



Brunswick County Master Gardener
Volunteer Association

NEWSLETTER

January 2006

New Year's Resolutions:

As a rule I avoid making New Year's resolutions as they usually last until January 2. But as we embark upon a new year as a Master Gardener chapter I thought I'd give it one more shot. So, here goes.

I resolve:

1. To lend a hand whenever I can.
2. To look for ways to make new ideas work and not for reasons they won't.
3. That when in doubt I'll check things out and not make negative assumptions.
4. To help others succeed, and celebrate their accomplishments.
5. To speak positively about others and about the organization. Someone might be listening.
6. To maintain a positive attitude no matter what the circumstances.
7. To act with initiative and courage, believing that if it's to be, it's up to me.
8. To act with enthusiasm. I have found it to be contagious.
9. That whatever I want for myself (recognition, respect, loyalty, etc.) I will give to others.
10. To keep faith and never give up.

I know this sounds ambitious but I think it's worth a try. I invite you to join with me in working for an exciting and productive year of growing our chapter.

Happy New Year.....Richard

State Association News:

The next Board of Directors meeting will be held January 8 at the Johnston County Extension Building, beginning at 10 a.m. The April Board meeting will be here in Brunswick County on April 17 at 10 a.m. All Master Gardeners may attend any or all Board meetings (only delegates may vote on issues brought before the Board). If you plan to attend a Board meeting, please let Shirley Waggoner-Eisenman know.

The Regional Master Gardener Conference will be held June 8 – 12 in Chattanooga, TN and the State Conference will be October 1 – 4 in Kill Devil Hills, NC. More information will be provided on the Regional and State conferences at a later date.

Reminders from Charlie!!

Are your timesheets for 2005 up to date? If not, please fill in all the required information as soon as possible.

Each Master Gardener is required to sign a Certification Agreement each year. Please see Charlie or check in the Hotline Office for a copy to sign, and give it to Charlie, David or Bette at the front desk.

Have you paid your dues?

Your \$5 annual dues were due by January 1. If you still need to send them in the form is printed on the back page of this newsletter.

Educational Training Programs for 2006

Our speakers for the first six months of the year have all been confirmed and we have a great roster of speakers and subjects. Please put these on your calendar, come to meetings to hear these interesting speakers and learn about their areas. Here's the lineup for January through June:

January 26: Dr. Frank and April Blazich. This is going to be a double-header and both sessions will be open to the public. So come early and get your space! Dr. Frank and April are both very interesting and engaging speakers. April will conduct an herb seminar following the General Meeting, from @ 10:15 to noon. We will serve lunch from noon to 1 p.m. and then Dr. Frank will show us how to take hardwood cuttings. While the public will pay a fee for these seminars, they are free of charge for Active Master Gardeners.

February 23: Phyllis Meiole. Phyllis will speak on the topic of "Ability Gardening: the Use of Garden Tools to Make Gardening Easier for Seniors."

March 23: Dr. Tom Creswell. Dr. Creswell is Plant Disease and Insect Clinic Manager in the Department of Plant Pathology at NCSU. He will speak to us about "Ornamental Pathology."

April 27: Dr. Lane Tredway, Assistant Professor of Plant Pathology at NCSU. His subject will be "Turf Diseases: Identification, Management and Control."

May 25: Bryce Lane. Mr. Lane is the host of the PBS series "In the Garden" and a national award-winning instructor in the Department of Horticultural Science at NCSU. He will conduct a hands-on workshop on "Container Gardening."

June 22: Dr. Jeannie Davies. Dr. Davies is Associate Professor, Extension Specialist, Horticulture Science, NCSU. Her subject will be "Herbs and Other Interesting Specialty Crops for North Carolina."

Master Gardeners Board

Elected Officers:

President

Richard Boland

rboland@atmc.net

910-579-5791

Vice president

Shirley Waggoner-Eisenman

shirley312@webtv.net

910-754-4148

Treasurer

Linda Lemieux

rellql@aol.com

910-253-4245

Volunteer chairs:

Recording Secretary

Cathie Rod

csrod@ec.rr.com

910-457-5091

Corresponding Secretary/Library

Peggy Meinzer

pmeinzer@lockwoodfolly.net

910-842-4928

MG Coordinator - Coop. Extension

Charlie Spencer

Charlie_spencer@ncse.edu

910-383-6432

NCMGVA Liaison

Shirley Waggoner-Eisenman

shirley312@webtv.net

910-754-4148

Newsletter Editor

Becky Dus

rcd@nfcexperts.com

910-253-8937

Restitution & Greenhouse

Al Powell

kathnal@atmc.net

910-579-8969

Greenhouse

Ash Tyler

atyler@ec.rr.com

910-278-6101

Gardens

Hilton Holcomb

hholcomb@atmc.com

910-575-4943

Maggie Hoon

fredmaggie@earthlink.net

910-253-0195

Curator-Herbarium

Mary Bausch

marybausch@ec.rr.com

910-278-5306

Banquets/Parties

Ann Duke

wduke1@ec.rr.com

910-454-0413

Webmaster

Lisa Miner

webmaster@bcmastergardener.org

Silence is often misinterpreted but never misquoted.

HOTLINE

In January 2005, there were 44 calls to the Hotline. The breakdown of these calls is as follows:

General: 14. The majority of these calls were for requests for Newcomer Packets, Soil Sample Kits and Soil Sample analysis information.

Lawns: 8. Most calls concerned problems with weeds.

Trees: 9. The calls were for information on fruit trees and pruning "how to."

Shrubs: 8. Questions concerned pruning oleander, azalea, roses and other shrubs.

Pests: 1. The pests were moles.

Vegetables: 1. No information on this request.

Flowers: 3. Questions concerned houseplants that needed to come in for the winter and white fly infestation

When you work on the Hotline, write down as much information as possible about the problems and their solutions on the Hotline forms. The back of the form has some questions to help you clarify the caller's problem.

Reminder from Charlie: **DO NOT** diagnose disease or pests over the phone! You need a specimen to make a proper diagnosis. All turf problems should go to Charlie, David, Al or Matt, in that order, other problems to Dave or Charlie.

Upcoming Events

- **Board Meetings:** Jan. 19, Feb. 16, March 16...
- **General Meetings:** Jan. 26, Feb. 23, March 23...
- Board and General Meetings will start at 9 a.m. unless you get notice of a change.
- The second annual **Business Expo** will be held at the Leland Fire House January 28. We will have a booth – sign up to help staff the booth.
- The new **Master Gardener class** starts Feb. 8
- The **Forestry Service** will provide trees for our give-away sometime in February. We are promised a much better selection this year. We can use volunteers to help with this.
- The **Home and Garden Show** is March 25 and 26 at the West Brunswick High School. We will have a booth both days. See Charlie to sign up.
- We will hold a **Coastal Gardening Seminar** on March 31 in the Extension Training room, with guest speakers and lunch, and will charge a small fee. Sign up to help with this event.
- On April 15 there will be a **waste collection** for homeowners, and we will conduct a **plant clinic** at the Southport Wal-Mart.
- Our first **Plant Sale** of the year will be April 20 – 22.
- The second **Plant Sale** will be May 18 – 20. Sign up to help with one or both of these events.
- There will be a **Pond Management Seminar** on May 4. This will be an all-day seminar, and lunch will be provided for a small charge.
- Our annual **Recognition Banquet** is scheduled for June 20..

Dave's Space:

Greetings! I hope each of you had your Holiday Wishes come true. If Santa didn't bring exactly what you asked for, you may be able to pick up some bargains now. Check on your gardening equipment needs for the spring season. This may be just the right time to pick up items that will make your spring gardening chores easier to handle this year.

Spring is just around the corner; many "Coastal Gardeners" will be putting out early spring gardens now and preparing other garden spots for a later planting date. You will find in this issue items related to the best time to plant many of your favorite plants and a listing of gardening chores for January. So, button up for cold weather and look for days that you can get outside comfortably to work on some of your plans for the coming spring. Even if the weather doesn't cooperate, there are still chores that can be performed inside.

Don't forget the plants that have been brought in to rest. Keep them watered (moist to touch) and provide them with enough light to continue their growth. Avoid cold or hot air drafts.

Tips for Planting Early Gardens

January is a good time to get an early start on gardening. Coastal Gardeners can plant peas, sugar snaps, onion seeds, head lettuce, carrots and other early vegetables.

Sometimes plants like tomatoes and eggplant can be started in a greenhouse or cold frame, also melons, okra, squash and cucumbers. Use peat or plastic containers to sow your seeds; use a good sterilized greenhouse potting medium; and seed the containers 4 -6 weeks prior to the desired transplanting date. Use only fresh, new 2006 packaged seeds. It is not always a good idea to save seed from last year, particularly hybrid seed; they will lose vigor or may produce plants not true to type. Purchase high quality seed from reputable dealers and garden centers. Request varieties that grow

well in your area and select varieties that have resistance to major diseases such as rust or nematodes.

8 Reasons Trees and Shrubs Fail to Flower: Many trees and shrubs are selected because of their flowering habit and it can be discouraging when they fail to bloom. It is often difficult to pinpoint the cause of the plant's failure to bloom; however, here are some possibilities.

1. The plant was placed in a too-shady location.
2. There is excessive competition from adjacent shrub or tree roots.
3. Plants are planted too deep, preventing flower bud set, and possibly preventing plant survival.
4. The flower buds were pruned away – this is possible if the plant was pruned at the wrong time of year.
5. Excessive sucker growth is reducing or limiting flowering.
6. Some trees don't flower until they reach a certain age; they need time to develop their root system before setting flower buds.
7. Sometimes flower buds are killed by extremely low winter temperatures or a late frost.
8. Sometimes you need to look at the soil chemistry to determine why plants are not flowering.

There is more detail on each of these points on the web site.

January Gardening Chores

- Enroll in classes! Read and study up on ideas you want to achieve this year. Include your New Year's Gardening Resolutions... Thou Shalt Not...
- Continue to plant spring flowering bulbs.
- Think water garden and have it ready for spring. There are numerous sources of information and construction materials for these projects. Garden centers and mass

merchandising garden stores handle pool liners, pumps and aquatic plants.

- Continue planting container grown ornamentals. Be sure to loosen the roots and the media before backfilling. For slightly pot-bound roots, cut on 3-4 sides, shake the roots and media to a loose condition and then plant.
- Plant fruit trees. The 2006 seed and nursery catalogs have already started arriving; this will trigger spring fever for many gardeners. We have a "Fruits for the Southeast" handout that provides the best alternatives to those beautiful apples and pears on the cover of the gardening magazines. You can grow apples here, but I would not encourage anyone to go into wholesale commercial apple production just yet.
- Add lime according to soil test recommendations. For best results in home landscapes, till the lime into the rootzone area for whatever plant you intend to grow. Surface applied lime reacts very slowly and not as completely as lime mixed into the soil. The sooner lime is applied in the winter, the more ready you'll be for spring planting.
- Ornamental Grass tops should be cut back now. On old, established clumps, prune back to 2' or so and simply tip back younger planting to remove the brown foliage.
- Rake and discard fallen leaves around rose bushes, as many disease organisms persist through the winter. Covering them with new mulch will not solve your disease problems.
- Pansies are by far the most popular winter landscape annual. Deadhead periodically to ensure more blooms. During active growth in the spring, fertilize them about once a month. A dilute liquid feed of 5:10:10 or 5:10:30 will keep them going and growing.
- Be prepared just on the chance there may actually be some more winter weather

ahead. Don't let unseasonably mild temperatures dictate what you do in the landscape.

- Poinsettias' keeping quality depends on several factors. Many home gardeners have no problem keeping a poinsettia attractive through the winter, but bringing it into "flower" in subsequent years is a challenge for the best of gardeners. They are still considered actively growing and will need water, sunlight and fertilizing through February.

Yellow Azalea Leaves

During the past few weeks, calls have been routed to me from folks with landscape questions. Perhaps the most common has been "Why are the leaves on my azaleas turning bright yellow and dropping off?" followed by "What can I do about it?"

No leaf lasts forever. If the leaves turning yellow and falling off are older, i.e., further down the stem, then what you are seeing is probably normal and nothing needs to be done.

Some varieties – such as Delaware Valley Whit and Glacier – have a parent that is classified as semi-deciduous, they are more prone to leaf drop. Some cultivars have leaves that turn pink or red before they drop. Still others may have leaves that turn reddish before falling. This is normal.

There are many reasons for azaleas to have discolored leaves and to possibly see an unusual amount of leaf drop over the winter. These reasons include: drought stress, root injury from flooding or drought, too much fertilizer, voles, insects, disease and fertilizer imbalances among other things. But, the prominent coloring of leaves in the fall in most landscapes is usually nothing to worry about and no corrective measures need to be taken.

2006 Dues Notice

Dues are payable by January 1 each year.

Make checks payable to: Brunswick County Master Gardener Volunteer Association (BCMGVA)
\$5.00 per Individual

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Mail checks to: Linda Lemieux

3882 Members Club Blvd.

Southport, NC 28461

If you have an item for the newsletter, be sure to submit it to both Becky Dus
(rcd@nfcexperts.com) and Lisa Miner (lisaminer@mac.com)

Brunswick County Master Gardener Volunteer Association
P.O. Box 109
Bolivia, NC 28422
Office: 910-253-2610

www.bcmastergardener.org

www.ces.ncsu.edu/brunswick

www.ncmastergardeners.org

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