

The Clod-Hopper



Volume 27 Edition 4 Gardeners of Wake County, Inc. – Raleigh, NC

APRIL 2011

NC STATE FAIR 2011

The GWC Board decided not to sign a contract to assist with the Flower Show at the NC State Fair for 2011. Members of the Club that enjoy participating in the maintenance of the Flower Show area grounds are encouraged to volunteer to do so. Fair designated work days will be listed in the



Club Calendar and additional information will be available on the GWC website. Erv Evans is the Superintendent of the 2011 Show. As more information becomes available from the Fair on volunteer opportunities for individuals for the competitive shows it will be included in the *Clodhopper* and on our website.

CLUB MEETINGS

Meetings are at 7:30 pm at the JC Raulston Arboretum

- April 15-17** Azalea Sale open to public
- April 19** Commissioner of Agriculture Steve Troxler
- May 17** Club Picnic

COMMUNITY GARDENING

The two garden plots the Club will use for their "Plant-a-Row for the Hungry" project will be tilled and the soil prepared in March. There are several organizations and individuals working in both locations so it is a good opportunity to

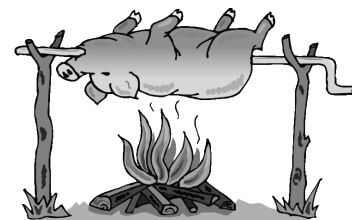


meet other community gardeners and spread the word about **Gardeners of Wake County**.

Gardening help will be needed from our members beginning in early April. Mac Williamson is in charge of the project so please call him to volunteer.

MAY PICNIC

The Club's annual picnic will be held at the home of Mark Boone off Ebenezer Church Road in Raleigh. It is scheduled for our regular May meeting day but will begin a bit earlier in the afternoon. It will be a pig picking at a cost of \$5 per person. Reservations may be made at the April meeting. More information will be available at the April meeting but mark your calendars now for a "really big party." A reservation form is included on page 3.



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NEW GARDENING BOOK

Toby Bost, a retired extension agent from Winston-Salem, has collaborated with Leah Chester-Davis to edit "*The Successful Garden Guide – North Carolina*". It will be available in book stores in late March. If you are new to North Carolina or want to give a gift to a new resident of the state

New Gardening Book (continued on page 4)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Vice President
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Treasurer
BRUCE BYFORD

Secretary
PAULA HOFFMANN

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BOB JACKSON
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MAC WILLIAMSON

Activities	Juliette LaBonte
Audit	Gary Jewel
Azalea Sale	Bob Hartgrove
Beautification Awards	Ginny Parker
Club Awards	Spencer Clark
Endowment Investment Chairman	Marcy Hege
Flower Show	Charles Gilliam
Friendship	Paula Hoffmann
Historical	Dick Lankford
Membership	Carole Johnson
Newsletter	Anne Clapp
Nominating	Ed Ponek
Programs (ex officio)	Mark Boone
Projects	vacant
Publicity	Vandy Bradow
Scholarship	Leon Lucas
Telephone	Jim Wilson
Webmaster	Jim Wilson

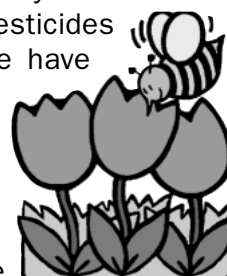
www.gardenersofwakecounty.org

POLLINATOR GARDENS

Why do so many of our plants not set seeds? Why is fruit mal-formed, or dropped from the plant? It could be from inadequate pollination. Debbie Roos, an Extension Agent from Chatham County, shared with us some information she has collected in her work with the organic farming group that has developed in Chatham County.

More than 80% of all flowering plants need the help of animals (beneficial insects such as flies, beetles, wasps, ants, butterflies, moths and bees; mice, bats, hummingbirds and other animals) to move heavy pollen grains from one plant to another. When we use insecticides and pesticides indiscriminately we may be endangering some of the pollinators we must have in our gardens.

Because bees are our most important pollinators we may need to change some of our gardening practices to encourage them to stay in our gardens. We need to use pesticides carefully, reduce tilling where we have ground nesting bees, allow crops to bolt at the end of the season, stagger planting dates to extend the planting season and keep the insects in the area, and avoid disturbing the areas where native bees live.



It is important to have flowering plants in the garden throughout the growing year. Check the plants in your yard to see what gaps in blooming you may want to fill. Late winter and early spring blooms are very important. Make sure that bloom times overlap throughout the growing season. Patches of flowers about 4 feet in diameter are more efficient for attracting pollinators than scattering them over a wide area.

Research has shown that gardens with 10 or more species of plants attracted the largest numbers of bees. Include plants that provide both nectar and pollen. We may enjoy the newest cultivars of flowering

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| 🌸 | New Members | 🌸 |
| 🌸 | Thomas Pope, Raleigh | 🌸 |
| 🌸 | Maggie Larson, Cary | 🌸 |
| 🌸 | Johnny & Sherrill Johnson, Garner | 🌸 |
| 🌸 | Will & Donna Farmer, Wake Forest | 🌸 |
| 🌸 | Kent Cline Earnhardt, Raleigh | 🌸 |

ANNUAL GARDEN CLUB PICNIC

The picnic will be an old-fashioned North Carolina “pig pickin” at Mark Boone’s place. Guests are welcome. The price will be \$5 per person. Bar-b-cued chicken is available for “those who do not pick pig“. Desert is not included with the meal so any member who wishes to bring a desert to share is welcome to do so. **Complete the reservation form below** and mail it, with your **check payable to “Gardeners of Wake County”**, to Charles Gilliam 2113 Cowper Drive, Raleigh, NC 27608. You may also bring the form and check to the April meeting.

Reservation for May 17 Gardeners of Wake County Picnic:

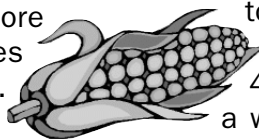
Member’s Name _____	\$5.00
Guests: _____	\$5.00
_____	\$5.00
_____	\$5.00
Total Payment \$ _____	

plants for their double flowers, unusual colors and lack of pollen to reduce our allergies but they are not that attractive to our pollinators.

There will be a field trip to the Chatham Mills Demonstration Pollinator Garden in Pittsboro later in the year. You may also want to check Debbie’s websites: www.growingsmallfarms.org and www.protectpollinators.org for additional information.

SWEET CORN

The first step to a successful corn crop in Wake County is to control the squirrel, raccoon and deer population around your garden. The next is soil preparation. Add organic matter, lime to correct the pH and fertilizer before sowing seeds. If corn is grown in an area where beans were grown last year the soil will contain more nitrogen since legumes add nitrogen to the soil. Nitrogen fertilizer will need to be applied again when the corn is knee high.



The first corn crop is usually planted in April in our area. The soil temperature should be close

to 55 degrees for good germination and quick growth. The earlier you can get the corn started the more likely you are to get your first crop harvested before corn earworms become a problem. A corn crop usually matures in about 2.5 months.

Plant corn in “blocks”, not a long single row. If you plant 3 ten-foot rows 30 inches apart the wind can do a good job of pollinating the corn. John Harris always recommended planting one packet of corn seed per person per season.

The best part of growing your own corn is getting it to the table quickly. Your editor’s method is to harvest the ears you need for dinner. Cut the bottom off even with the bottom of the ear and the top even with the tip of the ear. Remove enough shucks to leave 2 layers and the silks. Put a paper towel on the bottom of the microwave oven and arrange 4 to 6 ears like the spokes in a wheel with the tops touching and the bottoms evenly spaced around the wheel. Microwave on high for 3 minutes then rotate the ears so section that was in contact with the paper towel is on

top. Microwave for an additional 2 minutes. Allow to sit for a minute then remove the husk and silks. Smear with butter to taste.

LAWN CHORES

With the dry winter, fescue and bluegrass lawns may be stressed. If you applied fertilizer in early March keep the lawn watered weekly to assure it has had its recommended inch of water a week. Fescue does not need to be shorter than 2½ to 3 inches. It is also wise to remove no more than 1/3 the height of the blades in a single mowing.

If you want to change from a cool season lawn to a warm season grass such as Bermuda, centipede, St. Augustine or zoysia April is the ideal month to make the conversion. If you already have a warm season lawn you can apply fertilizer about 2 weeks after it greens up.



**GARDENERS OF
WAKE COUNTY**

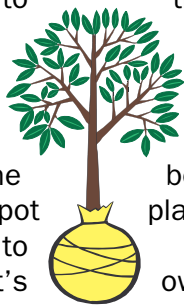
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Zebulon, NC 27597

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ORNAMENTALS

With all the April plant sales many of us will be adding some new plants to our landscapes. Remember that in digging holes, “bigger is better” in compacted clay soils. Amend the soil with organic material to help break up clay particles and add lime for those plants that prefer more alkaline soils. The plant should not be deeper in the ground than it was in the pot and some gardeners prefer to have the top of the new plant’s rootball about 1/2 inch above the soil of the filled hole, then use mulch to blend the rootball and soil line. This allows a bit of space for soil in the new hole to settle and not disturb the growth of the new plant.



If there is not enough space in the yard for those new plants you just purchased you may be able to make a container planting for the patio or front entrance. Your editor uses a couple of heavy bricks in the bottom of large, lightweight containers to reduce the chances of getting them blown over. Make sure the planters still drain well before you put the plants in place.

You may want to make your own potting soil for large containers. Combinations of aged fine bark, sand, composted manure and peat moss will work. If you are adding new plants to an existing container you will want to replace the organic material that was depleted during the past year.

New Gardening Book

(continued from page 1)

this book is a 220-page crash course in how to garden successfully in our state. It covers the basics of planning and planting a landscape, top plant choices, seasonal garden calendars, environmental concerns and a section of basic questions gardeners ask — with a very concise answer for each.

The book is a carefully edited compilation of the Extension’s “Successful Gardener” newsletters, written by extension agents from all over the State, and published over a period of 7 years. Many of the photographs were contributed by Dr. Bob Lyons, the former director of the JC Raulston Arboretum.