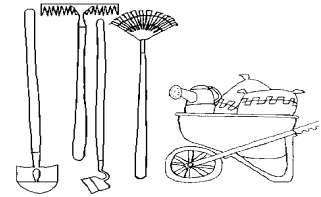


# IN THE GARDEN NOW

HELPING GARDENERS PUT KNOWLEDGE TO WORK



SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2013

## IN THE PLANT CLINIC

### PEAK SEASON SOIL SAMPLE FEES

As of this fall, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) Agronomic Division will be implementing a fee on soil samples submitted during its peak season: December through March. Peak season samples will be charged a \$4 fee per box. Samples submitted the rest of the year (April through November) will still be processed for free.

This fee is intended to improve lab efficiency by encouraging growers and homeowners to sample earlier in the season. It will also generate funds that can be used for lab improvements and additional peak-season personnel.

If you haven't sampled your soil recently, go ahead and sample now. If you send your sample through the Onslow County extension office, make sure it is received at the office before November 15 to ensure that it reaches NCDA prior to their deadline. Samples received by NCDA after 6 pm on November 27 will be subject to the peak-season fee. Remember that wait times are significantly shorter if you submit your samples during the off-season. It usually only takes about 7-10 days for the lab to process samples during the non-peak season; during peak season, sample turn around times can stretch to 8 or 9 weeks.

For more information about these fees, check out the Onslow County Cooperative Extension website, <http://onslow.ces.ncsu.edu/2013/07/peak-season-soil-testing-fee/>.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa Rayburn".

Lisa Rayburn  
Extension Agent,  
Horticulture

#### Contact Us:

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## SAVING YOUR SUMMER HARVEST

Robin Seitz, Family & Consumer Science Agent, NC Cooperative Extension, Onslow County Center

For many gardeners, there is nothing quite as satisfying as eating an ear of sweet corn that we have planted, tended, picked, shucked, silked and cooked ourselves. I feel pretty much the same about everything I grow. I enjoy every step in the process of growing and cooking food from my own little home garden. So what do I do in the middle of winter, when my little raised beds sit fallow? I enjoy the fruits of my summer labor by opening a jar or baggie of home preserved goodness. Yes, folks I am talking about home canned and home frozen product. If you grow a garden you probably know that even a small backyard or patio plot has the potential to yield great quantities of produce if conditions are favorable. So instead of bombarding your friends and neighbors with your abundant zucchini and cukes, why not save some of it for yourself and your family?

Canning and freezing are the two most popular methods of preserving food at home, although a fair number of people dry or dehydrate food at home too. All three methods focus on preventing spoilage caused by microorganisms and chemical changes caused by enzymes. Canning involves putting food into jars or cans and heating the product to a temperature that kills microorganisms and inactivates enzymes. The heating and later cooling of the jar or can forms a vacuum seal, which prevents contamination within the jar. Acid foods such as fruit and tomatoes can be processed in this way using a simple boiling water technique. Low acid foods, such as most vegetables and meats must be processed in a pressure canner to at least 240 degrees. This is necessary to inactivate spoilage enzymes that are not present in acid foods. Freezing reduces the temperature of food so that microorganisms cannot grow and enzyme activity is slowed. Drying removes most of the moisture from foods. Doing so stops microorganism growth and slows enzyme activity.

The method you choose to preserve your product depends on several things. Most importantly, ask yourself whether safe guidelines and methods are available for the particular food you have. Next, do you have or can you obtain the proper instructions

and equipment to properly preserve the item? Luckily, there are tons of resources available to help you answer those questions. The first and most authoritative stop is the National Center for Home Food Preservation; available online at <http://nchfp.uga.edu/>. Their book, "So Easy To Preserve", is an excellent resource with step-by-step recipes for safe canning, freezing and dehydrating.

Your local extension office can also provide preservation guidance. In Onslow County, Robin Seitz, our Family and Consumer Sciences agent, answers canning and other food safety and preservation questions. You can reach Robin by calling the office at 910.455.5873 or by email at [robin\\_seitz@ncsu.edu](mailto:robin_seitz@ncsu.edu).

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## CATERPILLARS ON THE MOVE

Caterpillars are on the move in the landscape and garden. Here are just a few of the caterpillars that I am seeing right now.

Fall webworms have been busy this year. If you have noticed webbing on the ends of tree branches, you have seen the work of fall webworm. These native caterpillars occur every year in our area and are most noticeable in later summer and fall. These caterpillars will feed for four to six weeks and then leave the tree to spin a cocoon in which they will over winter. While webworms can be unsightly, luckily they do not cause significant damage to mature trees. If you can reach the webs, you can prune them out or knock them down and break them open. If you have extensive webbing on smaller trees and decide to treat with an insecticide, target the foliage immediately adjacent to the web which is where these caterpillars feed.

The azalea caterpillars, *Datana major*, are one of the most distinctive caterpillar species in our area. They feed primarily on azaleas but they have occasionally been found on blueberries. They are most evident late in the summer. There is one generation of this pest each year. Adults lay eggs on the underside of azalea leaves where the small caterpillars feed gregariously. As they grow the caterpillars take on a distinct red, yellow and black coloration. Unfortunately, people usually don't notice azalea caterpillars until they have consumed

a lot of foliage and possibly even defoliated the shrub.

## AZALEA CATERPILLAR



*Azalea caterpillars typically assume this pose when they are disturbed.*

Tomato hornworms continue to be a problem in the vegetable garden. Several of these large green caterpillars can defoliate even the most vigorous tomato vine. If you find a tomato hornworm covered in small cottony cocoons, it has been parasitized by a tiny braconid wasp. Leave parasitized caterpillars in the garden until the wasps have pupated. You can tell the wasps are pupated when there are small holes in the tops of the cocoons. I have also seen beet armyworms feeding on my tomato plants in the last couple of weeks. This is a dark olive-green to brown caterpillar with light colored stripes running the length of the body. The armyworms will feed on a variety of crops including many weeds, trees, grasses, forages and garden crops.

## TOMATO HORNWORM



*A tomato hornworm that has been parasitized by braconid wasps.*

Caterpillars of the black

swallowtail butterfly can be found on parsley, carrot, fennel, dill and parsnips. The green and black banded caterpillars are voracious eaters. When disturbed, they will expand a yellow forked osmeterium just behind their heads. This structure can release a smelly liquid when the caterpillar tries to scare off predators. Whether black swallowtail caterpillars are a pest or simply an immature butterfly depends on your perspective. In the butterfly garden, they are treasured for what they

will become. In the vegetable garden, they may be a pest to be controlled.

## BLACK SWALLOWTAIL CATERPILLAR



*Black Swallowtail caterpillar*

This is just a short list of the caterpillars out and about right now.

Scout for

caterpillars by scanning shrubs and garden plants for bare twigs or stems then look closer to investigate. If you find a caterpillar or a group of them, pruning the branch out or picking the caterpillar off with a gloved hand is a good option. You can drop the offending insects into a bucket of soapy water or squish them with your shoe – whichever you prefer. I feed the tomato hornworms and armyworms to my chickens.

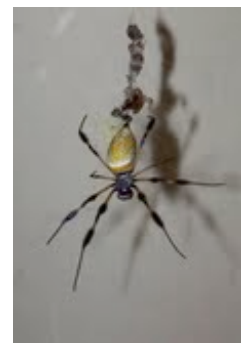
Insecticides containing *Bacillus thuringiensis* or spinosad are effective against smaller caterpillars (think ½ inch in length or smaller) and are less likely to impact the beneficial insects in your landscape. Products containing carbaryl (Sevin) or acephate (Orthene) will provide control on larger specimen.

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## SPIDERS ...BIG SPIDERS ...OH MY!

*Dr. Diana Rashash, Area Specialized Agent – Natural Resources*

*Female golden silk spider, Onslow County*



Eastern NC is home to two quite large spiders: the black and yellow garden spider (*Argiope aurantia*) and the golden silk spider (*Nephila clavipes*). The range of the golden silk spider has moved northward recently. According to David Stephan, retired Entomologist, NCSU, there have been more reports of this spider in the past five years than in all prior years combined. So far, the golden silk spider has been sticking to the coast (up to Carteret County), with one inland county report (Bladen County).

Both spiders – and their webs - can be rather startling when you come upon them suddenly. The female of both types is a large colorful spider that, including legs, can be 5” in diameter. Sometimes, you can see a much smaller, brownish spider on the web with her; that is the male.

The golden silk spider has venom similar to the black widow, but much more dilute. It is a very mild mannered spider that won't bite unless pinched. People bitten report localized swelling and mild pain. The spider in the photo has been politely living two feet away from a porch door. Other than having to duck under the web, there have been no issues with her presence.

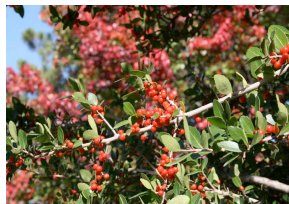
Both spiders have one generation per year. Around September, the female will form an egg sac roughly 5/8” to 1” in diameter. The male dies fairly soon after mating (and is often eaten); the first hard frost will usually kill the adult female. The young in the sac will overwinter and hatch out the following spring. If you see a sac in an inconvenient location, you can try moving it. The spiders are very good at capturing insects that may be harmful to your trees and plants.

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## HOLLIES FOR WINTER INTEREST

As we move toward winter, it is worth thinking about plants that add interest to the garden during the coldest part of the year. Our native hollies can add colorful berries, sometimes glossy foliage and interesting form to the winter garden. Native hollies in general prefer average, moist to wet soils in full sun or part shade. They are adaptable and will usually tolerate wet soils but perform best in rich, consistently moist, acidic soils. Hollies are dioecious meaning that there are separate male and female plants. The female plants need a male pollinator in order to produce the colorful red berries that people prize for winter interest.

Yaupon holly, *Ilex vomitoria*, is native to the coastal plain. This tough little evergreen holly is regularly found in sandy woods, dunes, open fields,



forest edges and swamps from Virginia to Florida. Naturally growing as a small shrub or tree, there are selections available that range from compact, dwarf shrubs to tall weeping tree forms. Yellow-fruited cultivars are even available. Yaupon holly tolerates more drought and higher soil pH than some of the other native hollies. ‘Shadow’s Female’ is one variety to look for, it is a female selection with a rounded form and bright red fruit.

Inkberry, *Ilex glabra*, is another slow-growing, evergreen holly. It matures to 5-8 feet tall and produces jet-black berries that persist in to spring unless eaten by birds. There are cultivars available that have a more compact, bushy form than the species such as ‘Shamrock’.

Possumhaw, *Ilex decidua*, is a deciduous holly that typically grows 7-15 tall. The leaves of possumhaw turn purplish-green to yellow in autumn before falling to reveal the orange-red berries that ripen in September and persist until mid-March when new growth begins, unless they are eaten first. Birds, deer and a variety of small animals (including possums) are attracted to the fruit.

Winterberry, *Ilex verticillata*, is another deciduous holly that typically grows 3 to 12 feet tall. It often suckers to form thickets or colonies.



Winterberry leaves don't typically develop much color before falling but the berries are bright red and quite showy. There are several varieties that have been selected for the larger and more abundant fruit, including ‘Red Sprite’, ‘Cacapon’ and ‘Winter Red’.

Prune to shape in early spring just before new growth begins. Hollies generally need minimal pruning unless they are used as a hedge. Some of the hollies will send up suckers from the root to form a colony. These suckers should be removed regularly if that isn't your goal.

The right selection of native holly can be used for year round interest, in a mass or shrub border, as foundation plantings, in native or wildlife plantings, rain gardens, along streams and ponds, or as a landscape specimen.

## **ONslow COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS HOST THEIR SIXTH ANNUAL CAMELLIA SHOW AND SALE**

The Onslow County Master Gardeners will host their 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Camellia Show and Seminar Saturday, November 2nd from noon until 5 pm. This show has grown rapidly since its inception. Last year, the show featured hundreds of camellia blooms brought by exhibitors from across the southeast. The show is sanctioned by the American Camellia Society. Visitors will be able to browse through the hundreds of gorgeous blooms in the show as well as participate in educational seminars for free.

The Onslow County Master Gardeners will be selling camellias in conjunction with the show. A large selection of camellias will be available. These high quality plants come in three-gallon containers and are two to three years old. Cost is \$20 via preorders or \$25 on the day of the show.

The Onslow County Farmers Market will celebrate their Fall Festival this same Saturday. For a fun filled day, schedule your visit to participate in both festivities. The Farmers Market will be open from 8:30 am until 1:30 pm with a wide variety of local produce, meats, cheeses, eggs, baked goodies and handicrafts.

The Camellia Show will be held at the Onslow County Multipurpose Complex located at 4024 Richlands Highway. The Farmers Market is located just behind the Multipurpose Complex. Admission for both events is free.

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### **TIPS AND TASKS**

Cooler temperatures make gardening and landscape maintenance more enjoyable in the fall. There are lots of important tasks to do this time of year that will make your garden neat and tidy over the winter and get your garden off to a healthier start next season

### **In the Vegetable Garden**

\* There is still time to plant. Cool season crops like collards, cauliflower, broccoli, turnips, radish, kale, kohlrabi, and rutabagas can be planted in late August or early September. Later in September, you still have time for onions, radishes and second plantings of short season hardy crops like leaf lettuce and spinach.

\* Cabbage, kale, collards, Swiss chard and looseleaf lettuce can be set out through mid-October. Seeds of radish, spinach, turnip and salad greens can also be sown. Plant garlic cloves and onion sets until November. Choose short-day varieties of onions like Grano or Texas supersweet.

\* Cool season herbs like dill, parsley and cilantro can be direct sown or set out as transplants and will stay green into winter.

\* Extend the growing season of tender summer crops like tomatoes and peppers by covering them through the first couple of frosts. We often have several weeks of nice growing weather after the first fall frost.

\* Clean up. Remove old plants, as well as any foliage that has fallen on the soil and compost them. Do a final weeding, and mulch the bed with compost, straw, grass clippings, or chopped leaves. These mulches can be turned into the soil next spring to help fertilize next year's crops.

\* Sample the soil to determine fertilizer needs for next growing season. In our area, gardeners should test the soil every 2-3 years.

### **In the Perennial Bed**

\* Fall is the best time of year to plant and transplant most trees, shrubs and perennials. It is also a great time to divide and replant perennials. Remember to keep new plantings well watered during their first several weeks as they get established.

\* If any plants had insect or disease problems, carefully clean up leaves and debris and remove them from the yard. Collect leaves and debris for composting but don't compost insect or disease-laden plant material.

\* As perennial beds go dormant, cut dry dead stems back to ground level. Seed heads may be left for winter interest or to feed the birds (sedum, echinaceae, blackeyed susan).

\* Most ornamental grasses hold up to the winter weather so leaves them for interest, if you like. If they look messy, cut them back

\* You can prune shrubs to remove dead, diseased or broken limbs: however save significant pruning for the dormant season (about February). Spring blooming shrubs shouldn't be pruned until after they flower, or you will lose next spring's blooms.

\* Once all of the leaves have fallen, give your landscape plantings a layer of mulch over top. Three to four inches of mulch is good; however excessive mulch can also cause problems so check the thickness of your mulch. Old mulch can be freshened up by raking. Don't let mulch lie against the trunks of trees and shrubs or it will encourage pest and disease problems. Spread a 2-3 inch layer of mulch over dormant perennials, but don't cover the foliage of evergreen perennials like hellebores.

### **In the Lawn**

\* Warm season grasses do not grow during late fall and don't require any nitrogen fertilizer before spring. Fertilizing at this time will encourage weed growth and disease problems like large patch and winterkill.

\* If annual bluegrass has been a problem in your lawn, apply an appropriate preemergent herbicide in late August or early September.

\* Long term, the most effective way to control weeds in turf is to nurture a healthy, dense lawn by following correct cultural practices. An abundance of lawn weeds in winter or summer is a sign of poor turf health, which could be caused by compacted soil, low nutrition, pH imbalances, poor drainage, herbicide damage, improper mowing height, or disease and insect problems. Keep your lawn healthy by having any insect or disease problems correctly diagnosed before treating, sending soil samples to the NC Department of Agriculture to determine your nutrient or lime needs, and following the correct cultural requirements for your lawn type.

\* If you had large patch diagnosed this spring, apply protective fungicides the beginning of September and again in October for control. Also, make sure that you are not irrigating at all through the fall.

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## **UPCOMING CLASSES AND EVENTS**

### **Dealing with Deer**

Tarawa Terrace Community Center  
Building TT44 Tarawa Terrace Boulevard  
(910)450-1687 to register  
September 6, 10 am

### **Composting**

Swansboro Recreation Center  
830 Main Street Extension  
(910)326-2600 to register  
September 10, 5:30 pm

### **Growing Bulbs**

Building TT44 Tarawa Terrace Boulevard  
(910)450-1687 to register  
September 20, 10 am

### **Growing Fruit in Onslow County**

Swansboro Recreation Center  
830 Main Street Extension  
(910)326-2600 to register  
September 24, 5:30 pm

### **Onslow County Fair**

Onslow County Fair Grounds  
146 Broadhurst Rd, Jacksonville  
September 30 – October 5

### **Composting**

Main Base Library, Camp Lejeune  
Corner of Holcomb Blvd and Birch St  
(910)450-5724 to register  
October 12, 2 pm

### **Making the Perfect Pie**

Onslow County Extension Office  
4024 Richlands Highway, Jacksonville  
(910)455-5873 preregistration is required  
Cost \$10 (and you get to eat pie)  
October 15, 5 to 9 pm

## **Canning Pie Filling**

Onslow County Extension Office

4024 Richlands Highway, Jacksonville

(910)455-5873 preregistration is required

Cost \$10 (and you get to take home pie filling)

October 29, 5 to 9 pm

## **Camellia Show and Sale/Farmers Market Fall Festival**

Onslow County Extension Office

4024 Richlands Highway, Jacksonville

November 2 (see article for details)

*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*

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## **RECIPE CORNER**

When you harvest your sweet potatoes, try this sweet twist from Our State magazine.

### **Roasted Sweet Potatoes with Rosemary Honey Vinaigrette**

- 5 cups sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- ¼ cup honey
- 3 tablespoons white-wine vinegar
- 3 tablespoons fresh rosemary, chopped  
(do not use dried)
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

Combine the potatoes and 1 tablespoon olive oil in a bowl, and toss well to coat. Spread in a single layer over a foil-lined 10-inch x 15-inch baking pan coated with nonstick cooking spray. Bake at 450° for 35 minutes or until light brown; do not stir. Whisk honey, vinegar, 1 tablespoon olive oil, rosemary, garlic, salt, and pepper in a bowl. Add the potatoes, and toss well to coat. Serve hot or at room temperature.

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## **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).



## The Onslow County Fair is coming to Town

The Onslow County Fair will be here September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013 through Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Crafts, sewing items, baked goods, home canned goods are all needed to be judged. Young and old can enter. Entries to be judged can be entered on September 30<sup>th</sup>, from 8:30 am until 4:30 pm. Some flowers entries may be entered the next morning.



Fair books are available at all branches of the county's public library or at the Onslow County Extension Office. All entries into the fair for judging have to have been completed within the last year and all participants with items to be entered have to be a resident of Onslow County. A complete listing of all the rules can be found in the fair book. There's a category for everyone from agricultural exhibits to arts and crafts, to canning and baked goods.

Please join in the fun by entering an item or items into the fair. The money awards are not large but the ribbons are special.

Tuesday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, a talent show will be held with the youth from all parts of the county. Talent goes on parade at 7:00 pm. We need everyone to get involved with the fair to show those that attend all the talent we have in our county.

The price to get in the fair this year will be \$5.00. Children under the age of three get in free as well as seniors age 65 and older get in free. Ride tickets will be sold separately in the midway. The fair opens on September 30<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 pm. Tuesday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, through Friday October 4<sup>th</sup>, at 4:00 pm and Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, at 12:00 noon. If you have any questions regarding the entries to the fair or a fair booth, please call us at 455-5873.

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