More Planning for Next Year
by Edna “Ladybug” Gaston, Master Gardener

[Note from the Agent: While there is much anecdotal information about insect repelling plants, there has been little scientific research on the subject. The following information is provided for your entertainment, and readers are advised to use proven repellant products when there is a risk of exposure to disease carrying insects such as ticks and mosquitoes.]

While we have recently turned the calendar page and fall is just around the corner, it’s never too early to start thinking about the next gardening season. I garden organically, especially where chemicals are concerned. I must consider the safety of my gardening assistants – two dogs and three cats! But insects are always a concern and a nuisance! Here are some possible plant solutions:

MARIGOLDS – long-time favorite to repel aphids. They are wonderful additions to the vegetable garden in a riot of colors. Now is the time to start collecting the seeds for next year.

BASIL - a tender annual, it comes with so many leaf colors. While all know the many culinary uses, don’t forget that it also repels mosquitoes. I prefer lemon basil, but this year I tried another variety and kept it on my porch. Sitting outside is not a problem with insect repelling plants.

CATNIP – excellent mosquito repellent. I have it in a pot on the porch and fortunately the cats haven’t found it. It works well as a companion plant in the vegetable garden and maybe will lessen the insect interruptions as we are working outside.

LEMONGRASS – another great plant but very tender and must be overwintered inside. With a nice refreshing lemon scent and interesting leaves it makes an attractive addition to the porch or deck and different from most of the other plants.

MINT – so many varieties and scents, in a container it is wonderful. We have several varieties along the woodpile to keep the ants away from our fire wood. So far it appears to be working!!!!!

SCENTED GERANIUMS – these are not your regular geraniums. While they do flower that is not the main attraction. The leaves are scented and are in many different shapes. Another tender plant but will last for years if overwintered inside. Again, lemon is my favorite but there is a citronella variety plus many, many more! I had a nice collection until the squirrels arrived – they, too, enjoy the plant and now I have none.

ROSEMARY – delightful to us, repelling to mosquitoes. Enjoy cooking with this versatile herb along with its great addition to the landscape and repelling attributes.

WORMWOOD – silvery foliage provides a nice change but is not enticing to mosquitoes. Be careful when handling this plant as some people are sensitive to its leaves. Another plant that is useful in the landscape.

While I do not have any scientific evidence that these plants really do repel insects I can truthfully say that I do have them in my landscape, on my porch and deck. Mosquitoes rarely bother me when I am in the vicinity of these plants. Now is the time to insert these plants into the borders around decks or porches. It’s not too late to take cuttings and grow inside until next spring. Never hurts to plan ahead!

Additional Information:

MONTHLY ROSE TIPS
By Heidi Moore, Master Gardener

This has been an unusually difficult summer for roses. The very hot, dry weather has caused hydration to be a very time consuming chore. It is necessary to water every rose bush deeply when temperatures reach 90 degrees and above for an extended period of time. This entails holding a running hose at the base of the plant for up to a minute to thoroughly soak each plant. Using the hose directly at the base of the plant will also prevent foliage from getting wet and spreading any diseases. This will help ensure that moisture reaches the complete root system and not just surface roots. Deep watering will keep your plants strong and promote growth. Strong plants are a natural deterrent to disease and insect infestation.

Deadheading and grooming at least once weekly throughout the blooming season will ensure some beautiful blooms as the autumn season approaches. Remove all foliage that has yellowed or shows signs of disease such as black spot and cut off spent blossoms, removing all waste completely from the garden. If you choose to compost this waste, be sure you do not plan on using this compost to supplement any garden area. Garden hygiene is very important and any debris will continue to produce fungus spores that will winter over and cause problems again next year. When grooming is completed, it might be necessary to spray with a fungicide and insecticide to prevent any further problems.

If you have any rose bushes that need to be moved, consider waiting until February if possible. Roses can be moved during the fall season, but I do not endorse the practice. I like to give my plants lots of time to re-establish themselves before winter weather sends them into dormancy. It is difficult to supply the water, fertilizer and necessary amount of sunlight to establish a healthy transplant at this time of year.

Garden to Do
By Carl Shaffer, Master Gardener

For the time period 1971-2000, the average first frost date of 32 F for Henderson was Oct 20 with a standard deviation of 11 days. That means that the first frost will be between Oct 9 and Oct 31 about 70% of the time. About 10% of the time (1 out of 10 years) it will be before Oct 6 and about 10% of the time after Nov 3. The average date has probably not changed from that time period. Note that low areas that collect cold air will often have frost earlier, and in town, sheltered areas, and hillsides that allow cold air to drain away may have frost later in the fall.

We often have two or three weeks of nice weather after the first frost in the fall. To avail oneself of this additional growing time for tender vegetables (green beans, summer squash, tomatoes, peppers, etc.) have frost protection material ready to use when frost is predicted. Materials to consider: Row covers – light weight and easy to use, Sheets and blankets – need support structures because of their weight, Plastics – need to be kept off of the foliage and removed in the morning before sunshine hits to prevent overheating. When a hard freeze is forecast, harvest your tender and semi-hardy vegetables. See the Aug 2010 issue for web links with more details.

Continue to monitor your fall vegetables for insects. Watch for aphids on cole crops. Use insecticidal soap for control. For caterpillars consider using a Bt (Bacillus thuringiensis) or spinosad product.

Harvest sweet potatoes, gourds, pumpkins, and winter squash before frost.

As fall clean-up continues, remove any diseased plants and leaves from the garden area and discard. Do not compost this material. If considering a cover crop, see the Aug 2010 issue for a web link.
Fall is an ideal time to have soil tests done on garden and lawn areas. If lime is needed, fall is an excellent time to apply it.

Use a bagging lawn mower to chop and collect leaves. The chopped leaves can be used for mulch, tilled into the garden, or composted.

You can continue planting radishes, spinach, leaf lettuce, and asian greens (includes mustards). Garlic can be planted through Nov. See Aug 2010 issue for extending gardening web links.

**Interesting tid-bits**

by Marty Finkel, Master Gardener

The annual Sculpture in the Garden is from Sept. 11 through Nov. 15 at the NC Botanical Garden, with a reception on Friday, Sept. 10 at 7 p.m.

After 18 months as Interim Director of the JC Raulston Arboretum, Dr. Ted Bilderback has accepted the position of Director. He is enthusiastic about leading the Arboretum forward and continuing with the implementation of the Master Plan begun under the leadership of the past director, Dr. Denny Werner. Work is continuing on planting the Asian Valley Garden, the renovation of the new All American Color Plant Trial Gardens (moved from its previous location), the Japanese Garden, and the completely redesigned (by architect Frank Harmon) Lath House. An Ellipse Events Ground will be constructed in the center of the Arboretum, starting in 2011. This grassy area will be used for public activities and festivals such as galas, anniversaries, weddings, etc.

Lavender plants should be pruned annually to prevent them from becoming leggy, bare, and ugly. Don’t prune into old base wood because it rarely regenerates. Two methods can be followed: 1) After spring frosts, remove most of the last year’s growth to stimulate new shoots and bushy habit. Always deadhead after flowering. 2) When deadheading, remove about 1 to 2 inches of the soft, unripened growth. When done right after flowering, a flush of new growth appears that should have time to harden off before fall frosts. In spring, trim this growth lightly and remove any winter damaged stems. From Aug. 2010 *Garden magazine* (journal of the Royal Horticulture Society).

Tulips for Christmas? The cut-flower market is apparently more lucrative than the tulip bulb market as growers concentrate on producing and promoting tulips that can be forced into bloom for cut flowers as early as Christmas. The number of tulip growers in Holland has dropped from 13,000 to 2,700, and virtually all the great tulips of the past 450 years are being lost, to the great dismay of European gardeners. From the Aug. 2010 issue of *The Avant Gardener*, Vol. 42, No.10

Al Cooke, Extension Agent for Chatham Co., reminds us that trees and shrubs are not necessarily “established” until they have been planted for 2 years. So continue to give adequate water when you plant this fall and again spring through late fall for a couple of years thereafter.

Two free events at the NC Botanical Garden in Chapel Hill: The 11th annual Jenny Fitch lecture is Oct. 24 at 2 p.m. when Michael McConkey will speak on “Native Edibles for an Edible Landscape.” Then on Thurs. the 28th at 7 p.m. poet and gardener Jeffery Beam will give a poetry reading of some of his works. Notify the Garden if you plan to attend either program.

**Plant of the month**

*Echeveria ‘Topsy Turvy’*

By Marty Finkel, Master Gardener

Profiled this month is a winter hardy *Echeveria, E. runyonii*, only discovered in the wild in 1990 in Mexico by Yucca Do Nursery. The species is a Mexican native to rocky cliffs. A garden specimen had been brought into the US in the early 1900s by Dr. Runyon, hence the specific epitaph. The ‘Topsy Turvy’ cultivar is a unique form, having
reurved upward and slightly contorted thick silver-blue leaves. It was named by former Huntington Gardens director Myron Kimnack. It makes a 6” tall and 10” wide rosette, and it produces offsets. The Granville Gardeners offered this plant at the September 11 plant sale. Dry soils and good drainage are a must for winter survival. It has been growing in the Plant Delights garden for 7 years and had no problem with a temperature of 7 degrees F.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**FARMERS MARKET MEETINGS**
Learn about and give your input into the Vance County Regional Farmers Market project by attending one of the following meetings. Your participation in these meetings is STRONGLY ENCOURAGED!
*Meeting for Potential Vendors, 10/11, Perry Library (Henderson), 7 pm
*Meeting for Community Input, 10/14, Perry Library (Henderson), 7 pm

**SMALL FRUITS WORKSHOP**
10/25, 6:30 pm, Warren County Extension Center. Learn the secrets of successful grape and blackberry production from some of NC's leading experts. Our speakers will be NCSU Bramble Specialist Gina Fernandez, NCSU Muscadine Specialist Connie Fisk, and Agricultural Extension Agent Carl Cantaluppi. This program is appropriate for farmers interested in alternative crops, as well as home gardeners.

**FORESTRY WORKSHOP/FIELD DAY**
11/3, Warren County Armory Civic Center. This free event will provide forest landowners the information they need to maximize the potential of their timber. Includes a morning seminar, sponsored lunch, and afternoon field tours. Register by Oct. 29 at 252-257-3640 or paul_mckenzie@ncsu.edu.

**TREE FRUIT WORKSHOP**
11/16, 6:30 pm, Warren County Extension Center. Learn the basics of raising tree fruits (apples, peaches, pears, etc.). Whether you are interested in backyard production or a small-scale commercial orchard, you will not want to miss this workshop. Presented by Mike Parker, NCSU Extension Specialist and one of North Carolina's leading experts.

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Recommendations for the use of agricultural 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 North Carolina Cooperative Extension nor discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned. Individuals who use agricultural chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conform to the product label. Be sure to obtain current information about usage regulations and examine a current product label before applying any chemical. For assistance, contact your county Cooperative Extension Agent.

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