Garden To Do
By Carl Schafer, Master Gardener
Fruits and Veggies

- Remove any old mummified fruit on trees, bushes, or vines and from the ground as these can be sources of disease next year.
- Clean up under pecan trees. Also continue to cleanup garden plants as they finish producing.
- Late fall and early winter is good time to plant fruit and nut trees. Container blueberries can also be planted now. Other berry plants are normally planted in the spring. Check local nurseries for plants, as well as North Carolina Horticulture for cultivars for this area.
- Plant your garlic now, if you have not already done so.
- Continue to collect leaves and compost them.
- Clean and repair, if necessary, your garden tools and equipment before putting them away for the winter.
- Use the internet to order some seed catalogs if you are interested in trying some new or different vegetable varieties next year. Also most garden magazines, at this time of the year, will have many mail order seed company advertisements. A sample listing of catalogs can be found in the Jan 09 issue of this publication.
- Most outside gardening activities should be finished by now. Trees and shrubs can still be planted as long as the ground is not frozen.
- If you are adventuresome, try a cold frame in a sunny area to grow radishes, lettuce, spinach, and other greens.
- There is still time to apply lime, if needed.

- Most pruning should be put off until late winter or early spring when the weather is more comfortable.
- If you want to grow your own onion transplants, start seeds in December so that plants can be set out in February or early March. Use short-day or day neutral varieties for our area.
- Inventory your left over seeds. Complete a germination test if you are uncertain of their viability.
- If you are growing transplants, note that the average last frost date for the Henderson area is April 21. Some seeds need to be started as much as 12 weeks before setting out. Thus, seeds will need to be ordered in December or early January to be available by mid to late January. For web resources for planning your garden and growing transplants, see the Feb 10 issue of this publication.

Interesting Tid-Bits
By Marty Finkel, Master Gardener

CSAs (CSA=Community Supported Agriculture) are getting huge in some areas – a Danish CSA started in 1997 with one farm supplying 100 families with organic produce had 44,000 subscribers and distributed food from over 70 farms in several countries by 2003. Here, one of the largest CSAs in the West delivers produce to families in remote areas of Alaska by bobsled and float plane. (This from the Aug. 2010 issue of The Avant Gardener, Vol. 42, No. 10. If more information is needed, contact Thomas Powell, Editor and Publisher, The Avant Gardener, Box 489, New York, NY 10028.)

Dr. Allan Armitage, professor in the Department of Horticulture, Univ. of Georgia, is well recognized by horticulture professionals for his study and evaluation of perennials. In his research trials in Georgia, he has evaluated perennials year after year, and recently visitors were asked which plants they like best. Evaluation criteria included length of flowering (or other ornamental aspects), disease/insect problems, and performance under adverse conditions. In an article published in the Dec. 2009 issue of Greenhouse Grower magazine, Armitage listed the top 12 perennials he called the best of the best. Athens, GA is in Plant Hardiness Zone 7b, and we’re in 7a, and no matter how good any plant is, it will succeed only if planted in the right
place and if planted well. The list is available with pictures online at:
http://polk.ces.ncsu.edu/content/Best+Perennial+Flowers.

Here are the 12 “best of the best.”

- **Athyrium nipponica ‘Wildwood Twist’** – a selection of Japanese painted fern
- **Coreopsis ‘Route 66’** – red & yellow daisy flowers
- **Echinacea ‘Tiki Torch’** – an orange cone flower
- **Erysimum ‘Jenny Brook’** – a wall flower with about 5 months of flowering
- **Gaillardia ‘Georgia Yellow’** – yellow blanket of flowers for late spring to early fall
- **Heliopsis ‘Tuscan Sun’** – a dwarf heliopsis
- **Heuchera villosa ‘Brownies’** – a coral bells for autumn
- **Heuchera villosa ‘Caramel’** – “apricot-hued” leaves
- **Phlox ‘Peacock White’** – robust, compact with bright white flowers
- **Lavandula x intermedia ‘Dutch’** – a vigorous hardy lavender
- **Rosa ‘Sunny Knockout’** – a fragrant pale yellow rose
- **Rudbeckia ‘Henry Eiler’** – rudbeckia with whimsy

From Green Thumb Prints, the Chatham County Extension Newsletter, Winter 2010, Al Cooke, Extension Agent, Agriculture

*Plant of the Month, Mahonia eurybracteata, Narrow leaf Mahonia*

By Marty Finkel, Master Gardener

On a field trip to Duke Gardens, some of the Master Gardener Volunteers saw this beautiful mahonia for the first time near the Japanese tea house. The only resemblance to the mahonia most seen in the landscape, *Mahonia bealei*, or Leatherleaf Mahonia, are the flowers. In both cases, the flowers are in yellow sprays and are fragrant. Where Leatherleaf Mahonia grows to 5’ to 10’ tall with about a 5’ spread, the Narrow Leaf Mahonia gets to about 4’ wide and 3’ across. Where the former has coarse, holly-like leaflets, Narrow Leaf has feathery, soft leaflets reminiscent of bamboo.

It is a wonderful, fine textured shrub to add to the shade garden, complementing many other shrubs such as Rhododendron, Hydrangea, azaleas, etc. Its origin is Japan, and the JCRA received a cutting in 2005 which was planted in 2007. It was introduced to the nursery trade by ItSaul Plants in 2009 patented as ‘Soft Caress’ and is a 2011 introduction in the Southern Living Plant Collection.

I received a young plant from the JCRA (J.C. Raulston Arboretum) about four years ago, kept it in the greenhouse the first winter, then planted it. The first winter after planting, there was significant burn from the cold and thereafter minor burn. It has been widely marketed and can be found easily in many garden centers.

*Mahonia pictures courtesy J. C. Raulston Arboretum*
MONTHLY ROSE TIPS

By Heidi Moore, Kerr Lake Master Gardener

November is the month we should begin to change our rose care procedures. Discontinue deadheading and pay particular attention to hygiene involving each plant and the surrounding area. As the weather begins to change and we get some very cool nights and warm days, your plants will show signs of leaf shedding. Be sure to clean up any leaves and petal debris that fall and remove blooms that become moldy or disease ridden. This is a particularly vulnerable time for your roses to contract black spot and mildew due to the cold nights and high dew levels. If any of your plants have become very tall, it is a good idea to trim them to a height of about 4 feet. I usually tie my bushes with some jute string at the time I trim as it will help protect your bushes from damage during the winter months caused by wind, ice or heavy snow. Here in eastern North Carolina it usually doesn’t get so cold as to damage your roses. Fluctuation in temperatures encourages growth to begin earlier and when a cold snap follows it usually will burn or kill the early growth. Applying a layer of natural mulch such as mulched grass and leaves should help to keep the soil at a more constant temperature. It is important to protect the bud union during the winter months. Continue to monitor rain amounts as your roses, as well as all your other garden shrubs, will need to be kept hydrated so as not to dry out during winter months. Care for any container roses should also continue. Keep your pots well hydrated and be sure to clean any leaf or blossom waste to prevent disease or insect problems. If your containers are in a well protected area, you should be able to leave them where they are. Moving them inside an unheated garage or shed would be another option. Bringing your potted roses into a heated area where they might continue to blossom might be something to consider. Wherever you decide to keep your potted roses, it is very important that you continue to give them water during the dormant season no matter where they spend the winter. Heavy pruning of even your container roses should be left until the spring, but you can cut them back for easier handling at this time. Continue to spray with a fungicide until all foliage has dropped. We as gardeners, do not know how severe the coming winter will be, so we need to prepare for the worst and hope for the best. Preventative care and common sense is our best defense.

Bulbs The Squirrels And Other Critters
Don’t Like To Eat

By Edna Gaston, Kerr Lake Master Gardener

From national Home Gardening, here’s a list of bulbs that supposedly squirrels and other creatures don’t like.

Autumn crocus (Colchicum spp., Zones 4 to 8)
Common snowdrop (Galanthus nivalis, Zones 3 to 8)
Crocus tommasinianus (Zones 3 to 8)
Daffodil (Narcissus spp., Zones 4 to 11)
Fritillary (Fritillaria spp., Zones 4 to 8)
Glory of the snow (Chionodoxa spp., Zones 4 to 8)
Grape hyacinth (Muscari spp., Zones 4 to 9)
Hyacinth or bluebell (Hyacinthus spp., Zones 4 to 8)
Ipheion spp. (Zones 4 to 9)
Ornamental onion (Allium spp., Zones 4 to 8)
Quamash (Camassia spp., Zones 4 to 8)
Shamrock or sorrel (Oxalis spp., Zones 7 to 10)
Snowflake (Leucojum spp., Zones 4 to 8)
Spanish bluebell (Hyacinthoides hispanica, Zones 4 to 10)
Squill (Scilla spp., Zones 4 to 10)
Star-of-Bethlehem (Ornithogalum spp., Zones 5 to 8)
Winter aconite (Eranthis spp., Zones 4 to 7)

Good luck in your bulb planting this fall. Keep with these hints in mind.