



Alamance Gardener

Alamance County Cooperative Extension Horticulture Department

Coming Events



Sat., July 16, 10 a.m. @ BSF
Summer Fruit Tour at the Orchard
Thu., July 21, 10 a.m. @ BSF
Summer Fruit Tour at the Orchard
Thu., Aug 11, 10 a.m. @ BSF
Summer Fruit Tour at the Orchard
*Thu., Aug 18, 10 a.m. at the Ag Bldg
Fall Lawn Care
Sat., Aug 20, 10 a.m. @ BSF
Summer Fruit Tour at the Orchard
Thu. Aug 25, 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/>

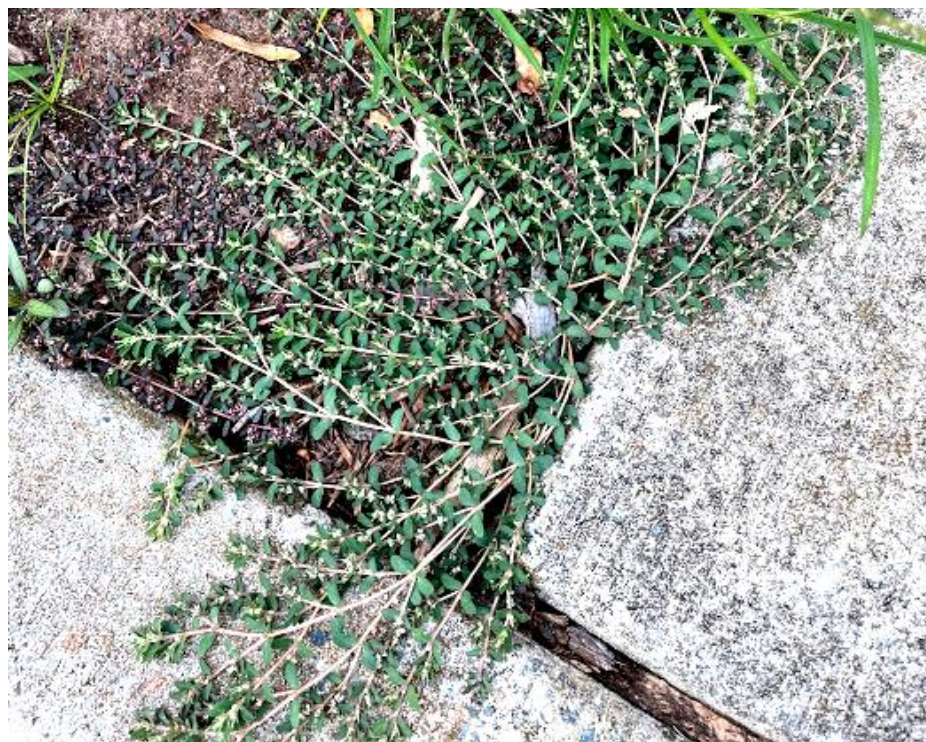
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the link below:



The Scourge of Spurge (and other summer garden nightmares)



This dirt devil lays low, hugging the ground, blending with the soil, well camouflaged with tiny dusty spotted leaves and reddish-tan stems. What's the harm, then? You can barely see it!

The harm lies in where the harm of all weeds lies—the robbery of soil moisture and nutrition from the plants you're trying to grow. Not to mention they spoil the view. A weed is, after all, merely a plant growing where it's not wanted.

So, what to do about these villains?

As they say, the best offense is often a good defense, and while you're over-seeing the weedy garden in front of you, waiting for inspiration and a cool morning to start weeding, there are a couple of things you can contemplate for future weed mitigation.



Weapons for the Weed War



Mulch. Mulching beds with 2-3 inches of ground hardwood or pine bark, or even pine needles, can prevent many annual weeds from germinating, especially those that require light to germinate, such as crabgrass. Use the leaves you rake from the lawn this fall to mulch the garden.



Dense plantings of desirable plants or groundcovers can also out compete weeds.

Preemergence herbicides. This granular product nips germinating weeds in the bud—literally. The trick is to apply to the area at the right time and water in. As seeds begin to germinate, the herbicide kills the seedlings before they grow. Apply in late August or September for winter weeds and again in late winter for summer annual weeds—such as spurge. Careful, though, these products prevent germination of seeds, that could include those you'd like to see grow, like grass seed. ALWAYS read and follow label instructions.

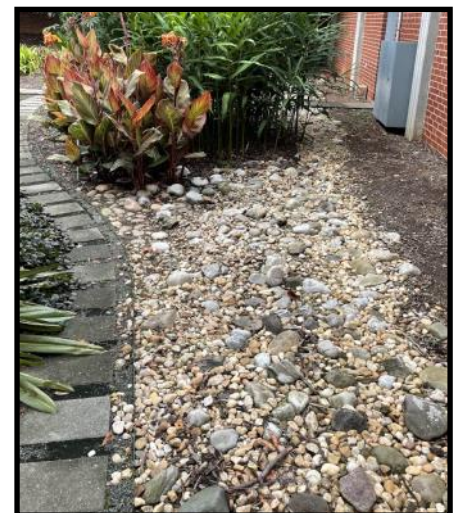
Post-emergent strategies

Hand pull. Water soil well before starting for most satisfying experience. Best choice for weeds near desirable plants.



Stirrup or scuffle hoe. Easy back and forth 'scuffling' takes care of weeds between rows or on pathways. Even does a superb job on pea gravel areas like that which surrounds our parking lot scree garden. If the gravel is a bit bigger, just turn up the heat!

Flame Weeder. To solve an erosion issue, we installed a 'river of rock' under the overhang on our building. Looks great, but a real challenge to weed. Just ask these EMGVs.



The flame weeder is a great solution for those tight spaces in concrete and gravel walkways and driveways. Just be careful not to use it on mulch materials or desirable plants. Read and follow the instructions!

Just a Few of the Usual (Summer) Suspects

Click on the name to read more about these common summer weeds.

[Virginia buttonweed](#)
(a perennial)



[Purslane](#)
(an annual)



[Crabgrass](#) (an annual)



[Goose grass](#) and
[prostrate spurge](#)
(annuals)



[Virginia copperleaf](#)
(an annual)



[Wood sorrell](#) (a perennial that seeds readily)



[Broadleaf plantain](#)
(a perennial)



[Dog fennel](#)
(a perennial)



[Nut sedge](#) (note the triangular stems) (a perennial)



NC STATE**Extension
Master Gardener**

Spotted lanternfly

*July Garden Tips*

Planthoppers are invading the garden this time of year. The flatid plant hopper is the one that's leaving fluffy white stuff on the stems of your plants. They're harmless and do little damage to the plants. However, the plant hopper pictured at left—spotted lanternfly—is a real bad guy to watch out for. This planthopper is considerably larger than the little guy making the fluff. The battle is on up north, but a colony has recently been discovered in Forsyth County. If you see one of these, take a photo, squish it, then report [here](#).

Fertilize established warm-season (Zoysia or Bermudagrass) lawns at the rate of one pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. Unlike fescue, which should be kept tall, warm-season lawns need to be maintained at a height of about 1". This promotes dense growth and discourages many weeds.

Even moisture at the root zone of tomatoes may help prevent blossom-end rot. Use soaker hoses or drip irrigation rather than overhead watering to reduce disease pressure and keep plants mulched. Even moisture is also key to preventing bitterness in cucumbers.

Plant Brussels sprouts, carrots and rutabagas from July 1 to 15. Around the middle of the month begin planting beets, broccoli and collards. Keep summer vegetables picked to encourage production.

Mature vines of poison ivy, trumpet creeper, English ivy and wisteria that climb your trees can be killed at this time. Cut a chunk from the vine near the base of the plant, being careful not to cut the resident tree. Apply brush killer to the cut. The cut must be fresh, so be prepared to apply the brush killer as

soon as you make the cut. The vines above the cut will die. Leave them on the tree or strip them, bag, and dispose in the trash. Never burn poison ivy!!!

If you are willing to keep them well-watered all summer, roses may be fertilized every four weeks until mid-August. This will keep them blooming well into fall. However, if deep watering is not an option, roses can be rested this month. Keep blossoms cut to encourage further bloom, too!

Keepp birdbaths filled and clean them out at least once a week to discourage mosquitoes. Clean hummingbird feeders frequently and refill them with a solution of four parts water and one part sugar. Boil the solution to dissolve the sugar and allow to cool before refilling feeder.

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

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

Renowned 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.

Arbor Gate Plant of the Month

Coneflower

Echinacea purpurea

Put coneflower on your short list of plants for your pollinator garden. This pretty native calls to the butterflies and bees with a sweet promise of nectar. Autumn promises the birds a cornucopia of nutritious seeds. Unless you count the goldfinches which occasionally nibble on the petals, pests don't bother Echinacea. Even the deer don't count them on their favorites list.

Growing in a nice clump 2-3 feet tall or better (depending on the variety), you can count on this sturdy, drought-resistant perennial to light up your garden for years. Purple not your color? Breeders have been hard at work bringing an entire range of color to the species—from pale lavender to shocking red. The pollinators don't seem to mind the new colors, but beware of some of the fancier cultivars featuring central bosses obscured by an impenetrable mass of petals—pollinators can't find the nectar or the pollen!

Read more [here](#):

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/echinacea-purpurea/>

