



Alamance Gardener

Alamance County Cooperative Extension Horticulture Department

Coming Events

Workshops and Demonstrations



Thu., Feb. 4, 10:00a DEMO at BSF*

Fruit Tree Pruning with Mike Parker

Thu., Feb 11, 10:00a DEMO at BSF*

Grapevine Pruning With Andy Zeman

Thu., Mar. 4, 10:00a DEMO

Pruning Woody Ornamentals

Thu., Mar. 18, 10:00a - ONLINE

Healing Gardens

*BSF Pruning demos will be at Buster Sykes Demonstration Farm, 2430 Turner Road, Mebane, NC. Pruning Ornamentals class will be held outdoors at the Agricultural Building (address below). Healing Gardens class will be held via Zoom.

Registration is required for all classes. Register here:

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

Contact us :

Alamance County Cooperative Extension Service
209-C N. Graham Hopedale Rd.
Burlington, NC 27217
Phone: 336-570-6740

E-mail:

Chris Stecker

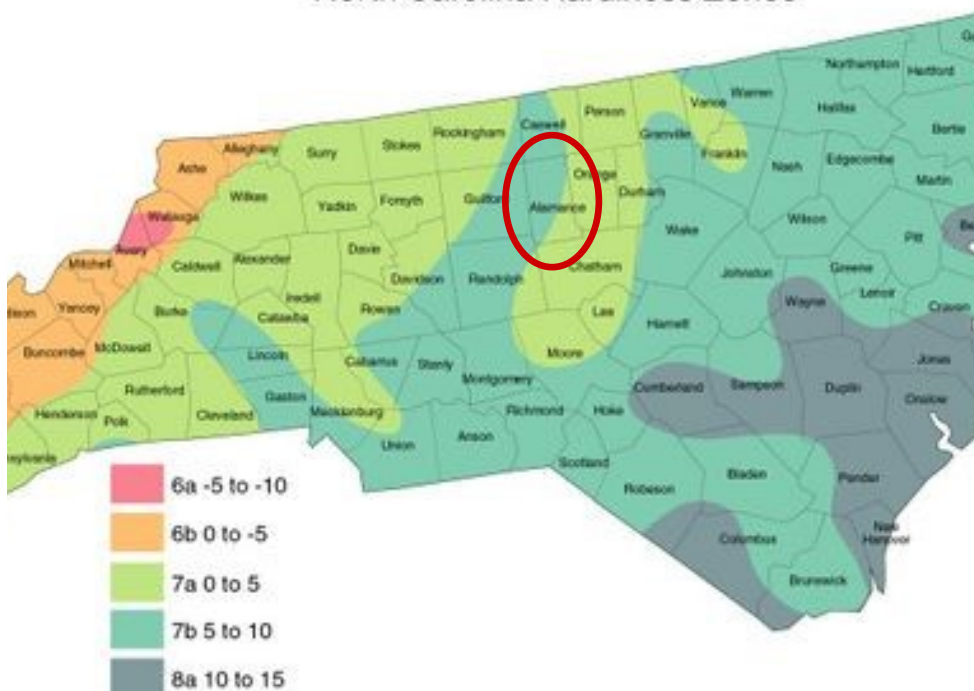
christine.stecker@alamance-nc.com

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Zone of Confusion

North Carolina Hardiness Zones



It's January and the catalogs are rolling in. I'm a sucker for the beautiful, the unusual and the delicious, but as I salivate over each tantalizing image, my eyes are inevitably drawn to the description, fingers crossed that the object of my desire has a fighting chance to survive in my garden. What I seek is assurance that the plant is likely to survive in Zone 7, as defined by the the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. The USDA Hardiness Zone Map divides North America into 11 separate planting zones. Each growing zone is 10°F warmer (or colder) in an average winter than the adjacent zone. Further divisions of "a" and "b" are separated by a difference of 5 degrees. If you see a hardiness zone in a gardening catalog or plant description, chances are it refers to this USDA map.

☐ **Gaillardia aestivalis**
'Glitz 'n Glamour' (Glitz 'n Glamour Blanket Flower)
Sun • 26" tall • **Zone: 7a to 9b,**
possibly colder • Dormancy: Winter
• Origin: United States

Catalog Rules

While the Zone map is certainly a useful tool, there are a number of other factors that may determine what you will or will not be able to grow in your own garden.

Read the descriptions in the catalogs carefully. You'll find information besides the Zone range that can help you make a decision. Look for recommendations that may make a plant more suited to grow here in Alamance County.



Grand Marshall (F1) 4151 78 days. (HR: AS, F2, V. IR: GLS, TYLCV) 🌱
Sets fruit in heat. An excellent choice for the South for its heat-setting ability and improved TYLCV resistance. Tall determinate plants produce high yields of large, 10–14 oz., high-quality beefsteaks with a deep-oblate shape.

For example, this tomato hybrid is noted for setting fruit, even when temperatures spike, and has been hybridized to resist a number of tomato diseases.

Drainage—Plants that should enjoy our hot, humid summers and be able to withstand cold temperatures may succumb to cold, wet feet over winter. Pair our moisture-holding clay soils with abundant rainfall and the combination of cold and wet can cause root rot. Included in this group are Mediterranean herbs such as lavender and marginally hardy tropicals like angel trumpets. Even some of our most drought-tolerant native plants have succumbed to the recent cold, wet winters, unless they are planted in soils amended liberally to provide better drainage. To improve drainage, raise beds and amend soils with compost. Create a special environment for plants that demand perfect drainage by incorporating pea gravel or Permatill (expanded slate) in addition to compost - never use sand (clay + sand = bricks).



B MEYER LEMON Preferred by home cooks. Hardier than other varieties, allowing you to enjoy more fragrant flowers and tasty, thin-skinned lemons. Matures to be 8–10' tall. Heat-tolerant. Harvest about 6–9 months after fruit develops. Self-pollinating. **Zones 9–10**
 4" Pot 3610 \$16.00

Microclimate—Or why you've heard of someone who has a lemon tree in their garden here.

A microclimate is a climate-within-a-climate; a small area that, due to a nearby structure or body of water or other climate-altering factor, has a different climate than the

Zone map would indicate. Ancient fig plants thrive near the crumbling walls of abandoned buildings—the masonry retains just enough heat and prevents drying winter winds from killing the fig plant.

For more information about plant selection, please contact us! Happy planning!

~Chris

NC STATE

Extension Master Gardener

January Garden Tips

It's time to plan! Gather your catalogs and consult your 2020 garden journal—you kept one, didn't you? If not, why not start journaling? 2021 seems like a year for fresh starts. Click this link for some [journaling tips from the Extension Gardener Handbook](#):

Sow seeds of cool-weather vegetables (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, collards, lettuce, onions and spinach) in containers for transplanting into the garden in March. Outdoors, sow edible-pod peas and English peas beginning this month. Continue to plant asparagus.

Clean used terra cotta pots before replanting by soaking them in a solution of vinegar and water. Use a brush to remove fertilizer salts and other residues. Rinse thoroughly with warm water.

Check the condition of stored bulbs and tubers of dahlias, tuberous begonias, caladiums and callas. Bulbs stored in warm, humid conditions

are prone to rot. Discard any bulbs that feel soft or rotten.

Mulch strawberry beds for winter protection. Use wheat straw or pine needles. When the first blooms appear, pull back the mulch.

Use a magnifying glass to inspect both sides of the leaves of your houseplants. Look for signs of insects. Sticky residue may indicate the presence of mealy bugs or scale insects. Small, fine webs are a sign of possible spider mite infestation. Call Alamance County Extension for information on the treatment of insect problems on houseplants: 336-570-6740.

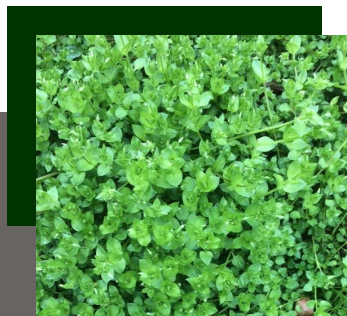
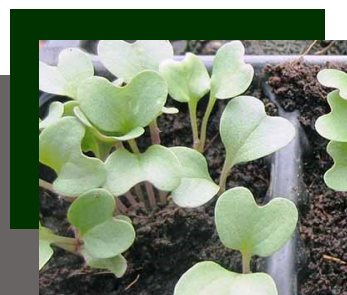
Do not fertilize houseplants and go easy on the watering during the winter months. Houseplants need some time off, too.

When the weather turns frigid, remember that fresh water is essential to all animals. Check to see that bird-

baths are ice free and filled up. Keep the water moving in water features and fountains to provide free-flowing water for wildlife.

Toward the end of this month, apply a dormant horticultural oil to roses. Do this before bud-break to smother over-wintering insects and their eggs. Read the label carefully for instructions on use.

Chances are, winter annual weeds are popping up now in your January garden. Hand pulling or raking is the most effective method of removal at this time. Resist the temptation to spray with herbicides unless temperatures turn mild for a few days (above 50 degrees). Sprays just won't work when it's too cold. Remember to read and follow all label directions. Consider leaving a patch or two of winter weeds for the bees. On mild days, they'll be out looking for a snack and the flowers of henbit, deadnettle and chickweed are high on their foraging menu.



Arbor Gate Plant of the Month



When putting together a plan for our “Hardy Tropicals” garden here at Arbor Gate, it seems we were a bit optimistic with some of our choices. Cold, wet feet doomed many of our selections and that condition is typical of our winters here in Alamance County. A combination of moisture-holding clay and ample winter rainfall is a death sentence for many marginally hardy “tropical” plants. But THIS plant has survived seven winters in our teaching garden with flying colors. *Sabal “Birmingham”* likes moisture, isn't even too picky about cold wet, but surprisingly handles drought well. Growing slowly to about ten feet tall and wide, it is happiest in part shade to full sun. *Sabal 'Birmingham'* is a seed-propagated selection of palmetto discovered in Birmingham, Alabama and thought to be a hybrid of our coastal native *Sabal palmetto* with a yet-unidentified species, perhaps *Sabal minor*? It is widely known for its extreme cold hardiness and its slow growth compared to other palmetto species. The evergreen leaves add a little structural energy and color to the melted-down appearance of the tropicals garden in winter. Pests and diseases don't bother it and deer steer clear.

Add a little something tropical to your garden, read more about *Sabal “Birmingham”* here:

<http://www.garysnursery.com/SabalBirmingham.html>