



Coming Events

Workshops and Demonstrations

Thurs., Apr. 14, 10:00a

Herb Gardening

Sat., Apr. 16, 8:00am-1:00pm

Household Hazardous Waste Disposal Day

100 Stone Quarry Road, Haw River

Thurs., Apr. 28, 10:00a

Home Vegetable Gardening

Thurs., May 12, 10:00a

Gardening for the Wild Life

Thurs., May 26, 10:00a

Butterfly Gardening

Thurs., Jun. 9, 10:00a

**Make Your Own Rain Barrel* FEE*

All classes will begin in the auditorium at the Agricultural Building and are free unless otherwise indicated.

Registration is required. Call 336-570-6740, or register online here: <http://alamance.ces.ncsu.edu/>

Contact us :

Alamance County Cooperative
Extension Service
209-C N. Graham Hopedale Rd.
Burlington, NC 27217
Phone: 336-570-6740

E-mail:

Mark Danieleley

Mark_danieley@ncsu.edu

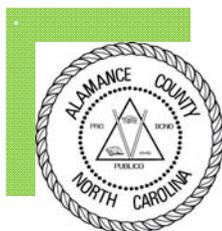
Chris Stecker

Christine.stecker@alamance-nc.com

Visit our website:

<http://alamance.ces.ncsu.edu/>

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Remember The Bulbs of Summer

Summer and fall flowering bulbs can be an interesting addition to our landscapes. Not all of them are hardy in Alamance County, but most require little special care and provide a lot of color and interest to the garden.



We'll start with caladiums. There are hundreds of varieties of caladiums with leaf colors of red, pink, white and green. Many have variegated leaves with a combination of different colors. Caladiums grow best in a rich well-drained soil and they prefer a part shade location. In deep shade the colors won't be as vibrant and a full sun location may burn the leaves. It is best to remove any flowers that try to grow to encourage better foliage and increase the tuber size.

Summer Lights, Summer Brights



In an effort to help stimulate the local economy, you can treat your caladiums like annuals and leave them in the garden until they are killed by cold weather in the fall. For the more frugal gardeners, the caladiums can be dug up when the nights turn cool and the leaves begin to droop. Let the plants dry out for a week before removing the foliage and then pack the tubers in dry peat moss. Store the tubers in a place where the temperature won't fall below 60 degrees and you have nice caladiums for the garden again next year.

Canna lilies can have interesting foliage like caladiums with the added benefit of showy flowers. These plants can add a dramatic and tropical look to your landscape. The leaves can be green,



red, or burgundy with many variegated forms. The flower colors include red, orange, pink and yellow. Some cannas can get to be six feet tall and make quite a display in the garden. Cannas prefer a rich well-drained soil with at least six hours of full sun a day.



Besides having attractive foliage and flowers most cannas are hardy in our area. Let the foliage die down naturally in the fall and then mulch the bulbs with tree leaves you have raked up in your yard. The cannas will return next year bigger and better.

Another perennial flower bulb to consider is the lily. There are many species of *Lilium* and hundreds of varieties available. The flower colors include white, yellow, red, pink, orange, maroon and some bicolors. Plant height can be from two feet to over six feet. The lilies prefer a full sun location in a well-drained soil. The taller varieties may need to be staked to prevent wind damage.

Dahlias are available in many different heights, flower shapes, flower sizes and colors. Colors include orange, pink, purple, red, scarlet, yellow, and white. They prefer a full sun spot in the garden, but will tolerate light shade. Be sure to water the dahlias during hot and dry periods to keep them growing and blooming. Dahlias can be excellent cut flowers. They do have some pest problems so examine the plants closely on a weekly basis to make sure a little insect or disease issue doesn't become a big problem. The dahlias in our garden have overwintered well for the past two years. If you have a plant your mother gave you or an expensive hybrid I would consider digging the clump after the first frost. Let the clump dry for a few days and then pack it in slightly damp perlite or peat moss and store at 35-45 degrees.



Last but not least are the calla lilies. Calla lilies have large tropical-looking leaves and unique upright flowers. Flower colors include red, white, pink, purple and yellow. They prefer a full sun location, but will tolerate a little shade. The blooms can be useful in cut flower arrangements. While most varieties are about two feet tall there are some selections of giant calla lily that are over four feet tall. They have overwintered well in our garden without any extra mulching.

If you have any questions about summer flowering bulbs or any other gardening topic, please give me or Chris a call.



April Garden Tips

Check leaves of azaleas, rhododendrons and camellias for signs of leaf gall disease. Affected leaves will be unusually thick and waxy. Pinch off these unsightly growths and discard in the trash.

April is a good month to start scouting for insect pests, too. Aphids, azaleas lace bugs and Boxwood leaf miners will be active this month. Look closely at your plants to see what kind of insects might be present. Proper identification is necessary before any control methods are used. Less than three percent of the insects you will see are actually potential plant pests. Most insects are beneficial and will help control the bugs that cause problems. If you have an insect on your shrubs or trees that needs to be identified, you can bring it to the Cooperative Extension Office.

Begin spraying fruit trees with a home orchard spray as soon as the flower petals fade. Save the bees! Make sure the flowers are done blooming and all of the petals are on the ground before you spray anything that contains an insecticide.

Now is the time to begin to fertilize your warm season lawn (Bermudagrass or Zoysia). Apply ½ pound of nitrogen per 1000 square feet. Repeat the application in June and August.

As of April 1st, NCDCA soil testing is free again! North Carolina is the last state to offer this wonderful service free of charge from April 1st until the end of November. To find out how to collect a sample, contact us at 336-570-6740.

If yours is a cool-season lawn, mowing season is here! Set your mower blade high; at least 3 inches, preferably 3-1/2. Try not to take more than one-third of the blade off when you mow. This may mean mowing more than once a week this time of year.

Leave grass clippings on the lawn! Grasscycling, rather than bagging and removing grass clippings, is an excellent way to reduce waste and improve the health of your turf. Grass clippings contain nitrogen and water pulled from the soil. When you grasscycle, you return that nitrogen and moisture to your lawn. Clippings left on the lawn do not create thatch and

improve the physical structure of soil. You can reduce the amount of nitrogen you add to your lawn by as much as one-third if you grasscycle!

After danger of frost is past – around April 15th – plant seeds of sweet corn, pole beans, lima and snap beans, cantaloupe, cucumbers, summer squash, pumpkins and watermelons.

Wait until the end of the month to plant tomatoes, peppers and eggplant. These do best when night temperatures are a little warmer; closer to 50 degrees.

Divide, repot and fertilize houseplants before moving them outdoors for their summer vacation at the end of the month. Line the pots with a piece of fine-mesh screening to prevent ants and other critters from moving in.

When selecting summer annuals, look for short, bushy plants with green leaves, well-developed root systems and more buds than flowers. Don't be afraid to gently tip the plant out of its pot to check for healthy, white roots.



Free again!



Arbor Gate Plant of the Month



Japanese Kerria

Kerria japonica

Japanese Kerria (also known as Japanese rose) is a tough-but-graceful, spring-flowering, deciduous shrub that is native to certain mountainous areas of China and Japan. It typically grows to 3-6' tall and to 6-8' wide on slender, arching, yellowish-green stems that remain an attractive green in winter. Single, five-petaled, rose-like, yellow flowers (to 1 1/2" diameter) bloom somewhat profusely in spring. Double-toothed, narrow, ovate-lanceolate, bright green leaves (to 4" long) turn yellow in fall. 'Pleniflora' is a very popular double-flowered cultivar that features rounded, pom-pom-like, yellow flowers (to 2" diameter). The genus name honors William Kerr who collected this plant for the Royal Botanic Garden at Kew in the late 1700s to early 1800s.

An attractive flowering shrub for shady areas of woodland gardens or shrub borders. Specimen, group or mass. Informal hedge or screen. Incorporate into foundation planting, wild garden or naturalized areas where plants may be allowed to sucker.

Grow in average, well-drained soils in part shade. Tolerates full shade. Flowers pale in too much sun. Blooms on previous year's wood, so prune in spring after flowering. Suckering habit can be a problem, and unwanted suckers should be promptly removed. If necessary, plants may be renovated by cutting stems to the ground.

Learn more here: <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/all/kerria-japonica/>

