

September 2020
Volume 11, Issue 9



Coming Events

Wed., Sept. 16th

Sale will go live at 9:00AM on
Wednesday, September 16th

Hit the link to check out the plants:

MASTER GARDENER PLANT SALE



Tues., Sept. 22nd, 10:00a and 6:00p

Food Preservation-Dehydrating

Thurs., Oct. 8th 10:00a

Houseplants

Thurs., Oct. 22nd 10:00a

Winter Resident Birds

Thurs., Nov. 5th 10:00a

Planting Trees and Shrubs

You can register online for any of the
Think Green Thursdays classes here:

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

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Alamance Gardener

Alamance County Cooperative Extension Horticulture Department

10th Annual Master Gardener Plant Sale

It's been said that necessity is the mother of invention, and like it or not, the current pandemic has been a game changer for all of us.

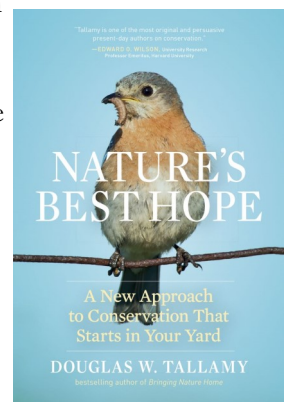
We are so pleased to be able to offer the 10th Annual Extension Master Gardener Fall Plant Sale ONLINE this year!



This year, the focus is on plants native to North Carolina and the southeast, with a few of our all-time garden favorites that may have been born elsewhere, but also contribute positively to our landscapes. We were inspired by Doug Tallamy, one of the most original and persuasive present-day authors on conservation. His most recent book, *Nature's Best Hope* will be available during the Plant Sale for just \$15.00. Most of the plants have been propagated from Arbor Gate Teaching Garden and from the Master Gardeners' own yards. Of course, all proceeds from the Plant Sale will go toward Alamance Extension Master Gardener programs and the maintenance and improvement of Arbor Gate Teaching Garden. Browse the plant selection [here](#). All plants are listed by their scientific name, but you can use the search feature to find a plant by its common name.

The sale will open at 9:00AM Wednesday, September 16th.

After you have completed your order (credit cards only), we will call you to set up a time for you to pick up your plants curbside at the Agricultural Building, 209 N. Graham-Hopedale Road, Burlington.



It's Hard To Get The Green, Green Grass of Home



Fall lawn care is one of the most confusing landscape practices for the average homeowner because of the overwhelming numbers of products you have to choose from. Most folks buy fertilizers and grass seed without really knowing what they need. Dozens of different brands of herbicides, fertilizers and grass seeds are advertised as the answer to your lawn woes. Millions of dollars are spent on advertising trying to persuade you that a certain brand of fertilizer or grass seed is better than some other. Unfortunately, the claims of most of these products are misleading or just plain false. In this article, I will try to cut through the hype and get to the facts about lawn care.

The first 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. Our 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 NCDA&CS lab in Raleigh does the soil test I recommend. The soil test is free this time of year and we have the supplies in our office.



The next problem we have is what fertilizer to use. I am sure you have seen and been confused by all the choices. 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.

Finally, let's talk about grass seed. We are in a transition zone where it is too cold to grow warm season grasses well and too hot to grow cool season grasses well. I think our best compromise is a cool season grass like tall fescue. Just like fertilizers, do not pay too much attention to the names of grass seeds. The important information can be found on the seed label. The first thing to look for is the varieties of seeds in the bag. A blend will be 2-3 varieties of fescues where a mixture will be fescue, Kentucky bluegrass, and perhaps some fine fescue. The advantage of the mixture is that it will do better in shady areas of your lawn. A listing of recommended grass seed varieties can be found in the publication at the link below.

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/2017-top-performing-tall-fescue-kentucky-bluegrass-and-fine-fescue-cultivars>

If you have any questions about lawn care other any other gardening issue, please give me or Chris a call.

NC STATE

Extension Master Gardener

Click this link to our [YouTube channel](#) for informative videos from Alamance County Extension. Subscribe and be the first to see new content.



September Garden Tips

Now is the best time to reseed, overseed and start new fescue lawns. Overseed at the rate of 3 to 4 pounds per 1,000 square feet. Sow new cool-season lawns in prepared ground at the rate of 7 pounds per 1,000 square feet. Fertilize established cool-season lawns this month, according to the results of your soil test. In the absence of a soil test, use a balanced fertilizer and apply at the rate of one pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. (Example: 10 pounds of 10-10-10 per 1,000 square feet)

If chickweed, henbit and other winter annual weeds spoiled your spring landscape, treat the garden now to keep them out. Apply a pre-emergence herbicide to flower beds and natural areas. Call Extension for a recommendation: 336-570-6740. **Warning!** Do not apply a pre-emergence herbicide to newly-seeded or overseeded lawns

Discontinue pruning at this time except to remove dead or broken branches and spent flowers. Spring-blooming plants have already formed

their flower buds, and pruning of any plants may encourage new growth that won't have time to harden off before winter.

Consider planting a cover crop or 'green manure' this fall in unused garden space. It's a great way to improve soil fertility and structure. Crimson clover is a good choice for our area. It works well in our raised beds. Plant at least a month before the first killing frost. In the spring, turn under your cover crop three weeks before planting your garden, or consider "no till" gardening – cut cover crop to the ground and cover with a layer of compost before planting.

Harvest herbs to preserve for winter use. Use your microwave oven to dry herbs. Heat them between paper towels for about one minute, or until the leaves are crisp. Chives store well in the freezer. Alternatively, pot up chives, parsley and other herbs in six-inch containers to grow in a sunny window.

Plant mustard, onion sets and radishes un-

til the middle of the month. Sow onion seeds all month.

Dig, divide and re-plant overcrowded perennial beds or start a new bed now.

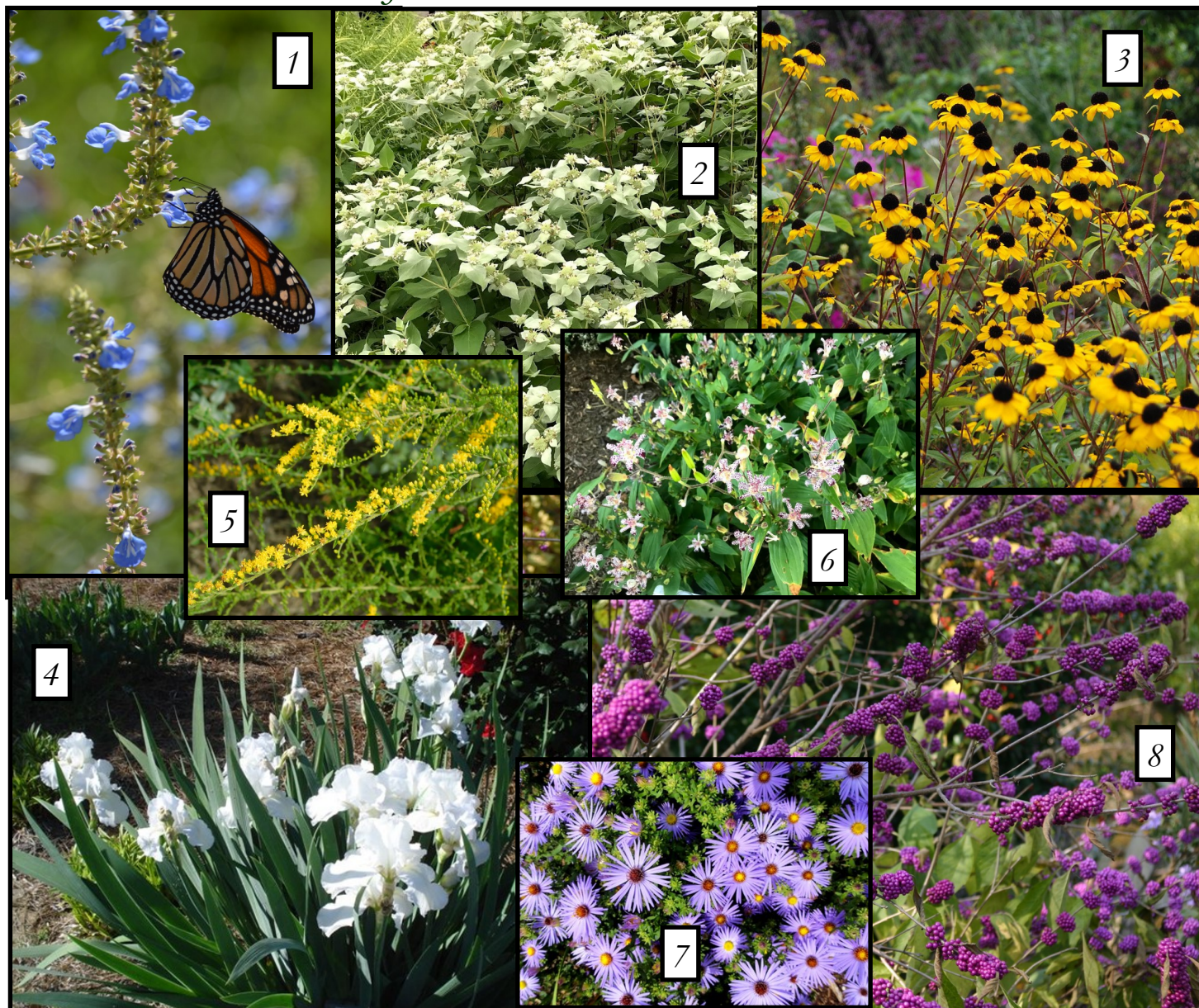
Shop online for new perennials, including many North Carolina native plants, as well as some excellent native shrubs and trees. Browse the website [here](#), then shop beginning Wednesday, September 16th at 9:00AM.

Once you've completed your order, we'll call you to arrange a time for touch-free curbside pickup. Many of these plants have been propagated from favorites at Arbor Gate Teaching Garden, and some from the Master Gardener's own gardens, but *all* have been nurtured by Extension Master Gardener Volunteers!



Our native Stokes' aster

Arbor Gate Plants of the Month



Some of the September Bloomers Available at the Sale!

These are just a few of the fall-blooming beauties now showing at Arbor Gate Teaching Garden. Find these and many others, most available for just \$5.00 each during our 10th annual Master Gardener Fall Plant Sale! Go [here](https://www.arborteteachinggarden.com/) to browse all of the plants, then shop beginning at 9:00AM on Wednesday, September 16th: <https://www.arborteteachinggarden.com/>

By the numbers:

1) *Salvia uliginosa*—Sky blue sage, 2) *Pycnanthemum muticum*—Mountain mint, 3) *Rudbeckia triloba*—Brown-eyed Susan, 4) *Iris germanica*—reblooming iris “Immortality”, 5) *Solidago shortii*—Short’s goldenrod, 6) *Tricyrtis sinonome*—toad lily, 7) *Aster oblongifolius*—aster “Raydon’s Favorite”, 8) *Callicarpa americana*—beautyberry, 9) *Aster tataricus* “Jin dai”,

