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What's Growing On?

VOLUME 28 ISSUE 1 SPRING 2025 EDITION

GARDEN GAB

Spring is the season for new growth. If you haven't already now is the time to pick your varieties. You will soon begin sowing some seed indoors, and transplanting outside. If you run into any problems in your home garden our website has a webpage titled "Resources for Homeowners". Each topic will direct you to scientific resources. If you have any additional questions or issues stop into the office during the week or give us a call. Our office is open to the public Monday through Friday 8:30am-4:30pm for soil testing, insect and disease identification, or any gardening and lawn care advice.

Resources for homeowners located on our website:

- Lawns & Alternatives
- Plant Problems
- Weeds & Toxic Plants
- Small Space & Urban Gardening
- Insect & Wildlife Pests
- Native Plants
- Trees & Shrubs
- Vegetable Gardens
- Rain Barrels & Gardens

Connect with us!

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RUTGERS

New Jersey Agricultural
Experiment Station
**COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
CUMBERLAND COUNTY**

Spring Flowering Bulbs

Spring flowering bulbs offer years of seasonal color in your landscape with a variety of shapes, colors, and heights.

Planting Requirements:

The optimum pH range for spring flowering bulbs is 6 to 7. If needed, limestone should be worked into the soil to raise the pH, while sulfur or aluminum sulphate will help in lowering a high pH. A soil test will provide information on the recommended amounts.

Spring bulbs need ample amounts of phosphorous in the soil to encourage root and bud development. If your soil requires additional amounts, phosphorous should be mixed in the soil below where the bulbs will be located so it can be utilized by the bulb's roots. Sources such as bonemeal or superphosphate can be added in the lower part of the planting bed as it is being prepared. Do not fertilize spring flowering bulbs after they have started flowering, this tends to encourage the development of bulb rot and may shorten the life of the flowers.

For bulb health and longevity, the soil must be welldrained but moisture retentive. In general, adding peat moss or compost will quicken drainage in heavy clay soils while slowing drainage to hold moisture in very sandy soils.

Select a site that will provide at least five to six hours of direct sunlight a day.

Spring flowering bulbs should be planted in mid-September through October when the soil temperature falls below 60°F. This will allow a root system adequate time to develop before the ground freezes.

The general rule of thumb for successfully planting spring bulbs is to plant them at a depth two to three times the height of the bulb. This means that most large bulbs like tulips or daffodils should be planted about eight inches deep and eight inches apart. Smaller bulbs like crocus and anemones should be planted three to four inches deep and three to four inches apart. Planting depth is always measured from the bottom of the bulb.



Phytotoxicity

Phytotoxicity is plant tissue damage, caused by chemical exposure. The severity of injury can vary based on chemicals used and the foliage effected.

Pesticide drift, or direct contact, is the most common cause of phytotoxicity. Knowing the application and care of the plant is vital in diagnoses.

What causes the damage:

- Pesticides
- Salts
- Cleaning agents
- Gasses and leachates

Plants are most suseptable in drought or insufficient soil moisture; and temperatures are above about 85°F when
Damage to desirable plants can range from minor (temporarily altered growth) to lethal. Common symptoms, while not exclusive to phytotoxicity, include:

- spots or blotches on leaves that often look bleached, burned, or “scorched”
- deformed leaves, often twisted, curled, shrunk, or more slender than normal
- sudden and prolific leaf shedding
- scarring on fruits, such as russeting (patches of rough, reddish-brown discoloration) on the skin of tree fruits



Damage from fungicide



Herbicide damage



Soap and insecticide damage

GARDEN INVADERS

Aphids: Aphids are a common pest to both houseplants and garden crops. As the weather warms up, aphid eggs that overwintered on plant material will begin to hatch. Check your plants regularly for these small, pear-shaped insects that can range in color from green, red, black, or yellow. They feed on the sap of plants and you will often find them on new growth, flower buds, and the underside of leaves. When infestations occur it causes curled leaves, yellow foliage, and stunted plant growth. Aphids are capable of transmitting plant viruses and can reproduce quickly, so it is important to frequently check for them and control them rapidly. When populations are small, you can easily get rid of them by rinsing affected leaves off with water or manually picking or smushing them. Using pesticides is often not necessary for aphid problems in home gardens.

Spotted Lanternflies: This sap-sucking leafhopper is now established across New Jersey. They begin to lay their eggs in the fall and continue to do so into December. Spotted Lanternflies undergo several stages of growth where it transforms from a small black and white nymph to a red and black nymph to a winged adult. Though these insects have the potential to cause damage to certain plants and crops, they are primarily a nuisance pest in the home landscape. If you have maples, willows, birches, roses, grapes, tree of heaven, or black walnut plants on your property, you should monitor them closely for spotted lanternfly as these are some of their favorite plants to feed on. However, pesticides are unnecessary in most situations and the use of homemade pesticides with dish soap, vinegar, or gasoline are not recommended at all. Sticky band traps and circle traps are effective ways to manage them on vulnerable trees. If you come across lanternfly eggs, you should scrape them off into a bag or container and smush them.

Spider Mites: These tiny garden pests thrive in mid May and early September. Damage often starts in lower plant growth, causing white and yellow spots where they feed. This species damages host plants by sucking plant fluid from needles as they feed. After prolonged feeding, needles turn rusty colored and may drop prematurely. Mites usually attack older needles located in the lower and inner parts of the plant. This species also produces silken webs on the needles. Monitor plants by placing a branch on white paper and looking for small black spots. These pests can be treated with miticide for home use, please follow all label instructions carefully.

If you come across any of these species or others that you are unsure of, bring a sample into the Rutgers Cooperative Extension office in Millville. Specimen can be placed in a bag and put in the freezer or submerged in alcohol.

The Impact of Drought

Drought effects all plants, and the impacts of drought can make plants susceptible to pest and disease for years following. Without sufficient water, plants can't uptake nutrients properly, adding additional stress.

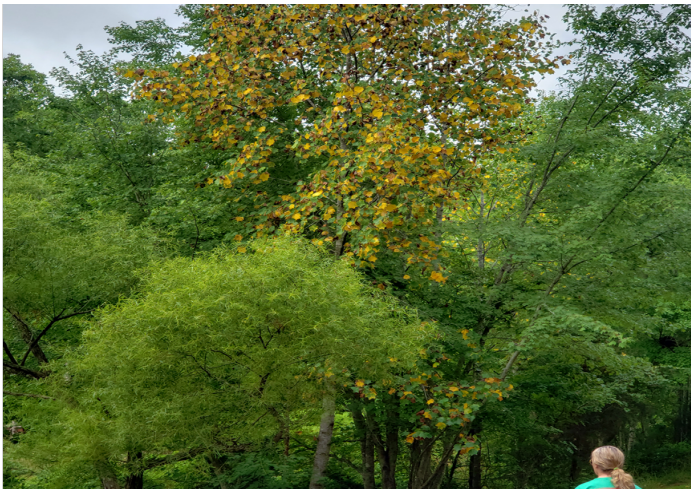
Drought stress can look like all of the following :



A dogwood suffering extreme drought stress.
Photo Credit: John Rutter University of Georgia



Corn Crop Drought.
Photo Credit: Amos Doyle, Cornell University.



A tulip poplar with yellowing and leaf drop likely caused by drought.
Photo Credit: Frank Reilly



Drought stressed lawns exhibit patchiness.
Photo Credit: David Graper, South Dakota State University.

The Impact of Drought

Economic Impacts:

Economic impacts are those impacts of drought that cost people (or businesses) money. Here are just a few different examples of economic impacts:

- Farmers may lose money due to crop loss.
- Irrigation costs increase.
- Ranchers may have to spend more money on feed and water for their animals.
- Businesses that depend on farming, like companies that make tractors and food, may lose business when drought damages crops or livestock.
- People who work in the timber industry may be affected when wildfires destroy stands of timber.
- Water companies may have to spend money on new or additional water supplies.
- Barges and ships may have difficulty navigating streams, rivers, and canals because of low water levels, which would also affect businesses that depend on water transportation for receiving or sending goods and materials.
- People might have to pay more for food.

Environmental Impacts:

Drought also affects the environment in many different ways. Plants and animals depend on water, just like people. When a drought occurs, their food supply can shrink and their habitat can be damaged. Sometimes the damage is only temporary and their habitat and food supply return to normal when the drought is over. But sometimes drought's impact on the environment can last a long time, maybe forever. Examples of environmental impacts include:

- Increase in disease in wild animals, because of reduced food and water supplies
- Migration of wildlife
- Increased stress on endangered species or even extinction
- Lower water levels in reservoirs, lakes, and ponds
- Loss of wetlands
- More wildfires
- Wind and water erosion of soils
- Poor soil quality

SEASONAL CHECKLIST

- Pick you varieties to begin planting.
- Make a time line to transplant outdoors.
- Remove infected plant material from vegetable and flower beds.
- Get your soil tested.
- Look for spotted lanternfly eggs.
- Water your plants deeply.
- Mow grass 3" or taller to help it survive the heat.
- Plant brocolli, brussel sprouts, and kale indoors starting in March .
- Leave seed heads for birds to eat.
- Buy local produce!
- Avoid pruning trees and shrubs.
- Order bulbs.
- Plant trees or shrubs.
- Remove summer annual weeds such as crabgrass before they go to seed.
- Provide birds and pollinators with water.
- Check for scale insects on your trees and shrubs.
- Visit a local botanical garden.

Interested in receiving bi-weekly pest and disease reports for southern NJ? The Rutgers Master Gardeners of Cumberland County will be sending out bi-weekly integrated pest management (IPM) reports to inform gardeners of current and upcoming garden pests, and how to control and prevent them. This free report will be sent right to your email, starting next spring. Call 856-451-2800 x4 if you would like to receive this informative report.

RESOURCES

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Bus Trip to the Wilmington Flower Market



THE RUTGERS MASTER GARDENERS OF CUMBERLAND COUNTY

invite you to join our **BUS TRIP** to the
Wilmington Flower Market
at Rockford Park Wilmington, Delaware

- * Plants and flowers for sale
- * Multitude of crafts and merchant wares
- * Live music
- * Variety of delicious food

Friday May 9, 2025

Rear parking lot of the Ramada Inn, Vineland
by 8:50 a.m. for 9:00 a.m. departure

Arrive back at Ramada Inn by 4:00 p.m.

\$35.00 per person

Checks should be made payable to "County of Cumberland"
and mailed or delivered to Rutgers Cooperative Extension
(RCE), 291 Morton Avenue, Millville, NJ 08332-9776



RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
Cooperative Extension
of Cumberland County
New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

**Please call 609-805-5206
to register by April 28th.**

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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: Tradenames 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.