

## Extension service networks with state

By Holly Edwards  
County Editor

Brunswick County recently became part of a new statewide computer network established by the N. C. Cooperative Extension Service. The network -- one of only two like it in the country -- allows local county agents to communicate via desktop computer terminal with state specialists and administrators, said Milton Coleman, county extension director.

The computer system makes large volumes of information contained in state and national databases available to county extension agents, Coleman said, and opens up "exciting possibilities" for improving services to county residents.

"From terminals on each desk in our office, we can communicate and exchange information with any other extension agent in the state or specialist on the N. C. State University campus," he said. "We will now be able instantly to access farm commodity market reports, and other valuable reports farmers need, as they are released by the U. S. Department of Agriculture."

The state cooperative extension service began in the fall of 1990 to develop a network in which all county agents and university specialists would have a computer terminal on their desks. The project was completed in October.

Coleman said electronic mail will now replace written correspondence among extension workers, and that plant and insect disease analyses will be available as quickly as the diagnoses are made at N. C. State University.

Also, in November when tornadoes struck several regions of the state, Coleman said extension agents in the affected counties had immediate access to valuable recovery information that had been developed for Hurricane Andrew victims in Florida and Louisiana.

"We are just barely scratching the surface of the potential that this electronic system has for helping us provide improved educational services to this county," Coleman said. "We are grateful to the county commissioners for their support in helping to pay for its installation."

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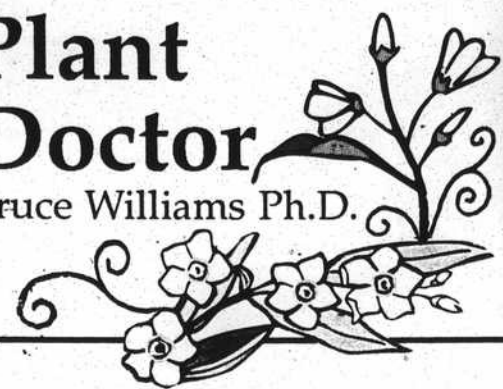
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## Plant Doctor

Bruce Williams Ph.D.



## December catch-up month for gardener

By Bruce Williams, Ph.D.  
Brunswick County  
Cooperative Extension Service

December is a great month to catch up on gardening chores and to share a little Christmas spirit with family and friends. Here are some gardening tips and suggestions for the season.

How many "live" Christmas trees do you notice in your community or city that are actually still alive? It has been my experience to notice that the majority of B&B Christmas trees don't survive. There are numerous reasons to consider.

One is that the tree simply is not acclimated to the new environment. Frasier firs and white pines like it in the mountains and that's where they should be planted in landscapes. If you want narrow-leaf evergreen trees for piedmont and eastern North Carolina go to a nursery and buy a red cedar, Leyland cypress, Scotch pine or possibly a Deodar cedar.

Another "kiss of death" to a live Christmas tree is how it is cared for in the home during the holidays. Too much or too little water and heat are common problems associated with the "Christmas Tree Short-life".

Other tips:

•Continue to plant nursery stock in the landscape. The one major consideration at this time of year is the soil condition. Wet soils are rather unforgiving.

•Tip pruning can be accomplished this month. Many evergreens are used in various Christmas decorations -- both the foliage and the berries.

favorites include the hollies, boxwoods, nandina, pines and cedars. Save the real heavy "renovative" type pruning until the winter (February).

•Continue to plant spring flowering bulbs.

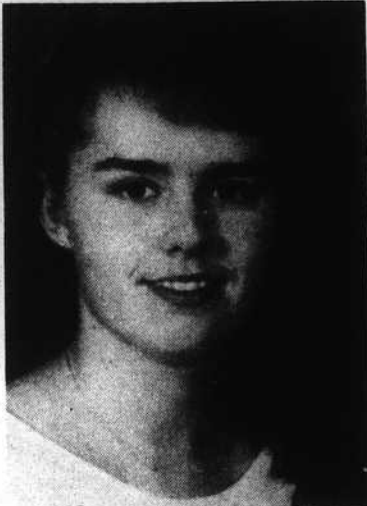
•Compost, compost, compost. Give a loved one a backyard composter.

•Consider a water garden. Now is a great time to plan where and how.

•Give gardening tools and subscriptions to landscaping magazines as gifts. One of my personal favorites is *Southern Living*. Other favorites are *Taunton's Fine Gardening*, *American Nurseryman* and *Horticulture*.

•The dead tops of many perennials can be removed. Frost has killed back the top growth of most of our favorite perennials. This includes Mexican bush sage, pineapple sage, cannas, coneflower, rudbeckia, peonies and veronica. The tops of others are still green and they don't need to be completely trimmed back. These might include lirioppe, daylily, tansy and hollyhock. Just a general clean-up of any brown foliage is necessary at this time. Some perennials, although dormant during the winter, offer winter interest. Don't cut the tops back until the early spring clean-up. This list includes sedum and the many ornamental grasses.

•I'm sure you've enjoyed some of the over 400 acres of wildflowers the North Carolina Department of Transportation has planted and maintained across our state. After judging their accomplishments, it became apparent which wildflowers performed the best. These would include black-eyed Susan, bur marigold, cardinal flower, corn flower, cosmos, Joe Pye weed, ox-eye daisy, Queen Anne's lace and toadflax.



CAISON



JONES



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## 4-Her achievements are cited at banquet

There were a lot of smiling faces at the annual 4-H Achievement Banquet held at the Brunswick County Government Center assembly building on December 3.

Perhaps the biggest smiles were those of Heidi Layman, Jessica Jones, Tiffany Casteen and Amy Caison, who received top honors as outstanding 4-Hers for 1992.

Or possibly the biggest smiles were those of the Lakeside 4-H Club members, who were honored as the outstanding 4-H club for 1992.

And there were certainly a lot of smiles from the other 4-Hers receiving awards, many of them for the first time in front of a large

audience.

But it seemed the biggest smiles were those of proud parents and 4-H club leaders as one by one the children they worked with during the year were recognized.

The theme of the 4-H Achievement Banquet was "Making the Best Better". Rep. David Redwine, as guest speaker, spoke of the importance of striving for excellence.

For more information about the 4-H program in Brunswick County, persons should call Billy Privette, extension agent for 4-H, or Mary Lou Cumbee, 4-H program assistant, at the cooperative extension service office, 253-4425.



Merry Christmas  
& Happy New Year  
To all of Southport!  
I love everybody,  
Sally Robinson



## Views On Dental Health

Larry Hemby, D.D.S.

### THE PREGNANCY MYTH

If you are an expectant mother, don't listen to any Old Wives Tales that tell you pregnancy will hurt your teeth. Neglect of regular dental care or failure to have an ailing tooth treated when needed can hurt your teeth, but not your pregnancy. It's only a myth that says having babies drains all the calcium out of your teeth and makes them decay.

Sometimes certain hormonal change that occur during pregnancy may lead to puffiness and bleeding of the gums. This usually subsides after the baby is born. But it should not be ignored when it happens. Nor should any other dental problem during pregnancy. Regular physical check-ups to help you stay as healthy as possible, for your own sake as well as your baby's, are especially important

during pregnancy. That should also include dental checkups so any decay or infection can be treated. See your dentist for a checkup so any dental problem you have can be treated to help keep your teeth and your body in good health.

Prepared as a public service to promote better dental health. From the office of:  
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