# Currituck Garden News

March 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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## Weed Control in Vegetable Gardens

With the onset of warmer weather, many of us are anxious to put in a spring vegetable garden. Most gardeners spend more time fighting weeds than any other chore in the garden. Garden weeds are hard to control because they grow rapidly, produce vast numbers of seeds, and spread aggressively. The gardener needs many weapons in his arsenal to fight the war on weeds successfully. Mulches can be used to prevent weed germination and growth. Organic mulches (bark chips, leaves, shredded newspaper, straw) are derived from plant material and decompose naturally in the soil. Inorganic mulches (black plastic) do not decompose and must be removed from the soil when they are no longer needed. Clear plastic is not recommended because it does not exclude the light that weed seeds need to germinate. Biotelo is a biodegradable and compostable mulch film that can also be used in the vegetable garden. Fast growing 'smother' crops or cover crops can be used to reduce weed germination. Cover crops (rye, ryegrass, etc.) are usually planted in the fall and killed by tillage or chemicals the following spring prior to planting vegetables. The straw residue from cover crops left on the soil surface can inhibit germination of weed seeds by 75% or more. Removal by hand or cultivation can be used to rid the garden of weeds. Weeds that emerge after planting should be removed early before they are past 3 inches tall. Hand tools such as the spring tooth hand cultivator and the trowel are very effective on small weeds and for working near garden plants. If working on your knees is difficult try using a scuffle hoe, onion hoe or Garden Weasel. Push plows and garden tillers are very effective cultivators but care should be taken not to cultivate deeper than 2 inches to prevent root damage to vegetable plants. Herbicides are another useful tool for weed control. Be sure to read labels carefully and follow the directions as they are written. Not all herbicides are labeled for use in a vegetable garden. To control weeds before the seeds germinate, use trifluralin (trade name Treflan). To control grasses in the garden after they are present, use sethoxydim (trade name Poast). Grasses should be no larger than 4 inches tall when the herbicide is applied for best control. For a chart showing which herbicides are labeled for use on various crops see:

http://go.ncsu.edu/vege_garden_weeds

Scuffle Hoe

Tomatoes growing with black plastic mulch.

Twist Cultivator

## Pruning Calendar

Pruning shrubs is a good way to kill some time while we wait for the ground to warm up and dry out. In March we can prune Beautyberry, Boxwood, Butterfly Bush, Sasanqua Camellia, Vitex, Clethra (Summersweet), Crape Myrtle, Eleagnus, Euonymus, Rose of Sharon, Peegee Hydrangea (summer blooming), Juniper, Nandina, Pittosporum, Privet/Ligustrum, Roses and Yew.

**For a more comprehensive list of plants and the best time to prune them, see:** http://go.ncsu.edu/pruning_calendar

## 7th Annual NE NC Daffodil Show

**Saturday March 22, 2014 from 1:00pm to 5:00 pm**

The Horticulture Division will showcase daffodils representing many of the more than one thousand varieties of blooms. The show will include photography, special classes for Small Growers, Youth and a large Miniature Section. No prior registration is required for daffodil entries.

Everyone is welcome. Admission is FREE!

**Entries by Exhibitors shall be accepted from**:
5:00pm to 7:00 pm Friday, March 21, 2014
and
7:00am until 9:30am on Saturday, March 22, 2014

In the Artistic Division, beautiful arrangements of daffodils will depict "Nature's Wonder". Registration is required for this division. Anyone interested in entering an Artistic Division flower arrangement should contact: James Fincher, (252) 599-2536 or jfinchir@aol.com to register.

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

## Treated Wood

The use of treated wood in gardening situations is quite controversial. The advantage of treated wood is that it resists decay and insect activity for many years and so is a more permanent addition to the landscape than most untreated woods. Prior to 2004, the primary wood treatment involved chromated copper arsenate (CCA). While this product was approved for use in landscape situations, the use of CCA treated wood was phased out in 2004. Before using treated wood in raised-bed gardening, obtain a product data sheet regarding the type of wood treatment used and limitations to the use of such wood in the landscape. The gardener may also wish to contact the Environmental Protection Agency for current information regarding the safety of wood treatments. Alternatives to treated wood include the use of woods naturally resistant to decay (cedar, redwood, and black locust), synthetic products (TREX, recycled plastics), rock, or masonry block. All of these provide sturdy structures that should persist for some time in the landscape. One could also choose to use untreated wood with the understanding that it must be replaced in two to three years.

From Bulletin #2761, Gardening in Small Spaces
University of Maine Cooperative Extension

## Vegetable Garden

It may be too early to plant tomatoes, but in March we can plant beets, broccoli, cabbage plants, Chinese cabbage, cauliflower, kale, kohlrabi, lettuce, mustard, onions, peas, Irish potatoes, radishes, rutabagas, spinach, Swiss chard and turnips.

**For a Spring Vegetable Planting Guide see:**
http://go.ncsu.edu/spring_vege_guide

# Controlling Weeds in Warm Season Lawns

Weeds in a warm season lawn are not only ugly, but they rob the turf of sunlight, nutrients and moisture. Weeds spread aggressively and a few left uncontrolled can quickly become a problem. Weeds can be broken down into two categories, grassy weeds and broadleaf weeds. Each of these categories can be further divided into annuals and perennials. Annuals germinate, grow, and die within a twelve month period. Summer annuals germinate in the spring, grow through the summer, set seed, and die at the onset of cold weather. Winter annuals germinate in the fall, grow through the winter, set seed and die as temperatures rise in early summer. Perennials grow for two or more years. They reproduce from vegetative parts such as tubers, bulbs, rhizomes, or stolons, though some also produce seed.

Weed control begins with proper management practices, which encourage a dense, healthy turf. A healthy turf shades the soil so that less sunlight reaches the ready-to-germinate weed seeds. A thick turf minimizes the space available for weeds to become established. Proper management practices include mowing, watering, fertilizing and liming. Lawns should be mowed to the proper height for each type of grass and frequent enough so no more than 1/3 of the blade is removed. During periods of drought, the lawn should be watered once a week. Proper lime application will help to maintain a soil pH where nutrients are readily available to the turf.

If herbicides are needed, it is important to know what weed you are trying to control. Herbicides fall into two categories, pre-emergence and post-emergence. Pre-emergence herbicides are applied to the soil prior to weed seed germination. In the spring, pre-emergence herbicides should be applied when air temperatures reach 65-70° F for four consecutive days (March). In the fall, to control winter annuals, apply pre-emergence herbicides when night time lows reach 55-60° F for four consecutive days (September / October). Pre-emergence herbicides are usually effective for 12 weeks so a second application may be needed. Post-emergence herbicides target visible weeds. When choosing an herbicide, select one that is recommended for the weed you want to control and the type of turf you have. Do not apply post-emergence herbicides when the air temperature is higher than 85°F. Turf damage may occur at higher temperatures. Turf damage may also occur if the lawn is under drought stress. Do not mow immediately before or after applying an herbicide. Do not apply if rain is expected within 24 hours after the herbicide has been applied. Herbicides work best when weeds are young and repeat applications may be necessary. For more information about lawns see : http://go.ncsu.edu/nc_lawns

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https://www.facebook.com/CurrituckMasterGardeners

## Rose Rosette

Photo credit: John Hartman, Univ. of Kentucky, Bugwood.org

If your ‘Knockout’ roses are growing abnormally, they might be infected with the “rose rosette” virus . Virus-infected branches will take on an abnormal bushiness (witches broom). Symptoms can vary depending on the variety of rose involved and may include elongated flexible shoots, proliferation of shoots leading to a “witches-broom” appearance, excessive development of thorns, leaf deformation, retention of juvenile red coloration in shoots, flower abnormalities, decreased cold hardiness, and plant death. Not all symptoms may be present in any given plant. Shoot proliferation and leaf deformation can also be caused by accidental exposure to low doses of the herbicide glyphosate (Roundup). If you see the “hyperthorniness”, then you can be confident that your roses have been infected. The virus is spread by a microscopic mite. Fortunately, it is not spread by pruning tools. Since there is no known chemical control, infected plants must be removed.

For additional information on any of 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.

## Coastal NC Daylily Society

The Coastal North Carolina Daylily Society extends an open invitation to come hear a special guest speaker. Dan Hansen from Ladybug Daylilies will be speaking at the next Daylily Society meeting on March 26, 2014. Dan has been a daylily hybridizer for 15 years and has a large daylily farm in Florida. Dan has registered 464 daylilies with the American Hemerocallis Society. The meeting will start at 10:00am at NC Cooperative Extension, Currituck County Center located at 120 Community Way in Barco off Hwy 158. Admission is free and the public is welcome. For more information contact the society president, Chris Shea vetcycler@yahoo.com or Debbie Kelso 252-232-2262.

For more information about Dan Hansen see:
http://ladybugdaylilies.com/

**NC Cooperative Extension**
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