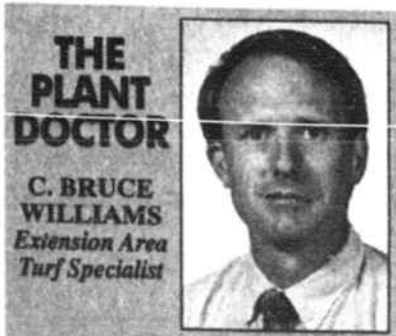


# You Asked For It; Here's The Plant Doctor's Top-10 List

As I review the year, I find landscape questions that keep popping up no matter how many times they are answered. The following is my list of the most common landscape gardening questions and a "condensed version" answer.

## The Ten Most Common Gardening Questions of Southeastern North Carolina Gardeners

- 1. What is the best lawn grass to plant in eastern North Carolina?**  
ANSWER: NO perennial cool-season lawn grasses (Kentucky bluegrass, tall fescue, creeping/red fescue, or perennial ryegrass) are normally recommended for eastern North Carolina lawns. In rare cases, tall fescue can be utilized in heavy clay soils or for a low-maintenance grass in utility areas.  
No single species of lawn grass is best for all people and all situations. Choose a lawn grass based upon maintenance, your immediate environmental conditions, and your lifestyle.  
■ Utility and low-maintenance lawns exposed to salt spray and/or heavy traffic:  
**Dry sites:** centipedegrass, bahiagrass, common bermudagrass  
**Wet sites:** carpetgrass  
**Shaded sites:** centipedegrass  
■ Medium-maintenance lawns exposed to salt spray and/or heavy traffic:  
**With irrigation:** St. Augustinegrass (var. "Raleigh"), Zoysiagrass, Bermudagrass  
**Without irrigation:** common bermudagrass, St. Augustinegrass  
**Shaded sites:** St. Augustinegrass, zoysiagrass  
■ High-maintenance lawns:  
■ Full sun or shaded sites: Zoysiagrass (vars. Emerald, Meyer, Cashmere, etc...)  
■ Full sun only: Hybrid bermudagrass (vars. Tifway, Tifway II, Tifdwarf, Tifgreen, etc...)
- 2. What are some good shrubs for foundation plantings in this area?**



**THE PLANT DOCTOR**  
**C. BRUCE WILLIAMS**  
Extension Area  
Turf Specialist

- 3. What is the best mulch for ornamental plantings?**  
ANSWER: There is no "best" mulch for all situations. Use what is available. Pine straw, pine bark, hardwood bark, shredded leaves/debris, wood chips or compost in a 3- to 6-inch layer is needed to help hold moisture, reduce weed problems, and moderate extremes in temperature around the root zone.
- 4. What are the "best" plants for heavy shade conditions?**  
ANSWER: Hosta, liriope, English ivy, Japanese acuba, Japanese camellia, fatsia, mahonia, leucothoe, azaleas, and Japanese spurge.
- 5. What plants are best adapted for wet soil conditions?**  
ANSWER: Red maple, gray dogwood, yaupon holly, Dahoon holly, sweetgum, blackgum, willow, Bald cypress, Southern wax myrtle, and inkberry holly.
- 6. What are the best plants for a living hedge or screen?**  
ANSWER: Elaeagnus, Nellie R. Stevens holly, Burford holly, Yaupon holly, Red Cedar, Japanese privet, Southern wax myrtle, Carolina Cherrylaurel, and Sasanqua camellia. Refer to NCSU Extension Horticulture Information leaflet #636 for additional information.
- 7. What trees are best adapted to residential urban conditions?**  
ANSWER: Small trees that can tolerate adverse conditions are best. Try Red maple, Sawtooth oak, Crapemyrtle, Bald cypress, Japanese zelkova, crabapple, or Carolina cherrylaurel. Refer to NCSU Extension Horticulture Information leaflet #617 for additional information.
- 8. What plants will not clog-up a septic drainage field?**  
ANSWER: Any woody plant can potentially clog drainage field pipes. Use grasses or shallow-rooted trees such as dogwood, crapemyrtle or redbud. Plant trees at least 20 feet from any drainage lines.
- 9. What is the best time of year to plant or move shrubs and trees?**  
ANSWER: The absolute best time of the year to plant balled-in-burlap/containerized or to move established woody plants is September through November. However the winter months of December to April run a very close second place. Containerized plants can be planted during anytime of the year if properly planted, watered and cared for. However, I have seen skilled gardeners and horticulturists plant or move plant material during every month of the year. Skill and technique are as important to success as timing.
- 10. What's a quick way to determine if you have good soil drainage?**  
ANSWER: Dig a hole in the soil as if you were planting a 3- to 5-gallon size shrub. Fill the hole with water and allow to drain. Fill again. If water remains in the hole for longer than 3 hours, you have poor drainage. For poorly drained soils, use raised beds for all plantings. Also consider incorporating lots of organic matter (e.g. compost) into the soil. In heavy clay soils, do not incorporate lots of sand in the root zone to improve drainage except when installing subsurface drainage tiles or dry wells. The same can be said for very sandy soils or doughy soils—never incorporate clay. Remember, sand and clay make brick.  
*Send your gardening questions or comments to the Plant Doctor, P.O. Box 109, Bolivia NC 28422. Send a SASE if requesting information or a reply.*

## Von King Stylist

invites everyone to call her for the latest cuts and styles for gala holiday parties.



Perms, manicures and pedicures, too.

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Resort Plaza • Shallotte

Call 754-7234 for appointment



## Have a Cuddly Christmas!

May you be surrounded with love and warmth this Christmas. From all of us to all of you, thanks for your friendship.

Dr. Ernest Ward, Laura, Shannon, Rich & Linda  
**Seaside Animal Care**  
925 Carter Dr., Calabash 579-5550

## Shallotte Middle School Extends Its Stamp Drive

Shallotte Middle School's used stamp collection drive has been extended, says art teacher Lola Jackson.

The school's art department is collecting used stamps to help children make art projects for a school fundraiser.

If you want to help, tear the top right corner off your incoming mail and take it to Shallotte Middle School. For more information, call Lola Jackson at 754-8218.

*Happy Holidays*

IN THE SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP MAY THE WARMTH AND JOY OF CHRISTMAS STAY CLOSE TO YOUR HEARTS.

**CHOICENTER**  
HOMES BY ANN  
Hwy. 17 N., Shallotte, 754-5147

The stockings were hung by the chimney with care, in hopes that Saint Nicholas soon would be there.  
Merry Christmas to all our customers.

**The Carousel**  
DISTINCTIVE CHILDREN'S CLOTHING  
Ragatch Row, Calabash, NC 910-579-9778

# Wishing You A Shining Christmas

... and, lo, the star which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

Matthew 2:9

May the light that is the love of Christ warm and guide you, not only at Christmas, but all during the year to come. Christmas blessings to all our friends.

**Coastal Pediatrics**  
Shallotte Professional Plaza  
4428 Main Street • Shallotte  
754-5437

*Joy to the World*

May peace and happiness fill your household on this most blessed of days.

**Lena and Frank Causey and Employees**  
Shallotte Marine Supplies  
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We wish you a Merry Christmas & a Healthy New Year!

**THE BRUNSWICK HOSPITAL**