

Inside This Issue:

- ▶ Extension Springs Green!
- ▶ Calendar Updates
- ▶ Spring Greens
- ▶ Spring Green With 4-H Summer Camp!
- ▶ Go Green In Your Kitchen
- ▶ Mud Springs Green!
- ▶ Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day
- ▶ Spring Greens With The Farmer
- ▶ Pond Weeds Will Spring Green



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SOLUTIONS

Newsletter of the Alamance County Cooperative Extension Service

Extension Springs Green!

Spring is almost here and it is my favorite season of the year. Not only is the weather getting better, but also all the deciduous plants are coming back to life. There have been shrubs and trees flowering for several weeks and I am just starting to see some new green leaves emerging. Things are also stirring at the Alamance County Cooperative Extension office. Winter is a time for meetings, reports and planning. Spring is the time to get back out into the field and see what is green and growing.

The recent good weather we have had has brought the home gardeners out in force. The number of calls, emails and office visitors with gardening questions has increased noticeably in the past couple of weeks. Everyone is rushing to get the shrubbery pruned and the lawn fertilized. I have seen tomato plants in the garden stores and, while it might be a little early to plant tomatoes; it is a good sign that spring is on the way.

We look forward to Springing Green with you this spring. Whether your interest is traditional row crops and livestock, programs for youth, foods and nutrition, or your home lawn and garden, Alamance County Cooperative Extension is here to help.



Mark S. Donieley

Calendar Updates

- Tue., Apr. 2 Opening Day Celebration at North Park Farmer's Market
- Thu., Apr. 4 10AM & 6PM **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - Home Vegetable Gardening
- Tue., Apr. 9 Alamance Cattlemen's Field Day, Walker Farm, Burlington
- Thu., Apr. 11 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** Rain Gardens
- Thu., Apr. 11 Opening Day celebration at Elon Community Church Farmer's Market
- Sat., Apr. 13 8:00-12:00 Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day (see page 2)
- Sat., Apr. 13 11:30-12:30 Be Healthy Now Easter Feast. Allied Churches of Alamance
- Tue.-Wed., Apr. 16-17 Central Piedmont Livestock Show and Sale
- Tue.-Fri., Apr. 16-19, 8:30 AM—4:30 PM Pick up days for 4-H Plant Sale
- Thu., Apr. 25 10:00AM **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - A Dalliance With Dahlias
- Sat., Apr. 27 10AM-4PM Homegrown In The Park, Burlington City Park
- Thu., May 2 10AM & 6PM **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - Dealing With Deer
- Thu., May 2 Horse owner workshop, Heritage Strables, Snow Camp
- May 2-June 6 Thursdays 11AM-1:00PM Med Instead of Meds series at Beth Schmidt Park
- Thu., May 16 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - Secret Lives of Birds In Spring
- Thu., Jun. 6 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - Growing and Hybridizing Daylilies
- Thu., Jun. 20 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - Prehistoric Gardening

For more information and to register
 Call 336.570.6740 or visit
<http://alamance.ces.ncsu.edu/>



Spring Greens

by: Mark Danieleley, Horticulture Agent

April is here and the spring gardening season has begun. There are many green vegetables to choose from, but time is running out to plant cool season favorites like kale, lettuce, spinach and turnips. As long as you can plant them in the first week of April, you should be OK. If you have a small garden, planting the cool season vegetables now means that you will not be able to plant your warm season crops until they are harvested. It is OK to plant warm season crops the first of June, but that may be a problem for the folks that want to have the first tomatoes in the neighborhood.



The Alamance County Extension Master Gardener Volunteers are trying a new plant in the garden this year, Malabar spinach. While the leaves resemble spinach, that is where the similarity ends. This plant loves heat and is sensitive to frost. It is best grown on a trellis to take advantage of its vining growth habit and it prefers a full sun site. The young leaves can be eaten raw mixed in a green salad and have a mild Swiss chard taste. When the leaves are cooked and used in stir-fries, soups and stews, the taste is more like cooked spinach. It will be interesting to see how it grows in our garden. Other warm season green vegetables to consider are cucumbers, green beans and zucchini.

Cucumbers varieties are categorized as either slicing (for fresh eating) or pickling. Popular slicing varieties include Ashley, Poinsett 76 and Diva. Popular pickling varieties include Early Green Cluster, National Pickling and Jackson Classic. Bitterness in cucumbers is usually caused by environmental factors like hot temperatures or dry soil. Peeling the cucumbers and cutting off the stem end sometimes, helps reduce the bitterness. The main pest problem is cucumber beetles. They can transmit a disease called bacterial wilt that is almost impossible to control.

Green beans are one of my favorite vegetables. The bush type can be planted every 2-3 weeks starting in mid-April through late August to ensure a continuous crop. Look for Tenderette, Roma Contender, Provider and E-Z Pick. Pole beans need a trellis for best production and take a little longer to mature. It is nice however to be able to pick beans while standing rather than bending over or crawling on your knees. Good pole varieties are Kentucky Wonder, Blue Lake and Fortex.



Zucchini can be a challenging crop to grow in a couple of ways. It can be a prolific producer and you may have trouble finding a home for all the zucchini you have. I have had neighbors avoid me during zucchini season because they were afraid I was bringing another bag full for them. The other and greater challenge is dealing with the squash vine borer. Once this insect gets inside the vine there is not much you can do. I hope you will have success in your garden and enjoy your spring (and summer) greens.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day

The next Collection Day will be Saturday, April 13, from 8 am until 12 pm at 100 Stone Quarry Road, Haw River. The types of hazardous waste that will be accepted are as follows:

- ☺ Household cleaners, drain openers, toilet bowl cleaners, oven cleaners, disinfectants
- ☺ Solvents, thinners, shellacs, varnishes, sealers, wood preservatives
- ☺ Automotive products including brake fluid, antifreeze, used motor oil (up to 5 gallons), filters, gasoline
- ☺ Pesticides
- ☺ Miscellaneous materials such as acids, bases, kerosene, batteries, photographic chemicals, pool chemicals, mercury, fluorescent tubes
- ☺ Latex and oil based paint and spray paint



⊘ The following will NOT be accepted: Gas cylinders, radioactives/smoke detectors, medical waste, electronics/TVs/computers, explosives/ammunition

If you have questions contact the Landfill at 336-376-8902 or Cooperative Extension at 336-570-6740.

Spring Green With 4-H Summer Camp!

Taylor Jones, 4-H Agent

After such a wet and cold winter, I dream of warm, sunny days sitting by the lake, hearing the sound of children playing and splashing, dragonflies zipping by, and the smell of an old-fashioned cookout. Do you know where I am? I am at Betsy-Jeff Penn 4-H Camp in Reidsville, North Carolina.

Every summer, hundreds of children from across the state meet up with their county 4-H agents to head for a week-long summer adventure at residential 4-H Summer Camp. This year, Alamance County 4-H will be attending camp July 7th-12th. At 4-H camp, youth from ages 8 to 14 are given the chance to have a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Activities range from horseback riding, canoeing and archery to ropes courses and more. While attending camp, youth learn new life skills they might not otherwise encounter. Life skills such as responsibility (keeping their cabins clean), leadership (helping younger campers and leading songs and skits), as well as communication and teamwork (trying to navigate the ropes courses) are all examples of what youth learn and cherish at residential 4-H camp.

According to the American Camp Association, or ACA, where Betsy-Jeff Penn 4-H Educational Center is also certified, the child development component of camp is obvious. Bruce Muchnick, licensed psychologist who works extensively with day and resident camps, [says](#), "Each summer at camp a unique setting is created, a community is constructed that allows participants to get in touch with a sense of life that is larger than one's self. The camp community seeks to satisfy children's basic need for connectedness, affiliation, belonging, acceptance, safety, and feelings of acceptance and appreciation." Camp is such a rite of passage, each child who attends has basic developmental needs met. Schools often do not foster this type of community or sense of belongingness in children.

The North Carolina 4-H website states that, "4-H is a fun program where you get to 'Learn by Doing.' With more than 10,000 established 4-H programs across North Carolina, you can be a part of 4-H wherever you live. All youth between the ages of 5 and 19 are invited to join! In 4-H you can go to camp, start a business, ride in a bike rodeo, take part in an international exchange, raise an animal, create a blog, give a presentation, participate in a community service project, develop your resume, practice interview skills, learn about healthy eating habits, build lifelong friendships."

The Betsy-Jeff Penn 4-H Educational Center sprawls across almost 200 acres of forests, lakes, fields, and streams. Within this landscape, children are allowed the opportunity to explore the wildlife and world surrounding them. With a 22-acre lake and streams feeding off in every direction, activities include wildlife and ecosystem hands-on study sessions and experiments. The forests are home to the top-notch safety and thrilling ropes courses that allow children to learn and grow physically and emotionally. The fields are where horseback riding takes place, getting youth out of their comfort zones, and allowing them to be free and one with an animal that weighs 1,000 pounds.

The 4-H camps and centers in North Carolina are owned and managed by the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, a department of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University. Each center is managed by a full-time camp director, as well as many other full- and part-time staff members. Summer Camp Counselors go through a rigorous application and interview process, are 18 or older, and must complete a six-day staff training in order to work at the centers with children.

Does camp sound like something your child would be interested in? Camp is open to any child, regardless of whether the child is a member of a 4-H club. To find out more about 4-H camp, contact Alamance County's 4-H Agent at taylor_jones@ncsu.edu or 336-570-6740, or visit www.bjpenn4h.org.



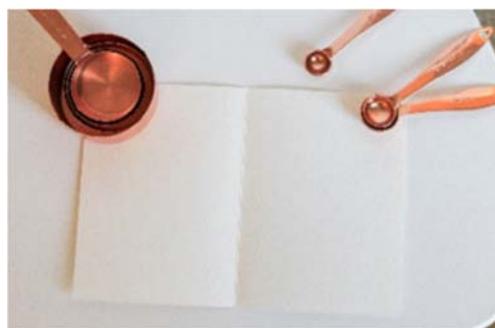
Go Green In Your Kitchen

By Eleanor Frederick, FCS Agent



In the United States, we throw away 30-40% of the food we produce. Imagine going to the grocery store and filling up your cart. When you go to check out, you pay for everything and then immediately dump a third of your food into the trash can. No one would want that! While consumers are not the largest offender in terms of waste, our actions do account for about half of the food waste that occurs. The benefits of saving food extend beyond dollar amounts. If we could cut food waste back by 15%, we would have enough food to feed an additional 25 million Americans each year. Here are some tips to help you reduce the food waste in your home.

Plan your meals ahead of time. It might sound overly simple, but planning ahead can help you reduce waste significantly. If you know what you plan to cook and/or eat for a week, you can buy only what you need so no food goes to waste. Planning ahead can also help you maintain a balanced diet by intentionally choosing recipes with fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and healthy fats.



Organize your fridge. Raise your hand if you regularly find forgotten food items in the back of your fridge... It happens to the best of us. If you have leftovers or part of a food that needs to be used soon, put them in a designated section of your fridge. For me, it's the upper left shelf, closest to eye level and the first place I reach for. If you have a "clean out the fridge" night, all of your odds and ends will be in one place, ready for use.



Save your scraps. Fruits and vegetables are great for you whether they come fresh, from a can, or out of the freezer. If you're using fresh produce regularly, you know that the food scraps pile up quickly. Save those scraps in the freezer and make a vegetable broth when you have a good amount. Less food will be wasted and you'll have a delicious home-made broth. You can add meat scraps and bones as well.

Compost what's left. You can compost no matter where you live. If you are lucky enough to have space for a compost bin in your yard, composting options are endless. If space is tighter, consider vermicomposting. Vermicomposting uses a special type of earth worm to break down food scraps into worm castings, an excellent fertilizer for your plants. If done correctly, you can achieve an odor free, completely contained, indoor compost bin. At NC State we have a vermicomposting expert, Dr. Rhonda Sherman, whose advice for starting and maintaining a "worm bin" can be found by searching "NCSU vermicomposting."

<https://composting.ces.ncsu.edu/vermicomposting-2/>

Spring 2019 FCS Events

April 2 Opening day celebration at North Park Farmers Market, 3:00 – 6:00 pm

April 11 Opening day celebration at Elon Community Church Farmers Market, 3:00 – 6:00 pm

April 13 Be Healthy Now Easter Feast. Allied Churches of Alamance County. 11:30 am – 12:30 pm

May 2 – June 6 Med Instead of Meds series. Beth Schmidt Park, Thursdays from 11:00 am – 1:00 pm. Cost \$25 (scholarships available). Watch our website or call the office when registration opens on April 1!

Mud Springs Green!

By Lauren Langley, Livestock Agent

Mud is everywhere this time of year for most livestock owners. All that mud will spring something green come April. Whether it is weeds or quality forage will be up to you! Planting either a perennial or an annual forage in a sacrifice lot after winter use is recommended or the sacrifice lot will grow weeds! Now is the time to take action and prepare for the grazing season ahead. Here are a few checklist items to consider in the coming months:

1. **Plant Seed** The best time of year to seed/overseed a pasture for cool-season grasses such as fescue is fall (spring for warm-seasons). However, spring is an acceptable time of year if you missed the fall deadline. If you seed in the spring, be prepared to let the pasture rest for about a year. The newly planted forage needs to be able to develop strong roots in order to withstand grazing. It is also the most appetizing grass and will have a hard time developing under grazing pressure. Planting Guide for NC: <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/A.-Planting-Guide-for-Forage-Crops-in-NC.pdf>
2. **Plan Summer Pastures** Now is the time to think about your warm-season perennials or annuals for summer grazing. Refer to the planting guide for the best dates for planting those summer pastures.
3. **Take Soil Samples** See if your pastures need any nutrients and/or lime. Once the frost is out and the soils have dried, samples can be taken. Contact your county Extension office for more information and to obtain soil sampling forms and boxes. ***There is a \$4 fee/sample in place until April 1st.***
4. **Fertilize** As stated in 3, test your soils first, so you know how much you need. Often, only nitrogen is needed in pastures. Don't guess, soil test!
5. **Spray Herbicides** Spring is a good time to spray annual weeds as it prevents them from getting established. However, mowing is usually sufficient for annual weed control unless weed densities are high.
6. **Check fences** Snow/ice and deer can be hard on fences. Check them before you turn out any livestock.
7. **Plan your grazing system** Think back to last year whether you had enough grass or if the pasture turned into a putting green or mud pit. You may need to supplement your livestock with hay during certain times of the grazing season and set aside a sacrifice area when the pasture needs a rest.
8. **Let the grass grow** Start rotationally grazing once grass starts growing. Don't let livestock chase green grass over the entire farm since that will delay significant growth and sustained grazing even longer.
9. **Repair Equipment** Start repairing haying equipment for spring harvest.



Spring Greens With The Farmer

By: Dwayne Dabbs, Field Crops Agent.

As the weather finally starts warming up, you will meet many farmers out on the highway in spray rigs, planting equipment, and tillage equipment. One of the main things to remember this time of year, when farmers are able to get out and work on planting crops, is to be careful out there on the roads! Most of the equipment can only go 15-20 miles an hour on the highway, and, depending how wide that equipment is, it may have to go slower than that. So if you get behind or meet a piece of farming equipment as you are travelling on the road, be careful and take your time. Sometimes the farmer can see you back there and sometimes they can't. Never pass a piece of farming equipment on a double yellow line or especially going up hills. Sit back and enjoy nature; it is not worth causing an accident over.

With that being said, farmers will be extremely busy this spring. The wet fall and winter we have had this past year has held a lot of farmers back from being able to prep fields for the spring and they will have to work that much harder to make up for lost time. This includes getting into the fields and spraying winter weeds that in normal years would have been sprayed in November or December, tilling fields to remove tobacco stalks and residue that was left from the last year's crop, and that list goes on. Normally, this time of year farmers would be topdressing their small grain, but again with the wet conditions, the amount of small grain that could be planted is very low. Within the next month, you will start seeing farmers planting their summer crops, assuming that it does dry up enough to be able to get back in the field. Therefore, when you pass by a farmer, on the road or in the field, wave hello, because they are the ones that help put food on our tables and clothes on our backs!



Pond Weeds Will Spring Green



As the weather warms, the pond weeds will start showing again. I have already had a couple samples brought into the office, and it seems like it happens earlier and earlier each year. While some weeds are easier to control earlier in the year, you have to know what weeds you have in order to control them. So, if you are starting to see weeds on your pond, get a sample and bring it by the office so we can discuss the most effective way to control them, hopefully without breaking the bank.

People always ask about pond dyes throughout the year, and ask if they will help with the weeds that they have in the pond. The answer is yes, they will, if you start putting them in the pond early enough. If you see weeds on the pond now, the pond dyes will not be as effective. Please also note that, if you do plan to use a pond dye, then you will have to add more to it over the course of the year, because as we get rain through the year, the dye will be diluted, and will not be as effective as when you first put it in.

I have learned over the years of working with pondweeds that generally, when you treat, it will not be a once and done situation. Many times it will take multiple applications over the course of the year to clean your pond up, and, although I wish that I had a silver bullet that would take care of the weeds once your pond is clean, unfortunately, I have not found it yet.

If you have any questions about your pondweeds or want to bring a sample into the office, please give me a call, I am in and out of the office often during this time of year, and cannot guarantee that I will be here if you come by. In that same breath, if we cannot coordinate a time to meet here in the office, you can still bring the sample by with your name, telephone number, and any special notes that you have about the pond (size, livestock uses, etc.) and I will call you back when I get back into the office.