



# Alamance Gardener

Alamance County Cooperative Extension Horticulture Department

## Coming Events

### Workshops and Demonstrations

Thurs., Mar. 16, 10:00a

*Fruit Tree Pruning*

Fri., Mar 31st

*Deadline to order from 4-H Plant Sale  
(See Pages 5-7)*

Thurs., Apr. 6, 10:00a

*Perennial Math—Multiplying By Dividing*

Thurs., Apr. 20, 10:00a

*Home Vegetable Gardening*

Thurs., May 4, 10:00a

*The Bulbs of Summer*

Thurs., May 18, 10:00a

*Gardening With Natives*

All classes will begin in the auditorium at the Agriculture 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 Danielely

[mark.danieley@ncsu.edu](mailto:mark.danieley@ncsu.edu)

Chris Stecker

[christine.stecker@alamance-nc.com](mailto:christine.stecker@alamance-nc.com)

Visit our website:

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

Like us on Face-  
book; click the  
link below:



## Thinking Inside The Box



Here at Arbor Gate, the Victory Garden was losing its shape. The edges had become blurred over time under the care of multiple Master Gardener Volunteers. The mature *Acer saccharinum* (Silver Maple) was sending its feeder roots farther and farther into the garden, lapping up water and nutrients meant for the vegetables and making for lopsided growth. Our resident rabbits were having their way with the tender greens and the decorative Knockout roses had succumbed to Rose Rosette a couple of years before.

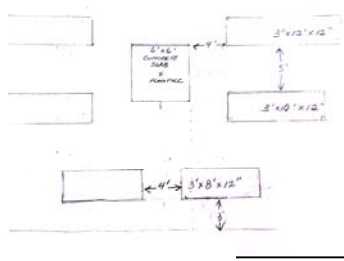
It was time to grow up and think inside the box!



# How To Make A Box

## 1. Make a plan.

This garden is at the front of the building and will be used by Master Gardeners and Junior Master Gardeners.



## 2. Gather Supplies:

For 6 boxes (2 @ 3' x 12', 2 @ 3' x 10', and 2 @ 3' x 8'), we used fifteen 2"x12"x12", nine 4"x4"x12' and 10# 3.5" heavy duty flat head screws. (Fancy steel corner braces optional)



## 4. Cut and assemble

\*Cut legs to 30"



## 3. Measure and mark



## 5. Dig the post holes 20" deep, 6 holes per box



## 8. Mix in lime and fertilizer\*

\*If you haven't had a soil test, mix in the equivalent of 40# lime and 10# 10-10-10 fertilizer per 1,000 square feet.

Our garden's total square footage is 180 square feet, so we tilled in about 7.2# lime and 1.8# 10-10-10 fertilizer.



## 6. Place box and level

## 7. Fill and firm\*

\*We used a mix of half topsoil and half finely ground pine bark. Firm and fill to top—the soil mix will settle.



## 9. Plant & Water\*

\*There was no time to waste! We had to plant the potatoes, so that the Junior Master Gardeners could harvest them around the first of July.

The new 4-H Club Junior Master Gardeners will take over planting some of the other new beds, too!



## March Garden Tips

Now is the time for renovation pruning of boxwoods, hollies and other broad-leaf evergreens. You will be cutting down to bare branches, but don't worry, hollies will rebound quickly from this treatment. Boxwoods will respond more slowly, taking a couple of years to look their best again. Do NOT do renovation pruning on needled evergreens, such as junipers or arborvitae—these do not have the adventitious buds necessary to regrow from bare branches. If your junipers become unmanageable, replace them with a right-size variety.

Prune butterfly bushes to within 1 or 2 feet of the ground. It's safe now, too, to cut back hardy lantana, salvias and other hollow-stemmed perennials.

Preventing crabgrass in fescue lawns is easy if the turf is dense and mowed no shorter than 3-1/2 inches. Crabgrass seeds require light to germinate, so a thick turf will prevent crabgrass seed from germinating. Apply pre-emergence crabgrass control to exposed areas, such as next to driveways and sidewalks before the

middle of the month. Reapply around the first of May.

Fertilize pecan trees at the rate of 4 pounds of 10-10-10 per inch of trunk diameter. Spread the fertilizer under the limbs of the tree to the full extent of the drip line. The "drip line" is an imaginary circle that surrounds the tree with a radius that extends from the trunk to the tips of the branches.

For unblemished fruit, you'll need to implement a spray program for your peach and apple trees. There are combination orchard sprays that will do a pretty good job, as long as you strictly follow the label instructions. Keep in mind that these combination sprays contain insecticides. Never spray insecticides when trees are in flower! You will need those bees for proper pollination and perfect fruit. Contact us for more information.

Sow seeds of beets, leaf lettuce, English peas and turnips. Plant cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, head lettuce plants and onion sets or plants.

Remove spent flowers from spring-flowering bulbs, but leave the foliage to replenish the bulb for next spring. Don't braid, tie or otherwise damage the leaves but allow them to die down naturally. Planting other annuals and perennials among the bulbs will help disguise unsightly foliage.

As new leaves of roses and other plants emerge, expect to see hordes of tiny insects known as "plant lice." Aphids have sucking mouth parts that pierce the leaf tissue and may cause unsightly, though not usually life-threatening, damage. Remove aphids from plants by spraying with a sharp stream of water. Insecticidal soap will kill them on contact. Always read and follow the label instructions.

Trim back ornamental grasses before new growth begins. Miscanthus, Muhly and other grasses will have a fresher look if old foliage is cut to the ground now. The longer you wait to cut these back, the more likely you will be to cut into the emerging foliage. Check your plants for new growth at the base and cut back only to this level.





## Eastern Redbud

## *Cercis canadensis*

How about a small (15-25 feet) tree to kick off the first of spring? In late winter you'll begin to see this native thrusting its colorful branches at roadside, peeking from beneath the larger hardwoods. Eastern Redbud is an "understory" tree that tends to live in the shadows of oaks and maples, rarely flowering unless exposed to a bit of sunlight, such as at the side of the interstate.

*Cercis canadensis*, even more than its fellow understory tree, *Cornus florida*, appreciates a sunny spot and will generally do well even with full sun exposure, once established. All varieties have an abundance of pea-like flowers, usually in shades of rosy lavender, although white-flowered varieties are out there. The flower show is followed by an abundance of pea-like seed pods. Heart-shaped leaves emerge just as the flowers fade. Now this is where things get interesting. Many new varieties are available, such as "Forest Pansy", featuring purple foliage and "Rising Sun" with leaves that emerge a deep apricot and mature through shades of gold and yellow with all colors present at once and eventually fading to lime green. The variety here at Arbor Gate is "Oklahoma", distinguished by the deep-green, glossy foliage that follows the weeks-long burst of bloom. The waxy cuticle on the leaves of "Oklahoma" seems to make it better able to thrive in hot, dry weather.

Prone to interesting habits of growth-there's even a weeping variety! - *Cercis canadensis* deserves a spot in your first-of-spring lineup.

Read more here:

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/all/cercis-canadensis/>

A 50-year-old species Eastern Redbud

