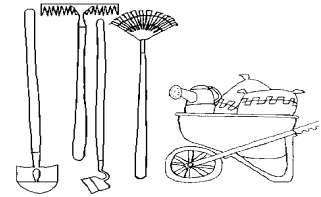


IN THE GARDEN NOW

HELPING GARDENERS PUT KNOWLEDGE TO WORK



NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2012

TIPS AND TASKS

Treat Large Patch Now

If your lawn was diagnosed with large patch this spring, fall is the time to treat. Even though symptoms are not currently as obvious, fungicides are most effective if they are applied when soil temperatures drop below 70° F.

Large patch is a fungal disease common in warm season turf. It appears as roughly circular patches of affected grass. Patches range from 2 feet up to 10 feet or more in diameter. Grass within the circle will turn yellow or tan and may die out entirely. Centipede and St. Augustine lawns are particularly susceptible.

The fungus that causes large patch becomes active in the fall when soil temperatures fall below 70° F. However, symptoms may not become evident until cool, wet weather in later fall or spring. Fungicides are not very effective once the symptoms of large patch appear, instead they should be applied preventatively now on sites that had large patch in the spring.

The most effective fungicides available to homeowners for treating large patch contain the active ingredients azoxystrobin and propiconazole. One fungicide application will control minor cases of large patch, but two to three applications on a 4 to 6 week interval may be needed to control severe cases.

Plant Bulbs, Cool Season Annuals and Winter Vegetables

November is a great time to plant bulbs for spring flowers. It is also a good time to divide established bulb plantings if they need it. Bulbs that will perform year after year in Onslow County include: daffodils, star flower (*Ipheion uniflorum*), blue bottles (*Muscari neglectum*), Spanish bluebells (*Hyacinthoides hispanica*), summer snowflake (*Leucojum aestivum*) and lilies (both Asiatic and Oriental).

Cool season annuals will add a splash of color in an otherwise quiet winter garden. Pansies, violas, snapdragons, English daisies and China pinks will perk up any garden. Ornamental cabbages and kales add interesting texture and color amidst the flowering annuals. Finish planting by the middle of October so these plants can establish before the first frost.

You can harvest something out of your vegetable garden all winter long. Onion seeds or sets and garlic bulbs can be planted for harvest next spring. Remember that chard (especially varieties such as 'Bright Lights' with its red, orange and yellow stems), kale, lettuces and cabbage can straddle the line between vegetable garden and ornamental plantings. Plant them in the vegetable bed, along the edge of the flower border or tuck into a container for seasonal interest.

Lisa Rayburn
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Prepare Houseplants for the Move Back Indoors

As cooler weather approaches, you will want to gradually transition houseplants for the move back indoors. Tropical plants may be injured when temperatures drop below fifty degrees. Ideally, move houseplants inside when temperatures inside and outside the home are about the same.

Inspect plants, including the root ball, for insects before bringing them inside. Aphids, scale, spider mites and whiteflies are common houseplant pests. If you find insects, treat them with an appropriate insecticide before bringing them back in the house. As always, read and follow all label directions of the product you select. Some insecticides will require a second application to break the lifecycle of the pest.

Acclimate your plants for the move indoors by slowly moving them from sun to light shade and then heavy shade. This process should take about a week. The move to lower light will result in some plant stress, you may see leaves yellowing or dropping as the plants acclimate.

Once in the house, place sun-loving plants in south or west facing windows. Plants that like more indirect light will do better in an east facing window. Keep plants away from the drafts of air conditioner and heater vents. Once inside the house, avoid overwatering to prevent root rot and fungus gnats.

NCDA Pesticide Pickup Day, November 27, 10-2

Do you have unwanted pesticides sitting in your garage or shed? Not sure what to do with them? We can help. The North Carolina Department of Agriculture (NCDA) will be holding a Pesticide Pickup Day on November 27 from 10 until 2. Bring unwanted pesticides in their labeled containers for disposal. Pesticides include herbicides, fungicides and insecticides. Fertilizers will not be accepted (except weed and feed formulations that contain an herbicide). The pickup will be located behind the Cooperative Extension Office at 4024 Richlands Highway.

HELP Garden Class, February 1 through June 28

Learn to grow vegetables for your own use or for sale. This intensive, hands-on training will lead you through the process from site selection, soil testing and crop scheduling through harvest, storage and marketing and everything in between. Cost for the entire class is \$50 and you get to take fresh produce home with you too! Call 910.455.5873 and ask for Larry Kent for more information.

FALL IS A GREAT TIME TO PLANT TREES AND SHRUBS

Amanda Taylor – Extension Agent, Iredell County



Cool weather and the changing colors of leaves are signs that it's time to plant trees and shrubs. Although many people plant in the spring, fall is a better

time for planting most woody plants. Trees and shrubs that are planted in the fall have more time to get established before the stress of a hot, dry summer, giving them a better chance of survival.

Before you plant, be sure to select the right plant for the site. Choosing trees and shrubs based solely on their ornamental characteristics, without consideration of the site, is probably the most common mistake people make when planting. Putting time into proper plant selection now will ensure a low-maintenance planting and prevent disappointment and headaches down the road. Choose a plant based on the conditions of the site where it will be planted. Is it sunny or shady? Dry or wet? A tree that is adapted to a particular site will have a better chance of thriving in that area.

A common pitfall is planting trees that grow too large for their location. When choosing a tree, consider its mature height and width, which are found on the sales tag. In 10 or 20 years, will it be too large for the spot where you want to plant it? Trees that grow too big for their location will require constant pruning, which will damage tree health. For help choosing trees and shrubs in North Carolina, visit www.ncstate-plants.net.

Have soil tests performed to assess your soil's pH and nutrients prior to planting. Soil samples are easy to gather, and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer services performs the test free of charge. Sampling supplies are available from your local Extension office. When you get your results back, amend the soil with lime and fertilizer in accordance with what the results tell you about your soil. Planting a landscape is an investment, so make sure you do it right the first time. Here are some things to consider when planting trees and shrubs in your landscape:

- If installing a container-grown plant, remove the pot and check for circling roots.
- Don't plant deeper than the soil surface.

- Make sure the trunk flare (the place on the trunk where the roots spread out from the base of the tree) is visible.
- Remove all twine, wire, strings, and straps to prevent girdling.
- Do not plant tall trees under utility lines.
- Remove any broken, dead, or crossing branches.
- Mulch the base of the plant with a layer of wood mulch or pine needles 2 to 3 inches thick, keeping the material a couple of inches away from the trunk.
- Provide 1 inch of water per week during the growing season when rainfall is lacking.

For more information on tree planting, visit www.cals.ncsu.edu/extgardener/tree.pdf.



WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT NEMATODES?

*Charlotte Glen – Horticulture Agent, Pender County
Cooperative Extension*



Compared to a normal root (top), roots infested with root knot nematodes (bottom) appear knotted, galled, and swollen.

If you garden in sandy soil, there is a good chance nematodes are plaguing your plants, draining them of the energy they need to grow and thrive. Nematodes are tiny, microscopic worms that feed within plant roots. You can think of them as the leeches of the plant world. Several types of nematodes are common in the south, and frequently cause problems in vegetable gardens, lawns and landscapes.

Root Knot Nematodes

The most common plant parasitic nematode found in our area is the root knot nematode. This pest can be a serious problem for most vegetables, causing infected plants to appear stunted and pale, drop flowers and fruits, wilt often, and decline even when plants are generously watered and fertilized. Gardeners most often realize they have root knot nematode at the end of the season, when they are pulling up spent crops and notice multiple bumpy, knot-like swellings on the roots of vegetable plants. There is nothing available that will kill root knot nematodes, but they can be managed to keep levels low enough to successfully grow most vegetables.

One of the easiest ways to reduce nematode levels is to

grow crops that are not susceptible to attack. These include sweet corn, asparagus, and cool season crops in the cabbage family, such as broccoli, kale, collards, and mustard. For some crops that are susceptible to nematode attack, resistant varieties are available. For example, many hybrid varieties of tomatoes have been developed with nematode resistance, including ‘Amelia’, ‘Celebrity’ and ‘Better Boy’.

For many other crops resistant varieties are not available. To grow these crops in nematode infested soils gardeners have to rely on other practices to manage nematode levels. A practice gaining in popularity is the use of certain cover crops to reduce nematode populations. One of the most promising is rapeseed, a relative of mustard and canola. When tilled into the soil, decaying leaves from this crop suppress root knot nematode levels.

Rapeseed is seeded in the fall, from late September through late October. Seed should be broadcast across the garden. Plants are left to grow through the winter and tilled into the soil in March. Rapeseed crops have a high sulfur requirement, a nutrient that is commonly deficient in sandy soils. When growing rapeseed for nematode control, be sure to take a sample of your soil to your local Cooperative Extension office for testing to find out if you need to add additional sulfur. If sulfur levels are too low, the rapeseed crop will not be able to generate the organic compounds that suppress nematode populations.

Other practices that reduce root knot nematode levels in vegetable gardens include frequently tilling the soil in the spring and summer to expose nematodes to sun and air, adding compost to the soil, and soil solarization. Gardeners can solarize their soil by tilling and watering the garden then covering it with clear plastic for several weeks in summer. To keep nematode levels down, gardeners will need to employ as many of these practices as possible every season.

Other plants root knot nematodes will also attack include figs, peaches, gardenia, aucuba, Japanese holly, Japanese boxwood, roses, and dogwoods. It is much more difficult to manage nematodes around permanent plantings and often the best option for landscape beds that have root knot nematodes is to remove infected plants and replace them with species that are resistant.

Sting Nematodes

Several other species of nematodes occur in our area including the sting nematode, a common problem in lawns in sandy soils. Lawns infested with sting nematodes are thin and weak, and do not improve when fertilized or irrigated. Unlike root knot nematodes, sting nematodes do not cause obvious symptoms on plant roots. To determine if these nematodes are causing problems in your yard, you will need to submit soil samples for testing. Early fall is an ideal time to test because that is when nematode levels are highest.

Testing for nematodes is similar to testing your soil for nutrients, except nematode testing costs \$3. Samples should be collected around living plants that show symptoms of possible nematode infection. Once the sample is collected do not allow it to dry out or get excessively hot. Boxes and forms for packaging samples are available from your local Cooperative Extension office.

DO YOU WANT TO BECOME A MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER?

Onslow County Master Gardener Volunteer Class Starts January 31, 2013

The Onslow County Center of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension is offering a Master Gardener Volunteer class starting January 31. The Master Gardener Volunteer Program is a joint endeavor of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service and volunteers who wish to learn how to be better gardeners and help other gardeners by sharing their knowledge. The program is designed to recruit and train volunteers to help meet the educational needs of the citizens of Onslow County.

Class participants learn about a wide variety of gardening subjects including vegetables, fruits, lawn grasses, shrubs, flowers and trees. The training focuses on developing diagnostic skills for insects and diseases of plants. Classes are also given on landscaping for water quality, soils, composting, propagation, wildlife control and much, much more!

Master Gardeners receive 40 hours of training and after graduation they provide 40 hours of volunteer work in the community. Master Gardeners are involved in a range of community projects including: answering homeowner inquiries at the Extension Office and

Farmer's Market, mailing out information bulletins to homeowners, conducting plant clinics, working with school children on special horticultural projects, talking to garden clubs, working on community beautification projects and developing the new Discovery Gardens of Onslow.

The 2013 Master Gardener course will begin January 31 and end April 2. Classes normally will be taught Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:00 am – Noon. Cost for the course is \$100, which includes a comprehensive Master Gardener Manual.

Persons interested in receiving an application for the 2013 course should call the North Carolina Cooperative Extension - Onslow County Center at (910) 455-5873, and request an application. Spots are limited.

CHOOSE AND CUT YOUR OWN CHRISTMAS TREE



If you are looking for a way to make memories this holiday season, consider taking the family out to choose and cut your own Christmas tree. You can enjoy an outing to a farm

and give your children the opportunity to pick out their favorite tree. You can cut your tree (if you choose) and farm staff will help shake and bind the tree for transport home. It doesn't get much fresher or more local than that.

Several species are commonly grown as Christmas trees in eastern North Carolina. Eastern red cedar is the traditional southeast Christmas tree with its dark shiny green leaves and fresh cedar scent. White pine and Leyland cypress are also common. Many farms also offer precut Fraser fir, which are grown in great numbers in the mountains of western North Carolina. Your personal preference will determine which type of tree is right for you.

There are two Christmas tree farms in Onslow County that offer choose and cut Christmas trees:

Justice Christmas Tree Farm

1325 Gould Road, Jacksonville, NC 28540

Onslow County

Office Phone: (910) 346-6783

Mike's Farm & Country Store

1600 Haw Branch Road, Beulaville, NC 28518

Onslow County

Office Phone: (910) 324-3422

PERSIMMONS ARE AN OVERLOOKED FALL TREAT

Persimmons are an often over looked fruit. While an unripe persimmon may pucker your palate, fully ripened persimmons will melt in your mouth or cooked into a pudding, jam or cake. There are two species of persimmons that are harvested for their fruit.



Native persimmons, *Diospyros virginiana*, is native to the southeast ranging from Maryland and West Virginia south the Florida and as far west as central Texas. The immature fruit is strongly astringent so wait until they are fully ripe to harvest. The fruit is generally considered sweetest after the first frost. Birds, deer, raccoons and opossums eat persimmons so finding ripe wild persimmons before the wildlife does can be a challenge.

Oriental persimmons, *Diospyros kaki*, are easy to grow and produce larger fruit. There also several nonastringent varieties of Oriental persimmon including 'Fuyu,' 'Hanagosho,' and 'Jiro'. Astringent varieties such as 'Hachiya' should be allowed to ripen fully before use.

Both native persimmons and Oriental varieties can be grown in Onslow County. Plant persimmons in full sun and well-drained soil with a pH of 6.0 to 6.5. Trees should be spaced 20 feet apart.

When purchasing persimmons, make sure you look for a named variety to ensure quality fruit. Native persimmons produce male and female flowers on separate plants so you will need both for good fruit production. Oriental persimmons will often produce fruit without a pollinator; however, cross-pollination can result in higher yields.

Learn more about growing Oriental persimmons here:
<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/hil-377.html>

RECIPE CORNER

Persimmon Pudding

2 c. soft, juicy persimmon pulp
1 level c. sugar
1 egg
2 c. milk
2 c. flour
1 tsp. soda
1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 tsp. cloves
1/2 tsp. allspice

Combine all ingredients and beat well, leaving half the milk until all flour has been added. Pour about 1 1/2 inch deep in well-greased pan and bake 1 hour in 325 degree oven. Pudding is done when dark brown. Serve warm or cold with whipped cream. Delightful!

Persimmon, Pomegranate and Pecan Salad

1 large pomegranate
4 ribs celery, preferably inner white ribs, with leaves
2 small persimmons (or 1 large)
1/2 cup pecan pieces, toasted
8 ounces mixed baby salad greens, washed and spun dry
1 large lemon, zest grated in long tendrils (with a zester or vegetable peeler)
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1/4 to 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese (optional)

To remove the pomegranate seeds, make a cut near the blossom end of the fruit, submerge the pomegranate in a bowl of water and pull the fruit apart with your fingers. The seeds will sink to the bottom of the bowl. Drain, and set the seeds aside; there should be about 1/2 cup.

Cut the celery on the diagonal into paper-thin slices, then transfer to a large salad bowl along with any of the celery leaves. Core the persimmons, cut them vertically into quarters and then crosswise into 1/4-inch slices; add them to the bowl, along with the toasted pecans, salad greens, pomegranate seeds and strands of lemon zest. Drizzle in the oil, squeeze in some lemon juice to taste and season with salt and pepper to taste. Toss to combine and sprinkle with feta to taste, if desired. Serve immediately.

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The use of brand names in this publication does not imply endorsement of the products or services named or criticism of similar ones not mentioned



CONTACT US

If you have questions about lawn, landscape or garden problems, contact your local Cooperative Extension office. In Onslow County call 455.5873, Mon – Fri, 8 am and 5 pm, or visit us online anytime at <http://onslow.ces.ncsu.edu>. While you are there, you can post your questions to be answered by email using the ‘Ask an Expert’ widget (in the upper left hand corner).



CHRISTMAS CHEER TIME IS HERE AGAIN

Onslow County 4-H County Council is again participating in the Elder Cheer Program. Since 1996 the Onslow County Adult and Family Services unit at the Department of Social Services has coordinated the Elder cheer program. This program places an emphasis on elderly and disabled population who are in resident care facilities, while giving our community the opportunity to share their holiday spirit.

On December 4th, join us at 6:30 pm for the social gathering and assembling of items. Please plan on attending and completing a wonderful community service project.

In the meantime, please tell everyone you know that we are collecting the following items. All of these can be dropped off at the Cooperative Extension, 4024 Richlands Hwy. Please remind our staff that they are for the Elder Cheer Holiday Program. Items requested by Onslow County Elder Cheer are: lotion, candy (diabetic), aftershave, fruit baskets, socks, cassette tapes, key chains, watches, blankets, deodorant, electric blankets, combs, perfume, slippers, hair brushes, night gowns, batteries, gospel tapes, holiday novelties, toothbrushes, writing paper, stationery, support hose, powder, pajamas, disposable razors, personal care items (soap, shampoo, etc.), small flashlights, fashion jewelry, live plants, pens, window mounted bird feeders.

County Council is also in need of baskets, tins and gift bags to help wrap these items. **All of these items are due in the 4-H office by November 30th.** For more information, contact Wanda Mills, 455-5873.