

# Garden News

March 2013

## 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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## Arbor Day Tree Give Away

The Master Gardener Volunteers of Currituck County will be giving away trees on March 9, 2013 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm in celebration of Arbor Day. County residents can stop by Moyock Foodlion, Grandy Foodlion or Corolla Ace Hardware to pick up Crape Myrtle, Pin Oak, Coastal Maple and River Birch seedlings. For more information contact Debbie Kelso 232-2261.

## Coastal NC Daylily Society

The Coastal North Carolina Daylily Society will meet on March 12, 2013 at 10:00 am at the Currituck County Center of NC Cooperative Extension facility. The CNCDS promotes and encourages interest in, and proper cultivation of, the genus Hemerocallis, and provides various programs of horticultural interest for its members and the general public. They also encourage membership in the American Hemerocallis Society. Membership is open to the public.

## 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Northeast North Carolina Daffodil Show

The NE NC Daffodil Society invites the public to come and view the vast diversity of locally grown daffodils as well as to enter their own flowers in the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Northeast North Carolina Daffodil Show on Saturday, March 23, 2013 from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. The daffodil show is co-sponsored by the North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Currituck County Center and the Master Gardener Volunteers of Currituck County. The show will be held at the Currituck Extension Center, 120 Community Way in Barco. This event is open to the public free of charge. An awards ceremony will be held at 2:00 pm. Contact Clay Higgins (252) 491-9268 ([clayhiggins@centurylink.net](mailto:clayhiggins@centurylink.net)) or Debbie Kelso (252) 232-2261 for additional information.



The Horticulture Division will showcase daffodils representing many of the more than one thousand varieties of blooms. No prior registration is required to enter daffodils. Entries by exhibitors shall be accepted from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm Friday, March 22, 2013 and from 7:00 am until 9:30 am on Saturday, March 23, 2013. In the Artistic Division, beautiful arrangements of daffodils will depict "Life on the Outer Banks at the Turn of the Century". Registration is required for the Artistic Division. Anyone interested in entering floral arrangements should contact Sharon Huttemann (252) 261-5317 or [thuttemann@aol.com](mailto:thuttemann@aol.com) to register.

## Currituck Home, Flower and Garden Show

The Currituck County Master Gardeners are delighted to announce the annual Currituck Home, Flower and Garden Show which will be held on Friday April 19<sup>th</sup> and Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup>. Doors will open to the public on Friday at 1:00 pm and close at 6:00 pm. Saturday's hours are 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. The show's theme this year is "Water Wisdom". There will be garden exhibits, children's activities and demonstrations designed to enhance your gardening skills. The Currituck Master Gardeners and several other vendors will have plants for sale. Hanging baskets, annuals, herbs, daylilies, and vegetables will be among the many plants that will be available for purchase. Our vendors will offer an extensive array of garden and household items, from garden furniture to garden art, birdfeeders, and much, much more. This event will be held at the Currituck Extension Center, [120 Community Way, in Barco](#). For more information on the show call 252-232-2262 or e-mail [deborah\\_kelso@ncsu.edu](mailto:deborah_kelso@ncsu.edu)

## Starting Plants from Seed

Growing your own transplants from seeds indoors can give you a head start on the growing season. If seeds are obtained well ahead of the actual sowing date store them in a cool, dry place. A good storage location would be an air-tight jar or a sealed zip-lock-type bag in the refrigerator. Many species have minimum, maximum, and optimum temperatures at which they germinate. Generally, 65°F to 75°F is best for most plants. The planting medium should be rather fine in texture and of uniform consistency, yet well aerated and loose. It should be capable of holding moisture, but drain well. Do not use garden soil to start seedlings; it is not sterile, it is too heavy, and it does not drain well. Commercial soil mixes have low fertility, so seedlings must be watered with a dilute fertilizer solution soon after germination and emergence. Use ¼ to ½ of the recommended fertilizer rate. Seedlings are often started indoors 4 to 12 weeks before the last spring frost. In Currituck County the average date for the last spring frost is the first week of April. Cover the seeds lightly; a suitable planting depth is usually about two to four times the minimum diameter of the seeds. Extremely fine seed such as petunia, begonia, and snapdragon should not be covered, but simply dusted on the surface of the medium. Moisten the planting medium thoroughly before planting. After seeding, spray with a fine mist.

The soil should be moist but not overly wet. Excessive moisture can lead to damping-off or other disease or insect problems. Place the whole flat or pot into a clear plastic bag to maintain moisture. The plastic should be at least 1 inch above the soil. Keep the container out of direct sunlight. Be sure to remove the plastic bag when the first seedlings emerge. After the seeds have germinated, move the flats to a well-lighted location. If a bright location is not available, place the seedlings under fluorescent lights. Use two, 40-watt, cool-white fluorescent tubes or special plant growth lamps. Position the plants 6 inches from the tubes and provide 16 hours of light daily. As the seedlings grow, the lights should be raised. Hardening is the process of conditioning a plant for growth outdoors. The process should be started at least 2 weeks before planting in the garden. Place plants outside in a protected area on warm days, and increase the length of exposure gradually. Do not put tender plants outdoors on windy days or when temperatures are below 45°F. For a list of plants that can be started by seed indoors and when to plant the seed see

[ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/hil8703r.html](http://ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/hil8703r.html)

## Vegetable Garden Planting Guide

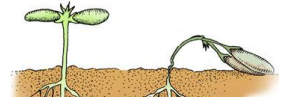
There are many vegetables that can be planted in the garden in March. Beets, Broccoli, Cauliflower, Kale, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Mustard, Garden Peas, Radishes, Rutabagas, Spinach, Swiss Chard, and Turnips can all be planted as seed. Onions can be planted as seeds, sets or plants, but Cabbage should be set out as plants. To find specific planting dates for these crops see

[ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/quickref/vegetable/plantingguide.html](http://ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/quickref/vegetable/plantingguide.html)

## Pruning Calendar

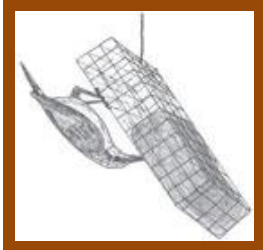
March is a good time to prune Bayberry, Beautyberry, Boxwood, Butterflybush, Camellia (Sasanque / Fall blooming), Summersweet, Crape Myrtle, Red Twig Dogwoods, Eleagnus, Euonymus, Rose-of-Sharon, Nandina, Pittosporum, Ligustrum, Roses and Yew. For a more comprehensive list of plants and the best time to prune them see [pubs.ext.vt.edu/430/430-462/430-462.html](http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/430/430-462/430-462.html)

Damping off is a fungal disease of seedlings that girdles the plant's stem where it enters the growing medium, causing the plant to topple over.



## Bird Feeders and Nesting Boxes

**Brown-headed nuthatches frequently visit suet feeders**



Bird feeders supplement the natural foods in your backyard and concentrate bird activity for easy viewing. Black oil sunflower, safflower, white millet, and thistle seeds are all preferred types of birdseed. It's best to buy each seed type separately and in bulk. Seed mixes often contain empty seed hulls and undesirable seed types. Sunflower seeds generally should be presented in above-ground platform feeders or covered feeders. Cardinals, chickadees, grosbeaks, and titmice prefer sunflower seeds. Thistle seeds can be used in tube feeders or in mesh bags. Thistle attracts American goldfinches, house finches, and purple finches. White millet should be spread on the ground beneath shrubs, or under aboveground feeders. Juncos, mourning doves, and sparrows eat millet. Suet, whether store-bought or

homemade, is enjoyed by an incredible variety of birds, including bluebirds, catbirds, nuthatches, orioles, pine warblers, woodpeckers, wrens, and yellow-rumped warblers. To make suet at home, mix raisins, chopped apples, leftover birdseed, oatmeal, peanut hearts, cracked corn, or peanut butter with melted animal fat, vegetable shortening, or lard. Straight peanut butter is not recommended because birds may have trouble swallowing it. Feeders should be cleaned every 2 to 3 weeks to prevent disease transmission among birds. Nesting boxes provide nesting sites for a variety of bird species, including bluebirds, chickadees, great-crowned flycatchers, screech owls, titmice, and wrens. Nest boxes should be built following recommended dimensions for box height, box width, entrance hole diameter, and placement height. Nest boxes should be cleaned out in February or March before the new nesting season begins. Build nest boxes that can be emptied easily. For more information about building nesting boxes, see [ncsu.edu/goingnative/ag636\\_01.pdf](http://ncsu.edu/goingnative/ag636_01.pdf)



**Northern Cardinals prefer black oil**

## Pest Patrol



**Male and female euonymus scale on the underside of a**

Scale insects feed on leaves or branches of many ornamental plants grown in landscapes. They attach themselves to a plant and feed by sucking fluids through straw-like mouthparts. This can reduce plant growth and vigor. Scale insects can be divided into two broad categories: armored scale and soft scale. The distinction is important because behavior and management of the two groups are different. Both groups live beneath waxy covers that protect them from predators, parasitoids and pesticides. Armored scales live beneath a waxy cover that is not attached to the adult body. Thus the cover can be removed to reveal the scale insect hidden below. Armored scales typically do not move once they begin to feed and do not produce honeydew. In contrast, soft scales secrete a waxy layer over themselves that cannot be separated from their body. Soft scales also excrete sugary honeydew and may move from branches to leaves during their life cycle. Black [sooty mold fungus](#) is often associated with this honeydew.

Armored scale are typically small and inconspicuous. The protective covers often blend well with plant bark so populations may become very large before being detected or a plant shows noticeable damage. Therefore, scouting is especially important on plant species that are frequently infested by armored scale. Common symptoms of infestation include premature leaf drop and branch dieback. Heavy infestations can kill a tree or shrub. Euonymus scale, Tea scale, Gloomy scale, Obscure scale, and Juniper scale are all examples of armored scale. When insecticide applications become necessary, dormant oil applications can be made in winter to kill scale on trunks and branches. Otherwise, target the crawler stage with horticultural oil or a systemic insecticide. For more information about armored scale see [ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/O&T/shrubs/note157/note157.html](http://ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/O&T/shrubs/note157/note157.html)

## Lawn Care

On Bermudagrass and Zoysiagrass lawns, apply preemergence herbicides in late February to mid-March. On St. Augustinegrass, Centipedegrass and Tall Fescue lawns, apply preemergence herbicides by time the dogwoods are in full bloom (around Easter). Preemergence herbicides can be used to control crabgrass, goosegrass, and foxtail. DO NOT fertilize Tall Fescue after March 15. For more information about lawn care see [lawncare.ncsu.edu/](http://lawncare.ncsu.edu/)

## Additional Upcoming Extension Events:

- March 14 Managing Fruit Trees in the Home Landscape program, 6:30pm register at [go.ncsu.edu/fruittrees](http://go.ncsu.edu/fruittrees)  
March 21 Starting a Vegetable Garden program, 6:30pm register at [go.ncsu.edu/vegetablegardening](http://go.ncsu.edu/vegetablegardening)  
April 3&4 Babysitting Training, ages 12 and up, call 232-2261 to register  
April 16 Identifying Dragons training for those working with youth, 6:00pm register at [go.ncsu.edu/identifyingdragons](http://go.ncsu.edu/identifyingdragons)  
April 4 Youth Electric Fieldtrip, ages 11 and up, register at [go.ncsu.edu/electricfieldtrip](http://go.ncsu.edu/electricfieldtrip)

For more information on the programs listed above call the Currituck Extension office at 232-2262.

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)

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Deborah E. Kelso  
Agricultural Technician

### MISSION, VISION AND GOALS

North Carolina Cooperative Extension partners with communities to deliver education and technology that enrich the lives, land and economy of North Carolina. 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.

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