

# "What's Growing On..."

Volume 23 Number 1 Spring 2020 Edition Published Quarterly

## Inside this issue:

Pam's Garden Gab: Pam's Garden Shed	1
Creatures and Critters	2
Flower Power	2-4
Houseplants	5
How Does Your Garden Grow?	5-6
Practical Pruning	7
Mark your calendar	8
Diagnostics	8-10
Turf Talk	10
Riparian Buffer	10
Eco Fair 2020	11
Master Gardener Course Schedule 2020	12
Garden Tips for March	13
Garden Tips for April	14
Garden Tips for May	15
Radio Spots & Interview	16



## RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION ON THE RADIO

For agriculture news and horticultural tips, listen to me, Pam Burton, on the RCE Agricultural Program on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday on SNJ Today 99.9 FM announcing local workshops, seminars, and horticultural tips.

### Pam's Garden Shed

Besides the obvious tools, carts, and containers, what sorts of stuff do you put in your garden shed? I have plenty of vintage watering cans that I am ever so careful NOT to use, as I don't know what they were once used for. But they make me smile. I have many galvanized buckets that I keep garden markers in, for quick use. Scrubbing brushes are a must and I keep mine stored in clear glass containers so I can easily spot them when I need them to clean clay flowerpots. I tend to collect old doors that make it into my shed before they are integrated into my homescaping. Wire baskets, wooden trugs, spools of twine, vintage tools that tell their own stories and a collection of garden cloches have happy spaces in my shed.

I usually have music playing when I am in the garden, but on my morning walks with Tessa, my golden retriever, I prefer the music of nature and spend moments just listening to the sounds of the birds, crickets, frogs, trees, cicadas, and sea oats. If you google "music in the garden" you are certain to find numerous events where concerts are offered in the open-air venue. How about adding some music to your gardens? Wind chimes are a wonderful addition and can be made from a variety of materials, including metal pipes, wood, and sea glass. There are many how-to instructions online, from the fairly simple to quite involved, and you will need to make decisions about what musical notes you want to hear as the wind blows your way. It's yet another sense that can be celebrated in the home garden. <https://pages.mtu.edu/~suits/windchime.html>

And so it goes,

*Pam*



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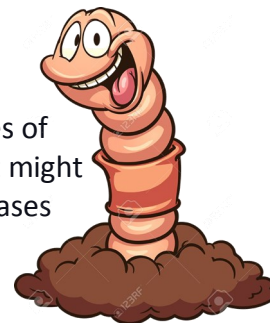
## Creatures and Critters

### Soil volcanoes

A client came in with the description of hundreds of small holes in his lawn with small volcanoes of soil next to them. He was not pleased with the aesthetics of the mounds and wondered what it might be. One possibility is that the mounds are the castings of earthworms and there are reported cases where earthworms can accumulate in large numbers and the castings become problematic. However, generally speaking, they are considered very beneficial to the soil for aeration, thatch control, water flow and the addition of organic matter.

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/earthworm-in-turf>

<https://pitt.ces.ncsu.edu/2015/11/what-causes-tiny-mounds-of-soil-in-my-lawn-2/>



### Twospotted Spider Mites

Rutgers Fact Sheet 235, *Twospotted Spider Mites*, describes the injury to the leaves of many vegetable crops from twospotted spider mites, as a characteristic stippling of leaves, since the mites feed on the plants one cell at a time. The leaves soon turn brown and drop from the plant. Check your beans, carrots, cucurbits, and potatoes and if you see any evidence of the insects you can hose off the plants with water every few days to remove the mites.

## Flower Power

### A Matter of Perspective



By now, you've been seeing dandelions, *Taxaracum officinale*, and you are either plotting how to be rid of them or rejoicing at this sign of spring which is an early pollen source for pollinators. Beekeepers love them. The name dandelion means *lion's tooth*, and probably refers to the jagged leaves, which are edible and best when picked young and tender. It is still great fun for kids to make a wish as they blow on the seedhead, making certain that the up to 20,000 viable seeds per plant are well dispersed!

The Indian Strawberry, *Duchesnea indica*, is listed on Rutgers Weed Gallery web page and it notes that it is a perennial vine with leaves similar to a strawberry. The flowers are yellow with red fruit. It spreads rapidly in thin turf by means of both rhizomes and stolons. The fruit resembles a strawberry but is tasteless and dry. The indian strawberry likes moist areas and is tolerant of shade and mowing. It is a low grower and hand pulling is a management tool most effective at the beginning of the infestation and when the soil is damp. However, I know some gardeners who like to use it as a groundcover and enjoy the sight of the red berries.

<https://extension.wvu.edu/lawn-gardening-pests/weeds/dandelions>

<https://wimastergardener.org/article/dandelion-taraxacum-officinale/>

<https://njaes.rutgers.edu/weeds/weed.php?indianstrawberry>

<https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/indian-mock-strawberry>

### Spring Flowering Bulbs

Rutgers Fact Sheet 1220, *Spring Flowering Bulbs*, provides recommendations for the care and maintenance requirements of post-bloom bulbs. Since seeds take stored food away from the bulbs, remove the spent flowers from the spring-flowering bulbs before they turn to seed. Leave the large green leaves in place to die back on their own. The foliage will help manufacture nutrients to be stored in the bulb for next year.

If you don't like the look of the dying foliage, try interplanting some cold-tolerant annuals like pansies.



If you are inclined to recycle the bulbous plants that you received for Easter, keep them in the container, and cut off the flower stalks after flowering. Continue to water the plant until the leaves turn yellow. At this time, cut back the leaves and withhold the water. Put the entire plant into a cool dark place until fall, when it's time to plant them in Mid-September through October. Keep in mind, these plants may not produce a flower the first season after planting.

Hopefully, you have been able to spot some signs of spring, like the early blooming common snowdrop, *Galanthus nivalis*. Common snowdrops are a member of the amaryllis family and grow only about 3-6" tall, with a small drooping bell-shaped flower. They like a site that is part shade to full sun and good drainage. Plant the bulbs in the fall about 2-3" deep. They need cold stratification of at least 20 degrees Fahrenheit in order to bloom so you won't be seeing these harbingers of spring down South!

<https://extension.psu.edu/snowdrops>

<http://extension.illinois.edu/bulbs/qa.cfm>

### Perennials, please!

There is an early yellow bloomer in the perennial garden called Golden Groundsel, *Packera aureus*. This perennial can be used in moist shady places as a groundcover, reaching about 1-2 feet in height, including the flower, although the foliage stays at about 6 inches. But plant with care, as it spreads by rhizomes and will outcompete timid species. Spring pollinators enjoy the cheerful yellow flowers that bear a resemblance to small sunflowers.

The common name of *Salvia lyrata* is Lyreleaf so named because the perennial wildflower has leaves that are shaped like the musical instrument the lyre. The leaves originate only at the base of the plant but the plant itself can reach 1 to 2 feet tall. The lavender flowers are in whorls on the upper part of a hairy stem and are attractive to hummingbirds, butterflies, and pollinators. It likes moist soil and can tolerate full sun to full shade.

While most of us are aware of the aroma of lavender it might come as a surprise that Rutgers Bulletin E271, *Landscape Plants Rated by Deer Resistance*, lists lavender as a perennial which is rarely damaged by deer. Lavender likes full sun, with limey soil and can withstand drought. It is a sub-shrub with somewhat woody branches reaching 1 ½ - 3 feet in height.

The lavender flowers are on long-stemmed slender spikes, and when dried will retain their lovely lavender color and clean fresh scent.

<https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/lavender>

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/all/salvia-lyrata/>

<https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/golden-groundsel-or-golden-ragwort>

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/all/senecio-aureus/>

### Label it

Have you ever planted a garden without adding labels because you were certain you would remember what you planted where? Don't feel bad, neither have the rest of us! The markers for your home gardens can be as simple as using old cut up blinds or as inventive as creating your own by recycling kitchen utensils. Word of caution, if you chose to write the plant name on a plant tag, permanent may only mean permanent inside and not outdoors. Surprisingly a soft lead pencil may last longer out in the elements!

<http://extension.msstate.edu/news/southern-gardening/2013/homemade-plant-tags-give-gardens-personality>

<https://marylandgrows.umd.edu/2018/05/04/the-importance-of-being-labeled/>

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/linn/news/ground-recycle-and-reuse-your-garden-chores>



## Staking peonies

The common garden peony, *Paeonia lactiflora*, is emerging from the soil with new growth and now is the time to set up the supports for these favorites, so when they flower the blooms don't bend over to the ground, especially after a rainfall. While you might be tempted to use a tomato cage, that could pierce the crown and cause damage. Supports can be done with twine and stakes or by using chicken wire with 2-inch holes placed horizontally over the plants and held in place with stakes. You will be so glad you took the time to stake them once they start to bloom!

<https://extension.psu.edu/the-beloved-peony>

<https://pss.uvm.edu/ppp/articles/may13tips.html>

<https://www.coffey.k-state.edu/lawn-garden/gardening/Peonies.pdf>



## Cutting garden

*Pentas lanceolate*, also known as the Egyptian starflower is an annual that loves full sun in well-drained soil and will provide color all summer long. The flower clusters are available in shades of pink, red, violet and white and they work best when planted in drifts or groupings in the garden. Expect to see hummingbirds and butterflies on these 1—2 foot tall plants. "Lancelote" is in the scientific name referring to the dark green lance-shaped leaves.

Sunflowers are available in many forms, including giant, semi-dwarf, dwarf and pollenless. There is some debate about the pollenless sunflowers, which are, as their name implies, without pollen. Why would anyone want to grow them, you might ask? Primarily for the purpose of cut flowers, since the pollen of sunflowers stains anything it comes in contact with. Be aware of this when you are looking through your seed catalogs, and try mixing it up with your choices.

Sweet William, *Dianthus barbatus*, is an often overlooked biennial that comes in a variety of colors and makes an excellent cut flower. As an added bonus, it has a pleasant aroma. As a biennial, they will have foliage the first year and bloom the second, so that makes them a bit hard to find in garden centers. But try an experiment and scatter some seeds in mid-summer, and you may luck out with some blooms next spring!

Indian wood oats, also known as river oats, *Chasmanthium latifolium*, is a native ornamental grass and one of my favs because of its versatility in tolerating drought, moisture, salt, and shade. It does prefer a site that has moist to well-drained soil in partial sun to partial shade. Rutgers Bulletin 271, *Landscape Plants Rated by Deer Resistance*, rates this grass as a plant that is rarely damaged by deer, and it is a host plant to the northern pearly eye butterfly.

The beautiful seed heads resemble oats and are green in the spring turning to a lovely bronze color in the fall, and I often use them in floral arrangements. The plant will reach heights of 3-5 feet in height and spreads by seedheads and rhizomes.

<https://extension.umd.edu/learn/pentas-egyptian-star-flower>

<https://hortnews.extension.iastate.edu/1996/4-26-1996/sunny.html>

<https://hortnews.extension.iastate.edu/2018/07/sunflowers-%E2%80%93-symbols-summer>

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/all/dianthus-barbatus/>

<http://extension.umd.edu/sites/extension.umd.edu/files/docs/Oct.-Dec2018.pdf>

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/all/chasmanthium-latifolium/>

[https://webarchive.library.unt.edu/eot2008/20090117192456/http://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/pg\\_chla5.pdf](https://webarchive.library.unt.edu/eot2008/20090117192456/http://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/pg_chla5.pdf)

## Houseplants

Jade plants, *Crassula ovata*, make excellent houseplants and require little care, given the right conditions. They prefer moderate light and moisture and like well-drained soil. They are fairly easy to propagate, and if a leaf falls off, leave it in an open area for a callus to form and then pot it up in a small container. Put a clear plastic bag over it to retain moisture and you should see root growth in a few weeks. In some cultures Jades are considered symbols of good luck, prosperity, and friendship, so share a new plant with a friend.

<http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu/FactSheets/jade-plants.php>

<https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/jade-plant/>

If you are looking to make an unusual design statement in your home, consider a staghorn fern, *Platycerium bifurcatum*. The staghorn ferns produce both basal and foliar fronds and it is the dramatic foliar fronds that provide the inspiration for the common name since the bold leaves resemble the antlers of a stag. Staghorn ferns are epiphytes and are often sold mounted on a wooden support or bark slab.

The fern is secured with fishing line or thin wire and sphagnum moss is provided for the roots from the basal fronds.

They like warm temperatures with good air circulation and high humidity, so a bathroom may be an ideal location for this living art.

<https://wimastergardener.org/article/staghorn-fern-platycerium-bifurcatum/>

<https://web.extension.illinois.edu/state/newsdetail.cfm?NewsID=34531>

## How Does Your Garden Grow?



### **Perennials**

Rutgers Fact Sheet 1233, *Growing Garlic in the Home Garden*, states that it may be beneficial to do an application of foliar feeding by spraying the leaves with a combination of 1-2% fish solution and 0.5% kelp every two weeks from mid-march through mid-may. It works best if the feeding is applied a day or two after irrigation or rainfall. Keep a watch on the weeds too, and start hand hoeing when the weeds are no more than an inch tall.

Horseradish is an herbaceous perennial, but many times is grown as an annual since it is cultivated for its root. If you decide to grow it as a perennial consider planting it with another long-lived perennials like rhubarb. Horseradish likes full sun with well-drained soil, and a layer of mulch will help with weed suppression. Horseradish is actually harvested in the fall after the tops have been frozen back. If you are intending it to be an annual, be sure to dig up all of the roots, because they will grow back next year.

Rhubarb is an easy to care for cool-season crop that requires some space commitment since it is also a large perennial plant. Choose a site in full sun that has well-drained soil and remove the flower stalks to increase yield and production. Rhubarb likes constant moisture, so mulch in the plant to help suppress weeds and retain moisture. Consider another long-lived perennial plant as a companion plant, such as horseradish.

White asparagus is not a special cultivar, but it is a special method of growing asparagus in the absence of light. Over the years a variety of methods have been used to accomplish this, including mounding soil over the beds, using black breathable fabric supported by hoops, and soil ridging. The white asparagus does have a different taste and texture and commands a higher price in the marketplace.

<https://plantvillage.psu.edu/topics/horseradish/infos>

<http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/homegardening/scenec4d4.html>

[http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs\\_ext\\_vt\\_edu/438/438-102/438-102\\_pdf.pdf](http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs_ext_vt_edu/438/438-102/438-102_pdf.pdf)



## Some like it hot!

There are unrefined methods of measuring the heat in a chile pepper by taking a bite out of it, as well as more scientific methods of measuring the heat including the scoville organoleptic test. This test still involves taste testing by humans, so it is still considered subjective. The most accurate method is using a high-performance liquid chromatography where the peppers are dried, ground and the chemicals responsible for the heat are extracted and analyzed, giving an objective heat analysis.

[https://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/\\_h/H237/](https://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_h/H237/)

## When life gives you lemons

A client overwintered his lemongrass and now it looks dead. Is there still hope? Maybe. Research shows that lemongrass in a container can be moved inside after the last frost and overwintered. Lemongrass has a bulbous shoot base and when planting in the spring after overwintering you can divide the bulb by cutting through the rhizome with a knife, making sure that each plant has its own rootstock. It likes warm, sunny and humid conditions with lots of nitrogen during the growing season.

<https://plantvillage.psu.edu/topics/lemon-grass/infos>  
[https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1284&context=extension\\_curall](https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1284&context=extension_curall)

## To Till or No till

No-till farming has been a practice "on the farm" for many years, while home gardeners have generally continued to till the ground, every year. However, there has been some re-thinking of that policy, and now no-till is becoming a popular practice for home gardening as well. Of course, this has met with some strong passionate opinions for both sides of the argument. I'd love to hear your comments on this topic and what success you have had with either method.

[http://sonomamg.ucanr.edu/Food\\_Gardening/Additional\\_KG\\_Articles/No-Till\\_Food\\_Gardening/](http://sonomamg.ucanr.edu/Food_Gardening/Additional_KG_Articles/No-Till_Food_Gardening/)  
<https://smallfarms.cornell.edu/2016/01/11/no-till-permanent-beds/>

## Malabar Spinach

Malabar spinach, *Basella alba*, isn't even in the spinach family but it is a warm-season edible vine that is quite ornamental as well. The leaves are oval to heart-shaped and are dark green. They are used in salads and have a mild slightly peppery flavor with a hint of citrus and other parts of the world enjoy using Malabar spinach in their cuisine. This annual likes hot weather and needs to be trellised.

<http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/homegardening/scene9529.html>  
<https://wimastergardener.org/article/malabar-spinach-basella-alba/>



## **Practical Pruning**

### **Pruning spring flowering shrubs**

A client asked, "When do I prune my mock orange, *Philadelphius sp.*?" Rutgers Fact Sheet FS 1221, *Pruning Flowering Shrubs*, recommends that spring-flowering shrubs that bloom before the end of June such as mock orange be pruned immediately after flowering. Spring bloomers bloom on one-year-old wood that grew last summer. Some other examples include dogwood, forsythia, witch hazels, rhododendrons, and some virburnums. Fact Sheet 1221 describes several different methods of pruning, based on your given situation. Keep in mind the object of pruning is to open up the top of the plant to permit light and air to reach the interior to aid in flower bud formation and reduce disease incidents. A good rule of thumb is the "one-third rule": remove about one-third of the oldest wood at the ground level; cut back one-third of the younger, newer canes at about one-third of their height per season. The fact sheet recommends NOT to use wound dressing or paint on any of the pruned cuts.

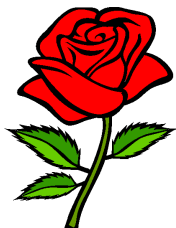
### **Blueberries**

Rutgers Fact Sheet 750, *Establishing Blueberries in the Home Garden Pruning*, provides specific recommendations on pruning blueberry plants during the first 3 to 4 years with a different set of recommendations for older plants that are 5 to 6 years old. The goal is to make sure that there aren't any canes on the plant that are older than 6 years old, no matter how old the plant gets. Pruning of blueberries is done toward the end of the dormant period, which is sometime in March.

<https://extension.psu.edu/pruning-blueberries-in-home-fruit-plantings>

<https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/pruning-blueberries>

### **Roses**



Rutgers Fact Sheet 944, *Roses and Their Care* and 1221, *Pruning Flowering Shrubs*, recommend pruning those roses that bloom on new wood in early spring when the buds begin to swell.

This includes hybrid tea roses, grandiflora, floribunda, some ramblers, and climbers, depending on variety/cultivars.

Start by removing the dead, weak, diseased, and crossing canes, and then reduce the size of the remaining canes by 25 to 50%, making the final pruning cuts at a 45 to 60-degree angle, and about 1/4 inch above an outward-facing bud.

### **Pinching back**

Pinching back is the terminology used for one type of pruning. Specifically, the very tip of the vegetative shoot, also called the terminal bud, is removed along with the first set of leaves. This generally can be done with your fingernails and results in more lateral stem growth. Some of the flowers that benefit from pinching back include marigolds, phlox, scarlet sage, bellflower, bee balm, and coneflowers.

<https://extension.psu.edu/pruning-herbaceous-plants>

## Mark Your Calendar

Happy Earth Day on April 22, 2020. In 1969, a spark from a nearby train ignited the oily, polluted Cuyahoga River in Ohio. That event combined with other environmental disasters of the time inspired governor Gaylord Nelson to found the first earth day in 1970. Environmental concerns exist to this day and so do the Earth Day celebrations, including an emphasis on sustainability, solar energy, and plastics in our waterways.

April 24th is National Arbor Day. Plant a tree for cleaner air supply, reduction of noise pollution, improved water quality, windbreaks, stabilization of soil, enjoyable shade benefits and just because they look nice. One tree can produce 260 pounds of oxygen per year, so take a deep breath and enjoy it. Rutgers Fact Sheet 1140, *Incorporating Native Plants in Your Residential Landscape*, offers a listing of native trees and their cultural and site requirements.

## Diagnostics

A client brought in a specimen of Japanese Laurel, *Aucuba japonica*, which was showing signs of stress. When asked about the site conditions, the client indicated that the plant was in full sun and had no winter protection. It is a plant that is prone to leaf scorch from harsh winters and in this zone they are at the northern most tolerance of cold temperatures. Aucuba also prefers partial shade instead of the full sun it is getting, so that adds an additional stress to the plant.

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/all/aucuba-japonica/>

<https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/plants/trees-shrubs/tree-and-shrub-problems/cultural-and-environmental/winter-damage>

A client brought in her prickly pear cactus, *Opuntia humifusa*, and was concerned because it was mushy and appeared rotted. It's been a part of her landscaping for years and she elected to have it sent to the diagnostics lab for analysis. The native cacti are winter-hardy in our area and are best in sites that have full sun exposure and well-drained soil that is dry, sandy or rocky. The beautiful yellow flowers are quite showy at 3-4 inches wide. I did recommend that she may want to consider taking some cuttings from the still vibrant green leaves to ensure that she can reclaim her stand.



<https://extension.umd.edu/learn/prickly-pear-cactus>

<http://sfp.ucdavis.edu/pubs/brochures/Pricklypear/>

Rutgers Fact Sheet 376, *Transplanting Trees and Shrubs*, recommends transplanting birches, beeches, most oaks, magnolias, and hemlocks only in early spring. One of the biggest problems we see with homeowners is the depth they plant the trees. The fact sheet states "... It is better to plant slightly higher rather than lower than the tree was growing prior to the move..." This will allow for some settling of the backfill. Because it's easy to burn young tender roots by over fertilizing, delay fertilizing until after the first growing season.

### Wish List Options

Rutgers Bulletin E 271, *Landscape Plants Rated by Deer Resistance*, notes bottlebrush buckeye, *Aesculus parviflora*, as a tree that is rarely damaged by deer. Add to that, this native is best in full sun, but will tolerate some shade, and produces flowers that look like bottlebrushes, hence the common name, in June. It's more commonly described as a deciduous suckering multistemmed shrub that sports good yellow fall color. It does prefer moist well-drained soil and works best planted in mass and given plenty of room.

<https://rutgersgardens.rutgers.edu/spring-flower-fair/sff-trees-shrubs-and-vines/>

<http://hort.uconn.edu/detail.php?pid=39>

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/all/aesculus-parviflora/>



Sweet mockorange, *Philadelphus coronaries*, is a multi-stemmed deciduous shrub reaching a height of 8 to 10 feet. It has lovely fragrant white 4-petaled flowers in clusters that bloom in late May. Mockorange likes full sun in well-drained soils and will tolerate rejuvenation pruning if it starts to get leggy. It works well as a border or a screen in the home landscaping and can be propagated by cuttings fairly easily.

<http://hort.uconn.edu/detail.php?pid=306>

#### Common Ninebark

*Physocarpus opulifolius* is known to be a tough adaptable species that prefers sun, but is tolerant of shade. Coppertina is a form that works well in homeowner settings and offers a growth habit that is wider than tall with the new bronze leaves sporting limey gold tints. Eventually the entire shrub turns a rich dark copper and has a wonderful peeling bark that exposes an orange underbark. The flowers are lovely and the bush attracts songbirds. Put it on your garden wish list.

<http://talon.niagara.edu/~mgallo/organisms/Coppertina.html>

<http://utgardens.tennessee.edu/pom/ninebark.htm>

#### False Holly

The leaves of the false holly, *Osmanthus sp.*, remind you of holly leaves. Osmanthus has a wonderful fragrance when in bloom, so consider planting False holly near a window or entrance of your home where it is partially shady and sandy or well-drained soil. They are also well-suited for hedges, screens and as individual specimen plants with their beautiful dense growth habit and dark evergreen foliage.

<http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/landscape/shrubs/hgic1083.html>

[http://ag.udel.edu/udbg/broadleaf\\_evergreen/o\\_xfortunei.html](http://ag.udel.edu/udbg/broadleaf_evergreen/o_xfortunei.html)

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/st425>

#### Enkianthus

*Enkianthus* is a non-native deciduous shrub that prefers acidic moist well-drained soil in sun to partial shade. The flowers are clusters of creamy yellowish bell shaped flowers with a red or pink vein that bloom in May or June. This specimen plant has wonderful fall color and grows well with other ericaceous plants. The height is 6-12 feet with a spread of 4-6 feet and it is a slow grower. It's a shrub that has the most impact when viewed at close range.

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/all/enkianthus-campanulatus/>

<http://www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/detail.php?pid=163>

#### Native Plants

Rutgers Fact Sheet 1140, *Incorporating Native Plants in Your Residential Landscape*, lists Virginia sweetspire, *Itea virginica*, as a native shrub that likes moist to average soil in full sun to partial shade. This native has a growth habit of three to six feet in height with outstanding fall foliage. It's best planted in mass and does spread readily by suckers. The flowers are have a sweet scent and resemble bottle brushes when they bloom sometime around May. Virginia sweetspire can be used as an alternative for burning bush, *Euonymus alatus*, which is considered an invasive plant.

<https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/virginia-sweetspire/>



## Winter jasmine

*Jasminum nudiflorum*, is hardy to Zone 7 but seldom used in home landscaping. This shrub reaches about 3-4 feet and produces yellow flowers on fine willowy arching stems in winter to early spring. It can look especially attractive if trained up the wall of a shed. If you have a difficult site to match up a plant's requirements, winter jasmine is noted to be drought tolerant, will tolerate sun to shade and a large range of soil conditions including heavy clay and sand. It is also reportedly seldom damaged by deer.

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/all/jasminum-nudiflorum/>

## Turf Talk

And so the mowing season begins again. It's always a question at the Helpline every year. Should I pick up my clippings? Rutgers Fact Sheet 102, *Your Lawn and Its Care*, recommends no. By using a mulching mower and following the proper mowing frequency, you can return the clippings to the lawn to recycle the nutrients and reduce waste. Rutgers Fact Sheet 389, *Minimizing Waste Disposal: Grass Clippings*, was revised in 1992. Even then, it is estimated that during the maximum grass growing times, the municipal refuse load in some NJ communities may contain almost 1/3 grass clippings.

Another trend I find at the HelpDesk is that many people are guilty of killing their grass with kindness when it comes to watering. Rutgers Fact Sheet 555, *Best Management Practices for Watering Lawns*, recommends that under most lawn situations in New Jersey, a thorough watering of a lawn more than twice per week is probably excessive. The fact sheet also states that the water should not be applied too rapidly or it may run off from sloped sites, thatchy turf, or turf growing on highly compacted soils.

A client brought in a sample of Roughstalk bluegrass, *Poa trivialis*. This cool-season grass grows more rapidly than other grasses, spreading by stolons. The stems are purple in color and currently, there are no selective herbicides you can use in a home lawn to control rough stalk bluegrass.

If you attempt to remove it by hand, be sure to remove the patch itself along with 12 inches of surrounding turf around the patch due to the stoloniferous nature of the plant.

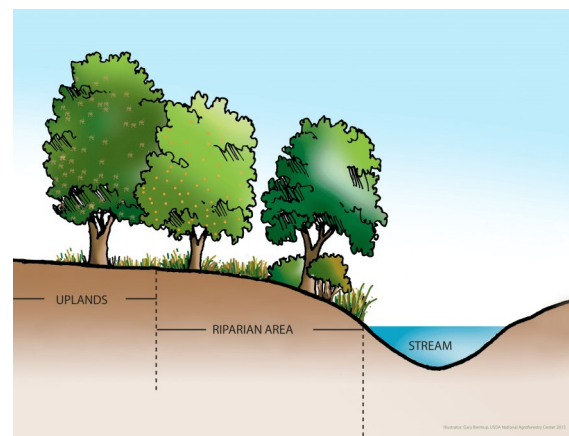
## Riparian Buffer

With the love of nature, there comes a new language to be learned. For example, what is a riparian buffer? Iowa State University provides the definition as '...a vegetated' 'buffer-strip' near a stream, which helps to shade and partially protect the stream from the impact of adjacent urban, industrial or agricultural land use...".

Riparian buffer strips are important for many reasons including trapping sediment, pollution, and nutrients, which all help improve the water quality. The riparian buffer strip also recharges the groundwater and provides better habitat for fish and other wildlife.

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/smallfarms/what-riparian-buffer>

<https://extension.psu.edu/riparian-buffers-for-wildlife>



## **Eco Fair 2020**

**Join us for ECO Fair on Saturday, May 2, 2020;  
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.**



In partnership with the Cumberland County Improvement Authority, WheatonArts presents the 14th annual ECO Fair, a FREE Family Day event inspired by natural living! This event showcases the handmade works of New Jersey artists, as well as environmentally minded organizations, family art activities, live music, and more. Local gardening clubs, including Rutgers Master Gardeners, will have a variety of plants and herbs for sale throughout the day.

Give us your zip code at the gate and receive a FREE Eco-shopping bag, courtesy of the Cumberland County Improvement Authority!

<https://www.wheatonarts.org/calendar-eventon/events/eco-fair/>

## **Rutgers Master Gardeners of Cumberland County at the 2020 ECO Fair**

### **Plant Sale** Update from Propagation Team Leaders:

Behind the scenes, there is a ton of research and planning including what to plant, when to start the seeds, what temperature considerations does it need, and making certain the greenhouses are clean and pest free.

Back this year are strawberry baskets after a hiatus and new this year are lemon grass, tomatillos, hops and Artemisia. This year we continue our focus on native plants and shrubs as well as pollinators. A major focus for us this year is Milkweed, and we will have several attractive and beneficial varieties for sale.

We are pleased to offer Rutgers exclusive varieties. Rutgers Downy Mildew Resistant varieties of Basil will be offered, along with Rutgers Habanero Pumpkin Peppers.

Tomato Lovers! Check out our Rutgers Scarlet Sunshine grape tomato (we think it is delicious), which is a new addition to the Rutgers tomato family R-250, KC 146 and Ramapo. A variety of popular non-Rutgers tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, zucchini, cucumber and more will be on sale.

Some thoughts from the Team Leaders: "I enjoy watching things grow and feel a sense of pride when something I planted grows to bear fruit or flowers." "My favorite plant is the volunteer. They grow when light, temp, and soil are perfect for them. My opinion is they do produce better."

Coming soon! A complete plant listing so you can make your "wish list" will be posted on facebook closer to the date of the ECO Fair! Like us! Rutgers Master Gardeners of Cumberland County

### **Butterfly Team**

Rutgers Master Gardeners of Cumberland County will once again bring the butterfly tent to the eco fair for a one-on-one experience with monarchs! No matter your age, you are always a "kid" again when you enter the tent. Get your cameras ready!

### **"Ask A Master Gardener"**

Come visit our new educational display highlighting current topics and concerns in the world of horticulture. You are encouraged to "Ask A Master Gardener" your garden questions, and you are welcome to bring a specimen to see under the portable microscope! No guarantees that we can provide immediate information or recommendations on the spot, but we will do the research and get back to you!

## Master Gardener Course Schedule

Open to the public for \$20 a class

Tuesdays, 9am– 12pm at the Extension Education Center, 291 Morton Avenue,  
Millville, NJ 08332 unless otherwise noted

[illegible]

## **Garden Tips for March:**

- ☐ Till or turn the vegetable garden soil when it's at the proper moisture level. FS129
- ☐ Submit a soil sample for testing to determine how much lime and fertilizer your lawn and garden areas need. Soil sampling packets with instructions are available at the Extension Center. The cost is \$20.00 plus \$7.00 s/h if we mail it in for you.
- ☐ Add lime to lawns and gardens only when a soil test recommends it. FS797
- ☐ Use dormant oils to combat scale insects and mites when the temperature is above 40° and when freezing temperatures are not predicted for a few days and before the buds begin to open. FS866
- ☐ Watch for sale prices on fertilizers and pre-emergent crabgrass killer.
- ☐ Sow grass seed as soon as possible. FS584
- ☐ Have the lawnmower serviced and the blade sharpened.
- ☐ Fertilize your lawn. FS633
- ☐ Purchase new 40 watt, cool-white fluorescent bulbs for starting your seedlings. Start broccoli, cabbage, and other cabbage family crops indoors in March for planting outdoors in April. FS787, FS129
- ☐ Remove dead asparagus shoots from last year's growth.
- ☐ Plant peas by seed in March. FS129
- ☐ Try growing grapes, raspberries, or strawberries for faster results and ease of growth versus tree fruits.
- ☐ Prune grapes, raspberries, blueberries, fruit trees, and summer-flowering shrubs early in the month when the temperature is above freezing. Grapevine prunings can be made into attractive wreaths.
- ☐ Remove black knot fungus 18" below the growth on cherry, peach and plum trees.
- ☐ Fertilize shade trees. FS031
- ☐ If the soil dries out against a house under the eaves where rain rarely reaches, water well during a thaw to prevent loss of plants.
- ☐ Pinch off early buds from developing pansies to encourage plants to branch and form more buds.
- ☐ Cut back the dried foliage of ornamental grasses.
- ☐ Check stored bulbs, tubers and corms. Discard any that are soft or diseased.
- ☐ Branches of forsythia, pussy willow, spirea, and dogwood can be forced for indoor bloom. Make long slanted cuts when collecting the branches and place the stems in a vase of water. Change the water every four days. They should bloom in about three weeks.
- ☐ Mulch heaved perennials; replant them when the weather is more settled.
- ☐ For geraniums overwintered using the hang & dry method, when they begin to sprout, remove the deadwood and prune the stem and roots. Pot them in sandy soil, water in and keep them in partial sun for a week, gradually moving them to full sun. Grow as houseplants until after the last frost date. FS1156
- ☐ Keep the bird feeder filled. FS1022
- ☐ Longer and brighter days means new growth on indoor houseplants. Repot and apply fertilizer per label instructions, which may differ for foliage plants and blooming plants. The label is the law! Remove dead leaves and flowers for more blooms and a nicer appearance.
- ☐ Watch for blooms of early spring bulbs such as daffodils, squill, crocus, dwarf iris & snowdrops.
- ☐ Remove mulch from strawberry beds when the plant resumes growth in the spring (typically late March) and move it to the top of the bed to the side of the row where it will then serve as a mulch against weeds. FS097
- ☐ Enjoy the early spring season!





## **Gardening Tips for April:**

- ☐ Seed bare spots on the lawn early in the month. FS584 & 108
- ☐ Rake winter debris from your lawn before mowing.
- ☐ For the control of crabgrass, the application of preemergence herbicides is generally more effective and easier to apply than postemergence herbicides. Preemergence herbicides must be applied before crabgrass germination to be effective. E233
- ☐ Sharpen the lawnmower blade. Mow the lawn at a height of 2½-3" while never removing more than 1/3 of the leaf blade.
- ☐ Leave the clippings on the ground. FS102
- ☐ Prune ornamental grasses.
- ☐ Prune your roses, except the climbing varieties. Remove the winter mulch from roses after the middle of the month. FS944
- ☐ Prune early flowering shrubs immediately after flowering and before new growth begins. FS1221
- ☐ Follow Extension's fruit spray schedules. FS112, 113, 115 and 116
- ☐ Divide summer and fall-blooming perennials.
- ☐ Start celosia, cosmos, marigold, annual phlox and zinnia seeds indoors at mid-month (Apr).
- ☐ Sow hardy annual flowers like calendula, clarkia, larkspur, and sweet pea.
- ☐ Plant gladiolus corms every two weeks for continuous bloom.
- ☐ Plant daylilies, delphiniums, painted daisies and phlox.
- ☐ Remove spent flowers from spring-flowering bulbs. Fertilize with 5-10-10 at 2 pounds per 100 square feet. FS1220
- ☐ For earlier bloom of dahlias start tubers in 8" to 10" pots in April using commercial potting soil. FS1153
- ☐ Direct seed beets, carrots, leaf & bibb lettuce, swiss chard, collards, endive, kohlrabi, turnips, and radishes. FS129
- ☐ Start eggplant, pepper and tomato seeds indoors. FS787 & 129
- ☐ Plant bedding plants of cabbage and broccoli.
- ☐ Harden-off or condition transplants before moving them to the garden. FS787
- ☐ Plant strawberries, rhubarb, asparagus, and small fruit plants as early in the month as possible.
- ☐ Plant sections of certified, disease-free potato seed tubers.
- ☐ Apply dormant oil sprays for insect control when the temperature will be above freezing for at least 24 hours. FS866
- ☐ Prune, clean, repot and fertilize your houseplants.
- ☐ Are those swarming insects termites or ants? Can you tell the difference? FS338
- ☐ Fertilize established trees and shrubs. Do not fertilize newly planted trees or shrubs. FS031 & FS 376
- ☐ Scope out a spot in the yard to start a compost pile. If you already have one, turn the compost pile and keep it moist. FS074 & 811
- ☐ Protect well-developed strawberry buds from frost injury by applying straw mulch when freezing temperatures are forecast.
- ☐ Research rain barrels to help save on water bills and protect plants during periods of drought. E329
- ☐ Plan a rain garden for a low spot in your yard that will allow stormwater to infiltrate slowly into the ground rather than running off into the nearest storm drain. FS513
- ☐ Control the euonymus scale now before their hard shells form. Bulletin E014
- ☐ Plant a tree for Arbor Day!

## **Garden Tips for May:**

- ☐ Water the lawn deeply, applying a half to one inch of water at a time. Your lawn needs one inch per week during dry periods. FS921
- ☐ Apply broadleaf herbicides to control weeds in the lawn. FS119
- ☐ Remove flowers from newly established strawberry plantings. Let them become established in the first year and form fruit next year. FS097
- ☐ Remove seed stalks from rhubarb as soon as you see them. Harvest rhubarb through early June.
- ☐ Remove unwanted suckers in raspberries when new shoots are about a foot tall.
- ☐ Thin fruit on apple trees to 8" apart about three weeks after their flower petals fall.
- ☐ Lift and divide old chrysanthemum plants or set out new plants purchased or grown from cuttings.
- ☐ Pinch back mums when they are about 6" tall for bushier plants; continue to pinch back the mums until mid-July.
- ☐ Remove daffodil and tulip flowers as they fade. Leave the foliage in place until it turns brown and dies. Dig bulbs for storage after the leaves die. FS1220
- ☐ Plant dahlia and canna tubers mid to late May. FS1153 & FS1155
- ☐ Time to plant caladium tubers, impatiens, coleus, begonias and pentas in shady areas. It is not too late to sow directly into the soil seeds of sunflower, zinnia, morning glory, portulaca, marigold, cosmos, periwinkles, and gourds. Achimenes and other summer-flowering bulbs can also be planted in May.
- ☐ Tender annuals can be direct sown now, but don't delay. Try your hand this year at impatiens or gaillardia from seed.
- ☐ Sow abundant amounts of zinnia seed of several varieties for bright color in the late summer. Asters are wonderful too and make great, long-lasting cut flowers.
- ☐ Stake your flowers now.
- ☐ They will be much easier to train.
- ☐ Replace and replenish mulch materials in flower beds and shrub borders to conserve moisture and reduce weed growth.
- ☐ Prune spring-flowering shrubs after the flowers fade. FS 1221
- ☐ Prune climbing roses as they complete their spring bloom season. Remove dead or weak wood as needed. FS 944
- ☐ Harvest early plantings of radishes, spinach, and lettuce.
- ☐ Harvest mature asparagus beds for 6 to 8 weeks only.
- ☐ Once there is no threat of frost, usually by mid-May, plant tender plants such as tomatoes, corn, and eggplant. FS 129
- ☐ Make successive plantings of beans and sweet corn to extend the harvest.
- ☐ Check beans, carrots, cucurbits, eggplant, tomato for Twospotted Spider mites; wash mites off plants with a soap-and-water solution applied under enough pressure to break the webs. FS 235
- ☐ If you see pests on shrubs or plants, eliminate them now. If you aren't familiar with the insect you see, take it to the local Extension Center for identification.
- ☐ Pinch back the terminal growth on newly planted annual and perennial plants. This will result in shorter, more compact, well-branched plants with more flowers.
- ☐ Transplant on cloudy days and make sure you keep the delicate exposed roots of your seedlings and plants protected from drying out.
- ☐ Utilize vertical space for vine plants such as scarlet runner beans and gourds.
- ☐ Move houseplants to a shady location outdoors when the danger of frost has passed, usually mid-May. The soil in the pots will dry out faster outdoors, so check it frequently.
- ☐ Thin seedlings of early planted crops to spacing specified on the seed packet or plant tag.

## Radio Spots and Interview



For the many listeners of 99.9 SNJ Today, you've probably heard my weekly one minute radio spots on current topics regarding horticulture, agriculture, gardening, environmental concerns and nature. I generally base them off of the FAQ's that come into the Helpline. What's the Helpline? Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Cumberland County offers the Helpline, a free service to residents of Cumberland County who call or email these types of questions to us to do the research and provide scientific, research based recommendations. To be better prepared before you contact the Master Gardener Helpline visit <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/master-gardeners/before-you-contact.php>

Tune into 99.9 on March 19<sup>th</sup> when I will be the morning guest with John and Yamira. We'll bring in Spring by chatting about what we do at the Extension Education Center, the Helpline questions we get asked, what is a Master Gardener, the upcoming plant sale at Wheaton Arts Eco Fair and many more topics!

### Ask a Master Gardener

As part of Spring cleaning in this new decade at the Extension Education Center, the Master Gardeners are changing it up just a bit. Look for us at area events where you can "Ask a Master Gardener" your gardening questions! We are bringing along a travelling microscope so you can see how cool that insect looks under the scope! The Master Gardeners may not be able to answer your questions on site, but they will research them and get back to you with recommendations.

At the "Ask a Master Gardener" exhibit, we will be highlighting current concerns and "what's new" in the field of agriculture with changeable displays and pertinent Fact Sheets. For instance, the Spotted Lanternfly has been seen in several surrounding counties, so it's important to know what to look for and what to do as a resident of Cumberland County. For more on the spotted lanternfly please visit <https://extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly>

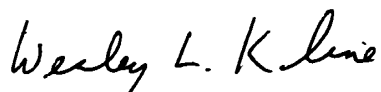
## Rutgers Cooperative Extensions Fact Sheets: Spring

<b>Fact Sheet #</b>	<b>Fact Sheet Name</b>
Bulletin E014	Pest Management for Trees, Shrubs, and Flowers on Home Grounds \$3.00
FS20	Weed control around the home grounds
FS31	How to fertilize shade trees
FS58	Mulches for vegetable garden
FS74	Backyard leaf composting
FS97	Growing Strawberries in the Home Garden
FS102	Your lawn and its care
FS108	Renovating Your Lawn
FS112	Apple Pest Control Schedule for New Jersey Home Orchards
FS113	Peach and Nectarine Pest Control Schedule for New Jersey Home Orchards
FS115	Cherry Pest Control Schedule for New Jersey Home Orchards
FS116	Plum Pest Control Schedule for New Jersey Home Orchards
FS117	Using leaf compost
FS119	Weed control in home lawns
FS129	Planning a vegetable garden
FS221	Asparagus Beetles
Bulletin E233	Crabgrass and Goosegrass Control in Cool Season Turfgrass
FS235	Two-spotted Spider Mites
Bulletin E329	Rain Barrels Part I: How to Build a Rain Barre
FS338	Termite Prevention and Control
FS376	Transplanting Trees and Shrubs
FS513	Rain Gardens
FS523	Grow your own vegetable and flower seedlings
FS584	Seeding Your Lawn
FS626	Fertilizing the home vegetable garden
FS633	Fertilizing the home lawn
FS681	Varieties for NJ home vegetable gardens
FS684	Turfgrass seed selection for NJ homes
FS787	Starting Vegetable Seeds indoors
FS797	Soil testing for home lawns and gardens
FS811	Home Composting
FS866	Using horticultural oils
FS921	Conserving water on home landscapes in NJ
FS944	Roses and their care
FS1022	Backyard Birdfeeders
FS1140	Incorporating native plants in your residential landscape
FS1153	Growing Dahlias
FS1155	Cannas
FS1156	Keeping Geraniums Over Winter
FS1163	Mail order vegetable seed sources for the NJ gardener
FS1220	Spring Flowering Bulbs
FS1221	Pruning Flowering Shrubs

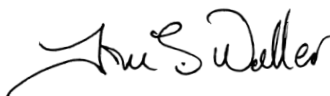
**Call 856/451-2800 Ext. 4 when calling to request a fact sheet.**

**Refer to the Fact Sheet by FS# or by name; All fact sheets are free unless otherwise noted.**

Sincerely,



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**Pesticide User Responsibility:** Use pesticides safely and follow instructions on labels. The user is responsible for the proper use of pesticides, residues on crops, storage and disposal, as well as damages caused by drift.

**Use of Trade Names:** Trade names are used in this publication with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement is implied. In some instances the compound may be sold under different trade names, which may vary as to label.

For important announcements concerning the Cumberland County Extension Center visit:  
<http://Cumberland.njaes.rutgers.edu>

If you have any questions concerning the website, please call our office at  
856-451-2800 x1 for agriculture and  
856-451-2800 x4 for Home Horticulture and Master Gardeners

Public Notification and Non-discrimination Statement

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