

The Clod-Hopper



Volume 28 Edition 3 Gardeners of Wake County, Inc. – Raleigh, NC

MARCH 2012

FEBRUARY MEETING

At least two of the “crowd counters” reported that there were 69 people in attendance at the February meeting. With the State/Carolina basketball game in full force at the RBC Center we were pleased with the attendance. The 17 guests were introduced and invited to visit the plant exchange table in an orderly fashion at the end of the meeting. Carole Johnson reports that 11 of them joined the GWC. Their names are listed in the “new member” section of this newsletter.



have a gardening technique you would like to learn about or if you would like to share one of your gardening secrets with the group please contact Sherrill.

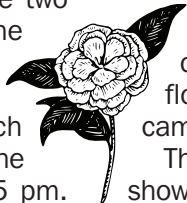
The Club will continue to support the “Plant-a-Row” program and the Inter-faith Food Shuttle this year. There will be two garden sites. Sign-up sheets were available at the meeting and we will still be looking for participants next month.

There are several new committee chairs this year so check the page 2 listing in this issue for their names and contact information. Many of our members have enjoyed the “field trips” and they will be continued this year. If you have a suggestion for a destination, contact Mark Boone.

The “demo” feature at the beginning of the meeting will continue. Sherrill Johnson has agreed to arrange our gardening demonstrations. No, not the “Occupy Raleigh” variety! If you

FLOWER SHOWS

For those members who like to see the “newest, largest, prettiest flowers” in the spring there are two flower shows scheduled at the JCRA. The Triangle Camellia Society will hold their annual show and plant sale on March 10. The show will be open to the public, at no charge, from 1-5 pm. If you have a bloom to enter it can be



brought to the Arboretum between 8 and 10 am. The Raleigh Garden Club will sponsor the design section of the show. So come and view some beautiful floral arrangements featuring camellias.

The Iris Society will have their show on April 28. More information will appear in the April *Clod-Hopper*.

AZALEA SALE

Bob Jackson brought us up to date on plans for the Azalea Sale. We still need help unloading plants and setting up the sales area so check the club website to sign up. As usual, club members will be able to purchase plants on Thursday afternoon.



Arrangements have been made to sell Black Kow composted cow manure as a soil amendment for those who want to incorporate it in the soil when they plant their Azaleas. The “mature manure” is a good source of organic matter for all the plants that will be available for sale that weekend. There is additional information on our website (www.gardenersofwakecounty.org) for placing an order for Black Kow prior to the sale.

MARCH PROGRAM

With the wind damage to trees this winter and a strange season of temperature fluctuations some of our trees and shrubs need careful pruning. The speaker at our March meeting is Jeff Kish of Bartlett Tree Experts in Raleigh. If you have had plant damage that you need to know how to take care of or if you just want to know the best way to prune the trees and shrubs in your landscape this is a program you will not want to miss. If you have questions about plants in your yard you may want to bring a photograph of the problem to make it easier for Jeff — and fellow club members — to understand the problem.

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CLUB MEETINGS

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

- 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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www.gardenersofwakecounty.org

MEMBERSHIP

Carole Johnson reported that there are 30 members who have not yet renewed their membership. If you are one of those 30 people, we will miss your contact information in the directory and hope you will contact Carole quickly so you can be included.

Since the publication of the February newsletter we have received new membership applications from Stephanie Lauck, Cyndy Cromwell, Marjorie Cronin and Camille Arrington of Raleigh. They were welcomed at the February meeting. Doug and Bonnie Sutton of Raleigh joined at the February meeting. The other new members who joined that evening were Ellen Jackson, Niema Hassan and Nancy Stevens of Raleigh; Debbie Krueger, Lynne Hollman and Marilyn Fleming of Cary; Teresa Capen and Joyce Pettengill of Willow Spring and Cassandra Atkinson of Clayton. Contact information for these new members will be available at the March meeting.

SPRING PLANTING

Phil Campbell of Campbell Road Nursery had a power point presentation of many of the new plants that will be available at the nursery (at the corner of Campbell Road and Tryon Road merger of Raleigh and Cary) this spring. One eye catcher was the lime green "Wasabi" Coleus; another, the "Mahogany Splendor" Hibiscus. Then there was the "Whopper" Begonia that has a lot more flowers than others such as Dragon Wings.



She included some photographs of design ideas and container gardening as well. One of the newer landscape trends is the "Living Wall", a system for growing plants on a flat surface. There is one in Cameron Village that adds a bright touch of color and plant material on a vertical wall.

Living walls can take on many forms. They can be flat or curved but most are tall enough to provide a visual, and physical, barrier between spaces. They may contain foliage or flowering plants; tropical, annual or perennial plants or a combination. Some of them use plants to duplicate the logo of a company or "print" a message to passers-by.

Campbell Road Nursery will be carrying "native" plants, grown by Ball Seed Co. for various regions of the country, this year. They are planted in blue pots so you will be able to pick them out quickly. Native plants can be used in containers as well as planting them in the garden.

Remember: a container garden is simply a smaller version of a large bed; or put another way, a flower bed is just a larger version of a container garden. Either type gardening can be done with veggies, colorful foliage, herbs, perennials, annuals and succulents. You combine the colors and textures to create a design that pleases you. Managing the water supply to a container can be more difficult because in hot, dry summers they are going to take more frequent watering than "in-the-ground" plantings.

The nursery has both retail and wholesale operations. There are greenhouses at the back of the property to propagate plants and seedlings for wholesale customers and landscapers as well as provide many of the plants for their retail store.

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

MARCH IN THE GARDEN

The calendar says it is March but many of the garden chores such as fertilizing, pruning and insect control were done in the warmth of 70 degree February days. Scale insects have appeared on many shrubs and trees. Horticultural oil can still be used for control and Orthene can be used as well. Both products are safe for use on hollies. Some of the other insecticides are not labeled for use on holly so read labels carefully before using chemical controls.

Caterpillars are actively destroying leaves on ornamental and fruit trees. *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) is the "organic" product that is recommended for controlling them. The liquid spray is available as Thuricide and the powder form for dusting is Dipel. With all the spring pollen your editor prefers to wear a dust mask when applying Dipel.

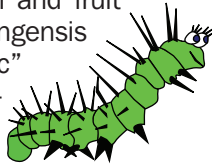
Leaf miners will also make their appearance this month. There are swarms of small flying insects hovering around hollies and some other evergreen shrubs and trees. They will lay eggs on the leaves. When the larvae hatch they bore or "mine" into the

leaf to form the tunnels. The leaves are disfigured and many of them will fall off the plant. The swarms of "gnats" can be sprayed with Orthene or you can spray the plant with an oil spray to "smother" the eggs.

This is also the time of year that voles become active.

Remove mulch from around the trunks of trees and shrubs to check for possible bark damage and keep the mulch away from the trunks. If you see the "mouse holes" in flower beds, especially where lilies and other bulbs are planted you may want to bait a mouse trap with apple or peanut butter and put it near the hole. (Your editor props a flower pot over the hole in hopes the vole's eyesight is poor enough in the dark to be attracted to the smell of "bait" but unable to see the trap.)

Camellias bloomed several weeks earlier than usual this year and there are lots of blooms on the ground. It is a good idea to pick up the blooms around plants to prevent the spread of disease and insect problems. Don't put them in the compost pile if they have petal blight. Put them in a plastic bag and dispose of them in the trash.



FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

It is time to prune fig trees. There is some cold damage on plants because the winter was mild and figs were getting new growth when we had our first hard freeze in "late" February. The damaged wood needs to be removed, even if it means cutting the plant severely. The plants need to be limed and fertilized. It takes 1/2-pound of 15-15-15 for every three feet of height of the tree spread around the drip line of the plant and just beyond. After the fertilizer gets watered in mulch the area around the tree.

Blueberries have already bloomed in some parts of Raleigh. They can be fertilized lightly. Too much fertilizer may reduce the fruit crop. The same fertilizer we use for azaleas can be used on blueberries.

Make sure there is clean mulch around fruit trees and bushes. Keep the mulch away from the trunks to prevent insect, vole and mouse damage. The mulch keeps weeds under control, conserves moisture and may protect ripe fruit that may fall to the ground.



**GARDENERS OF
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ROSES

With the unusually warm winter many gardeners are cleaning up rose gardens a bit later than usual. When roses are blooming in January it is hard to cut them back! Climbing roses can be kept to a reasonable size by removing one cane to the ground and allowing a new cane to form. If this is done for 3 or 4 years you will have a bush with canes of 4 different lengths that produce a larger cover of blooms. The younger branches or canes will produce more blooms than the longer woody canes.

For miniature roses, cut out all dead growth, remove any crowded and diseased canes and cut back the remaining canes to produce a rounded form.

The Hybrid Teas and Floribundas get cut back to leave canes not longer than 20 inches to force new growth. Remove damaged canes and be sure to cut back those canes that have a "hole" at the top of the cane that may harbor an insect. Some gardeners apply "Elmer's" Glue or clear nail polish



to the stub after they finish pruning. It may prevent borers from entering the newly trimmed canes. After you cut the roses back remove all the old mulch.

When you finish cutting plants back and replacing the mulch you can spray with lime-sulfur spray to take care of over-wintering insect and disease problems. When Bayer introduced "3-in-1 Rose Care" with fertilizer, insecticide fungicide they gave us a product that you can pour around the base of the plant instead of spraying.

Follow the directions for future applications to have beautiful roses for cutting the rest of the season. This past year that meant until December. After the roses are sprayed with lime-sulfur and fertilized put in the new mulch. Keep it several inches away from the base of the plant to make it easier to reapply the fertilizer.

If you see canes on roses that appear to have stunted growth, "witches broom" branch formations

and very distorted prickles (thorns) you may have a rose disease called "rose rosette". There appears to be more of the disease prevalent in this area than in past years. Cut out all infected stems. Sterilize pruners between each cut and put the cuttings in a plastic bag for disposal. Do not compost them and do not leave the trimmings on the ground in the garden. Put them in a plastic bag when you remove the stem.

ODDS AND ENDS

It has been entertaining to read the comments on the furor of the Plant Delights catalog cover illustration. That has been great advertising for a wonderful nursery! Just think what they would have said if they had read some of Tony's columns in *The Clod-Hopper* when he was the editor. By the time you get this the next nursery opening at Plant Delights will be May 4, 5 and 6. If all the people who read about the nursery after this furor buy plants there may not be enough left for us!