

The Shoreline

Vol. 12, No. 4

A Shoreline Community, Pine Knoll Shores, N.C.

April 2017

New Series

Meet Your
Town Staff

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Gardening Tips for April

By Jan Corsello

We have had crazy yo-yo weather here in Pine Knoll Shores this spring, with daytime highs ranging from 40 to 75 degrees and lows from 30 to 50 degrees. A few days in the 70s tempt us to believe that winter is over, but as I write this in mid-March, tonight's low is expected to be in the upper 20s and tomorrow's high won't get out of the 40s. We even had a dusting of snow last weekend.

Pine Knoll Shores is in Zone 8, and our average last frost date is April 15. Do not be fooled—just because garden centers sell summer annuals and vegetables early doesn't necessarily mean we can safely plant them. Keep an eye on the local weather forecasts.

I have been moving my tender houseplants out on fine days to get some sun and spring rain, but moving them back in when I expect it to get too cold. When moving plants in and out, try to do it when the inside and outside temperatures are roughly the same to avoid shocking the plant.

Our cool weather has set back the growth and bloom time of many plants. Most of our outdoor plants can handle the occasional drops in temperature as long as it doesn't stay too cold for too long. Camellia flowers that were just opening when we got a cold snap turned brown and dropped. Those still in bud were fine.

If you haven't pruned your summer-flowering plants yet, there is still time. Plants that bloom on "new wood," such as crape myrtles and hydrangeas, can be pruned in the early spring. But please avoid "crape murder."



Garden Club members trim a crape myrtle in the town garden on Pine Knoll Boulevard.—Photo by Jan Corsello

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Smoke Alarms Save Lives

By Jason Baker, Pine Knoll Shores Fire Chief

Smoke alarms that are working properly can save lives, yet they are often forgotten by homeowners once they are installed—unless there is a cooking mishap that causes them to go off or they beep when the battery needs to be changed.

A simple internet search will reveal some eye-opening facts and statistics. The data below was provided by the National Fire Protection Association for years 2009-2013.

- Smoke alarms provide an early warning of a fire, giving people additional escape time.
- Three of every five home fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or fire alarms that were not operational.
- The death rate in reported home fires in the same time frame was more than twice as high in homes without working smoke alarms as in homes with working devices.
- In fires in which smoke alarms were present but did not operate, almost half of the malfunctioning smoke alarms had missing or disconnected batteries.
- Dead batteries caused one-quarter of the smoke alarm failures.

Without question, smoke alarms save lives, yet often they are checked only when they exhibit problems. Early in my career I was on a fire call and was told by the resident that the smoke alarm did not sound when she had a fire in the oven. When she showed me the location of her alarm, I was forced to tell her that the box she indicated was actually a door bell. My fire department at the time provided smoke alarms, installed them and instructed the residents on the correct maintenance to keep them in good working order.

Correct placement is key. Smoke alarms should be placed on the ceiling at least four inches from the wall. One should be placed in each bedroom and also outside the bedroom. If your bedrooms are grouped together, you may be able to use a single detector outside the bedrooms. Keep in mind: this detector is *in addition* to the ones placed inside each bedroom. If your bedrooms are not grouped together in your home, you will need to place a smoke alarm inside *and* outside each bedroom.

It is important to place a smoke alarm in (or near) the kitchen area as well. If you choose to place an alarm in the kitchen, it should be a "rate of rise" heat detector, which will sound if the temperature in a room goes up too quickly (rising at the rate of 12 to 15 degrees Fahrenheit per minute). A traditional smoke alarm should be placed outside (but near) the kitchen, following the ceiling/wall placement guidelines given above in the bedroom discussion.

In addition to the locations discussed above, there should be a working smoke alarm on every level in your home, including the basement. On levels without bedrooms, install alarms in the living room or family room and near the stairs to the upper level.

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