

SOLUTIONS

Newsletter of the Alamance County Cooperative Extension Service

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A Change of Seasons

Mark S. Danieleley, Interim Director

Fall is a time of change. The days are getting shorter and temperatures are getting cooler. The summer garden is giving way to the fall garden. Farmers are harvesting tobacco, with corn and soybeans not far behind. It seems like the older I get, the faster the changes come. Extension certainly has changed over the last one hundred years. The early county agents had a very difficult job. The first obstacle they had to overcome was just getting to the farms. When the weather was bad some roads were almost impassable. There was no such thing as a quick farm visit. Many times the county agent would be out for several days and would stay with the farmer they were visiting before moving on to the next farm. That is of course if the farmer accepted the county agent. Acceptance of the new county agent was slow in many cases. Farm practices were passed down from father to son and weren't easily changed. Sometimes the county agent would work with the boys on the farm



to try new agricultural practices. Once the farmer saw the new practices could increase yield and productivity, they started adopting those practices. The county agent soon became a good source of research information and a trusted advisor. Today is different. We have gone from a time of very limited access to information to almost unlimited access. Unfortunately it is hard for many people to determine if the information they have found is dependable. The information may have come from a company trying to sell a particular product or service. In other cases, the information may be accurate, but from a different part of the country and won't work well in our area. The good news is everything doesn't change. You don't need to search around the internet to get answers to your questions and hope you get it right. You can still depend on Alamance County Cooperative Extension to provide the research based unbiased information you need. That is something that will never change.

Mark S. Danieleley

Calendar Updates

- Tues., Oct 7: 4-H Volunteer Open House (see Page 5)
- Thurs., Oct 9: 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - Hydroponics
- Sat., Oct 18: 8:00-1:00 Household Hazardous Waste Disposal Day (see page 2)
- Thurs., Oct 23: 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - Composting
- Mon., Oct 27: DEADLINE to Order from 4-H Fall plant Sale. (see page 5)
- Thurs., Oct 30: Beef Cattle Management Series- Handling Equipment/Facility Design
- Mon., Nov 3: DEADLINE to apply for Master Gardener Class of 2015 (see page 6)
- Thurs., Nov 6: Beef Cattle Management Series- Herd Health
- Sat., Nov 8: Fall Horse Field Day

For more information and to register:
 Call 336.570.6740 or visit
[http://alamance.ces.ncsu.edu/](http://alamance.ces.ncsu.edu)



Time for a Change?

Lauren Langley, Livestock Agent

Fall brings cooler weather, leaves changing color, and family gatherings. It can also be a good time to make some changes around the farm. You may be wondering, why change? With so much activity occurring in the fall on a livestock farm, the question is why not make some changes? On beef cattle farms, it is a time of calving and breed-



ing. For goat and sheep farms, fall typically brings breeding. Small poultry flock owners are slowing down production to make it through the winter. My point being that this is typically a time of transition and maybe we should step back and evaluate our livestock operation. Here are some suggestions for making changes to your livestock farm:

Keep Good Records- That scrap piece of paper on the dash of your truck that you occasionally write something on does not qualify as keeping good records.

Really make an attempt to keep written/electronic records on all of your animals with identification, health and breeding records, offspring data, etc.

Herd/Flock Health- Work with your veterinarian or me to establish a health plan for your livestock. This is so important for the overall health of your livestock. If you are unsure of what to vaccinate for and at what time, that is why we are here.

Attend an Educational Program- Even if you think you know everything there is to know about livestock, I can assure you it is an on-going learning experience. Find something that interests you and go; you may be surprised at what you learn and take back with you. More times than not, networking with other people in your similar situation will provide new ideas you can use.

Try Something New- This is a big one. You always wanted to try that new forage variety but talked yourself out of it or ran out of time. This is the time to try something that may change your farm/livestock for the better. If you talk to any successful person, they will tell you it didn't come easy and it didn't come without risk.

Be Better Prepared, Plan Ahead- Tired of flying by the seat of your pants? Why not take a different approach? Last winter, you ran out of hay towards the end of the feeding period and had to scramble to find hay. Don't make this a habit. Be better prepared for different situations throughout the entire year, not just the winter.

These are just a few suggestions as you transition your farm into fall, think about what changes can be made to help you reach your goals? Change is never easy, but it has to start with one small step at a time.

Upcoming Livestock Events

Registration is now open for the Beef Cattle Management Series starting in late October. This is a four-week training series on Thursday evenings in the Alamance County Extension Auditorium. The topics that will be covered will include: handling equipment/facility design, herd health, and beef quality assurance (BQA) certification training. To learn more about the training series please contact Lauren Langley or visit this link:

<http://alamance.ces.ncsu.edu/2014/09/beef-cattle-management-series/>

We will also have the annual Fall Horse Field Day on Saturday November 8th at the NC Therapeutic Riding Center. Hope to see you there!

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day

The next Collection Day will be Saturday, October 18, from 8 am until 1 pm at 100 Stone Quarry Road, Haw River. The types of hazardous waste that will be accepted are as follows:

- ☺ Household cleaners, drain openers, toilet bowl cleaners, oven cleaners, disinfectants
- ☺ Solvents, thinners, shellacs, varnishes, sealers, wood preservatives
- ☺ Automotive products including brake fluid, antifreeze, used motor oil up to 5 gal, filters, gasoline
- ☺ Pesticides
- ☺ Miscellaneous materials such as acids, bases, kerosene, batteries, photographic chemicals, pool chemicals, mercury, fluorescent tubes
- ☺ Latex and oil based paint and spray paint

⊘ **The following will NOT be accepted:** Gas cylinders, radioactives/smoke detectors, medical waste, electronics/TVs/computers, explosives/ammunition



Changing Gears for Field Crops

by: Dwayne Dabbs, Field Crops Agent

As the summer starts to come to a close, you will start see changes in the field as well. Tobacco is ripening into a bright yellow, and is being harvested as fast as farmers can get it out of the field. The corn is drying down and soon farmers will start harvesting it for grain. Soybeans will soon start to dry down and start dropping their leaves, and will be harvested. The fields will be tilled to get ready for next year, so like they say, being a farmer is a never ending job.

With all the talk of harvesting crops it will soon be time to put some crops in the ground. Small grains, like wheat,



barley, rye and oats are planted in the fall, usually throughout October. The part of the county you are in will determine the reasons why the small grain crops are planted. In the northern part of the county, farmers use these small grain crops as a part of their rotation with tobacco and the other crops, but will ship the majority of the grain off to a grain elevator, as soon as it is harvested. They may save a part of the crop to

sell later in the year in hopes that the prices have gone up since harvesting. In the southern part of the county, if the farmer has a dairy or has livestock on their farm, then some of the small grain may be used as feed for the animals, while some of it may be sold to bring in some cash flow.

Do You Have Weeds In Your Pond?

by: Dwayne Dabbs, Field Crops Agent



I have received many calls this summer about weeds in ponds throughout the county, so I decided that I would talk a little bit about what you need to do if you have them in your pond. At this point in the year most weeds will start dying back since it is starting to get cooler outside and your pond should start clearing up. So treating your pond with chemicals is really not going to do much except make you spend money, because these chemicals are by no means cheap compared to some of the things we buy.

When you see a weed problem in your pond the first thing you need to do is figure out what you have, so that you can use the right chemical or biological control to control the weed. I would suggest that if there are still weeds in your pond, get a sample of the weeds and bring them here to the office. I can identify them and then we can talk about control options you can use for next year when the weather starts warming up. Make sure you get as much of the weed as possible and try to collect the sample close to when you bring it to the office, because that will make it easier to identify. It is helpful to get the entire weed or a full stem of the weed along with some of the pond water, instead of just bringing a handful of leaves. Most people who have brought samples have brought them in something as simple as a cool whip container or a mason jar, so you don't need to get anything fancy.

I have seen a few places saying that grass carp will control most of the weeds that may grow in a pond, and part of that statement is true, grass carp will take care of weeds that are submersed in the water. However if you have algae or weeds floating on top of the water, then carp will do very little to help control those weeds, and you will have to use a chemical to control them. So, the easiest way to find out what the weed may be is to get a sample and bring it in. You may have to wait until next spring to get it, but I will be able to identify the weed and help you to decide how you want to control it in the most cost effective way.

A Colorful Change

By: Mark Danieley, Horticulture Agent

One of the things I like best about fall is observing the changing leaf colors. It is nice to go to the mountains to see the fall foliage, but you can get some great views here in



Flowering Dogwood

Alamance County. There are several factors that influence leaf color including temperature, amount of rainfall, plant health and length of day. Day length however is the most important. The shorter days and longer nights initiate the biochemical processes that cause the color change.

First we need to understand something about the pigments that are involved in creating those fall colors. Chlorophyll gives leaves their green color and is required for photosynthesis. Photosynthesis allows the leaves to produce sugars that feed the tree during the growing season. These sugars are also stored in the stems and roots to feed the tree during the dormant season. Carotenoids are pigments that produce yellow, orange and brown colors. They are responsible for the color in plants like carrots, corn, daffodils and bananas. Anthocyanins are red, blue and purple pigments and give color to blueberries, cherries, strawberries and plums.

Chlorophyll and carotenoids are produced in plant leaves throughout the growing season. Anthocyanins are mostly produced in the fall in response to the excess sugars accumulated in the leaf cells during the summer. As the days get shorter chlorophyll production ceases and the colors of the carotenoids and anthocyanins start to shine through giving trees their distinctive fall colors. It is easy to identify many trees in the fall by their leaf color alone. Dogwood leaves turn red to reddish purple and tulip poplar leaves are golden yellow. Our native red maple is named for its red flowers and not its foliage. The red maple fall color can be red, orange, yellow or just light green. There are grafted red maple varieties like 'Red Sunset' and 'October Glory' that have consistent and excellent fall color.



Southern Sugar Maple

Weather can have a strong effect on the fall foliage colors. Warm, sunny days with cool nights usually bring on the best display. Sunny days increase the production of sugars which in turn increases the production of anthocyanins. Brilliant displays of red, crimson and purple are the result of the increased anthocyanins. Dry weather and warmer than normal night temperatures can reduce the fall display. The weather so far seems favorable to a good fall foliage season. Take some time to look around and enjoy the beautiful display of the changing leaf colors this fall.



Amsonia hubrichtii

Change A Life - Volunteer!

by: Erin Bain, 4-H Agent



In our last issue of Solutions, I spent some time highlighting the amazing things our current Alamance County 4-H Volunteers are doing to help youth here in the community "To Make the Best Better." Now, I want to talk to you all about how you can get involved as a 4-H Volunteer and enrich your own life in addition to making a positive impact on a young person!

When a lot of people think of volunteering, they think that volunteer is just another word for unpaid worker. Although there is no monetary reward for working with an organization as a volunteer, the benefits are excellent! Adults who volunteer have the unique opportunity to get out into their community and meet others that have a desire to give back. People who volunteer for the same types of organizations may also have other interests in common, and it is never a bad idea to meet new friends/acquaintances. Volunteering is also a great way to help your own children or grandchildren meet new people. If you volunteer for a youth organization such as 4-H, you're not only meeting other like-minded adults, but also helping the children in your family socialize with other youth outside of school time in a productive way.

The personal emotional/intrinsic value of volunteering is different for every person, but volunteering and seeing that you have been able to make a difference in your community or in the life of another gives almost everyone that warm

fuzzy feeling. Those who volunteer outside of the home may also see physical benefits to their participation. While most people may not want to volunteer for projects that are all manual labor there is often a physical aspect to special projects, even if it is just moving boxes of t-shirts or helping to set up tables for an event. Plus, my grandmother always used to say that happy people are healthy people, and volunteering has a tendency to induce happiness!

4-H programs all over the world rely heavily on volunteers in order to operate successfully. Studies as well as personal experience have shown me that youth who participate in 4-H learn important life skills that have lasting impacts on their lives in the future. Having adults interested in helping improve their lives and making connections with them is a big part of why 4-H members are positively affected by their participation in the program.

If you can remember an adult who made a positive impact on your life, whether it be a teacher, a pastor, a 4-H leader, or any other caring figure, it's worth considering becoming a 4-H Volunteer. 4-H Volunteers are often afforded opportunities for training/professional development, travel, and the knowledge that you are having a positive impact on the lives of our youth through 4-H is priceless. Alamance County 4-H will hold an Open House on Tuesday, October 7th and potential Volunteers and their families are welcome to come to learn more about the programs we have to offer and how to get involved! Please contact Erin Bain, 4-H Extension Agent at 570-6740 or erin_bain@ncsu.edu to RSVP for additional information.



Fall Plant Sale!

Alamance County 4-H would like to ask for your support as we raise funds for our scholarship fund and programming efforts. To help us raise these funds, we are having a Fall Plant Sale. Not only will you be supporting a great organization, but you'll be growing your own food!

The deadline to order is **October 27** and the pickup dates are **November 6-7** at the Extension Office (8:30 am-4:00 pm).

The plants we are offering this year include: Apple Trees (\$18), Blackberry Plants (\$8), Fig Trees (\$8), Muscadine Vines (\$8), Peach Trees (\$18), Pear Trees (\$18).

You can pick up a brochure and an order form at the Extension Office, or you can find it online at <http://go.ncsu.edu/4-h.fall.plant.sale>. Be sure to spread the word!



Are You Ready for a Change and a Challenge?



- Do you want to learn more about the culture and care of many types of plants?
- Are you eager to participate in an intense, practical training program?
- Do you look forward to sharing your knowledge with people in your community?
- Do you have enough time to attend training and to complete the volunteer service?

If you answered "yes" to these questions, then you are just the type of person we are looking for to join the Extension Master Gardener Volunteers in Alamance County. The Master Gardener Program is a public service that provides university training to participants to enable them to serve their communities as volunteer educators.

If you're ready to get down and (just a little bit) dirty, meet some great new people, and have a whole lot of fun while helping the community to grow, join the Alamance Emgees, Class of 2015! Deadline to apply is November 3rd.

New interns are required to complete:

- **50 hours of education**, including the Master Gardener Course (42 hours)
- **50 hours of volunteer service** in Alamance County

EMGV REQUIREMENTS

Recertifying EMGVs are required to complete:

- **10 hours continuing education**
- **40 hours of volunteer service** in Alamance County,

15-week course begins January 14, 2015

Classes are scheduled for Wednesday mornings from 9 until 12 at the Agricultural Building auditorium, 209-C North Graham Hopedale Road, Burlington.

Instructors include Extension Horticulture Agents, Certified Arborists, Master Gardeners, and Extension Specialists.

Topics covered in the 2015 program:

Soils and Fertilizers, Plant ID and Botany, Landscape Design, Lawns, Pruning/Woody Plants, Small Fruit, Tree Fruit, Vegetables, Insects, Annual and Perennial flowers, Plant Diseases, Houseplants, Pesticides and IPM

Program Director: Mark Danieley, Horticulture Agent

Link to the Application:

<http://alamance.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Application-2015.pdf>

Deadline for application: November 3, 2014.

2015 fee for book and materials: \$100, payable upon acceptance into the program

For further information, contact:

Alamance County Cooperative Extension
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Or e-mail: Chris Stecker, EMGV Program Coordinator: christine.stecker@alamance-nc.com