

Spring 2022

The Garden Path

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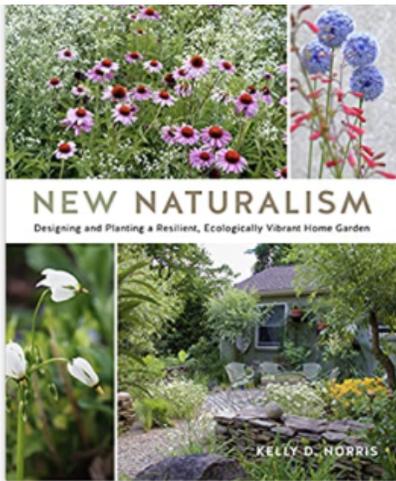
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The New Naturalism: A Brief Introduction

Juel Duke



The New Naturalism by Kelly D. Norris is a book, published in 2021, that introduces new concepts for designing residential landscapes. I first learned of the book when I registered for a class currently underway through the J. C. Raulston Arboretum.

<https://jcra.ncsu.edu/events/details.php?ID=2762>). The first two classes made me feel uninformed and very overwhelmed, despite 40+ years as a serious hobbyist gardener that included two Extension Master Gardener courses in two different states as well as numerous other

botanical and gardener classes. The third class, of six, was much better and I was able to do the homework.

This short article is intended as only a teaser for a full review of the course and the book that will be in the Summer issue of the Garden Path. For now, be assured that “Right Plant, Right Place” is still the standard for selecting plants but Mr. Norris, and others, are teaching a much different way to evaluate the plants and the place, based on long term resiliency of the ecosystem. There is much to learn but I’m glad that my personal motto “Why just plant when you can over plant” is part of the approach.

CHECKLIST FOR MARCH, APRIL AND MAY

Mary Jane Bosworth

March

- Plan carefully what you need for your flowerbeds to prevent overbuying.
- Now is the time to plant outdoors annual seeds of the following: alyssum, calendula, pansy, snapdragon and viola.

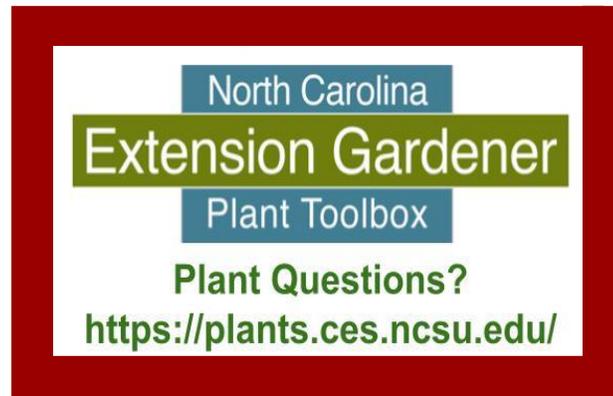
- Warm season vegetables, such as eggplant peppers and tomatoes, can be sown in pots or trays to get them ready for outdoor planting at a later date.
- Set out transplants of broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower up to 4 weeks before the last spring freeze (mid - April).
- Seeds of carrots, lettuce, peas, mustard and spinach may be sown outdoors.
- To propagate shrubs with long pliable stems, try ground layering. Bend one or two stems of forsythia, winter jasmine, rhododendron or even hydrangea to the ground, making a slight cut in the underside of the stem and covering it with dirt, holding it down with a wire or a brick. It should be ready to separate from the main plant in the fall.
- Mow your liriopé beds before new growth emerges. Mondo grass can also be cut back at this time.
- Apply a pre-emergent herbicide to ground covers until they become dense enough to be relatively free of weeds.
- Apply pre-emergent herbicide to control summer annuals such as crabgrass and goosegrass.

April

- Tender annuals, started indoors, should be “hardened” before planting them in the garden.
- Start hanging baskets early in April. Impatiens and begonias do well in shade. Dwarf marigold, petunias, scaevola, verbena and vinca are sun lovers.
- Mulch.
- Transplant red spider lilies (*Lycoris radiata*) and *Lycoris squamigera* when the bulbs go dormant (the leaves start to yellow). Transplant immediately and not too deeply.
- Trim the flower heads from spring flowering bulbs to prevent them from going to seed. Allow the leaves to die naturally.
- Stake perennials that tend to be top heavy. Peony and delphinium fit this category.
- Watch for aphids or white flies on mums, sedum, verbena and others.
- Apply slow release fertilizer when perennial shoots start to emerge.
- Continue planting container grown shrubs and water them regularly.

May

- Thin out annuals, if necessary.
- Remove spent flowers to promote continuous blooming.
- Water gardens when needed. Ideally, 1” of water is needed per week.
- New transplants should not be allowed to dry out. When watering, try not to wet the leaves of the plants to prevent disease.
- Plant tender summer bulbs such as cannas, dahlias, ginger lilies and tuberose.
- After blooming, cut off spent flowers and stalks from bearded Iris.
- Mulch to control weeds and retain moisture.
- Sow warm weather vegetables: beans, cucumber, okra and Southern peas.
- Set out transplants of eggplant, tomatoes, peppers, sweet potato slips, watermelon,.
- Harvest broccoli, peas, asparagus and cabbage.
- Side-dress sweet corn when it is 8 to 12 inches high.



ALL THE BUZZ

Bea Leach



Now is about the time in the winter that gardeners are knee deep in seed catalogs and dreams of how to improve upon the amazing work done in last year's garden. After the surprises that showed up in my yard last season, I've just decided to let nature do the planning.

In early spring, I noticed a flower growing in a far corner of my yard. It was a petunia that had been planted by a bird as I never have planted petunias here. I knew that it would not do well in that

corner under the tree so I uprooted it and plopped it in a large pot. Before long, that little petunia became a mighty plant! It was still alive and green until we had the first snowfall in January.

Another anomaly was this UPS – Unidentified Plant Specimen (right). No idea from where it came and no idea what plant. It continued to grow happily in that spot until our first hard freeze.



For years, the front of our home has been shaded by large, old maples. They always provided enough shade to grow mounds of red and white impatiens in my galvanized wash tubs. The winter of 2021 saw the last of the maples removed. In the spring, I decided to add *Catharanthus roseus*, annual vinca,



(<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/catharanthus-roseus/>) to the galvanized tubs since there would be more sun through the late morning.

The vinca looked pathetic throughout the season. No amount of water or fertilizer helped. In late August, I noticed impatiens coming up outside the tubs and in September they started their bloom. Guess what will be in the galvanized tubs in 2022?

In a Google dive, this gardener found that “impatiens” is a Latin word that describes how the plant “shoots” out the seed when the seed pods opens. No wonder they were all over the place!

If your winter garden planning has you thinking about adding more native plants to your garden, let me lead you to a wonderful website every gardener needs in their bookmarks. <https://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/Wildlife/Butterflies-and-Moths> This database was created based on the scientific research of Dr. Doug Tallamy, the T.A. Baker Professor of Agriculture in the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware and Research Assistant Kimberley Shropshire.

When you get to the start page, you are prompted to enter your zip code. The filter searches only native plants specific to that location. By clicking on “Find Native Plants”, it will take you to a list of flowers, grasses, trees and shrubs. Each plant is ranked by the number of caterpillar species it supports. Clicking on the individual genus will take you to more information about the plant as well as pictures of the top fifteen butterflies or moths that like the plant.

You can also click on “Find Butterflies” and you will get a list of butterflies and moths specific to your area and what host plants they use. The butterflies and moths are ranked by how picky they are about their diet.

This website gives you the ability to register a login which allows you to save plants that you want to include in your space to “My List”. Bookmark it to your tablet or phone to use as a reference when your car autopilots you to your favorite nursery.

Until next time...

My Favorite Plants(This Year)

Juel Duke

Over 45 years as a plant lover and gardener, I have had many favorite types of plants, the ones I sought out to buy in hopes of amassing a collection of merit. I've given up on that, realizing the sources that I buy from are way ahead of me. Now, I accumulate just for the pleasure of observing the plant.

Decades ago, I was driven to buy bromeliads that led me down the dangerous path to orchids. Ten years of orchid study and a tragic ending to that collection led to an interest in native plants, in general. This was when my love for landscape plants started and I immersed myself in learning the native plants where I lived. That is still a passion and led to an obsession with *Salvia*. After a few years I admitted that the genus of *Salvia* just didn't quite fill some need so I quit seeking out the less common species.



A visit to a nearby nursery resulted in a different direction. I almost always have a detailed shopping list when I'm on a plant buying mission. My then-husband just picked up what he thought looked cool and left it to me to care for them and find their right place. This day he bought a 2" pot of a plant with the tag *Drimiopsis maculata*. It was a small bulb with delightful spotted leaves that did charm me. I could find very little information on its growing requirements other than it was not hardy in our

climate and needed winter dormancy. I can always find a place for small plants that need little for part of the year. Over the next few years it proved to be very tough and inclined to produce many bulbs.

The original, now much larger, *Drimiopsis maculata*, left. The spots tend to fade as the leaves age or if grown in shade as the plant is here. Note also that each leaf or two represents one bulb.

A few years ago I divided and planted those bulbs up into 6 packs with the intent of selling them at a local plant sale that was canceled. They've stayed in the same six packs and continued to multiply.



A few of the hundreds of offsets from my original *Drimiopsis maculata*. These haven't been watered or had much light for several months.



The same six pack after being under lights about a month and being watered once, two weeks before this photo. Note the spots inside the rolled leaves.

About this time I decided to try my hand, once again, at succulents. While researching succulents, I saw pictures of the little *Drimiopsis* that had continued to charm me. It is considered a succulent and is native to dry areas of South Africa. No wonder it was so forgiving! Even better, there were other species in that genus that were just as interesting and easy to grow, FAR easier than the lithops that I desired. Oddly, they were not as common as lithops in the nursery trade. I suspect that it's because of their tendency to multiply and multiply...

Somewhere along the way, I discovered that there are two genus of similar plants, the other being *Ledebouria*. The few I've acquired all have spotted or striped leaves and little bloom spikes as they come out of dormancy. They are all equally generous in multiplying. One, *L. cooperi*, is even hardy here where I garden in Warren County in NC.



Ledebouria cooperi, grown outside, showing its ¼" pink blooms in mid-April just as the striped lance-like leaves reach 1 to 2". I also grow it in a pot where the leaves get much larger but it doesn't bloom

There's one that you may already be familiar with as the "scilla lilly" (*Scilla socialis*) popular among Victorian gardeners is now known as *Ledebouria socialis*. Even in this unkempt, pot-bound state, *Ledebouria socialis*, still catches my eye.



There is still some confusion on my part as to the distinction between the two species and both are related to hyacinths, as you'd suspect by the bloom form. The Pacific Bulb Society, at one time, had a very informative section on them but I learned two very important lessons from them. Make a label and install it if it's important to you. Their

section is in the process of being redone and, no doubt will be better at some point. For now, I am having trouble remembering the current scientific names but it seems likely that they will change anyway. Visually, the species are easy enough to distinguish.



Both are approx 6" pots. *Ledebouria kirkii*, left, and *Ledebouria paucifolia* are two of my favorites.

These plants are helping me to let go of a few things and just enjoy them. I don't need to know the scientific name. I don't need to have at least one of each. They are very hard to find but generally inexpensive when I do find one I want. I enjoy searching them out on the internet and adding them to my small collection. They are generally quite small plants, too, that enjoy being outside in the summer and are quite happy on a windowsill for their dormancy.

Post script: Another visit to the Pacific Bulb Society website(Pacificbulbsociety.org) led me to find a source in South Africa that offers more “must haves”. There’s also a third related genus now known as Resnova. I do find it hard to resist an inexpensive, forgiving plant with interesting foliage and a few blooms after a long period of neglect.

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