



## Coming Events

### Workshops and Demonstrations



Thurs., June 10, 10 a.m.—ONLINE  
*Feathering the Nest—Birds and Their Crazy Cries*

Thurs., June 24, 10 a.m.—ONLINE  
*Preserve at Home: Pickling 101*

Register here:

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

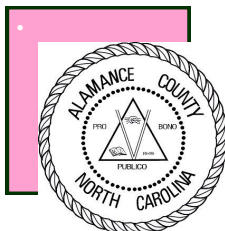
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Contact us :

Alamance County Cooperative  
Extension Service  
209-C N. Graham-Hopedale Rd.  
Burlington, NC 27217  
Phone: 336-570-6740  
E-mail:  
Bill Kleiner  
[bill\\_kleiner@ncsu.edu](mailto:bill_kleiner@ncsu.edu)  
Chris Stecker  
[christine.stecker@alamance-nc.com](mailto:christine.stecker@alamance-nc.com)

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## What's Wrong With My Plant??

Learning how to identify plant health issues takes years of experience to become really good at it, and even then, many plant problems are difficult to diagnose. Diseases and insects are only two of the factors that cause plant health issues. Environmental and cultural conditions, like soil fertility and texture, weather conditions, and quantity of light, are extremely important to understand. For instance, the second half of last year (July-Dec. 2020), Alamance County had almost 33 inches of rain and then the first quarter of this year (Jan.-March 2021) the county had over 14 inches of rain. Wet conditions cause a plant's feeder roots to die back. Then hot and dry conditions like we have been seeing in the past month result in plants dropping their leaves and dying back.



A good example is 'Sunshine Ligustrum', which is a nice bright yellow landscape shrub. We have seen many samples of this plant with dying limbs and dropping leaves. Our heavy clay soils combined with long periods of rain have caused some 'wet feet' conditions that 'Sunshine Ligustrum' doesn't like. So, remember, environmental and cultural conditions are other important factors that you need to take into consideration when diagnosing your plant issue.



## *Show us a sign or a symptom!*

To diagnose your plant disease, you need to identify your plant and its normal appearance. You want to know if the problem is a result of a living (biotic) or nonliving (abiotic) factor. A living organism like a fungus will spread throughout a plant causing various symptoms like leaf spots. A nonliving factor will many times cause plant dieback or nutritional symptoms.

The main questions to ask are

- ◇ When was the problem noticed?
- ◇ Was the damage sudden or gradual?
- ◇ How old are the affected plants?
- ◇ What percentage of the plant is affected?
- ◇ How severe is the injury?

Follow these questions up with environmental and cultural practice questions like

- ◇ Have there been temperature extremes before and after planting?
- ◇ Have we had a lot of rain or are we under drought conditions?
- ◇ Has the plant been watered and how much?
- ◇ Is a large area affected or is it just scattered plants?
- ◇ Is it the same plant type (tomatoes) affected or does it affect many different types of plants (tomatoes, peppers, beans, watermelons, etc.)
- ◇ What are the soil types and conditions?
- ◇ Have you used any herbicides, fertilizers or other chemicals?
- ◇ What other things can you think of that might have caused the problem?

After reviewing many of these questions, start checking for signs and symptoms of plant pathogens, insects, and mites. For instance, one sign is the presence of spider mites and their webbing on the undersides of many plant leaves. Symptoms are the yellowing of the leaves. Make sure you go back to your resources and try to solve the problem. Many of those resources are found at this website: <https://alamance.ces.ncsu.edu/>. You can enter the name of the plant in the search bar for specific information.

If you need help, bring a good sample into the Extension office for us to identify, or send some good photos of the problem to us. You'll find instructions for collecting a sample at the Plant Disease and Insect Clinic site: <https://pdic.ces.ncsu.edu/>. The site explains how to bring in samples for each crop, such as ornamentals, flowers, fruit, vegetables and other plants. It also explains how to bring insects for identification. If your sample needs further investigation, we can send the sample to the clinic. There is a charge for sending a physical sample to the PDIC, but images are still free. Hopefully following these simple steps of asking the right questions and bringing in the proper samples will help you to identify your problems and get an answer for control.

~Bill



*Entomosporium leaf spot (fungus)  
on Indian hawthorn*



*Herbicide injury on tomato*



*Signs of spider mites*



*Symptoms of Rose Rosette virus*

## NC STATE

### Extension Master Gardener



## June Garden Tips

Summer pruning begins this month. Now is a good time to prune spring flowering shrubs like azaleas, forsythia, quince and rhododendron. All of these plants will start to form their flower buds for next spring in July and August. As long as they are pruned before the first of July, they will not lose any of next spring's bloom. It is fine to do severe pruning on any of these shrubs that have gotten out of control. They will put out new leaves shortly and will look fine by fall.

Summer pruning and training of fruit trees is an often neglected chore that will lessen the dormant pruning work and improve fruit quality and yield. Contact Extension for more information.

Because it is less invigorating than dormant season pruning, summer pruning won't stimulate growth in the form of suckers and water sprouts. So, this is the best time to remove unwanted suckers from crape myrtles and other trees. It's also a fine time to do any needed pruning and shaping of 'bleeders', such as dogwoods and maples.

Remember that spring-planted trees and shrubs will need extra care during the warm days ahead. Do not fertilize these plants until next year, but keep them well-watered all summer.

Continue to plant all kinds of beans and southern peas. Make second plantings of tomatoes, cucumbers and squash for a late crop when older plants fade. Cuttings of sucker shoots without buds from healthy tomato plants are easy to root in moist potting medium and will give you a second planting free of charge!

Harvest garlic when leaves begin to brown. Allow to dry in a covered, shady area with good air circulation. When dry, brush off any remaining soil, trim roots close to the bulb and either trim leaves or braid. Store at room temperature.

Did you know that anything that collects more than one tablespoon of water will support a generation of mosquitoes? Empty, rinse and refill birdbaths and pet water dishes at least once a week. Empty saucers under pots or eliminate the

saucers altogether. Places that collect water and can't be emptied are candidates for mosquito 'dunks'—floating rings that contain a bacterium toxic to mosquito larvae but not to pond fish, birds or pets. Be sure gutters and downspouts are running freely—a clogged gutter is another potential mosquito breeding ground. Look high and low for sources of standing water. Wholesale spraying of your yard and garden has proven to be ineffective at preventing mosquitoes from crossing property lines. The best offense is a good defense.

All garden vegetables will benefit from an even moisture supply when the weather heats up. This can prevent bitter cucumbers, underdeveloped onions and blossom-end rot in tomatoes. Supplement rainfall when there is less than one inch per week and keep the garden mulched. Use drip irrigation or soaker hoses to water efficiently without wetting the foliage.

Add a light fertilizer side dressing to vegetables that have begun to set fruit. Be careful not to over fertilize okra. Excess nitrogen will cause rank growth but little fruit.



*Arbor Gate Plant of the Month*

English Lavender

*Lavandula angustifolia*

Not English, but rather of Mediterranean descent, and that clue is the key to growing this fragrant herb successfully—excellent drainage in a sun-drenched location! We struggled to grow lavender at Arbor Gate until we planted it in our sunny parking lot scree garden, and boy are the pollinators happy that we did!

Perfect in a sunny container as well, lavender requires little care and only occasional water—you won't have to call on the neighbor kid to remember while you're on vacation.

Pests—including deer and rabbits—won't bother the ever green-gray foliage or the lovely flowers, which will bloom from the last of May until frost.

If you're going to try it in your garden, keep in mind that lavender prefers a sweeter soil, so the addition of lime won't hurt, and to enhance the drainage, mulch with gravel rather than organic materials.

Read more here:

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/lavandula-angustifolia/>

