



## Coming Events

Thurs., Sept. 11th, 10:00a  
*Shade Gardening*

Wed, Sept 17, 10a-7p  
**MASTER GARDENER PLANT SALE**

Thurs., Sept. 25th, 10:00a  
*Planting Trees and Shrubs*

Thurs., Oct. 9th, 10:00a  
*Hydroponics*

Thurs., Oct. 23rd, 10:00a  
*\*Composting—NEW!*

Mon., November 3  
**DEADLINE** to apply for the  
Master Gardener Class of 2015 (*See p.5*)



Contact us :

Alamance County Cooperative  
Extension Service

209-C N. Graham Hopedale Rd.  
Burlington, NC 27217

Phone: 336-570-6740

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[Mark\\_danieley@ncsu.edu](mailto:Mark_danieley@ncsu.edu)

Chris Stecker  
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Follow us on  
Facebook!

Just click here:



*\*Replaces Plants with Fall/Winter Interest*

## Master Gardener Plant Sale

### 4th Annual Master Gardener Fall Plant Sale



For information:  
Phone 336.570.6740  
E-mail: [christine.stecker@alamance-nc.com](mailto:christine.stecker@alamance-nc.com)

### ONE DAY ONLY!

**Wednesday, September 17, 10:00 AM - 7:00 PM**

Agricultural Building  
209 N Graham-Hopedale Rd.  
Burlington

- Flowering perennials and ferns grown by Master Gardeners, all priced at \$5 or less!
- One-day-only specials on Atlas gardening gloves and The Garden Plate cookbook.
- Enter to win a 2-hour private landscape consultation with Rett Davis.

All proceeds go toward the care and improvement of Arbor Gate Teaching Garden, a public demonstration garden maintained exclusively by Alamance County Master Gardener Volunteers.



## In Search Of: The Green, Green Grass of Home...



September is here and it is time once again to work on our fescue lawns. Many lawns have suffered from drought, brown patch disease or just plain neglect and are looking pretty bad. My lawn is completely (well mostly) dead, but that is the result of several herbicide applications. While I have had a bermudagrass lawn for several years, I am transitioning back to fescue this fall. I have missed having green grass in the winter and though fescue can be challenging to grow it is attractive most of the year.

Fall lawn care is one of the most confusing landscape practices for the average homeowner because of the overwhelming numbers of products available. Most folks buy fertilizers and grass seed without really knowing what they need. Dozens of different brands of herbicides, fertilizers and grass seeds are advertised as the answer to your lawn woes. Millions of dollars are spent on advertising to persuade you that a certain brand of fertilizer or grass seed is better than some other. Unfortunately the claims of most of these products are misleading or just plain false. In this article I'll try to cut through the hype and get to the facts about lawn care.

## The Green Starts Here

The first recommendation I have is to take some soil samples. I know it requires some time and effort, but it is the only way to make sure your lawn is getting what it needs. I'll give you a brief overview of soil testing and recommend you read the information found at the following link. Our primary concerns are with the soil pH and nutrient levels. Our soil is naturally acidic and that acidity needs to be neutralized with lime in order for the fertilizer we apply to be effective. Without going into a long discussion of soil chemistry, I can tell you that if the soil pH is too low, the fertilizer nutrients can be tied up on the soil particles and are mostly unavailable to plants. It doesn't matter what kind of fertilizer you use or how much you apply-it just won't work.

### A Gardener's Guide to Soil Testing:

<http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/agcomm/publications/Ag-614.pdf>

## The Fertilizer Conundrum



The next problem we have is what fertilizer to use. I'm sure you have seen and been confused by all the choices. The good news is that fertilizing your lawn can be quite simple. The soil test will give you a recommendation for a fertilizer that will supply the nutrients your lawn needs. It doesn't matter to the lawn if it is a fancy brand name turf fertilizer or plain old 10-10-10. The only thing that matters is the percent of nutrients in the bag. The even better news is that if you have used a complete fertilizer like 10-10-10 for several years, you may only need to add nitrogen. The phosphorus and potassium levels in the soil may be adequate



for good plant growth. Using a straight nitrogen fertilizer avoids adding excess nutrients to the environment and can save you a considerable amount of money. In many cases, fertilizing your lawn using a straight nitrogen fertilizer will cost 1/3 of what it will cost to use a complete fertilizer.

The final topic for this article is grass seed. We are in a transition zone where it is too cold to grow warm season grasses well and too hot to grow cool season grasses well. I think our best compromise is a cool season grass like tall fescue. Just like fertilizers, don't pay too much attention to the names of grass seeds. The important information can be found on the seed label. The first thing to look for is the varieties of seeds in the bag. A blend will be 2-3 varieties of fescues where a mixture will be fescue, Kentucky bluegrass, and perhaps some fine fescue. The advantage of the mixture is that it will do better in shady areas of your lawn. Tested and recommended varieties of grass seeds can be found in the Carolina Lawns publication.

### Carolina Lawns:

[http://www.turfinfo.ncsu.edu/PDFFiles/004175/Carolina\\_Lawns.pdf](http://www.turfinfo.ncsu.edu/PDFFiles/004175/Carolina_Lawns.pdf)

If you have any questions about lawn care or any other gardening topic, please give me or Chris a call.





## September Garden Tips



**R**oot geranium cuttings for color next summer. Take 4-inch cuttings of terminal growth, making an angled cut just below a node. Dip the cut end into rooting hormone. Use a pencil to poke a hole in moistened potting medium then insert the cutting. Water well and place the pot in a plastic bag and close the top with a twist tie. Keep out of direct sunlight until rooting occurs (in 2 to 3 weeks), then remove the pot from the bag and place it in a sunny window in a cool room (55 – 65 degrees). Pinch the young plants back at least once for bushier growth.



**C**onsider planting a cover crop or 'green manure' this fall in unused garden space. It's a great way to improve soil fertility and structure. Crimson clover is a good choice for our area. Plant at least a month before the first killing frost. In the spring, turn under your cover crop three weeks before planting your garden.



**S**ow seeds of hardy annual flowers now, including poppies, calendula, sweet alyssum and larkspur. Plant now so the seedlings will have time to develop good root systems before the coldest part of winter.



**N**ow is the best time to reseed, over seed and start new fescue lawns. Over seed at the rate of 3 to 4 pounds per 1,000 square feet. Sow new cool-season lawns in prepared ground at the rate of 7 pounds per 1,000 square feet.

**N**ow is the time to take action against the winter annual weeds that would spoil your spring landscape. Chickweed, henbit, deadnettle, and annual bluegrass can all be controlled in shrub and perennial borders by the timely application of a pre-emergence herbicide. Keep in mind, however, that pre-emergence herbicides will kill flower seedlings just as well as weeds.

**F**or extended green, over seed warm-season (Bermudagrass or Zoysiagrass) lawns with annual ryegrass now. Make sure you buy *annual* ryegrass seed and sow at the rate of 7 to 10 pounds per 1,000 square feet.

**H**arvest sweet potatoes in late September or early October (before first frost). Plant mustard, onion sets and radishes until the middle of the month. Sow onion seeds all month.

**O**der spring-flowering bulbs now for planting in late fall. Worried about voles chowing down on your bulbs? Instead of tulips, do your tiptoeing through any and all members of the genus *Narcissus*, which includes daffodils and jonquils. There are hundreds of cultivars from which to choose.

**E**stablish new perennial flower beds. Dig, divide and replant overcrowded beds. Spread a 2 to 3-inch layer of organic matter over the area, add lime and fertilizer according to the soil test, and till in to a depth of 6 to 8 inches. Space divisions at least 1 foot apart in all directions to postpone future root competition.

**Get NEW perennials at the Master Gardener Plant Sale, Wednesday September 17, 10AM—7PM at the Agricultural Building, 209 North Graham Hopedale Road, Burlington.**

**Master Gardener nurtured ferns and flowering perennials, deals on gloves and cookbooks—ONE DAY ONLY!**



## Arbor Gate Plant of the Month

*Tricyrtis formosana*



## Toad Lily

*Tricyrtis spp.*

This shady character has become a favorite in the Arbor Gate Teaching Garden. Although it might prefer a deep, moist, humus-rich soil, our *Tricyrtis formosana* is doing quite nicely well-mulched in the shade of a big, rooty Silver Maple. Once established, Toad Lily is quite drought tolerant. Extended drought may brown the leaf edges a bit, but Toad Lily will bloom anyway, providing weeks of unusual purple-spotted blooms atop various types of clumping foliage, depending on species. Use the arching stems of *Tricyrtis hirta* to spill over a wall or fallen log. The 30-inch upright stems of *Tricyrtis formosana* are topped in late summer and early fall with spikes of fuzzy buds and strangely beautiful flowers. Be sure it's planted where the flowers can be appreciated by passers by. Bonus! Toad Lily is not a favorite of deer, so plant it among your ferns and hellebores - the deer should munch elsewhere.

Toad Lily is just one of the many great plants that will be available for sale at the Master Gardener Plant Sale September 17th.







*Release Your Inner Gardener!*



**MISSION:**

*Under the auspices of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, the mission of the Extension Master Gardener Volunteers is to learn about issues related to urban horticulture that are research based, practical and environmentally sound and to educate the community on these issues.*

**EMGV  
REQUIREMENTS**

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

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 fFlowers, Plant Diseases, Houseplants, Pesticides and IPM

**Program Director: Mark Danieleley, Horticulture Agent**

**Link to the Application:**

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Application.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  
209-C North Graham Hopedale Road  
Burlington, NC 27217  
336.570.6740



Or e-mail: Chris Stecker, EMGV Program Coordinator: [christine.stecker@alamance-nc.com](mailto:christine.stecker@alamance-nc.com)

