

The Clod-Hopper



Volume 28 Edition 7 Gardeners of Wake County, Inc. – Raleigh, NC

JULY 2012

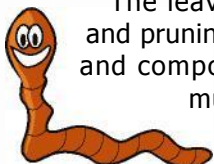
JUNE MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Your editor thanks all the members who contributed information for this article. Charles Gilliam reports they have harvested the onion and garlic crops at the Alliance Medical Ministry community garden. He says the garlic looked "as good as store-bought". Summer squash is being planted as the replacement crop in those rows.



There were 26 of our members who joined Tim Alderton on a tour of the gardens prior to his talk which had been announced as "JCRA Through the Seasons". With the short, mild winter this year and the long spring with good rainfall there seems to have been a longer blooming period for many of the plants. There has also been good growth on many of the woody plants. Tim pointed out that soil preparation is an important part of successful growth for new plants. I am sure he also pointed out the layer of mulch throughout the gardens.

The leaves, grass clippings and pruning debris are ground and composted then used as mulch throughout the gardens. It is an ex-



cellent source of organic material that encourages the growth of very large earthworms and it reduces the amount of chemical fertilizers used in the gardens. You saw the annual trial beds where some of the newest cultivars are being evaluated for future sale. You may want to go back to the beds later in the season to see which cultivars are growing well and which ones you might want to grow in your own gardens.

Two interesting gardening implements were discussed during the "member's demo" segment. Carole Johnson has a Fiskars Big Grip Multi-purpose Planting Tool. It is available in local stores. It has a good balance and shape for digging, a serrated edge to help cut and divide plants and a forked tip for digging out weeds. The serrated tip is also useful for opening bags of mulch or potting soil. Mac Williamson demonstrated a tool for sharpening dull pruners and scissors. At \$15 it is a good option to avoid buying new bypass pruners.



During his talk Tim showed slides of many of the Buddlias in the JCRA collection. Many were developed in the breeding program of Dr. Dennis Werner, a member of the NCSU faculty and a past Director of the JCRA. "Miss Ruby" is the cultivar named to honor Ruby McSwaim whose portrait is in the entry of the building in which

CLUB MEETINGS

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

July 17 Dick and Judith Tyler of Pine Knott Farms

Aug. 21 Derek Smith "NC DOT Wildflower Highway Beautification"

Sept. Anne Clapp "Camellia Selection and Planting".

JULY MEETING

The speakers for the July meeting are Dick and Judith Tyler of Pine Knot Farms. The nursery is just above the North Carolina state line near Bracy, Virginia. The nursery is an excellent source for perennials and they are known by collectors as the source for hellebores.

For those adventuresome gardeners who want to visit a very well-run nursery your editor suggests you get a catalog (with directions for finding the nursery) and make a day-trip. It doesn't take very long to get to the nursery but you can spend hours walking through the rows of plants.



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JULY GARDENING

This is the time of year we make the most of the early morning and evening hours for our gardening chores. If plants need irrigation to supplement rainfall it is safer to do it in the early morning. This is especially true if you use an overhead sprinkler system or a handheld hose for watering. Drip irrigation during the evening is usually safe as there is no water on the foliage of plants that might cause problems.

If you added trees and shrubs to your landscape this spring they may need more water than your established plants. A good mulch layer will keep the soil cooler and moist so check the mulch level as well as the soil moisture level in planting areas.





With the heat and humidity we are seeing an increase in scale, spider mites, leaf miners and leaf hoppers. Spider mites seem to be more prevalent this year than last year. Remember to check labels carefully if you are trying to control mites. Many of the garden insecticides are not labeled for controlling mites so you may have to add a miticide to your spray arsenal. Also remember to check labels carefully if the insect or disease problems are on hollies. Some products, especially Cygon, are not labeled for use on holly and will damage the plant.



For those of you growing corn in your gardens, remember that when the corn is in tassel it needs to be dark green. If it is not it needs an application of 15-15-15 fertilizer at a rate of about 1/2 pound per 10 feet of row. If there are black patches on the blossom end of your tomatoes, peppers or eggplant they have a calcium deficiency which may be corrected by spraying the plants with a calcium solution. (To avoid the problem next year remember to apply lime to the soil before you plant.




Last of all, remember to keep all ornamental plants deadheaded after blooming. It will reduce your "weed" problems next year.


New Members



Rob Adams, Raleigh



Sandra Ellington, Raleigh






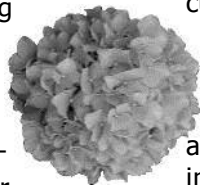
PROPAGATING CUTTINGS

This is a good time to take semi-hardwood cuttings of shrubs. The ones that are especially easy are Camellia, azalea and Hydrangea. Take the cuttings from the shrubs in the early morning while the plants are at their most turgid state. You should be able to bend the wood and make sure you do not cut into the previous year's growth.

A rooting hormone will improve your chances of having the cuttings of Camellia and azalea take. Most Hydrangeas will root without the added hormone. In fact, some gardeners will propagate hydrangeas by scraping a bit of bark from a lower stem, pressing the stem into the ground at the base of the plant and putting a brick on top of the stem to make a firm contact with the soil. Keep the soil moist and check to see if roots have formed before the first frost. If they have,

remove the stem from the plant and pot it up to grow over the winter.

The "Clapp Method" for azaleas and camellias is to use a Styrofoam cooler for a "rooting chamber". Put an inch of gravel



in the bottom of the cooler for a bit of weight and to provide some drainage. Mix half peatmoss and half coarse builders sand to make a layer at least four inches in the cooler and moisten the mix well before you "pour" it on top of the rocks.

Use a pencil or stick to make a hole in the potting medium for each cutting. The spacing of the holes will be determined by the size of the cuttings. There seems to be a higher percentage of good plants if the leaves of one cutting do not touch another one. Make a slanted cut at the base of each cutting, dip it in water and then dip it in rooting hormone powder. Shake off excess powder then put the cutting in the hole in the rooting medium and press the medium firmly around the base of the cutting.

After all the cuttings are in place, use a misting spray bottle and lightly spray the "stuck" cuttings. Cover the Styrofoam cooler with a sheet of clear plastic or enclose it in a clear plastic bag. The cuttings should be left in a shady area, but they do need light for rooting. Check the cuttings regularly to

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INVASIVE ALERTS

Fine Gardening Magazine has been reminding its readers for several years about the invasive nature of many of the plants that are included in their feature articles. National magazines publish articles written by well-known authors from many areas of the country. Climate conditions vary and native plants vary from one region to another so gardeners do have difficulties knowing whether plants grown in one part of the country may cause problems for them.

The August 2012 issue has an invasive alert on page 94. Plants recommended in some articles that are considered invasive in North Carolina

are the Chaste Tree (*Vitex agnus-castus*) and Wisteria (*Wisteria sinensis*). In addition, morning glories and bugleweed (*Ajuga reptans*) are listed as invasive in neighboring Virginia and Tennessee and fennel is listed as invasive in Virginia.

To keep some of our garden plants from becoming a problem for our neighbors it is a good idea to dead-head the blooms from perennial plants that cause a problem to prevent them from going to seed. For annuals it may be easier to pull the entire plant at the end of its bloom and replace it with another seasonal annual.

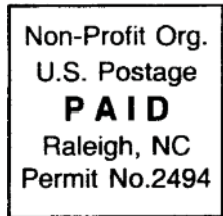
BOXWOOD BLIGHT

Last fall a North Carolina nursery received a shipment of boxwoods from an out of state nursery that was infected with the fungus *Cylindrocladium buxicola*. The plants were destroyed. The disease was diagnosed by staff at the Mountain Horticultural Research and Extension Center near Asheville. It is believed the diseased plants originated from a shipment that came into the United States from either Europe or New Zealand.

The disease has been found on plants growing in landscapes in Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Virginia. Both English and American Boxwood may be affected. The spores do not float through the air but are transmitted from plant to plant by equipment such as pruning shears and shovels or they can be carried for short distances (20 feet or so) by rain, irrigation equipment or a garden hose. The disease can be carried to a garden on a plant that shows no symptoms of the disease.

The fungal disease spreads more easily in hot, humid weather. The symptoms are tanning or bronzing of foliage, small light brown spots on the leaves and defoliation. The North Carolina Extension Office does have a list of fungicides that are effective for controlling the fungus.

Since many of us pick up plants as we travel during the summer we need to be careful about the health of plants we bring home. Buy from reputable nurseries or accept gift plants from gardening friends. Boxwood hobbyists can check www.boxwoodblight.org for additional information.



Change Service Requested

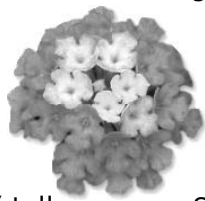
JUNE MEETING

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our meetings are held. Miss Molly, Purple Haze and Blue Chip are others from the same program. The plants are described as compact growing and kept at a 4 to 6 foot height.

Dr. Werner has also introduced a number of redbuds, *Cercis Canadensis*. There is a weeping form that covers part of the Cascade Walkway to the right of the pool and fountain at the building entrance. "Merlot" has dark purple leaves. The early blooming "Kay's Early Hope" was named to honor the late Kay Yow. "White Water" has variegated leaves.

Two lantanas mentioned were Sunset Beach and Citrus Salad. Both are very colorful, about 5' tall with an 8-10' spread. Citrus Salad is said to be very cold hardy. The Stachyurus "Carolina Parakeet" was mentioned for its hanging racemes of flowers. The plants



are shrubs or small trees that seldom are taller than 12 feet.

Tim included two fragrant Calycanthus in the slide show: the white bloomed Venus and the red Aphrodite. The most famous Calycanthus to come out of the JCRA is probably the sweet shrub originally called *x Sinocalycalycanthus raulstonii* "Hartlage Wine" or Raulston Allspice. That plant was hybridized by Dr. Richard Hartlage, one of JC Raulston's graduate students.

The name of the spectacular Gardenia grandiflora with 4 inch flowers was 'Sunset Tea'. The groundcover raspberries are Rubus Rolfei. The toad lily was *Tricyrtis ravenii*. The dwarf dogwood was *Cornus Florida* 'Suwannee Squat' and it is available from Woodlanders Nursery in South Carolina or from Camellia Forest in Chapel Hill. The salvia that seemed to get a lot of attention was *S. greggii* 'Senorita Leah'.

PROPAGATING CUTTINGS

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make sure the rooting medium is still moist and the humidity is still high in the box. You will need to use a spray bottle to moisten the cuttings and medium. Open the top of the box at least once a week to be sure the humidity in the cham-

ber is high and to see if any cuttings have deteriorated - and need to be removed. The cutting should be ready to be potted up by spring.

