

Agriculture

Tips for organic gardening

Severely prune butterfly bushes (Buddleia) and Chaste-trees (Vitex). Plant canna outside.

Pencil in planting dates on your gardening calendar. This is particularly helpful for reminding ourselves of succession plantings, such as gladiolus.

In fact, make your first planting of glads now, and repeat every 10 days to two weeks until July.

Remember to soak bare-rooted ornamentals in water for 24 hours before planting.

Mark the daffodils you prefer as they bloom. After the foliage dies down, you will know which ones you want to divide.

Think before you prune forsythias. No little round balls, please. A naturally weeping plant is spectacular in bloom and fits comfortably into the landscape while in its green stage.

Since forsythia and other spring flowering plants set their flowering buds in the late summer and early fall, make sure they receive adequate moisture at that time.

Organic Gardening says following a few simple guidelines when choosing bedding plants will insure great results. Avoid plants that are tall and spindly. Buy plants with dark green leaves and stems. Reject any with lower leaves missing, an indication of insufficient nutrition. Reject any plants in dry soil, as artificial mediums are hard to rewet, and the plants may have already been damaged by water stress.

Another tip from OG: save rain wrappers that package your newspapers and place them on poles in the



garden. Breezes ripple the paper, frightening off birds.

Discourage rabbits in the garden by sprinkling dry sulfur around the outer edges.

Gardeners interested in providing food and shelter for visiting wildlife will be interested in a habitat created near Washington, D.C. by the National Wildlife Federation and the Planting Council. Located at 8925 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, VA., the habitat makes a great side trip on visits to the nation's capital. Included are four nature trails, and many increasingly popular vistas for nature photographers. Open from dawn to dusk year round, the admission is free.

Cool and Delicious
Build a grape arbor over a hot, sunny deck and convert it into a cool summer retreat, says Elizabeth Perdomo in Organic Magazine.

Among the muscadine varieties suggested for vigorous growth are 'Triumph,' 'Cowert,' 'Dixie,' and 'Nesbi.' Plant the vines at the corners of the arbor, or around the perimeter of a free form area.

One vine covers about 25 feet, and can be planted as close as four feet apart.

Muscadines can live for 150 years, so build the arbor to last. Use rot-resistant cedar, cypress, or pressure-treated 4x4's. String the top with 12 wire to form one-foot squares.

Tidy up the Rose Bed

Stop! Don't touch that climber! Climbing roses flower on one-year old canes. Wait until they have finished blooming to prune. But they do need a good balanced feeding.

Hybrid tea roses, however, are another matter—the time is now.

Thoroughly rake debris and winter covering from the base of the plant. Cut away any dead or diseased shoots. Cut back any crossed live canes, since they will rub together and wound the bark, bringing about possible invasion by pests and diseases. Redirect the stem's growth by cutting to an outside bud—one that is point away from the plant. The other, less desirable cane should be cut down well below where it crossed its neighbor. Cut at a 45-to 65-degree angle slanting into the center of the shrub. Leave four to six canes on each plant.

Prune all branches back to at least half their lengths. No need to purchase expensive wound dressings. Just apply a thin film of grafting wax or paraffin if the roses are in an area subjected to moisture-robbing winds.

Apply a balanced fertilizer, following manufacturer's directions. Lay down whatever mulch you prefer—pine needles are very satisfactory in this area.

Now stand back. You're in for a blommin' treat.



Above Neil Young a senior at Perquimans High School makes room for a shrub. Young and other Ag III students from the High School recently did some landscaping work at the county extension office. Young is a senior at the High School.

Rural area kids choose reading

GREENVILLE—Teenagers nowadays may not be reading "War and Peace" and other timeless literary classics, but they are reading for pleasure—at least in rural eastern North Carolina—says an East Carolina University library educator.

Dr. Constance Mellon, an assistant professor in the ECU Department of Library and Information Studies, says most of the 362 respondents in a recent survey of ninth graders definitely choose reading as a leisure time activity. Some of these adolescents are actually buying reading materials with their own pocket money.

The popular choices of reading material for males in her survey tended to be such magazines as "Hot Rod," "Field and Stream" and "Sports Illustrated," along with biographies of sports figures, "war books" and comic books. Female students were likely to select romance novels, mysteries and magazines: "Seventeen," "Jet," "Ebony," "Teen and "Young Miss."

"One of the most compelling finds of this study is that teenagers, at least rural teenagers, are reading," Dr. Mellon commented. Students also indicate a willingness to read something of their own choosing, she said, as opposed to material assigned to them.

Dr. Mellon undertook the survey in collaboration with two ECU graduate students—Carroll Harrell, media specialist at Perquimans High School, and Annette Privette, an English teacher at Bunn High School in Franklin County. The three developed a questionnaire which was completed by ninth grade students of all academic levels at Perquimans and Brinn high schools.

The two schools are "well-matched in all but one aspect," Dr. Mellon noted; while Perquimans is located in a sparsely populated coastal area, Bunn High is less than 35 miles from Raleigh—one of the state's largest cities.

Both high schools are centrally located in the areas they serve, more than 90 percent of the student enrollment in both schools is classified "rural" and both have about equal racial distribution of black and white with

virtually no other ethnic group represented.

Although rural teens often depend on buses for transportation to and from school and lack "easy access to public libraries and stores which sell reading material," they probably have more leisure time in which to read, than urban students who can more readily while away hours with the amusements and distractions in cities, Dr. Mellon said.

Still, she concedes that most teens today—even rural teens—can be easily distracted from reading as a leisure activity.

"There can be no doubt that this is a media generation, seemingly uncomfortable with silence," she said.

TV, portable radios and tape players, video games and inexpensive home computer software offer spare time activities for modern youngsters, she acknowledged. "With such sophisticated entertainment only a knob away, can the printed word compete?" she asked.

"It can, and does, according to the ECU survey of rural teens. To the surprise of Dr. Mellon and her collaborators, more than 80 percent of the

responding teens say they do read in their spare time, even if it's by default because they can't find anything more "fun" to do.

District homemakers meeting scheduled

By PAIGE UNDERWOOD

Home Economics Ext. Agent "Changing Times" will be the theme of the Northeastern District Extension Homemakers annual meeting to be held on Wednesday, April 22 in Windsor, NC.

Over 400 EHA members from seventeen counties are expected to attend the meeting. Mr. William P.

Harrell of Colerain, North Carolina, inventor of the game "The Constitution," will speak on "Understanding the Constitution."

A tour of Historic Hope House and King Bazemore House will be conducted in the afternoon.

Extension Homemaker Council members in each county will be selling tickets for the district project to

be drawn that day. Prizes will be 1) Wooden blanket chest with casters, 2) magazine rack, 3) footstool, all made by the Coulbourn Lumber Company.

Reservations for the meeting must be made by Friday, April 10, 1987. Contact your County Extension Office for registration information.

Information on fish farming in N.C.

Americans are eating fish like never before, and some farmers around the country are responding to that demand by taking a hard look at fish farming. Ask producers in the south and they'll tell you it's really nothing new.

In North Carolina, for example aquacultural enterprises range from the historical commercial fishing operations in coastal and oceanic waters to the production of rainbow trout in Western North Carolina mountain streams.

Webster's Dictionary defines agriculture as "the science or art of culti-

vating the soil, producing crops, and raising livestock." Fish farmers, or aquaculturists have long contended they too produce a crop, and should be recognized and regulated as doing so.

On the national level many regulations affecting the production of fish and seafood are enforced by the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Department of Interior. Fish farmers think that should be the Department of Agriculture's job. This split has also occurred in many states. Rules and regulations are being

drawn that day. Prizes will be 1) Wooden blanket chest with casters, 2) magazine rack, 3) footstool, all made by the Coulbourn Lumber Company.

Concerns of the fish farmer are starting to be heard. The USDA now has an Office of Aquaculture. The 1985 Farm Bill allows the establishment of four regional aquaculture centers to coordinate research. They are steps in the right direction for an industry that will likely soon contribute a billion dollars a year to the U.S. economy.

Home extension calendar

April 7—Spring Achievement Day—Perquimans County Extension Office—10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Lunch by School Food Service, Mrs. La Claire Anderson. Must call to pre-register for lunch by March 27.

Battenburg Lace Ornament Workshop—Tuesday, March 31—

9:00-1:00 p.m. Instructor—Mrs. Helen Timms—Small Cost—Class Limit 10. Please call 426-7697.

April 22—Northeastern District Extension Homemakers Annual Activity Day—Southwestern Elementary School, Windsor, N.C. Hospitality, 9:30 a.m. Meeting at 10:00 a.m.

Starting flower seeds indoors this year

Both new and experienced gardeners should check seed packets for germination and growing conditions, say staff members at the N.C. Botanical Garden at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

These conditions can vary widely. Some seeds require a darkened room, while others need bright lights and bottom heating. Others should be covered by a growing medium, while very fine seeds often need to lie on the surface of the medium.

If starting two types of seeds indoors in one flat, both types should have the same requirements and should be labeled. Some baby plants are not recognizable, and no one wants to transplant tiny snapdragons into the garden plot meant for sweet peppers.

To start seeds indoors, check the germination period usually given on

the seed packet in a phrase like "start indoors four weeks before the final frost." In Piedmont North Carolina, the average date for the final frost is April 30, so a count back should be made before sowing starts.

The requirements for seed-starting containers are simple—anything from an empty egg carton to a clean plastic or wood flat, or peat pots that are later planted with their contents in the outdoor plot can be used.

To germinate successfully, a seed needs adequate moisture for seed swelling and sprouting. The moisture must be even throughout the container to prevent the tiny plants from drying. More constant humidity can be achieved by covering the container with clear plastic wrap. As soon as the seedlings emerge, however, holes are poked in the plastic for ventilation and to lessen the possi-

bility of overheating.

Many seeds like a heated medium, which can be created with heated coils under the containers, or by placing the containers on an appliance that gives off heat, like the top of some refrigerators. Most seeds need light, obtained from a sunny window, fluorescent lights or even a table lamp. This light is what makes the seedlings develop after they have sprouted.

Using commercial seed-starting mix as a planting medium is simplest. The best mixes are combinations of sphagnum peat moss, vermiculite and nutrients. Adding other components like soil, which are not sterile, is unwise since tiny seeds and developing plants depend upon a disease-free environment.

4-H workshop

By JUANITA T. BAILEY
Home Economics Ext. Agent
Perquimans County Extension Service and Albemarle EMC will be holding a 4-H Electric workshop on Saturday, April 4, 1987 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the Albemarle EMC Office. At this workshop youth will learn how electricity works, to save

electricity and how to construct an extension cord. You must be 10 years old to register because everyone will be making an extension cord during the workshop. Bring a bag lunch, \$1.50 for a drink and \$1.00 to help cover the cost of workshop materials. Call 426-7697 to register. (Pre-registration is Required!) See you at the workshop.

Democratic convention set

The Perquimans County Democratic Convention will be held on Saturday, April 4, at 1:00 p.m., County Chairman London announced today. The Convention will be held at the Perquimans County Courthouse, London said.

At the top of the Convention's agenda will be the election of a new County Democratic Chairman and County Executive Committee. Also,

County's members on the State Democratic Executive Committee will also be chosen.

"The County Conventions are important for all Democrats in North Carolina," Chairman London noted. "With Democrats from each county choosing Party leaders and looking to the future, we will have a strong Party organization ready for victory in 1988."

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