



Home Gardening Newsletter

April - June
2018



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Upcoming Horticulture Events

Organic Pest Management Seminars

The N.C. Cooperative Extension Service is holding an in-depth Organic Pest Management Seminar for gardeners who desire to learn more on how to control (organically) insects, diseases and weeds that plague their vegetables. Seminars will be held at the following dates and locations:

- **May 22nd** from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. at the Jackson Extension Center's [new location on 876 Skyland Dr. Sylva, N.C.](#)
- **May 24th** from 10:00 - 12:00 a.m. room 114 at the Swain Extension Center on 60 Almond School Rd. Bryson City, N.C.
- **June 5th** from 10:15 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at the Cashiers Library on 249 Frank Allen Rd. Cashiers, N.C.



This seminar (free) will cover a whirl wind of topics such as companion plants, farm-scaping, soil amendments, organically approved sprays, a plethora of tips and more. Participants will receive plenty of handouts, ask questions and enjoy a great presentation. You won't want to miss it! To register for this class or for more information or directions contact Christy Bredenkamp at your local N.C. Cooperative Extension Center at phone # 586-4009 or 488-3848 or e-mail clbreden@ncsu.edu

Bee Events



- **Jackson Bee Chapter** - This new and growing bee chapter will hold their 4th meeting Tuesday May 22nd, 7:00 p.m. at the Jackson Extension Center's new location at 876 Skyland Dr. Sylva N.C. All those interested in Beekeeping are most welcome! Find them on FaceBook!
- **Smoky Mountain Beekeepers** - New and veteran beekeepers from Swain and neighboring areas meet the 2nd Thursday of the month, 7:00 p.m. at the Swain Extension Center on 60 Almond School Rd.(SCC Bldg.). For more information go to website: smokymtnbeekeepr.com



The Three Amigos - Algae Lichen and Moss

Every winter, homeowners notice and ask the question "what is the blue-gray and green stuff growing on my trees, stone walls, fence posts, walkways and lawn?" The answer is it's probably one or all of these three things - algae, lichen or moss.

Algae are threadlike green plants that form a slimy green film on rocks and decks during warm and humid conditions and on soils that are compact and water logged. During periods of dry weather, this algal growth forms a dry, cracking crust on the surface of the lawn that repels water and impedes recovery.

For algae control of interior or exterior surfaces around the home, oxygen bleach (hydrogen peroxide) is preferred as it will not harm you, your pets or your plants. Control options for algae in the lawn include: ammonium sulfate and hydrated lime or fungicides. If using fungicides, then make applications on a 10 to 14-day interval during warm, humid weather.

Lichens are a composite of a fungus and either a green or brown algae capable of producing food by photosynthesis. Lichens are located on every continent including the Arctic and Antarctic. They survive in all climates and are found on undisturbed surfaces, such as bark, wood, rocks and soil. Lichens do not parasitize plants nor associated with any plant diseases. Instead, lichens live in symbiosis with trees and shrubs oftentimes facing north.



When looking at a cove of trees covered in lichen, people mistakenly blame them as the cause for the decline. In reality, decline may occur from a combination of poor location and soils that are waterlogged and compact with limited light penetration. Lichen did not cause branch decline, but rather one of the effects of the plant decline was an increase in lichen growth. To improve tree health, thin out dead trees and limbs, prune off additional limbs for more light penetration and apply fertilizer to promote more growth.

Mosses are small green plants that do not produce seeds or have a vascular system like most plants. Mosses produce spores as a method of reproduction and are part of the Bryophyte division. Mosses are competitive and grow in clumps or mats in cool moist shady areas of woodlands and forests with nearby water.

If you desire to reduce or eliminate your mossy area and take back control of your lawn, then the following practices will help to prevent and control moss:



Take a soil sample to determine proper lime and fertilizer needs. Lime raises pH and helps to lower soil acidity. Changing the soil pH and nutrient levels will minimize weed encroachment and enable grass seeds to germinate and grow in less stressful conditions.

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May Horticulture Tips



Lawns

- Cut tall fescue and bluegrass to 3 inches in height.
- DO NOT fertilize tall fescue now.
- Be sure spring-seeded lawns get one inch of water per week.



Vegetables

- Transplant warm season vegetable plants (tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, squash, etc.) after danger of frost is past. Drive stakes next to tomato plants at planting time to avoid injuring roots later.
- After mid-May (after soil has warmed to 65 degrees), plant seeds for beans, lima beans, corn, cucumbers, kale, melons, okra, southern peas, pumpkin and squash. Keep seedbeds moist as seedlings emerge.
- Mound soil around potato plants to encourage tuber formation.
- Use a 2-inch thick mulch of straw to reduce weeds and retain soil moisture in vegetable beds.
- Fertilize vegetables 6 to 8 weeks after germination. Consider fish or fish-and-seaweed emulsion for a fast acting, well balanced organic fertilizer.
- Thin seedlings of early planting when they have 1-2 true leaves.
- Watch for worms on cabbage family vegetables and greens. Spray with *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) if needed. Watch for flea beetles on eggplant and tomato, cucumber beetles on cucumbers. Spray only if needed.
- Be prepared to cover early plantings with row cover fabric if a late frost threatens.

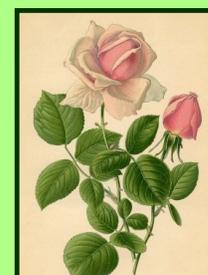


Fruits

- Control weeds in strawberry beds and around fruit trees. Fertilize grapevines, blackberries and blueberries if not done earlier.
- Continue with fruit tree spray programs through August. Be sure to follow label instruction for pre-harvest interval. Weekly fungicide sprays will be needed to prevent black rot on grapes.
- Thin apples, pears and peaches to about 6 inches apart when the fruit is the size of a nickel.
- Harvest strawberries.

Trees Shrubs & Flowers

- Plant trees, shrubs and ground covers.
- Fertilize ornamentals as needed.
- Prune flowering shrubs after they bloom.
- Plant summer-flowering bulbs: gladiolus, dahlia, canna, caladium.
- Plant perennials and annuals (wait until after last frost date to plant tender annuals).
- Begin monthly applications of rose fertilizer, plus 1 tablespoon Epsom salts per bush.
- Mulch flower beds with pine needles or pine bark. Remove weeds before applying mulch.



Algae Lichen & Moss cont.

Options for removing moss include: physical removal (e.g., hand or rake) or chemical control with copper sulfate or ferrous sulfate. Read the label for specific instructions for appropriate concentrations and safety. Afterwards, you may need to remove the moss by raking to allow recovery of the area. Once the moss is gone prepare a good seedbed by tilling in the appropriate amount of lime and fertilizer and reseed bare areas with a shade loving turf grass.

In addition, for areas already covered in turf, aerify (core) compacted soils. If limited light is an issue then increase light penetration and air movement in shady areas by removing a few trees or limbs, along with unnecessary undergrowth. If sitting water is an issue, consider improving drainage and avoid excessive watering by altering irrigation schedules.

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Sincerely,
Christy Bredenkamp, Extension Agent
Agriculture-Horticulture



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