

August 2021  
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# Alamance Gardener

*Alamance County Cooperative Extension Horticulture Department*

## Coming Events

### Workshops and Demonstrations

Register here:

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

Thursday, Aug. 26, 10 a. m.

**Live and in person!**

*Carolina Lawn Care*

**WEDNESDAY., SEPT. 15, 10th  
ANNUAL MG PLANT SALE—  
ONLINE!**

*Stay tuned for details!*

Visit our YouTube page for informative videos from Alamance County Extension. Subscribe and be the first to see new content:

[Alamance County CES](#)

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## Cool Season Lawn Not So Cool?



If you had some problems with your cool-season lawn (Tall fescue, Kentucky bluegrass, etc.) this year, it's time again to start thinking about renovation.

Late summer to early fall is the most desirable time to renovate a cool-season lawn. Before you proceed, you need to assess what are some of the underlying causes of your turf deterioration. Drought, excessive shade, tree root competition, poor drainage, soil compaction, inadequate fertility or water, acid soils, weed or insect infestations, disease, and poorly adapted grass species or cultivars are all factors that may contribute to lawn problems.

Following the steps on the next page in order will help you develop a more successful renovation of your cool-season lawn.

## Time To Renovate!



**Soil test.** You should take your soil test about 3-4 weeks before you start renovation. Contact our office for soil test materials and instructions. The soil test results will give you your soil pH and nutritional levels to help you develop a fertilization program.

**Weed Control.** An herbicide is suggested if you have broadleaf or grassy weeds in your lawn. You will need to wait four weeks following the use of the herbicide before your seeding can begin. Information on weed control can be found at this site: [ncsu.edu/extension-gardener-handbook/6-weeds](https://ncsu.edu/extension-gardener-handbook/6-weeds)



**Mow.** Make sure you mow your lawn at the lowest height and remove all clippings, leaves and other debris from the area.

**Thatch.** If the area has thatch buildup, you will need to address this before you proceed.



**Cultivate.** For bare spots, you will need to till the top 4-6 inches of soil, then rake the soil before seeding. Several passes with a de-thatcher (power rake or vertical mower) is usually the best choice for large areas to slice an opening in the ground. You can then drop the seed into the furrows and lightly cover with soil. The mowing and de-thatching reduces plant competition and enhances light penetration for good germination and fastest establishment.

**Lime.** Lime should be applied in accordance with your soil test recommendations.



**Drag or slice.** After cultivation and application of the lime, drag the area with a large mat or a span of weighted down chain link fence behind a lawn tractor to help break cores and work lime into the cultivated soil, or use a vertical slicing machine to break up the cores if you are using a mechanical core aerating machine.

**Fertilizer.** As recommended by the soil test results, apply fertilizer using a rotary spreader to ensure uniform application.



**Seeding.** Ensure uniform broadcasting by passing over the area in one direction with half of the seeding rate then applying the remaining half at a right angles to the first pass. A slit seeder, consisting of a vertical grooving seeder and seed box, can be used to ensure good seed-to-soil contact with minimum disruption.

**Roll.** Roll the area to firm the soil and ensure good soil and seed contact.



**Mulch.** Bare areas that are seeded should be mulched with straw to enhance germination and reduce bird feeding.

**Water.** Keep newly planted lawns moist by irrigating lightly a few times a day. As the seedlings continue to grow, decrease the number of waterings per week, but increase the duration of water going onto the lawn to promote deep rooting.



For more information on reseeding, fertilizing, managing warm season grasses and many other lawn topics, please go to this site-the ["Lawns" chapter of the NC Extension Gardener Handbook](https://ncsu.edu/extension-gardener-handbook). Or feel free to contact Chris or me.

~Bill

## NC STATE

### Extension Master Gardener



## August Garden Tips

It's August, and that often means things may be looking a bit ragged in your yard and garden. Heat, humidity, insects and diseases have taken their toll over the course of the summer. Much of this burned-out look may be attributed to the end-of-summer wind-down and can be addressed with a little judicious deadheading and cutting back. However, if you feel the use of pesticides is warranted, please contact us for proper identification of the pest and help in selecting the best product to use. Phone 336-570-6740.

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. Drip irrigation saves water and keeps leaves dry. Drip irrigation systems tailored to the home garden are relatively inexpensive and easy to install. Call us for more information at 336-570-6740.

Collect soil samples from lawn and garden and send them to the NCDA Soils Lab for anal-

ysis. 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.

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.

Continue pinching back annual flowers to encourage new blooms 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.

Need more lawncare tips? Our Think Green Thursday Fall Lawncare class will be live and in person in the auditorium here at the Extension office on August 26 at 10 a.m. [Click here to register.](#)

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.

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.



## Arbor Gate Plant of the Month



### Spider Lily

### *Hymenocallis* 'Tropical Giant'

*Hymenocallis* is a bulbous member of the Amaryllis family that also includes Crinum and Lycoris (sometimes also known as 'spider lilies'). This spider lily is native mostly to the U.S., Mexico, and Central America and is an easy-to-grow moisture-lover.

*Hymenocallis* 'Tropical Giant' is an old garden hybrid that inhabits abandoned home sites in the South and is one of the most reliable of the spider lilies. The lush, glossy-green, amaryllis-like foliage forms a dramatic clump that, while very drought-tolerant, multiplies even better when kept moist. In August the 2' tall x 3' wide clumps are topped by white spider-like flowers that add a sweet fragrance in the evening. The small daffodil-like cup is highlighted with long white extensions that give the spidery appearance.

Here at Arbor Gate, our 'Tropical Giant' keeps company with other hardy tropicals -- Crinum, ginger lilies and cannas.

Read more here:

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/hymenocallis-crassifolia/>

