

# Mountain Gardener

Buncombe County's Extension Newsletter for Home Lawn & Garden Enthusiasts

Buncombe County Center, 94 Coxe Avenue, Asheville, NC 28801-3620 ( 828-255-5522)

March/April 2013

## Inside This Issue

- March Garden Chores, p. 2
- April Garden Chores, p. 3
- Spring Garden School, p. 4
- Gardening in the Mtns., Hotline, Rain Barrels p. 4
- Moles, Events Notification, p. 5
- Coming Events p.6

## Contact Us

Buncombe County Center  
94 Coxe Avenue  
Asheville, NC 28801

Extension Agent  
Agriculture-Urban Horticulture

Check out Buncombe County  
Center's website at:

<http://buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu>

Distributed in furtherance of the acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University commit themselves to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status or disability. In addition, the two Universities welcome all persons without regard to sexual orientation. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.

Helping gardeners put knowledge to work.

*"There is more pleasure in making a garden than in contemplating a paradise"*  
..... Anne Scott -James



## Spring Garden School April 6, 2013

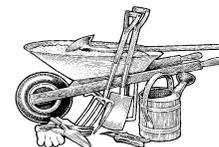
Learn how to grow fresh vegetables in your back yard. The school topics include soil preparation, "how to grow" seedlings, cool weather plants, herbs and summer vegetables. Experienced Extension Master Gardeners will teach basic gardening methods and pest control procedures with a focus on beginner gardeners and folks new to WNC.

For more information on registration and fees see page 4 or go to:

<http://buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu>

## Normal March/April Weather Weather Averages For Asheville, North Carolina

Normal March Average High	58.8°F
Normal March Average Low	35.5°F
Normal March Precipitation	3.82"
Normal April Average High	67.8°F
Normal April Average Low	42.8°F
Normal April Precipitation	3.33"



## Hours of Daylight for Asheville, NC

	<u>Sunrise</u>	<u>Sunset</u>
March 1	7:00 am	6:25 pm
March 31	7:19 am	7:50pm
April 1	7:17am	7:51pm
April 30	6:40am	8:15pm

**Persons with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency may request accommodations to participate in activities mentioned in this newsletter. Please contact Linda Blue at 828-255-5522 during business hours at least 3 days prior to the event to discuss accommodations.**

**NC** State University  
A&T State University  
**COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION**

Empowering People · Providing Solutions

## **Garden Chores for March**

### **LAWNS**

- It will soon be time to crank up the lawn mower. Did you get the blade sharpened?
- If you have not yet gotten around to the spring fertilizer application, you're almost out of time. Products containing slow release nitrogen should be put out no later than the first week of March. Quick-release products such as 10-10-10 can be applied through the end of the month.
- If crabgrass has been a problem, mid-March is a good time to spread "crabgrass preventer" for best results.
- It can be difficult to time applications of "weed and feed" products for good results. Early March would be only slightly early for the weed prevention and a little later than desired for the slow release nitrogen.

### **ORNAMENTALS**

- Summer blooming shrubs and trees such as butterfly bush, rose-of-Sharon and crape myrtle can be pruned now.
- Do not prune spring blooming plants until after the flowers fade.
- March is a good time to do severe pruning when overgrown shrubs need to be renovated.
- When the weather breaks, plant trees, shrubs, perennials.
- Repot and trim up house plants. Rejuvenate hanging baskets and use cuttings to start new baskets.
- Sow seeds for larkspur, poppies and snapdragons.
- Check house plants for insect infestations. Plants can be taken outside on a warm day for spraying, but bring them in before dark.

### **FRUITS**

- Remove straw or row covers from strawberry plants as soon as flowers appear.
- Plant all types of fruit crops.
- Prune fruit trees, grapes and brambles.
- The Extension office has video tapes on pruning grapes, blueberries and fruit trees that are available for loan.
- Fertilize all fruit crops.

### **VEGETABLES**

- Plant English and edible-pod peas, onions, and kale.
- Wait until late March to set out potatoes and plants of cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower.
- Start transplants indoors for tomatoes, peppers and eggplants mid-month. They will need 6 to 8 weeks to be ready for the garden.

### **OTHER**

- It's lovely to have a bouquet of daffodils in the house. If you want to mix daffodils with other cut flowers, though, take an extra step first. The sap from daffodil stems can clog the stems of other plants. The recommendation is to let the daffodils stand in water by themselves for at least 6 hours before placing them in with other flowers.
- 
-

## **CHORES FOR APRIL**

### **LAWNS**

- Consider aerating the lawn with a core aerator as early as possible. This will allow spring rains to soak into the ground more readily.
- DO NOT fertilize cool season lawns (fescue and bluegrass). Nitrogen applied this late is an invitation for brown patch fungus disease in June.
- Maintain mowing height for fescue lawns at 3 to 3 ½ inches.
- This is a good time to hit broadleaf weeds, such as clover and dandelions, with a spot spray of a selective herbicide such as 2, 4-D, Trimec, 33 Plus or similar products.

### **ORNAMENTALS**

- Apply a fresh layer of mulch to landscape beds before summer weeds germinate. Pull the winter weeds first. Only add enough mulch so that the total depth of mulch is no more than 4 inches.
- Try planting those spent Easter lilies in the garden. Keep them indoors until May, then plant them about 5 inches deep in a sunny location. They probably will not bloom again this year, but should be back next summer.
- Let the foliage of the spring bulbs die most of the way down before cutting the leaves. The bulb needs to absorb that energy for next spring.
- As soon as spring blooming shrubs have finished blooming, it's time to prune if they have gotten too large.
- Do not plant frost-tender flowers before May unless you will be able to cover them in case of frost.

### **FRUITS**

- Pull weeds in the strawberry bed and put straw mulch between the rows.
- Fertilize fruit trees, blueberries, grape vines, and brambles.
- Finish pruning brambles, grape vine and fruit trees.

### **VEGETABLES**

- When the soil is not too wet to work, till or turn over the soil for May planting, incorporate lime and phosphate according to soil test recommendations.
- When planning the vegetable garden, remember to rotate the location of plant families from year to year if possible.
- Set out transplants for cool season crops such as cabbage, broccoli and lettuce. Make sure they are hardened off before planting into the garden.
- You can still start transplants for warm season vegetables.
- Begin "hardening off" warm season transplants a week or two before planting in early to mid-May.
- Have row cover fabric handy if frost sensitive crops are planted before May.

### **OTHER**

- The first hummingbirds arrive in our area between April 10<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. Get the hummingbird feeders cleaned and ready to go out.

## **Spring Garden School**

**“Learn How to Grow Fresh Vegetables in Your Backyard”**

**Date: April 6, 2013**

**Time: 9:00am—1:00pm (registration starts at 8:30)**

**Place: NC Cooperative Ext. Office( Buncombe County)**

**94 Coxe Ave. Asheville (corner of Hilliard & Coxe)**



Learn about soil preparation and starting seedlings. Get information on growing cool weather crops, fresh herbs, tomatoes and other summer vegetables. School concludes with a question and answer session.

- Space is limited to 30 attendees.
- Registration fee is **\$ 5.00** You **must pre-pay** for a guaranteed space.

For more information call 255-5522 or to register go by 94 Coxe Ave. or send payment to NC Cooperative Extension, 94 Coxe Ave. Asheville, NC 28801. Please note on check what program you are paying for. Make checks payable to: **BCMG Enhancement Fund.**

## **Gardening in the Mountains**

The Extension Master Gardeners' popular Gardening in the Mountains programs started in February and will run through October. The lectures will be the third Wednesday each month from 10:00 to 11:00. They will be at the Cooperative Extension office, 94 Coxe Ave, Asheville. The programs are free and no pre-registration is required.

<b>March 20</b>	<b>Raised Bed Gardening</b>
<b>April 17</b>	<b>Viburnums and Hydrangeas</b>
<b>May 16</b>	<b>Rhododendrons and Azaleas</b>

## **Master Gardener Hotline Is Open**

The Extension Master Gardeners' Garden Hotline is open. The hours for March-September will be 9:30 to 3:30 Mon.-Thurs. and 8:30—12:30 on Friday. To ask your gardening questions call them at 255-5522.



## **WE HAVE RAIN BARRELS !**

The NC Cooperative Extension, Buncombe County Center, has rain barrels available for sale. The 80 gallon barrels come complete with fittings and installation instructions. Barrels may be purchased for \$110 + tax at the Extension office at 94 Coxe Ave., Asheville. For more information call 255-5522.

To receive this newsletter via email  
Phone (828) 255-5522 or email: [joyce.plemmons@buncombecounty.org](mailto:joyce.plemmons@buncombecounty.org)

## **Moles Are Doing Well This Year**

*By: Glenn Palmer, Extension Master Gardener Volunteer*

If you're like a lot of folks hereabouts strolling over your lawn is like walking on a mattress. There are mole runs everywhere.

With two warm winters, temperatures of our soils are much higher than normal and the grubs haven't gone as deep for their winter vacations. Result, neither have the moles as they hunt for food. That's one reason but it's also mole breeding season so this is normally a busy time on the mole social calendar.



Spear or bayonet type mole trap (Carolinafarm.com)

The soft soil does make it easier to set spear-type traps though so if you're into winter sports bring them out.

Is it legal to trap moles? They are not classified as game animals so there is no open season for them. However, if they are depredate your property you're entitled to trap them. Call the NC Wildlife Commission for a "Depredation Permit" 1-800-662-7137.

If you need help there are licensed Wildlife Damage Control Agents who will do the job for you. These are independent contractors so they do charge a fee.

How about insecticides to kill the grubs? These are most effective in late summer when the grubs are smaller and higher in the soil. At this point spear-trapping or hunting with a shovel are your best bet.

Or, of course, you can recognize that by consuming the grubs, aerating your soil in the process, the moles are doing you a favor so just wish them well.

---

## **Sign Up for E-News**

Here is an opportunity to sign up for notices of coming events offered by Buncombe County's Extension Master Gardener Volunteers. Extension Master Gardener Volunteers are trained by NC Cooperative Extension to assist with providing educational information to area citizens. They offer gardening information by staffing a Garden Hotline, conducting Saturday Plant Problem Clinics, and staffing Ask a Gardener information tables at many local events, as well as providing Garden Schools and other events. If you would like to be included in periodic email updates of coming educational opportunities offered by Master Gardeners, you can sign up by sending an email with "**ADD**" in the subject line to [buncombemastergardener@gmail.com](mailto:buncombemastergardener@gmail.com).

Please note that this address is only for signing up for the e-news. For gardening and other questions, please continue to call (828) 255-5522 for the Master Gardener Hotline.

---



## **EVENTS**

- **March 9 & 10** **Organic Growers School**, UNC-A campus, Asheville. See: <http://www.organicgrowersschool.org>.
  - **March 9,23** **Compost Demo**, 11-2, WNC Farmers' Mkt., next to Jesse Israel's Garden  
**April 13,27** Center.
  - **March 20** **Gardening in the Mountains**, "*Raised Bed Gardening*", 10am  
at the Buncombe County Extension Office. Free, no registration required.
  - **April 6** **Spring Garden School**, "Gardening for the Beginner", 9-1, \$ 5 (pre-pay),  
Buncombe County Ext. Office, 94 Coxe Ave., Asheville.
  - **April 13 & 27** **Plant Problem Clinic**, by Extension Master Gardeners - WNC Farmers'  
Market, 11:00 - 2:00 in the breezeway between the retail buildings.
  - **April 17** **Gardening in the Mountains**, "*Viburnums & Hydrangeas*", 10am  
at the Buncombe County Extension Office. Free, no registration required.
  - **April 27** See the Master Gardeners at Montreat LandCare Native Plant Sale, 10-2,  
Pratt Park, just inside the Montreat Gate. Area Nurseries will be selling  
native plants and shrubs and there will be many educational exhibits.
- 
-