

November 2017
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Coming Events

Thurs, Nov. 16th

Deadline to order Holiday wreaths from Alamance County 4-H (see page 5)

We're working on our slate of classes for Think Green Thursdays in 2018. Classes will begin in February.

Let us know if there's a topic you would like to see covered. We'll work on it!



Meanwhile, for all your garden questions

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Right Plant, Right Place, Right Now!



Fall is a great time to plant new shrubs and trees. While the tops of the plants are dormant, moderate soil temperatures during the winter encourage root growth. This root growth helps the plants become established and be better prepared for possible hot and dry conditions the next summer. A good root system greatly increases the chances of a newly planted shrub surviving the summer. That does not mean you cannot plant in the spring, but you will need to water a spring-planted shrub more often during the summer than a fall-planted shrub.

Choose Wisely...

The first thing to consider before buying any plant is the mature size. Often plants are purchased solely on appearance without any thought given to how big they will get. Even if you are trying to consider size, you can make a mistake a couple of different ways, and one way is to rely too much on the plant name.

Take for instance dwarf burford holly. You would think that a 'dwarf' shrub would be fine to plant under a window in front of your home. The problem is that dwarf burford holly can grow to be 8-10 feet tall and usually blocks the window unless it is pruned. The term 'dwarf' does not necessarily mean that the plant will not get big. It just refers to the size of the parent plant, which in this case can be 15-20 feet tall.

The other mistake that is frequently made is what I call 'getting more bang for your buck'. As you look at all the 3-gallon plants at the nursery, there are some varieties of plants that are obviously much bigger than others. A typical 3-gallon compacta Japanese holly may be 24 inches tall where a Helleri Japanese holly may be only 12 inches tall and a Chinese privet may be 36 inches tall. Since all the plants are the same price, the tendency is to buy the bigger plant instead of the smaller plant. The bigger plant may look better initially, but it may soon grow too large for the space and need to be pruned heavily or removed. The ideal situation would be to match the plant with the space so pruning would not be a regular chore.



...Or Choose Your Weapon



Try You Must, But, If At First...

Successful landscape planting is a combination of picking the right plant for the right place and proper planting technique. Choosing the right plant is all about the growing environment. The amount of light the plant will receive, the space it has to grow, and the soil conditions are all factors that determine how well a shrub will do in a certain area. The wrong plant may not die; it may do very well and outgrow its space. Then you will need to prune it constantly or remove and replace the shrub. On the other hand, it could be unhappy in a poorly-drained site and fail to thrive. Either way, you are not getting what you want.

Chris will cover proper planting in her garden tips, but improper planting is the number one cause of landscape plant failure followed closely by improper watering. Planting a shrub or tree too deep and covering the root ball with clay soil will almost certainly lead to plant death. Plant roots need to be able to 'breathe' and covering the roots with soil prevents air from getting to the roots. Most of the time poor planting will kill a plant in the first growing season, but I have seen cases where the plants struggled along for several years before dying. If you have a plant that was improperly planted and is performing poorly, now is a good time to remove it and try again.

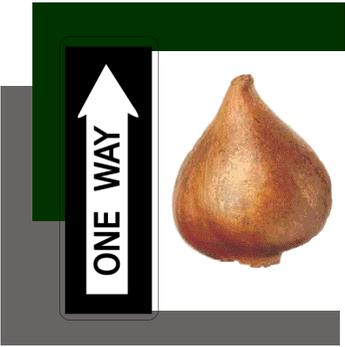


If you have any questions about planting or any other gardening topic, please give me or Chris a call.

NC STATE

Extension
Master Gardener

November Garden Tips



Continue planting spring-flowering bulbs this month. Plant tulips, hyacinths, and jonquils 6 inches apart and 8 inches deep (to the bottom of the bulb). Crocus, anemones, and grape hyacinths should be planted 2 inches apart and 4-5 inches deep. Remember to plant bulbs with the pointy side up! If deer are a problem, stick to members of the narcissus family—jonquils and daffodils.

layer of mulch. This will help reduce next year's disease and insect problems.

Treat perennial weeds such as mock strawberry and wild garlic this month. Apply a broadleaf herbicide when temperatures are above 50 degrees. Add a spreader-sticker to the mix to help the herbicide stick to skinny leaves.

Bring in your rain gauge to avoid freeze damage. Drain and store water hoses to extend their lives. Clean and service garden tools for winter storage. Oil blades of shovels and other tools to keep them from rusting. Drain gas tanks of garden equipment to prevent water buildup.



Set out forget-me-nots, pansies, snapdragons, violas, sweet William, pinks and other hardy plants for flowering in winter and early spring.

Now is a great time to plant or transplant trees and shrubs. Dig a planting hole no deeper than the plant's root ball and at least twice as wide. Remove containerized plants from their pots and loosen the roots a bit.

Purchase amaryllis bulbs and pot them up yourself. Be sure the pot has at least one or more drainage holes. Since amaryllis like to be pot bound, choose a pot that is no more than an inch or two wider than the diameter of the bulb. Clay pots are better than plastic because their added weight will help support the amaryllis, which tends to get top heavy when in bloom. The top third of the bulb should extend above the soil.



Put packets of unused seed inside screw-top glass jars. Add a small tissue packet of powdered milk to the jar to serve as a desiccant, soaking up moisture from the air inside the jar that would otherwise get into the seeds and reduce their longevity. Store the jar in the refrigerator.

Balled-and-burlap plants should be set in the hole with burlap intact. After placing, loosen the burlap and ties and pull back from around the trunk. Plant containerized or B-and-B plants so the root ball is a couple of inches higher than the surrounding soil. Backfill, then tamp lightly to settle the soil around the roots. Water thoroughly and follow with a 2- to 4-inch layer of mulch, keeping it away from the trunk. Wait until spring to fertilize.

Reduce botrytis blight on peonies and powdery mildew on bee balm and phlox by trimming away and disposing of old, dead stems and leaves.



After leaf fall, maintain rose beds by raking up and discarding old mulch and fallen leaves and replace with a fresh



Carolina Climbing Aster

Ampelaster carolinianus

Now that the feasts of summer are over and many sources of nectar and pollen have been shut down by frost, where is a poor honey bee or monarch butterfly to go for a decent meal? Why, to the asters, of course!

This member of the aster family in particular doesn't even begin to shine until the end of October at Arbor Gate Teaching Garden. A southeast native, *Ampelaster carolinianus* is really more of a scrambler than a climber, mounding upward on a trellis or cascading gracefully over a wall. Not too rambunctious in habit and very undemanding, Carolina Climbing Aster asks only for a well-drained site in full sun to part shade. An unassuming mound of medium green foliage gives way to a cloud of pale lavender blooms beginning in late October and shining well into December.

You really should have this great native plant in your garden; the pollinators will thank you for it.

Here's a link to more info on Carolina Climbing Aster:

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/all/ampelaster-carolinianis/>





2017

Alamance County 4-H Wreath and Garland Sale

It's time to start decorating for the holidays, and what better way to do so than by purchasing a wreath or garland to support Alamance County 4-H! These live products come from Pardue Tree Farm and Nursery in Sparta, NC. The farm is a three-generation family-owned farm and have been in the evergreen business for over 25 years. They harvest by hand the Fraser Fir and Boxwood boughs to make their wreaths. For more information, stop by 209-C N. Graham-Hopedale Rd. Burlington or call 336-570-6740.

*Pick-Up Dates are
December 1st from
8:30am-5:00pm and
December 2nd from
9am-12noon*



Details:

- All proceeds will benefit Alamance County 4-H youth.
- The outside diameter of the wreath is approximately 20-24 inches.
- Payment is required at time of order.
- Please make checks payable to **Alamance County 4-H**.
- **Order deadline is Thursday, November 16, 2017.**

