



Alamance Gardener

Alamance County Cooperative Extension Horticulture Department

Coming Events

Workshops and Demonstrations

Thu., Feb. 7, 10:00a DEMO

Grapevine Pruning With Andy Zeman

Sat., Feb 9 10:00a DEMO at BSF*

*Grapevine Pruning at BSF**

Thu., Feb 21, 10:00a DEMO at BSF*

*Fruit Tree Pruning at BSF**

Sat., Feb 23, 10:00a DEMO

*Fruit Tree Pruning at BSF**

Thu., Mar 7, 10:00a

Pruning Shrubs and Trees

Thu., Mar 14, 10:00a

Pruning Small fruit Plants

Sat., Mar 16, 10:00a DEMO at BSF*

*Pruning Small Fruit Plants at BSF**

*BSF pruning demos will be at
Buster Sykes Demonstration Farm,
2430 Turner Road, Mebane, NC.

All other classes will be held at the
Agricultural Building (address below)
Registration is required for all classes.
Register online here:

<https://goo.gl/JaFYs1>

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Watch Your Bloomers!



Is this February? I am enjoying the nice weather and I appreciate saving money on the heating bill, but what is going to happen next? There are several ornamental plants that seem to be blooming earlier than normal and will probably have their flowers damaged by freezing temperatures. While that is disappointing, I am more concerned about our muscadine grape and tree fruit crops. Their cold temperature dormancy requirements have been met, so a prolonged warm spell may encourage them to start to flower.

You should be very careful when buying fruit trees to make sure they are suited to Alamance County. I visited with a homeowner last year to look at his fruit trees and he asked why he never got any fruit off his cherry trees. This was around the first of March and the trees were in full bloom. Since the probability of having freezing temperatures after the first of March is near 100%, the probability of that tree ever having fruit is about zero. Watch your fruit trees closely and record the date of full bloom. If your trees are in full bloom the first to the middle of March, it is unlikely you will ever have a good crop.



Frost-killed peach

..And Now for A Little Spring Training

February is normally the time to start pruning our grapevines and fruit trees. This year I'm recommending you wait as long as possible to prune. March will be a better month for pruning this year. Pruning can stimulate new growth and flowering and the last thing we want this year is to have our plants bloom earlier. This year it will be better to be a little late than a little early. When you cut them, the grapevines will 'bleed' considerably, but that won't hurt the vines at all.

Pruning and training our fruit trees and grapevines is very important, but often not done or at least not done properly. We have scheduled two pruning classes to help you learn proper pruning techniques for grapevines. The first class on grapevine pruning will be held at the Extension office on Thursday February 7 at 10am. The class will be taught by Andy Zeman of Benjamin Vineyards. I will teach the next class on grapevine pruning on Saturday February 9 at 10am at the Buster Sykes Demonstration Farm.



Dr. Mike Parker, NCSU Tree Fruit Specialist, will teach the first fruit tree pruning demonstration at 10am Thursday February 21. I will lead the next demonstration on Saturday February 23 at 10am. Both fruit tree pruning demonstrations will be held at the Buster Sykes Demonstration Farm located at 2430 Turner Road, Mebane.

The pruning classes are free, but please register online by clicking on your favorite [Think Green Class here](#) or call 336-570-6740 to register, so we will know how many handouts to prepare. If you have any questions about grapevine and fruit tree pruning or any other gardening topic, please give me or Chris a call.

NC STATE

Extension Master Gardener



4-H Plant Sale - Spring 2019



February Garden Tips

February is for fruit. Plant fruit trees, grapevines and berry bushes now. Prune fruit trees to enhance fruit production and improve framework. Prune grapevines this month, too. See the schedule on the front page for a list of timely classes on pruning. If you'd like to add a few more berries, check out [the 4-H Spring Plant Sale](#) for blueberries and more!

When spring bulbs begin to show green sprouts, apply a balanced (10-10-10) fertilizer. This boost will help the bulbs store more energy for next year's flowers.

There's no need to fertilize trees and shrubs if the foliage looks healthy and the plants are growing at an acceptable rate. If you're in a hurry, or you just like to get your exercise by pruning, this is a good time of year to fertilize. Spread the fertilizer over the entire root zone, which normally extends well beyond the spread of the branches. Don't fertilize plants that are under stress from drought or disease.

On a mild day (over 50 degrees) spray wild onion, wild garlic, and winter annual weeds in the lawn with a broadleaf herbicide. When spraying wild onion and garlic, add a spreader-sticker to the mix to make the product, well, spread and stick. Remember to always read and follow the label directions and consider leaving a patch of henbit, deadnettle, chickweed and other winter annuals for the bees. These early bloomers help sustain our pollinators until the garden comes to life in a few weeks.

While broadleaf herbicides won't harm established lawn grasses, keep in mind that flowers and vegetables are broadleaf plants and therefore are susceptible to this type of herbicide. Hand pulling is the best solution for winter annual weeds in the garden.

You may divide perennials now if you didn't get it done last fall. Daylilies, Siberian iris, peonies, hosta, Shasta daisy and Lenten rose are a few candidates to divide and replant.

In the vegetable garden, plant potatoes, broccoli and onion sets and sow seeds of carrots, cabbage, onions, peas, radishes, rutabagas, spinach and turnips. Set out male hybrid asparagus crowns such as Jersey Giant or Jersey Gem.

Repot houseplants that have outgrown their containers. When repotting cactus, grasp spiny plants with kitchen tongs or wrap a folded newspaper around it, taking care not to crush the spines.

Trim back ornamental grasses this month, before new growth begins. Pampas and other grasses will have a fresher look this spring and summer if old foliage is cut to the ground now. Give your liriopse the same treatment as the grasses.

Apply a slow-release nitrogen fertilizer to fescue lawns by the end of the month. If you're applying a crabgrass preventer to a fall-seeded lawn, check the label for precautionary statements.

Arbor Gate Plant of the Month



Paperbush

Edgeworthia papyrifera

While the garden slumbers through the gloomiest part of winter, here comes the sun! *Edgeworthia papyrifera*, commonly called Paperbush, a plant long used for paper and medicine in China, came to the US in 1845. This fascinating plant begins its dead-of-winter show when pale green bundles begin to form in late fall, hanging like earrings from the tips of cinnamon branches. Each cluster of tubular flowers matures to a 1 to 2" silky white umbel. At the end of each fuzzy fingertip, a sunny yellow star opens, sending a whiff of spicy gardenia into the sullen winter air.

Invite this unusual shrub into your garden and enjoy not only a late-winter display, but also a summer show of rich blue green foliage with an almost tropical feel.

Paperbush's suckering habit makes for a well-formed 3 to 4-foot slowly colonizing shrub that requires no pruning.

Part shade and a deep, moist soil are on its wish list, but ours here at Arbor Gate managed in full sun for several years until it was successfully transplanted. In its current location, Arbor Gate's *Edgeworthia papyrifera* gets some afternoon shade.

