

# Good Pruning Improves Plant Vigor

One of the most important aspects of late winter gardening is pruning. Judging from the questions and the interest I get about the subject, I will dedicate the next two columns to various aspects of pruning.

Pruning is an essential practice for all woody ornamental or fruit bearing plants. Most cultivated ornamental or fruit bearing plants need to be pruned annually. Pruning will accomplish the following:

1. Instigate growth that will produce new flowering and fruiting wood.
2. Confine the plant to the space or shape that is desired.
3. Reduce disease and insect problems by removing diseased, dead, or cross-over branches.
4. Improve light penetration into the plant canopy, which will favor balanced growth and reduce pest problems.
5. For fruit trees, pruning will remove excessive fruiting wood that will reduce the hand-thinning of fruit later in the spring. Fruit quality will also be improved.

A good pair of pruning shears is essential. I have found that the single blade anvil type are inadequate for most hardwood pruning cuts.

## THE PLANT DOCTOR

C. BRUCE WILLIAMS  
Extension Area  
Turf Specialist



Get yourself a good pair of heavy duty double blade shears. A good set of lopping shears and a pruning saw (Note: a pruning saw cuts on the pull strokes) are also needed to do a professional job.

I can always tell a good horticulturist by their pruning cut.

A "thinning-out" cut is used to remove limbs or branches in an overly dense plant or diseased portions of a plant. This type of pruning cut does not stimulate excessive vegetative growth but improves the general architecture and form of the plant. To perform a thinning-out cut, the shoot, branch or limb must be removed where it attaches to the next larger limb or branch. The cut should be roughly flush to the larger limb. The majority of maintenance

pruning cuts on most non-flowering ornamental shrubbery should be thinning-out cuts.

A "heading-back" cut removes only a portion of the shoot, branch or limb. A heading-back cut stimulates new growth, inhibits shoot dominance and generally improves the vigor of the plant. This type of pruning cut improves fruiting and flowering on many of our ornamental and orchard trees when performed at the correct time of the year. To perform a heading-back cut, the terminal portion of the shoot or branch will be removed above an existing bud, leaf or branch. The process should leave a viable bud or branch below cut.

This bud or branch will grow out to replace the pruned portion with a more vigorous shoot.

Proper pruning improves the vigor of your plants. Plants respond to pruning much as they do to fertilizer application. Next week, I will discuss when, what, and how to prune fruit and vine crops.

The North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service offers a number of excellent publications detailing pruning procedures and practices. Contact your local Extension Office

or send me a SASE for additional information.

Send your plant questions to The Plant Doctor, P.O. Box 109, Bolivia, N.C. 28422.

## Seminar On Bugs, Trees Set March 16

Homeowners will have an opportunity to participate in a seminar covering insects of trees and shrubs and shade tree care on Tuesday, March 16.

The two-hour seminar, to be presented by Dr. Jim Baker, extension entomologist, will present "Insect—Friend or Foe?" at 10 a.m. at the Jones-Byrd Conference Center, Sea Trail Plantation.

Baker will cover several insects that have been recently identified in this area, such as the black twig borer, which is causing problems with dogwoods, maples, magnolias and other landscape plants.

Dr. Jim McGraw, extension forestry entomologist, will discuss shade tree care and problems encountered in altering the landscape.

The seminar is open to the public. For more information, call the Cooperative Extension Center in Bolivia at 253-4425.



MONA LaFontaine poses with Big Bird, Ernie and Barney as she helps N.C. Public Television raise funds for children's programming during Festival '93. LaFontaine works for the N.C. Department of Transportation in Brunswick County.

## Local SEANC Members Help With Fundraiser

Brunswick County members of the State Employees Association of North Carolina have been participating in the N.C. Public Television "Festival '93" fundraising effort.

Mona LaFontaine and Doug Hall of the N.C. Department of Transportation in Brunswick County traveled to Research Triangle Park recently, where LaFontaine was a part of festival activities for her first time and Hall, for her fourth.

"I wanted to be a part of SE-

ANC's support of public television and I am glad I did. It is very interesting to see how the show is made and to be part of the process," LaFontaine said.

Both women are on the District 62 Executive Committee. Hall is the publicity chair.

SEANC's goal is to improve North Carolinians' quality of life through participation in community events.

## CLUB BRIEFS

### South Brunswick Islands Optimists Plan Busy Spring

The South Brunswick Islands Optimist Club has a busy spring planned, starting with a student oratorical contest March 16 at 7 p.m. at Brunswick Community College.

Students will speak on the topic, "I Can Make a Difference," with winners to advance to the district contest to compete for scholarship funds.

On May 13 the club will host the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) graduation ceremony at Shallotte Middle School for fifth graders participating in the program.

During Bicycle Safety Week, the third week of May, the club is planning bicycle safety classes and demonstrations for the public on topics such as use of helmets, hand signs and bike repairs.

The club also plans to recognize outstanding young people during Youth Appreciation Week.

A social is also planned to highlight the club's work in service to youth and community, with the time, date and place to be announced.

For more information on the club or any of its upcoming activities contact Bonnie Cox, 842-2319.

#### To Show Bird Slides

Joan Van Atta, a South Carolina nature and wildlife photographer, will speak and show bird slides at the next meeting of the Brunswick Bird Club.

The club meets Wednesday, March 17, at 7:30 p.m. in the meeting room of Atlantic Telephone Membership Corp. on N.C. 130 West in Shallotte.

A bird walk at the Santee Coastal Reserve near Georgetown, S.C., will be held Saturday, March 20, at 9 a.m.

For more information about the meeting or the upcoming walk contact Marcia Warring, 579-9474.

#### VFW Visiting Vets

Calabash Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) members and auxiliaries will visit the V.A. Medical Center in Fayetteville Saturday, March 13.

The group plays bingo with veterans who are patients there, providing game prizes and refreshments, said Mary Benes.

#### Azalea Anchors Meet

The Azalea Anchors, the local chapter of Waves National, will hold its next meeting March 13 at 11:30 a.m. at Fisherman's Wharf Restaurant on U.S. 17 in Jacksonville.

Membership is open to all former, retired and current Navy women, Naval Reserve, Waves, Navy Nurse Corps, Coast Guard and Women Marines. For more information contact Annie Wier, 1-919-791-4736.

#### Waterway Artists Meet

The Waterway Art Association meets Wednesday, March 17 for a painting and business session at the Sunset Beach Fire Station, with members and prospective members welcome.

The painting session from 10 a.m. until noon will be for companionship; no instruction will be offered this month. Participants are asked to bring supplies of their choice and their lunch.

The business meeting will begin at 1:30 p.m. For more information contact Margaret Noland, 579-1405.

#### Dolls Are Theme

Dolls are the theme of the "Hello

Dolly" luncheon planned Thursday, March 18, from noon to 2 p.m. at the Surf Club by the North Myrtle Beach (S.C.) Christian Women's Club.

Frances Shannon of Little River, S.C., will present a keepsake doll from her collection of porcelain dolls. Jeannie Ray of North Myrtle

Beach will be the guest soloist. Guest speaker will be Jean Flythe of Raleigh, a former fashion model.

Cost is \$7.50, with a nursery available at no charge starting at 11:30 a.m. Reservations are necessary for the nursery and the luncheon and can be made by calling Louise Blizzard, 579-2562.

## Births Are Announced

### Smith

Kay and Kerry Smith of Duck Haven subdivision have announced the birth of a son, Kerry Taylor Smith, born Feb. 23 at 9:30 a.m. at New Hanover Regional Medical Center, Wilmington.

Taylor weighed 7 pounds and was 20 3/4 inches long.

Grandparents are Lemuel and Jewel McCumbee of Ash and Robert E. (Hollis) and Melva Smith of Grissetown. Great-grandparents are Bessie Brooks of Charlotte and Lola Smith of Ash.

Taylor joins a sister, Kassi Nicole Smith.

### Darr

Steve and Kelley Holden Darr of Supply are the parents of a daughter, Melanie Elaine Darr.

Born Feb. 2, she weighed 7 pounds and was 21 inches long. Melanie joins a sister, Brandy Nicole, and a brother, Kellen Steven.

Her grandparents are Kellen Holden and Delores Holden of Supply and Martin and Martha Harris of Laurinburg.

### Whitfield

Jeff and Leigh Whitfield of Holden Beach have announced the birth of their first child, a son, John Sklyer Whitfield.

Born 6:26 p.m. Feb. 25 in New Hanover Regional Medical Center, Wilmington, he weighed 9 pounds, 15 ounces, and was 22 inches long.

Grandparents are John and D.J. Whitfield of Salisbury and Betty and J.L. Campbell, also of Salisbury. Margaret Milligan of Clinton, N.J., is John's great-grandmother.

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formerly of Cheveux Hair Salon in Myrtle Beach

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