

The Garden Path

The path to an environmentally sound and beautiful landscape
Learning is not a spectator sport. - D. Blocher

Drought? Sun? Bring it on!

By Carla Burgess, The monthly garden columnist for Carolina Country magazine, where this article first appeared.

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For low-maintenance annuals that deliver a riot of bloom, you can't go wrong with these oldies and newbies. Mass them in the landscape or plant them in pots in a sunny location, and get ready for a spring-through-fall flowerthon. All of these selections are exceptionally drought tolerant, though you'll want to water regularly for a few weeks after planting until the roots become established (containers will require more frequent watering).



A WINNING AFRICAN DAISY

Osteospermum
'Asti White'

Osteospermum 'Asti White' cinched the 2008 All-America Selections bedding plant award. It has pure-white, 2- to- 2 ½-inch flowers with blue eyes on neat, compact plants about 20 inches tall and wide. It is the first white African daisy that can be propagated from seed – 17 weeks from sowing to flowering. If you are too impatient, look for this and other *Osteospermum* varieties on selves this spring.



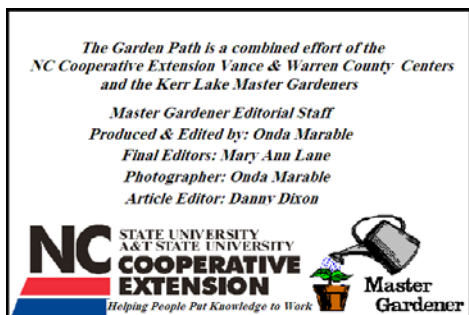
DIAMOND FROST *Euphorbia* 'Diamond Frost'

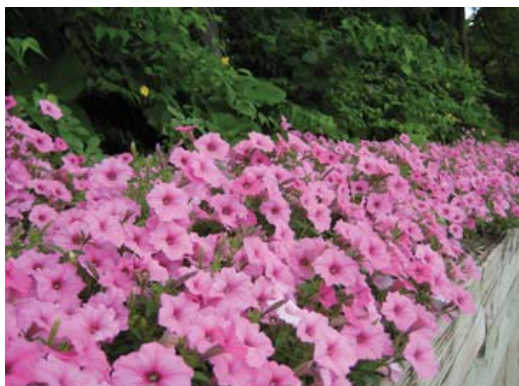
Euphorbia 'Diamond Frost' seems like the plant world's equivalent to the new "it" girl. Mark Weathington, assistant director of the J. C. Raulston Arboretum in Raleigh, raved about its ever-blooming performance in the clench of the drought last year. With its cloud of tiny white flowers amid airy foliage, 'Diamond Frost' is reminiscent of baby's breath. It's about 20 inches tall and just as wide. It's charming in groups, in containers, or tucked among other annuals or perennials. No deadheading required—looks great from start to finish!



ZINNIA A'PLENTY 'Profusion'

The 'Profusion' hybrid zinnia series has been snagging awards for almost a decade. 'Cherry', 'White' and 'Orange' are past AAS Gold Metal Winners. Cheery, 2-inch flowers are borne atop a neat mound of foliage about 15 inches tall and wide. As you'd imagine, these zinnias bloom profusely and are excellent landscaping annuals in well-drained soil. Unlike many zinnias, these are resistant to mildew and handle heat, humidity and drought with finesse.





**PETUNIA
HEAVEN**
'Vista
Bubblegum'

You better like pink! With 2- to 3-inch flowers on mounding 20-inch-tall plants, Supertunia, 'Vista Bubblegum' is unbelievably floriferous. No flopping and no messy heads. It's a knockout in hanging baskets, beds or borders. The series Surfinia is a super-cascading petunia with dozens of varieties to choose from. About a foot in height, it may trail to 4 feet long in beds, branching and blooming all the way. 'Baby Pink Ice' and 'Mini Mini White' were a splash on the arboretum trail grounds.

AUGUST TO DO !

Fruits and Veggies

By Carl Shafer, Master Gardener, Vance County

- Strawberries set fruit buds for next spring in the fall, so now is the time to fertilize with a complete fertilizer like 10-10-10. Water if the ground is dry.
- Blueberries are also setting fruit buds in the fall. If you have not been fertilizing earlier in the year, do so now and keep plants watered.
- The week of **September 1st** is the recommended time to spray for peachtree borers. Get prepared now. Spray the trunk and major branches, paying particular attention to ground level, with endosulfan (Thiodan). Follow label instructions. Peachtree borers may also attack apricot, cherry, nectarine, and plum trees.
- Clean up spent crops in the garden and plant your fall garden. (See article in the **July 07** issue or pick up Horticulture Information Leaflet 8001, *Growing A Fall Vegetable Garden*.

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/hil-8001.htm>

- If you are not planting a fall garden or if you have extra unused space, plant a cover crop. (See article in the **August 07** issue and/or see <http://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheets/HGIC1252.htm>)
- Make notes of successes and failures in the garden this year so that as you plan next year's garden you can remember what to change and what to expand on. Note any diseases that require treatment before symptoms appear, so that you can take preventive measures next year.

PESTS!!

By Cynthia Dickinson, Master Gardener, Warren County

INDIAN WAX SCALE

Indian wax scale insects are tiny, brownish-purple females with microscopic legs and a thick covering of sticky, white wax. There are no males.

The eggs are ovoid, pale purple, and resemble pollen when shaken onto a white surface. Eggs are found under adult scales. A severe infestation of Indian wax scale detracts from the host plant's appearance because of the many white scales and the copious honeydew that they secrete. A black fungus called sooty mold grows in the slightly sugary honeydew, further disfiguring the host plant.

Indian wax scales [begin to lay eggs](#) in March, each scale laying from 1,200 to 2,000 eggs. By late May, tiny crawlers hatch and move about, searching for a place to feed. Once the crawlers insert their sucking mouthparts into the host plant, they do not change locations again. The crawlers then secrete the waxy covering from which the name is derived. The young Indian wax scales mature throughout the summer, producing a thicker waxy covering and becoming increasingly tolerant to pesticides; They over winter as adults.

Handpicking scales in winter (if practical) is an effective control measure. Since they may lay their eggs apart from their host plant, the scales should be destroyed after removal and not just knocked to the ground. The Indian wax scale seems to be one of the most difficult ornamental plant pests to control during much of the year. However, the crawlers are extremely susceptible to pesticides. Because there is only one generation per year, applying carbaryl (Sevin) or a pyrethroid to the crawler stage in early June will give virtually complete control. Several formulations of carbaryl are available. The following pesticides are labeled for scale insects and should give more than adequate control of Indian wax scales if diluted properly and applied thoroughly during the month of June.

Pesticide	(Trade Name)	Formulation
*carbaryl	(Sevin)	40 Flowable
*carbaryl	(Sevin)	50 Wettable Powder
*horticultural oil	various	see label directions

*Suitable for home use.



IRIS TIPS FOR THE MONTH

By Heidi Moore, Master Gardener, Warren County

By now you have trimmed your iris foliage down to at least 6 inches and cleaned out the area around them to keep the rhizomes from rotting or infested with borers. If your iris have become crowded or the rhizomes are beginning to climb over each other, August is the best time to thin them. It is easiest to use a pitch fork to dig up iris. The rhizomes should be close to the surface and easy to loosen. It is best to try and separate the rhizomes by cutting them apart with a sharp knife rather than breaking them. Iris that have not bloomed well are either crowded or not getting enough sun. Sometimes moving your plants to different parts of your garden will give them a new chance to perform well.

Iris should not be fertilized until the fall when leaves begin to change color. Remember that you should not mulch around your iris. If mulch is left around the plants, heat is trapped against the rhizomes and the result is bacterial soft rot. Left unchecked, soft rot can turn your plants to mush. Exposing the top of rhizomes allows air circulation and prevention of soft rot.

ROSE TIPS FOR THE MONTH

By Heidi Moore, Master Gardener, Warren County

August is a difficult month to know exactly what is going on with your roses. Hot, dry weather will subject your bushes to an infestation of spider mites. Check your bushes carefully to be sure there are none present. If you confirm the presence of mites, a good miticide would be one containing either abamectin or spiromesifen. These two miticides/insecticides will work well to contain mites, leaf miners, whitefly, thrips and aphids. Be sure to keep your roses well watered and fed with liquid fertilizer to keep them strong which will help ward off disease and harmful insects. The stronger your plants, the less problems you will have keeping them healthy.

It is important to continue with your weekly spray routine for black spot. As the weather turns cool and damp, black spot will once again become difficult to control. I find manganese with zinc to be the most effective at keeping fungal diseases under control. Products containing propiconazole or trifloxystrobin are also known to be effective.

Continue deadheading your roses. It is important to keep your plants and the area around them clean and well cared for. Be sure to remove weeds or debris close to your bushes. This will encourage good growth and will also help to deter unwanted insects and disease.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

By Marty Finkel, Master Gardener, Granville County



Farfugium japonicum 'Crispatum'

With no common name, this plant's identity is really a mouthful. The cultivar 'Crispatum' (syn. 'Crispata') is sometimes referred to as parsley leaf farfugium, and it is a beautiful addition to any light to deep shade garden. It grows to about 12 to 15 inches tall and wide. It has yellow, daisy like flowers in late summer or fall. Its main claim to fame is the wavy or curly edge to its gray-green tinted leaves. In early spring, there is a hint of pink in the leaves as well. It combines very well with other perennials and annuals and is stellar in containers. It prefers moist soil and does not do well in prolonged drought (does any plant except cactus?).

Farfugium japonicum was once known as *Ligularia tussilaginea*, and it can still be found in some catalogs or reference books under this name. Of the four selections pictured here, my favorite is the 'Crispatum.'

In the accompanying photographs, the plain green-leaved one is *Farfugium japonicum*, the one with yellow spots is *F. japonicum* 'Aureomaculatum', the one with white variegation is *F. japonicum* 'Argentea', and the curly leaved one is the featured plant. Herbaceous plant guru Allan Armitage says there is another similar, but even more crested cultivar, 'Tsuwabaki,' which may go to the head of my plant lust list, even unseen!



Farfugium japonicum

F. japonicum 'Crispatum'



F. japonicum
'Aureomaculatum'

INTERESTING TIDBITS

By Marty Finkel, Master Gardener, Granville County

--Broadleaf weeds in lawns can be controlled by spring and fall applications of corn gluten meal, which acts as both a pre-emergence herbicide and a source of nitrogen for healthy green grass. Sold under a variety of trade names, this corn product is completely safe for people, pets, and wildlife.

Horticulture Magazine, June/July 2008

--For control of fungus gnats, cover the soil of potted plants with ½" of sand. It takes about a week to notice there are no more gnats flying around. Apparently the larvae are unable to crawl up through the sand to emerge as winged adults. Of course, if you are growing carnivorous plants in proximity, the fungus gnat problem disappears. Horticulture Magazine, April 2007.

--A lead-free, oil-based ink that will not fade or wash away is used in DecoColor Permanent Paint Markers for use in writing plant tags. Tony Avent recommends this product, which can be purchased for \$5 to \$7 for a pack of 2 in a range of colors at artists' supply stores or at a number of online sources. Horticulture Magazine, April '07

--If you like rose hips, don't get a rose described as "self-cleaning," which is another word for sterile. The roses begin work on a second cycle of bloom as soon as the first begins to fade. Horticulture Magazine, April 2007

-- Ever wonder where dogwood got its name? Plantsman Dan Hinkley, in an article on *Cornus racemosa* in the April 2007 issue of Horticulture Magazine says "The common name is corrupted from dagwood or daggerwood, revealing the chronicled use of its hard wood for skewers or daggers....."

AUGUST TO DO !

Landscaping & Lawn Care

By Onda Marable, Master Gardener, Vance County

- Cut leggy stems of petunias back by half to encourage new blooms.
- Remove or change water in bird baths, pets' water bowls and potted plant saucers every 2 to 3 days to get rid of mosquito larvae.
- Check dry conditions around shrubs and trees planted the last year—give them a deep soaking once or twice a week. Use a soaker hose or run an open hose at a trickle to allow water to sink in slowly.
- Sharpen and raise the lawn mower blade to lessen stress on the lawn.
- Watch the level of any water garden and remember to add only dechlorinated water.
- Fertilize plants as recommended but not the lawn.

Recommendations for the use of chemicals are included in this publication as a convenience to the reader. The use of brand names and any mention or listing of commercial products or services in this publication does not imply endorsement by NC State University, NC A&T State University or NC Cooperative Extension nor discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned. Individuals who use chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conforms to the product label. Be sure to obtain current information about usage regulations and examine a current product label before applying any chemical. For assistance, contact an agent of NC Cooperative Extension.

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