

Is A Nice—And Natural—Yard Possible?

Dear Plant Doctor: I am very concerned about what "we" are doing to the environment. At the same time, I would like to have a nice lawn and garden with flowers. When I talk to some of my friends, they tell me the only environmentally sound alternative is to leave everything natural. I do not like to have all those weeds, bugs, and snakes in my yard. What do you suggest?

Answer: I, too, am very concerned about the environment. We tend to have a selective consciousness about the environment. I was recently reminded of this by two friends who were victims of malaria.

The natural environment of southeastern North Carolina is a very dynamic system that includes a multitude of human parasites, insects, reptiles, rodents and other "critters." Many of these "critters" do not appeal to people and are not considered to be desirable or healthy in a home yard. Bunnies and birds are fine but what about snakes, lizards, mosquitoes, ticks, termites and red-bugs?

One of the best reasons to have a home lawn and garden is to provide a buffer between you and the native environment. In addition, a properly maintained home lawn or garden is an asset to an environment in which

THE PLANT DOCTOR

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asphalt and concrete seem to predominate.

The EPA just published a pamphlet titled "Healthy Lawn, Healthy Environment" that outlines steps for working with nature on your lawn. For example, the EPA recommends that a preventative health care program for your lawn should have the following steps:

1. Develop healthy soil.
2. Choose a grass type that thrives in your climate.
3. Mow high, often, and with sharp blades.
4. Water deeply but not too often.
5. Correct thatch build-up.
6. Set realistic goals.

Use pesticides only as a last alternative. For example, use a spudding fork or trowel to remove undesirable weeds from your lawn. If a herbicide is used, be sure to read and fol-

low all label instructions and precautions.

In your garden, use plant species and varieties that are native or well-adapted to this area. Choose vegetable and fruit varieties that have good genetic resistance to disease and insect pests.

The environmentally sound yard and garden require your management to be concerted, conscientious and continuous. For your friends living in a "natural environment," ask them what they do for rodent, insect (including fleas, ticks, redbug, etc.), snake and termite control?

Please send a SASE to receive a copy of "Healthy Lawn, Healthy Environment".

Dear Plant Doctor: We own a second-row house from the ocean. Our treasured native cedars are salt-spray damaged on the ocean side. Should we leave damaged limbs or remove them? Also, should we allow greenbrier to climb into the cedars or remove it?

Answer: Most native "cedars" along the coast are in the red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) group. These plants are very resilient to salt spray damage. I would not prune until I was sure no life remained in the limbs. Dead limbs should be removed immediately to reduce the possibility of disease.

Greenbrier (*Smilax sp.*) is a very

vigorous native vine that is well adapted to the coastal environment. I do not think greenbrier will in any way damage your cedars. However, greenbrier growing in your trees may not present the "aesthetic" landscape ideal you desire.

Send your gardening question and comments to The Plant Doctor, P.O. Box 109, Bolivia, N.C. 28422.

Crary School Students Set Choral Show

Students of the Crary School, Shallotte, will present a choral program, "This Is My Country" Thursday, June 10, at 7 p.m. at Seaside United Methodist Church, N.C. 904, Sunset Beach.

Patriotic numbers will be sung by various grade levels as well as the entire student body. Eboni Frink will sing a solo. Piano solos will be played by Tracy Kirtley and James Fort. Several students will narrate, and the seniors will accompany one of the numbers with tone chimes.

Mrs. Foy Crary is the director of the school. Marjorie Crissman is music instructor.

The public is invited to attend.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Junior Princess

Jennifer Stanley was crowned Junior Miss Brunswick County Princess in the 10-12 age group May 15 at Supply Elementary School. She also won the award for prettiest dress and best talent. She is the daughter of Martha Stanley of Holden Beach and David Stanley of Ash. In July she will compete in the state Junior Miss pageant.

Student Guides Will Answer Ferry Passengers' Inquiries

Starting Monday information guides will be aboard the Southport-Fort Fisher Ferry to answer questions and comments from passengers as they cross the Cape Fear River.

This year's guides are Paul Haislip, Tom Miller, Kris Shepard and Denise Stidham. They will act as a link between the Lower Cape Fear and the visiting public, passing our brochures supplied by the Southport-Oak Island and Carolina Beach Chambers of Commerce. They are also briefed on the history of the area,

available attractions and services, and landmarks along the ferry route.

One guide will be on each ferry from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, said Brenda Marshburn, Brunswick Town State Historic Site assistant manager.

The program originated from a special legislative appropriation in 1984, Marshburn said, "and has been a tremendous asset to the tourism of this region."

The guide program is administered under the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources.

Water Exercise Class Scheduled

A water exercise class will begin June 15 at Sea Trail Plantation and continue Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

The classes will be held at the Resort Swim & Tennis Club by instructor Jane Cole of Myrtle Beach, S.C. Cost is \$3 per session.

For more information contact Sally Neale, 579-7323.

LEARN TO SHAG!

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