



**Ellis Yard Selected**

The Holden Beach Beautification Committee has selected the yard of Mr. and Mrs. Danny Ellis of 217 Lois Avenue as yard of the month for August. Pictured are Rachel Harmon, yard of the month chairperson, and Doris Ballenger, zone captain. The yard is landscaped with vinca, geraniums, petunias and blooming oleanders.

STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER



**Patriotic Winners In July**

Ed and Jane Bye were the July winners of the Sea Trail Yard of the Month. Their yard was decorated with small American flags, a wooden Uncle Sam figure and a patriotic bear on a bicycle.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**Like Us, Yards Need Regular Care**

My garden and yard have really been neglected this summer. The hot, dry weather coupled with back problems have left my yard looking more like a prairie than a lawn: weeds in plant beds, flowers wilting from dry soil conditions and shrubbery begging for a summer pruning.

The one real positive benefit of the summer is that I have discovered what most people already know; there are a lot of similarities between human care and maintenance and plant care and maintenance.

An over-fertilized and poorly-pruned tree is often highly susceptible to limb breakage or other structural problems. After nearly six weeks on my back with a herniated disk, I realize a little less fat and a little more exercise are in my future plans. The doctor tells me to plan for more diet and exercise and then follow through. He has 100 percent of my attention.

The same is true for your lawn and garden. Proper routine care will save you a great deal of time and money in addition to keeping your yard in much better shape. Here are some gardening tips to help you get your garden "in shape" for the autumn.

■Fertilize warm season grasses with a high potassium-containing fertilizer before Sept. 15. Bermuda grass, zoysia, and St. Augustine do best with 3 or 4 pounds of 5-10-30 or equivalent per 1,000 square feet. In normal years, we have significant rainfall during the last 10 days of August to help wash in the fertilizer. This fertilization will help winterize your grass against cold damage.

■Harvest seeds of biennials such as hollyhock, foxglove, etc., and plant them. Now is also a great time to harvest seeds of perennial flowering plants such as daylilies and hostas.

■Begin to plan and plant fall vegetable gardens. In the coastal plains fall gardens are often as bountiful as

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the summer gardens. You still have plenty of time to get another crop of cucumbers, squash or tomatoes if you plant before Aug. 15.

■Maintain a prudent approach to irrigation. The fall is the time plants store most of their food reserves for winter, so maintain adequate water on all lawn and garden plants.

■August and September are the best months of the year to kill undesirable woody vegetation like poison ivy or kudzu. Use Roundup or similar systemic herbicides for permanent control of these pesky plants.

■Now is not the best time of the year for pruning. However, many summer blooming or nonblooming evergreens and deciduous plants will benefit from a "fine" or "detail" pruning to maintain shape or to remove diseased limbs. Do not prune spring blooming plants like azaleas now because you will remove the developing bloom buds.

■The fall is considered by most gardening experts to be the best time of year to establish wildflower plots or perennial plant beds. Now is a great time to condition the soil with summer composted grass clippings, etc.

■You can get another month or so of blooming from your crape myrtles by removing the spent flowers and light pruning.

■The secret of a really great lawn and garden is planned and properly executed maintenance.

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

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