

Currituck Garden News



January 2014

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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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Whiteflies

Over the winter you may experience an infestation of whiteflies on your plants indoors. In colder climates, whiteflies die outdoors, but indoors they can reproduce throughout the year. Whiteflies feed by sucking sap from plants and are found on the undersides of leaves. When a heavily infested plant is disturbed, clouds of white winged adults fly into the air. Because large amounts of sap can be removed, heavily infested plants can be seriously weakened and grow poorly. Leaves may even turn yellow and drop prematurely. Whiteflies can also suck out more sap than they can digest and they excrete the excess as a sweet, sticky substance called honeydew. The honeydew covers leaf surfaces and provides a place for black, sooty mold to grow. Both the presence of sooty mold and the removal of plant sap can interfere with photosynthesis.

Adult whiteflies are about 1/10 to 1/16 inch long and look like tiny white moths. Adult females usually lay between 200 and 400 eggs. Within a week, the eggs hatch and the nymphs will begin to feed. After 4 weeks, the nymphs become adults and live for about a month. Ornamental plants in and around the home often become infested through the introduction of other infested plants. Inspect all new plants as well as plants being brought indoors for the winter for whiteflies before placing them with other plants. Inspect all plants regularly and remove by hand any older leaves heavily infested with non-mobile nymphs. Whiteflies have natural enemies in the garden, such as lady beetles, spiders and lacewings but indoors, whitefly populations can increase rapidly. Yellow sticky traps can be helpful in controlling light infestations if it is caught early enough. In many cases, controlling whiteflies with insecticides has been difficult because they have developed resistance to some chemicals. For this reason, alternating the type of chemicals used is recommended. In addition, the eggs and non-feeding pupae are generally less susceptible to insecticides than the nymphs and adults. Controlling a whitefly population usually requires several applications 5 to 7 days apart. Insecticides commonly used for whitefly control include neem oil, insecticidal soap, horticulture oil, pyrethrins, permethrin, imidacloprid, and malathion. Before using any chemical, read and follow label directions carefully.



Left: Adult Whiteflies



Right: Whiteflies, eggs and nymphs.

NE NC Daffodil Society

The Spring 2014 meeting of the Northeast North Carolina Daffodil Society will be held at the NC Cooperative Extension Currituck County Center located at 120 Community Way in Barco on Saturday, February 22, 2014. The meeting will start at 10:00am, with registration beginning at 9:30am. American Daffodil Society member Clay Higgins will recap the year 2013 in daffodils and cover the preparation of entry cards for your daffodil exhibits. Katherine Beale will be making a presentation with demonstrations on how to stage daffodils for the show, including single stem, three stems, and a collection of 5 stems.

An Artistic Design Class will be held at 1:00pm. Laura Anne Brooks an outstanding experienced artistic designer, judge and member of the National Garden Club will demonstrate how to build **Horizontal, and Transparency Designs**. There is a minimal charge of \$5 per person to attend the class. Submit fee at the door.

For more information contact: NENCDS Chairman, Clay Higgins (252) 491-9268 (clayhiggins@centurylink.net) or Debbie Kelso (252) 232-2262.



Vegetable Garden

For the cold hardy gardener, there are a few things you can plant in January. Onions can be planted from seed but hold off on the sets or plants until February or March. Both garden peas and edible podded peas can be planted from January thru March.



Pruning Calendar

If you're tired of being cooped up indoors, feel free to prune your Abelias, Beautyberry, Boxwood, Butterfly Bush, Vitex, Cotoneaster, Crape Myrtle, Eleagnus, Euonymus, Gardenia, Juniper, Photinia, Privet/ Ligustrum, and Muscadine Grapes. Winter is also a good time to prune summer blooming Spirea such as Spiraea japonica, Spiraea bumalda and Goldmound Spirea. Hydrangeas that bloom on new wood can also be pruned now but don't prune your Big-leaf Hydrangeas until June or July.

For a more comprehensive list of plants and the best time to prune them, see:

http://go.ncsu.edu/pruning_calendar

Hydrangeas

Hydrangeas do not require annual pruning yet many people feel the need to prune them. Hydrangeas can become large plants over time. Planting young plants in small spaces can force the gardener to move it or prune it later down the road. Though hydrangeas don't need to be pruned, they can be pruned quite successfully if you understand how they flower.

A plant that flowers on **new wood** will form flower buds for that year on the new growth that it produces in the spring. Smooth hydrangeas (*H. arborescens* 'Annabelle' or 'Incrediball') and Peegee hydrangeas (*H. paniculate* 'Limelight' or 'Pinky Winky') both flower on new wood. A plant that flowers on **old wood** will produce flower buds on a stem that has been growing for a year or longer. Big-leaf hydrangeas (*H. macrophylla* 'Nikko Blue'), both mophead and lacecap, and Oakleaf hydrangeas (*H. quercifolia*) flower on old wood.

Plants that flower on **new wood** can be pruned in fall, winter, or spring and still produce flowers that summer. The best time to prune this type is in January thru March. Plants that flower on **old wood** cannot be pruned without sacrificing some of the flowers. Any time you remove a stem from this type of hydrangea, the new growth that takes its place will have to live for a year before it is mature enough to produce a flower bud. It is best to avoid pruning these plants altogether by choosing an appropriately sized plant and placing it so it can reach its full size. If you must prune a Big-leaf or Oakleaf hydrangea do it in June or July (but not after August 1).

Easy Growing Orchids

Growing orchids successfully requires an understanding of where orchids come from and how they grow. Most of the orchids grown in the home are native to tropical and subtropical areas and are epiphytes. Epiphytes are plants that grow in the branches of trees, clinging to them for support while absorbing moisture from the surface of bark that is wet from dew or rain. These plants should be potted in an orchid mix made of bark chunks that won't hold much moisture. Epiphytes will not tolerate soggy roots and keeping them too wet will damage the roots and kill root hairs. Some orchids however, are terrestrial or soil-dwellers. These orchids originate from temperate regions of the world and they should be potted in a regular potting mix that holds some moisture but still drains well. The best way to water orchids is to hold the container over a sink or tub and water thoroughly so moisture exits the bottom and is discarded. Try to use room temperature water and never let the roots stand in water. Usually once a week will be sufficient depending on the growing environment.



Dendrobium Orchid

Orchids respond well to weekly fertilization while the plant is actively producing new leaves. Orchids planted in bark require more nitrogen than other potting mixes so a 30-10-10 orchid fertilizer should be used. Balanced fertilizers such as 10-10-10 can be used, but these must be diluted to ¼ strength. Nearly all repotting should be done between February and June when orchids are producing new growth and new roots (just after flowering). In the winter place plants on trays of moist gravel or use a humidifier to increase the humidity.



Paphiopedilum Orchid

All orchids need good light to bloom, but they are sensitive to the heat which accompanies high light intensities and may sunburn. Temperatures in windows can be lowered by drawing sheer curtains across them. A south facing window with sheer curtains is ideal. An east facing window would be second and a west facing window third. Orchids may not bloom in a north facing window. A 10 degree drop in temperature at night is critical to flowering for most orchids. Some orchids require even more (15° to 20°). A two week period in the spring or fall where temperatures at night are kept 10° to 15° cooler than during the day should initiate

flowering as long as the light levels are adequate. If an orchid refuses to bloom, the light levels are usually too low or the night temperatures are too high.

Some of the easiest orchids to grow are Phalaenopsis (Moth Orchid), Cattleya (Corsage Orchid), Oncidium (Dancing Lady Orchid), Paphiopedilum (Slipper Orchid), and Dendrobiums.

For more information on Growing Orchids in the Home see: <http://go.ncsu.edu/orchids>



Cattleya Orchid



Oncidium Orchid



Phalaenopsis Orchid

For additional information on the contents of this newsletter call or e-mail Debbie Kelso at 232-2262, deborah_kelso@ncsu.edu

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.

Frost Blankets

Grandma's old method of covering the garden with blankets and sheets works well as long as the fabric remains dry. If the fabric absorbs water, evaporative cooling can lead to colder temperatures adjacent to the blanket. To recharge the heat stored in the soil, the blankets and sheets must be removed in the daytime. Frost blankets (Floating Row Covers) are lightweight fabrics that lay directly over crops. Because they transmit light, they provide crop protection over an extended period of time without being removed. When plastic is used as a covering over a growing bed, it must be held up off the plants. Plants will freeze where the plastic touches them. Learn more: http://go.ncsu.edu/frost_blanket

Master Gardener Volunteer Training

The Master Gardener Volunteer training classes will be starting on January 14, 2014. The class will meet every Tuesday from 1:00pm to 4:00pm for 13 weeks. The fee for the class \$95. For more information or an application please contact Debbie Kelso 252-232-2262 or Deborah_kelso@ncsu.edu.

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