

The Clod-Hopper



Volume 26 Edition 7 Gardeners of Wake County, Inc. – Raleigh, NC

JULY 2010

GWC President's Message: Gardeners of Wake County

Remember when the days were cold and dreary, and our thoughts were of warm sunny days. I think we “thunk” a little too hard. We could use a little moderation in the temperature and humidity – but then it wouldn't be our wonderful North Carolina would it?

I hope each of you is enjoying your garden. We are still making changes to last year's canvas. After many years, a couple of old standbys – spiderwort and 4 o'clocks– got reduced to only one or two spots in the garden. We

have added more night blooming primrose (thanks to Karl and Paula). Then we visited Campbell Road Nursery to pick up several new additions including ornamental peppers, coneflowers, Mexican heather and Persian shield.

Remember that a lot of nurs-

eries start discounting perennials in July and August. Buying now will allow you to get that plant that was too expensive earlier in the season.

See you on July 20 – or any time in the garden.

Mac

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CLUB MEETINGS

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

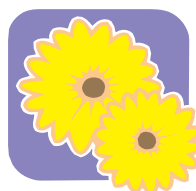
- July 20** Shawn Banks on “Garden Pests”
- August 17** Herbicides and Pesticides for Home Gardeners
- Sept. 21** Barbara Fair on Home Landscaping

JULY MEETING

Shawn Banks, Co-operative Extension Agent, will be our July speaker on garden pests. If there is a specific pest (weed or insect) you would like to know more about Shawn asks that we let him know before the meeting so he will have the information on hand. Contact Charles Gilliam, Program Chairman, or any of the other Club officers and we will get your requests to him.

FAIR WORKDAYS

The workdays for the flower show grounds for July are the 10th and 24th. August workdays are the 14th and 28th. All are Saturdays. There is also a need for some additional helpers to water some of the new plantings. It is simply a matter of turning a sprinkler on for 30 minutes and then making sure it is turned off.



ORGANIC VEGETABLE GARDENING

The June program was a goldmine of information for those who are joining the home gardening movement. Members who have grown a few tomato plants, garlic, lettuce and carrots took copious notes as well. (My notes are difficult to read because the lights were turned out to see the slides.) The speaker was Ken Fager from the Center for Environmental Farming Systems research station in Goldsboro. The Center is one of the research laboratories of the Department of Horticulture Science at NCSU.

He showed us a “Covington” sweet potato that was one of the last of his last year's crop in his own garden. He cleans them, allows them to dry in the garage then stores them on the floor of his kitchen. He does keep the tempera-

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ORGANIC VEGETABLE GARDENING – continued from page 1

ture of his house about 60 degrees during the winter. Other produce such as carrots, onions and beets are stored in a refrigerator that is kept at 38 degrees. The soil is cleaned off the vegetables and they are wrapped individually in newspaper for long term storage. Don't store fruit in there as the ethylene gas it emits will spoil the other produce.

If you want to grow your own seedlings for vegetables they can be started in pots in a greenhouse or in a hot bed. A hot bed is a structure similar to a cold frame. A heating cable is installed about 8 inches beneath the surface of the soil. One soil mix is 3 quarts peat, 1.5 qt. compost, 2 qt.. vermiculite, 2 teaspoons lime and 2 tablespoons each of blood meal, kelp and bone meal. The moistened soil mix spread on top of the "native" soil that anchors the heating cable in the hot bed. Seeds of crops such as onions, cabbage and other greens can be started in the hot bed. When they reach the desired size use a knife to cut the seedlings and a block of soil out of the box and plant them in the garden.

The real secret of a productive home vegetable garden is crop rotation to reduce problems from insects and disease. Ken uses a 7 crop rotation system that moves vegetables and cover crops through a spring, summer and fall production cycle. Clover, rye, hairy vetch and cowpeas are four of the cover crops I could read in my notes. He does recommend that sections of the garden that will be planted with early spring vegetables should be left fallow.

Early spring onion crops are more likely to survive a late frost if they are not mulched. Wait until mid-May to mulch them for weed control and to keep the soil a bit cooler. Carrots are often planted as a spring crop but they actually are easier to grow as a fall crop in this area. Planting them by mid-August allows them to mature in the cooler fall temperatures.



Another technique for extending the planting season





New Members






Allen & Cindy Sullivan, Garner



Beth Maira, Cary



Stephen and Mary Thomas, Bahama
















in the early spring and fall is to use floating row covers to keep the plants and soil warm. Row covers do need to be removed when plants bloom so insects can pollinate them. But leaving lightweight row covers in place helps keep insects from chewing leaves. Cabbage grows quite successfully under row covers.

It is not always a sign of poor gardening techniques when vegetable production slows down in the summer. Most plants grow less actively when temperatures reach 85 degrees. Mulching rows to reduce soil temperatures helps.

2010-2011 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Anita Kuehne, Scholarship Chair and committee members Helen Cleereman and John Little have selected 7 students to receive awards for the academic year that begins August 18. A total of \$12,000 in scholarship funds has been provided.

The students selected are William Owen of Mt. Ulla, Kristin Hartgrove of Greensboro, Wes Richards of Zebulon, Kelly Nash of Kannapolis, Ryan Prairie of Fuquay-Varina, Susan Barkley of Clayton and Courtney Goldman of Charlotte. Susan Barkley will graduate in December. Three of them, Kristen Hartgrove, Wes Richards and Ryan Prarie received scholarships from the Club last year.

William Owen is the son of Joe and Barbara Owen of Mt. Ulla (in Rowan County). He serves as Secretary for Farm House Fraternity and is a member of the NCSU PLANET Team. His goal is to go to graduate school and work in production horticulture with the intent of furthering his current greenhouse business.

Kristen Hartgrove is the daughter of Rick and Anna Hartgrove of Greensboro. She is the Programming Committee Chair for the WISE Student Council, a member of PAX and the NC FFA Association. Kristen plans to pursue a master's degree after graduation. Her professional goal is biotechnical horticulture "exploring and manipulating plants genes to create more sustainable, truly unique or pharmaceutically useful plant species."

Wes Richards is a member of the NCSU Horticulture Club and the American Society for Horticulture Science. He is planning a career in the Landscape Industry with a professional goal of owning his own company and becoming a leader in the horticulture industry of Wake

County. Wes is the son of Renae Joyner of Zebulon.

Ryan Prairie is the son of Anna and Joe Prairie of Fuquay-Varina. He is the current Agri-Life representative for the NCSU Horticulture Club. His professional goal is to establish his own nursery, promoting more trees and shrubs in an effort to combat global warming.

Kelley Nash is planning to go to graduate school and pursue a career in research. Her current research interest is olericulture and pomology (vegetable and fruit production). She is a member of the NCSU Horticulture Club, University Scholars Program, National Society of Collegiate Scholars and the Student Wolfpack Club. Kelley is the daughter of James and Kimberly Nash of Kannapolis.

Susan Barkley is an active member of Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and plans to go to graduate school after graduating in December. Her interests include landscape and garden design, sustainable and organic horticulture, permaculture, plant biology and nutrition. She is the daughter of Dave and Linda Weiss of Angier.

Courtney Goldman' professional goal is to work as an extension agent after graduation. She is also interested in plant breeding and establishing a florist business. Her parents are Bruce and Cindy Goldman of Charlotte.

JULY IN THE GARDEN

The heat and humidity of July takes its toll on gardens and gardeners alike. Early morning, late afternoon and early evening are usually more comfortable times to work in the garden. If you use an overhead watering system (sprinklers or a hose), water in the morning to reduce the risk of problems with fungus on plants. You can water with a soaker hose or drip irrigation system in either the morning or evening.

Be careful when spraying insecticides and weed killer. Most of these liquid products contain organic chemicals that will volatilize when temperatures reach the 80's. The active ingredient may not reach the plant or it may be in a form that could be harmful. Read labels carefully for information on safe temperatures for use.

Major insect pests in July are Japanese beetles, leaf hoppers, leaf miner, scale and spider mites. If you are using a horticultural oil to control scale use one that is



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JULY IN THE GARDEN – *continued from page 3*

labeled for use in the summer. If you use traps for Japanese beetles place them downwind from the plants you wish to protect.

Mulch plants to maintain soil moisture and keep soil temperatures lower in plant root zones. Keep mulch away from the trunks of trees and shrubs. Use mulch in the rows of vegetable gardens to control weeds and conserve water.

For those who grow figs, remember that the fruit is growing rapidly and needs water. A soaker hose at the drip line of the tree and a two-inch mulch layer will provide even moisture. Irregular watering – or too much water applied at one time may cause the fruit to split.

SOIL SOLARIZING

July is a good time to try soil solarization as a method of control for nematodes, weeds or insect and disease problems in the soil. Break up the soil to a depth of 8 inches and remove plant debris (roots, leaves etc.). Break up large clumps of soil and smooth the bed with a sturdy rake. Water the area well.

Cover the area with a sheet of clear plastic. To keep the cover in place dig a shallow trench around the bed and bury the edges of the plastic in the trench. If you have bricks, rocks or pieces of 2 X 4 boards they can be placed on top of the buried edges as well. Six weeks of July and August heat usually heats the soil to temperatures that reduce problems from these pests.

ROSES

When temperatures are in the 90's on a regular basis roses slow down – much as gardeners do. They will continue to bloom if they are fertilized and watered on a regular basis. Do not apply fertilizer unless you can supply water for the plants.



If you allow your roses to slow down in July keep spent flowers removed. It is a good time to remove small non-productive canes and weak wood in the plants. Continue to keep insect and disease problems in control. Letting roses rest in July and early August is one way of having beautiful roses in October.