

SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER 2020

# HOME GARDENER NEWSLETTER



Jackson & Swain Counties Cooperative Extension Service



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## New Horticulture Agent

First of all, I would like to introduce myself! I'm Katie Ashley and I'm your new horticulture agent in Jackson and Swain counties as Christy Bredenkamp is now the County Extension Director in Macon county.

I am originally from Florida, where my family has worked in the citrus industry for many generations. I earned my bachelor's degree from The University of Central Florida in biology and my master's degree in botany and plant pathology from The University of Maine, where I worked with blueberry growers and did research on mummy berry.

In between my studies, I served in The Peace Corps in Nicaragua and AmeriCorps in the southwestern US. I enjoy being outdoors, growing and cooking food, live music, and travelling.

I'm more than happy to meet with anyone who is having plant problems or who would just like to say hello! Please feel free to reach out by email at [Katie\\_Ashley@ncsu.edu](mailto:Katie_Ashley@ncsu.edu) or by phone at the Jackson office at 828-586-4009 or the Swain office at 828-488-3848. I'm looking forward to meeting and working with you all!



# Garden Activity Calendar

September and October are times when we start adjusting to cooler weather and thinking about the next growing season. Here are some tips to get you started with your plans and wrapping up your successful 2020 garden!

## September Activities

### Vegetables & Fruit

- Sow seeds for carrots, lettuce, mustard, radishes, greens and spinach and plant onion seed or sets.
- Transplant broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, and collards. Floating row covers can protect cabbage family crops from cabbageworm moths.
- Dig sweet potatoes either this month or next, before frost.
- Remove crop residues as soon as harvest is complete to reduce risk of pests or disease.
- Collect herbs for drying or freezing for winter use.
- Strawberry beds need one inch of water each week now for good flower bud development.

### Flowers

- Sow seeds in garden beds for these spring flowers: cardinal flower, delphinium, hollyhock, larkspur, lupine, poppy, Shasta daisy, and Stokesia.
- Set out new chrysanthemum plants this month.
- Plant pansies to add color in the autumn, winter, and spring months.

### Lawns

- Seed tall fescue and bluegrass lawns and mulch newly seeded areas with straw.
- Fertilize and lime tall fescue lawns with a slow release fertilizer.
- If needed, apply an insecticide for lawn grubs in early September or consider biological pest controls available from some mail order businesses.
- Core-aerate cool season lawns this month or next if soil is compacted.

### Miscellaneous Tasks

- Wait to prune plants to prevent winter injury.
- Submit soil samples for spring fertilizer recommendations. Apply lime according to results.
- Continue feeding hummingbirds. Migrating birds need lots of feeding stations along their route.



## October Activities

### Vegetables & Fruit

- Plant lettuce, green onions, carrots, radishes and most leafy greens inside the cold frame.
- Pick green tomatoes before frost. Rinse in a 10% bleach solution and place in a dark place to ripen.
- Harvest pumpkins, winter squash, and gourds before frost.
- Plant garlic and shallots in late October or early November.
- Sow cover crops such as clover, annual rye, barley and buckwheat in fallow winter beds to improve soil structure and suppress weeds.
- Pick up fallen fruit and harvest any fruit still hanging to prevent diseases.

### Flowers

- Collect flowers for dry winter arrangements before frost.
- Plant spring flowering bulbs such as daffodil, tulip, crocus, and hyacinth now through early winter. Fertilize at planting.
- Plant or transplant peonies.
- Divide and plant flowering perennials.
- Cut back perennials after frost has killed the tips. Leave some seed heads for winter birds.
- Remove dead annuals from the garden; compost unless infested with insects or disease.
- Dig and store non-hardy summer bulbs (gladiolus, dahlia, caladium).

### Lawns

- Fertilize cool-season lawns with 1 lb. nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft., if not done last month.
- Remove thick layers of leaves from the lawn to prevent dieback in grass. Compost the leaves or give them to another gardener.
- Mow cool-season lawns 3 inches high.

### Miscellaneous Tasks

- Prepare garden equipment for winter storage.
- Store unused seeds and collected seeds in a cool, dry location.
- Store leftover fertilizers in a dry location.
- Turn the compost pile, incorporating layers of chopped autumn leaves.

### Shrubs and Trees

- Plant trees, shrubs and groundcovers. Keep them watered during dry winter months.
- Prune maple, birch, elm, and willow trees now through January if needed.
- Pull bagworms off shrubs to prevent re-infestation next year.





Eastern Cicada Killer with cicada prey underneath



European Hornet



Yellowjacket



Asian Giant Hornet: **Not** in NC!

## Hornets & Wasps

Several people have noticed large flying insects and can't help but either wonder what they are or duck for cover! There is a lot of concern about the arrival of the Asian giant hornet, or "murder hornet" to Washington state, however eradication efforts are underway to reduce the spread of this pest. Additionally at this time, no Asian giant hornets have been reported in North Carolina, however we do have several look-a-likes which are no cause for concern.

The first look-a-like which we've been seeing quite a few of recently is the Eastern cicada killer. These large wasps are fascinating insects which are active during the summer. The males lack stingers, and the females have stingers but are non aggressive and only sting when mishandled. They can commonly be seen flying carrying a dead cicada, a large insect by which these wasps get their names.

A second look-a-like is the European hornet, the largest hornet commonly found in the United States. The adults are about 1 ½ inches long and are brown with yellow stripes on their abdomen. Their heads are reddish brown and become yellow near the face. Unlike other stinging pests, these hornets also fly at night and are attracted to lights. These hornets can girdle tree branches and be minor pests of beehives and prey on worker honey bees.

A third look-a-like is the Eastern yellowjacket. While there are other species of yellowjackets in North Carolina, the Eastern yellowjacket is the most common. Like honeybees, they are protective of their hive and will swarm and sting if disturbed. They are about the size of a honeybee. Queens and males are produced around this time of year in the late summer and early fall. Unlike the females, males don't sting and have much longer antennae. Yellowjackets are attracted to sugary substances such as drinks and fruit, and other foods as well.

For a longer list of look-a-likes, check out this article by Matt Bertone:  
<https://entomology.ces.ncsu.edu/murder-hornet-comparison/>

Also, if you or someone you know finds an insect that is causing concern, feel free to reach out to your local extension office!



# Upcoming Events

## September Events

**September 22nd 10-11:30am via Zoom**  
Plants, Pests, Pathogens (PPP) Meeting  
Topic: Using the Extension Gardener Plant  
Toolbox to Find the Right Plant for the Site  
<https://gardening.ces.ncsu.edu/programs-3/plants-pests-and-pathogens/>

**September 2-December 16 Wednesdays 6-8pm**  
Backyard Naturalist Program (14-Week Program)  
<https://chatham.ces.ncsu.edu/2020/08/carolina-backyard-naturalist-online/>

**September 10th 7pm via Zoom**  
Smoky Mountain BeeKeepers Association Meeting

**September 15th 7pm via Zoom**  
Jackson County BeeKeepers Association Meeting

**September 15th 10-11:30am via Zoom**  
Climate Change in NC  
Rebecca Ward, Extension Climatologist

## October Events

**October 27th 10-11:30am via Zoom**  
Plants, Pests, Pathogens (PPP) Meeting  
Topic: Current Pest and Plant Disease Issues in NC  
<https://gardening.ces.ncsu.edu/programs-3/plants-pests-and-pathogens/>

**September 2-December 16 Wednesdays 6-8pm**  
Backyard Naturalist Program (14-Week Program)  
<https://chatham.ces.ncsu.edu/2020/08/carolina-backyard-naturalist-online/>

**October 7th & 14th 10-12pm via Zoom**  
Climate Resilient Gardening  
Laura Lengnick, Chief Scientist Cultivating Resilience

**October 8th 7pm via Zoom**  
Smoky Mountain BeeKeepers Association

**October 20th 7pm via Zoom**  
Jackson County BeeKeepers Association



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