

October 2011



Fall is Prime Time for Planting Your Landscape!

Inside this issue:

Fall Pruning Tips 2

Not All Pawpaws Are Created Equal 2

Community Gardening Tip 3

Forsyth County Fall Plant Swap 3

From the Master Gardener Hotline 4



Forsyth County Center

1450 Fairchild Road
Winston-Salem NC
27105

336-703-2850
Fax: 336-767-3557
www.forsyth.cc
forsyth.ces.ncsu.edu

R. Craig Mauney

R. Craig Mauney
Extension Agent
Horticulture

Fall is the time for landscaping! Now is the best time to plant trees, shrubs, and groundcovers. Plants installed in October will develop good root systems before the ground freezes during the winter. For successful landscapes, it is important to select the right plant for the right spot.

So, how do you know which plants to use? Prior to planting, complete a site analysis of the area you plan to landscape. When completing a site analysis, determine the exposure, check light conditions, soil conditions, slope and/or elevation of the land, and make note of walks, drives, and how people and vehicles will move across the property you will be planting.

Observe the planting area at different times of the day in order to see how much or little sunlight an area receives. What is the exposure of your landscape? Watch for how water drains across the bed area. Before planting is the time to do any grading for water redirection or bed leveling. Consider the condition of the soil. If it is compacted clay, you will want to incorporate organic soil amendments to improve drainage. Think about how people and vehicles circulate around the planting area. Are there good views that you want to feature or eyesores that you want to hide? You can select plants for their form and for their function, screening areas you want to hide with some, and highlighting the architecture of your home with others.

environmental conditions of the site, it is time to select plants. Before purchasing a plant, carefully examine the plant's information label or research the needs of the plant. Select plants with growing requirements that are compatible with your site. Pay close attention to light requirements, water and soil needs, and the growth pattern of the plant. It is also wise to consider what sort of the maintenance the plant will require. Choose plants that mature at a size that will enhance your foundation or walk. For low maintenance landscapes, space your plants for mature spread and height. This will reduce the amount of pruning you will have to do in a few years.

You can develop a landscape with year round interest by choosing plant materials which feature the design elements of color, texture, form, and line. Look for color in flowers, berries, bark, and foliage. Fall blooming shrubs like Sasanqua Camellia and Witch Hazel add an element of surprise and elegance and make great specimen plants. The groundcovers of Wintergreen and Cotoneaster can create a unified design and have showy red berries which attract birds in the fall. Peeling cinnamon bark of the 'Natchez' Crepe Myrtle makes an eye catching textural feature in the fall landscape. Even the bright hues of the fall color exhibited by the foliage of oak leaf hydrangea, burning bush, or

(Continued on page 2)

Now that you know the

(Continued from page 1)

fothergilla bring the beauty of the woods to the ground floor.

Take time before purchasing and planting landscape plants to do your homework. Then, follow those simple guidelines and you will extend the seasonal interest of your landscape while creating low maintenance plantings which can be enjoyed for years to come.

Fall Pruning Tip

As homeowners clean up their landscapes and prepare for winter, the question of pruning often arises. How late can I safely prune my shrubs and trees? Caution must be used when pruning shrubs and trees after July 4th. Why use July 4th as the 'cut off' date for pruning? This leaves ample time for the pruned plant to respond with a flush of new growth and harden off before cold weather occurs. Susceptibility to cold weather is increased after pruning. Late summer pruning will often promote new growth that may not have time to become conditioned for cold weather. Wood around winter-pruned cuts is more susceptible to desiccation.

The time of pruning should be based on when a plant flowers. Spring-flowering (before May) shrubs such as forsythia, deutzia, lilac, viburnum, mock-orange, and spirea flowers on buds formed the previous summer or fall. If these shrubs are pruned during late summer, fall, or winter, many of the flower buds will be removed. To ensure maximum flowering, these shrubs should be pruned as soon as possible after flowers fade in the spring. Little or no pruning should be done after the Fourth of July.

Summer-flowering (May or later) shrubs flower on new growth produced in the current growing season. They should be pruned before new growth begins in spring. Summer- and fall-flowering shrubs include abelia, beautyberry, butterfly bush, Rose of Sharon, crepe myrtle, and summersweet. Hydrangeas are an exception to the rule. They are summer bloomers but should be pruned immediately after flowering.

Most broadleaf evergreens, such as hollies, box woods, tea olives, and viburnums require a limited amount of pruning on a very selective basis. Generally, pruning can be done whenever it is convenient, but the best time is early spring. If you need to prune broadleaf evergreens dramatically, it is best to do this in late winter. Dramatic or severe pruning would be defined as removing more than half of the plant's top growth. The ACC basketball tournament can be used as a guide for the time to do severe pruning. If you can wait until this time in early

March, you won't have to see the ugliness which results from severe pruning for very long. Spring will dawn, and the buds will break, all be it a little later if you have removed more than half of the broadleaf evergreen. Plan your pruning chores for the proper time of the season to insure the long life and beauty of your landscapes.

Not All Pawpaws Are Created Equal



For a while now, I have been contemplating the different stages of ripeness among the different varieties and clones of pawpaw, and especially how these different stages among varieties affect eating quality.

In my experience, certain varieties such as 'Overleese' and 'Shenandoah' are good at most any stage of ripeness-but this is not the case with the variety 'Mango' and several others. Once the skin darkens on 'Mango' a couple days after harvesting, this variety takes on bitter qualities and the flesh breaks down rapidly, causing it to become mushy. Thus I have learned that, for maximum enjoyment, 'Mango' needs to be consumed within two to three days of harvesting, maybe slightly longer with refrigeration. At this early stage 'Mango' has good flavor and a soft consistency resembling pudding.

On the other hand, there are several varieties that are consistently great at different stages of ripeness. As stated before, 'Overleese' and 'Shenandoah' are two that come to mind, and these varieties can easily hold in refrigeration for two to three weeks and still maintain high quality. I bring all this up because I feel it is pertinent for growers and sellers of fresh fruit to be aware of the differences in the varieties they are growing. It is a clear fact that not all pawpaws are created equal. It makes good sense for growers to concentrate on varieties that are good at all stages of ripeness or at least to educate their consumers on the different stages of ripeness. The average consumer would be less likely to try pawpaw again if their first encounter left a strong acrid or bitter aftertaste. When I read or hear someone say they do not care for pawpaws, I am convinced that they simply have not eaten one at the perfect stage of ripeness. At least I believe this is the reason for the majority. I will be paying close attention and taking notes over the next several years as I get new varieties producing in my garden. So far it seems that 'Mango' is the most perishable variety I have. 'Greenriver Belle', 'Rebecca's Gold', and 'PA Golden #1' seem to last in good condition almost as long as 'Overleese' and 'Shenandoah'.

I would love to hear from other growers regarding your thoughts and any observations. I can be reached at: derek_morris@ncsu.edu.

Pawpaw Trifle

2 cups pawpaw pulp
 1 cup blueberries
 2 ½ cups granulated sugar
 1 bar (8 ounces) cream cheese
 ¼ cup packed brown sugar
 ½ teaspoon vanilla
 2 homemade or store bought pound cakes
 2 cups heavy cream

In medium sauce pan, combine pawpaw, 2 cups granulated sugar, and 1 cup water. Bring to a simmer over medium heat until blueberries begin to burst, about 8 to 10 minutes. Let cool completely.

Make cream filling: Using an electric mixer, beat cream cheese, brown sugar, remaining ¼ cup granulated sugar and vanilla on high until well combined. With mixer on medium, gradually add the heavy cream; continue beating until soft peaks form.

Arrange 1/3 of cake in a 3 quart serving dish or bowl. Spoon 1/3 of fruit over cake; spread to sides of dish. Dollop 1/3 of cream filling over fruit spread to sides of dish. Repeat twice, end with cream filling.

Cover; refrigerate at least 2 hours or up to 1 day.

Community Gardening Tip - *Mary Jac Brennan*

October is the time to clean up the remains of your summer garden. If your summer crops are still producing, you can continue to enjoy the last sweet fruits of summer. Once you are finished harvesting from your garden, you can now harvest for your soil. Any leftover plant materials that are disease free can be composted and ‘recycled’ into nutrients for next year’s spring garden.

Gardeners have used compost for centuries. Composting is an efficient method of breaking down organic materials into an end product that is beneficial to soil and plants. Adding yard and garden wastes directly to the soil without first composting them has some undesirable effects. For example, if large quantities of uncomposted leaves are incorporated into the soil, the microbes that work to decompose the leaves will compete with plant roots for soil nitrogen. This competition can result in nitrogen deficiency and poor plant growth. Increased populations of the microbes can also deplete most of the organic matter in the soil, leaving the soil with less structure than before. When materials such as leaves and grass clippings are composted, however, a microbial process converts them to a more usable organic material. When mixed with soil, compost increases the organic matter content, improves the physical properties of the soil, and supplies essential nutrients, enhancing the soil’s ability to support plant growth. Compost can also be applied to the soil surface to conserve moisture, control weeds, reduce erosion, improve appearance, and keep the soil from gaining or losing heat too rapidly.

As you begin to do your fall garden chores, do your soil a favor and feed the compost bin with the remains of your summer garden. Not only are you recycling the way that nature does, but you are saving landfill space for our county! Following this tip will help you to be a sustainable community gardener.

Forsyth County Fall Plant Swap

Start potting up all those extra plants in your yard and get ready for the annual Fall plant swap to be held at the Forsyth County Agriculture Building located at 1450 Fairchild Rd in Winston Salem on Saturday, October 8th. Bring your extra plants to swap and perhaps come away with something that you have always wanted, but never found for your own gardens. Craig Mauney, Forsyth County Horticulture Agent, will have a list of plants considered invasive to our area for us to refer to so that we won’t invade everyone’s neighborhood. Also, if you have a plant that you’re unsure of the name, bring it on and he or one of the Master Gardeners will try to tentatively identify it for the trade or just for your knowledge.

This swap is open to anyone that wants to trade plants, not only to Master Gardeners or residents of Forsyth County, so tell all your friends and neighbors. If you have a plant or plant related item to swap, you can attend. ie: Plant related items are containers, gardening magazines, garden statuary, etc.

All plants should be labeled with the botanical name, common name accepted if botanical name not known. You can write on a stick or even the side of the pot, as long as it’s labeled. Again, if you don’t know what it is, someone at the swap will be able to help. We’ll get there at 10:00 to set up, but the actual swapping will begin at 11:00 AM. So get there early to set up your plants and look over all the others. For more information about this event, please email Vickie Hodges at dtpforu@hotmail.com with “Plant Swap” in the subject or call Kathy Hepler at 336-703-2852. Hope to see you there!

From the Master Gardener Hotline - Leaf Mulch

Bertram Lantz, Master Gardener Volunteer

Question: A recent hotline call was from a woman who had a relatively new lawn that was covered with crabgrass. She asked “What can I do to get rid of this ugly weed”?

Answer: Crabgrass is one of the most troublesome weeds found in a lawn. It grows low to the ground and spreads out having the appearance of a crab. The most effective control is having a healthy lawn that is better able to compete with the weed. Keep your grass three inches high and try not to remove more than 1/3 of the grass at a time. If it doesn't rain, water deeply. Have a soil test done every couple of years and fertilize accordingly. Soil tests in North Carolina are free and sample boxes are available at the Cooperative Extension on Fairchild Road.



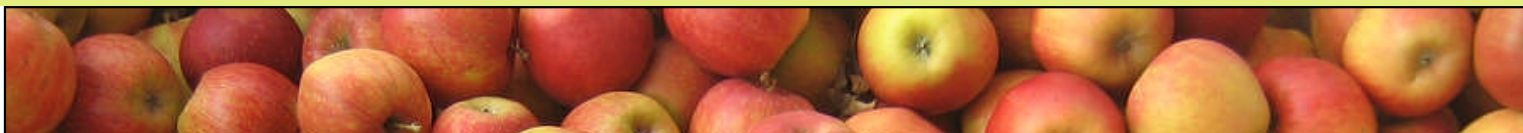
You can also apply a pre-emergent weed control which acts as a barrier and prevents germination of crabgrass seeds. Look for pre-emergent that contain pendimethalin, prodamine, bensulide or dithiopyr. This information can be found on the pre-emergent content label. Do not aerate your lawn after applying the herbicide as it will break the barrier. If you are reseeding your lawn, remember that a pre-emergent will prevent your grass seed from germinating, so do your reseeding in the fall. There are products that are available that will not damage germinating lawn grass seed, but they are more expensive.

Crabgrass is an “annual” which means that it germinates in the spring, produces more seeds during the growing season and dies off in the late fall. It has prolific seed production and one plant can produce thousands of seeds per year. Most of these seeds will germinate the following spring, but many will remain viable and able to germinate years later. Crabgrass seed germination starts when the soil temperature reaches 55 to 60 degrees (F) for 3 to 10 days, so the timing of weed control application is critical. As a general rule of thumb you should apply the pre-emergent after forsythia blooms start dropping and before the lilacs start blooming. It is probably better to be a bit early than it is to be late.

Unfortunately, you probably can't eliminate crabgrass from you yard in a single year. As mentioned earlier, some seed lies dormant and may not germinate for several years. It is also likely that the barrier from your application will not be 100% effective. Just be aware that it may take several years before you get crabgrass under control.

Since crabgrass roots are fairly shallow, you may also consider hand pulling the weed wherever possible. If the crabgrass plant is eliminated, it can't produce more seeds. Watch for the early appearance of the weed, and it will be easier to pull the plant when it is small.

There are post-emergent chemicals that can be applied after the plant has started to grow. There are mixed results for these products, and some are quite expensive. Consult your local nursery for their recommendations, and apply before the plant reaches 3 inches high.



PRESORTED
FIRST-CLASS MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Winston-Salem, NC
Permit No. 714

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Forsyth County Center
1450 Fairchild Rd
Winston-Salem, NC 27105