NOW IS THE TIME

Lawns
✦ Start thinking about fertilizing your cool-season lawns in February (around Valentine’s Day) with 1 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 sq. feet.
✦ Avoid heavy traffic on the dormant lawn. Dry grass is easily broken and the crown of the plant may be severely damaged or killed.

Ornamentals
✦ Ran out of time to plant spring flowering bulbs? You can still plant them now; large healthy bulbs may still bloom.
✦ Prune limbs and branches injured with snow and ice. Be sure to use a sharp pair of pruners or a sharp saw to make a clean cut.
✦ Winter is a great time to clean and sharpen your garden tools.

Miscellaneous
✦ Continue to replenish bird seed through the winter months. These little creatures need extra help with food.
✦ When using salt to melt ice on walks and driveways, spread it carefully to avoid damage to nearby shrubs. Consider using sand or sawdust instead.

UPCOMING EVENTS

01/14-2/4/10  4:00-5:00pm  Concepts in Ecology Series  Bullington Ctr—698-6104**
02/8-10/11/10  3:00-4:30pm  Gardening 101 Series  Bullington Ctr—698-6104**
02/14-03/09/10  2:00-3:30pm  Landscape Design Series  Bullington Ctr—698-6104**
03/25/10  7:30pm  An Appalachian Spring  Bullington Ctr—698-6104**

** fee required

Person with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency may request accommodations to participate in activities mentioned in this newsletter, please contact Diane Turner at 828-697-4891 during business hours at least 5 days prior to the event to discuss accommodations.
Henderson County 4-H is selling plants to support their programs. They are selling strawberry, blueberry, raspberry, blackberry and asparagus crowns. All plants are bare root and will be sold with directions for care. All orders and payment must be received by March 12, 2010. Order early, supplies are limited! Contact the Extension office at 697-4891 for more information.

There are two species of Clethra native to western NC, *Clethra alnifolia* known as summersweet and *Clethra acuminata* known as cinnamon clethra. Both deciduous shrubs prefer shade and moist well drained soil. They both also display fragrant white flowers in July and their gold foliage throughout the fall is a worthy attribute. *C. alnifolia* is a smaller shrub than *C. acuminata* as is considered to be more shrub-like. 

*C. alnifolia* is considered to be easy to grow and very hardy. The flowers attracts bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds throughout the summer. Michael Dirr states that this shrub is incredibly pest free, except for a few mites in dry weather. He also boasts that it would be an excellent addition to any shrub border or heavily shaded corner of a gardeners lot. 

*C. acuminata* is known as cinnamon clethra because of the nice brown inner bark displayed as the exterior bark exfoliates. This shrub can grow to be tree-like, up to 15 or 20 feet, if pruned up to make the bark a focal point. May become rather large for most gardens and is known to sucker often.

Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: it is the time for home. ~Edith Sitwell
2010 SEEDLING SALE ORDER FORM

Henderson County Soil & Water Conservation District, 61 Triple Springs Road, Hendersonville, NC 28792 Phone: 828-697-4949, Fax: 828-693-5832

Your order must be picked up on February 6, 2010 @ the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research Station from 10 am to 3 pm. Directions: Take Exit 40 (Asheville Airport/Arden) off I-26. Go west on 280 (past the airport) 1.3 miles. Take a right on Old Fanning Bridge Road (SR1419) and go 1.2 miles to Research Drive on the right. Follow the signs.

ORDERED BY: (please print)

Order Date:
Name:
Phone Number:
Address:
City: State: Zip:
Email Address:
Special Requests/Notes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># SEEDLINGS</th>
<th>SPECIES</th>
<th>PRICE/UNIT</th>
<th>COST</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ash, White</td>
<td>75¢ each</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baldcypress</td>
<td>75¢ each</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birch, River</td>
<td>75¢ each</td>
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<td>Chestnut, Chinese</td>
<td>75¢ each</td>
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<td>Mockernut Hickory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oak, Chestnut</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oak, Cherrybark</td>
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<td>Oak, Live</td>
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<td>Oak, Red</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oak, White - Mountain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persimmon</td>
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<td>Black Cherry</td>
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<td>Crabapple</td>
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<td>Crabapple, Southern</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yellow Poplar</td>
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<tr>
<td>White Pine</td>
<td>30¢ each or $25.00/100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

GRAND TOTAL $

PLEASE SEND NO MONEY NOW - PAYMENT DUE ON DAY OF SALE
CHECK OR CASH ONLY – NO CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

😊 THANK YOU! 😊
PLANTING BARE ROOT PERENNIALS

Sometimes you may think you have received a dead plant in the mail when you receive a bare root perennial; however, they are only dormant to survive shipping better. In most cases, ordering perennials bare root is more economical, and I know that saving money is on many of our minds. Once you receive your plants this spring, follow these steps to successfully grow them into healthy plants.

1. Remove the plant from its package, and carefully remove all loose packing material (peat moss and sawdust are commonly used).
2. Soak the roots in a bucket of water for up to an hour.
3. Examine the root system, and trim away any rotted, moldy, broken or elongated roots with a sharp knife or your pruning shears.
4. Dig a hole deep and wide enough to allow the roots to fan out from the crown at about 45° angle. It sometimes helps to make a mound of soil in the bottom of the hole and spread the roots around it. Remember, the crown of most perennials should be roughly level with the surrounding ground.
5. Cover the roots with soil and press down firmly. Make sure all the roots — especially those under the crown—are in contact with soil.
6. Water the plant well and add a layer of mulch. If the weather turns unseasonably warm and sunny a few weeks after planting (as it sometimes does in western North Carolina), provide the new plant with some additional shelter from the afternoon sun with a box or laundry basket until the roots become established.

GET TO KNOW THOSE PESKY MOLES

Moles are a very shy animal. Three species are found in North Carolina: the eastern mole, the hairy-tailed mole and the star-nosed mole. All are similar in general appearance. The head has a long, tapering snout; lacks external ears; and has small, barely noticeable eyes.

Moles are harmless to people or pets. The mole’s diet is almost entirely animal, including earthworms, white grubs, ants, beetles and other subterranean insects. A mole will eat almost its own weight in food daily and in the process tunnel up to 15 feet per hour.

All moles are classified as wild, nongame animals under North Carolina laws. No hunting or trapping seasons are set up for these animals, and they are subject to all applicable state laws and regulations. This means you can not kill a mole without requesting and receiving a permit from the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. The reason is that several species of moles are becoming dangerously low in numbers, so the NCWRC moved to protect all mole species.

Moles can be difficult to eradicate. Because moles are solitary creatures, you probably have only one or two. One way to help control moles is to take the nonlethal approach. This means that their food source must be reduced and as stated earlier this includes white grubs, beetles and earthworms. The one easiest to control are grubs, this can be done applying insecticides to your lawn. For information on insecticides, contact me at diane_turner@ncsu.edu.
Thanks to those of you that have responded that you wish to continue receiving “Garden Plugs” newsletter. I hope you enjoy it in the year to come. For those of you that have not responded, this will be your last edition unless you call Ivy at 697-4891 or email her at ivy_olson@ncsu.edu.

Best wishes for a great new year from your NC Cooperative Extension—Henderson County Center Staff.

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**RHODODENDRON LEAF CURL — A NATURAL THERMOMETER**

Leaf curl and droop is normal when rhododendrons are exposed to extreme heat, extreme cold, or drought. It is a natural reaction that helps prevent dehydration under these conditions of extreme stress. The curl and droop should go away when the extreme condition is reversed.

Leaf curling in cold weather is a defense against moisture loss through the leaf surface. When the temperature drops below 35°F, rhododendron leaves begin to cup and curl at the edges. At 25°F, the leaves have curled so tight that half the leaf surface has disappeared and the leaves droop. When temperatures hit the teens, leaves shrivel even tighter...turn brownish-green and dangle like stiff string beans.

Leaf curling is a strategy to prevent moisture loss in the leaf tissue. As the temperature rises above freezing again...the leaves unfurl and look striking in the winter garden.

Not all rhododendrons exhibit this ability to curl and droop. Some like 'Unique' do not respond as dramatically as others, like 'Crest'. When it gets very cold, 'Crest' curls its leaves up so tightly that they look like thin pencils. By looking out a window on a winter day, one can determine roughly how cold it is by the degree rhododendron leaves have curled and drop. When temperatures rise, the leaves open again.

Next time you encounter a rhododendron, estimate the temperature by evaluating the curl of its leaves. You may surprise yourself with the plant's accuracy.
Garden Plugs

A newsletter for Henderson County Gardeners

Jan. / Feb. Contents:

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Upcoming Events
Small Fruit Sale

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Annual Tree Seedling Sale
Bare Root Perennials
Pesky Moles
Rhododendron Thermometer

Diane A. Turner
Extension Agent-Horticulture