



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

JC Raulston Arboretum Plant Focus

Rosemary Provides Landscape Variety, Culinary Delight

Rosemary, *Rosmarinus officinalis*, is an attractive, drought-tolerant perennial that should be part of everyone's landscape or herb garden. Steeped in thousands of years of myth and tradition, and known as the herb of love and remembrance, rosemary delights both beginners and seasoned gardeners.

Many varieties exist, with some hardy to -10 degrees F as long as they have some time to slowly harden off in the fall. Classified as either upright or creeping, some varieties grow tall and upright, others low and bushy. The upright varieties make a good, informal hedge. Prostrate varieties look best in pots or cascading over masonry or rock walls or in rock gardens where the individual branches create interesting edge patterns. These also can be shaped by selective pruning. All varieties are evergreen and most will bear tiny white or blue flowers intermittently, making it a decorative shrub. Put this together with its value as an herb and this plant is a winner.

Native to coastal regions of the Mediterranean and North Africa, the Latin name *Rosmarinus* means dew of the sea, a reference to the shimmering blue flowers that cover the plant. Like most Mediterranean plants, it needs good drainage and a hot, sunny site.

Popular rosemary cultivars that grow upright include 'Gorizia', 'Tuscan Blue', 'Salem' and 'Arp'. 'Gorizia' has leaves that are double the size of more ordinary varieties. Mature plants may grow to 5 feet tall and wide. 'Tuscan Blue' has strong, upright thick stems and can reach heights of 7 feet or more. 'Salem' grows to 4 or 5 feet with dark blue flowers reminiscent of common rosemary. 'Arp' is referred to as the winter hardy variety and grows to about 5 feet. For the best-looking prostrate rosemary, consider 'Blue Boy'.

One of the best places to sample rosemary with your eyes and nose is the Paradise Garden in the JC Raulston Arboretum. A soldier row presentation of these plants, rigid in formation, is protecting the fort, situated along the west border of the Paradise Garden. Learn more at www.ncsu.edu/jcraulstonarboretum. **Karen Neill**



Rosemary
Robert E. Lyons ©



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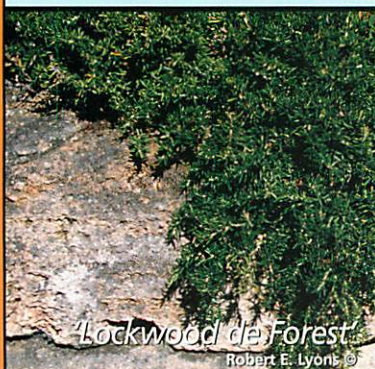


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Garden Spot

TOP AWARDS RECEIVED FROM:

- Garden Writers Association
- 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



'Lockwood de Forest'
Robert E. Lyons ©



'Tuscan Blue'
Robert E. Lyons ©



'Prostratus'
Robert E. Lyons ©



Get Growing! Garden for Good Health

No matter what kind of space you have, you can grow a vegetable garden. An area as small as 25-square-feet can feed a family. If you live in a condo or an apartment, grow vegetables and herbs in containers on your patio or deck. Containers can be half barrels, bushel baskets, five-gallon tubs, window boxes and other creative containers. Creative gardeners grow vegetables, fruits and herbs in flower beds and mixed in with ornamentals. For those with disabilities, raised beds help make gardening possible. Any type of garden space will grow a productive vegetable garden with planning and good cultural practices.

One of the bonuses to growing vegetables, fruits and herbs is the superior quality, freshness and taste compared to what you're likely to purchase in stores. This superior taste may renew the desire in both you and your children to eat more vegetables and fruits. They are a convenience food, too. Eat them raw or cooked, with a meal or as a snack to improve your diet. A healthy diet has big payoffs and, conversely, an unhealthy diet is one of the causes of rising health problems and medical costs.

Obesity is now called the greatest health hazard in the United States. Data from the International Food Information Council says that 25 percent of America's children are obese or at risk of becoming obese. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Community Nutrition Mapping Project reports that almost half of North Carolinians are overweight. While the USDA recommends that all Americans eat 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables a day for good health, less than half of the population in North Carolina meets the daily vegetable recommendations and even fewer meet the fruit recommendations. This information alone is good reason to grow your own vegetables and fruits.

Often, both children and adults tend to eat what they help grow. So, get growing!

Gardening benefits extend even further. Gardening is great exercise, burning anywhere from 250 to 400 calories per hour, depending on your intensity while doing your garden chores. A daily visit to your garden can be part of your exercise program and the bounty from your garden can be part of your healthy eating plan. Instead of being a couch potato, grow a potato and a tomato and burn some calories.

Gardening relieves stress and provides mental relaxation while also satisfying the human instinct to nurture. With the rewards of fruits, vegetables and flowers, gardening provides tremendous enjoyment and brings beauty to you and the world.

Involving children in gardening is a great way to spend time with them as well as teach them invaluable lessons of life. The knowledge of where plants come from, how fruits and vegetables grow and the requirements for the plants to live and survive is something children will enjoy learning. It teaches them responsibility and respect for living things and nature. Working in the dirt and getting their hands dirty while producing vegetables and fruits is a lesson that will stay with them for a lifetime.

Emily Revels

"Be Healthy – Grow What You Eat"

Extension's Successful Gardener seminars around the state this spring will demonstrate how to grow a garden as part of *Successful Gardener's* "Be Healthy – Grow What You Eat" program. Watch for this at the Southern Spring Home & Garden Show in Charlotte, March 3-7, and the Southern Ideal Home Show in Greensboro, March 26-28. To learn more go to www.successfulgardener.org.



Robert E. Lyons ©

Sour Cherry



Robert E. Lyons ©

Herb Garden

Plant Strawberries Now

For many folks, picking strawberries means going to the local strawberry farm. Others like to grow their own in the garden.

March is a good time to set dormant strawberry plants in the garden. Since strawberries will be in the same spot several years, it's worth your time to do a good job of preparing the soil. This includes a soil sample taken well in advance of planting so that you can lime and fertilize the soil properly.

Home gardeners will likely get the best results with the standard matted-row method. With this system, a single row of plants becomes a wide or matted row during the first growing season. Harvest begins the second spring.

Variety selection is crucial and varies with the region of the state. For instance, 'Earliglow' is adapted to the Piedmont and mountains whereas 'Titan' is adapted to the Piedmont and coastal plain. For details on variety selection and

overall culture, contact your local Cooperative Extension Center and ask for the publication, *Grapes and Berries for the Garden*.

Your local Extension agent can also provide you with a list of sources for strawberry plants. If you are like the majority of people who simply want to buy them at local farms, the agent can provide you with the names and locations of growers in your area.

Kevin Starr

Q&A How do I keep deer from eating my plants?

Deer invasions continue to be a problem for home gardeners. There are more deer today than ever and they adapt very well to suburban living. Control measures that are available include fencing, repellents or plants that are deer resistant.

When looking at fencing as an option, the size of your fence can be crucial. If you choose to go with a woven fence, nine feet is considered adequate. However, a six-foot solid fence will also deter deer as it prevents them from seeing where they are jumping. A two-strand fence will work well if the deer population in the area is light.

Repellents such as Hinder, Thiram, Big Game Repellent and Deer Away work well. Spray these products on the plants you don't want deer to eat. Reapply repellents after a big rain or on new plant growth. Hanging bars of soap from tree branches or distributing human smells (such as human hair) will also serve as deterrents if populations of deer are small. However, just like the repellents, you must reapply or replace them after rainfall or new growth for them to be effective.

For a list of deer resistant plants, contact your county Cooperative Extension Center.

Ben Dungan

ENVIRO-TIP

Why IPM Is Important for Your Garden

No method of pest management will give complete control of pests in the garden. For many years, chemical control was the most used method of pest control, but the overuse of pesticides in the garden has resulted in some pests developing resistance to chemicals. The use of chemicals has caused the decline of beneficial insects, too. While correct use of pesticides is safe for the consumer, public perception is becoming increasingly negative toward the use of chemical pesticides.

Integrated pest management (IPM) is the practice of combining cultural and biological controls, along with pesticides, to manage the level of insects that can be present without causing unacceptable damage to a crop. In other words, some insects can be present in the garden without ruining the crop. IPM helps to control pests to an acceptable level by using methods such as timing of crops, rotating crops, planting resistant varieties and introducing beneficial insects.

IPM also recognizes the importance of combining these methods

with some chemical use and with educating the gardener on the importance of regular scouting and monitoring of crops to catch problems early. Good garden maintenance is important to keep the plants growing vigorously so that they will be better able to withstand some insect presence.

The ability to accept less-than-perfect crops is an important part of IPM. A small flaw on a fruit or vegetable does not make it worthless. The gardener who really wants to lessen the use of chemicals in the garden will come to terms with minor imperfections and will take immense satisfaction in the fact that his garden is using lower amounts of chemicals.

Donna Teasley



Robert E. Lyons ©

gardentalk



"There is nothing that is comparable to it, as satisfactory or as thrilling, as gathering the vegetables one has grown."

– Alice B. Toklas

Announcing Extension's



► Wednesday, March 3

- 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- Southern Spring Home & Garden Show, Charlotte Merchandise Mart
- Details: (704) 933-0301

► Saturday, March 13

- 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- Hickory Metro Convention Center, 1960 13th Avenue Drive SE, Hickory
- Details: (828) 465-8240

► Saturday, March 20

- 9 a.m. to Noon
- Pease Auditorium, Central Piedmont Community College, Charlotte
- Details: (704) 336-2561

► Saturday, March 27

- 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., various times
- Southern Ideal Home Show, Greensboro Coliseum
- Details: (336) 375-5876

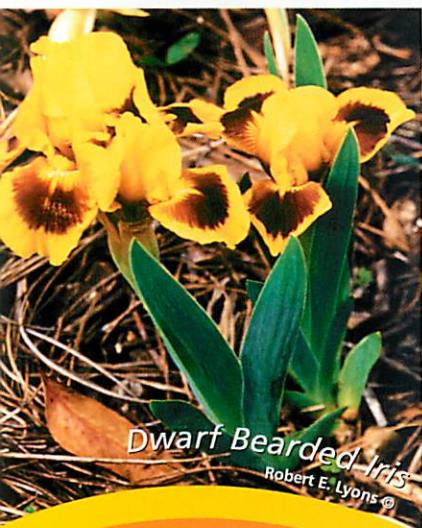
► Friday, April 16 – Sunday, April 18

- On the hour and half hour throughout the show
- Southern Ideal Home Show, State Fairgrounds, Raleigh
- Details: (919) 245-2050

In addition to these *Successful Gardener* Regional Seminars, many counties offer *Successful Gardener* workshops throughout the year. Below are dates for Nash County *Successful Gardener* workshops. All will be at the Nash County Agriculture Center. For details, call (252) 459-9810

► Thursday, March 25, 7 p.m.

- Lawn Establishment and Care
- Saturday, April 24
- 9 a.m. to Noon
- Container Gardening



Dwarf Bearded Iris
Robert E. Lyons ©

Farmers' markets

are one of the "good things" in life. They are the shopping destination for anyone looking for the freshest vegetables, fruits and flowers. They also are a good place for families to visit, providing a chance to talk with the farmers who grow the produce. Many markets plan special activities centered around a particular commodity, such as watermelon day, strawberry day or herb day. Some markets hold Octoberfests, Christmas tree festivals or Extension Master Gardener plant clinics.

The N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services operates markets in Asheville, Charlotte, Raleigh, Greensboro and Lumberton. In addition, many local town markets sell just-picked-from-the-garden produce. They are usually open to the public from April through December.

Your county Cooperative Extension Center is a valuable resource for locating farmers' markets in your area.

To learn about the state markets, access www.ncagr.com.

Willie Earl Wilson

Gardening in March

Lawns

- Apply cool-season lawn fertilizer no later than early March so the nitrogen will run out before hot weather arrives in June.
- Apply crabgrass preventer in mid-March or when forsythias are in bloom. Proper timing will help prevent crabgrass seed from germinating.
- Reseed bare spots in cool-season lawns.
- Newly seeded lawns can be damaged by herbicides. Be sure to read herbicide labels to prevent harm to new seedlings.
- Begin aerating and dethatching warm-season lawns such as Bermuda, centipede and zoysia before the grass greens up.

Ornamentals

- Trim old foliage on liriop and other ornamental grasses now; take care not to cut into the crown of the plant.
 - Prune spring-flowering shrubs such as forsythia after blooms fade. Prune summer-blooming shrubs such as crape myrtle.
 - Prune roses early in the month.
 - When planting trees and shrubs, dig the hole twice as wide but no deeper than the rootball. If staking is necessary, remove stakes after one year.
 - Plant a tree for Arbor Day, which is always the first Friday after March 15.
 - Now is a great time to transplant houseplants to a new pot. If your plants have been in the same pot for several years it's a good idea to give them fresh soil and a clean home.

Edibles

- Protect strawberry blooms from late frost by covering with sheets of cloth or plastic (don't let the plastic touch the plants).
- Plant fruit trees, blueberries and grapevines before buds break.
- Fertilize the asparagus bed in mid-March before new spears emerge. *Diane Ashburn*

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For a list of garden centers where you can find *Successful Gardener*SM, please call (704)336-2561 or visit Cooperative Extension on the web at <http://www.successfulgardener.org>

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