



# Alamance Gardener

*Alamance County Cooperative Extension Horticulture Department*

## Coming Events



Thu., Mar. 2, 9 a.m.-noon class at BSF\*  
*Blueberry School*

Sat., Mar. 11, 10 a.m., DEMO at BSF\*  
*Pruning Fruit Plants*

Thu., Mar. 16, 10 a.m.  
*Pruning Shrubs and Trees*

Thu., Apr. 6, 10 a.m.  
*Lawn Alternatives*

\*BSF pruning demos will be at Buster Sykes Demonstration Farm, 2430 Turner Road, Mebane, NC. Pruning Shrubs and Trees and Lawn Alternatives classes will be held at the Agricultural Building, 209 N. Graham-Hopedale.

Registration is required for all classes.

Links to register for all upcoming Extension events can be found here:  
<https://alamance.ces.ncsu.edu/>

### Contact us :

Alamance County Cooperative  
Extension Service  
209-C N. Graham-Hopedale Rd.  
Burlington, NC 27217  
Phone: 336-570-6740  
E-mail:  
[askanemgee@gmail.com](mailto:askanemgee@gmail.com)  
[bill\\_kleiner@ncsu.edu](mailto:bill_kleiner@ncsu.edu)

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## Changes



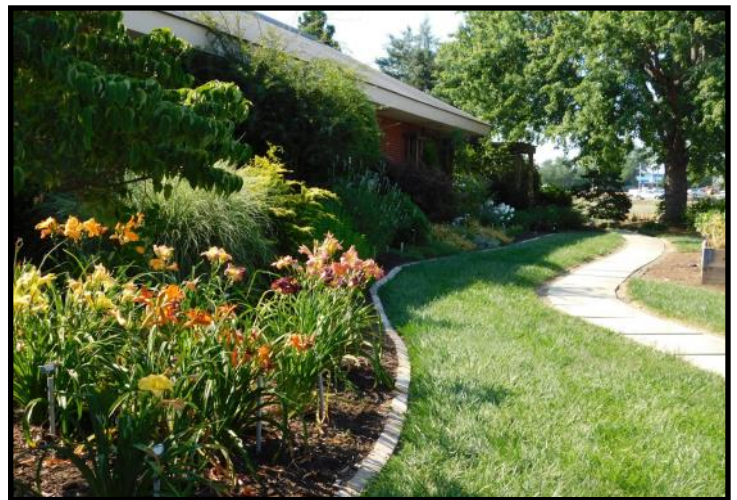
Whew! That was fast! An incredible run with the EMGVs since 2002 and as your EMGV Program Coordinator and Horticulture Technician for better than 16 years.

But now, it's time for me to step away from the office and make room for a new garden guide—your new consumer horticulture agent! This player will be named sooner rather than later, so stay tuned!

With my retirement will go the monthly issue of Alamance Gardener in your inbox. Don't worry, the garden tips have been mostly the same information for lo these many years and you can find several years of issues here: <https://alamance.ces.ncsu.edu/>. Just type Alamance Gardener and the month in the search bar.

So, I'm posed here in the Holly Tunnel Mark Danielely and I created back in 2009. It's still part of Arbor Gate Teaching Garden, which has metamorphosed into quite a butterfly since its inception in 2002. You might want to come visit—the plants are labeled and most have been time-tested to survive, even thrive, in our Alamance County soils and weather conditions. (See the next page for more transformation photos.)

The Extension Master Gardener Volunteers (and I will be one of them!) will still be around to care for the gardens and to answer your gardening questions. Get in touch at [askanemgee@gmail.com](mailto:askanemgee@gmail.com), or call 336-570-6740.



## NC STATE

Extension  
Master Gardener

### March Garden Tips

**F**inish pruning roses this month. Reduce hybrid tea roses to 24 inches, prune to an outside bud and remove dead wood. Begin your rose spray program as soon as first leaves appear. Even better, plant some of the tough shrub roses that don't require spraying. Prune these to five or six sturdy branches about knee-high, removing any spindly, crossing or otherwise bothersome branches.

**F**ertilize pecan trees at the rate of 4 pounds of 10-10-10 per inch of trunk diameter. Spread the fertilizer under the limbs of the tree to the full extent of the drip line.

**I**n the vegetable garden, sow seeds of beets, lettuce, peas and turnips. Plant cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, head lettuce and onions.

**I**f your cool-season vegetable garden usually succumbs to unseasonable heat, try gardening in containers. Pots can easily be moved to a more sheltered spot if unusual heat – or cold – threatens.

**C**ut back old foliage of liriope, pampas and other ornamental grasses as close as possible to the ground without damaging new growth tips.

**R**emove spent flowers from spring bulbs but leave the foliage to replenish the bulb for next year. Don't braid or otherwise damage the leaves, but allow them to die down naturally. Plant other annuals and perennials among the bulbs to disguise unsightly foliage.

**D**ig and divide perennials as growth tips emerge. Hostas especially should be dug before foliage expands or risk damaging the leaves. The plant will survive the damage, but the broken leaves will remain unattractive all season.

#### *Change Your Lawn!*

In the 16th-century Renaissance, lawns were cultivated by the wealthy in both France and England, though they were more likely planted with chamomile or thyme\* than with grass.

Closely-shorn grass lawns first emerged in 17th-century England at the homes of wealthy landowners. Before lawnmowers, only the rich could afford to hire the many hands needed to scythe and weed the grass, so a lawn was a mark of wealth and status.

With the invention of the lawnmower in 1830, the English lawn mindset was passed on to us in U.S. suburbia. Instead of hiring hands (though sometimes we do that, too), we now pour thousands of dollars, gallons of chemicals and hours of labor on the soil in an attempt to create a monoculture of non-native plants that seems to serve no purpose other than to give us neighborhood bragging rights, or at least save us from neighbor shaming or HOA finger-wagging.

Turfgrass is simply not the best planting for many sites. It needs mowing, it needs water, it wants fertilizer, and many types don't like shade — it's pretty picky stuff. It takes a lot of work, water, and fertilizer to keep a lawn looking good.

Turf may be the best choice for golf courses and soccer pitches—croquet anyone? But trying to grow a lawn where the maple roots have invaded or on a sun-scorched bank can be a frustrating, fruitless endeavor.

Attend our April 6 Think Green Thursday class "Lawn Alternatives" to get some fresh ideas for covering the ground in a less input-intensive, more attractive way. Change you lawn! Registration is required. Register here: <https://alamance.ces.ncsu.edu/>

\*Both of these are low-growing plants to consider growing in your modern turfless lawn.



## *Arbor Gate Plant of the Month*



### Trailing phlox

### *Phlox nivalis*

You say you can't get grass to grow on that hot, sunny bank? This great southeast native may be just the lawn alternative you're after! Trailing phlox is the ideal groundcover for a hot, dry, well-drained site. The 4-inch tall mat of shiny, needle-like foliage is mostly evergreen and, beginning in early March, it's virtually smothered with flowers in pastel shades that persist through April. A shearing of spent blooms can encourage sporadic bloom until frost. Clumps slowly spread to about 3 feet and are just right for rock gardens or to cascade over walls or as part of your flowering lawn.

Here at Arbor Gate Teaching Garden, *Phlox nivalis* 'Camla', a Plant Delights selection, has performed admirably in our parking lot scree garden since the garden's installation in 2015.

Toss the turf and consider *Phlox nivalis* to include in your sunny site flowering lawn.

Read more here: <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/phlox-nivalis/>

