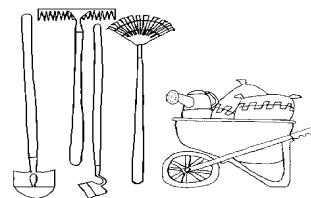


IN THE GARDEN NOW

HELPING GARDENERS PUT KNOWLEDGE TO WORK



November / December 2013

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Kudzu Bugs

Kudzu bugs have started swarming on residential structures. This movement occurs in the fall as the kudzu bugs move out of the soybeans fields and into residential areas as they search for areas to overwinter. Light-colored surfaces are particularly attractive to kudzu bugs but they will also congregate on brick or dark colored siding. People are understandably concerned that these small bugs will make their way in to homes and other structures.

Controlling kudzu bugs is not an easy task. Preventive sprays on the exterior of buildings are not recommended because they aren't long lasting enough to provide control throughout the migration season. If you must treat, it is most effective to directly spray bugs that are gathered on outdoor surfaces. Many companies make insecticides to kill insects on contact in and around the home. These products are readily available at local home and garden retailers. However, it is likely that new kudzu bugs may quickly re-infest the site.

For longer term control, focus on physically excluding the small bugs by sealing gaps and openings (like those around utility lines and making sure that weather stripping around doors and windows is secure). Avoid crushing kudzu bugs that do make it indoors because they emit an unpleasant odor.

You can learn more about kudzu bugs here:

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/Urban/kudzubug.htm>

NC State University
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**COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION**

Empowering People • Providing Solutions

Onslow County Master Gardeners' 6th Annual Camellia Show and Sale

The Onslow County Master Gardeners will host their 6th Annual Camellia Show and Sale on Saturday, November 2. This event is held in conjunction with the Farmer's Market Fall Festival so there will be activities and events on site for the entire family. The Camellia Show and Farmer's Market are located at the Onslow County Multipurpose Complex at 4024 Richlands Highway, Jacksonville NC.

The Camellia Sale will be held outside from 8:30 am until 5 pm. A selection of high quality 3-gallon camellias from Cam Too Nursery will be on sale. Proceeds benefit the Onslow County Master Gardeners.

The Camellia Seminar and Show are open to the public from noon until 5 pm inside the Multipurpose Complex. This event is sanctioned by the American Camellia Society and will feature hundreds of beautiful camellia blossoms from area residents as well as camellia growers up and down the east coast. Seminars will be held throughout the afternoon.



Discovery Gardens Update

We have been working hard to establish a 4-acre teaching garden behind the Extension office here at the Onslow County Multi-purpose complex. After years of laying the groundwork, Master Gardener volunteers are enjoying planting and maintaining the gardens.



Right now, we are focusing on planting the biocels. Part of our storm water management system, biocels function to collect and hold rainwater until it can percolate down in to the soil. These biocels are an alternative to the traditional storm water pond. At completion, these cels will be planted with a selection of plant material including many native plant options. Homeowners can manage stormwater on their own property in a similar manner by employing rain gardens. You can learn more about rain gardens here:

<https://www.bae.ncsu.edu/topic/raingarden/>

The storm water biocels are just the first step. At completion, the garden will include a lawn mall suitable for events, an ornamental pond, raised bed vegetable gardens, a childrens farm garden, a pollinator garden and much, much more. Come by the office and see our garden grow.



Persons interested in receiving an application for the 2014 course should call the North Carolina Cooperative Extension - Onslow County Center at (910) 455-5873, and request an application. Spots are limited.

Do you want to become a Master Gardener Volunteer?

The Onslow County Center of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension is offering a Master Gardener Volunteer class starting January 22. 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 2014 Master Gardener course will begin January 22 and March 31. Classes normally will be taught Monday and Wednesday mornings from 9:00 am until noon. Cost for the course is \$100, which includes a comprehensive Master Gardener Manual.

Fire Ants

Fall is a good time to treat for fire ants. Fire ants can be controlled with either 'baits' or 'contact insecticides'. The type of product used is based on two factors. First, how fast do you want control achieved and for how long? Secondly, how many mounds are there? If there are more than 4-5 mounds per quarter acre, then a broadcast treatment is recommended. Mound treatments are economical for light infestations of 3 mounds or less per quarter acre.

Broadcast baits generally give more complete control and take days to weeks to effect control but the control persists for 4-9 months depending on the product used. If applied to individual mounds, control is obtained more quickly but more material is used on a per mound basis.

In bait formulations, the ants carry the active ingredient into the mound and share it with other ants and the queen. This usually results in a more complete kill of the mound. Contact products produce control in a few days (broadcast) or hours (mound treatment) but do require rainfall or irrigation to be activated. Contact insecticides used as a drench produce immediate control in high traffic areas.

For more information about controlling fire ants in your lawn, go online to:
<http://www.extension.org/pages/11334/management-options-of-fire-ants-for-home-lawns-and-ornamental-turf>

Remember Peak Season Soil Samples Are Now Subject to Fee

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.

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/>.

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Fall Gardening Tips and Tasks

Clean up! Remove old plants, as well as any foliage that has fallen on the soil and compost them. If any plants had insect or disease problems, carefully clean up leaves and debris and remove them from the yard (don't compost insect or disease-laden plant material!). Collect leaves and debris from healthy plants and compost them.

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, black eyed 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.

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

Plant spring blooming bulbs like daffodils, Spanish bluebells, summer snowflake and blue star in November and December.

You can prune shrubs and trees to remove dead, diseases or broken limbs but save significant pruning for the dormant season (Feb/Mar) and 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 but excessive mulch can also cause problems so check the thickness of your mulch first. 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. You can spread a 2-3 inch layer of mulch over dormant perennials but don't cover the foliage of evergreen perennials like hellebores.

Mow the lawn one last time. You can mulch leaves with your lawn mower and spread a light layer over the yard to add organic matter to the soil. Warm season grasses do not grow during late fall and don't require any fertilizer before spring. Fertilizing at this time will encourage weed growth and disease problems like large patch and winterkill.

If you are planning on making new garden beds, or expanding current ones, why not do it now and save yourself some work during the hectic spring gardening season? You can make a lasagna bed or cover an area of grass with thick newspapers and mulch. In the spring you will have an area ready to amend and plant -- without having to remove sod!

Bring in any pots that can't take a freeze -- terra cotta, ceramic, and many plastic pots. Bring in house plants and tender plants before temperatures dip below 55 at night.

Prepare Houseplants for the Move Back Indoors

After a long season outdoors, its time to gradually transition houseplants for the move back indoors. Tropical plants may be injured when temperatures drop below fifty degrees.

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 some 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.

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 Haws Branch Road
Beulaville, NC 28518
Onslow County
Office Phone: (910) 324-3422

Florida Betony

Now is the time to control Florida betony. This weed is found throughout the southeast and has the paired leaves and square stem characteristic of the mint family. Florida betony is also known as wild artichoke or rattlesnake weed. Both of these names refer to the distinguishing structure of Florida betony – the swollen white tubers that are produced underground. These tubers resemble the segments of a rattlesnake's tail or a white grub. These structures are responsible for the persistent nature of Florida betony. The tubers are also edible.

Florida betony is a cool season perennial weed. It goes dormant during the heat of summer but grows enthusiastically in the cooler temperatures of spring and fall. Control of Florida betony depends on the location – treatment in lawns is easier than landscape beds.

Controlling Florida betony in lawns requires a multipronged approach. In lawns, the first step to weed control is to optimize turf growth. A dense stand of regularly mowed grass will compete better

against Florida betony and other weeds. Follow the correct cultural practices for your lawn to make it as thick and healthy as possible. This includes mowing at the correct height and frequency, as well as fertilizing at the right time and rate for your grass type. Cultural requirements vary depending on the type of grass you have in your lawn. For more information, request a lawn maintenance calendar for your turf type from your local Cooperative Extension Office.

There are selective herbicides that can be used for control in lawns but the herbicide option will depend on the type of grass you have. Herbicides that contain 2,4-D as the active ingredient work well on zoysia and bermuda lawns. Centipede and St. Augustine are sensitive to 2,4-D. For this reason, atrazine is frequently used to control Florida betony in these turfs. That said, combination products that contain 2,4-D, MCPP and dicamba (Weed-B-Gone, Spectracide 33 Plus) can be used on St. Augustine and centipede lawns as long as the lower label rates indicated for the turf type are used. When using any product, it is important that your sprayer be properly calibrated to apply herbicide at an accurate rate. As with any chemical, make sure you read and follow all label directions. Stay out of the border of shrub beds or the drip line of individual trees or shrubs in the landscape when using these products.

Regardless of the herbicide you use, you will need to make more than one application to achieve control. It often takes two years to completely control Florida betony. The best time to spray for control is in the fall as the weed is starting to grow

for the season (October-November) and again in the spring (February-March).

Controlling Florida betony in perennial beds is more of a challenge. Pulling is not very effective since it leaves tubers behind in the soil. If you are going to remove Florida betony by hand, dig carefully to remove the tubers. This technique is effective in small areas. Make sure that tuber-infested soil is disposed of carefully so the Florida betony doesn't spread to a new area. Do not compost the tubers. Applying a thick mulch, 3-4 inches deep, can help slow the spread of Florida betony but will not control it completely.

Glyphosate (RoundUp and other brands) can be used to control larger infestations in flowerbeds. Glyphosate is a non-selective herbicide so it will damage or kill any plant it comes in contact with. However, careful targeted spraying can provide control. Spray only when there is little to no wind and air temperatures are less than 85 degrees. Some spray nozzles come with a cone that be used to prevent drift. Certain product formulations marketed to homeowners now come with a "foam" setting that helps reduce drift and allow you to track application better. Glyphosate application is particularly effective when the Florida betony is in flower – typically in mid to late spring.

The key to effective Florida betony control is good management, appropriate herbicide selection, accurate timing of application and persistence.

Brand names are included as examples only and are not intended as an endorsement or as a discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned.

**North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service
North Carolina State University
Onslow County Center
4024 Richlands Highway
Jacksonville, NC 28540**

Spotlight for **November 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 3rd, 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, puzzle books, key chains, watches, blankets, deodorant, electric blankets, combs, perfume, slippers, hair brushes, night gowns, batteries, gospel cd's, 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.

4-H 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 27th.** For more information, contact Wanda Mills or Kelly Abma at 910.455.5873.

Holiday Baking Class

Did you know that pound cakes were original made using a pound each of butter, sugar, eggs, and flour? That's why they were called pound cakes. Over time creative cooks have experiments and changed the recipe by substituting ingredients, or adding various mix-ins and toppings until there are almost as many different pound cake recipes as there are bakers. The most extraordinary thing about pound cakes is how easy they actually are to prepare. Intrigued? Then join us on November 21st from 5pm until 9pm to make YOUR Perfect Pound Cake. In this hands-on class participants will create their own unique pound cake using a basic recipe and a variety of flavors, add-ins and toppings. Participants will leave with a recipes, tips and techniques and their own "personal" pound cake. The class will be held in the Cooperative Extension office's Learning Center, the cost is \$10 per participant. Pre-registration is required and the deadline to sign up is November 15th.

