

GGG

Granville Gardeners Gazette

Promoting Education and Recreation through Gardening Activities

Oxford, North Carolina

www.thegranvillegardeners.org

October 2025, Volume XV, No. X



Best fertilizer for trees and shrubs



Matt Archibald



Most tree removals aren't necessary

FROM BARREN TO BOUNTIFUL: SMALL FIXES FOR LARGE ISSUES

By Matt Archibald, ISA Board Certified Master Arborist, Residential Consultant at Leaf & Limb

Monday, October 27 at 7 p.m., Granville County Expo Center, 4185 U.S. Hwy 15 S, Oxford, NC

About the Program

With news about climate change everywhere, it seems impossible for us to help out on a smaller scale for a global problem. Taking simple solutions to your landscape will help! Matt brings us on a journey from trees to soil to prairies and more to help solve problems affecting us all.

About the Speaker

Matt Archibald is passionate about trees and nature. He is an ISA Board Certified Master Arborist, Tree Risk Assessment Qualified and a veteran in the industry for 12 years and counting. Coming from a rock-climbing background, he discovered his passion and purpose in life when he started learning about trees and their ever-expanding universe of information. He is a residential consultant at Leaf & Limb helping clients' trees thrive and not just survive.

Matt also hosts educational tree walks for organizations and nonprofits around the triangle like Duke Gardens and the North Carolina Botanical Gardens. He serves on the Hillsborough Tree Board and Keep Durham Beautiful.

by Matt Archibald and Marty Finkel

Photo credits: Leaf & Limb

<http://leaflimb.com>

President's Notes

For everyone who was able to go to our September meeting, I think all would agree that it was wonderful. Our speaker, Brie Arthur, had a fantastic way of presenting great information in an entertaining and dynamic way. I heard lots of laughter throughout her presentation. At the end of our meeting, she fielded many questions. It was obvious that she had had hands-on experience with everything she talked about and/or showed us in her presentation.

I want to thank all of you who brought refreshments for our social. It was one of the best we have had.

Finally, I am excited for the club with next year's leadership list that we will be voting on. Elections will be held at the November meeting. I am thankful to the members that have agreed to lead our club.

David

JCRA AUCTION PLANTS

I received news from Rob this morning that we will be taking a break from receiving and auctioning the plants that we have been receiving from the JC Raulston Arboretum.

Some of the reasons are:

- the JCRA will soon face severe understaffing as two more are retiring, bringing the total to four.
- Over time there has been a noticeable drop in the amount bids have generated, due largely it is thought because of the frequency of the auction (every other month)
- There needs to be a workable plan for caring for the donated plants from the time they are received to the time they are auctioned.
- There needs to be a wider pool of bidders – including those who are not GG members.
- I'm sure Rob, David, and others have other thoughts for discussion

We are assured that the donations and the auctions will resume, though probably not until the first of the new year. The club is really fortunate that Mark Weathington, the JCRA director, implemented Rob's idea for the JCRA to donate plants for auction at GG meetings and to add the proceeds to our scholarship fund. It's a win-win since the plants we receive are often rare, very desirable, and not yet in the nursery trade.

If you have questions or suggestions, please direct them to Rob Thornton or David Quinn (and to the incoming president after the 2026 installation of officers and board members).

By Marty Finkel

October To-Do List

- Refer to the accompanying chart for the first frost date. Usually there are a few weeks of frost-free weather after this date, so protecting vegetables with lightweight floating row covers could extend the harvest period. There are different weights of this fabric, and several seed and/or supply catalogs carry it, such as Pinetree Garden Seeds, Jung Seeds & Plants, Johnny's Selected Seeds, Territorial Seed Co., and others. Reuse the covers in the spring for frost protection and for insect protection for newly set-out transplants.
- If it has been a couple of years since soil tests were done, test garden and lawn areas now and apply lime if indicated. There is no charge for samples submitted April through November, but from December through March there will be a \$4 charge for each sample. So, get those samples in before the first of Dec. – boxes and instructions are available at the Ag. Ext. Service Building.
- Roses: Remove and dispose of dead flowers and yellowed and/or spotted foliage: Any debris left in the bed will continue to produce fungus spores that will over-winter and cause problems again.
- **Change in sowing dates for** cool weather annual seeds larkspur, forget-me-not, poppies, coreopsis, cosmos, nicotiana, stock (*Matthiola incana*), vinca. **NOTE:** At the September 2025 meeting, speaker Brie Arthur said to revise our previous dates for planting cool weather annuals seeds because it is **not cool enough in October** now for good germination. **Instead**, sow in December – February for full bloom by Mother's Day. These findings are based on her experience in Fuquay-Varina. Sow first of December in the Oxford area.
- Plant seeds of radishes, spinach, leaf lettuce, Asian greens (including mustard), cilantro, arugula, collards, fennel, radish, and parsley, beets, carrots, turnips, kale. If you can't get the seeds planted by the first week, plant transplants of broccoli, kale, cabbage, and lettuces.
- Plant new perennials, shrubs, and trees. Take notice of colorful and/or shredding bark, berries, weeping and/or contorted trunks and branches for winter interest when choosing trees and shrubs.
- Clean up perennials and shrubs: remove any dead and diseased parts but do not put this material in the compost. To provide winter interest, winter food for birds, and over-wintering habitat for our native bees, leave seed heads each fall. In spring, cut stalks 8" to 24" above ground. New growth in summer will hide the stubble. Repeat in fall. Bees will be able to nest in the cut stems over winter while birds will have the most recent seed heads to eat from. You should be seeing more birds in your garden.
- Leave the leaves. Please refer to the article "Leaving Leaves in Place" in this issue.
- Watch for aphids and caterpillars on broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, collards, kale, etc. and use insecticidal soap for control.
- Take advantage of end of the summer sales on plants but be sure the plants are in good enough condition to survive with TLC.
- Do not use any pesticides (insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, miticides, other "cides") that contain neonicotinoids (neonics) since recent research has shown that this class of chemicals kills pollinators and other beneficials.

by Marty Finkel

Frost Dates: First and last frost dates for Oxford, NC

How to read these charts for the fall.

As your growing season comes to an end, the nightly temperatures for Oxford, North Carolina, start to go down, and therefore every day that goes by increases the chance that you'll get frost. Your risk of frost really begins around October 6, and by October 30 you're almost certain to have received at least one frost event.

The charts on this page show the **probabilities** of receiving a certain temperature on a certain day. Some examples that might help:

1. You have a small 20% chance of getting 32° by October 11.
2. There is a 50% chance of being hit by a 32° frost starting around October 20
3. You have a 80% chance of seeing 32° by October 30
4. Said another way, you have a 1 in 5 chance at making it to that day without a 32° night.

	In the Fall								
Temperature	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%
First 16°	Nov 24	Dec 3	Dec 10	Dec 16	Dec 22	Dec 27	Jan 2	Jan 9	Jan 19
First 20°	Nov 7	Nov 14	Nov 19	Nov 23	Nov 28	Dec 2	Dec 6	Dec 11	Dec 19
First 24°	Oct 28	Nov 2	Nov 6	Nov 10	Nov 13	Nov 16	Nov 19	Nov 23	Nov 28
First 28°	Oct 13	Oct 19	Oct 23	Oct 26	Oct 29	Nov 1	Nov 5	Nov 9	Nov 14
First 32°	Oct 6	Oct 11	Oct 14	Oct 17	Oct 20	Oct 23	Oct 26	Oct 30	Nov 3
First 36°	Sep 30	Oct 3	Oct 5	Oct 7	Oct 8	Oct 10	Oct 12	Oct 14	Oct 17

This chart and the one for spring are displayed on The National Gardening Association Tools and Apps. Data is provided by the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information. To access the whole chart (includes how to calculate the last spring frost date), do an internet search for “frost dates calculator.” There are several websites which offer calculators. Choose the one from the National Gardening Association.

This chart was copied and pasted from The National Gardening Association Tools and Apps. Permission is granted for use for educational purposes.

By Marty Finkel

Leaving Leaves in Place

Q: *Why should we leave leaves where they fall? Don't they smother grass when left on it?*

A: Yes and no. If a thick layer of leaves, or leaves left in large piles, remains on turf for a long enough time, it will damage or kill the grass. However, research has shown that shredded leaves thinly spread over the grass actually feeds it and helps it grow stronger.

In the early 1990s Michigan State researchers began studying the effect of leaves on lawncare. They made leaf piles on plots of grass to see how much it took to kill a lawn. In the spring, they found that leaf covered lawns were among the first to turn green.

“ ‘It's not only not a problem, it's awesome,’ says Dr. Thomas Nikolai, a specialist in Michigan State University's plant and soil science department, in an interview with The Christian Science Monitor.”

It's best not to let a thick layer of leaves accumulate on the lawn but to use a mulching mower (or even a non-mulching one) to shred them into smaller pieces that shortly sink into the grass and begin to decompose. Do this a few times during the season -- it fertilizes the soil



Photo: LayLa Burgess
©2018 HGIC Clemson Extension



Millipede



and Roly-poly

Photos: publicpicturesdomain.net

If the leaves are accumulating on the lawn faster than you can mulch-mow, rake or blow them onto garden beds and leave in a 2 to 3" layer. This will add nutrients, help insulate the ground, keep in moisture, help protect the plants, and provide cover for overwintering moth and butterfly larvae, other insects, frogs and salamanders. If leaves are still accumulating, blow or rake them into large piles in out-of-the-way locations. When I had my gardens, my husband dumped leaves at several sites for me to wheelbarrow to garden and/or vegetable beds for mulch.

If you have wooded areas, you could make large leaf piles and leave for the winter. In the spring, the bottom layer will be ready to use as compost, and the middle and top layers as mulch for various gardens as well as under shrubs and around trees (leave 5" of bare ground between the trunks and the mulch).

I was surprised to learn of the many creatures that depend on leaf litter for survival. Here are only a few examples: Centipedes, millipedes, roly-poly (aka sowbug), worms, and snails eat leaf litter to some degree, as do microscopic decomposers like fungi and bacteria. It shelters spiders that eat insects.

Stick bugs have an insurance program that helps ensure a good percentage of their eggs surviving winter: After mating, the females (disguised as, you know, sticks) drop more than 100 eggs from treetops that free-fall to the ground, where they overwinter in the leaf litter – **they look like seeds!** Ants think they are seeds and take them back to their underground nests where they hatch into baby stick bugs the next spring.



Stick bug
 Photo: brisbaneinsects.com
 Tony Shaw



Collection of stick bug eggs
 Photo: Wikipedia Commons



Mourning cloak butterfly
 Photo: Julie Michaelson

Cocoons and pupae of some moths, beetles, and bugs overwinter in moist leaf litter, and some butterflies overwinter in it as adults – two examples are the Mourning Cloak and the Question mark. Also found in this sheltering layer are adult nine-spotted ladybugs. Examples of butterflies and moths that can be found there in the pupa stage are Eastern tiger swallowtail butterfly, Hummingbird Clearwing moth, and the exquisite Luna moth. In autumn, "94 percent of moths drop off the tree when they develop as larvae," says University of Delaware entomologist [Doug Tallamy](#). The insects land under the cover of leaves, bark and soil and pupate in cocoons, emerging as adults the following spring.



Luna Moth
 Photo: Marty Finkel



Hummingbird Clearwing moth
 Photo: David Poulos



Question Mark butterfly
 Photo: Sturgis McKeever,
 Southern GA University,
 bugwood.org



Photo: D.J.Weaver, CC-BY-NC

Look for this guy under the leaves, too!

By: Marty Finkel Information sources: Treehugger "Skip the Rake & Leave the Leaves for a Healthier, Greener Yard" by Derek Markham updated 8-30-24; Xerces Soc. "Leave the Leaves!," Oct. 5, 2024; National Wildlife Federation "Life in the Litter," by Emma Johnson 12-1-2019

October Happenings

Cooler weather is finally here! This is a great time of year to get out and see what's happening.

Weekends in October (Sat. & Sun., until Oct. 26) Fall Harvest Days at Harvey Hills Farm. 10am – 4pm. 3257 Tump Wilkins Rd, Stem. More info on Facebook: [Harvey Hills Farm & Nursery](#), or on website: <https://www.harveyhillsfarmandnursery.com/>.

First 3 October weekends (Fri., Sat., & Sun., until Oct. 19) Camellia Forest Nursery Open House, 620 NC Hwy 54 W, Chapel Hill. Fri. & Sat. 9am – 5pm, Sun. 12 – 5pm. More info: [CamForest Open House](#)

October 7. (Wed.) Native Grasses: The New Workhorses of the Garden (virtual), 12-1pm.

Strategies to garden smarter and boost your landscape's ecological impact? Join Shannon Currey, education and outreach at Izel Native Plants, to learn how native grasses can help reduce resource use, add biodiversity and increase resilience. Offering so much more than turfgrasses can, these extraordinary plants help preserve and build the soil, reduce weed competition and lend a host of ecosystem benefits. They're workhorses that get the job done while adding beauty and aesthetic appeal. We'll examine what makes grasses special and explore how you can use them in your landscape. And while sedges, grass-like plants with virtues of their own, are wonderful, this session will focus on true grasses. From short to tall, in shade and in sun, learn about using native grasses to build better landscapes. This *virtual program* takes place via Zoom. The recording will be shared with all registrants. Free. Registration required: [Native Grasses with Shannon Curry](#). Sarah P. Duke Gardens, Durham. 919-668-1707.

October 8. (Wed.) Adventures in Ecological Gardening: Creating a Wildlife-Friendly Habitat and Promoting Biodiversity, 3-4pm. NC Botanical Garden, Reeves Auditorium, 100 Old Mason Farm Rd., Chapel Hill, or online. Dr. Neeti Bathala, graduate of Duke's Nicholas School of the Environment, will present this program for you to attend in person or online: Cultivate your garden from an ecological perspective! Neeti will guide you through creating a wildlife-friendly habitat that enhances biodiversity in your garden. Learn how to approach gardening from an ecosystem level, with discussions on your garden's biome, planting zone, and the natural layering of ecosystems. The program will also cover essentials such as assessing food sources and seasonality, water needs, cover, nesting options, and the space required to create a garden that supports both you and your wildlife neighbors. In person, or online. Free, but registration is required: [Neeti Bathala on Ecological Gardening](#)

October 11. (Sat.) PlantFest 2025, 9am-3pm. Blackwood Farm Park, 4215 NC-86, Chapel Hill. Orange County Master Gardener volunteers will hold PlantFest, featuring a big plant sale, kids' activities, gardening exhibits, free seeds, tool sharpening, a nature-themed art sale, music, food trucks and more. Our plant sale includes native plants that are hard to find at local nurseries. Bring a wagon to hold your plants. Proceeds benefit Master Gardener volunteers' work in the community. For more info, including map and parking directions: www.PlantFestNC.org.

October 11. (Sat.) Fall Native Plant Sale at Umstead State Park, 12-3pm. William B. Umstead State Park, Reedy Creek entrance off 2100 N Harrison Ave, Cary. The Umstead Coalition's Annual Fall Plant sale features locally grown native trees, shrubs and native flowering perennials. Plants include Pawpaw, American beautyberry, native azaleas, purple coneflower, and much more. Native plant experts will be on hand to offer growing tips. All proceeds go directly to help William B. Umstead State Park and you will be helping promote natural landscape habitats. Plant list at [Umstead Plant Sale](#). William B. Umstead State Park, Reedy Creek entrance off 2100 N Harrison Ave, Cary.

October 14. (Tues.) Doug Tallamy: Next Steps for Nature - 500 Questions (and Answers) for How to Save Nature in Our Yards. 1-2pm. Free program made available (via Zoom) by the Gardening Association of North Carolina. Join other gardeners and nature lovers to hear Doug Tallamy share. In this talk, Tallamy will address common concerns on biodiversity, invasive species, native plants, and

conservation strategies, providing practical guidance and motivation to restore nature in everyday spaces. Register here: [GAONC.org](https://www.gaonc.org).

October 14. (Tues.) JCRA Evening Garden Stroll, 4-7:30pm. JC Raulston Arboretum, Raleigh
Enjoy extended hours, and take a self-guided, after-hours stroll through our premiere collection of flowering trees, shrubs, and perennials. A free public tour will be offered beginning at 5:30pm leaving from the Bobby G. Wilder Visitor Center. Free. No registration required. Visit jcra.ncsu.edu/calendar/ for details.

October 15. (Wed.) How to Plant a Rain Garden (Online), 3-4pm. Free online program offered by JC Raulston Arboretum: If this summer's nonstop rain had you wondering not just "where is all this water going?" but also "how can we make the most of it?," a rain garden offers an elegant, practical solution to managing excess water in your landscape. By slowing runoff and helping water soak into the ground, rain gardens not only reduce flooding but also protect local waterways while adding beauty to your garden. Join Greg and Evan as they explore our existing rain gardens and show you how to plan and plant your own. You'll learn how to prepare the soil, choose plants that can handle both flooding and dry spells, and see the careful planning that goes into a functional, thriving rain garden. Free online program. Register at jcra.ncsu.edu/midweek/. JC Raulston Arboretum, Raleigh.

October 16. (Thur.) Lawn to Meadow: Transition with a "Light Touch" 12-1pm. A virtual program offered by North Carolina Botanical Garden, Chapel Hill: In April of 2022, Sara and Evan Cooper moved into their new home in a suburban Philadelphia neighborhood. After one spring and summer of consistently mowing their ~5,000 square foot front lawn, Sara eagerly initiated the process of transitioning the lawn into a native wildflower meadow. She wanted to avoid four things, however: chemical use, heavy labor, smothering, and an early-stage ugly phase. Leaving the turf in place and collaborating with her father and Landscape Designer, Larry Weaner, she began a turf-to-meadow conversion process that relied on light-touch actions that simultaneously weakened the lawn and strengthened her newly planted meadow. After two growing seasons, the results exceeded expectations...enough to be featured in The New York Times in 2024 and the BBC in 2025. Learn the practical steps they took, the successes and challenges they have so far encountered, and their plans for guiding the meadow to maturity. Free. To register: [Lawn to Meadow: Transition with a "Light Touch"](#)

LOOKING AHEAD

Nov. 11. (Tues.) Native Plant Solutions: Add Life under Trees. 12-1pm. A virtual program offered by Duke Gardens: Spend your lunch hour with Shannon Currey, education and outreach at Izel Native Plants, getting to know some of the best go-to plants for building ecologically sound landscapes. In the ongoing Native Plant Solutions series, we take a deep dive into a handful of specific native plants, focusing on a landscape situation or plant adaptation that makes them particularly helpful. Native trees are powerful plants in cultivated landscapes. They provide a host of benefits, from reducing ambient temperatures to raising property values and creating habitat for wildlife. However, because the sun exposure and soil moisture vary greatly under the tree canopy, figuring out what to plant underneath trees can be challenging. The default is often turfgrass or mulch. But this default misses an opportunity to realize the full potential of the trees and our landscapes. Soft landings is a strategy that uses diverse native plantings to help support wildlife and add ecological function. Many pollinators start their lives in our native trees. Soft landings provide the critical shelter and habitat underneath those trees that many species need to complete their life cycle. This approach also helps support the trees, improve soil health, and manage stormwater. It's also much more appealing than mulch or turfgrass! Free, but registration is required: [Native Plant Solutions](#).

December 6. (Sat.) Granville-Person Master Gardeners Wreath-making Workshop. Held at Person County Cooperative Extension Center. 304 S Morgan St., Roxboro. Details coming next month.

Plant of the Month:

Anemone huphensis 'Honorine Jobert'



Anemone 'Dreaming Swan'



September and the first couple of weeks in October are when the Japanese anemones are the stars of the garden in the Oxford area. There are many cultivars with flower stem heights from 4-5' to 2-2.5' and flower sizes from 2-3" to 4" across. They perform best in moist, well-drained soil and sun to partial shade. Often, they are slow to establish but are free-flowering the second year and can soon take over. They spread by underground runners. Plant early in the fall for root establishment or very early in the spring. They are stunning in great swaths, especially with ornamental grasses. 'Crispa', or 'Lady Gilmore', has pink flowers and beautiful ruffled, lettuce-like leaves with a thin edge of red. It grows to about 2.5'. 'Honorine Jobert' is pure white with dark green leaves and tops out at about 3.5'. They are good as cut flowers also. . The Missouri Botanical Garden says that "'Honorine Jobert' is an old garden hybrid discovered in Verdun, France in 1858. It is synonymous with *A. x hybrida* 'Alba'." The blister beetle can devour the leaves and buds fairly fast but can be controlled with Sevin. While both these plants are anemones, their habits are quite different. Anemone 'Dreaming Swan' is a clumper and is quite well-behaved.

SOME OTHER PLANTS IN BLOOM THIS MONTH

Note that bloom times vary, depending on climatic and meteorological conditions, and many plants bloom several months in a row (and sometimes rebloom). *Source: JCRA Showtimes for October.*

Flame aniscanthus	Gardenia	Gold Japanese shrub mint
Autumn flowering crocus	Buddleia	Orange cosmos
Asters	Verbena	Sunflowers
Abelia	Gerbera	False sinningia
Ice plant	Crinum lilies	Mexican giant cigar plant
Hardy begonia	Glossy chimonanthus	Cyclamen
Echinacea	Hardy chrysanthemum	Red yucca
Yellow blackberry lily	Catmint	Dahlias
Camellia	Hardy ginger lily	

Compiled by Marty Finkel

Credit: JC Raulston Arboretum at NC State University

Photos of Some Other Plants in Bloom or Fruit This Month (* indicates native plant)



Golden Variegated Giant Reed



Glabrella (formerly Briggsia)



Dwarf Jessamine



Texas Craglily*



Loquat



'Snow Day' Pearlbush



Green Leopard Plant



Gardenia 'Chuck Hayes'



Whorled Tickseed*



American Dittany*



Gaillardia*



Beeblossom*



Virginia Mountain Mint*



Showy Goldenrod*



Blue Wood Aster*



Seashore Mallow*

First two rows: JC Raulston Arboretum at NC State University Last two rows: Debbie Roos, Chatham Co. Agriculture Extension Agent, Chatham Mills Pollinator Paradise Demonstration Garden