



The Garden Path

The path to an environmentally sound and beautiful landscape

Drying Herbs

Preserve your herbs so you can enjoy them all through the year

by Stevie Scarameli, Extension Master Gardener, Vance County

All the parts of many plants can be harvested and preserved for use in the future. Roots, leaves, stems, flowers and even seeds can be dried fairly easily so their flavors can be added to foods or infused into teas year round.

Leafy herbs have their greatest stock of essential oils just before they bloom, and their leaves should be harvested then. These herbs include basil, savory, chervil and marjoram. Lemon balm, basil, parsley, rosemary and sage can all be harvested several times a year. Herbs should be cut early in the morning, as soon as the dew is off the plant, on a day that is going to be hot and dry. Cut the top growth, about 6 inches below the flower buds.

Don't wash the leaves if they are clean, as water may wash away some of the oils. If the leaves are dusty or have bits of mulch on them, rinse them quickly, tie them in a small bunch and then put them in the sun only until they have dried from their rinse. Once they are dry, take them to a warm, well-ventilated dry place that is free of strong light and hang them. They should be tied and hung with the leaves down so that oils in the stem can migrate into the leaves. To keep the bunches free of dust, they can be put in a brown paper bag that has holes punched in it, so that air can circulate around the herbs. A bag will also protect the leaves from direct light, which would darken the leaves. Herbs that benefit from this protection are sage, savory, oregano, basil, marjoram, mint, lemon balm, and horehound. Leaves can also be dried separate from the stems. Thyme, parsley, lemon verbena, rosemary and chervil can also be dried in this fashion. The leaves are spread in a single layer on drying trays similar to those used for drying fruits and vegetable, but netting or screen must be used to prevent very small leaves from being lost.

If the herbs can be dried in three or four days they are most flavorful, but sometimes humidity or wet weather prevent this. If the leaves haven't dried within two weeks, they can be placed in an oven at 100° F. and left there until they crumble into dust when rubbed. When they are thoroughly dried, remove the leaves from the stems.

Herb seeds from anise, coriander, cumin, caraway, dill and fennel plants should be harvested when the seedpods or heads have changed color, but before they open. The pods are spread one layer thick on a tray, just as the leaves. The seeds should fall out easily when the pods have dried. Seeds can also be harvested by hanging the whole plant upside down in a brown paper bag. As the seeds dry and fall out, the bag will catch them.

References include: Stocking Up. How to Preserve the Foods You Grow Naturally, p. 99-103. By the Editors of "ORGANIC GARDENING AND FARMING" copyright 1973 by Rodale Press, Inc.

Interesting Tidbits

by Marty Finkel, Extension Master Gardener, Granville County

This month's tid-bits will consist of interesting, new cultivars of plants to look for.

Buddleia 'Silver Anniversary': This is a cross of the Asian species *Buddleja crispa* and *B. loricata* from South Africa. Its major attributes are 1) the bright silver color of the leaves throughout the growing season, and 2) it is sterile! It has small creamy flowers that make up insignificant inflorescences and produces no viable pollen. It grows about 4 – 5' a year after heavy spring pruning. It can be seen in the Klein-Pringle White Garden at the JCRA. Source: JC Raulston Arboretum Newsletter, Summer 2007, Vol. 11, No. 1.

Callicarpa dichotoma 'Duet': This is a newly released variegated cultivar of the Asian beautyberry that has white fruit. It was discovered as a bud sport on *Callicarpa dichotoma 'Alba'* and has leaves with a white edge and green center variegation. The Asian species of beautyberry in general has smaller leaves and a more graceful, semi-pendulous habit. It does well in full sun but to reduce the risk of leaf burn, partial shade may be preferable. Since it isn't trademarked or patented, there are no restrictions on propagation and marketing. Source: Same as above: JCRA Newsletter etc.

Hypericum calycinum 'Brigadoon': A new, chartreuse-yellow St. John's Wort is available that will grow in sun or light shade. It grows to 12 to 16" tall and spreads to 2' wide and has small, oval leaves. In the sun, the leaves are orangey-gold and in light shade are chartreuse-yellow. It is subject to no serious pests or diseases, tolerates summer heat without greening out, and grows in average soil that isn't too wet. It makes a great ground cover and is striking with deep burgundy leaved *Heucheras* or in front of deep green evergreens. Source: "Fine Gardening" magazine, Oct. 2007, No. 117

Lavandula angustifolia 'Violet Intrigue': Not another lavender! This cultivar was sent to The Gardens at University of Georgia in Athens among others for trial there. In Allan Armitage's "Plant Pick" article, he says "The summer provided brutal excesses of rain, heat, and high humidity that year, yet we were all pleasantly surprised by the outstanding performance of 'Violet Intrigue.'" He further states that it is labeled for Zone 8 although it returned "... to fight another season in our trial gardens in zone 7." He characterizes it as a superb, vigorous grower that has the same cultural requirements as all other lavenders, i.e., soil reasonably high in organic matter, excellent

drainage, and sun. Sounds like one we might have more success with than some of the other cultivars on the market. Source: Same as above: "Fine Gardening" etc.

CORRECTION: On September's plant of the month it was stated that the adult form of ivy (tree ivy) does not produce vines. Most of the adult forms do form vines, and they will root if allowed to run. It is not a problem to remove them – my plant made four beginning-to-run vines after about 3 years, and I snipped them when they were beginning to trail.

Guidelines for Treating Invasive Plants

Invasive Plants, Part II

by Marty Finkel, Extension Master Gardener, Granville County

(From the NC Botanical Garden 2007 edition of "Controlling Invasive Plants.")

Cut: For some plants, continual cutting can exhaust the energy stored in roots. Do not, however, mow or string-trim plants that have gone to seed, as this will spread the seeds. Hand cut plants with seeds and fruits, place them in a bag, and put in the trash -- not in your yard waste. Cutting can stimulate re-sprouting, so repeat the cutting or treat the re-sprouts with foliar spray to increase the effectiveness of management.

Cardboard and Mulch: This method is an effective treatment on dense ground covers. Cut back all vegetation as far as possible and remove vines from trees. Completely cover the area with cardboard, overlapping edges and securing if necessary. Cover cardboard with organic mulch, wet, and create drainage holes where water pools. The cardboard may be left to compost in place. Pull any sprouts that appear. This treatment will suppress all vegetation under the cardboard.

Cut and Paint: For trees, shrubs, and vines that are too large to pull, make a level cut through the stump close to the ground and clear away debris. Immediately paint or spray the outer two-thirds of the stump with a 15-25% solution of glyphosate herbicide. This treatment is most effective on deciduous plants in summer or fall and on evergreen plants year round. You can also use this method when drift from foliar spray could harm desirable plants.

Girdle: For larger trees and shrubs, remove the bark and vascular tissue immediately underneath the bark. Using an axe, hatchet, saw, or chainsaw, cut a ring all the way around the trunk of the plant near the base. Immediately applying a 15-25% solution of glyphosate herbicide to the wound increases effectiveness.

Hack and Squirt: Using an axe or hatchet, make several uniform cuts on the trunk of a tree or shrub. The cuts should be closely spaced and angle downward to create a "cup." Spray a 15-25% solution of glyphosate herbicide immediately into the wounds to fill the "cups."

Pull: Pull or grub the plants, being sure to remove the entire plant including the roots. Leaving roots can allow the plant to re-sprout. This method is most effective on herbaceous plants and seedlings. For larger trees and shrubs, specialized tools may be necessary.

Spray: Using a 1-2% or ready-to-use solution of glyphosate herbicide, thoroughly wet the foliage of the invasive plants (foliar spray). Species with waxy leaves may require a 5% solution of glyphosate.

"Native Alternatives to Invasive Plants," by C. Colston Burrell, is an excellent booklet prepared by the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. It is Handbook #185 and can be ordered by calling 718-623-7286, or by shopping in the online store at www.bbg.org/gardengiftshop. The NCBG also sells it at Totten Center. It also gives other sources of information about invasive exotic plants. The Brooklyn Botanic Garden sends three gardening handbooks per year when you join the BBG as annual Subscriber Member. For membership information, call 718-623-7210 or visit the website at www.bbg.org. The handbooks are truly informative and can be kept as reference books.

Local Happenings for October

compiled by Marty Finkel

JC Raulston Arboretum

4415 Beryl Road, Raleigh, NC.

919-515-3132.

Self-Guided Tours: daily, 8 - 5.

Free Guided Tours: Sundays at 2 p.m.

www.ncsu.edu/jcraulstonarboretum

Thursday 4: Permaculture Basics and Home Applications

Saturday 6: Annual Plant Distribution

Sunday 7: Celebrate North Carolina Wines!

Tuesday 9: Plantsmen's Tour: Fall Color for the Shrub Border

Thursday 18: Plant Lust Vol. 1: Variegation

Saturday 20: Horticulture Symposium (Horticulture Magazine)

The Sarah P. Duke Gardens

426 Anderson Street, Durham, NC

919-684-3698 or 919-668-1707

www.hr.duke.edu/dukegardens/

Tuesday 9: Hummingbirds and Hamburgers: the Tropical Connection (class)

Thursday 11: The International Flora Montreal (class)

Sunday 21: Controlling Wildlife Damage in Your Garden (seminar)

Tuesday 23: Challenges in Urban Gardens (lecture)

Thursday 25: Historic Plants of Colonial America (class)

Tuesday 30: Floral Designs for Fall (class)

NC Botanical Garden

CB3375, Totten Center

Chapel Hill, NC

919-962-0522

www.ncbg.unc.edu

Guided Tours: Saturdays 10-11 a.m. Meet at the gathering circle in front of Totten Center.

Self-Guided: Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Sunday. 1-5 p.m.

Mondays 1, 15, 22, 29: Field Sketching

Wednesdays 3-24: Color Pencil 1

Thursdays 4-25: Three-Dimensional Botanical Art

Saturdays 6, 13, 20, Nov 3: Color Theory 1

Sunday 7: Backyard Composting

Saturdays 13, 20, Nov. 3, 17: Conservation Biology

Sunday 14: Demystifying Picture-Framing

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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Plant of the Month

by Marty Finkel

Clerodendrum trichotomum Harlequin Glorybower

The Harlequin Glorybower, or *Clerodendrum trichotomum*, is blooming as this article is being written, the 17th of September, and has been in bloom for about 3 weeks. Its fragrance is wonderful and perfumes the air for some distance around it. The individual flowers are about 1 to 1 ½ inches wide, tubular at the base and spreading into 5 narrow oblong lobes at the mouth. They are on long, stalked clusters averaging 6 to 9" across, with the inner flowers opening first, and grow out from the upper leaves. The leaves are about 4 to 9" long, about 2 to 5" wide, are dark green on the upper side and slightly downy or hairy on the underneath. After each flower fades, a reddish-purple, leathery calyx about ½"



long with a bright blue, fleshy seed remains. Dirr says "One thing is absolute, when the gardening public sees the plant with flowers and fruits present at the same time, there is an instant love affair and eagerness to buy."

The *Clerodendrum* prefers full sun and moist, well-drained soil. It will tolerate light shade but will have a more open habit.

It grows to about 12 - 15' by about 10' or so wide, and it produces suckers from the roots. I removed about 5 suckers over a two-year period, so it isn't a big deal, and you can pot the small trees, grow them for a summer, and give them to friends.

Dirr calls the *Clerodendron* a die-back shrub, as in the University of Georgia Botanical Garden a 12' high and wide specimen lost about 60% of its superstructure after a 4 degree freeze in 1994. I will take my chances and see what the future will bring with this delightful small tree.

What to do?

Fruits and Veggies

by Carl Shafer, Extension Master Gardener, Vance County

- We often have two or three weeks of nice weather after the first frost in the fall. To avail oneself of this additional growing time for tender vegetables (green beans, summer squash, tomatoes, peppers, etc.) have frost protection material ready to use when frost is predicted. Some things you can use to protect your plants include row covers, sheets, blankets, and plastic sheeting. Use supports of some kind to keep the covers from touching your plants. Remember to remove them in the morning before sunshine hits to prevent overheating. When a hard freeze is forecast, harvest

your tender and semi-hardy vegetables.

- As fall clean-up continues, remove any diseased plants and leaves from the garden area and discard. Do not compost this material.
- Fall is an ideal time to have soil tests done on garden and lawn areas. If lime is needed, fall is an excellent time to apply it.

Lawn Care

by Virginia Tietz, Extension Master Gardener, Vance County

- Mow to 2 ½ to 3 inches in height.
- Have your soil tested. A free soil test kit can be obtained at the Vance County Extension Center, 305 Young Street, Henderson. Then apply the nutrients your lawn needs.

- Apply broadleaf herbicides to control broadleaf weeds like chickweed, henbit & other weeds as necessary. Remember that some herbicides may affect newly seeded turf. Follow label directions.

Landscape Chores

by Kelly Groves, Horticulture Agent, Vance and Warren Counties

- Fall is considered the best time to plant trees and shrubs.
- Prune dead and diseased branches from trees and shrubs.
- In fall and early winter, don't forget to water new trees and shrubs to increase winter hardiness. Continue until the ground freezes.

The Garden Path is brought to you by NC Cooperative Extension, Vance and Warren County Centers.
Edited by:
Kelly Groves, Horticulture Agent
Danny Dixon, Extension Master Gardener, Franklin County
Onda Marable, Extension Master Gardener, Warren County



On the web:

The Garden Path Newsletter
vance.ces.ncsu.edu/content/thegardenpath

Vance County Extension
vance.ces.ncsu.edu

Warren County Extension
warren.ces.ncsu.edu

Urban Horticulture at NC State University:
www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer

Kelly Groves
Horticulture Agent
Vance County Center
NC Cooperative Extension
PO Box 1028
305 Young St.
Henderson, NC 27536
252-438-8188
kelly_groves@ncsu.edu

Question Corner

by Kelly Groves, Horticulture Agent, NC Cooperative Extension

Q: I haven't seeded my lawn yet because it has been so dry, should I go ahead and do it?

A: No, wait on your lawn. Grass seedlings require good moisture to grow and thrive. They will not grow and establish well if it stays really dry. In addition, because of the water shortage, we all should be conserving water. It is best to wait until next fall. If you are desperate, you might have success in the spring, but fall is best for reseeding.