronic-only reports, the NCDA&CS will work within its limited budget to save significantly on postage, printing and paper costs,” said Dr. Colleen Hudak-Wise, director of the Agronomic Division, “Although environmental and fiscal benefits are driving this change, clients should also see increases in convenience and efficiency. Online reports are available to clients faster than mailed reports and make record keeping much easier.”

Eventually, the NCDA&CS would like to notify all clients via e-mail when their reports are available online. Clients who provide a valid e-mail address on their sample information form, or who register an e-mail address with the Agronomic Division online, can receive electronic notification. In the interim, all other clients will receive a postcard with instructions on how to find their reports.
Decorating From The Landscape

Gardeners often enjoy gathering items from the landscape to lend a natural touch to the holiday decorating. Plant materials such as berries, nuts, seed pods, pinecones and evergreen foliage lend themselves to creative uses in wreathes, swags, table settings or fresh arrangements.

December is a good time to prune grape vines, so go ahead and make a grape vine wreath. For color add berries of holly, nandina or pyracantha.

When cutting greenery, use sharp pruners and make good pruning cuts above a side branch or leaf node. Keep an eye on the overall shape of the plant as you prune. Place cut stems directly in water and allow to soak for a day or two. Then spray with an antitranspirant for longer life.

Spotlight: Ornamental Peppers

Are you tired of poinsettias, and looking for something different to add a splash of color this winter? Consider ornamental peppers. In recent years plant breeders have bred the plants to be covered with small chile peppers in holiday colors.

Ornamental chiles (*Capsicum annuum* or *C. frutescens*) are often sold this time of year in garden centers as a house plant. They should already have some fruit (small chile peppers) and possibly some flowers. The colorful little peppers can be purple, orange, yellow or red, sometimes all on the same plant. They also come in various shapes—small and round, to long and twisty.

To keep the plant compact and colorful as long as possible, give it plenty of sunlight. As with most house plants, water thoroughly when the soil is dry, but allow to dry out a bit between watering. Normal household temperatures are fine. You don’t need to fertilize because, like poinsettias, the plants are usually discarded when they no longer look good.

A note of caution: although these peppers are edible, they tend to be very hot. As with all hot peppers, use caution when handling. Wash your hands after handling the peppers and keep small children away from them.

Garden Almanacs

With holidays and a new year approaching, this may be a good time to remind you that we have Gardeners’ Almanacs available. This booklet provides a list of garden chores and some instructional material each month, a vegetable planting guide for Buncombe County and more valuable information. For $5 they make a great gift for a new gardener, new neighbor, or yourself. Pick one up at the Buncombe County Cooperative Extension office at 94 Coxe Ave.
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 horticultural education in Buncombe County. On November 12 our outstanding volunteers were recognized for their contributions in 2009.

2009 Volunteer of the Year award was presented to Judy Deutsch. Judy has been a Master Gardener volunteer for only 3 years, but has been willing to take on leadership roles such as chairing committees to organize the Spring and Fall Garden Schools and the 2009 Garden Tour.

The New Sprout award was presented to the outstanding member of the Class of 2009. Barbara Hayes was recognized for her willingness to volunteer for numerous activities and head up projects.

20 Years and 4000 hours: Glenn Palmer (Mr. Ask-A-Gardener)

2009 Extension Master Gardener Volunteers receiving certification after completing training and more than 40 hours of service were:

- Ann Ammons
- Rita Barnwell
- DiAnn Bock-Feinroth
- Katie Doan
- Laura Fine
- Jim Gordon
- Mary Beth Gwynn
- Barbara Hayes
- Rosemary Kaschyk
- Marilyn Lonon
- Carolyn Mann
- Jane McCormick
- Gary Mills
- Tom Mills
- Sally Mundt
- Esther Pardue
- Ellen Shaw
- Susan Spencer
- Marie Tracy
- Theresa Trebon
- Bobbi Venos

Treating Hemlocks

If you have hemlock trees that need to be treated for hemlock woolly adelgid infestations, this is a good time to treat. This applies to either sprays with insecticidal soap or horticultural oil, or applying a systemic soil drench treatment. It is best to apply the soil drench when there is moisture in the soil and the ground is not frozen. If you don’t get it done now, you can still make applications in February or March. For more information on hemlock woolly adelgid control, go to: http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/O&T/trees/note119/note119.html.

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.
EVENTS

- November 20  Extension Master Gardener application deadline.

- December 8  Gardening in the Mountains Series, “Trees in the Landscape”, presented by Extension Master Gardeners at the NC Arboretum, 10:00am. Tuesday is free admission. No registration required.

- January 12  Gardening in the Mountains Series, “Seed Starting and Cold Frames”, presented by Extension Master Gardeners at the NC Arboretum, 10:00am. Tuesday is free admission. No registration required.