



Helping Carolinians Increase Their Knowledge of Gardening, Manage Their Landscape Investment & Protect the Environment

NC STATE UNIVERSITY NORTH CAROLINA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

JC Raulston Arboretum Plant Focus

Deciduous Azaleas Dazzle with Color

Deciduous azaleas may not compete with their evergreen relatives in popularity, but they definitely have their place, especially in naturalized landscapes. Such landscapes take advantage of existing native plants, especially large trees, often incorporating them all into a mulched area which reduces the need for mowing. Deciduous azaleas can add to these settings by providing impact with their flowers without detracting from the natural look. Deciduous azaleas, which botanically are in the genus *Rhododendron*, generally do well in the typical azalea conditions of filtered shade and acidic, well-drained soil with a high organic matter content.

Unlike evergreen azaleas, some of their deciduous cousins can be found growing wild in the southeastern U.S. One of the showiest species is the flame azalea, *Rhododendron calendulaceum*. This species and other native azaleas in the mountains are sometimes called honeysuckle. The flowers are frequently a bright orange although they may range into yellow or red. One of the most widely distributed species is *Rhododendron periclymenoides* (formerly *Rhododendron nudiflorum*), sometimes called the pinxterbloom azalea. It features pink flowers and, like the flame azalea, blooms in the spring. The plumleaf azalea, *Rhododendron prunifolium*, is different in that its orange to orange-red blooms arrive in the summer.

Although many hybrid cultivars of deciduous azaleas have been developed, some are not heat tolerant. Good choices are species that are native to your part of North Carolina or named cultivars which may have been developed using these species. The hybrid rhododendron collection at the JC Raulston Arboretum (JCRA) at NC State University is extensive and will provide many ideas for your garden. Look for 'Early Red Flame', a cultivar of the flame azalea, on the east side of the JCRA. Learn more at www.ncsu.edu/jcraulstonarboretum. **Kevin Starr**



Flame Azalea
Robert E. Lyons ©

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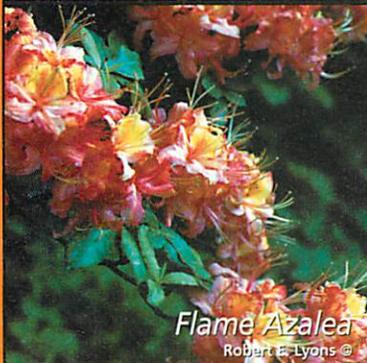


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- National Association of County Agricultural Agents
- Southern Extension Forest Resource Specialists
- N.C. Association of County Agricultural Agents
- Mecklenburg County Priority Awards
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Flame Azalea
Robert E. Lyons ©



Pinxterbloom Azalea
Robert E. Lyons ©



Flame Azalea
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Weed Control in Lawns

Step one in lawn weed control is to practice tolerance. If the Biltmore Estate and most public gardens in Europe allow plants that are normally considered weeds to grow in their lawns, so can you. Weeds control erosion. Sometimes weeds improve lawn coverage, and certain weeds will capture fertilizer from the air.

Gardeners desiring a monoculture of grass alone should concentrate on cultural and chemical methods. Cultural methods include any technique that favors the growth of lawn grass. The two most critical cultural methods are fertilizing and mowing.

Proper soil fertilization and proper soil pH will favor turf over certain weeds. Sourgrass will not grow when the pH is correct and a proper pH also stunts chickweed. Proper mowing height for your turf discriminates against weeds as well. For example, mowing tall fescue at 3 inches keeps the ground shaded. Many annual weeds, including crabgrass, will not germinate in the shade.

Gardeners desiring more weed control can use herbicides. The best herbicide programs target broadleaf weeds such as clover, dandelion or

chickweed with a postemergence herbicide.

Generally, two applications are necessary. A late fall or winter application kills winter annual weeds while a late spring application kills summer annual weeds.

For grassy weeds such as chickweed, target with a herbicide applied before the weed germinates. For crabgrass in the Piedmont, apply preemergent herbicides in late February or early March. Make sure any herbicide you use is labeled for the specific grass that you are growing. There are over six species of turfgrass and most herbicides can't be used on all of them.

Two broadleaf applications and one grassy weed application will kill most lawn weeds. Exceptions include wild garlic, nutsedge and existing perennial grasses such as Bermuda. There are methods to suppress or kill these weeds without damaging your lawn. The Agricultural Chemicals Manual at <http://ipmwww.ncsu.edu/agchem/agchem.html> or your local Extension Center can help match the proper herbicide for your particular weed and turf.

David Goforth

2003 All-America Rose Selections

Rose cultivars labeled All-America Rose Selections (AARS) are ones you will want to consider for your garden. Every AARS rose completes an extensive two-year trial program where it's judged on disease resistance, flower production, color and fragrance. Four were selected as the 2003 winners: 'Eureka', 'Cherry Parfait', 'Whisper' and 'Hot Cocoa'.

'Eureka', which is nearly as wide as it is tall, provides a sparkling hedge-type look with its glittering gold hues. The 3 1/2-foot-tall AARS floribunda offers a beautiful, old-fashioned-looking bloom in rich apricot yellow with 4-inch flowers. In groups of three or five, 'Eureka' offers a golden anchor to the border, a centerpiece or accent area. This rose is expected to become very popular due to its abundant blooms, exceptional reblooming ability, glossy green leaves, easy-to-grow vigor and light fragrance.



2003 AARS ©

'Cherry Parfait'



2003 AARS ©

'Eureka'



2003 AARS ©

'Whisper'

Hybrid tea lovers will find the color pureness of 'Whisper' most attractive. This is one of the most stunning white roses introduced in the past decade. Developed by Colin Dickson in Ireland, 'Whisper' enchants the viewer with classically formed flowers of creamy white with dark green, semi-glossy leaves. Very resistant to disease, 'Whisper' is equally at home as a specimen plant or in a cutting garden. This sophisticated rose will grow up to 5 1/2 feet by 4 feet and boasts 5-inch flowers.

The grandiflora winner, 'Cherry Parfait', takes maximum advantage of

see **All-America** on page 3, photo page 4 ▶

Q&A Are old pesticides still usable?

Gardeners often have pesticides from a few seasons back and wonder if they are still usable. The biological efficacy of pesticides will gradually decrease with time regardless of how the product is stored. Nearly all chemicals have a limited shelf-life but proper storage will increase the amount of time the pesticide can be used. If pesticides are stored under dry, cool conditions, out of direct sunlight and with the container properly closed, they should retain their effectiveness for several years. Extreme heat or freezing temperatures will

reduce the effectiveness of pesticides.

The best way to dispose of pesticides is to use them while they are still good, always following their label instructions. Never use chemicals that have undergone a physical change such as forming lumps, discoloring or separating. Never use a chemical that has been suspended, canceled or does not have a label. If you have a pesticide for which you are unsure of the name, contact your local Cooperative Extension Center for help in identifying the product. Your Extension Center also can advise you on where to take old pesticides for disposal. **Diane Ashburn**

All-America

continued from page 2

its shrubby appearance as the background for its very showy color. White petals with a broad red edge create a treat for the eyes. Excellent in all climates, 'Cherry Parfait' has a loose habit that makes it a perfect companion plant in the garden for perennials and shrubbery. Seemingly always in bloom, this bicolor rose is attractive throughout the season, accented by its dark foliage. With its massive dose of color and dark foliage, 'Cherry Parfait' also is an effective container plant.

'Hot Cocoa' is a color that gardeners simply can't agree on, a very novel brownish-orange floribunda washed with smoke on the top and a deep rusty orange on the underside. Perhaps "smoky chocolate orange" best describes it! In any case, people of all ages are attracted to 'Hot Cocoa', whose pointed buds of deep rust unfurl to reveal the color that some call cinnamon brown and which often takes on a purplish cast. These large 4-inch flowers hold their color and tolerate heat very well.

Learn more about these AARS winners at www.rose.org/. **Karen Neill**

ENVIRO-TIP

Consider These Water-wise Tips

When drought conditions result in limited water supplies, a water-wise landscape is critical. Here are a few water-wise tips for you to consider:

- Water thoroughly, but infrequently, to a depth of 6 to 8 inches to encourage roots to seek water and nutrients from deep in the soil.
- Drip irrigation and soaker hoses will apply water slowly and directly to the roots of plants through small flexible pipes and flow control devices called emitters. Drip irrigation usually costs less and uses 30 to 50 percent less water than sprinkler irrigation. Since water is applied directly to the root zone, evaporation and runoff are minimized. Avoid watering at mid-day when evaporation losses are at their highest.
- Do not water when there is wind; you can lose up to 50 percent of your water. Early morning watering should help coastal gardeners when wind speeds are typically at their lowest. Wind also can cause uneven water distribution.
- Use overhead sprinklers on cloudy days to prevent evaporation losses.
- Watering early in the day reduces evaporation loss and allows plant foliage to dry.
- Resist cultivating the soil which

will increase moisture loss.

- Vegetables like moisture, but over-watering them is harmful. Plants may look wilted on a hot summer afternoon. They will usually perk up overnight. If plants are wilted in the morning, water immediately.
- Hand watering is not just for newly planted ornamental plants. It is also an effective and efficient way to apply water to plants that show signs of stress during dry periods. The direct application of water to the base of the plant, provided it is applied slowly enough to be absorbed by the soil, uses less water and is more efficient than sprinkler irrigation. To avoid runoff when using a hand-held hose, use a nozzle that divides the spray into rain-size droplets. Resist the temptation to fire hose your plants lightly every day with your thumb over the end of a hose. This is the worst possible way to hand water.
- Use a rainfall sensor to split watering responsibilities with Mother Nature.

To ensure that you have a water-wise landscape, contact your local Extension Center for additional help.

David Barkley



Robert E. Lyons ©

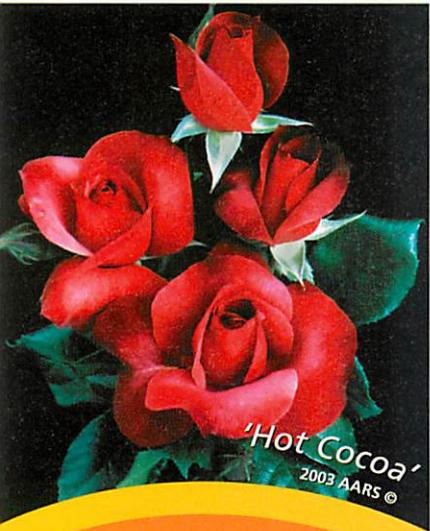
Hens-and-Chicks

gardentalk



"If there is magic on the planet, it is contained in the water."

– Loren Easley



Gardening in April

Lawns

- Plant warm-season grasses, such as zoysia, Bermuda, centipede and St. Augustine, from mid-April to early June.
- Apply fertilizer to warm-season grasses according to results from your soil test.
- Patch bare lawn areas by sowing new seeds, planting sprigs or plugs or placing pieces of sod.
- Cut grass at the appropriate height per type you are growing: tall fescue at 3 inches, Bermuda at 2 inches, centipede at 1 1/2 to 2 inches and zoysia at 1 to 2 inches.
- Treat the summer broadleaf weeds with an herbicide before it gets too hot and the weeds get too good of a hold on the turf.

Ornamentals

- As azaleas, rhododendrons and camellias finish blooming, add fertilizer and mulch.
- Prune azaleas, rhododendrons and oakleaf hydrangeas, as well as other spring bloomers, after bloom is finished.
- Sow annual seeds in the ground toward the end of the month and buy flats of annuals after the frost-free date in your area. Check the flats of flowers on the leaf underside for insects and insect eggs before buying.
 - Fertilize perennials and feed roses monthly. Begin a regular spray program for roses every 10 to 14 days to control black spot, aphids, spider mites and other pests.

Edibles

- Sow beans and corn toward the end of this month.
- Transplant tomatoes toward the middle of the month but be prepared to cover tomatoes if frost is in the forecast for your area.
- Set out transplants of hardy perennial herbs such as thyme, rosemary and sage. Transplants of dill, fennel and parsley can also be set out now. **Craig Mauney**

www.ncstate-plants.net

requires you to hop on the information highway to find your one-stop garden spot to get gardening questions answered and to find a myriad of resources, no matter where your gardening interests lie.

Brought to you by North Carolina Cooperative Extension and the Department of Horticultural Science at NC State University, this Web site provides a wealth of information that is based on research. You won't have to wade through advertisements and you will find nothing but the facts.

Whether it's a question on weeds, trees, fruits, vegetables, perennials, herbs, annuals, propagation techniques, poisonous plants, how to deal with moles, ideas on some great garden spots to visit in your area (plus much more!), this Web site is worth a visit throughout the year.

While you're on the information highway, also visit www.successfulgardener.org.

Ben Dungan

Garden Spot



Extension's *Successful Gardener*SM program provides timely, research-based horticultural information. The newsletter is part of the statewide horticulture program which includes Extension's *Successful Gardener*SM Regional Seminar Series and county workshops. We publish 10 issues per year. Comments concerning *Successful Gardener*SM may be sent to:

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