Garden Plugs

A newsletter for Henderson County

Henderson County Center

March / April 2010

Lawns
✦ Lawns may be reseeded now thru late-March.
✦ Pre-emergent weed control programs will need to begin this month to prevent summer and annual weeds.
✦ Apply broadleaf herbicides as labeled to manage henbit, chickweed, wild onions, or garlic. Apply on a warm, calm day.
✦ Mow tall fescue lawns to 2 ½ to 3 inch height. Research has shown that mowing to the proper height will help control weeds.

Ornamentals
✦ If spring flowering shrubs need to be pruned, do so within one month of blooms fading.
✦ Do not remove foliage from spring blooming bulbs until the leaves have turned completely yellow and brown. Do not prune them before.

Miscellaneous
✦ Start planning your vegetable garden now on paper. Remember to rotate vegetable families at least every 3 years to prevent insect and disease problems.
✦ Add soil amendments now according to soil test results.

UPCOMING EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>03/01/2010</td>
<td>3:00-4:00pm</td>
<td>Grow a Great WNC Lawn</td>
<td>Bullington Ctr—697-4891**</td>
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<tr>
<td>03/15/2010</td>
<td>3:00-4:00pm</td>
<td>Growing Plants from Seeds</td>
<td>Bullington Ctr—697-4891**</td>
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<tr>
<td>03/29/2010</td>
<td>3:00-4:00pm</td>
<td>Invasive Plants</td>
<td>Bullington Ctr—697-4891**</td>
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<tr>
<td>04/19/2010</td>
<td>3:00-4:00pm</td>
<td>Grow Great Tomatoes</td>
<td>Bullington Ctr—697-4891**</td>
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<tr>
<td>04/20/2010</td>
<td>4:00-5:30pm</td>
<td>Best Perennials for WNC</td>
<td>Bullington Ctr—698-6104**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/26/2010</td>
<td>3:00-4:00pm</td>
<td>Herb Gardening</td>
<td>Bullington Ctr—697-4891**</td>
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<tr>
<td>04/30-05/01</td>
<td>10:00-4:00pm</td>
<td>Spring Plant Sale</td>
<td>Bullington Ctr—698-6104</td>
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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.
Do you have a declining majestic Hemlock or a stressed out disease-prone Leyland cypress in your landscape that eventually will need replacing? If so, consider the 'Green Giant' arborvitae (Thuja plicata 'Green Giant'). The pyramid-shaped conifer is tolerant of a wide variety of soils and is hardy in USDA Hardiness Zones 5 – 7. It can also tolerate garden conditions with full sun to part shade.

'Green Giant' arborvitae is virtually maintenance free, as well as pest and disease-resistant. Additionally, deer grazing does not appear to be a problem for these hardy trees, certainly a beneficial quality for landscape plants.

This tree will increase in height rapidly, growing 1 – 2 feet per growing season, sometimes more. A hedge row of 'Green Giant' was planted on the grounds of the U.S. National Arboretum in 1998. At the time of installation, the trees were 3 – 3 ½ feet tall on 6 ½ foot centers. Ten years later, the trees stand 18 – 20 feet tall and 8 feet wide. Mature specimens of ‘Green Giant’ can grow to 40 feet tall with an 8 to 15 foot spread, so be sure to give them plenty of room.

All of these qualities have made 'Green Giant' arborvitae a highly desirable tree among landscapers, nurserymen, and homeowners. 'Green Giant' is propagated easily from cuttings, and so is readily available from most wholesale and retail nurseries, as well as numerous mail order sources.

Spring makes its own statement, so loud and clear that the gardener seems to be only one of the instruments, not the composer. ~Geoffrey B. Charlesworth
Master Your Garden – A Lecture Series

Henderson County Extension Master Gardener Volunteers are offering a series of lectures for a small fee of $5.00 per participant for each program. Money raised is used to support future educational efforts by the Volunteers. All lectures will be held on at 3:00pm in the classroom at the Bullington Center.

Spring 2010 Schedule
- March 1 – Grow a Great WNC Lawn - Dave Zorich
- March 15 – Growing Plants from Seeds – Pierre Hart
- March 29 – Invasive Plants - Alan Mizeras
- April 19 – Grow Great Tomatoes – Kathy Connors
- April 26 – Herb Gardening – Betty Lockwood

To register for these or other upcoming Mastering Your Garden Lectures, call the Extension office at 697-4891. Keep checking our website http://henderson.ces.ncsu.edu/ for more information on upcoming lectures.

Name: ______________________   Phone: ____________________
Email: ________________________________________________

Check lecture/s in which you registering. Each lecture is $5.00 or $25.00 for all.

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Make checks payable to: NC Cooperative Extension
Please send checks to:
Master Your Garden Lectures
Yard waste can account for 20% of the solid waste in local landfills, and up to 50% of all yard waste is grass clippings. Grass clippings are recyclable and do not need to take up valuable landfill space. To deal with the solid waste crisis in North Carolina, all of us will have to make major changes in the way we handle yard waste.

Using grass clippings as a source of fertilizer for your lawn can save time and money and help protect the environment. Leaving grass clippings on your lawn can generate up to 25% of the lawn’s yearly fertilizer needs and reduce the amount of time and money you spend fertilizing and bagging. Lawns stay greener and healthier when clippings are left on them.

Any mower that is in good working condition and has a sharp blade can be used in the grasscycling program. Mulching mowers may be better than traditional mowers for those who cannot mow on a regular basis. These mowers tend to cut grass into finer pieces, allowing it to filter down among the standing plants. With either mower, best results can be expected if the lawn is dry. Mowing the lawn when the grass is dry will allow better distribution of the clippings and less chance of clogging the mower.

If you can, mow your lawn regularly to 2.5 - 3 inches for tall fescue or bluegrass lawns. A basic rule is not to remove more than 1/3 of the growth at one time. Occasionally, prolonged rains make it impossible to mow regularly. In these cases, raise the height of the mower for the initial cutting and gradually lower the mower to the recommended height. You can mow just once and recycle the longer clippings if: the clumps of grass are spread evenly over the lawn to allow them to disintegrate; or the clippings are allowed to dry for a day or two, then mowed again to distribute them evenly. If you have not been able to mow for awhile and the quantity is too great to leave on the lawn, clippings can be used as mulch in tree and shrub beds. Mowing frequency will vary with temperature, fertility, amount of moisture, season, and natural growth rate of the lawn.

I love spring anywhere, but if I could choose I would always greet it in a garden. ~Ruth Stout
Each year the All-America Selections committee tests many new varieties of flowers and vegetables in trial gardens all over the US and Canada. Winners are selected based on unique or improved qualities and their performance across the many locations. Here are the 2010 introductions.

- **Echinacea purpurea ‘PowWow Wild Berry’** - This purple coneflower differs from all others for flower color, branching and plant size. Gardeners will love the deep rose-purple 3 to 4 inch flowers that retain color on the plant longer.

- **Marigold F1 Hybrid African ‘Moonsong Deep Orange’** - The fade-resistant orange flowers make others look more golden than orange. The flower size from 2 ½ to 3 ½ inches and fully double blooms rank among the best of the class.

- **Zinnia ‘Double Zahara Cherry’** - Recommended for 4-inch pots or larger, the handsome symmetrical dark green plants produce fully double 2 ½ inch blooms.

- **Watermelon F1 Hybrid ‘Shiny Boy’** - A red fleshed melon with dark seeds, sweet tropical flavor and crisp texture.

### Mulching is a Must for Gardeners

Mulching is good for every type of garden. A good layer of mulch will discourage weeds from growing, conserve moisture during dry periods, improve soil structure, maintain soil temperature, and prevent soil erosion or water runoff. Another attribute of mulch on my list is the aesthetic value a fresh layer of mulch adds to a home’s curb appeal.

North Carolina gardeners use pine needles, pine bark, compost, aged hardwood, and decayed sawdust. Most of our landscape plants benefit from working this organic matter into the root zone area. This could include all the previously mentioned materials except pine needles and also manure, composted wood shavings, and lawn clippings.

Mulch can be applied just about any time of the year when trees and shrubs are being planted. The best time, however, to apply mulch in established bed areas would be in mid-spring when soil temperature has warmed up enough for sufficient root growth. If applied earlier, the mulch will keep the soil temperature lower and root growth possibly delayed.

The mulched area should include as much of the root zone as possible. For beds mulch the entire area. For individual plants, such as trees, the mulched area should extend at least 3 to 6 feet out from the base of the plant. It is advisable to pull the mulch 1 to 2 inches from the base of plants to prevent bark decay.

Organic mulches decompose with time, releasing small amounts of nutrients and organic matter to the soil. The layer of mulch should be renewed as needed to maintain a 2- to 4-inch depth. Some gardeners feel that if mulch is good the more they use the better; however, the mulch layer can become too deep. Excessive application of mulch can result in a situation in which roots are growing in the mulch and not in the soil.
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Diane Turner Mulching
Extension Agent-Horticulture

Diane A. Turner