

The Clod-Hopper



Volume 27 Edition 6 Gardeners of Wake County, Inc. – Raleigh, NC

JUNE 2011

CLUB ACTIVITIES

The Club pig picking in May was a great success. 91 members and guests attended to help dispose of the guest of honor – The Pig. Thanks to all the members that added the snacks and desserts that rounded out the meal. The plant exchange was conducted with the decorum we expect from club members at such a gathering. No major fights were reported. Thankfully the rain held off until just after the plant exchange. Thank you to Mark Boone for extending the hospitality of his home to the Club.

The private tour of the Executive Mansion grounds with

Gerald Adams was a treat. If you were not lucky enough to get there you will definitely want to see Carole Johnson's slide show. She e-mailed it to quite a few of us but if you did not see it you need to ask for a special showing. It's almost as good as seeing the garden in person.

The fish pond was a big hit. Gerald provided some valuable information on how to keep fish ponds free of algae and protect the fish from carnivorous birds. That might be a good topic for a future program.



JUNE MEETING

Remember to mark your calendars for the June 21 meeting. The topic of Tony Avent's program was not available as we went to press but he always has some beautiful slides and a very informative program for us. If you did not get to his spring "open garden" be sure to mark your gardening calendar for the date of his summer opening. There were several new areas under construction in May and lots of new plants in the greenhouses.



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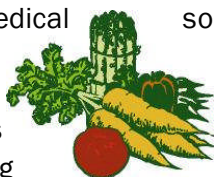
CLUB MEETINGS

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

- June 11** Tour of Pollinator Garden in Pittsboro 10:00 am
- June 21** Tony Avent, Plant Delights Nursery
- July 19** Jonathan Kidder, Water Garden Plants and Designs
- August 16** Rufus Edmisten, Secretary General of Gardening

COMMUNITY GARDENING

Two GWC community gardens are installed. The one on New Bern Avenue at Alliance Medical Ministry is being coordinated by Charles Gilliam. The first crops are in place and being



tended on a regular basis. Some new crops will be planted as soon as the cabbages are harvested. Help is still needed so please contact Charles for information on how you might help.

Mac Williamson is coordinating the work on our plot at the Interfaith Food Shuttle Teaching Farm on Tryon Road. We need more volunteers at that site as well. If you are not an "experienced" vegetable gardener this is a good way to gain some experience and provide healthy food for those who might not have enough to eat.

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GARDEN WILDLIFE

The June issue of *Carolina Gardener* has an interesting article on inviting wildlife to your backyard garden. Evidently your editor has mastered the techniques. As the neighborhood garden club gathered for a meeting at our house a mother fox walked across the side yard carrying one of her three offspring. She was evidently concerned that the deer population near her den by the creek was getting too large so she moved her family to a safer place in the side yard.



The deer came up the hill an hour or so later to eat the roses that had started to bloom that day. Their second course was daylily buds. Going back down to the creek they stopped for a taste of stalk holly. They also browsed on the tender new growth of summer phlox. The phlox is close to the place we killed the copperhead earlier in the week.

The gist of the article by local gardener Helen Yoest is if gardeners want to attract wildlife they need to provide food, water, cover and places to raise their young. In our case the water is provided by a stream that runs across the back of the property. The water pools in two holes that were made when two large trees were uprooted by storms. Frogs love that area and we love to hear them croak at night. Remember that frogs like to eat insects! A raccoon family also visits the pond and stream then scurries up the tall oak tree to take a nap.

Five Line Skinks are also fond of insects. Lately they have been sharing the bounty of insects that are attracted to the pots of bog plants. Later in the summer the bats will be attracted to the insects swarming around street light on the corner. There are bat houses available that will provide daytime housing for these nocturnal animals but be sure to put the box in a protected place out of the sun. Your family and friends will probably be happier if the box is not close to the entrances to your house.

Providing trees and shrubs of several heights will provide homes for a greater range of birds and other animals. Densely planted areas also seem safer to (continued on bottom of page 3)

New Members

Carole Gilliam (Mrs. Charles)
Barbara Harvey, Cary
John and Saille Everette, Raleigh
Brenda Strickland, Raleigh
Richard and Lucee Wallace, Wake Forest

GROWING CHRYSANTHEMUMS

It's not too late to start chrysanthemums for fall color. May, June and July are usually good months to start plants. If you have a plant that survived the winter it can be divided into two or more plants and replanted. You may also take tip cuttings from the stems of the plants. Use sharp scissors or a knife to remove a 3 or 4 inch cutting from the tip of the stem. Remove the lower leaves and put the cut ends in water until you put them in your rooting container.

The rooting medium can be coarse sand, vermiculite, peat moss or a combination of sand and peat moss. Put at least 2 inches of the dampened rooting medium in a container. Use a small stick or nail to open a hole in the soil, place the cutting in the hole then firm the soil around it. Cuttings should be spaced about 2 inches apart. You may use

rooting hormone to treat the cuttings before putting them in the soil. Follow the directions carefully.

If you use a shallow container for your cuttings you will have to mist them several times during the day. If you use a deep container (an old Styrofoam cooler) you can cover the box with plastic to retain moisture.

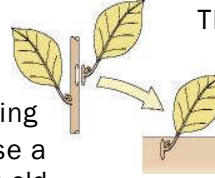
Place the "stuck cuttings" in their container in a shady spot and keep them moist until they root. Most cuttings will develop a good root system in 2 to 3 weeks. When they have developed a good root system they can be transplanted.

If they are to be grown in containers put 3 cuttings in a six inch pot or 4 cuttings in an eight inch pot. The plants may need some relief from full sun when they are transplanted. Keep them

watered and fertilized just like Bruce Wrenn did when he raised our mums for the State Fair.

The rooted cuttings may be transplanted to a flower bed instead of potting them up. It will be easier to leave them in the rooting box for another week or so. The plants will need fertilizer to encourage growth. They will need additional light for more growth and will need to be watered on a regular basis. Pinch the top out to encourage branching. Put the new plants in the ground in the evening and water well.

All chrysanthemums need to be pinched back to encourage well-branched plants. By July 15 the plants should be allowed to grow without further pinching to encourage bud formation. Keep plants fertilized to encourage growth and flowers.



Garden Wildlife (continued)

many of them. Nesting boxes and birdhouses will attract families looking for a home. Remember to clean the homes after the family moves out so it is safe for the next tenant.



For those homeowners who want to protect a vegetable garden from unwanted visitors I'll share this trick from a gardening friend in Virginia. They use the "Square Foot Gardening" raised beds, then construct cover boxes from chicken wire attached to a lightweight wood frame. After the beds are planted just place the cover boxes over the plants. You can fertilize and water without removing the covers then when the crops are ready to pick you tip the cover back, pick what you need then drop the cover back in place.

FLOWER GROWING IN JUNE

June is a good time to sow seeds for perennial Shasta daisies, coreopsis and coneflowers. It will take 2 to 3 weeks for the seedlings to emerge. They may be sown directly into the bed or started in pots or trays. It is not too late to direct sow annuals such as cosmos, marigolds, sunflowers and zinnias. Making plantings of annuals two weeks apart will provide a longer display of color.

For those who purchased geraniums this spring don't be surprised to see fewer flowers in the heat of mid-summer. High nighttime temperatures cause plants to consume more carbohydrates than they can produce. Remove spent blooms and dead leaves. When the plants

get spindly and are not producing new flower buds you can cut the stems back about half their length.

Cut the stem just above a leaf node. To encourage new growth apply liquid fertilizer and water regularly. The plants will continue blooming until frost.

Petunias also need to be pinched back to encourage new blooms. Keep annuals deadheaded to encourage new growth and blooms instead of allowing the plant to set seeds.

If you have problems with powdery mildew on zinnias it is better to remove infected plants to keep the disease from spreading. Thinning out plants will encourage air circulation. If you use a fungicide you need to continue spraying as long as symptoms appear.



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INSECT PROBLEMS

June and July are months when there are lots of insects in the garden. Gardenias are attracting whiteflies that damage the plant leaves. The leaves will develop a thin black film of sooty mold. Spraying the leaves with a strong stream of water will remove the sticky syrup that produces the mold. Use yellow sticky traps to attract the white flies. You can make a "sticky trap" by coating a yellow plastic bottle with Vaseline and hanging it near the plant.



Other pests to look out for

include two-spotted spider mites.

Remember that not all insecticides include a miticide so read labels carefully. It is also the month when euonymus scale usually appears. Horticultural oils will help control scale but be sure the product you select is labeled for use in hot weather.

NCSU PLANT CLINIC

The basement of Gardner Hall is home to the NCSU Plant Disease and Insect Clinic. Dr. Barbara Shew is the current director. Commercial farmers, extension agents and Master Gardeners are the most frequent users of their services but home gardeners in North Carolina may use their services as well.

Photographs of problems may be submitted through their website: www.plantclinic@ces.ncsu.edu or by mailing samples. The information on the services available is on the website. There is a charge of \$30 per sample whether you submit it directly or have it sent by an extension agent or Master Gardener. The solutions recommended for problems are based on the principles of Integrated Pest Management using controls that will have the least negative effect on the environment.

As expected, service from the clinic in the summer is slower due to the volume of samples submitted, both physical specimens and photographs.