

November 2021
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Coming Events

November 1 - 19

4-H Wreath and Garland Sale—click picture for info:



We are still planning for Think Green Thursday workshops and classes for 2022. We will begin in February with tree fruit and other pruning sessions at Buster Sykes Orchard. Please let us know if you have any other horticulture-related topics you'd like to see covered. Just send me an e-mail, or call us!
-Chris

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Alamance Gardener

Alamance County Cooperative Extension Horticulture Department

It's Showtime!

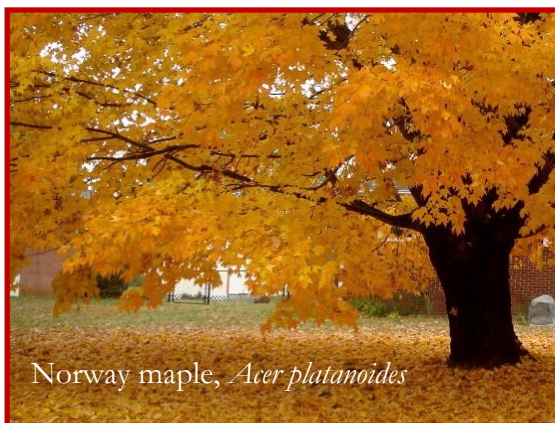


Sugar maple, *Acer saccharum*

Oh! How I love Autumn! Summer has breathed her last overheated breath, and a spectacular new show is just beginning!

Leaves are green in the spring and summer because that's when they are making lots of chlorophyll. Chlorophyll is important because it helps plants make energy from sunlight—a process called photosynthesis.

But in the fall, because of changes in day length and temperature, the leaves stop their food-making process. The chlorophyll breaks down, the green color disappears, and the yellow (xanthophylls) to orange (carotenoids) colors become visible and give the leaves part of their fall splendor. Temperature, light, and water supply have an influence on the degree and the duration of fall color. Low temperatures above freezing will favor anthocyanin formation producing bright reds. Some mixtures of pigments give rise to the reddish and purplish fall colors of trees such as dogwoods and sumacs, while others give the sugar maple its brilliant orange.



Norway maple, *Acer platanoides*



Flowering dogwood,
Cornus florida

Nature's Own Mulch

The autumn foliage of some trees shows only yellow colors. Foliage of others, like many oaks, displays mostly browns. All these colors are due to the mixing of varying amounts of the chlorophyll residue and other pigments in the leaf during the fall season.

But, the leaves of all deciduous trees will eventually fall. Some hang on to their leaves and are called tardily deciduous or marcescent. You'll be dealing with those leaves as late as March.

While we're on the subject of dealing with leaves, why not leave them? They're nature's own (and best!) mulch. Why rake them to the curb and then buy truckloads of mulch to replace them?

If you want to have a lawn, you will have to remove the leaves in order to allow the grass to grow. Rake or blow them into areas where you would normally add mulch. You'd be surprised how much weeding you'll eliminate by having a 3-inch layer of leaves. Even better, use your mower to mulch the leaves. They'll break down faster and add excellent organic matter to the soil, or as the 'brown' in your compost pile.



Young beech trees are notoriously marcescent



More Colorful Choices



Crape myrtle



Japanese maple 'Bloodgood'



Rabbiteye blueberry

Oak leaf hydrangea



Cousins-
fothergilla and witch hazel



Winterberry holly



Amsonia hubrechtii



Japanese maple
'Sango Kaku'

Just a few more of the Arbor Gate plants we can count on for great color every autumn.

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.

Plant garlic early in the month. Separate cloves, leaving the papery covering intact, and plant 2 inches deep (to the bottom of the clove). Just like the spring-flowering bulbs, keep the pointy side up!

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 though the growing season. 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 fallen rose leaves which may harbor disease organisms, 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 tanks of garden equipment for storage.

Arbor Gate Plant of the Month



Taxodium distichum

Bald Cypress

Maybe not for your pocket garden, but this robust swamp native is an excellent underused choice for the landscape, especially if excessive moisture is an issue. Remarkably, this versatile plant also does very well in a drier location, such the situation offered here at Arbor Gate. Cypress “knees” won’t be as prolific as they would be in a more watery environment, but the wide spreading roots may pop one up a dozen feet or more from the mother plant, just to keep things interesting. Planted in 2003, our *Taxodium distichum* plays well with others in the garden. Over the years, it has provided an increasing amount of shade and we have slowly changed the underplantings mix to suit. Along with dawn redwood, bald cypress has the unique trait (among needled conifers) of being deciduous. Before they carpet the ground, the needles turn a lovely russet and make a very pretty mulch as they fall.

Read more here:

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/taxodium-distichum/>