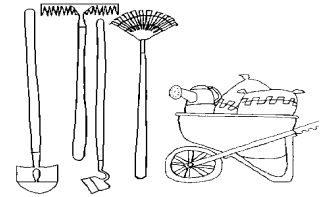


IN THE GARDEN NOW

HELPING GARDENERS PUT KNOWLEDGE TO WORK



MARCH / APRIL 2013

Lisa Rayburn

Lisa Rayburn
Extension Agent,
Horticulture

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MOLE CRICKETS



Some homeowners are noticing small tunnels in the lawn and the grass dying in the areas where the tunnels are located. This is often a sign of a mole cricket infestation. There are several species of mole crickets that attack lawns in our area. The two main species are the tawny mole cricket and the southern mole cricket. These insects damage lawns by feeding on grass roots and tunneling through the top 1 to 2 inches of soil, loosening it and uprooting plants and causing them to dry out. Mole cricket activity will be seen in March and April and then crickets tend to disappear while they are laying eggs. They typically have a strong hatch in June and July.

Monitor suspected areas of mole cricket activity with a soap and water treatment. Add five tablespoons of liquid soap to five gallons of water and slowly pour in one area allowing the mixture to penetrate the soil. If present, greenish-gray to reddish-brown crickets, 1 ½ inches long or less with short front legs and shovel-like feet will come to the surface within three minutes.

Heavy thatch encourages mole cricket activity, so avoid heavy watering and fertilizing and dethatch the lawn as needed. A beneficial nematode, *Steinernema scapterisci*, is a good long-term control of southern and tawny mole crickets when applied to the lawn in March-April or in September-October. You'll likely have to order these beneficials by mail. If chemical control is needed, most products should be applied mid-June to mid-July when mole cricket nymph activity begins and before they are ½ inch in length. As mole crickets mature in late summer and early fall they do their worst damage but are harder, if not impossible, to control at that stage.

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This case of crape murder was documented on Western Boulevard in Jacksonville. Sadly this crime is encountered all too often in our landscapes today.

CRAPPE MURDER - Are You Guilty?

Charlotte Glen ~ Horticulture Agent, Pender County

Too often crape myrtles are cut back to bare trunks in the belief this abuse will yield more flowers. In reality this type of severe pruning results in a shorter bloom time, delayed flowering, weaker branching, and can increase insect and disease problems. This practice, known as topping, is harmful to all trees and is never the right way to prune a crape myrtle.

The Right Way to Prune Crape Myrtle

Like all trees, the correct way to prune a crape myrtle involves enhancing its natural form rather than trying to force it to grow in a space that is too small or an artificial shape. Crape myrtles naturally grow as small upright or vase shaped trees with multiple trunks. In a well pruned crape myrtle, the trunks grow upward and outward, with branches fanning out rather than growing inward into the center of the tree.

To determine if your crape myrtle needs to be pruned, examine the direction in which the trunks and branches grow. Starting at ground level, follow the trunks upward to where they begin to branch, focusing on the interior of the tree rather than the outer edges. Branches that grow into the center of the tree, crossing over other branches or trunks, should be removed.

To remove a branch, follow it back to where it joins a larger branch or trunk. Take a close look at the point where the branch joins the trunk. You will notice at the point where the two join the branch is swollen or enlarged. This area is known as the branch collar. Using a pruning saw, remove the branch by cutting just above the branch collar rather than flush with the trunk. If the branch was removed at the correct place the branch collar left behind will extend out a centimeter or two from the trunk. If it has been years since the tree was last pruned

you may have to remove several branches. Whole trunks can be removed by cutting them off as close to ground level as possible, but this results in profuse sprouting of suckers during the summer and should be done only as a last resort.

If you have the time and the tree is not too large, you can clean up the interior of the tree by cutting off small twiggy branches that grow from the main trunks. This is best done using hand pruners. You can also remove seed pods and trim off the ends of branches that are less than pencil sized in diameter. While these practices will help the tree look neater and may increase the size of flower clusters, they are not necessary to keep the tree healthy.

See before and after pictures of a crape myrtle I pruned this past weekend:

<http://pender.ces.ncsu.edu/pruning-crape-myrtle/>

Reducing Tree Size

Crape myrtle varieties like ‘Natchez’, ‘Muskogee’ and ‘Tuskegee’ easily reach twenty five feet tall or higher with a similar spread. If you have planted a large growing variety in a space that is too small to allow it to mature your best option is to move the tree to a different spot and replace it with a more compact selection such as ‘Tonto’, ‘Sioux’ or ‘Catawba’, which grow to fifteen feet or less. If moving the tree is not an option, you can reduce tree height and width by cutting back the tallest and most wide spreading branches at the point where they join another branch. Known as reduction pruning, this method preserves the natural shape of the tree and is infinitely preferable to topping. Keeping a large growing variety confined to a small space will require annual pruning. Minimizing irrigation and fertilizer applications can help keep these trees in bounds.

For more information, including photographs, visit the following website:

<http://pender.ces.ncsu.edu/2013/02/how-do-i-prune-crape-myrtle/>

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TIPS AND TASKS

Spring blooming bulbs should be fertilized just as the new growth emerges. Abnormally warm winter temperatures have resulted in many spring bulbs, such as daffodils and snowdrops, emerging and blooming early this year. If your bulbs have already flowered, wait until November to fertilize with a complete fertilizer such as 10-10-10. Summer flowering bulbs can be fertilized when the shoots emerge.

Fertilize trees and shrubs before active growth begins (before mid-March). Fertilize based on your soil test for best results. For more information about fertilizing trees and shrubs, stop by the office and pick up a copy of "A Gardener's Guide to Fertilizing Trees and Shrubs". Fertilize perennials and annuals in April. Do not fertilize warm season grasses yet. Wait until May or June for best results.

If necessary, continue application of preemergent herbicides to centipede and St Augustine lawns through early March. Avoid applications of once turf starts to green up. Bring weed samples to the plant clinic for specific herbicide recommendations. While you are here, request a lawn maintenance calendar for your turf type.

March is an excellent time to relocate plants or transplant container grown plants. Fall blooming perennials can be divided now. (Divide spring blooming perennials in the fall.) Keep an eye on new plants and replanted divisions throughout the spring and summer and provide adequate water to make sure they establish well.

Many cool season spring vegetable crops can be planted now. Early March is a good time to transplant broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage plants. Asparagus beds should be established by the end of March. Kohlrabi, lettuce, mustard, radish, turnips, and spinach can be started from seed through the beginning of April. Potatoes can be planted until the beginning of May.

Remember to wait until after the last frost to plant warm season crops like tomatoes, cucumbers, squash and peppers. The last average frost date in Onslow County is around April 21. However, this is just an average – in any given year the last frost may be earlier or later. Be prepared to protect these

crops from frost if necessary. Heat-loving crops like okra, eggplant, sweet potato and watermelons will do better if you wait an extra couple of weeks for the soil and air temperatures to warm.

BEWARE OF POSSIBLE HERBICIDE INJURY TO VEGETABLES

Mary Helen Ferguson ~ Extension Agent, Randolph County

Some gardeners have recently experienced damage to their vegetable plants from residual herbicides in manure, straw, or hay. The herbicides of concern contain picloram, aminopyralid, or clopyralid as an active ingredient. These herbicides are used on pastures, hay, some other crops, and lawns to kill broadleaf weeds. They're useful for their intended purpose but are unusually persistent in hay and manure.

These herbicides can enter gardens when a gardener amends the soil with fresh or composted manure from an animal that has eaten grass or hay treated with one of these herbicides. Alternatively, someone may use treated hay or straw as mulch or may try to grow vegetables on land where one of the herbicides has been applied. Treated grass clippings from non-residential properties could cause problems as well. Symptoms of injury to vegetables and other broadleaf plants include curling of plant leaves and stems—and death in highly sensitive crops such as beans and tomatoes.

If you're using fresh or composted manure as a soil amendment, ask what was applied to the hay or pasture grass that the animals have eaten. Likewise, if you're a gardener using hay or straw as mulch, ask the supplier what herbicides were used on the crop. Do not use hay or manure from animals that have eaten hay that was treated with herbicides containing picloram, aminopyralid, and clopyralid. Trade names for these products include Confront, Curtail, ForeFront, Grazon, GrazonNext, Lontrel, Milestone, Millennium Ultra 2, Redeem, Surmount, and Stinger.

More information can be found in the publication "Herbicide Carryover in Hay, Manure, Compost, and Grass Clippings" available online at http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/fletcher/programs/ncorganic/special-pubs/herbicide_carryover.pdf.

EVENTS AND REMINDERS

March 5 – Onslow County Farmers Market Association Meeting, 2:30 pm.

March 12 – Onslow County Beekeepers Association meeting, 7 pm.

March 14 – Onslow County Master Gardener Association Meeting, 9 am.

April 2 – Onslow County Farmers Market Association Meeting, 2:30.

April 4 – The Plant Clinic will open for the season. Hours are 9-noon and 1-4, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Bring your plant questions to the clinic and our Master Gardeners will help you find the answers. The Plant Clinic is located in the Onslow County Extension Office (Onslow County Multipurpose Complex) at 4024 Richlands Highway, Jacksonville.

April 9 – Onslow County Beekeepers Association Meeting, 7 pm.

April 11 – Onslow County Master Gardener Association Meeting, 9 am.

April 13 - The Onslow County Farmers Market opens. The Farmers Market has three times and two locations: Tuesday and Saturdays from 8:30am - 1:30pm at 4024 Richlands Highway (at the Onslow County Multipurpose Complex) and Thursdays noon to 6 pm on at their NEW LOCATION at the Jacksonville Commons area across from Richard Ray Park. They are no longer going to be behind Dick Sporting Goods on Western Boulevard. Come by for seasonal local produce including fruits, vegetables, meats, cheeses, flounder and baked goodies. The Master Gardeners will be available each Saturday to help answer your gardening questions.

April 13, 20 and 27 - Master Gardeners Plant Sale, 8:30-1:30 at the Farmers' Market. We'll have tomato, pepper, eggplant and herb transplants for sale along with a selection of perennials. Also, you can ask your Master Gardeners gardening questions.

UPCOMING CLASSES

March 16 – Lawn Care, 2 pm.

Learn how to grow and maintain a beautiful lawn in Onslow County. Location: Main Base Library, Camp Lejeune. There is no cost for this class. Call 910.451.3026 to reserve your space.

March 23 and 30 – Introduction to Beekeeping (8-5, two day class).

Learn everything you need to know to get started raising honeybees. Cost is \$20 and includes a handbook. Location: Onslow County Extension Office at 4024 Richlands Highway Jacksonville. Contact Jeff Morton 910.330.5732 for more information or to register.

April 20 – Creating a Beautiful Container Garden, 2 pm.

We will discuss how to create and maintain beautiful flowering container gardens throughout the season. Location: Main Base Library, Camp Lejeune. There is no cost for this class. Call 910.451.3026 to reserve your space.

May 11 – Hypertufa Workshop, 10 - 1.

Learn how to make beautiful planting containers out of hypertufa – a lightweight, cement substitute. Master Gardeners will help you create your own container that you can take home for summer planting. Cost \$15. Preregistration is required, call 910.455.5873 to reserve your space.

March 8 – April 19 – Terrawa Terrace Community Vegetable Gardening Series, 10 am.

Each class will meet from 10 until noon. We will start with a discussion topic and then move on to planting and caring for the community garden onsite. Location: Terrawa Terrace Community Center. Contact 910.450.1687 for more information or to reserve space in this class (requires base access). There is no cost for this class. Individual session topics are as follows:

March 8 – Crop Scheduling and Garden Planning

March 22 – Soil Sampling and Fertility

April 5 – Container Vegetable Gardening

April 19 – Growing and Using Culinary Herbs

May 3 – Insects in the Garden

May 17 – Harvesting and Storing Your Veggies.

KICK START YOUR VEGETABLE GARDEN BY GROWING MESCLUN

Mesclun is the perfect way to kick start the spring vegetable garden. A mix of salad greens, mesclun packs a lot of variety in one planting. Mesclun mixes include a variety of salad greens such as leaf lettuces, spinach, mustards, kale, arugula, radicchio, and endive. When purchasing mesclun seed, gardeners can choose between spicy mixes and those with milder tastes. Mesclun can be sown in early spring and again in late summer. Grow mesclun similar to loose-leaf lettuce, sowing seed in a well-prepared seedbed in the garden or in a container. Mesclun grows and tastes best under moist, well-drained conditions, so watch carefully to prevent water stress. Harvest the young leaves with scissors starting when the leaves are about two inches tall. Cut above the growing point and the crop will continue to grow and can be harvested multiple times. Sow successive plantings every week to ten days to ensure a steady supply of tender greens.

GROWING RADISH

Shawn Banks ~ Extension Agent, Johnston County

The genus for radish, *Raphanus*, is derived from the Greek word raphanos meaning “easily grown.” One of the easiest of all the vegetables to grow, radishes mature in as few as 30 days after planting. Most of us are familiar with the round red or red-and-white radish that is popular on salads, but there are several other varieties. Some types of radishes have roots like carrots, and several varieties grow large and can be stored during the winter much like beets and turnips.

Some of the more popular varieties in the home vegetable garden include Cherry Belle, Cherry Beauty, Champion, Early Scarlet Globe, Red Boy, and Sparkler. A popular white carrot-root type is White Icicle. A fun variety to add to the children’s garden is Easter Egg, which produces a mixture of five or six different root colors. Larger radish varieties for storage include April Cross, Everest, Omny, Long Black Spanish, and Round Black Spanish.

Radishes should be planted in a well-prepared seedbed that is well drained but moist. Plant seeds about 2 to 4 inches apart, and keep radishes well watered. Plants stressed from heat or drought produce hot, tough, pithy roots. The best-quality radishes are produced when the growing temperatures are between 50°F and 65°F.

Seedlings can be started as early as February 15, with plantings continuing every two weeks until May or June for spring crops. Begin again August 1 through September 15 for fall crops. Bury the seeds ½ inch deep directly into the seedbed. Keep the soil moist until harvest. The small garden-variety radishes take as little as 28 days to reach maturity, while larger storage radishes may take up to 90 days to mature.

RECIPE CORNER

Mixed Green and Radish Salad with Feta

4 cups mixed greens (mesclun mix)
2 radishes, thinly sliced
1 green onion, chopped
1.5 ounces feta cheese, crumbled
salt and ground pepper to taste
2 tbsp vinaigrette to taste

Wash the mixed greens and blot or spin dry. Place greens in a salad bowl and top with the radish, green onions and feta cheese. Dress with the vinaigrette, salt and pepper to taste. Toss well and serve. Serves 2.

Vinaigrette

¾ cup extra virgin olive oil
3 ½ tbsp wine vinegar
1 tbsp Dijon mustard

Mix all ingredients in a bowl or bottle. Mix well for 1 minute. Fresh strawberries and toasted pecans make a tasty addition to this salad too.

STRAWBERRY SEASON IS UPON US!

April marks the beginning of **strawberry season** in Onslow County. You can find local strawberries at the farmers market or pick your own. We have three pick-your-own strawberry farms in Onslow County:

Aman Family Farms

Jack Aman
2384 Belgrade-Swansboro Rd
Maysville, NC 28555
910.934.2938

Southwest Strawberry Farms

Julian Wooten
2053 Pony Farm Rd
Jacksonville, NC 28540
(910) 347-4835

Mike's Farm

Mike and Theresa Lowe
1600 Haw Branch Road
Beulaville, NC 28518
(910) 324-3422

Call ahead for hours, pricing and picking information.

Lenoir County:

Putnam Family Farms

Steve Putnam
2044 Lightwood Knot Road
Kinston, NC 28504
252.520.3330

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).

SHOWSTOPPER PLANT:

Carolina Jessamine

John Vining ~ Extension Agent, Polk County



Born in the South, Carolina Jessamine is a terrific native vine for Carolina landscapes. Admired for its sweetly scented, canary-

yellow flowers, this vine really puts on a show from February to April. The golden, trumpet-shaped, 1.-inch-long blooms are borne in small but prolific clusters throughout its narrow, glossy, evergreen foliage. Carolina jessamine can be trained to climb up arbors or trellises and is often found in wooded areas growing on tree trunks. This moderately vigorous vine generally takes three to four growing seasons to cover an average-sized arbor, and it can climb to 20 feet.

Occasionally, older jessamine vines become top heavy or sparse near the bottom. This can be remedied by pruning the vines back hard soon after they finish flowering. Carolina jessamine is the state flower of South Carolina and is winter hardy from zones 7 to 9.

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 in your county.

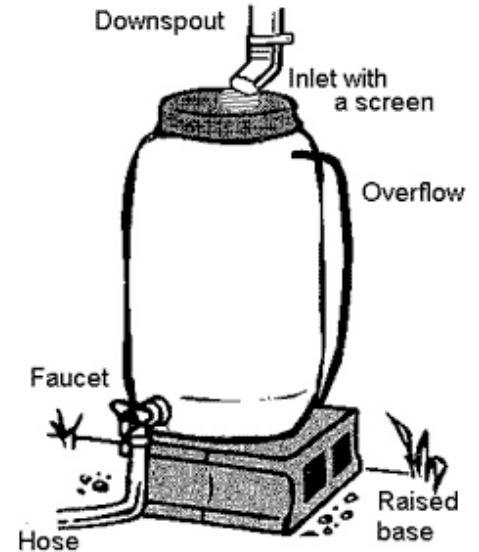
The use of brand names in this publication does not imply endorsement of the products or services named or criticism of similar ones not mentioned

Rain barrels: use what nature provides to water your plants!

Take advantage of the water nature gives us. Using a rain barrel or cistern to collect rainwater can lower your water bill, be good for your plants, and also protect the environment by reducing runoff from your property.

The NC Cooperative Extension – Onslow County rain barrels are made using food-grade barrels from Mt. Olive Pickle Co., so they also help with “reduce, reuse, recycle”. The completed rain barrels come with a brass faucet, an overflow pipe, and a screened water inlet. The fee per rain barrel will be \$50.

The rain barrels, whose sale serves as a fundraiser for some of our Extension programs, are very popular. Please stop by the Onslow Cooperative Extension office to reserve your rain barrel. Your reservation can also be made by mailing the bottom of this form, along with the appropriate fee, to the address indicated below. Please call (910) 455-5873 if you have any questions. Barrels will be available for pick-up by Saturday, April 20th. Sales are first-come, first-served and will continue until the supply is sold.



Pre-order Form: Rain Barrel Sale Beginning – April 20, 2013

Mail to: NC Cooperative Extension
Onslow Multipurpose Complex
4024 Richlands Hwy.
Jacksonville, NC 28540

Attn: Rain Barrel Sale

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____ Email: _____

Fee enclosed: _____ \$50 for each rain barrel ordered

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2012 Extension Volunteer Recognition

On January 29th, 4-H recognized **Justine Smith and Edward Tokonitz** as the **4-H Volunteer Leaders of the Year**. Along with these leaders, all 4-H volunteers were thanked and recognized for their years of service at the annual 4-H Volunteer Leaders Banquet. The theme this year was "Rockin' Out With 4-H."



The annual Onslow County Agricultural Awards Banquet was held on February 7th at the Onslow County Multipurpose Complex. Recognition was given to the various groups of volunteers that give of themselves to support and expand the work of the NC Cooperative Extension here in Onslow County.

Special recognition was given to **Linda Hawes** who was named the **2012 Master Gardener Volunteer of the Year** for her devotion to increasing the knowledge level of other master gardeners and the public.

Several local farmers received awards for Crop Yield Contests:

Wheat Yield Champion: David (Jeff) Collins planted Dyna-Gro Shirley and produced 65.90 bushels per acre. The runner-up was **George Pierce** who planted Coker 9436 and produced 57.70 bushels per acre.

Soybean Yield Champion: George Pierce, Asgrow 6931 with 58.62 bushels per acre. The runner-up was **Sammy Pierce**, who planted Asgrow 6931 and produced 57.53 bushels per acre.

Corn Yield Champion: Donnie Riggs planted Pioneer 1319HR with a yield of 203.80 bushels per acre. The runner-up was George Pierce, who planted DeKalb 6469 and yielded 197.21 bushels per acre.

Thank you to all those that entered the Yield Contests!

The Onslow County Agricultural Hall of Fame Award was begun in 1984. The nominee can only be inducted to the Agricultural Hall of Fame once, as either a recipient of the Master Farmer Award or the James R. Strickland Service to Agriculture Award. This award is especially important because past recipients choose the inductee. This year's inductee was: **Mr. Barry Huffman, for Master Farmer.**

NORTH CAROLINACOOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
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