

# Currituck Garden News



November 2013

## Fall Cankerworm

### PLEASE SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER

The Garden News is published to provide you with educational information, upcoming programs and opportunities on gardening issues. Feel free to share with others.

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Fall cankerworms, commonly called inchworms, can be a nuisance in the spring when they descend from trees on silk threads. Inchworms feed on leaves and high populations can defoliate whole trees. Cankerworms have a preference for maples, oaks and elms. While these insects and the damage they cause are most noticeable in the spring, the best time to control them is in the fall. Fall cankerworms emerge from the ground as adults from November through January. The females crawl up on tree trunks where they mate with males. After mating, they lay a cluster of eggs in the tree canopy. The eggs overwinter and hatch in late March to mid-April. The young larvae feed on tender spring leaves until late April or May when they descend to the ground on silk threads. The larvae burrow into the ground, spin a cocoon and pupate. The pupae remain in the soil until they emerge again as adults in the fall.

Fall cankerworms are best controlled by placing bands on trees in November to trap the females as they climb the tree. To band trees, install a strip of cotton or insulation around the tree at least 3 feet off the ground but below the lowest limb. This layer will keep insects from crawling under the band. Add a band of roofing felt over the cotton. Apply a strip of Tanglefoot 1/8" thick and 2" wide to the felt using a putty knife. Monitor the trap until late April and apply more as needed.

For more information on Fall Cankerworms see: <http://go.ncsu.edu/inchworm>



Top Left: Fall Cankerworm larvae



Bottom Left: Adult female with eggs

Tree banding photo courtesy of [www.elizabethcommunity.com](http://www.elizabethcommunity.com).



## Vegetable Garden

November through March is the best time to plant asparagus. Crowns should be planted in rows 5 feet apart with the crowns spaced 12 inches apart in the row. In the fall, allow the plants to grow until they have turned brown. Then cut down the fern and destroy it. If cut down before frost the next year's crop of spears is reduced. A properly managed asparagus bed will produce for 15 years or more. For more information on growing asparagus see:

<http://go.ncsu.edu/aspg>



Harvest mature green tomatoes before frost, and ripen indoors in the dark.

Store at 55-70°F. The warmer the temperature, the faster they ripen. Harvest root crops and store in a cold (32°F), humid location. Use perforated plastic bags as an easy way to increase humidity. Remove crop and weed plant debris from the garden and till the soil. This will help reduce the carryover of diseases, insects and weeds to next year's garden.

## Lawn Care

Apply pre-emergence herbicides to control winter annual and perennial broadleaf weeds like chickweed and henbit if it wasn't done in October. Fertilize fescue lawns again in November. Use a turf grade fertilizer with a 4-1-2 ratio (ex. 16-4-8).

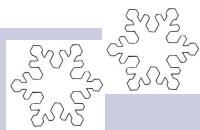
For more information about lawn care see:

[http://go.ncsu.edu/nc\\_lawns](http://go.ncsu.edu/nc_lawns)

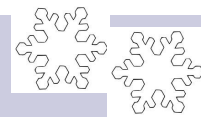
## Pruning Calendar

November is a good time to prune Abelia, Beautyberry, Boxwood, Butterfly Bush, Summersweet, Cotoneaster, Euonymus, Gardenia, Rose-of-Sharon, Photinia, Pittosporum, Privet, and Yew. For a more comprehensive list of plants and the best time to prune them, see:

[http://go.ncsu.edu/pruning\\_calendar](http://go.ncsu.edu/pruning_calendar)



## Bringing Plants in for the Winter



If you have plants outside in the ground or in containers and you want to bring them in for the winter, there are a few things you need to consider. Sudden changes in temperature, light, and humidity can be traumatic to plants, resulting in yellowed leaves, dieback, wilting, and even death. To prevent shock when you bring plants back indoors, expose plants gradually to reduced lighting. Over a period of about a week, gradually reduce light levels by moving plants from sun to light shade to heavy shade, and finally indoors. When you move plants indoors, make sure the light conditions are as close as possible to those out-doors. Once indoors, some of the leaves may turn yellow and drop off as it adjusts to lower light levels.

Inspect the plants carefully. Take them out of their pots to see if anything has crawled in through the drainage holes. Soaking the pot in a tub of lukewarm water for about 15 minutes will force insects out of the soil. If ants, snails, earthworms, or other insects burrowed into the soil, you might want to repot the plants. Wash the leaves and stems with the hose to remove dirt and insects. Allow them time to dry, and spray the entire plant, soil and pot with an insecticidal soap. Reapply insecticidal soap 10 days later in case any eggs have hatched. Some plants tend to hold the soap solution on their leaf surfaces. This may cause burning. Before using an insecticidal soap, check the label to see if the plant is listed. If not, test a small area on your plant for sensitivity. It may take seven to 10 days for symptoms to appear.

If necessary, move plants into larger containers. If plants have gotten leggy during their outdoor stay, remove them from the container, and prune the top and roots in equal proportions. Scrub the pot, add fresh bagged potting soil (not garden soil) and repot. This also is a good time to take cuttings of annual flowers, such as impatiens, begonias, geraniums, and coleus. They root easily in water or sand, and make attractive houseplants. This is a good way to overwinter them for planting in the garden next year. Or, you can just dig and pot a few annual plants, and enjoy their flowers for many more weeks indoors.

## Master Gardener Workshops

Currituck Master Gardeners Doris Flattum and Shelly Murray will be holding a workshop on November 8th at 9:30 am. Learn a unique technique for decorating clay pots with leaves and go home with your own decorated pot. The class will be held at 101 Forbes Lane in Harbinger, rain or shine. The cost for this workshop is \$10 to cover materials. To pre-register contact Doris at [dorisflattum@embarqmail.com](mailto:dorisflattum@embarqmail.com) or call 252-491-2390.



## Weather for Gardeners

Join us on November 6, 2013 at 1:00 pm to hear Dr. Duane Harding speak about Weather for Gardeners. Dr. Harding studied at the University of Michigan to become an oceanographer, meteorologist, and atmospheric physicist. Early in his career he worked inside Kilauea, the active volcano in Hawaii and became a tenured associate professor in Kentucky teaching the history of natural philosophy. He later became a broadcast meteorologist on channel 3 WTKR in Hampton Roads.

The talk will take place at the NC Cooperative Extension Currituck County Center located at 120 Community Way in Barco. It is free and open to the public. To pre-register for the event go to: <http://go.ncsu.edu/harding> or call Deborah Kelso 252-232-2262.



## Over Wintering Geraniums

One of the saddest things for a gardener to witness is the death of their favorite annuals when we get that first hard freeze. For those of you who love geraniums, I recently learned a new technique you might want to try. Geraniums have thick, succulent stems which give them the ability to survive through the winter without soil. To over winter geraniums in a dormant state, dig up the entire plant before frost and gently shake the soil from the roots. Hang the plants upside-down from the rafters in your attic where it is cool and dark. For best results, the attic temperature should be 45 to 50° F. Two or three times during the winter, take the plants down from the rafters and soak the roots in water for 1 or 2 hours. Don't be concerned if the foliage dies and falls off, as long as the stems remain firm and solid. Squishy or shriveled stems should be removed. In March or April, pot up the remaining healthy geraniums in containers. Water them well and prune out any dead stem tips. Place potted plants in a sunny window to encourage new growth. After the danger of frost has passed, plant the geraniums outdoors.



For additional information on any of the contents of this newsletter call or e-mail Debbie Kelso at 232-2262, [deborah\\_kelso@ncsu.edu](mailto:deborah_kelso@ncsu.edu)

Deborah E. Kelso  
Agricultural Technician

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For accommodations for persons with disabilities, contact the Currituck County Center at 252-232-2262 no later than five business days prior to the event.

### **Coastal NC Daylily Society**

The Coastal North Carolina Daylily Society Meeting will be held on November 12, 2013 at 10:00 am. They will meet at the NC Cooperative Extension Currituck County Center located at 120 Community Way in Barco. After the meeting there will be a pot luck lunch so bring a dish to share. For more information contact Deborah Kelso at 252-232-2262 or [deborah\\_kelso@ncsu.edu](mailto:deborah_kelso@ncsu.edu).

### **Dirty Tools**

Dirty equipment is a common means of spreading pathogens to healthy plants. Remember to scrub garden tools and soak them in a bleach solution of 1 part bleach to 9 parts water before putting them away for the winter. Rinse metal tools after the bleach treatment to avoid corrosion. Alcohol can be used to disinfect hand tools and is less corrosive than bleach. Keeping them clean and dry over the winter will also extend the life of your tools.

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