

Hoke County Gardening News

August 2016

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We hope you find this newsletter informative and fun.

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Welcome to Gardening News



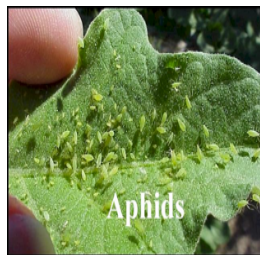
Crepe Myrtle Summer Care

Remove seed pods for a second bloom

Once Crepe Myrtles have finished blooming, they set seed. To encourage a second (or even a third) bloom, use a sharp pruner to remove the seed head. Crepe Myrtles bloom on new growth, pruning encourages new growth and more flowers.



Summer Pests



Look for aphids on your Crepe Myrtle during the summer months. Aphids or plant lice are a common insect. They excrete a sticky substance called honeydew. Honeydew will turn black and moldy looking. Often lady bugs or green lacewings will keep aphid populations from growing to large enough numbers to cause damage. Look for these natural enemies before considering chemical control. Natural controls to consider are horticultural oils, insecticidal soaps or neem oil. There are several brands at your garden center. These will do the least damage to our beneficial insects. You can also apply permethrin or malathion. Repeat applications may be needed. Be sure to read the label completely. Ensure that aphids are one of the insects controlled on the containers label. Read and follow all label directions.

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Organic and Sustainable Gardening



Each issue of the Gardening News will include a segment on organic and sustainable gardening, trends, issues and opportunities for you to explore in your garden or landscape.

Controlling Insects with Less Toxic Insecticides

With proper plant care you can minimize damage from insects. Proper watering, fertilization and care can reduce plant stress. Less stress can equal less insect problems, but sometimes no matter what, insects become a problem.

Insecticidal Soaps

Insecticidal soaps have several advantages for controlling insects. They are relatively non-toxic to humans and other mammals, as well as beneficial insects. Soaps are a contact killer on soft-bodied insects. They damage the protective coat of the insect causing them to dehydrate. Since soaps are a contact killer, be sure to spray the top and bottom of the leaves and all stems. Repeat applications may be needed for best results. Many insecticidal soap products can be found at your local garden center or hardware store. Some need to be diluted before spraying, while others are 'ready to use.' Be sure to read and follow all label directions.

Horticultural Oils

Horticultural oils smother soft bodied insects on contact. The type of oil purchased depends on when you are going to apply it. Summer or superior oil is applied, as the name tells you, in the summer or warmer months. No matter which horticultural oil you use, do not apply if the temperature is above 90 degrees or rain is forecasted within 24 hours. Dormant oils are used during the winter months on leafless, dormant plants. This product will damage foliage if used during the growing season. Be sure to read and follow all label directions.

Botanical Insecticides

Botanical insecticides are made from plant extracts. Natural toxins plants are used as the insecticide. Three of the common botanical insecticides are neem oil, azadirachtin and pyrethrums. There are several others, but these are relatively common in most garden centers and hardware stores. Neem oil will kill small insect pests and mites as do horticultural oils, and also has some fungicidal capacity for minimizing powdery mildew. Neem oil is used to control a large number of insects, including leafminer, whiteflies, thrips, caterpillars, aphids, mealybugs, spider mites, scale crawlers and beetles. Please note that it is more effective on growing immature insects. Azadirachtin is the active ingredient in neem oil. It reduces the insect's ability to feed and reproduce. Pyrethrum is made from a species of daisy. Be sure not to confuse with pyrethroid's, which are synthetically made insecticides. An advantage of pyrethrum is that it can be applied close to harvest. You may find these botanical insecticides combined with others or on their own. Be sure to read and follow all label directions.

Next month- Insect control with essential oils, beneficial insects, microbial insecticides and minerals

August Gardening Chores

*"A garden is a grand teacher.
It teaches patience and careful
watchfulness; industry and
thrift; above all entire trust."*
Gertrude Jekyll 1843-1932

Soil Samples: Now is a good time to take a soil sample. The results will provide information on nutrient needs and your soil pH. If lime is needed, it takes up to 6 months to activate, so by applying in late summer or fall, your soil pH will be corrected for next spring. There is now a peak season fee of \$4 for soil samples sent in from Thanksgiving through March, other times there is no charge for soil samples.

Fall Vegetable Garden - It's time to plant your fall vegetable garden. If you enjoy starting your own seeds, it is time to get started, as it takes 4-6 weeks for your plants to get large enough to plant out. For collard lovers, August is a good time to plant collard slips. (Slips are small plants often sold bare root in bundles.) For complete information visit NC State University site on fall gardens:

<http://content.ces.ncsu.edu/growing-a-fall-vegetable-garden>

Fertilize container plants - Late-summer is a good time to look at your container plants to see if they need a little fertilizer to encourage new growth. Options for fertilization are water soluble, slow release or commercial fertilizer. For the homeowner water soluble and slow release fertilizer containers are a good option. Slow release fertilizer can be applied by dibbling or top-dressing. Dibbling is simply digging a small hole and inserting the correct amount of the slow release fertilizer. Advantages are less fertilizer can be lost due to spillage and application is near root zone. Top dressing or applying fertilizer to the soil surface, can be used if container plants are large and roots have filled the pot. Liquid fertilizer can be applied when you water. It is easy to use too much liquid fertilizer, so be sure to measure accurately according to label directions. If you get fertilizer on your plant leaves, wash them off so there is no burn of the leaves. Both water soluble and slow release are available in many formulations specific to your plant material.

Water, water, water- When watering turf, shrubs or your vegetable garden, be sure to apply 1" of water per week. Apply at one time, not several applications. Frequent watering encourages shallow roots; putting your plants under stress, thus allowing for diseases and insects to become more prevalent. To measure how much water is being applied, use a straight sided container and place in the area being watered. It is best to put several in your irrigated area. Once you determine how long to run your watering system, you are set and ready to water, as needed.

NCSU Extension Gardener Newsletter

So, it's hard to give away all your secrets, but if you are interested, NC State has a quarterly newsletter for gardeners. Visit <https://extensiongardener.ncsu.edu/>. There you will find gardening news and a link to sign up for their newsletter. The newsletter is available for the three (3) regions of the state; mountains, piedmont and coastal plain. You can read any or all of the newsletters!

Plant of the Month: *Asclepias tuberosa*, Butterfly Weed



Butterfly weed or milk weed is a nectar source for the Monarch Butterfly. The plant grows in zones 4 to 9. We are in zone 7 & 8 depending on which part of the county you live in. It prefers well drained soil and full sun. The variety 'Hello Yellow' was featured on Bryce Lane's Plant of the Week. Butterfly weed is a great plant that not only supports the Monarch Butterfly, it attracts bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.

Name this weed.....



This plant has yellow spaghetti like vines growing on top and around a variety of plant material. This plant grows from seed, with no leaves but does have flowers. It lacks green from chlorophyll as it is parasitic, meaning it takes nutrient from its host plant.

Common or swamp dodder (*Cuscuta gronovii* Willd.) or Love Vine is a native plant to the US is the most prevalent and abundant species of dodder in North America. Its range extends from Maine and Nova Scotia to Florida and westward through Canada and the Midwest. It is more abundant in the central and northeast. Control can be difficult. If you find it in herbaceous landscape and garden plants, take action. If found on bedding or vegetable plants remove the plant and dodder. Also, rotate to a non-host species for several years, as the seed will remain in the soil for several years. If dodder re-appears, remove the dodder immediately.

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