

The Clod-Hopper



Volume 27 Edition 7 Gardeners of Wake County, Inc. – Raleigh, NC

JULY 2011

CLUB ACTIVITIES

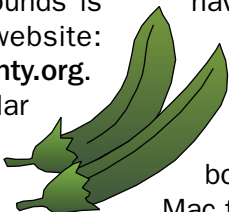
Ginny Parker will be in charge of the annual Christmas Party this year. If you have a suggestion for a restaurant for our gathering she asks that you get in touch with her.

Information on hours for workdays at the State Fair Grounds is listed on the club website: www.gardenersofwakecounty.org. Help is needed on a regular basis to maintain the gardens through the summer. Work dates are scheduled for July 23, August 20 and September 24.

Charles Gilliam reports that the squash crop at the Alliance vegetable garden has been harvested

so that section is to be replanted. The cucumber plants are very productive. Mac Williamson and CJ Dykes are coordinating the work on the Tryon Road garden. A second crop of okra is to be planted. There have been some insect problems so they are searching for organic solutions to pest problems. Additional gardeners would be welcome at both sites. Contact Charles or Mac for additional information.

There were a number of plants at the give-away table but the bragging rights table was unpopulated. Remember to bring your contributions to both for the July meeting.



CLUB MEETINGS

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



- July 19** Jonathan Kidder, Water Garden Plants and Designs
- August 16** Rufus Edmisten, Secretary General of Gardening
- Sept. 20** Lee Calhoun, Calhoun's Nursery "Heirloom Apples"

JUNE MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The June program was a trip down memory lane for those members who remember buying plants from Tony Avent at the house on Dixie Trail. He started with a picture of the "traditional-landscaping" in the front yard — tall trees, low bushes under windows and green lawn, then reminded us of his advice to plant in drifts of one. The "after" pictures

showed "modern-landscaping" — the use of color, texture and form to move the eye through the landscape — the addition of perennials and annuals in foundation plantings, grass for paths and 900 plants surrounding a house on a quarter-acre lot.

Tony also developed a new philosophy of plant nutrition in those days. His journey from feeding plants from bags and bottles to feeding the soil and letting the soil feed the plants has been shared with gardeners all over the world. The story of building soil gets told with pictures of the tobacco land in Juniper Level (half way between Panther Branch and Willow Spring —



pronounced "willer" in the south) that was transformed into a botanical garden that surrounds Plant Delights Nursery today. That original soil had a pH of 3.3 and a potassium reading of 1 instead of the recommended 60.

The native soil was mixed with composted organic material in a 50/50 blend. Weed seeds can be a problem and it is best to take care of them before you plant. For organic gardeners, that means allowing seeds to germinate, till under, allow more to germinate and till those under until weeds are under control before you plant. (Weed seeds do get blown into yards from neighboring property so

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JULY IN THE GARDEN

For those gardeners who must plant something in July you can plant flowering annuals and perennials but remember to keep them watered. For vegetable gardeners it is a good time to start Lady peas, Crowder peas and Black-eyed peas. There is still time to plant Bermuda, Zoysia, Centipede and St. Augustine grass.

Mulch, mulch, mulch! It uses up some of the composted leaves and grass clippings and helps plants survive. In the heat of July and August it is important to remember to check the moisture level of the soil around plants added to your landscape this year. Water them when they need it. You may want to add more mulch, no more than 3 inches in depth but you may want to extend the width of the mulch band around trees and shrubs. Could someone explain to me why the landscape crews in the area pile mulch around trees and shrubs to a depth of a foot or more and extend it

no more than 15 inches from the trunk?

If some of your evergreen shrubs need to be shaped after the new growth developed it can be done in July. Sometimes a plant will develop a few stems that are much longer than others. You can tip prune to shape the plant but do not cut into last year's growth. Sharpen your pruners before you start so you make clean cuts that don't damage the plant.

You may want to root some of the pruned tips to share at a plant giveaway. Semi-hardwood cuttings of azaleas, boxwood, Camellias and Hydrangeas are very easy to root in July.

When your blackberries finish producing fruit this summer it is time to prune back the fruiting canes. This allows the new canes to develop and you can train the new growth on a fence or trellis to make it easier to pick berries next year.

Remember to keep fig trees watered. They are developing fruit and need the water to make plump figs. It is also time to make the second fertilizer application for the year. Fig trees need about a half a pound of 10-10-10 per three feet of height of the tree. A 12-foot tree will need about 2 pounds of fertilizer.

July is also the time to cut back bearded iris into that "fan" shape to encourage new growth. If the iris have been in the same spot for more than 3 year it is probably time to divide them as well. Dig the plants, trim the leaves back to the "fan" shape, divide the plants if needed and remove the back section of the rhizome. You may want to dust sulfur on the cuts you made to the rhizomes. Allow them to rest in a dry spot, out of the sun while you prepare the new iris bed. They may be planted in the same space but you need to add compost and lime to the soil and moisten it well before replanting.

Organic Rose Gardening

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some interior stems during the summer when roses are dead-headed improves air circulation through plants.

Companion planting is suggested for controlling some rose problems. Research suggests that members of the allium family (garlic and onions) provide some protection from fungal diseases (black spot) when they are grown in the same area over a period of years. (Plant Delights lists two, *Allium millenium* and *A. nutans* "Pam Harper", in the spring 2011 catalog.) Catnip, thyme, rosemary, southernwood, artemesia, alyssum and tansy seem to improve rose vigor and are attractive through the growing season.



LAWN MAINTENANCE

The heat and low rainfall are adversely affecting turf grass right now. If there are actively growing weeds in your lawn hand pulling may be the safest control. It will be easier after a soaking rain. Do not apply weed killers in the heat; the spray may volatilize and harm adjacent plants or the gardener. Apply weed killer to lawns that are not suffering from drought stress.

This is also the season that brown patch begins to appear in fescue lawns. If you fertilized the lawn late in the spring or used more than the recommended amount of nitrogen there is a high likelihood you will see the circular, tan-colored patches of dead grass that may be several feet in diameter. Mow the infected area and put the clippings in a compost pile rather than leaving them on

the lawn. Apply a fungicide to the lawn to prevent the spread of the disease.

If you have had problems with Japanese beetles July is a good time to think about controlling them. The females lay their eggs in the soil in July and about 2 weeks later the grubs emerge to eat grass roots. For long term control of Japanese beetles you may want to treat the lawn with *Bacillus popilliae*, a bacteria that infects Japanese beetle grubs. The product to look for is Milky Spore Powder Japanese Beetle and Grub Control. It is recommended that you avoid using a chemical grub control on the lawn for the three years it takes to get Milky Spore established.



**GARDENERS OF
WAKE COUNTY**

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JUNE MEETING *(continued from page 1)*

to keep weeds under control provide a wind-break for your garden. In our area the prevailing winds are from the southeast.)

The Avert gardening philosophy on hedge shears is "get rid of them." You can use loppers or pruning shears to remove damaged limbs, improve the shape of a plant, take cuttings for propagation or put in a vase. If you use them to keep a plant small enough to fit under a window or grow across the driveway you need to move the plant.

Plant Delights began their mail order operation at Juniper Level in 1991. The 1992 sales catalog said they had 2300 different plants in the display gardens. Tony said there were 19,000 in the gardens now. The 1992 catalog lists 816 plants in 48 pages, no photographs and very brief descriptions and it cost \$2. The 2011 Spring Sales Catalog and Plant Owner's Manual is 110 pages with color photographs, and the catalog price is listed as 10 stamps or a box of chocolates.

The nursery will be open July 8, 9, 10, 15, 16 and 17. The hours on Friday and Saturday are 8-5 and on Sunday 1-5. They will also be open September 9, 10, 11, 16, 17 and 18. For more information check out their website at: www.plantdelights.com.



AZALEAS

With more gardeners planting Encore azaleas it is important to remind you to inspect your plants for problems. Spider mites are active in June and July. Check the bottom of the leaves for signs of the insects or webs. Spray them off with a sharp stream of water from the hose.

In late July the second generation of azalea lace bugs hatches. If you have serious infestations year after year and your azaleas are in a sunny location it may be time to think about moving the azaleas to a shadier location or it might be easier to plant some shade between them and the sun. If you want to spray to control the lace bugs use a chemical control rather than insecticidal soap which may damage plants in the heat.

Protect Encore plants from Japanese beetles. The beetles damage the flower buds as well as the leaves. That could explain why your Encores do not re-bloom as well as your neighbors. If you fertilize your Encore azaleas in the summer, fertilize them lightly and apply water as needed.

