

JC Raulston Arboretum Plant Focus

Deciduous Magnolias Provide Artistic Shapes

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

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- International Association of Business Communicators
- National Association of County Agricultural Agents
- Southern Extension Forest Resource Specialists
- N.C. Association of County Agricultural Agents
- Mecklenburg County Priority Awards
- Printing Industry of the Carolinas

Deciduous magnolias offer some of the most beautiful flowers for gardeners. The trees also provide artistic shapes and winter interest. Because some of the deciduous magnolias grow in shrub form, they offer the gardener the chance to use them in small areas. The biggest problem is that so many bloom early in the season and are damaged by late frosts.

Deciduous magnolias perform best in full sun to partial shade. They like a well-drained, porous, organically rich soil with a pH of 5.5 to 6.5. A northern exposure for early spring-flowering cultivars may be most suitable to help delay flowering and possibly escape frost damage.

Saucer magnolia, *Magnolia x soulangiana*, also sometimes called tulip magnolia, generally grows 20 to 30 feet in height and blooms in white, pink and purple. It can begin blooming as early as February. Star magnolia, *Magnolia stellata*, generally reaches a height of 15 to 20 feet and can bloom as early as late February to early March. The star magnolia flowers are generally white, although some open as pink and then fade to white.

The National Arboretum has developed a group of deciduous magnolias known as "The Little Girls". These cultivars are the result of hybridizing different cultivars of *M. liliiflora* and *M. stellata*. Some of the names of these cultivars are 'Ann', 'Betty', 'Judy', 'Susan' and 'Jane'. These cultivars bloom 2 to 4 weeks later than *M. stellata* and *M. x soulangiana*, giving them a better chance of not being damaged by a late frost. They range in color from white to reddish-purple to pink.

The JC Raulston Arboretum (JCRA) in Raleigh has one of the most extensive collections of magnolias in the world, including "The Little Girls" cultivars. For a taller tree form, consider 'Spectrum' and 'Galaxy', both with pink flowers. Yellow is a newer flower color for deciduous magnolias and is represented well by 'Yellow Lantern', 'Elizabeth', 'Yellow Bird' and 'Butterflies', all easily viewed at the JCRA. To learn more, access www.ncsu.edu/jcraulstonarboretum.

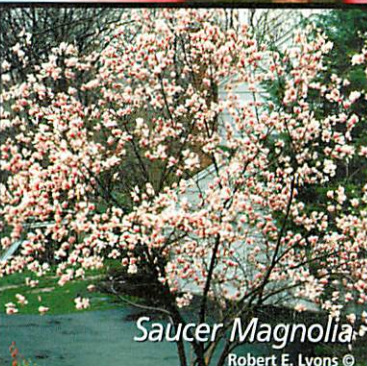
Emily Revels



'Elizabeth'
Robert E. Lyons ©



Star Magnolia
Robert E. Lyons ©



Saucer Magnolia
Robert E. Lyons ©

'Ann'
Robert E. Lyons ©



Fall-Blooming Perennials Emphasize Rich Tones of Season

The long, hot days of summer can make even the best-kept gardens look worn and weary. Insects and diseases love the hot, humid weather and have had their way with most of the perennial border. Not to worry. Including some late summer and fall bloomers in the garden can cure this dilemma.

One of the most common is the garden chrysanthemum. Mums have showy flowers in a wide range of sizes and shapes, from small, button-sized flowers to large globes in many colors. I'll never forget the day I stumbled upon a two-acre plot maintained by the mum breeders at a research facility. What a blaze of glory emphasizing the rich, warm tones of fall!

The foliage must be pinched back when the plants are 6 to 8 inches tall and then again before the plant sets flower buds, typically by mid-July so they will bloom in the fall. Besides being a winner in the garden, mums make an excellent cut flower.

If mums are too common, try some flowers in the genus *Eupatorium*, namely hardy ageratum, *E. coelestinum*, and the bigger cousin, Joe-Pye weed, *E. purpureum*. The former is a tall, graceful native that has numerous small flat clusters of bright blue or violet flowers on 2-foot plants that attract and keep butterflies happy. Hardy ageratum, also called mistflower, loves moist, sunny areas and tolerates poor drainage. It has become a choice perennial with 8 weeks of blue flowers. It spreads readily by rhizomes but any extras can be pulled out easily.

Joe-Pye and Spotted Joe-Pye, *E. maculatum*, provide a show-stopping display. Height varies by

variety with a range from 5 to 8 feet tall with billowing, large, pale pinkish-mauve flowers. Joe-Pye is beautiful swaying in the breeze singly or as a backdrop for other perennials and shrubs. You can shorten plants by cutting the stems in half in early summer. Moist, sunny locations are best but it will tolerate some shade.

Swamp sunflower, *Helianthus angustifolius*, is similar in size with abundant golden-yellow flowers covering the upper third of the plant. This is another spreading plant if soil is loose. These can be dug and divided in the spring.

Significantly shorter but a good companion to ones already described is goldenrod, or plants in the genus *Solidago*. Goldenrod is another North American native that brings to mind the naturalistic meadow garden. Its flowers can range from elm-like branched plumes to golden-spiked slender wands and flat-topped clumps. This plant has been used in European gardens for hundreds of years but has been neglected in American gardens. Many of the newer selections are not as aggressive and flower well in dry, sunny locations.

Ornamental grasses have been well behaved all summer but once the fall arrives they will be in their glory. Flower spikes 8 to 10 inches in length appear in the fall and the foliage turns to a golden hue. Look for names like maiden grass, *Miscanthus*; switch grass, *Panicum*; fountain grass, *Pennisetum*; and feather reed grass, *Calamagrostis*. These grasses complement the flowering perennials now and the evergreens in the winter months. **Carl Matyac**



Robert E. Lyons ©

'Crown of Rays' Goldenrod



Robert E. Lyons ©

'Lynn' Garden Mum



Robert E. Lyons ©

'Gateway' Joe-Pye Weed

Discover Muscadines

North Carolina produces more than 1,200 tons of muscadine grapes, often called scuppernongs, each year for fresh consumption and wine with a total farm value of \$374,000 annually. Native to Eastern North Carolina, these grapes were discovered and enjoyed by early explorers and colonists. Sir Walter Raleigh's explorers, captains Phillip Amadas and Arthur Barlowe, wrote in 1584 about muscadines: "Grapes of such greatness, yet wild, as France, Spain, nor Italy hath no greater."

Muscadine grapes continue to be popular today. They are easy to grow in the home garden.

To be successful, prune back each year, removing up to 90% of the vine along the main arms. When pruning, maintain the structural arms on a trellis with 2 to 3 inches of twigs bearing fruit buds along each arm. A soil pH of 6.5 is ideal and the site should be well drained. Adequate levels of boron are needed. Avoid shady areas and low-lying areas prone to cold temperatures.

Muscadine grapes provide additional income for farmers and represent an ongoing diversification of the state's agriculture industry. For more information about North Carolina muscadine grapes and the wine industry, visit www.ncstate-plants.net or www.ncwine.org.

David Barkley



Robert E. Lyons ©

Muscadine Grapes

Q&A What causes these round black spots on pecan kernels?

Stinkbugs and possibly related true bugs cause this damage when they feed on the immature nuts. While some pesticides kill stinkbugs, you could make several applications and still only get partial control. Most people don't have the equipment to spray a mature pecan tree anyway. Commercial orchards reduce stinkbugs by controlling broadleaf weeds around the trees. I haven't found this technique worthwhile for home-

owners with one or two trees, but it is worth trying in larger plantings. Stinkbugs overwinter as adults in protected areas. Removing old lumber piles and similar sites may pay dividends. Try to keep planting of peas and other crops that are attractive to stinkbugs away from the pecan trees. Beyond these few steps, you have to live with the damage. While the spot turns bitter, this bitterness doesn't extend to the rest of the kernel.

David Goforth

ENVIRO-TIP

Don't Send Natural Resource Up in Smoke

North Carolina is known for the outstanding fall color of its autumn leaves. Unfortunately, these leaves soon fall to the ground and the air is filled with the odor of burning leaves. Although many communities still allow burning of leaves, it is not the best or most environmentally sound method of disposal. The open burning of leaves produces particulate matter and hydrocarbons which contain a number of toxic, irritant and carcinogenic compounds, including carbon monoxide. It also creates a fire hazard.

Composting is a better alternative for leaf disposal. Proper composting does not cause health or fire hazards and, in fact, can be beneficial to gardens and lawns. Good composting is a process that speeds up what Mother Nature

does naturally. Place the leaves in a pile or bin, provide adequate moisture and turn the pile periodically. Microorganisms will gradually and safely break down the leaves into a humus-like product called compost.

Compost can serve many purposes in your own yard. Use compost as mulch in flower beds or add to the garden or to potting soils as a soil conditioner. Apply compost to your lawn as an organic matter source when planting new grass. Composting leaves will transform them from a waste to a resource that can help you become a more successful gardener.

Fred Miller



Robert E. Lyons ©

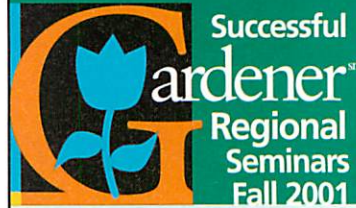


gardentalk

"Why are there trees
I never walk under but
large and melodious
thoughts descend upon me?"

— Walt Whitman

Announcing Extension's



Learn about fall lawn care, caring for trees and shrubs, growing perennials and herbs, landscape design, and environmental tips on how to use water wisely and reduce the use of pesticides and fertilizers.

► Thursday, October 11

- 6 to 8 p.m. (5 p.m. for self-guided tours through garden)
- Perennials – Beyond the Basics
- Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, Belmont
- Speaker: Ann Armstrong, Extension Master Gardenersm, Mecklenburg
- Details: (704) 922-2110
- Registration: (704) 829-1271
- Fee: \$8

► Sunday, October 14

- 2 to 4 p.m.
- Caring for Trees and Shrubs
- Legacy Demonstration Garden, Greensboro
- Speakers: Extension Master Gardenersm, Guilford
- Details: (336) 375-5876
- No registration required
- Free

► Thursday, October 18

- 6 to 8 p.m. (5 p.m. for self-guided tours through garden)
- Growing Herbs in the Piedmont
- Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, Belmont
- Speaker: Debbie Moore-Clark, Extension Master Gardenersm, Mecklenburg
- Details: (704) 922-2110
- Registration: (704) 829-1271
- Fee: \$8

► Sunday, October 21

- 2 to 4 p.m.
- Greensboro Arboretum
- Landscape Design with an Organic Emphasis
- Speakers: Julie Blitzen and Nancy Cavanaugh, Cove Creek Gardens
- Details: (336) 375-5876
- No preregistration
- \$5 at the door



Garden Spot

The Gene Strowd Community Rose Garden,

located in Chapel Hill, features over 600 roses. The garden was dedicated to Fletcher Eugene Strowd in 1990 for his role in planning and planting several hundred of the roses during the garden's construction.

The garden is a half acre in size and can be toured with other gardens in the Chapel Hill area. The garden features climbing roses and ramblers along a split rail fence. The Learning Garden is next to the Gene Strowd Community Rose Garden and is abundantly planted with annuals and perennials. A gazebo is available for picnic lunches.

The grounds are maintained by a partnership between the Chapel Hill Rose Society and the Park and Recreation Department. The garden is handicapped accessible.

The garden, at 120 South Estes Drive, is off US 15/501 Bypass. It is open daily from sunrise to sunset. No admission fee is charged.

For more information on the Gene Strowd Community Rose Garden call (919) 968-2784.

Cyndi Lauderdale

Gardening in October

Lawns

- Fescue and bluegrass lawns may be fertilized with 1 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet, if not done in September.
- Do not apply nitrogen to warm-season lawns.
- If desired, Bermuda lawns may be overseeded with annual rye.
- Keep leaves off of lawn.

Ornamentals

- Do not prune shrubs, except to snip off an occasional stray shoot.
 - Plant trees and shrubs. Be sure to loosen roots on container-grown plants and situate the top of the root ball a little above the soil line.
 - Plant pansies early for best flowering in winter and spring.
 - Take cuttings of begonias, coleus, geraniums and impatiens to root and grow indoors during winter.
 - Remove bagworms from evergreens to prevent reinfestation next year.
 - Move houseplants indoors before temperatures dip below 45 degrees.
 - Plant spring-flowering bulbs beginning in late October.
 - To help trigger roses into dormancy, stop deadheading spent flowers and allow rose hips to form.
- ### Edibles
- Plant garlic and bulbing onions for harvest next summer.
 - Dig sweet potatoes before frost.
 - Keep Chinese chestnut burs and pecans picked up regularly to reduce weevil populations next year.
 - Rake all leaves and fruit from under fruit trees. Also remove any fruit left hanging in trees. Good sanitation is important to reduce insect and disease populations.

Linda Blue



Tune in to "Making It Grow!" – a gardening show featuring Extension agents from the Carolinas. Saturdays, noon, WTVI 42, Charlotte

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Successful Gardener™ Editor
Mecklenburg County Extension Center
700 N. Tryon St. • Charlotte, NC 28202

Editor and Project Coordinator: **Leah Chester-Davis**
Extension Communication Specialist – Urban Programs

Project Coordinator: **Emily Revels**
Consumer Horticulture Agent, Mecklenburg County

Assistant Editor: **Karen Neill**
Consumer Horticulture Agent, Guilford County

Compilations Editor: **Ben Dungan**
Consumer Horticulture Agent, Gaston County

| County | Name | Phone |
|-------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Buncombe | Linda Blue | (828)255-5522 |
| Cabarrus | David Goforth | (704)792-0430 |
| Catawba | Fred Miller | (828)465-8240 |
| Currituck | Tim Clune | (252)232-2261 |
| Durham | Paul McKenzie | (919)560-0525 |
| Forsyth | Craig Mauney | (336)767-8213 |
| Gaston | Ben Dungan | (704)922-0771 |
| Guilford | Karen Neill | (336)375-5555 |
| Henderson | Bill Skelton | (828)697-4111 |
| Lincoln | Kevin Starr | (704)736-8452 |
| Mecklenburg | John MacNair | (704)336-2561 |
| | Emily Revels | (704)336-2561 |
| Nash | Mike Wilder | (252)459-9810 |
| New Hanover | David Barkley | (910)452-6393 |
| Northampton | Heather Lifsey | (252)534-2711 |
| Orange | Royce Hardin | (919)245-2050 |
| Pitt | Danny Lauderdale | (252)757-2801 |
| Polk | John Vining | (828)894-8218 |
| Randolph | Amy Lynn Bartel | (336)318-6005 |
| Rowan | Darrell Blackwelder | (704)633-0571 |
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| Wake | Carl Matyac | (919)250-1100 |
| Wilson | Cyndi Lauderdale | (252)237-0113 |

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