

The Clod-Hopper



Volume 27 Edition 12 Gardeners of Wake County, Inc. – Raleigh, NC

DECEMBER 2011

THE HONORABLE SPEAKER

The program was entitled “Gentleman Farming in Wake County”. The speaker was The Honorable Paul Newby, Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court. He reminded us that attorneys have to be careful of their words. An example was of the attorney at a trial questioning the doctor who had performed an autopsy. “Sir, do you perform all your autopsies on dead people?” Answer: “Yes, I find the live ones put up a fight.” To avoid a similar mistake he planned to refer to a text of his remarks as needed.

His decision to purchase a farm near Falls Lake in 1995 may be a result of watching the TV show “Green Acres” as a child. One justification was that he thought with 4 children under the age of 8 he should be sure they knew where their food came from. The family continues to live in

town but the farm is an educational/recreational resource for the whole family.

There is a vegetable garden — a large one. If you have a large garden you really need a tractor. If you have children they need a horse — Famous Amos. With the building boom, landscapers needed ornamental plants. It is easy to grow Nellie Stevens holly and Autumn Blaze maple. The plants are thriving but there is not a demand for them in the current economic climate.

The children have grown chickens, sheep, cows and goats as 4-H projects. When you have animals, you have to have fences. Sheep are



(continued on page 4)

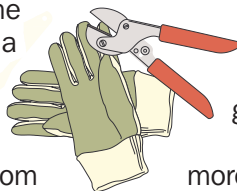
PRUNING DEMONSTRATION

The gardening tip for November was how to prune a crape myrtle. CJ Dykes chose to prune the demonstration plant as a small tree form rather than a bush form. Since the plant blooms in the summer on new wood it should be pruned in the winter. It may be pruned as a single trunk specimen or it may be allowed to develop more than one trunk. If you do not want a stem coming from the base of the plant to become a “trunk” it needs to be cut back to the adjoining branch or root.

Remove branches growing to the inside of the plant, cutting them back

to an adjoining limb as well. Prune branches so they do not rub against another branch. The plant may be allowed to grow to its maximum height or the height may be restrained with pruning. To keep it at a smaller height prune new growth back to an inch or so from the past year’s growth.

Severe pruning encourages more new growth and produces more flowering stems. Plants that are pruned to a more upright tree form will not produce as many flowers because they do not have as many stems to produce blooms.



ELECTION RESULTS

Bruce Byford, our treasurer, is retiring and moving to South Carolina. The nominating committee, chaired by Ed Ponek, asked Mac Williamson to serve as treasurer. Ginny Parker has served as Board Member At-Large for four years and therefore is not eligible to serve another term. The committee nominated Sherrill Johnson to serve as Board Member At-Large. No other changes to the slate of officers elected in 2010 were recommended. No additional nominations were made from the floor. The slate was presented to the members present for a vote and elected without dissenting vote. The installation of the officers will occur at the December meeting.

CLUB MEETINGS

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

Dec. 13 Annual Banquet

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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

THE REST OF THE STORY

At the end of the September meeting the speaker Rufus Edmisten presented Anne Clapp a certificate of membership in The Order of the Long Leaf Pine. It was awarded in recognition of her “integrity, learning and zeal in service to the citizens of North Carolina”. Mike Raley, the Host of WPTF’s *Weekend Gardener* (680 AM on the dial) was present and was asked to join Anne for a photograph with the plaque. Now you can hear the rest of the story.

In March one of the *Weekend Gardener* listeners called the show to ask if Rufus Edmisten couldn’t be persuaded to get Anne and Mike membership in The Order of the Long Leaf Pine for their service to gardeners for over 20 years. We have no idea who that listener is but he was successful. Six weeks after Anne received her award Mike Raley went to a special luncheon at Curtis Media. There, in front of his family, friends and broadcasting colleagues Mike received his award.

Mike hosted the show in 1986 when Erv Evans was the *Weekend Gardener*. The show changed format when Erv replaced John Harris as *The Tarheel Gardener*. That show was recorded on Wednesday afternoon. Listeners mailed their questions to the WPTF offices, enclosing dead (and not completely dead) insects and plant material. John selected the questions to answer and recorded a 15 or 30 minute show that was aired on Saturday morning.

Erv broadcast the first “live” one-hour show on Saturday morning in 1986. There were “envelopes” of dead things to discuss but the primary format was a call-in show where the questions and answers went over the airways without editing or pre-planning. By 1990 Erv was having voice problems and a series of “Master Gardeners” filled in for him on the show. Anne Clapp was one of those and by the spring of 1991 she was doing the program on a regular basis. During our tenure on the show we started taking the show “on the road”.

About 20 shows during the year are done “on remote”. We take the radio equipment to garden centers, trade expositions and businesses throughout the area and broadcast the show live. It gives us a chance to meet our listeners. In March of 2012 Anne and Mike will celebrate 21 years of a gardening radio show that is now 3 hours long.

We were honored to be asked to appear as guests on Dr. Bill Friday’s public television show “North Carolina People”. It was filmed on the terrace at the JC Raulston Arboretum and aired as the 3450th episode of the program. In March of 2012 Mike and I will celebrate 21 years of a gardening radio show that is now 3 hours long — and available on podcast to listeners around the world. Both of us think gardening is a wonderful hobby and fellow gardeners are very supportive friends. We thank that unknown listener who started the process that resulted in an award that both of us treasure.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____

Spouse _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone (h) _____ (w) _____

E-mail _____

Occupation _____

Gardening Special Interests _____

Other Interests/Hobbies _____

Sponsor (not required) _____

Membership dues are \$15 for individuals and \$25 for families for the calendar year: January – December. Make checks payable to Gardeners of Wake County. Application form and check are to be mailed to:

Gardeners of Wake County
 Carole Johnson, Membership Chairman
 5346 Lake Wendell Rd.
 Zebulon, NC 27597

DECEMBER GARDENING TIPS

BULBS

Late blooming spring bulbs can still be planted in early December. Bulbs that bloom in February can be planted but they may not bloom this year. If you already have the bulbs for crocus, early-blooming daffodils or snowdrops it is better to go ahead and get them in the ground than it is to store the bulbs for planting next year. Remember to give them a light top dressing of a fertilizer formulated for bulbs.



Mice and voles will burrow and eat bulbs. There are several methods to control their damage. The bulbs can be planted in a mix of soil and sharp gravel such as Permatil or you can plant them, with soil, in a “box” of ½-inch wire mesh set in the ground at the required depth. If you have a large bed of bulbs some gardeners will set mouse traps under flower pots in the beds. You have to prop one side of the pot up high enough for the mice to crawl under the pot to get to the bait. Tulips and crocus

are more popular food sources than daffodils.

In some areas daffodils may be emerging from the ground. They do not need to be mulched for protection. They do not need to be fertilized.

ROSES

December is a good time to remove the mulch in a rose garden. Spray the plants and ground with lime sulfur spray to control black spot. Use a dormant oil spray on roses to control the eggs of overwintering pests such as insects and spider mites. Then replace the mulch with fresh material. The Rose Garden at the JCRA gets a 3- to 4-inch blanket of composted leaf mulch after it is sprayed with lime sulfur. Other gardeners prefer the look of a bed mulched with pine straw.

If you have planted bare root roses you may want to provide some winter protection. Mound the plant with wood chips, shredded leaves or pine straw. Make sure the material gests



into the center of the plant over the graft union. In windy areas it may be necessary to put a cage of wire around the plant for the first winter.

WINTER ANNUALS

Pansies, violas, snapdragons, Sweet William as well as ornamental vegetables such as cabbage and kale can still be planted. If you haven't tried the new “Plentiful” series of pansies you might want to use them as a trailing plant in a container or on the edge of a planting that trails over the edge of a bed. The plants need a layer of mulch to prevent frost heaving during the winter.

Make sure these annuals get watered during dry spells as they are not going to have a well-established root system. Fertilize the plants lightly with a balanced fertilizer between cold spells. Some gardeners think that blood meal produces stronger colors in pansies. Remember to deadhead spent blooms. For pansies, that means pinching the stem back to the base of the plant, not just snipping off the dead flower.

**GARDENERS OF
WAKE COUNTY**

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HONORABLE SPEAKER *(continued from page 1)*

supposed to be dumb and goats are supposed to be smart. Why then do the goats get out of the fences to forage for food and the dumb sheep stay inside where it is safe and they get fed?

Then there is the farmer's need for irrigation water. The garden gets put in near the house at the top of the hill. Water is in the irrigation pond at the bottom

of the hill. Water does not flow up hill so you have to have a pump. Why do pumps only break during a drought? Another question for gardeners:



Why do crops always come in when you have to be out of town?

The talk also included a short civics lesson on how the court system works in North Carolina.

The Supreme Court of North Carolina has 7 Justices, including the Chief Justice. They are elected to fixed terms. The maximum age for service is 72, sometimes referred to as statutory senility. Judge Newby will run for re-election in 2012. There will be 4 Justices on the 2014 ballot, 1 in 2016 and 1 in 2018 with the current court make-up. When one of our members asked why they didn't rotate the seats so two justices got elected every two years we learned that if you run to fill the unexpired term of a Justice that has retired, resigned or died in office you run in the year the position becomes available but you are elected for a full term — not the unfilled portion of the previous term



STOCKING STUFFERS

You can cut this out and leave it as a reminder for someone who might need a suggestion for a last minute gift for a gardening friend. We can never have too many gardening gloves. Gardening handcreams protect our skin, especially in cold weather. Soaps that remove the grit from underneath our fingernails make cleanup a lot quicker. A good nail brush to keep near the faucet outside might help as well.



Trowels usually need to be replaced because they got lost or worn out. Some gardeners want more than one so they can keep them in convenient spots inside and outside. A timer for the growlights or sprinkler would make life easier. There are lots of clever tool boxes or baskets that make moving our gardening equipment around easier.