

The Clod-Hopper



Volume 28 Edition 2 Gardeners of Wake County, Inc. – Raleigh, NC

FEBRUARY 2012

NATIVE PLANTS

The speaker for the January meeting was Laurie Lawson from Niche Gardens in Chapel Hill. If you were not at the meeting to pick up a copy of their catalog you need to check out their website www.nichegardens.com. The gardens and nursery, located at 1111 Dawson Road in Chapel Hill, were started 26 years ago by Kim Hawks. Free guided tours of the display gardens are available at 10am on Saturdays during the spring and fall.

As the catalog states, and Laurie explained, the term 'native plant' is used for plants that are native to North America, prior to the time plants were introduced by American settlers. The ones included in the slide show were Echinacea (the coneflowers), Baptisia (wild indigo), Stokesia

(Stokes aster), Heuchera (alum root), Tiarella (foam flower), Sarracenia (pitcher plant), Solidago (goldenrod), Trillium and Spigelia marilandica (Indian pink). Laurie also showed some slides of Heucheraella which is a cross of Heuchera and Tiarella.

As a refresher in botanical nomenclature, when you see the name Echinacea purpurea 'Kim's Knee High', Echinacea is the genus, purpurea is the species and 'Kim's Knee High' is the cultivar (cultivated variety). In some cases the cultivar was naturally occurring in a field of plants and propagated for a specific trait such as color or form. In other cases the trait was developed by a plant breeder who

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AZALEA SALE

Bob Hargrove has over 4,000 Azaleas under contract for the Club to sell in April. Please mark your calendar for the week of April 9 and find some time to volunteer to help with the sale. Plants will need to be unloaded and set in place the first part of the week. The member only sale is

Thursday afternoon and the sale is open to the public Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Sign-up sheets will be distributed at the February meeting so you can sign up for the various chores that need to be done. You can also try out the "Sign-Up Genius" system on the club website www.gardenersofwakecounty.org. It should be up and running by the time you get this edition of *The Clodhopper*.

The sale will be held in the Flower Show compound at the Fairgrounds. There will be other groups selling plants in the area during the same hours as our sale.



FEBRUARY MEETING

The speaker for the February 21st meeting is Phil Campbell from Campbell Road Nursery. Her topic is listed as Spring Planting. If you have not been to the nursery on the corner of Campbell and Tryon Roads you will certainly want to pay them a visit. The nursery fronts on Tryon Road with a large greenhouse that showcases Poinsettias for Christmas and other container plants during the rest of the year. Then there are acres of commercial greenhouses behind that are not open to the public.



There are lots of new plants in the trade this spring — both ornamentals and vegetables. Come to the February meeting and see what Phil has to tell us about the new introductions and some of our old favorites.

CLUB MEETINGS

Meetings are at 7:30 pm at the JC Raulston Arboretum

- Feb. 21** Container Gardening; Phil Campbell, Campbell Road Nursery
- Mar. 20** Tree Shaping and Pruning; Jeff Kish, Bartlett Tree Experts
- Apr. 17** Vermi-Composting and Casting Tea; Greg Morris, Earth Worm Expert
- May 15** Annual Picnic

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FEBRUARY IN THE GARDEN

Your editor still refers to a well-worn copy of John Harris's booklet "Garden Calendar for North Carolina" when she gets the material for this part of *The Clodhopper* together. If you can find a copy you might want to add it to your reference collection. Even if "global warming" continues we can probably just change the dates for the various chores.

We make that last statement because his February list gives instructions to fertilize bulbs as soon as they come out of the ground. That later part is still true; mine got fertilized when they appeared in December and several daffodils have already bloomed. The recommended amount is 4 cups of 8-8-8 per 100 square feet. He also suggests cutting forsythia, flowering quince, cherries, almonds and crabapples to force them for blooms. Mother Nature has already "bloomed" several of those in our landscape.



If you want to start a strawberry bed, February is still the time to do it. For best results use certified plants from a reputable nursery. Plants grown in North Carolina are better adapted to our area than those grown in states north of us. Mr. Harris reminds us to make sure there is no Bermuda grass growing in the area where strawberries are to be planted. He also reminds us to mulch the plants well to control weeds, moisture and to keep the berries clean.



February is still the best month to start this year's vegetable garden. You may want to call the Master Gardener office for a copy of the NC Department of Agriculture home vegetable garden planting guide. It is also available on-line. The guide tells you how many plants you need per person/per year, suggested cultivars, planting dates, planting depth and distance between plants, minimum soil temperature for planting and the average days to maturity for a crop. It does not have the information on fertilizing the crops.

John always included the warning to gardeners who smoked that they should not light a cigarette or have one in their hand when working with tomatoes or peppers. The plants are susceptible to tobacco mosaic virus which

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New Members

Douglas and Linda Mann, Youngsville

Will and Rose Cotton, Angier

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____

Spouse _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone (h) _____ (w) _____

E-mail _____

Occupation _____

Gardening Special Interests _____

Other Interests/Hobbies _____

Sponsor (not required) _____

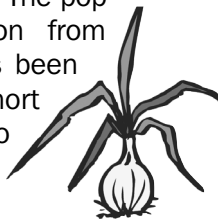
Membership dues are \$15 for individuals and \$25 for families for the calendar year: January – December. Make checks payable to Gardeners of Wake County. Application form and check are to be mailed to:

Gardeners of Wake County
Carole Johnson, Membership Chairman
5346 Lake Wendell Rd.
Zebulon, NC 27597

FEBRUARY IN THE GARDEN *(continued from page 2)*

can be on the hands of smokers. If you smoke, wash your hands well before handling tomato or pepper seeds or plants.

Wild onions are popping up all over the place this winter. Now is the time to kill them. The popular recommendation from many gardeners has been to mow the lawn short about April 15th to get rid of wild onions. You won't see any signs of the onions until fall. The tops got cut off and they were ready to go dormant for the summer. The onions are still waiting in the soil to re-sprout when temperatures moderate in the fall. You do need to use a chemical to get rid of them, and February is usually a good month to do it.



TREES AND SHRUBS

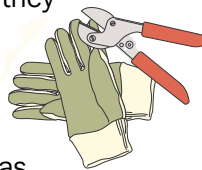
If you are pruning spring flowering trees such as dogwoods or fruit trees remember to save the bud-



ded branches to force blooms to enjoy inside. Re-cut the base of each branch at an angle to encourage more water absorption. Put the branches in a container with warm water and leave them in a heated area with good light but out of the direct sun until they start opening.

February is also a month you can prune summer-blooming hydrangeas. Remove weak branches and remove about 1/3 of each branch you cut back.

Nandina, Mahonia and Aucuba also get pruned in February. To keep a "well-rounded" plant, remove the tallest canes by cutting them to ground level. (Do not remove more than 1/3 of the canes in any one year.) New growth will develop at the base of the plant during the spring. By doing this each year you will develop a plant that has leafed branches at 3 levels with berries on at least two levels of stems.



NATIVE PLANTS *(cont. from page 1)*

selected specific plants for traits such as color, size and flower form then crossed and re-crossed the plants to develop specific traits that would appeal to gardeners. These plants could then be tissue-cultured to be able to sell the plants more widely.

Some purists do not consider these "developed plants" as "native plants". Some of us call these people "snobs".

The Sarracenia, or Pitcher Plant, is a native of eastern North Carolina. Our native stands of the plant are endangered as coastal development increases and collectors rob plants from the land in which they grow naturally. We are fortunate to have local nurseries such as Niche Gardens and Plant Delights legally propagating our native plants so we can enjoy them for years to come.

As Laurie reminded us, when they first started in business tissue culture was in its infancy and plants were propagated from seed or rooted cuttings. It took longer and plants were often expensive. She showed the picture of the Trillium seedlings that were 3 years old and about the size of a dime.

**GARDENERS OF
WAKE COUNTY**

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OLD ROSES

Many gardeners enjoy the color and fragrance of roses in their gardens but are discouraged by the maintenance they think is needed for modern roses to perform well in this area. They are turning to plants described as “old roses”. The plants are more widely available in catalogs than in nurseries or “big box” stores. To help you interpret some of the information in catalogs we pass this information on.

True antique or heritage roses are those that were bred prior to 1867, the year in which the rose ‘La France’ was introduced. That rose was a cross between a hybrid perpetual and an old fashioned “tea rose” and was the first “hybrid tea rose”. Vintage or heirloom roses refer to those bred between .1867



and 1960. The term old rose or old garden rose refers to any rose grown before 1960.

Niche Gardens lists several old garden roses in their catalog. There are three cultivars of the China rose: ‘Mutabilis’ a disease resistant, fragrant, single flower that opens yellow and slowly changes to a dark pink; ‘Louis Phillipe’ — a double flower, crimson (NC State red), fragrant repeat bloomer and ‘Old Blush’, a fragrant climber that blooms fall and spring and produces really large red rose hips in the fall. They also list two Noisettes, the roses that were originally bred in Charleston, SC. ‘Crepuscle’ is a very fragrant, apricot colored climbing rose that originated in Charleston. ‘Natchitoches’ is a shrub rose from the Gulf Coast with small pink, fragrant flowers and foliage that looks almost blue.

Another North Carolina source listed in rose society publications is Almost Heaven Roses in Iron Station, NC. The website is www.almostheavenroses.com.

MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to our new members: Dr. Will Cotton, DVM and his wife Rose from Angier. Their membership information will appear in the 2012 Membership Directory. As a reminder, there many current members who need to pay their dues for 2012. The membership form is on page 3 of *The Clodhopper*. Please complete the form and mail it, with your check for dues, to Carole Johnson as quickly as possible so she can get the 2012 Membership Directory printed.