



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

Everything's Coming Up...

Wisteria, azaleas, roses, shrubs and a wide variety of annuals and perennials fill the Sunset Sands Garden Club's April Yard of the Month, at the home of Bob and Anne Boehmer, 1129 Indigo Circle, Sea Trail, at Sunset Beach. The front features an informal mixed planting bed, while a landscaped wooden walkway leads to a screened-in porch overlooking the marsh in rear.

Red Cross Removes Donor Age Cap

An increased demand for blood has prompted the American Red Cross to eliminate its age limit for donors.

People older than 75 can now donate blood.

An October study by the American Association of Blood Banks found that while the aging of society will result in an increased demand for blood components, the same demographic trend has the potential to produce a larger group of untapped blood donors—older adults. While elderly donors tend to take more medication than younger ones, the study indicated that factor did not prevent them from making regular blood donations.

Only 74 people in the Blood Services Carolina Region who are regular blood donors are in the 75-year-old category. The region serves 121

hospitals in the Carolinas and parts of Tennessee, Virginia and Georgia.

"We hope that the new age limit rule will help encourage both repeat donations and even first-time donations by older adults," said Dr. Jerry Squires, principal officer for the region.

Other eligibility changes are also in effect. These relate to information regarding medications; delays in donation related to antibiotics treatment, changes in blood pressure medication or insulin levels.

Donors who have had cancer may donate as long as they had no chemotherapy or no recurrences in the past five years. Previously they were unable to donate. Also, donors who have had seizures must now wait only three months to give, rather than a year.

However, donors with pacemakers are not eligible to give blood.

And those who have been exposed to German measles, red measles, mumps or chicken pox will be deferred for three weeks unless they have been immunized or have had the disease. Donors who have been exposed to meningitis are deferred for three weeks.

People are eligible to donate blood every 56 days. They must be at least 17, weigh 110 pounds or more, and be in general good health. The process takes about an hour and includes what the Red Cross calls a "free mini-physical".

The Cape Fear Chapter's Blood Center is open from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays and 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays. Call 919-762-5540 for appointments.

Bloodmobile stops are scheduled regularly in Brunswick County.

Apples Challenge The Home Gardener

Dear Plant Doctor: I have two nice apple trees that really produce, however, I can never tell when to spray them.

I cannot find any insects although the apples still get "stung," which causes them to fall off or leaves a dimple that hinders their growth. How do I prevent this problem? Any other tips on growing apples would be appreciated. Thanks.

Answer: Producing high quality apples in eastern North Carolina is one of the greatest horticultural challenges to the home gardener.

The apple (*Malus pumila*) is thought to be native to the Caucasus Mountains of southern Asia but is presently grown in most temperate regions of the world.

Like many other members of the rose family, the apple is susceptible to a wide spectrum of insect and disease pests. Apple trees require a certain amount of cold temperature (below 45 degrees Fahrenheit) chilling for proper flowering and growth. The amount of chilling differs depending upon apple variety. For this area low chilling varieties usually perform best.

The most prudent method for controlling pests on apples is to use an Integrated Pest Management approach. To produce a high quality fruit, the apple grower must understand and use many pest control methods and cultural practices.

The unnecessary application of a pesticide costs money and potentially can create pest problems that even the best pesticides or cultural practices cannot control. It is paramount that the pest problem be positively identified. This requires constant ob-

THE PLANT DOCTOR

C. BRUCE WILLIAMS
Extension Area
Turf Specialist



Apple Pests in North Carolina (AG378) and *Disease and Insect Management in the Home Orchard*, Fruit Disease Information Note No. 2, that will outline pesticides and cultural practices that will help you produce better apples.

If you have a history of blossom end rot with your tomatoes or peppers, now is a good time to begin correcting the problem.

Blossom end rot is caused in tomatoes and peppers by dry weather and the lack of available calcium in the plant. The naturally derived mineral products, dolomitic limestone or gypsum, will provide the necessary calcium in the soil that your plants need.

Apply these amendments based upon N.C. Department of Agriculture soil test recommendations. If you have already planted, calcium chloride (two to three tablespoons to a gallon of water) applied every seven to 10 days beginning at bloom will provide a rapid source of available calcium to the tomato fruit.

A good straw or other organic mulch around the plant will also help prevent blossom end rot by conserving soil moisture.

Send your questions and comments to *The Plant Doctor*, P.O. Box 109, Bolivia, N.C. 28422. Please enclose a SASE if requesting publications or a reply.

ervation and monitoring of your trees for pest populations that will harm apple quality or yield.

I cannot positively identify the insect pest causing the problem with your trees, but it sounds like the Tarnished Plant Bug (*Lygus lineolaris*).

This small brown insect has piercing-sucking mouthparts that introduce a toxic saliva into the plant when the insect is feeding. Insect feeding can cause young fruit to drop or dimples to appear on the older fruit.

This insect is most active in early March through May. You can control it through preventive insecticide sprays. Be sure the insecticide you apply is specifically labeled for apples, because some insecticides may cause premature apple drop if improperly applied. Follow all label instructions and precautions.

Contact your local North Carolina Cooperative Extension office for help in obtaining positive identification of the pest when damage is noted.

I am sending you two publications, *Integrated Management of*

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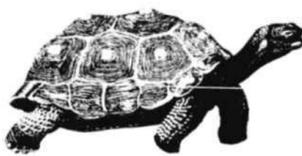
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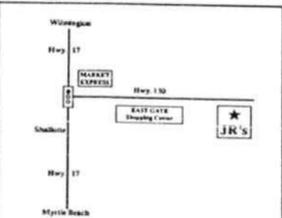
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