

Spring Home Gardening Section for the Salisbury Post

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Spring Calendar

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April-September

#### April

\*Still time to fertilize cool season fescue/bluegrass lawns. Do not fertilize lawns after April 15.

\*April 15 is considered the last frost free day in the Piedmont. Tender annuals can be set outside. Watch the weather forecast And be prepared to cover if a sudden late frost should occur.

\*Post emergence herbicides can be applied 3 weeks after fescue germinates. Dandelions, wild garlic (wild onions, clover and other broad leaf weeds can be eliminated now.

\*Tomato plants are traditionally set in mid-April, however be prepared for a late frost. Use a starter solution of houseplant fertilizer with high phosphorus (the middle number in fertilizer) to get plants off to a good start.

\*Azaleas can be pruned after bloom to July 4th. Apply a slow-release fertilizer also after bloom to keep them healthy during the summer months. Azaleas set their buds in late summer, so don't prune after July 4<sup>th</sup>.

\*Boxwood leaf miner is a problem in April. American boxwoods are most often affected by the yellow-orange fly. Spray with approved pesticides to kill adults and larvae.

\*Continue to prune evergreen shrubs as needed.

\*Black spot on rose leaves may be a problem depending on the weather. Spray regularly to keep the disease in check. Those that are opposed to pesticide usage may want to consider shrub roses.

\*Aphids can also be a problem. Aphids or plant lice congregate on rose buds and tips.

\*Tent caterpillars are insects with the webs full of caterpillars on cherry and other trees in the *Prunus* family. Physical removal is the easiest method. There are insecticides labeled for the insect. Do not burn the webs; it's dangerous and will injure your trees.

\*Voles can be a problem in heavily mulched areas. Use snap traps or baits to control this pest. Rozol is a recommended bait to control the pest. This is available at

\*Fruit trees need continuous sprays with home orchard sprays to control insects and diseases. Spray thoroughly every 10-14 days.

\*Daffodil leaves and leaves of other spring flowering bulbs should not be mowed but kept alive and healthy to produce flowers for next seasons' flowers.

\*Yard work starts at a fast pace this month. Start slow and stretch to avoid excessively sore muscles. A check-up at the family doctor may be in order for those that plan for a major workout.

#### May

\*Warm season vegetables should be planted by May 10: These include tomatoes, pepper, squash, melons, okra and beans. Try new varieties.

\*Pansies need to be removed and replaced with summer annuals or perennials.

\*Continue to harvest of cool season crops such as lettuce, cabbage, onion and broccoli, garden peas should be underway.

\*Disbud spent rhododendron blooms and prune back candles to compact the plant and prevent leggy growth.

\*Keep a close check for lace bugs on azaleas and rhododendrons. Turn the leaves over and check for black tar-like spots. Spray underneath the leaves to keep lace bugs in check.

\*Insects are out and they are hungry. Keep a close eye on tender crops. Aphids are usually the first to arrive.

\*Danger of frost is over-house plants can be moved outdoors to recoup from their indoor winter home. Don't put plants in direct sunlight.

\*Ticks come out this month. Check yourself thoroughly if you work outdoors or walk in open fields or wooded areas. Mark the calendar when a tick is removed.

\*Anthracnose may be a problem on shade trees such maple, oak and sycamore. Brown spots may cause the leaves to fall prematurely. The disease will not kill the tree.

\*Mulching helps conserve moisture and reduce weed growth. Apply course bark or needles not to exceed 6 inches deep.

## June

\*June is the month to renovate strawberry beds. Thin berries to 12 inches apart and remove runners. Fertilize with a complete fertilizer and water during the summer. Keep the plants as weed free as possible to promote good growth and bud set in August.

\*Brown patch arrives in cool-season fescue or bluegrass lawns. Mow lawns when the grass is dry. Avoid fertilizer now especially fertilizers with high nitrogen.

\*Woolly aphids arrive in early June. These insects are a problem for those that have silver maples. Control using pesticides is not practical.

\*Japanese beetles hatch this month, usually after a warm summer shower. Sevin dust easily kills the critter.

\*Tomatoes start blossom end rot just before ripening. Blossom end rot can best be controlled with even watering practices. Make sure to lime the soil to help reduce this physiological problem.

\*Daylilies are at their peak at the end of this month. Planting continuous blooming varieties for blooms throughout the summer is becoming very popular.

\*Those that wish to reseed lawns this fall should have their soil tested this month so soil amendments can be made before planting in early fall. Soil sample boxes are available from the Extension Office.

\*Extra mulch around vegetables, especially tomatoes and beans helps conserve water and reduce weeds.

\*Pumpkins need to be planted early this month. Most take between 110 and 120 days to mature. Howden's Field is a large variety that the kids enjoy.

\*Honey bees are busy pollinating cucurbits and other plants. Be careful and spray insecticides late in the evening to avoid unnecessary bee kills.

\*Continue to pinch back herbs and dead head roses and other flowers.

## July

\*July 4th is the peak for summer vegetables. Tomatoes, sweet corn, okra and other vegetables should be plentiful at this time. Visit the Farmers Market and take advantage of local grown fresh produce.

\*Yellow jackets can ruin outings from now until the first frost. It takes some skill to locate nests. Aerosol sprays that control wasp and hornets work well. Use these sprays at dusk. Be careful.

\*Crepe myrtles show their color this month. Some varieties have problems with powdery mildew.

\*July is the month to take cuttings. Azalea, boxwood, holly, camellia and other evergreen shrubs can have tip cuttings taken this month. Cuttings should be six inches and dipped into rooting hormone powder. Place them in half sand half Canadian peat and keep moist for about 6 weeks.

\*Bermuda grass can be easily killed in July and August. Use Roundup at 2 ounces per gallon for effective control. Make sure the grass is actively growing.

\*Bermuda grass can be controlled in shrubs with Vantage. It controls the weed without injury to the shrub. Follow the instructions. It takes a while for the pesticide to work.

\*Water carefully early in the morning to avoid evaporation. Trickle or drip irrigation works well for valuable trees and shrubs. Carefully evaluate your water source. A weak well is no match for constant vegetable irrigation.

## August

\*Those that would like to start a new fescue lawn should kill entire lawn with systemic herbicide such as Roundup.

\*Cool season vegetables such as turnip, broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower can be direct seeded now.

\*Insects are out in force. Daily spraying may be necessary to control some insect pests.

\*Fertilize shrubs early in the month for the last time until the spring.

\*Azaleas set their blooms during late July and August. Make sure the shrubs receive ample water.

\*Fertilize strawberries with a complete fertilizer (10-10-10) about 2½ pounds per 100 feet or row.

\*Late vegetables can be planted now. Late tomatoes, green beans and squash for those that want fall vegetables.

\*Keep vegetables, flowers and other items healthy to enter in the Rowan County Fair.

\*Spray stone fruits such as peach, cherry, and plum for peach tree borers this month.

\*Black orange striped oak caterpillars will literally strip the leaves from oak tree and some other tree species. It's late in the summer and the tree is generally unaffected by the over active caterpillar.

\*Mums are available at the end of this month. Use these as accents around the home and garden.

## September

\*Labor Day is an excellent time to reseed and apply fall fertilizer for cool season lawns. A narrow window of opportunity exists for seeding. The earlier in September lawns are seeded, the stronger and better established the lawn becomes before winter.

\*Pre emergence herbicides can be applied to lawns when the temperatures begin to dip into the 50's to prevent chickweed and annual bluegrass.

\*Cool season lawns can be core-aerated this month.

\*Maples should be pruned in September when the leaves are still there to prevent excessive bleeding.

\*Fall webworms make a mess in some trees, especially pecan, sourwood and hickory. These do not kill the tree only a nuisance.

\*Those suffering from garden burn-out should remove garden debris, and turn stubble under. Plant a cover crop of wheat or clover for next springs' vegetable garden.

\*Pumpkins and winter squash can be harvested this month before frost after the vines dry up. Avoid bruising or scratching fruit while harvesting. Wipe the fruit with 1 part bleach and 10 parts water to kill bacteria and fungi. This allows the vegetables to last until Halloween.

\*The Rowan County Fair is the 3rd week of September. Enter crops, produce and flowers and show off your handy work.