Ladybug, Ladybug…

Ladybugs may be delightful little beneficial insects, but they may lose some of their charm for some unfortunate homeowners in late October. The multi-colored Asian lady beetles have become pretty reliable in timing their annual “congregation” for the third week in October. In their search for a warm spot to huddle together for the winter, they are attracted to large bright objects, such as the sunny side of a light colored house.

Although they are harmless, even gardeners who love to see ladybugs in the garden eating aphids, are sometimes less enthusiastic about having lots of the little beetles inside the house. If lots of beetles are finding their way indoors, it’s a good idea to look for places your home’s weather stripping or caulking needs replacing.

For more information on lady beetles visit this web site:

http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/Other/goodpest/note107.html

Normal October Weather
Weather Averages
For Asheville, North Carolina
Courtesy of Wikipedia

Normal October Average High 43.3°F
Normal October Average Low 67.1°F
Normal October Precipitation 3.18”

Hours of Daylight for Asheville, NC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sunrise</th>
<th>Sunset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>7:24 am</td>
<td>7:15 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 31</td>
<td>7:50 am</td>
<td>6:37 pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inside:

Chores for October...................2   The Organic Way – Composting.............4
Maintaining Healthy Trees...........3   Overwintering Flowers...................4
Trees and Construction...............3   Introduction to EMG Program............5
Spotlight-Magic in the Garden........3   Planting Garlic...........................5
Insects to Watch For..................3   Events.....................................6

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, 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
CHORES FOR OCTOBER

LAWNS

• If you did not fertilize the lawn in September, you can still apply 1 pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet, preferably using slow release fertilizer.
• This is an excellent time to core aerate compacted soils.
• It is getting late to seed cool season lawns in the mountains, but if you get it done early in the month, keep the area watered, and Mother Nature complies with warm autumn weather, seeding can still be successful.

ORNAMENTALS

• If you have identified hemlock woolly adelgids in your hemlock trees, this is a good time of year to treat. Soap or oil should be applied between August and December. Fall is also a good time to apply systemic insecticide treatments.
• Plant bulbs at the end of October or in November.
• Plant trees and shrubs. Loosen roots of container grown plants that may have become root-bound. Do not plant too deep.
• Clean up the flower bed. Remove spent annuals and cut back perennials that are past their prime.
• Inspect house plants before moving back indoors for insect infestations, particularly spider mites, whiteflies or mealybugs. While you are at it, clean up the plants by removing dead leaves and flowers, snip back over-long stems and give the plant a thorough bath with the garden hose.

FRUITS

• Most blackberries and raspberries produce fruit only on 2 year old canes, so the canes that fruited this year should be removed if you have not already finished that chore. The new, green canes will fruit next summer.
• The exception is the everbearing red raspberry variety ‘Heritage’ which produces a crop in late summer on first year canes, then a second crop on the lower part of that same cane the following spring. These can be managed by removing the canes after the spring (second year) crop. However it is usually recommended to simply cut all the canes to the ground in late fall and get one larger crop next summer.
• Weed the strawberry bed if needed and water if it gets dry. Next spring’s flower buds are forming now.

VEGETABLES

• Plant garlic and onions.
• Check the cabbage family crops for cabbage worms and aphids which are at their most numerous this time of year.
• Floating row cover fabric can be used to protect crops from cabbage worms, but be sure to inspect for worms or aphids and control them before covering.
• Take cuttings of rosemary. They will root in water and can be grown indoors for the winter. Keep in a sunny spot and do not over-water.
• Harvest pumpkins and winter squash before frost.
• Plant a cover crop of winter rye or other winter grain. Turn under in early spring.

OTHER

• Leave hummingbird feeders out for late migrating birds.
• Read pesticide labels and make sure they are properly stored for winter.

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.
MAINTAINING HEALTHY TREES

As we enjoy our WNC autumn leaf display, we might remember how important it is to keep landscape trees healthy. An unhealthy tree in the landscape may not only be unsightly, it can become a hazard. Here are some steps to maintaining healthy trees:

1. Never top a tree. Topping introduces decay, eventually leading to heart rot.
2. When planting a new tree select an appropriate species for the location. Consider sun/shade, soil moisture and tree size.
3. If possible, minimize the amount of turf sharing the root zone. Mulch is best. Shade tolerant ground covers or other plantings are less competitive with the tree roots than lawn grass.
4. To avoid soil compaction, do not park vehicles or have play areas under trees. If soil has been compacted, aerate and apply mulch.
5. Prune out broken or damaged branches as soon as possible. Make correct pruning cuts at a branch collar or near a side branch.
6. Do not damage bark with mowers or weed trimmers.
7. If possible, irrigate during drought. It is not uncommon to see red oaks and some other species dying 2 or 3 years after a severe drought.
8. Protect tree root zones during any type of construction or soil disturbance. The area under the spread of the branches is considered the minimum area in which no disturbance should occur.

Trees and Construction

Speaking of trees and construction,
A new publication on Construction and Tree Protection is available at the Extension office, or on line at:


SPOTLIGHT : MAGIC IN THE GARDEN

Are there magic lilies in your garden? These interesting plants go by many other names including resurrection lily, naked lily, surprise lily and autumn amaryllis. *Lycoris squamigera* is a late summer flowering bulb. The surprise is in the fact that the leaves of the plant come up in fall or spring, but die down in early summer. Then in late summer, often after some rain, the “naked” flower stems arise bearing four to 7 amaryllis-like flowers. Flowers are usually pink.

*L.squamigera* is the most cold hardy of the species for growing in western North Carolina. It will grow well in full sun or partial shade. Plant it among other perennials or in the woodland garden where the dying foliage will not be a problem in early summer.

Magic lily is a low maintenance plant. It does not need extra water since it is dormant during the summer drought period. Plant the bulbs about 6 inches deep in the fall. They will gradually spread over time.

INSECTS TO WATCH FOR

Ornamentals: Check evergreens for bagworms. Half of those bags contain eggs which will hatch in the spring, so remove and destroy them. Spruce mites are cool weather mites that become active now. Shake a branch vigorously over white paper to check for them.

Vegetables: Aphids and several species of caterpillars can be a problem on broccoli, cabbage, collards and other cabbage family plants.
THE ORGANIC WAY: COMPOSTING

The backbone of organic gardening is healthy soil with lots of microbial activity. Compost, “brown gold”, is fundamental to the process of building that soil. So with the fall leaf raking ritual about to begin, what better time to start a compost pile?

Besides being one of the best ways to improve the tilth of clay soil, improve drainage and aeration, and add nutrients, composting is the best way to dispose of leaves, grass clippings, other yard waste, and kitchen scraps such as vegetable peelings, egg shells, tea bags and coffee grounds.

The work of breaking down organic material is carried out by microorganisms. They will work best if provided with 4 things: food (nitrogen and some carbon), water, air, and lots of microbes to do the job. The nitrogen can be provided by any green vegetation, kitchen scraps, a little fertilizer, or fresh manure. The carbon is all the dry, brown material like dried up leaves and plants. Water can be added periodically if Mother Nature does not provide, or if the pile is in a bin with a lid. Air is provided by building a bin with material that allows air flow and by turning the pile to aerate occasionally. And where do the microbes come from? Simply leave some soil on plant roots when you pull them up, or add a few shovels full of rich garden soil or some “finished” compost. Fresh manure is also an excellent source.

For more information on composting and compost bins ask for a free copy of AG-467, “Composting: A Guide to Managing Organic Yard Wastes”. Or find it on line at: http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts.hort/hil/pdf/ag-467.pdf Also stop by the compost demonstration site at the WNC Farmers’ Market to see different styles of bins.

OVERWINTERING FLOWERS

Reprint, Ask A Gardener, October 28, 2004, By Glenn Palmer

Q: We have some nice annuals in our flower bed this year. Is there a way to save annuals over winter?

A: When we talk about saving “annuals” two different kinds of plants may be involved. The first are the true annuals, those that go through their life cycle, from seed to flower to seed, in one growing season and then die. We can extend their life by deadheading them so the plant “thinks” it hasn't performed its function but one season is all they're programmed for.

The second originates in a warmer climate where they grow as a perennial but because they can’t survive our winters, we treat them as annuals, discarding them in the fall. Some examples might be petunias, begonias and geraniums. Tender perennials can often be grown indoors as a house plant.

There are several alternatives for carrying some of these plants through the winter. The availability of warm space and appropriate light will determine which suits you best. One method is to simply dig up the plant, put it in a pot, and keep it growing, giving it as close to the same sunlight as it had in the garden during the summer. If you have good light conditions but space is limited you might be able to divide the plant and use smaller containers. Even less space would be needed initially if you took cuttings and started a new plant.

Another option may be to let it go at least semi-dormant. Pot up the plant and keep it in a darker, cooler site (above 40 degrees) and let it get quite dry, watering just once a month. Some, like geraniums, can even dry out completely and survive the winter in dark, cool storage. Cool basements or heated garages sometimes work for this. In spring, bring the plant out to a sunny window sill and start bringing it back to life sometime in March.
Introduction to the Master Gardener Program

Friday, October 19, 2007
1 pm to 3 pm
Buncombe County Extension Center
94 Coxe Ave., Asheville

Are you interested in learning more about the Extension Master Gardener volunteer program? Come to this introductory session and find out if volunteer training is for you. We'll talk about the training requirements, the volunteer activities and meet some of the active volunteers. You may fill out an application form if you don't already have one and even schedule an interview if you like. The deadline for applications for the 2008 program is November 16.

Planting Garlic

Garlic is one of the most popular herbs grown in American gardens. Fortunately, both elephant garlic and regular garlic are easy to grow in western North Carolina. Research done by Dr. Jeanine Davis, at the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center near Fletcher, has found that October is the best time to plant garlic in our area.

Plant garlic in fertile, well drain-ed soil, high in organic matter. Break the bulb into individual cloves. Plant cloves 1 to 2 inches deep, pointed end up about 3 inches apart. Do not fertilize now. Mulch with one to two inches of straw to protect from sudden cold snaps.

This fall you will probably see several small leaves grow. Don't worry about them, they won't mind the cold. During the winter the bulbs will be growing nice big root systems. In spring when you see the first signs of new growth, apply a light dose of 10-10-10 fertilizer, or a complete organic fertilizer.

Harvest your garlic next summer when the tops begin to die down. Hang bunches of bulbs in a dry, shaded location to dry thoroughly before storing.

HAVE YOU RENEWED?

Have you returned your newsletter renewal and survey? Our newsletter mailing list must be updated annually. Next month's mailing will go out to the revised list, so be sure to return your form if you wish to continue to receive Mountain Gardener. Oh, yes, and do be sure to include your name and address!
October 13  **Plant Problem Clinic** – By Extension Master Gardeners at the WNC Farmers Market, Last clinic of the year. 11:00 am – 2:00 pm in the breezeway between the retail buildings.

October 9  **Gardening in the Mountains Series, “Heaths and Heathers”**, Presented by Extension Master Gardener volunteers at the North Carolina Arboretum at 10:00 am. No pre-registration. Tuesday is free admission.

October 19  **Introduction to the Extension Master Gardener Program** – 1:00 to 3:00 at the Buncombe County Cooperative Extension Office, 94 Coxe Ave. Asheville.

November 13  **Gardening in the Mountains Series, “Firewise Landscaping”**. Presented by Extension Master Gardener volunteers at the North Carolina Arboretum at 10:00 am. No pre-registration. Tuesday is free admission.

November 16  **Deadline for applications for the 2008 Ext. Master Gardener volunteer training**

---

**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.**