Feature

Media and Internet Resources for Gardening
By Joanne King

What’s destroying my plant? Why won’t my tomatoes ripen? I need a good shade shrub. We all know the feeling of desperation. I need to know the answer and I want to know ASAP!

There are lots of ways to add to your knowledge of horticulture that will help you solve specific problems in your garden, via the Internet, TV, radio, and newspaper.

NC State University’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Cooperative Extension Service offer numerous topics on their websites. The most widely used are the following:

http://www.turffiles.ncsu.edu/: Provides detailed information on the various types of lawns that thrive in our area, including how to plant, how to maintain, common problems and how to treat them.

http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/factsheets/: Consumer Fact Sheets provide information on trees, shrubs, native plants, ground covers, flowering plants. The fact sheets use a standard format, usually a picture of the plant, and its key characteristics. It can be searched either by common name or scientific name.

http://www.ncsu.edu/jcraulstonarboretum/index.php: This link takes you to the J.C. Raulston Arboretum website. You can research plants at the arboretum, events, or sign of their newsletter.

http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/index.php?page=lawngarden: This link takes you to the NC State Cooperative Extension website, specifically, the section most pertinent to homeowners for lawn and garden topics. You can also access all of the horticulture publications from this site.

Even though the TV programs follow a schedule, their websites are available 24/7 with access to previous programs for viewing, and access to Q&A’s and links. The first two, Almanac Gardener and In the Garden, will provide information that is pertinent to our state. The other two are broadcast nationally, so they cover a wider range of topics. The gardener will find any of these programs enjoyable and informative. Almanac Gardener, hosted and produced by Mike Gray, with assistance from fellow experts from the North Carolina Cooperative Extension.
Extension Service at North Carolina State University’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, takes viewers through the finer points of garden planning, maintenance and innovation. This year’s focus has been on saving money with home vegetable gardening. The program airs on UNC-TV on Saturday at 12 PM for 20 weeks from April through August. Check with your UNC-TV provider for other air times. The program can also be viewed online for the current year and prior years.

In the Garden, [http://www.unctv.org/inthegarden/](http://www.unctv.org/inthegarden/), can be seen on public television and online. This 30-minute weekly educational program hosted by N.C. State University's Bryce Lane, introduces viewers to the science behind gardening. The series is offered as a college course through the university's continuing education program. Viewers will learn the fundamentals of horticulture -- how plants grow, plant identification, home landscaping techniques and information and ideas they can use around their homes. The program features a plant of the week, recommended by a viewer. The plants selected have characteristics that make them a successful choice in our climate, and provide unique interest. In the Garden airs Saturdays at noon on UNC-TV, from September through March. The sessions from the current year and prior years can be viewed online.

The Victory Garden, [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/victorygarden/show/index.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/victorygarden/show/index.html), is produced by PBS and focuses on viewers with a wide range of interest – types of gardens, edible gardening, and the latest trends in gardening. Their website includes a Q&A section, recipes, videos, and info on public gardens. Check your TV provider for schedule.

P. Allen Smith’s Garden Home, [http://www.pallensmith.com/](http://www.pallensmith.com/), airs on public television. The program also focuses on a wide range of topics, and the website has a Q&A section, and lots of great videos. Check your public TV provider for schedule.

WTSB Radio 1090 AM Radio [http://www.wtsbradio.com/](http://www.wtsbradio.com/), broadcasts a 10 minute segment called the Extension Report on the third Tuesday of the month at 12:10pm. Shawn Banks, Consumer Horticultural Agent for the Johnston County Cooperative Extension Service, provides the report which focuses on a topic that is relevant for that week.

Triangle Gardener Magazine, [http://www.trianglegardener.com/main/](http://www.trianglegardener.com/main/), is a local guide to gardening. In fact, its publisher, Beverly Hurley, uses the title, “your local guide to enjoyable gardening”. Each bi-monthly issue includes stories on plants, garden design, pests, garden books, garden travel, events and tours, industry pros, and much more. The publication is a blend of her love of gardening, and her quest for garden information specific to the Triangle. The website has numerous links to previous articles, how-to videos. The Triangle Gardener has many local advertisers providing the reader with easy access to their websites.

The News and Observer features a garden column in the Saturday newspaper. Their website, [http://www.newsobserver.com/life/home_garden/](http://www.newsobserver.com/life/home_garden/), has a Home and Garden section that provides many articles on general gardening topics. All of the websites referenced in this article have links to additional resources. So whether you need a quick answer, new ideas, or you just want to sit back and enjoy the scenery, there are plenty of resources available.

### Featured Plant

**Tiger Eyes Cutleaf Staghorn Sumac**

*Rhus typhina* ‘Bailtiger’

By Tina Stricklen

You might ask yourself “What’s the ballyhoo about Tiger Eyes Sumac?” Take one look at this exotic specimen and you will know why. Tiger Eyes is a tropical-looking plant with deeply cut pinnate leaves that emerge as chartreuse, and then turn vibrant gold through the growing season. In
Developed from the standard staghorn sumac, this plant is not your typical weedy, ditch plant. Since its introduction from Bailey’s Nursery in Minnesota in 2004, Tiger Eyes Sumac has gained momentum in the nursery trade for its strong architectural qualities as well color and ease of care.

Hardy from Zones 4 to 8, this plant can take full to partial sun and will adapt to a wide range of soil types. The multi-stemmed deciduous shrub will eventually reach six feet in height with an equal spread. Used en masse, as a specimen or in a container, this plant makes a statement.

Sources:

http://www.baileynurseries.com/imagelibrary/gallery/search/?name=sumac&brand=All&plant_type=Shrub&height_lo=&height=f&spread_lo=&spread=f&exposure=All&zone=All&foliage=&dosearch=Do+Search


**Upcoming Events**

**Gardening A-Z Workshop** at Clayton Community Center 715 Amelia Church Road, Clayton 27520 starting at 6:30 and going until 8:30. This is a series of gardening classes that will begin on Thursday, August 4th and meet every Thursday until September 29th. We will cover a different garden topic each night for about 30 minutes, then we will spend about an hour or so in the demonstration garden getting some hands on experience. The class will cost $15 to cover materials. This fee will be collected the first night of class. To register for this class go to Clayton Parks and Recreation's online registration page at https://secure.rec1.com/NC/clayton-parks-recreation/reg.php or call their office at 919 553-1550.

**Design Your Own Garden** with David Hawk is a six week class being held at the Arboretum at JCC beginning Wednesday, August 17 and meeting each Wednesday until September 21. The cost for this class is $90.00. Participants will learn design principles, garden requirements, plant specifications and more. For more information or to register for this class call 919 209-2052 or 919 209-2184 or visit their events page at http://www.johnstoncc.edu/arboretum/events.aspx

**Plant Day at the Tobacco Farm Life Museum**
Saturday, August 27 from 9:30 until 2:00. Stop by and learn more about plants for this area and meet some local vendors. Located at 709 Church Street (US 301), Kenly, NC this event is free to the public.

**Extension Master Gardener Volunteers** will be at the Clayton Farm and Community Market Saturday August 20 from 9 until 1. Stop by and have your gardening questions answered.
The Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD) received its name because the male has a black spot at the tip of each wing. This insect is in the Order DIPTERA, meaning it is a true fly having only two wings just like mosquitoes and houseflies. There are native Drosophila species that lay their eggs in fruit that is past its prime or beginning to rot. The SWD is different. It is not native and was first reported in North Carolina in 2010. Female SWD have saw-like teeth on their ovipositor (the body part used to lay eggs) allowing them to lay eggs in sound fruit (fruit that is ripening or just becoming ripe).

SWD can infest a wide range of fruit including strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, peaches, nectarines, figs, plums, persimmons, grapes, cherries, and their wild relatives. The female lays the egg under the skin of the ripening fruit where the egg hatches and the larvae (maggot) has access to the flesh of the fruit. The fly is very small (about 1/8’th of an inch), making it very hard to see in the field.

**Monitoring**

Traps are constructed of a quart sized plastic container with holes one quarter of an inch in diameter around the top and a lid. About one cup of apple cider vinegar mixed with a few drops of liquid dish soap is placed in traps that are hung with a string near the plantings at fruit height. Once a week the traps should be checked. Pour the contents of the trap through a strainer. Look through the insects found in the trap to see if any are SWD. The males are fairly easy to locate, as they will be the small ones with the black spot on the tips of their wings. You may need a 20x hand lens or a microscope to see the teeth on the ovipositor of the females. More information on trapping can be found at [http://ncsmallfruitsipm.blogspot.com/2011/06/do-it-yourself-spotted-wing-drosophila.html](http://ncsmallfruitsipm.blogspot.com/2011/06/do-it-yourself-spotted-wing-drosophila.html).

To check fruit for SWD larvae you would collect some sound fruit and gently crush the fruit in a sugar or salt solution. The larva will then leave the fruit where they can be counted.

**Control**

We’ve been finding SWD’s in traps this year in Johnston County. That doesn’t mean they are everywhere. It does mean it is possible they could be in your backyard. If you’re already spraying for other insects, you’re likely controlling SWD without realizing it. A non-chemical method of control would be to cover the plant with a fine netting or row cover. Make sure the row cover is secured to the ground to prevent the flies from flying in from underneath.

If larvae are found in sound fruit, sanitation will be important. Clean up any fruit that has fallen or is over ripe on the plant and put it into a plastic bag to be discarded. Don’t put this fruit into the compost bin as maggots will continue to mature and pupate into adults.
More information

More information can be found at the NC Small Fruit and Specialty Crop IPM blog by clicking on the Spotted Wing Drosophila tab. [http://ncsmallfruitsipm.blogspot.com/](http://ncsmallfruitsipm.blogspot.com/). There is also a handout available for home gardeners about the SWD.

What’s In Season?

Artichoke

*Cynara scolymus*

I’ve never understood what people see in an artichoke. However, I’m open to new experiences, so let’s get right to the heart of the matter. You may want to invest in some thick gloves if you decide to grow this thistle-like member of the *Asteraceae* family. Like broccoli and cauliflower the part that is eaten is the immature flower, in particular the fleshy part of the bracts (outer covering) and the receptacle (heart) of the flower. When allowed to flower the flower, color is a pretty lavender.

The artichoke could be considered a cool season annual; best grown in early spring. The seeds would need to be started indoors and planted outside in early spring while the temperatures are still very cool. The plants need between 190 and 240 hours of temperatures below 50°F in order to initiate flower buds. They grow best when temperatures are around 75°F during the day and 55°F at night. However, they will grow at temperatures between 45°F and 85°F as evidenced by the fact that Thomas Jefferson grew artichokes in his gardens at Monticello plantation in Virginia by giving them some wintering protection.

Deep, well-drained, fertile soils work best for growing artichoke. Raised beds may be needed in areas where there is a high water table or heavy clay soils. Mulch will help retain water, reduce weeds and keep soil temperatures lower during the summer.

In California, artichokes are grown as a year round perennial. Research done at Virginia Technical College suggests that on the east coast artichokes can be grown as a cool season annual. The same research suggests planting them in the fall and providing winter protection will yield the best results in the coastal plain and lower piedmont regions. ‘Imperial Star’, ‘Emerald’, and ‘Early Emerald Pro’ are cultivars/varieties that were tested in Virginia that performed well.

Flower buds are ready to harvest when the outer ring or two of bracts have just begun to open from the main bud. If all the bracts have loosened up the bud is past the eating stage and can either be removed or left to flower.

**Recipe: Steamed Artichoke**

**Ingredients**
- 2 whole artichokes
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 cloves of garlic, sliced
- salt and pepper to taste

**Directions**
1. Fill the pan with just enough water to cover bottom. Bring to a full boil over high heat. While water is heating, trim and discard the stems and tough outer leaves of
artichokes. Tuck slivers of butter and slices of garlic into artichoke leaves.

2. When water is boiling, place steamer insert in pot and set artichokes in steamer, stem-side down. Cover pot with lid and allow artichokes to steam for approximately 20 minutes, until tender.

Resources

August Garden Tasks

GENERAL INFORMATION

• Collect soil samples for testing so you'll know how much fertilizer and lime to add this fall. Test your lawn, flowerbeds and vegetable garden. Testing should be done once every 3 years.
• Water deeply but infrequently this encourages a deep and extensive root system for better drought tolerance.
• Control fungal diseases by watering early in the morning, allowing the sun to dry water droplets from the foliage.

LAWN CARE

• Prepare your lawn for fall seeding. August is the best time to prepare for planting cool season grasses for the optimal planting time in September.
• Water lawns when the grass blades are just starting to curl or footprints remain when you walk across the lawn. Watering too often encourages plants with a shallow root system that do not handle drought well.
• Maintenance needs are different for each grass type. Call Cooperative Extension for a Lawn Maintenance Calendar.

TREES, SHRUBS & ORNAMENTALS

• Plan for Fall Bulbs - Autumn-blooming crocus and colchicum add color in the fall. They are not always available locally; consider ordering them now from a mail-order source. They need to be planted in September.
• Mulch trees and shrubs with a 2-3” layer of mulch to keep roots cool, conserve moisture, and control competing weeds and grasses. Leave 3-4 inches between the mulch and the trunk of the tree/shrub.
• Avoid pruning shrubs and trees during late summer. Pruning stimulates new growth which will not have sufficient time to harden off before cold weather.
• If a foundation shrub is overgrown and blocks a window or creates a security risk, some pruning is needed. Remove as little live wood as possible now, then plan more drastic pruning for February. Consider replanting using a shrub whose mature size will not require pruning for that area.
• Add phosphorus and potassium now according to soil test results. These nutrients help plants withstand the winter.
• Cut back leggy impatiens and other summer flowers, then fertilize them. They’ll re-grow within a few weeks, and look great up till frost.

EDIBLES

• Examine fruit trees periodically for scale infestations and mark with flagging tape. Applying summer or horticultural oil can keep them from getting out of hand.
• Caring for Strawberries - Now that strawberries have finished bearing, prolong
their life by cutting off the tops without injuring the crown. Thin plants to 12 inch spacing. Fertilize with 1/2 pound of 5-10-10 per 25 sq.ft. Weed and apply mulch to conserve moisture and reduce weed growth.

- Allow Peppers to Turn Red - Peppers allowed to turn red will be sweeter and higher in beta-carotene. Even jalapenos which are traditionally harvested green, mature to tasty red peppers.
- Fill in empty spaces in the garden with fall crops of lettuce, collard, and other cool-weather vegetables. Beans planted in late summer can produce a crop before frost.
- Watch squash plants for sudden wilting. A second generation of squash vine borers is hatching. You may be able to save the plant by removing the caterpillar, then covering the injured area of the vine with moist soil to encourage rooting.

LANDSCAPE IDEAS

- Look for interesting plants in nurseries that can be added to the garden this fall.
- Late bloomers add color and life to the steamy August garden. Visit botanical gardens and arboreta or the neighbor down the street to see what’s blooming in the area this time of the year.
- Consider ornamental grasses, the light airy texture will look good well into winter.
- Keep Extra Containers for Instant Color - Plant some extra flowering containers periodically for backup color. When one starts looking spent, you can move another into its place. Replant the old one or take it to the plant hospital for recuperation.