

# Alamance Gardener

*Alamance County Cooperative Extension Horticulture Department*

## Coming Events

### Workshops, Demos, etcetera

Thurs., Aug. 9, 10:00a

*Fall Lawn Care*

Wed., Aug. 22, 9:00a

*Master Gardener Class of 2019—Info session*

Thurs., Aug. 23, 10:00a

*Garden In A Jar Terrarium Workshop-FEE\**

Wed., Sept. 5, 9:00a

*Master Gardener Class of 2019—Info session*

Thurs., Sept. 6, 10:00a

*Meet The Ferns and Their Frond Spike*

Wed., Sept 19, 9AM-6PM

**MASTER GARDENER PLANT SALE**

Thurs., Oct. 11, 10:00a

*Planting Trees and Shrubs*

Thurs., Oct 25, 10:00a

*Fall Bulbs—Make a splash next spring*

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/>

*\*\$10 Fee covers the cost of materials to build your own garden in a jar*

### Contact us :

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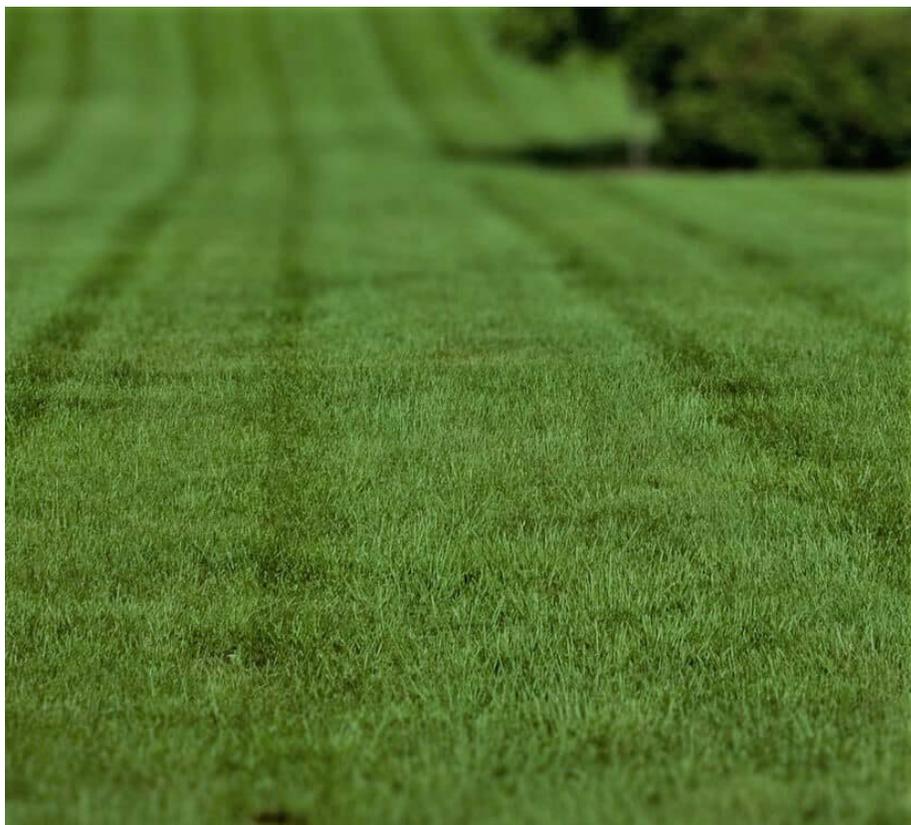
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## Chasing Green



Lawn care is one of the most confusing landscape practices for the average homeowner. I have seen numerous advertisements promoting this or that product that will magically transform your poor lawn into a lush green yard. Do not believe them! These advertised claims are misleading at best. While there is not one magic product to improve your lawn, there are some simple steps you can take to improve your lawn; and August is a good time to start.

The first step is to evaluate the condition of your lawn. Most tall fescue lawns that are not irrigated look pretty bad this time of year. Drought and disease have taken their toll over the summer.



## Time For a Do-Over?

If your lawn is more than 50% weeds, it may be time to consider renovating the lawn. Renovating the lawn begins with spraying the weeds with a non-selective herbicide containing glyphosate. One application may not be sufficient, especially if one of the weeds is bermudagrass. If you begin the herbicide treatments in early August, you will have enough time to spray again if you did not get good control after the first spray. Seeding for a tall fescue lawn should begin in early to mid-September.

The second 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. The 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 does not matter what kind of fertilizer you use or how much you apply-it just will not work. The soil testing is a free service of NCDA&CS so the only cost is the postage to send the sample to Raleigh. Here is the link to a good publication with more information on soil testing:

*A Gardener's Guide to Soil Testing* <http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/agcomm/publications/Ag-614.pdf>



I am sure you have seen the wide selection of lawn fertilizers and been confused by all the choices you have. 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 does not 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.

If you are interested in learning more about lawn care, our Think Green Thursdays class on August 9 will cover all the steps necessary to grow a great lawn. If you have any questions about lawn care or any other gardening topic, please give Chris or me a call.

### ***Release Your Inner Gardener!***

The Alamance County Master Gardener Class of 2019 begins Wednesday, January 16th. Here's a link to an informative brochure about what the Alamance EMGVs are about: <https://goo.gl/3yXWe5>

This link has information about the Class of 2019: <https://goo.gl/M9wHdL>

And here is the application: <https://goo.gl/YiZ353>

For a complete overview of the program, be sure to attend one of our information sessions, scheduled for Wednesday, August 22nd, at 9:00AM, or Wednesday, September 5th, at 9:00AM in the Agricultural Building auditorium. Mark and Alamance Extension Master Gardeners will be on hand to answer all your questions! Call 336-570-6740 for more information and to register.

**NC STATE**

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Master Gardener

## NC STATE

### Extension Master Gardener



## August Garden Tips

**Y**ou say your lawn and garden are looking a bit under the weather?

Well, the heat and humidity of summer will do that, especially when coupled with the usual plant disease and insect characters. Much of this ragged look may be attributed to the end-of-summer wind down and can be addressed with a little judicious pinching back.

However, if you feel the use of pesticides is warranted, please contact us here at NC State Extension for proper identification of the pest and help in selecting the best product to use. Phone 336-570-6740.

**F**eed basil with a liquid fertilizer to keep it productive into fall. If you cut off the seed heads, the plant will put more energy into producing flavorful foliage.

**G**et busy on your fall vegetable garden this month. Before the 15th, plant cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, spinach, cucumbers, leaf lettuce and kohlrabi. Between the

15th and the 30th plant kale, turnips, mustard, head lettuce and radishes. To keep the worms away, try covering broccoli, collards and their relatives with a light row cover.

**C**ollect soil samples from lawn and garden and send them to the NCDA for analysis. This service is free this time of year and the turn-around time is relatively short. Call us to find out how: 336-570-6740.

**C**ontinue pinching back annual flowers to encourage new bloom right up until frost. Stop fertilizing roses by the end of the month.

**T**reat for turf pests now, if needed. Cut a 12-inch square of turf and peel it back. If there are fewer than six white grubs visible in the exposed soil, put the turf back and forget about it. Six or more and you may need to treat the lawn. Call us for more information.

**T**ry not to disturb the soil in flower beds during hot, dry August days. Loosening the soil through cultivation can damage surface roots and increase water loss. Instead, inspect mulch and replenish where needed—2 to 3 inches between the plants, but only about ½” around the base of each plant.

**A**void overhead watering of plants to slow the spread of disease. Water in the early morning to allow foliage, fruit and flowers to dry out before evening. Early-morning watering discourages slugs, too. Dry surface soil slows down their nocturnal activities.

**F**all webworms and azalea caterpillars are beginning to make their presence known. Hand pick what you can reach. Break open webs to expose the worms to the birds and the elements. Not all birds find these hairy caterpillars tasty, but there are those that don't mind a fuzzy snack.—the elusive yellow-billed cuckoo or “rain crow” is one.

## *Arbor Gate Plant of the Month*



### Wand Flower, Beeblossom

### *Gaura lindheimeri*

*Gaura lindheimeri* is a herbaceous clump-forming perennial that is native to Texas and Louisiana. I had to do a bit of research to find a “common” name for this airy native, but by any name, *Gaura lindheimeri* is drought and heat tolerant, deer resistant, and flowers from summer through fall, enticing bees and butterflies to feast on pollen and nectar. Best grown in sandy, loamy, well-drained soils in full sun. Good drainage is essential for this tap-rooted southern US native. It grows to as much as 5' tall on stems clad with spoon-shaped to lanceolate leaves (to 3" long). The species sports pinkish buds along wiry, erect, wand-like stems that open to white flowers which slowly fade to pink. More recent introductions feature darker flowers and foliage. Only a few flowers are open on the stalks at one time, resulting in a delicate, open appearance. The thin flower stems tend to become leggy and flop, particularly when grown in rich soils. I kind of like the graceful arches of the “flopped” stems, but if that look isn't for you, plant in lean soil or plant close to other perennials for support. Plants may be cut back in late spring by 1/2 to control size. May self-seed if spent flower stems are left in place in the fall.

Read more here:

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/all/gaura-lindheimeri/>

