



Coming Events



We are in the process of planning classes for 2021. Much is still up in the air as I write

this, but we would love to have your input!

Here is a link to some of our recorded Think Green Thursday online classes from 2020 on YouTube:

[Think Green Thursdays 2020](#)

We hope to have in-person classes in 2021, but may start off by Zooming in February.

- ◆ What have you thought of our virtual classes?
- ◆ What would you like to learn more about in 2021?

Visit our website for more information and links to Alamance Extension online learning opportunities:

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

With the help of the Extension Master Gardeners, *Alamance Gardener* will continue to provide good gardening information and timely tips to keep your Alamance yard and garden in top shape.

Keep the pointy side up! ~Chris

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Hanging Up His Shovel?



As many of you know, I am retiring at the end of this month so this will be my last Alamance Gardener article. The search for a new horticulture agent will begin soon and, in the meantime, Chris and the Master Gardener Volunteers will keep the newsletter coming.

I began my Extension career in Randolph County in 2004 after working in the landscape, greenhouse and nursery industry in Alamance County for 20+ years. I enjoyed my time in Randolph County and even got to meet Richard Petty! After two years, I got tired of the one hundred mile a day commute to Asheboro and was able to transfer to Orange County in 2006.

In Orange County, I worked with a wide range of clientele. In one day, I could go from a small-scale organic vegetable farm to a large residential estate. Another day I would be working with a community garden in an underserved neighborhood and then go do a landscape consultation at a fraternity house on the campus of UNC.

Thank You, Mark!

Research Station, I walked through the peach orchards with my professor and a research assistant, tasting different varieties of peaches. I noticed they would take one bite of a peach and then drop it. Well, those were the best peaches I ever tasted and I wasn't going to waste a single one. I did soon learn why they took only one bite and didn't eat six whole peaches at one time.



In 2008, I transferred home to Alamance County after Rett Davis retired. That was a move that I had to ponder for a while. I definitely wanted to come back home, but I was a little concerned about having to fill Rett's shoes. Rett was very encouraging and a great help in my transition. I frequently called for advice and he always had the answers I needed. One particular piece of advice from Rett changed my life. When asking Rett about a vegetable garden insect, he suggested that if I grew a vegetable garden, I would gain valuable experience that would be helpful in answering gardening questions.

Of course, Rett was correct. After I began growing a vegetable garden, I did gain a tremendous amount of knowledge like Rett said, but I also discovered I really liked vegetable gardening. There is a real sense of accomplishment in growing something that you can eat. My small garden space got larger and larger and

finally took over most of our backyard. I especially enjoyed growing tomatoes even though I don't like to eat tomatoes. Somehow, I never had a problem finding people to give the tomatoes to.

I have also enjoyed the time I have spent working on the Buster Sykes Demonstration Farm. Mr. Sykes had worked with Rett to preserve his farm so it could be used for agricultural education and demonstrations. We planted a tree and small fruit orchard in 2017 and it has done very well. It has been used many times for pruning demonstrations as well as summer orchard tours. The highlight of the tours was the tasting of whatever fruit was ripe at that time. Unfortunately, we were not able to do the orchard tours this year because of the Covid



restrictions, but we were still able to donate over 3,000 pounds of fresh fruit to local food banks.

I have really enjoyed my time working as an Extension agent in Alamance County. Our staff, the Master Gardener Volunteers and my many cus-



tomers have been great. I also appreciate all the people who have an interest in gardening and in the Alamance Gardener newsletter. I hope to still be able to see all my gardening friends around the county as I move into retirement.

~Mark Danieley

NC STATE

Extension Master Gardener



November Garden Tips

Continue planting spring-flowering bulbs this month. As a general rule, plant bulbs two to three times as deep as the bulb is tall. For example, a two-inch tall bulb should be planted about six inches deep (to the bottom of the bulb). Plant tulips, hyacinths, and jonquils about 6 inches apart. Crocus, anemones, and grape hyacinths should be planted 2 inches apart. Remember to plant bulbs with the pointy side up! If deer are a problem, stick to members of the narcissus family—jonquils and daffodils. Alliums and some lesser-known beauties like Siberian squill (*Scilla*), Snowbells (*Leucojum*) and Snowdrops (*Galanthus*) are also relatively deer-resistant.

Set out forget-me-nots, pansies, violas, sweet William, pinks and snapdragons. Choose plants with tight buds, and pinch back open blossoms to encourage more blooms. Add a slow-release fertilizer at the time of planting and again about midway through the growing season. Alternatively, apply a water-soluble fertilizer every couple of weeks. Mulch to suppress weeds and protect roots.

Put packets of unused seed inside screw-top glass jars. Add a small tissue packet of powdered milk to the jar to serve as a desiccant, soaking up moisture from the air inside the jar that would otherwise get into the seeds and reduce their longevity. Store the jar in the refrigerator.

After leaf fall, maintain rose beds by raking up and discarding old mulch and fallen leaves and replace with a fresh layer of mulch. This will help reduce next year's disease and insect problems.

Treat perennial weeds such as mock strawberry and wild garlic this month. Apply a broadleaf herbicide when temperatures are above 50 degrees. Add a spreader-sticker, such as a tiny bit of dish soap (not detergent) to the mix to help the herbicide stick to skinny leaves.

Now is a great time to plant or transplant trees and shrubs. Dig a planting hole no deeper than the plant's root ball and at least twice as wide. Remove containerized

plants from their pots and loosen the roots a bit. Ball-and-burlap plants should be set in the hole with burlap intact. After placing, loosen the burlap and ties and pull back from around the trunk. Plant containerized or B-and-B plants so the root ball is a couple of inches higher than the surrounding soil. Backfill, then tamp lightly to settle the soil around the roots. Water thoroughly and follow with a 2- to 4-inch layer of mulch, keeping it away from the trunk. Wait until spring to fertilize.

Bring in your rain gauge to avoid freeze damage. Drain and store water hoses to extend their lives. Clean and service garden tools for winter storage. Oil blades of shovels and other tools to keep them from rusting. Drain gas tanks of garden equipment to prevent water buildup.

Reduce botrytis blight on peonies and powdery mildew on bee balm and phlox by trimming away and disposing of old, dead stems and leaves.

Arbor Gate Plant of the Month



Pretty in Pink

Muhly Grass

Muhlenbergia capillaris

It's November and clouds of pink and white float across the landscape. One of our loveliest native grasses, *Muhlenbergia capillaris* is a tough customer that craves sunshine and hopes for good drainage, but will tolerate less than perfect conditions once established.

Growing up to four feet tall by four feet wide, muhly grass begins as a mound of fine-textured leaves and culminates in autumn with a stunning display of tiny flowers that persist throughout winter, the clouds of pink and white slowly fading to buff. For maximum visual impact, plant muhly grass in drifts of three or more.

Deer aren't interested, but other wildlife will find cover in the mounds of foliage and birds and small mammals will feast on the tiny seeds.

Cut back the growth in late winter before the new leaves sprout to regenerate the clouds.

Read more here:

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/muhlenbergia-capillaris/>



A cloud of white