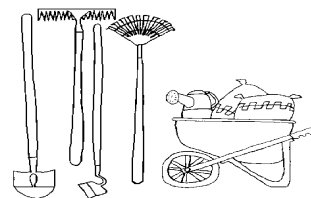


IN THE GARDEN NOW

HELPING GARDENERS PUT KNOWLEDGE TO WORK



MAY / JUNE 2013

FRUITS FOR ONSLOW COUNTY

Each spring, local garden centers teem with a selection of fruit trees and shrubs. As tempting as these displays might be, some plants are better options for Onslow County than others. If you want to successfully grow fruit here, you will want to do your research first. You will want to know which plants grow well here and which are likely to present challenges. It's also important to make sure that your planting site is suitable and prepared appropriately for the crop you are growing.

Lisa Rayburn
Extension Agent,
Horticulture

Choosing Fruit Plants for Onslow County

Some fruits are steady and reliable producers here, while others have more insect and disease problems or do not produce fruit consistently under our growing conditions.

When homeowners ask for a recommendation of fruits to grow, my short list includes the following easy-to-grow options: muscadine grapes, blackberries, blueberries (southern highbush or rabbiteye varieties), figs and strawberries. Pecans, pears and plums can also be grown but they will require more management because of disease and insect pressures. Apples, peaches and nectarines are harder to grow and usually require a diligent spray schedule throughout the growing season to produce quality fruit. Some fruit just don't do well here. English walnuts, apricots, cherries, raspberries, grapes (other than muscadines), citrus (except in containers) and rhubarb are poor choices for Onslow County.

Some fruit crops require cross-pollination for best fruit set. Pecans, apples, pears, plums, many muscadines, and blueberries require another compatible variety planted nearby for best fruit set. Peaches, nectarines, strawberries, blackberries and figs are self-fruitful. Many fruit trees are pollinated by honeybees which are susceptible to most insecticides, so never apply insecticides when fruit trees are in bloom.

Good site selection is important for success. All of these crops require good drainage, correct pH and full sun for optimum yield. Choose a site with well-drained soil. If you don't have well-drained soil, build a berm or raised bed 4 to 5 feet wide to plant on. Sample your soil so you can adjust the pH prior to planting. Blueberries are acid loving preferring a soil pH of 4.5 to 5.8.

Contact Us:

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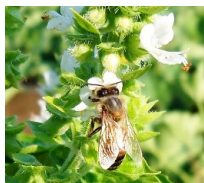
Empowering People • Providing Solutions

Strawberries like a sweeter soil with a pH from 5.5 to 6.5; all the other fruits do best in the range of 6.0 to 6.5. Fruit trees require full sun for optimum yield, good ripening and best flavor. Blueberries and muscadines can tolerate a little bit of shade but will not perform as well as if given full sun.

WHY YOU SHOULD READ THE LABEL

Charlotte Glen – Horticulture Agent, NC Cooperative Extension, Pender County Center

Check the label to find out if a pesticide is particularly toxic to bees and other wildlife and to learn how, when, and where you can apply it.



Please Read the Label!

Have you ever hesitated to use a pesticide because you were not sure how to mix it, where or when it should be applied, or what threat it posed to bees, wildlife, pets or people? All of this, along with other essential information, is listed on every pesticide label. Reading the label before you buy or use a pesticide is important for all types of pesticides, including organic products. It will help you decide which product is right for your pest problem, how to correctly apply it, and what risks are involved.

First, Know Your Pest

There are many different pesticides available for home gardeners. These include herbicides to kill weeds, insecticides to kill pest insects, and fungicides to control plant diseases. Some contain synthetic chemicals while others are made from natural materials such as minerals, bacteria, or plant derived chemicals.

Whether you are dealing with a weed, insect, or plant disease, the first step to using any of these products effectively is to make sure you have the problem correctly identified.

Pesticide labels list which pests they can be used to treat. Using a pesticide on a problem it will not control wastes your time, money, and can harm beneficial insects, water quality, and wildlife. If you are unsure which pest you are dealing with contact

your local Cooperative Extension office for help.

The ingredient in a pesticide that harms a pest is known as the product's active ingredient. Just as on medicine bottles, pesticides must list their active ingredients on the label. These can usually be found on the front of the packaging. Knowing what active ingredient is in a pesticide allows you to compare one product to another. It also allows you to look up active ingredients on websites such the Extension Toxicology Network, extoxnet.orst.edu, to find out more about their potential effects on people and the environment.

When and How to Apply

Not sure what type of plants or under what conditions you can use a pesticide? Check the label. For example, some pesticides should not be applied to edible crops while others should not be used on plants in containers or those that are drought stressed. Most pesticides should not be applied during hot weather, when temperatures exceed 90 degrees, or when rain is expected in the next 24 hours. Some herbicides should not be spread on certain soil types or over the rooting area of trees and shrubs. For example, herbicides containing atrazine should not be applied to lawns if the soil pH is over 7.0. No pesticide should be sprayed or spread near any body of water or stormwater drain unless it is specifically labeled for aquatic use.

When pesticides fail to work it is usually because they were not mixed or applied correctly or the wrong product was used because the pest was not accurately identified. Directions for mixing and applying pesticides are included on the label. These directions will tell you how much to mix, where and how to apply them to the plant, how many days must pass between applications and if there are limits on the number of time a product can be used in a year.

People, Pets, and Wildlife

Other essential information contained on a pesticide's label include first aid instructions, protective clothing and equipment you should wear when mixing and applying, and hazards to wildlife, including bees. Many insecticide labels include statements about their toxicity to bees, which is

often high. To reduce the risk of harming bees and other beneficial insects, do not spray plants when bees are active and avoid spraying open flowers. Natural products are often less toxic to bees because they break down fast, reducing the amount of time bees are exposed.

For pesticides that can be sprayed on edible plants, make sure to check how long you have to wait after spraying before you can harvest. This time is known as the post harvest interval (PHI) and can range from a day to weeks or months. The label will also tell you how long you have to wait before people or pets can enter the treated area. This is usually after all sprays have dried completely but additional restrictions exist for some products.

however in worst-case scenarios, a fungicide application might help prevent the disease from spreading further. Fungicide applications are best when they are applied preventatively in the fall. If you choose to spray a fungicide this spring, don't expect a miracle to happen overnight. Also, remember that recovery will be even slower and tougher if you've applied a DNA type of herbicide as your pre-emerge for summer weeds.

In most cases, the best thing is to stay the course with management practices that will encourage each type of grass to do well. In severe cases, treating damaged areas like a new establishment with light and frequent fertilizer and water inputs may help encourage faster lateral spread. This doesn't mean you should apply more fertilizer, just smaller doses more often. Applying too much fertilizer will make the disease worse this fall!

Finally, be sure to map the affected areas now while they are clearly visible. You will save yourself some money this fall by spot treating these areas instead of having to make a whole property application, since the disease tends to reappear in the same areas.

For more information go to:

http://www.turffiles.ncsu.edu/Diseases/Large_Patch.aspx

LARGE PATCH

Lee Butler, Extension Coordinator -Turf Pathology

You know it's officially spring in North Carolina when the pollen is so thick that not even a record breaking tornado outbreak can clear the stuff out, the dogwoods and azaleas are in full bloom, and there are giant patches of brown grass in bermudagrass, centipedegrass, St. Augustinegrass, and zoysiagrass. These "giant patches of brown grass" are better known as large patch, caused by the fungus *Rhizoctonia solani*, and if you've ever had an outbreak of this disease, you now know why the disease was coined large patch.



What you may not know however, is what your control options are this time of year. You shouldn't worry too much if you have this disease on bermudagrass. Bermudagrass tends to grow out of the damage once the temperatures are consistently warmer and the daylight longer.

As for our other warm-season friends, damage tends to be most severe on centipedegrass and recovery may take all summer in extreme cases. Unfortunately, there isn't much you can do to make for a magical recovery. We rarely recommend fungicides for large patch in the spring of the year,

IN THE PLANT CLINIC

Solitary Bees:

I've had several calls about solitary bees this month. There are many common species of solitary bees that nest in the ground. Solitary bees vary in size, shape and color but all are good pollinators. Female bees excavate nesting burrows that reach six or more inches in depth. Small mounds of excavated soil may appear around each nest opening.

Solitary bees may nest in close proximity creating a small "city" of nests. However, since individual females are each building their own nest, solitary bees do not defend the nesting area the same way social bees like honey bees or yellow jackets. A person might be stung if they tried to catch a bee or if one became trapped in clothing but this is

generally not an issue. Mowing and other outdoor activities can continue in the area with little problem.

Ground-nesting bees generally prefer nesting areas with morning sun exposure and well-drained soils with little organic matter. Bees avoid damp soil and thick turf so heavy watering or irrigation and establishment of dense turf should help discourage nesting. Alternatively, ground cover or heavy mulching can be used to cover bare patches where grass will not grow.

Fire ants:

Late May to early June is a good time to control fire ants for the summer. Baits are designed to fool ants into thinking they are food. Applied correctly, baits are the most effective, long lasting, and environmentally friendly method of fire ant control. Baits can be applied around individual ant mounds or broadcast over a large area. Broadcasting is recommended when there are more than five mounds visible per quarter acre or over 20 mounds per acre.

Baits should be applied when fire ants are actively foraging for food. For best results apply baits in the morning after the dew has dried when rain is not expected for a few days since ants are not attracted to soggy food. Always use fresh baits since the soybean oil used in baits can go rancid over time. Read the label directions of any product you are thinking about using to find out what rate it should be applied and how it should be spread.

Baits take days or weeks to control ant populations but control can persist for 4-9 months depending on the specific active ingredients used. If more rapid control is required, a contact insecticide can be used in the form of a drench or granules.

Drenches are mixed with water and poured onto a mound. They provide quick knock down of the mound but rarely kill all of the ants and new mounds usually pop up in the treated area within a few days. Drenches are best used only if a mound needs to be quickly neutralized. Most drench products contain synthetic insecticides like bifenthrin or permethrin. The Safer brand of products offers an organic drench with the active ingredient D-limonene, but this may be difficult to

find locally.

Granules are sprinkled around a mound or broadcast over the yard. Ants are killed when they come in contact with the pesticide. Granules usually do a better job of killing more of the ants than drenches but rarely get them all. Most granular products contain either bifenthrin, permethrin, or a similar synthetic insecticide. Ortho offers a granular form of spinosad, an organic insecticide, under their EcoSense line of products, if you can find it.



TIPS AND TASKS

Most warm season lawns can be fertilized mid-May until mid-July. Make sure you are applying the appropriate fertilizer at the right rate for your turf type. Warm season weeds will be ramping up their growth as temperatures increase. Bring a sample to the office for appropriate identification and control options. Keep lawns mown to the correct height for your turf type to encourage a dense stand and prevent weeds. Leave grass clippings on your lawn to return nutrients and moisture to the soil.

Make multiple small plantings of vegetables and herbs two weeks apart to extend the harvest season. Stake tomato plants to prevent rot. Scout your vegetable garden regularly to catch pest and disease problems early. Pick fruits and vegetables as they ripen to keep up production levels.

Water according to plant needs. Vegetables and newly planted area may need frequent watering while lawns and established plants may need little to none. Remember to water deeply rather than frequently to promote deeper, more drought-resistant rooting.

Remove the spent flower heads on annual and perennial flowers to neaten up the plants and extend the bloom period. Pull weeds before they flower and set seed.



MARVELOUS MULCH



Mulch is a marvelous addition to planting areas. Gardeners rely on mulch to suppress weeds and make garden beds look tidy. But mulch offers many

additional benefits. It conserves moisture, keeps soil cooler, and reduces plant diseases. Over time, proper mulching builds better soil by adding organic matter, reducing compaction, and preventing erosion.

Many types of mulch are available. Popular options include pine straw, pine bark, and hardwood bark. Pine straw is easy to transport, attractive, and stays in place fairly well. Although many people worry that pine straw will acidify their soil, it has little effect on soil pH. Pine bark mulches come in different sizes, from large nuggets to small chips. The drawback to pine-bark nugget mulch is its tendency to float, so don't use it where water flows or ponds. Shredded hardwood mulch holds together well, making it a good choice in wet or windy locations.

Aim for three to four inches of organic mulch around trees and shrubs – too much mulch can reduce the amount of water that reaches the soil. If depths are adequate but mulch looks weathered, rake it to loosen the surface and freshen its appearance. Apply mulch evenly over the plant's entire root system. For trees and shrubs, this means out to the edge of the canopy. Keeping mulch away from the trunk of trees and shrubs helps prevent insect and disease problems. In landscape beds, mulch the entire bed evenly.

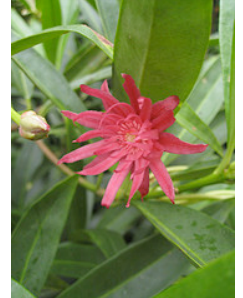
Two to three inches of mulch will suppress weeds in most vegetable gardens. Shredded leaves, clean straw, compost and shredded bark are all good options for vegetable gardens. Mulch can be applied to vegetable gardens any time but the best time is late spring after the soil has warmed. Applying mulch in early spring will delay soil warming and possibly plant growth.

Organic mulches break down over time increasing soil organic matter, structure and water retention.

Avoid the use of landscape fabrics or weed barriers which prevent this movement of organic matter into the soil.

ILICIAM

Each year the North Carolina Nursery & Landscape Association ([NCNLA](#)) and North Carolina Cooperative Extension select their Showstopper Plants, a list of must have plants for North Carolina Landscapes. These plants are nominated by North Carolina nurserymen and selected by North Carolina Cooperative Extension horticulture experts. The 2013 Showstopper Plants are excellent choices for North Carolina gardeners. Featured plants are promising new cultivars or iron-clad plants that will thrive across the region. They are featured in Extension Gardener Learning Centers at home and garden shows throughout North Carolina.



Are you gardening in North Carolina and looking for an evergreen shrub with handsome green colored foliage? If yes, look no further; 'Aztec Fire' anise is the plant for you. This landscape gem is a first cousin to the more commonly known Florida anise. Unique to this anise, or *Illicium*, this plant produces burgundy colored flowers. Nurseries in North Carolina are now carrying *Illicium* 'Aztec Fire'. This anise will grow in full sun but really thrives in partial shade. Give this Mexican native plenty of room to grow. Typically this anise will reach a height of eight feet and a width of six feet. Best of all it has a natural pyramidal growth habit.

An evergreen beauty, 'Aztec Fire' is best grown as a large shrub, and makes a great hedgerow. Anise also will fit nicely into a naturalized landscape planting. One interesting note, anise shrubs grown in full sun will possess lighter green foliage than those grown in partial shade. Hardy in USDA zones 7-9.

UPCOMING CLASSES

Insects in the Garden - 3 May 13 at 10 am -

Learn about the good, the bad and the ugly!
We will discuss beneficial and pest insects
and how to manage them in the garden.
Terrawa Terrace Community Center
Call [910.450.0514](tel:910.450.0514) to preregister

Container Gardening for Edibles - 7 May 13 at

5:30 - Learn to grow vegetables and fruits
successfully in containers in Onslow
County.
Swansboro Recreation Center
Call [910.326.2600](tel:910.326.2600) to register, class size is
limited

Hypertufa Container Workshop - 11 May 13 from 10-1

The Onslow County Master Gardener
volunteers will teach you how to build your
own hypertufa planter. Hypertufa is a
durable, lightweight cement mixture that can
be used to make planters of various sizes
and designs. You will learn a variety of
techniques and get to take your container
home with you. Cost \$15. Preregistration
required - call [910.455.5873](tel:910.455.5873) to register.
Location behind the Farmers Market at 4024
Richlands Highway Jacksonville.

Food Preservation Basics - 17 May 13 at 10 am

Learn how to care for your garden produce
after you harvest. We will discuss storage,
food safety and an introduction to canning/
preserving. Terrawa Terrace Community
Center. Call [910.450.0514](tel:910.450.0514) to preregister

Growing and Using Culinary Herbs - 21 May 13 at 5:30

We will discuss how to grow, harvest,
preserve and use a variety of culinary herbs.
Swansboro Recreation Center
Call [910.326.2600](tel:910.326.2600) to register, class size is
limited.

Composting - 31 May 13 at 10 am

Learn how to successfully compost garden,
yard and kitchen waste.
Terrawa Terrace Community Center
Call [910.450.0514](tel:910.450.0514) to preregister

Building a Beautiful Container Garden - 22 June 13 at 10 am

Learn how to design, plant and care for a
beautiful flowering container garden all
season long.
Jacksonville Public Library
Call 910.455.7350 to preregister

Barnyards by the Sea: Canning Basics - 29 June 13 at 10 am

Learn how to safely preserve your harvest
for use throughout the year.
Extension Office, 4024 Richlands Highway
Call 910.455.5873 for more information

BLUEBERRIES

June is the height of blueberry season in Onslow
County. Stop by the Onslow County Farmer's
Market or visit one of Onslow County's pick-your-
own farms to stock up on these joys of summer
before they are gone.

Remember these tips from the North Carolina
Blueberry Council:

* When choosing blueberries, select plump, full
blueberries with a light gray-blue color. A berry
with any hint of red isn't fully ripened. Blueberries
do not ripen after they are picked.

* Once picked, don't place the berries, still warm
from the sun, in a closed bag or container. Leave the
container open so moisture doesn't form in the
container. Don't wash berries until just before using
to prevent berries from becoming mushy. Chill
berries soon after picking to increase shelf life. If
refrigerated, fresh-picked blueberries will keep 10
to 14 days.

* Freeze berries in freezer containers without
washing to keep the skins from toughening. Place
berries one layer deep. Freeze, and then pour the
frozen berries into freezer containers. Because
unwashed blueberries freeze individually, they can
be easily poured from containers in desired
amounts. Remember both frozen and fresh berries
should be rinsed and drained just before serving.

To pick-your-own berries, call ahead for picking
hours and ask if you need to bring your own

containers. Onslow County has two pick-your-own farms:

Justice Blueberry Farms
1325 Gould Road
Jacksonville, NC 28540
910.346.6783

Southwest Blueberry Farms
2053 Pony Farm Road
Jacksonville, NC 28540
910.347.0026

RECIPE CORNER

Blueberry Peach Coffee Cake

Ingredients:

1 1/4 c. sifted all purpose flour
1/2 c. sugar
6 T. butter, melted
1 t. baking powder
1 t. baking soda
1/4 t. salt
1/2 c. milk
1 egg, beaten
1 t. grated lemon rind

Crumb Topping:

1/2 c. flour
1/4 c. sugar
1/4 t. grated nutmeg
2 T. butter, melted

Fruit:

3/4 lb. (3 medium) peaches, peeled and sliced
2 c. blueberries
1/4 c. sugar

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a 9-inch square baking dish. To prepare crumb topping, combine ingredients in a small bowl and set aside. To prepare fruit, gently mix peaches, berries, and sugar in another bowl.

Mix flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt in a large bowl. Add melted butter, milk, egg, and lemon rind; stir until blended. Pour batter into prepared pan and top with half the crumb mixture.

Spoon fruit evenly over crumb mixture. Sprinkle remaining crumb mixture over fruit.

Bake 40 to 45 minutes. Serve warm or cool.

Yield: 6 to 8 servings.

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

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).



4-H Summer Avenues of Interest 2013

The 4-H motto is:

“To Make the Best Better”, so make the best better by enrolling now to learn something new and meet new people. The 4-H office along with those giving leadership to the activities hope you have an enjoyable summer and invite youth age 5 – 19 to take advantage of the many opportunities offered in the Avenues of Interest Summer Program.

We invite you to join us for an exciting summer!!! Any youth in Onslow County may enroll in one or more workshops, you do not have to be a 4-H'er to register, just come by the 4-H office at 4024 Richlands Highway, Jacksonville. Call us at 455-5873 or you can also check our web site to see what classes we offer and if they are full. (<http://onslow.ces.ncsu.edu>) All programs have a registration fee, which must be paid when you register. Registration will not be held at the workshop or activity.

All monies collected are used for supplies and or instructor fees. Again, do not miss out on an exciting summer of 4-H activities.

NORTH CAROLINACOOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY
ONslow COUNTY CENTER
4024 RICHLANDS HIGHWAY
JACKSONVILLE, NC 28540

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