

# Program Helps Residents Become Lawn Specialists

BY TERRY POPE

Nice lawns and shrubbery can be an asset to any home, but selecting and getting the right species to grow can sometimes be a pain.

A pilot-program introduced to about 50 Brunswick County families in mid-May by the Brunswick County Agriculture Extension Service makes a beautiful yard within the grasp of any homeowner.

Called the Urban Integrated Pest Management pro-

gram, the three-month course works with county residents to teach them things they may not realize about their own yards. It also provides counseling and do-it-yourself manuals so residents can become their own lawn specialists.

"I'm real pleased with it so far," said Billy Barrow, assistant county agricultural extension agent and coordinator of the program. "It's been good for us. It helps put us in touch with a larger number of people and gives us an idea what the problems are in the county."

Barrow said the AES office limited the scope of the program to 50 families recruited through county garden clubs, focusing on problems with lawns and shrubs rather than with gardens or vegetable plants. Many of the participants live in the Carolina Shores, Calabash, Ocean Isle, Seaside, Boiling Spring Lakes and Southport areas.

Most homeowners who have time to work on their yards are retired, Barrow said. Often, the retired couples have moved to Brunswick County from other areas, where climates are different, pests are different and where a different variety of plants are known to grow well.

"The people we are shooting for are those who have moved into the area and who have the time and interest to improve their landscapes," Barrow said. "A nice landscape can make a big difference if they ever decide to resale their home."

A USDA grant helps fund the pilot-program along with a \$30 fee per family. Kathy Tobler of Southport is the only staff member assigned to the program, making one visit every three weeks to inspect how well each family is progressing.

"I do a lot of writing," Ms. Tobler said, while inspecting and recording the progress on David Donnally's flower garden in Boiling Spring Lakes. A manila file folder is kept on each yard, like a doctor's file containing charts and records, only the subjects are flowers and plants.

"You get to meet some of the most interesting people," she added, before Donnally invited her inside for a quick tune on his banjo.

Donnally was having problems getting his centipede grass to spread and in starting a flower garden when the program first began in May. Soil samples were taken from his flower garden to determine how much and what type of fertilizer was needed. With increased watering, the yard is improving while there are now flowers in bloom nestled in his elevated garden.

"Centipede is a good neglected grass, and I've played more golf this summer than worked on my lawn," Donnally confessed. "But we've been tickled with the program. We didn't know what to do, but now we're getting a little education on it."

The do-it-yourself manuals address many of the problems the typical amateur horticulturist may face. Once they learn how to use the guide manual, "they can flip through and find the answers on their own before calling us," which is the aim of the program, Barrow said.

"A lot of the problems we're finding are dealing with cultural things," he added. "Like not enough watering, or



PROGRAM coordinator Kathy Tobler examines David Donnally's flower garden at his Boiling Spring Lakes home. The Integrated Pest Management program continues until mid-August.



STAFF PHOTOS BY TERRY POPE

BILLY BARROW, assistant Brunswick County Agriculture Extension agent, examines a problem with

azaleas that Boiling Spring Lakes resident Bill Shirik is having.

not enough fertilizer, or too much fertilizer."

For Bill Shirik of Boiling Spring Lakes, the program made him aware that there are different kinds of fertilizer available, and that each type of lawn requires a different form of care.

"This is like gold," Shirik said, as he lifted up a section of grass removed from where he is relocating a sprinkler system at his lakefront home. Before the program, Shirik said he actually knew very little about lawn care.

"Most people, when they go out to buy fertilizer, they go to the store and buy whatever's on sale," Shirik said. "I found out I was overfertilizing my lawn."

Shirik, who retired in Brunswick County after moving

from the midwest, cleared his yard of woods and stumps just two years ago and now has a good stand of grass. He would also like to get evergreen trees to grow there, something other than pines.

Shirik took someone's advice about planting two Christmas trees in his yard two years ago, but they both died. With the proper care, Shirik should be able to get some types of evergreens to grow in his yard, Barrow said.

"We don't have all the answers, but we can reach a good number of people and give them advice about their yards," Barrow said. He hopes the program will continue next summer and expand to a new rotation of homeowners and amateur horticulturists.

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# Missing Children



NAME: Garry Patrick Sidden, Jr.  
RACE/SEX: W/M  
DATE OF BIRTH: 6-16-66  
AGE: 19  
HEIGHT: 5'4" EYES: Brown  
WEIGHT: 160 HAIR: Brown  
SKIN: Ruddy  
SOCIAL SECURITY NO.: 237-29-0734  
OTHER IDENTIFYING PHYSICAL  
FEATURES: Walks with a limp and must  
wear orthopedic shoes. 2" scar in palm  
of left hand.

Picture was taken when Garry was 15 years old.



NAME: Galvin Lee Sidden  
RACE/SEX: W/M  
DATE OF BIRTH: 8-23-71  
AGE: 13  
HEIGHT: 5' EYES: Blue  
WEIGHT: 110 HAIR: Blonde  
SKIN: Fair  
SOCIAL SECURITY NO.: 237-29-0812

Picture was taken when Galvin was 10 years old.

The brothers were last seen at the scene of their father's murder, in Wilkes County, NC. They were both reported missing 7-21-82. They are believed to be together. Anyone having information regarding these missing children should contact the Wilkes County Sheriff's Office and ask for Capt. Garry Phillips. Please call (919)838-5104.

## N.C. Center for Missing Children

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