

# How Does Your Garden Grow?

## There Are Only Eight Planting Days Before Good Friday

By Sherry Matthews

Even with the wind and rain that has plagued Hoke County for the past couple of months, spring is around the corner and with it comes the all important decision of whether to plant a garden.

"There is a lot of gardening going on in this area," Hoke County Agricultural Extension Chairman Willie Featherstone said.

"I'm not sure if all these people are gardening for the enjoyment or for the economical reasons connected with growing your own food, but they are planting," Featherstone added.

"I garden for the pure enjoyment of it," Robert Gatlin said.

"The excitement of getting up one morning and seeing a change in what you've planted is a great thrill," Gatlin added.

For Gatlin, gardening is just "a hobby".

"Miracles happen everyday in a garden and being able to witness those types of miracles gives you a good feeling inside," Gatlin said.

For many, planting a garden is just a "tension release, but for some it is a way to stretch the food dollar," Featherstone said.

"It doesn't cost a great deal to raise a garden if you don't plant more than you need," the extension agent added.

"Don't plant an acre just because you have an acre. Plant what you will use and leave the rest," Featherstone said.

With so many Hoke County residents planting gardens and wanting to plant gardens, Featherstone offered a few hints on "how to make your garden grow".

"I would recommend that any gardener first take a soil sample," Featherstone said.

Although soil samples should have been taken by now there is still time, Featherstone added.

"We take the soil samples given to us and send them to the North Carolina Department of Agriculture for analysis. This is a free service to anyone who wants

or needs to take advantage of it," Featherstone said.

According to Featherstone, taking soil samples helps you determine a need for lime.

"Calcium is needed in most plants and a soil sample will tell you if there is a lack of calcium in your garden," Featherstone said.

In a lot of plants, a lack of calcium will lead to "blossom end rot" but liming will prevent this, Featherstone said.

Another helpful hint in having a "garden to be proud of" is not to plant too early, Featherstone said.

"There are cool season plants like cabbage and broccoli which should be planted while the soil is still cool. People in the area are planting these type of plants right now," Featherstone said.

"Warm season plants need to be planted when the soil temperature is up, otherwise the growth of the plant may be stunted because of cool nights," Featherstone added.

Another very important part of having a good garden is "being sure to plant varieties" that have been tested and are known to grow well in the area, Featherstone said.

"It is good to try new varieties but at the same time plant things that you know will grow well in your own garden," Featherstone said.

"Also when planting your garden be sure you buy good quality seed," Featherstone added.

### Tips For Success

Getting healthy plants is a must if a garden is to be a success, Featherstone said.

According to Featherstone, there are many other ways to improve your garden:

"Mulching (putting out pine straw or some other type covering) will help to conserve moisture, reduce weeds, keep soil cool and reduce erosion.

"Don't panic if you see one or two insects in your garden. Spraying before checking out the situation may cause you to kill insects that are beneficial to a garden.

"Be sure to use "certified seed".

\*Placing fertilizer to the side of the plants and not directly on the plant will help prevent burning of the leaves.

\*Apply fertilizer two or three times. Don't put it all on at once.

All these things will help make your garden more attractive and productive, Featherstone said.

For a beginner, gardening may seem expensive but according to Featherstone, if done right, a

garden will pay for itself.

"We would not be as active in our garden if it didn't pay for itself," Gatlin said.

Gardening provides many families with food and is a "wor-

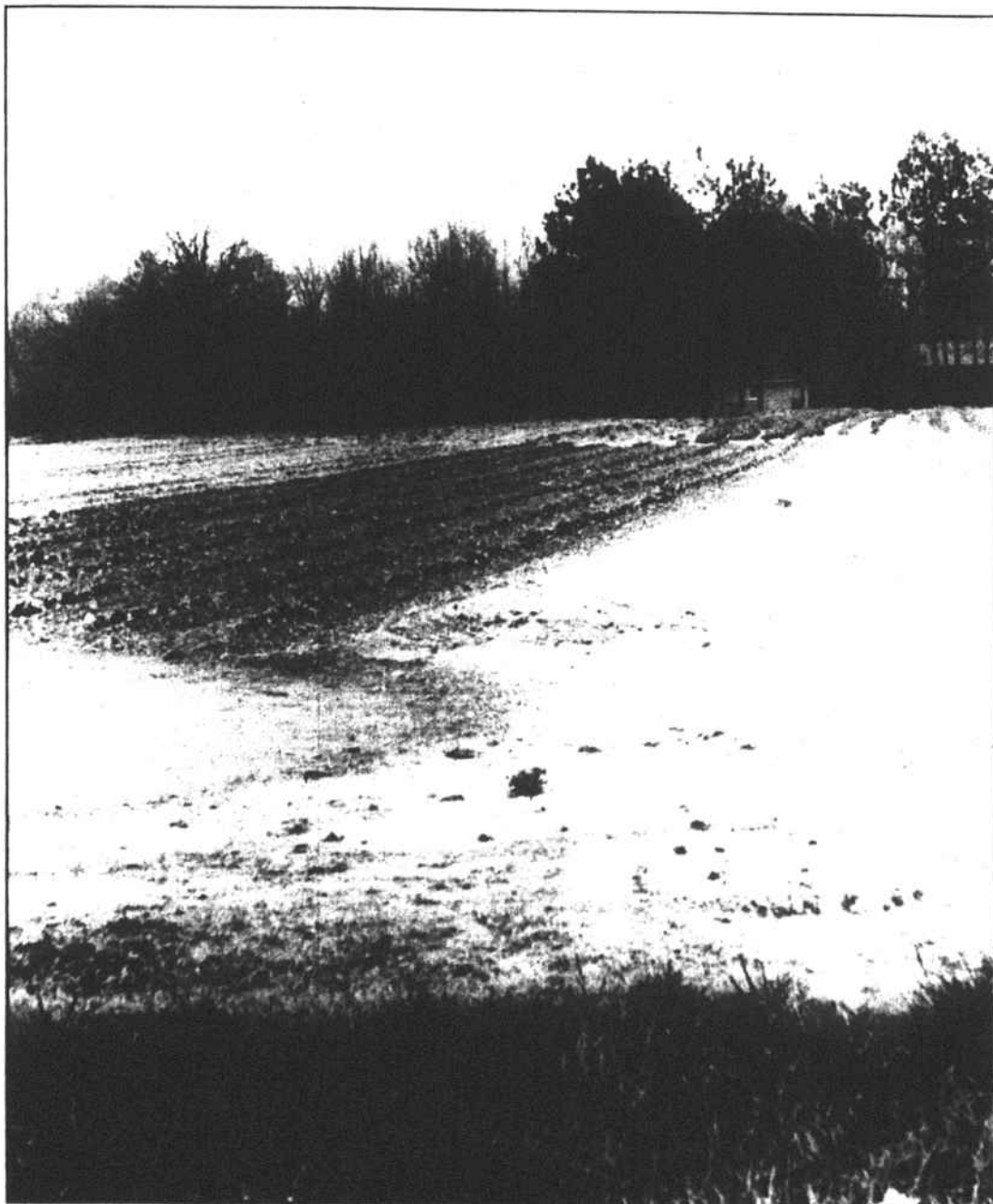
thy and enjoyable" hobby for all who get involved, Gatlin said.

"If anyone wants to start a garden and needs help they should call us at the Extension Service," Featherstone said.

### Home Garden Vegetable Planting Guide

Seed or plants	Amount per person per year	Suggested varieties	Suggested planting dates *	Inches between plants	Planting depth (inches)	Min. soil temp. F°	Approx. seeds per ounce	Days to maturity
Asparagus (crowns)	10	Mary Washington, Princeville	Nov. 15-Mar. 15	15	6.0	—	—	2 years
Beans, snap	1/4 pound	Tenderette, Harvester, Astro, Roma (Flat)	Apr. 15-July 15	3	1.0	60	100	50-55
Beans, pole	1/4 pound	Kentucky Wonder 191, Dade, Blue Lake	Apr. 15-July 1	6	1.0	50	100	65-70
Beans, bush lima	1/4 pound	Fordhook 242, Henderson Bush, Early Thorogreen	May 1-July 1	6	1.5	65	70 <sup>a</sup>	65-80
Beans, pole lima	1/4 pound	King of the Garden, Sieva (small)	May 1-June 15	6	1.5	65	70 <sup>a</sup>	75-95
Beet	1/4 packet	Ruby Queen, Early Wonder	Mar. 1-Apr. 1; July 15-Aug. 15	2	0.5	50	1,600	55-60
Broccoli	15 plants	DeCicco, Green Comet, Bravo, Green Duke	Mar. 1-15; July 15-Aug. 15	18	0.5	45	9,000	70-80
Brussel sprouts	25 plants	Long Island Improved, Jade Cross Hybrid	July 1-15	20	0.5	45	9,000	90-100
Cabbage (plants)	25 plants	Round Dutch, Early Jersey Wakefield	Feb. 1-Apr. 1; Aug. 1-15	12	0.5	45	9,000	70-80
Cantaloupe	12 plants	Classic, PMR 45, Burpee Hybrid, Ambrosia	Apr. 20-June 1	24	1.0	70	1,000	85-99
Carrot	1/4 packet	Danvers Half Long, Spartan Bonus	Feb. 15-Mar. 1; July 1-15	2	0.25	45	23,000	85-95
Cauliflower	25 plants	Early Snowball "A"	Mar. 1-15; July 1-Aug. 1	18	0.5	45	10,000	55-65
Collards	25 plants	Vates, Morris' Improved Heading, Carolina	July 15-Aug. 15	18	0.5	45	8,000	60-100
Corn, sweet	1 packet	Silver Queen, Earliking, Seneca Chief, White Delight	Apr. 15-June 1	12	1.5	60	150	85-90
Chinese cabbage	1/4 packet	Michihli, Hybrid G	Mar. 15-April 1; Aug. 1-15	12	0.5	50	9,500	75-85
Cucumber, pickling	1/4 packet	Carolina, Calypso, Liberty (mountains)	Apr. 20-May 15; Aug. 1-15	10	1.0	65	1,000	40-50
Cucumber, slicing	1/4 packet	Poinsett, Sweet Slice, Marketmore (mountains)	Apr. 20-May 15; Aug. 1-15	10	1.0	65	1,000	40-50
Eggplant (plants)	2 plants	Florida Highbush, Special Hibush	May 1-31	24	0.5	70	6,000	80-85
Kale	1/4 ounce	Green Curled Scotch, Siberian, Vates	Mar. 1-Apr. 1; Aug. 15-Sept. 1	6	0.5	45	10,000	40-50
Kohlrabi	1/4 ounce	White Vienna, Grand Duke Hybrid	Mar. 1-Apr. 1; Aug. 1-Sept. 1	4	0.5	55	8,000	50-60
Lettuce, leaf	1/4 packet	Grand Rapids, Salad Bowl, Buttercrunch	Mar. 1-Apr. 1; Aug. 1-Sept. 1	6	0.25	45	25,000	40-50
Lettuce, head	15 plants	Great Lakes, Ithaca	Feb. 15-Mar. 15; Aug. 15-Sept. 1	10	0.25	45	25,000	70-85
Mustard	1/4 ounce	Southern Giant Curled, Tendergreen	Mar. 1-Apr. 1; Aug. 1-Sept. 15	2	0.5	40	15,000	30-40
Onion (seed)	1/4 ounce	Yellow Danvers, San Joaquin	Jan. 15-Mar. 31; Sept. 1-30	4	0.5	50	9,500	130-150
Onion (sets or plants)	50	Ebenezer, Excell, Early Grano	Feb. 1-Mar. 15; Sept. 1-15	4	—	—	—	60-80
Okra	1/4 packet	Clemson Spineless, Emerald, Lee	May 1-31	12	1.0	70	500	60-70
Peas (edible-podded)	1/4 pound	Sugar Snap, Mammoth Melting Sugar, Snowbird	Jan. 1-Mar. 1	1	1.0	40	200 <sup>a</sup>	60-70
Peas, garden	1/4 pound	Wando, Green Arrow, Freezonian	Jan. 1-Mar. 1	1	1.0	40	200 <sup>a</sup>	65-70
Peas, Southern	1/4 pound	Dixie, Mississippi Silver, Colossus	May 1-July 1	4	1.0	70	125	55-65
Pepper, sweet (plants)	4 plants	California Wonder, Yolo Wonder, Pimento	May 1-31	18	0.5	65	4,500	75-80
Pepper, hot (plants)	2 plants	Red Chili, Cayenne, Hungarian Yellow Wax	May 1-31	15	0.5	65	4,500	75-80
Potato, Irish	10 pounds	Kennebec, Atlantic, Pungo, Superior	Feb. 15-April 1	10	5.0	40	—	95-120
Potato, sweet	75 plants	Porto Rico 198, Jewel, Pope	May 15-June 15	10	—	70	—	95-125
Pumpkin	1/4 packet	Big Jumbo, Howden's Field, Spookie (small)	April 15-May 15	48	1.5	70	110	115-120
Radish	1/4 packet	Early Scarlet Globe, Cherry Belle	Feb. 1-Apr. 1; Aug. 15-Sept. 15	1	0.5	45	2,000	25-30
Rutabaga	1/4 packet	American Purple Top, Laurentian	Feb. 1-Apr. 1; July 1-Aug. 1	4	0.5	60	12,000	70-80
Spinach	1/4 packet	Hybrid 7, Dark Green Bloomsdale	Feb. 15-Mar. 15; Aug. 1-15	6	0.5	45	2,800	50-60
Squash, summer	1/4 packet	Seneca Prolific (yellow), Zucchini Elite (green)	Apr. 15-May 15	24	1.5	60	300	50-60
Swiss chard	1/4 packet	Lucullus	Mar. 15-May 1	6	0.5	50	1,600	60-70
Tomato (plants)	15 plants	Whopper (VFN), Mt. Pride, Marion, Better Boy (VFN)	Apr. 20-July 15	18	0.5	60	10,000	75-85
Turnip	1/4 ounce	Purple Top White Globe, Just Right	Feb. 1-Apr. 15; Aug. 1-31	2	0.5	60	13,000	55-60
Watermelon	1/4 ounce	Congo, Sweet Princess, Sugar Baby (small)	Apr. 15-June 1	60	1.5	70	250 <sup>a</sup>	90-100

\*Dates are for upper Coastal Plain and lower Piedmont. In Western N.C. plant 10 to 20 days later in Spring and 10 to 20 days earlier in Fall. In Eastern N.C. plant 7 to 14 days earlier in Spring and 7 to 14 days later in Fall.



**Cabbage Patch**

Rows of newly planted cabbage await a little sunshine to help them grow.



**Ready To Roll**

The tractor stands ready to do its duty, whether it be hauling mulch to the garden or harvesting the vegetables that will soon be ready.