



Coming Events



Thurs., June 9, 10 a.m. @ BSF

Summer Fruit Tour at the Orchard

Sat., June 18, 10 a.m. @ BSF

Summer Fruit Tour at the Orchard

Thurs., June 23, 10 a.m. @ BSF

Summer Fruit Tour at the Orchard

Thurs., July 7, 10 a.m. @ BSF

Summer Fruit Tour at the Orchard

Sat., July 16, 10 a.m. @ BSF

Summer Fruit Tour at the Orchard

We will partner with FCS Agent Elisa Phillips and the Extension Master Food Volunteers at several upcoming Summer Fruit Tours—get ready for a taste of what's growing on! Registration required for each tour:

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

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the link below:



Never Mind Lions and Tigers and Bears...



Dekay's brown snake

This time of year we hear the horrified cries of “SNAKE!!!!” ringing throughout the county. I can hear the calls in my office, mostly because many dead snakes are brought in to the office for identification—in person, or in a photograph. The little snake is less than a foot long, so certainly it is a baby copper-head, what else could it be?!



Believe it or not, the most commonly sighted ‘baby’ snake this year has been the one pictured above—Dekay’s brown snake, and that ‘baby’ is full grown at about 10 inches long. Another grown up baby is the worm snake, full grown at 9-12”.

Both of these enjoy a diet of slugs, earthworms and other tiny invertebrates, which of course inhabit areas under mulch or rocks or other garden materials, so chances are you could be startled when you uncover one while gardening. I know I still jump when I uncover one!



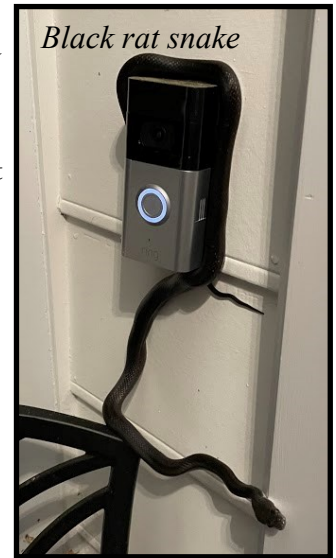
Worm snake

Could Be Worse, You Could Be in Australia



baby black rat snake

This little snake really IS a baby. It will grow up to be our most commonly seen adult snake. Named for its favorite food, the rat snake is a constrictor and not venomous, but you might get nipped if you grab him/her. At right is a young adult demonstrating its talent for climbing. At least it had the good manners to ring.



Black rat snake



baby copperhead

Here's the baby to beware of. This pit viper is the only venomous snake you are apt to find in Alamance County. Note the bright yellow-green tip on its tail—unique among the little snakes. This baby will grow out of its bright tail but retain the distinctive markings, shaded hourglasses of brown and copper on a heavy body.

There are several other snakes commonly seen here in Alamance County, none of which are venomous, though they may look like a few that are.



Northern water snake

The northern water snake is the resident most frequently mistaken for a cottonmouth or water moccasin. The common garter snake is another garden friend, sometimes lighter or darker, but always wearing garters.



Garter snake

To learn more about the snakes of North Carolina, go here: [SNAKES](#)

[of NC](#) Note the maps that are featured with each species. Feel free to bring your snakes (if living, please bring in a clear container) pictures of snakes, or any other gardening questions to us.

~Chris

Mark Your Calendar!

**Thursday, September 29, 7:00 PM
at Burlington's Paramount Theater**

Reknowned naturalist and author Douglas Tallamy explains how, by simply adding native plants in our own backyards, we ourselves can become nature's best hope.

Tickets are just \$5.00 for this community event sponsored by Alamance County Extension Master Gardeners.

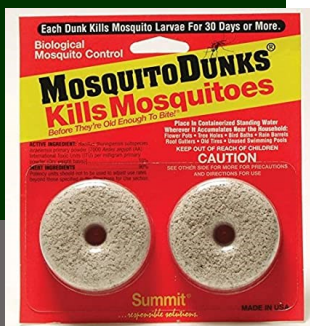
Tickets available now at the Paramount Theater Box Office.

**NATURE'S BEST HOPE
A Conversation with
Doug Tallamy, PhD**



NC STATE

Extension Master Gardener



June Garden Tips

Continue to plant all kinds of beans and southern peas. Make second plantings of tomatoes, cucumbers and squash. Cuttings of sucker shoots without buds from healthy tomato plants are easy to root in moist potting medium—with care you can plant them right in the garden.

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.

Keep scouting throughout the gardens for signs of pests and diseases—most problems can be solved if caught early enough. If there are holes in the leaves, look for the culprit. If none can be found, it's safe to say that the bad actor has dined and dashed. If you do find one, bring the suspect in to us for identification and a course of action, if any is needed.

Now is a good time to prune spring flowering shrubs like azaleas, forsythia, quince and rhododendrons. 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 gotten out

They will put out new leaves shortly and will look fine by fall.

Now is also the best time to remove suckers from trees and shrubs, such as crape myrtles. Summer pruning is less invigorating than late winter pruning, so the suckers will be less likely to resprout.

Pinch or cut back fall-blooming perennials such as asters and chrysanthemums this month. This haircut will encourage bushier growth and less flopping come bloom time.

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

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 sau-

cers 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. 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.

Did a few seedling trees get away from you and invade your borders? If they're too big to pull, cut them off low and treat the stump with full-strength glyphosate or other brush killer. Treat within 15 seconds of making the cut—plants are quick to seal off a wound and soon won't absorb the herbicide. This method also works for woody vines that climb trees.



Stokes aster

Stokesia laevis

Your resolution to add more native plants to your garden will be off to a great start with the addition of Stokes aster. This great plant will shine in the pollinator patch in shades of purple, blue and white from the end of May until frost (deadheading will help to extend the bloom). Displaying the dependable nature of our native plants, *Stokesia laevis* is the perennial that keeps its promise, coming back stronger every year and possibly sending a few seeds elsewhere in the garden to brighten a dull spot with a patch of color. If the new plant isn't where you want it, Stokes aster is easily transplanted to another location in your garden or that of a willing friend.

Stokes aster isn't fussy about soil and is drought tolerant once established. Plant in as much sun as possible for best bloom performance.

Easy to propagate by division and not bothered by deer or rabbits, *Stokesia laevis* deserves a spot in your garden.

Read more here: [STOKES ASTER](#)



*Creamy yellow
cultivar 'Mary
Gregory'*