

May 2017

#### Inside This Issue

Hoke County Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) .....	1
Organic and Sustainable Gardening .....	2
May Gardening Chores .....	3
Plant of the Month .....	3
Name this Insect .....	5
Bird of the Month .....	5
Name this Weed .....	6
ABC...XYZ Gardening Vernacular .....	6
Community Calendar .....	7

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# Gardening News

## Hoke and Scotland County

### Welcome to Gardening News



### Hoke County Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

The weather has finally decided to cooperate and it looks as if we will have a great spring growing season. Our CSA farmers are telling me that the potatoes, onions, green beans, broccoli, cabbage, kale and other spring vegetables are looking very good. You will receive a box of fresh produce from local growers each week and may also receive locally grown beef or chicken if you choose that option.

Once again, we will offer grass-fed beef from Moore Brothers Beef in Prospect, N.C. You will receive 5 cuts of beef each session.

This year we are also offering fresh, locally raised poultry from John Council Farms. The whole hens will be between 3-4 pounds. A separate sign-up sheet will be attached and you can order weekly as desired. Poultry will be \$3.60 per pound.

Our three five week sessions for this year will be:

May 24 - June 21

June 28 - August 2

No pick - up July 5

October 18 - November 15

Each 5-week session will be:

Vegetables: \$75.00

Beef: \$70.00

Poultry: \$3.60 per pound

**NC** State University  
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**COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION**

Empowering People • Providing Solutions

Pick-up will be on Wednesdays from 12 noon - 5 p.m. at Home Food Market on Main Street in Raeford.

You may sign up at Home Food Market or by emailing [hokecountyfarmersmarket@gmail.com](mailto:hokecountyfarmersmarket@gmail.com)

We accept cash, checks, credit cards, debit cards and EBT/SNAP cards.

For more information contact Wanda Cohen at [910-489-4842](tel:910-489-4842) or Carl Daniels at [785-577-2900](tel:785-577-2900). You also may contact the Hoke County Extension office at [910-875-3461](tel:910-875-3461).

## Organic and Sustainable Gardening

### Pollinator Plants for Monarch Butterflies



Who doesn't love to see a pretty butterfly flitting from one plant to another. Much like other pollinators, butterflies are having a difficult time in our modern world. In the 1990's there were nearly 700 million monarchs making the journey from Mexico to California. Today, scientists estimate that only 20% of the population remains. As a homeowner or landowner, you can take small steps to help provide a habitat that is inviting and provides food for Monarchs and other butterflies.

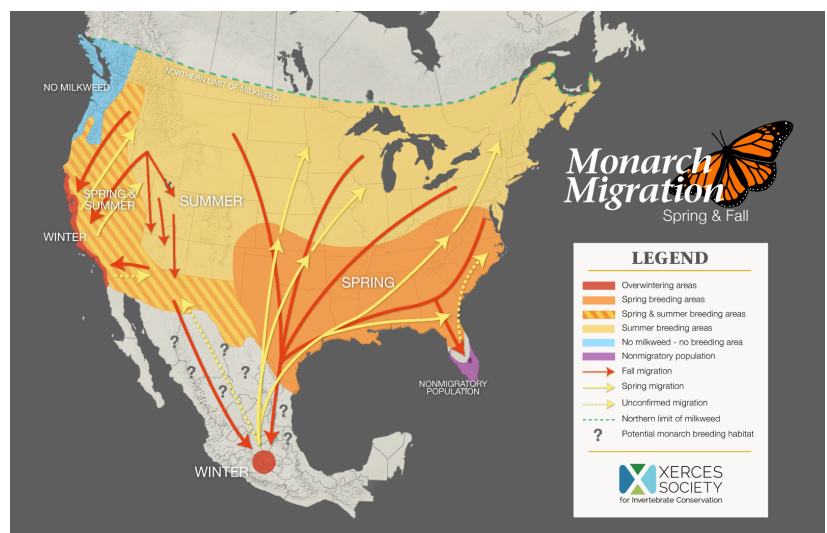
Monarchs require suitable habitat that provides host plants for breeding and flowering plants to provide nectar for adults. Due to urban development and other factors, the native habitat for not only Monarchs but other butterflies have been substantially reduced. In the case of monarchs, a major cause of butterfly population decline seems to be the loss of milkweed plants, which is their breeding habitat.

The simplest step you can take is to plant native plants for butterflies and other pollinators. Native plants are considered those that occurred in North America prior to European settlement. A plant that is native will grow better because it is adapted to your environment. One of the most important pollinator plants for Monarchs in particular is milkweed. Look for a variety or varieties that are native to your location.

Diversity is important as different butterflies require different plants. An interesting example is Zebra Swallowtail's caterpillars feed almost exclusively on pawpaw plants. By planting a variety of plants that bloom at different times you are creating a habitat that provides everything the butterfly needs to complete its life cycle.

NC State University publication called, "Butterflies in Your Backyard" has information on nectar and pollinator plants, planning your pollinator plantings and general butterfly information. It is available in print at any Cooperative Extension office. You can also download a copy that the following link: <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/butterflies-in-your-backyard>

Sources: [www.xerces.org](http://www.xerces.org) and NCSU  
Butterflies in Your Backyard



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## May Gardening Chores

Leaf gall can be seen on azaleas and camellias at this time of year. Leaf galls look like very thick and distorted leaves. Hand-pick and remove the infected leaves from the plants. Be sure to dispose of leaves with gall fungus away from your yard.

Plant annuals and summer bulbs such as caladiums, cannas, dahlias and gladiolus.

Inspect vegetables and fruits for the following insect problems: aphids, caterpillars, lace bugs, leaf miners, mites, scales, stem borers, weevils and whiteflies. Call your local Cooperative Extension agent for best control method.

Scout for bagworms on likely plants, such as junipers and Leyland cypress. Spray the small gray worms before they build their bags, this makes control much easier in the long run.

If you have only a few transplants, wrap an aluminum foil collar around tender plants to prevent cutworms from wrapping around stems and cutting the plant off at ground level.

Remember to change direction when mowing your lawn to prevent wear patterns and other problems.

Feed houseplants that are growing and/or blooming. Consider dividing or re-potting pot bound plants.

## Plant of the Month:

### Peony- Part One- Growing and Selecting Your Peony

Peony is a very beautiful long-lived plant. Select carefully and plant in a permanent location in September. Much like planting a tree, peonies become a permanent fixture in your garden. This allows the root system to develop and be ready for spring growth. Don't expect flowers until the third year.

If you already have peonies in your garden, you know they are easy to grow and require minimal care. Do not fertilize until plants have been in the ground for about 5 years. Check your soil pH with a soil test and add lime as needed. Mulch around the plants to help keep the roots cool in our hot summers. Compost and bone meal are good supplements for your peony plants.

As peony's grow in the spring, be sure to provide some type of support for the foliage and leaves, this will keep them from falling to the ground. As the flowers begin to fade, remove the spent flowers and place in the compost bin. This will minimize disease problems.

If you are thinking about adding peonies to your garden, understanding their growth habit and flower type are good ways to begin selecting varieties for your landscape. There are three (3) basic types of peonies:

*Peonia lactiflora* Herbaceous peonies grow to be about 1 ½ to 2 feet tall and wide. They typically bloom in late April with a variety of colors in the white, pink and red ranges. Many are double flowers. Flowers can be used as a cut flower or simply enjoyed in the garden.





### Selected Cultivars

- 'Cherokee Chief' (red bracts)
- 'Cherokee Princess' (white)
- 'Cloud 9' (white)
- 'Pendula' (white, weeping form)
- 'Plena' (double white form)
- 'Red Cloud' (pink bracts)
- 'White Cloud' (white)



### *Paeonia suffruticosa*

Tree peonies, or called Mudan in China, are grafted onto herbaceous root stock. As with all peonies these are long-lived deciduous woody shrubs that will grow in USDA zones 4-9. Mature plants can have over 50 flowers which are 8-10 inches across and bloom over a two-week period.

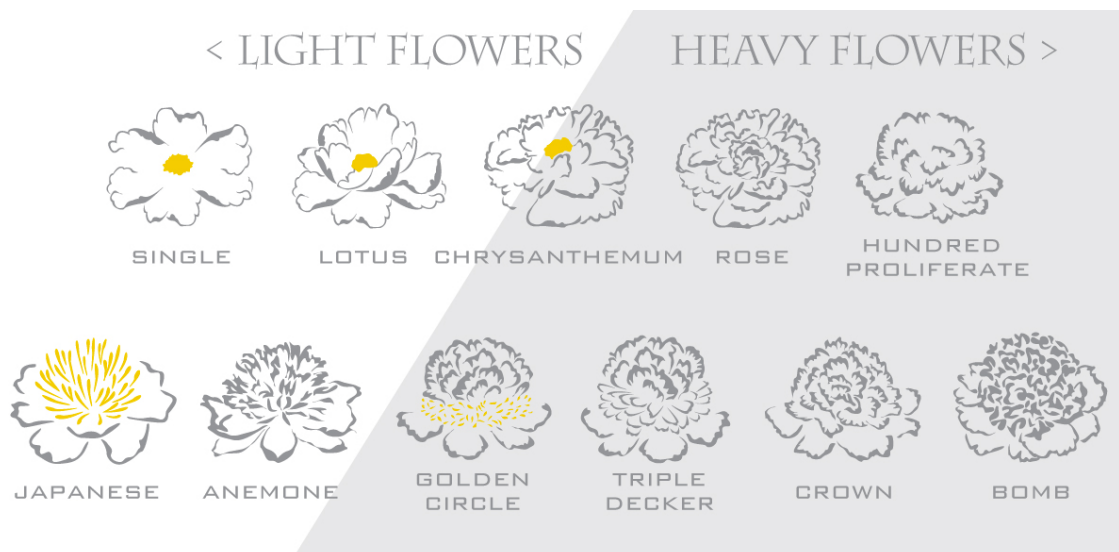


### Intersectional 'Itoh' Peonies

Itoh peonies are named for the Japanese nurseryman Toichi Itoh who was the first to succeed in hybridizing tree peonies with herbaceous peonies in the 1960s.

The leaves and flower forms resemble those of tree peonies, while the growth habit is similar to that of herbaceous peonies. Flowers are held upright on top of the bush. This makes them different in that they don't require any kind of support. In the fall, after the frost, intersectional peonies are cut back to ground level, and the plants come back larger each spring.

To make things really interesting, there are quite a few types of flowers. From single to bomb, the choices are extensive. Spend some time investigating peonies. Before you know it, late summer will be here and time to buy peonies will be upon us.



PART TWO: Planting your peonies from the ground up, coming in August.

Name this insect.....

## Wheel Bug- A Beneficial Insect: Look but don't Touch!



In the spring, wheel bugs nymphs can be seen on tree trunks and shrubs, crawling around in groups. You can often find eggs where they are congregating. As the eggs hatch, the nymphs, which are bright red and black begin crawling and feeding. As the nymph grows to the adult, a 'wheel' forms behind the head, giving it a distinctive look.

Wheel Bugs are a member of the Assassin Bug family, meaning they are predators of other insects. The adults are large bugs with adults reaching 1- 1.5 inches. Wheel bug adults and immature bugs are general predators that feed on a diversity of insects such as caterpillars, plant hoppers, sawfly larvae, aphids, and beetles.

Because wheel bugs are predators, they can also sting humans. It is reported that the bite is worse than a bee sting. Protect this beneficial insect, but look and don't touch!



## Blue Jay

Blue Jays are one of the most colorful birds seen in home yards. This noisy bird makes a Jay! Jay! call. It also can make a variety of musical sounds, even do an imitation of a Red Shouldered Hawk scream.

Blue Jays population initially declined as development occurred. But because they are very adaptive and will eat most anything, their populations have increased and now are at a healthy population.



Blue Jays are omnivorous meaning they eat plants and insects. They do eat mostly vegetable matter, such as acorns, seeds, grains, berries, and small fruits, to name a few. Crickets, caterpillars and a variety of other animal life are eaten also.

According to [allaboutbirds.org](http://allaboutbirds.org) blue jays are known for their intelligence and complex social systems with tight family bonds. Their fondness for acorns is credited with helping spread oak trees after the last glacial period.



Tray or hopper feeders on a post are the preferred feeder style of for this bird. Suet, peanuts and sunflower seeds are good options to support their love of nuts. They also like to have a bird bath available to take a drink of water.

For more information on Blue Jays and other birds, visit <http://www.allaboutbirds.org> or <http://www.audubon.org/bird-guide>



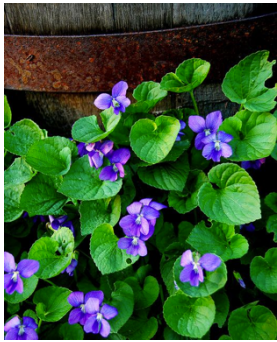
## Name this weed.....

### Violets – Friend or Foe (*Viola spp.*)

Violets, *Viola* spp., are often found in shady areas of thin turf where the soil is moist and poorly drained. They spread by seed and rhizomes, so can be difficult to control. Some people find them troublesome, but others welcome their pretty bluish-lavender flowers in spring.



#### Integrated Pest Management Strategies



1. **Live with the violets.** A few violets can be attractive. All you may need to do is improve the health of the lawn so the lawn can better compete.
2. **Hand pull or dig violets.** Small areas or scattered plants can be hand pulled or dug. Be sure to get all the roots system when digging. A good follow-up strategy is to then improve the health of the turf so new plants will be choked out.
3. **Spot treat.** If you have a few scattered plants or a few confined areas, spot treat with an herbicide such as glyphosate (Roundup). **THIS CHEMICAL WILL ALSO KILL GRASS** so direct the chemical only on the individual weeds or use to kill areas where the soil will be improved and grass replanted. Spot treating can also be done with the herbicide, triclopyr (do not apply to centipede, Bermuda or St. Augustine) or atrazine (can apply on centipede and St. Augustine). Atrazine may only damage the violets. A 3-Way herbicide may also offer control. Read the label and see exactly what is controlled and if it is for your type of grass. After killing the violets, it is necessary to improve the health of the lawn or the problem will just reoccur. Always read and follow label directions.
4. **Improve lawn maintenance.** Once the immediate problem is under control using one of the methods above, the only long-term solution is to improve the vigor of the grass so it will choke out new plants before they become established. This is true for any weeds in your turf. Steps may include reducing the amount of shade, improving soil drainage, watering turf during dry spells, and selecting grasses well adapted to local conditions. Mow high to help shade out weeds. Take a soil sample and follow the fertilization recommendations and schedule for your type of turf. It is especially important not to scalp shaded areas by mowing too low.

Sources: NCSU Turf Files, NC Ag Chem Manual, Missouri Botanical Garden and UGA Pest Management Handbook.

## ABC....XYZ Gardening Vernacular

### I is for Inflorescence

Inflorescence is the arrangement of flowers on the flowering stem of a plant. A key term used is pedicel or stem that attaches a single flower to the inflorescence.



Head inflorescence form is a short dense spike in which the flowers are borne directly on a broad, flat peduncle, giving the inflorescence the appearance of a single flower, as in the dandelion.



Raceme - Pedicels attach the flowers to the stem, such as in foxglove.

Panicles are like compound or branched racemes. An example is the oat plant. Oatmeal is made from oats.



In a spike, raceme and panicle, flowers mature from the base upwards.



Corymb is a type of inflorescence in which the pedicels are different lengths. Pedicels at the base are longer than those near the top, giving the inflorescence a flat to rounded top. Yarrow and hawthorn are examples of corymb.

Umbels are flat topped or convex inflorescence with the pedicels arising from a common point, like an umbrella. Geraniums, onion and milkweed flowers have umbel inflorescence.



Cyme is a flat or round topped inflorescence where the terminal (end) flowers bloom first (in contrast to a spike, raceme and panicle.) Helicoid cyme is coiled like a scorpion tail and typical of plants in the *Boraginaceae* family. Dogwood, baby's breath and tomatoes have cyme inflorescence.



## Community Gardening Calendar

**May 10 – 10 a.m. to 12 noon, Growing A Healthy Beautiful Centipede Lawn** - Class will focus on growing centipede lawns including insect and disease problems. Class will be held at the Hoke Cooperative Extension Center, 116 W. Prospect Avenue, Raeford, N.C. Pre-register by calling 910-875-3461. Space is limited. Instructor Matt Martin, Extension Associate for Turfgrass, N.C. State University.

**May 25 – 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., Propagation: Growing the Plants You Love - and Want to Love"**

Join us as we learn more about growing from seed and cuttings. You will also learn about plants that will grow and bloom over the winter. Instructor Jackie Hough of Raft Creek Farms, will lead the class with both instruction and hands on propagation. Class will be held at the Hoke Cooperative Extension Center, 116 W. Prospect Avenue, Raeford, N.C. Pre-register before May 23 by calling 910-875-3461 b. Space is limited.

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**June 1 – 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., Tomato's Diseases and Pest Problems** – Understand and identify common diseases and pests of tomatoes. Scotland County Cooperative Extension Center. Pre-register by calling 910-277-2422.

**July 12 – 6 p.m., "Air-Layering" Taking the mystery out of propagating above ground** - Gardeners will learn how to propagate several plants using air-layering. Location: Local Farm in Red Springs, N.C. Pre-register by calling Hoke County Cooperative Extension at 910-875-3461.

If your organization has gardening events we would be glad to list them here.

## **QUOTE:**

*“The world’s favorite season is the spring.  
All things seem possible in May.”  
- Edwin Way Teale*

*We hope you find this newsletter informative and fun. Please share with a friend!*

*Send questions, comments or suggestions for articles to [shannon\\_newton@ncsu.edu](mailto:shannon_newton@ncsu.edu)*

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