

## THE GARDEN PATH , AUGUST 2015

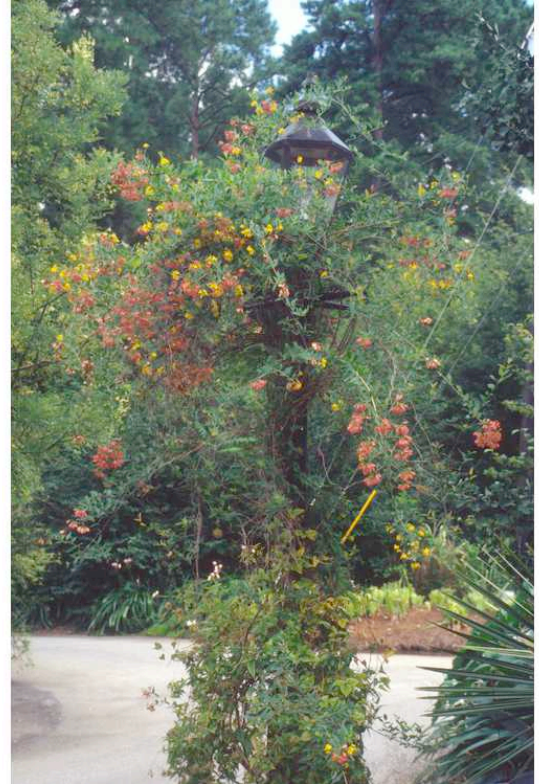
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### PLANT OF THE MONTH - AUGUST By Marty Finkel

Redwing (*Heteropterys glabra*), JC Raulston Arboretum photo collection

Redwing is native to the area where southern Brazil, northern Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay meet, and one wouldn't think it would be hardy in our area (zone 7). It is a woody vine that has an upright growth habit, so it can grow up a support or twine around branches of a small tree or large shrub. Without support, it makes a mounded, shrubby plant and its branches will weave through its neighbors. In early summer, gold flowers appear in sprays. These are quickly followed by bright red fruits that look like winged maple seeds. What makes this such an amazing plant is that it keeps blooming alongside the fruit well into the fall, resulting in a continuously hot display. The leaves are a glossy green and are flushed with burgundy when they first appear. It will have the best flower and fruit show if planted in full sun but will grow well in light shade. When first planted, it can use some training to get it started up a support, or it can go under a low-branched tree. It may die back to the ground for the first couple of years but later, the stems will stay green during most winters. It grows best in slightly moist, well-drained soil. Once established, it tolerates dryer conditions and root competition. As Mark Weathington says in an article for the JC Raulston Arboretum "It makes an outstanding landscape plant and should be more widely planted in USDA hardiness zones 7 and warmer where the graceful form, flowers, and fruit will add a bolt of bright color to the garden."



### CHECKLIST FOR AUGUST By Mary Jane Bosworth

By now the joy of gardening is probably fading with the hot weather. Get out there when it's cooler, morning or evening to do the chores that must be done. Hopefully, if you have done everything right, you won't have much to do and will be able to sit back with your sweet tea and enjoy the garden.

- ✓ Hydrangea and forsythia can be propagated by bending stems to the ground and covering them with 2" of soil. I usually put a rock or brick on top to keep the branch down. This can also work with figs. When roots form, the branch may be cut and planted.
- ✓ Fall blooming bulbs are now available at garden centers.
- ✓ To encourage deep roots give your plants a good soaking rather than frequent sprinkling.
- ✓ Mulching is very important in dry spells. Check yours and replenish if needed to conserve moisture and help those plants survive.
- ✓ August is a good time to transplant iris and daylilies. You are more likely to remember the color they provided if you don't wait till spring. It also gives the plants time to settle in before winter.
- ✓ Late July or early August, place pansy seeds in the refrigerator for 10 to 14 days then plant in fertile soil.

- ✓ There are many plants that will provide fall color and can be planted now. These include: chrysanthemums, copper plant (*Acalypha*), impatiens, coleus, flowering cabbage (kale).
- ✓ Continue to deadhead blooms.

## **GARDEN TO DO – AUGUST** By Carl Shafer

Always check previous TO DO lists as many items continue to be relevant and some you may have not had time to do.

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, unless you have a recent soil test to follow. Water if the ground is dry. Get Leaflet No. 8205 (Strawberries in the Home Garden) for more complete information.\*

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. Get HIL-8100 (Growing Blueberries in the Home Garden) for more complete information.\*

The week of September 1<sup>st</sup> is the recommended time to spray for peachtree borers. Get prepared now. Spray the trunk and major branches, paying particular attention to ground level. Follow label instructions. Note some products will recommend multiple applications. Peachtree borers may also attack apricot, cherry, nectarine, and plum trees. For more information on peachtree borers with a link to a list of “Homeowner Products Listed for Borers” see: [www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/O&T/trees/note141/note141.html](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/O&T/trees/note141/note141.html).

Clean up spent crops in the garden and plant your fall garden. Links for HIL 8100, *Growing A Fall Vegetable Garden* and Central NC Planting Calendar can be found in the Extension “Lawn and Garden Publications” web site.\* Also see:

<http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/426/426-334/426-334.pdf>, and [www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/pdf/hgic1256.pdf](http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/pdf/hgic1256.pdf). Also most seed sources have growing guides and other information on their web sites. They usually have recommendations for the best varieties for fall planting.

If you are interested in extending your vegetable gardening season past the first frost, see: [www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/426/426-381/426-381.pdf](http://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/426/426-381/426-381.pdf) or <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/hortihints/0402c.html> or Jabbour, Niki. *The Year-Round Vegetable Gardener*. North Adams, MA.: Storey Publishing, 2011. Also see: <http://wimastergardener.org/sites/wimastergardener.org/files/FloatingRowCover.pdf>. For a more comprehensive coverage of season extension with a resource list, see: <http://growingsmallfarms.ces.ncsu.edu/growingsmallfarms-seasonextension/>.

If you are not planting a fall garden or if you have extra unused space, plant a cover crop. See: [www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/quickref/soil/covercrops.html](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/quickref/soil/covercrops.html). Also check above fall garden web sites and below. Note that NCOrganic ([www.ncorganic.org](http://www.ncorganic.org)) in the Organic Production section has individual sections on: Production Guides, General Organic Growing Resources, Pests & Disease Control, Season Extension and Greenhouse, Cover Crops, and Sources of Organic Seed and Organic Farming Supplies.

If you have areas in your garden that did not produce well, take soil samples of those areas and areas that produce well for comparison to determine if it is a soil problem.\*

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.

If you have not been reading the Extension Gardener ([www.successfulgardener.org](http://www.successfulgardener.org)), the Summer 2015 issues are now posted.

\* Web links for these and many more topics can be found at: [www.ces.ncsu.edu/lawn-and-garden-publications/](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/lawn-and-garden-publications/).

## **THE TYROS' CORNER -AUGUST** By Eileen Novak

You know, it’s a sad thing in my life but so little seems to go the way I plan or envision it. Just like when I played golf, I was told to see the ball rolling into the cup. I didn’t see that too very often, I can tell you. The ball stopped short of, rolled past and circumnavigated the cup but rarely rolled into it. Just like gardening. You think I would know better by now, wouldn’t you? I planned out my garden, planted my seeds on the Ides of March giving myself 6 weeks for the little darlings to grow into robust, happy plants. They evidently didn’t read

the part about robust and happy. Anyway, a little more than 6 weeks later I was frantically clearing the last of the weeds from the garden, having had an enforced respite caused by spring pollen. I pulled EVERY weed, especially those prickly Carolina horse nettles. Then I put down all 96 tomato plants that were thin and spindly rather than robust. A week later I went out to find about 20 plants remaining, the rest having been chewed down to nubs by the just-emerging Colorado Potato bugs who, not finding their preferred meal of horse nettles, decided to make do with  $\frac{3}{4}$  of my tomato plants.

A little research told me that the villain in question was first noticed on a military exploration mission out west in 1820 by a naturalist named Thomas Say (check out Amy Stewart's book Wicked Bugs for this and more fascinating stories). The beetle was first noticed "feeding on a tough little weed in the nightshade family" but Mr. Say didn't think it a major discovery. He didn't plant potatoes, tomatoes or eggplants. They are all in the nightshade family and will all do in a pinch when some overenthusiastic gardener decides to eliminate its favorite food from a 50 foot radius. Silly me, I thought they would leave, or that flying insects would not see what they wanted and keep going. Nope. They did what they do best: they adapted.

I, therefore, had to adapt my gardening technique (death to all weeds) to a slightly modified one (leave the horse nettle till it blooms then pull it up). This new method, while leaving weeds in an otherwise orderly (yeah, right) garden allows me to easily eradicate any of the larvae that I see munching on the weed with a supremely satisfying stomp and grind, while not doing all that much damage to the weed. Those plants must have springs instead of cells – they bounce right back up.

But just for fun, let's get back to that pesky beetle's story. After switching from the buffalo burr (the nightshade it was noshing on when first noted by Mr. Say) to the potatoes planted by the settlers that arrived, it set about eating the other members of the nightshade family that the settlers so obligingly provided for the smorgasbord: tomatoes, eggplants and even tobacco. And with its newly expanded palate, it discovered it could travel east and find an even greater abundance of this feast. In 1875, it had inflicted so much damage that the European countries banned the importation of American potatoes to keep the beetle out. World War 1 made it impossible to avoid accidental importation of agricultural pests as the American doughboys marched across the continent. The Germans, in particular, thought it was an obscene form of biological warfare, believing that we were dropping the beetles from airplanes to ruin them.

Well, for our part, we didn't bring the beetle "over there" deliberately, unlike the "gifts" of sorrel, henbit and chickweed that the old world settlers inflicted on us.

### **INTERESTING TID-BITS FOR AUGUST** By Marty Finkel

The monarch isn't the only butterfly that depends for survival on a single host plant – the great purple hairstreak in its larval (caterpillar) stage eats only mistletoe! This butterfly is native to the lower half of the United States. The top side of its wings is a brilliant blue, and the male has more blue covering his wings than the female. The eggs are laid singly on mistletoe, and when they hatch, the caterpillars are the same color as the plant, making them nearly impossible to see. On top of the thorax, near the head, there is a diamond-shaped mark. After the adults emerge and dry their wings, they begin eating the next day, often drinking nectar from white-flowered plants.

The latest blackberry cultivar released to the nursery trade (in 2012) from the NCSU small fruit breeding program is 'Von.' It is thornless, floricanefruiting, and is distinctive for its sweet flavor, small seeds, and low acidity. It was developed by Dr. Jim Ballington, Dr. Gina Fernandez, and Dr. Penelope Perkins-Veazie with NCSU's Department of Horticulture Science. 'Von' underwent three years of data analysis at the Piedmont Research Station in Salisbury, NC, where it performed as well or better than other varieties in post harvest tests. It produces fruit late in the season.

The NC Museum of Natural Sciences is hosting **Dig It! The Secrets of Soil**, a 5,000 square foot traveling exhibit that started in May and continues until August 16. The goal is to teach consumers more about the importance of soil starting with our vital agriculture industry. It shows that our food, clothes, houses, cars and more are all connected to soil. Featured in the exhibit are more than 50 different soil monoliths, a hands-on soils display with infrared gas analyzers, touch-screen displays and more. This year, 2015, is the

International Year of Soils, and the museum expects more than 100,000 visitors to the exhibit. For more information, go to [naturalsciences.org](http://naturalsciences.org).

Craig LeHoullier, heirloom tomato expert in Raleigh, was the subject in a past *Garden Path* article, and he recently published a book, *Epic Tomatoes*, that has received quite a bit of positive press from several horticultural journals and in the *Raleigh News & Observer*. The book is already in its third printing. LeHoullier is known as the Tomatoman, and there were several events listed in a June 27 N&O article celebrating the publication of the book. He is the co-founder of the Tomatopalooza tomato tasting events that have been ongoing for a decade at locations across the Triangle. He is well known for saving and naming the Cherokee Purple tomato, and he is the tomato advisor for Seed Savers Exchange.

Charlotte Glenn, Chatham Co. extension agent, sent an alert July 10<sup>th</sup> that basil downy mildew is now active in N.C., so now would be a good time to harvest it and make pesto. She wrote that it was recently confirmed in the N.C. mountains and will likely move to the Piedmont. Indications of infection are leaves turning yellow and then brown, with dark fuzzy spores growing on the back of the leaves. If you see this condition, remove the plants. Infected plants CAN be tilled into the soil or composted because basil downy mildew requires a living host to survive and will not persist on dead plants or in plant debris. It CAN be passed on through infected seeds, so don't save seeds from plants that show symptoms. This disease WON'T spread to other types of plants because it only infects basil plants, with sweet basil the most susceptible. Spraying fungicides don't have much effect on preventing the disease – keeping the foliage dry reduces the chance of the plants becoming infected, as well as thinning and pruning to keep a good air flow around them. Photos are available on Debbie Roos' Growing Small Farms website:

<http://growingsmallfarms.ces.ncsu.edu/growingsmallfarms-2014-basil-downy-mildew/>

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