

Alamance Gardener

Alamance County Cooperative Extension Horticulture Department

Coming Events

Workshops, Demos, etcetera

Thurs., Aug. 8, 10:00a and 6:00p

 *Fall Vegetable Gardening*

Wed., Aug. 22, 10:00a

 *Fall Lawn Care*

Thurs., Sept. 12, 10:00a and 6:00p

 *Fall Flowers—the Pollinators' Picks!*

Wed., Sept 18, 9AM-6PM

MASTER GARDENER PLANT SALE

Thurs., Sept. 26, 10:00a and 6:00p

 *Composting—Let It Rot!*

Thurs., Oct. 10, 10:00a

 *Planting Trees and Shrubs*

Thurs., Oct 24, 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/>

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Where There's a Will...and a Sunny Spot

My wife and I moved to a new house about two years ago. When we discussed moving, I wanted to move to the country so I could have a bigger garden. My wife wanted to move closer to town and since I wanted to go with her, we moved closer to town. My garden at the old house took up about 2/3 of the backyard, but the backyard at the new house has a lot of trees and shade. It seemed too shady for a garden, which was a great disappointment for the folks that were recipients of the tomatoes I used to grow.

I missed having a garden so this spring I starting watching how the sun moved across the backyard. The natural area got morning sun and the deck area got afternoon sun. The only way to know if it would work was to try. I tilled up the two spots and planted a dozen tomatoes in each bed. Much to my surprise, they have grown very well. While I am not a fan of tomatoes, their success has given me hope that I can grow some lettuce and spinach this fall.

And Now, Make Way For Broccoli!

Planting a fall garden is a good way to extend your harvest of fresh vegetables after the summer crops have finished producing. Many of the cool season vegetables do better in the fall than in the spring. Since the fall crops are maturing during cooler weather the flavor and quality will be better than those same vegetables grown in the spring.

Planting vegetable seeds is less expensive than buying transplants, but there are a couple of problems to consider. Some of the cool season vegetable seeds do not germinate well in warm soil conditions. You can help by lightly watering the seeds each day until they germinate or by using a lightweight row cover. This row cover could be used again for frost protection later in the season.

The other concern is the amount of time it takes from seeding to harvest. Most of the cool season vegetables should be planted in August and if you wait until September to plant seeds some of the longer maturing crops like broccoli, they may not have enough time to mature before cold weather. Try to use transplants when planting in September to increase your chances of a successful harvest.

Planting seeds in September is still a good option for quick maturing crops like radishes as well as leafy greens including kale, lettuce, mustard and spinach. A light frost will not damage these crops and they may continue to grow well into November.

Insects may be a problem in the fall garden because their populations have increased all summer. Careful scouting is essential to make sure the insects do not get ahead of you. The two main insect pests of the fall garden are caterpillars and aphids.

The pretty moths you see flying around the garden will soon be laying eggs. Out of those eggs will come some hungry caterpillars. I prefer to use a *Bacillus thuringiensis* product like DiPel or Thuricide. These are biological control products that may take a few days to work, but you can harvest the same day you spray. The Bt products should be applied every 5-7 days to be most effective.

Aphids are another problem in the fall garden, but not as common as caterpillars. They are especially bad when they get inside a head of broccoli. They are hard to see and almost impossible to wash out. I do not recommend preventative sprays for aphids, but I would check the garden for them every few days. A few aphids can become many aphids quickly. Insecticidal soap can be an effective control for aphids and can be sprayed on the same day as harvest.



Broccoli transplants



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

Fall harvest from the Urban Victory Garden at Arbor Gate



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Master Gardener**


August Garden Tips

Feed 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.

Get 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. For more fall vegetable gardening tips, sign up for the Think Green Thursday class on August 8th at 10:00AM or 6:00PM. Register through the links on our website:

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

Collect 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.

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

Destroy unwanted perennial weeds with a selective broadleaf herbicide before reseeding fescue lawns. Spray in the early morning or toward evening when the wind is still and cooler temperatures reduce the chances of vaporized herbicide affecting nearby plantings. Wait four to six weeks before overseeding.

Try 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—two to three inches between the plants, but only about 1/2” at the base of the plants.

Avoid 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.

Fall 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.

Are your lawn and garden experiencing the end-of-summer blues, er, *browns*? The heat and humidity of summer will eventually take their toll. Much of this ragged look is normal for this time of year 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 Extension for proper identification of the pest and help in selecting the best product to use. Give us a call, e-mail a picture, or drop by the office.

Arbor Gate Plant of the Month



Rain Lily

Who needs a rain gauge? These pretty little bulbs will let you know there's been a downpour, just a few days after the storm.

Various *Zephyranthes* species are native wildflowers from North Carolina south to Argentina. Our USDA Zone 7 is about the northernmost limit of their hardiness, but here they are a long-lived perennial suitable for the front of the border or dotted around the rain or rock garden.

Plant the rain lily bulbs in full sun to part shade in well-drained organic soil. Beginning in late July, crocus-like, one- to two-inch flowers bloom singly atop upright stems rising six to twelve inches tall above a tuft of outward-spreading, narrow, grass-like, green leaves. If you keep the soil evenly moist, rain lilies will have off-and-on flowers regardless of sky rain all the way until frost. Otherwise, let it rain!

Find out more here: <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/zephyranthes/>

Zephyranthes

