

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

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## JC Raulston Arboretum Plant Focus

### Versatile Vibrant Viburnums

"A garden without a viburnum is akin to life without music and art," says Michael A. Dirr, noted horticulturist. Choices abound. More than 150 species and cultivars range in size from low shrubs to small trees, with white or pink flowers, many fruit colors, for wet or dry areas, from formal to natural, native or exotic and with inspiring fall color. Leaves of viburnums vary in shape, texture and size. Flowering may occur from autumn to June, depending on the species. Viburnums are versatile, fitting into woodland plantings, borders, patios and public areas.

Natives *Viburnum alnifolium*, known as hobblebush, and *V. cassinoides*, Witherod viburnum, prefer moist to wet soils and shaded woodland. Both grow to about 6 feet high with white flowers. Hobblebush has red to black summer fruit with deep red foliage in autumn. Witherod viburnum will turn heads with variable fruit colors from green to pink to red, then blue to black. Other natives prefer drier or well-drained soils. Black haw, *V. prunifolium*, can survive in full sun or heavy shade. Downy arrowwood, *V. rafinesquianum*, will tolerate many soil types and cold winters. Native viburnums provide food for wildlife and are among the toughest of landscape plants.

Another attribute of some of the viburnums is a sweet fragrance. While a few are real stinkers, many of the exotic species provide a memorable experience while in bloom. Seasoned gardeners favor Koreanspice, *V. carlesii*, and the cultivar *V. x burkwoodii* 'Mohawk' for a delicious spicy fragrance and striking fall foliage. *V. x carlcephalum* 'Cayuga' has pink buds that open up to 5-inch, fragrant white, waxy flowers in spring. Leatherleaf viburnum, *V. rhytidophyllum*, lives up to its common name in cooler climates. Leaves are distinctly corrugated and deep green.

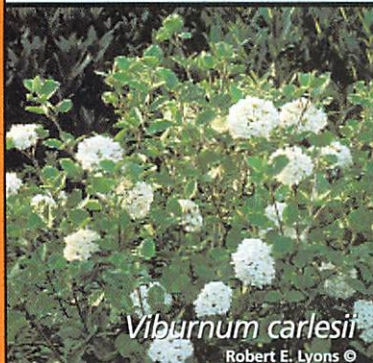
*Viburnum awabuki* 'Chindo' was introduced by J.C. Raulston. The leaves are lustrous and dark green. It will survive in all but wet soils. Growing 10 to 15 feet, it is one of the most desirable evergreen screening plants for sunny or shady areas. *Mike Wilder*

*Viburnum carlesii*  
'Compactum'

Robert E. Lyons ©



www.ces.ncsu.edu



*Viburnum carlesii*  
Robert E. Lyons ©



*Viburnum rhytidophyllum*  
Robert E. Lyons ©



*Viburnum davidii*  
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## Home Orchard Basics

A home orchard can be a great family project and can provide fresh fruit for family consumption. A well-established and maintained home orchard will also enhance the appearance of the home landscape. However, there is more to growing fruit than planting the trees and harvesting the crop. Growing high-quality tree fruit requires considerable knowledge about selecting cultivars, planting site, soil types, planting techniques, training, pruning, fertilizing and managing pests. Without sufficient and proper care for selected fruit, quality will be quite poor. Apples, pears, peaches, plums and cherries can be successfully grown in the home orchard if you follow some basic rules. Here is a brief summary of what it takes to have a home orchard.

Select your site to avoid spring frost. Spring frost is the number one reason for loss of tree fruit in North Carolina. Selecting an elevated site that may avoid frosty areas may help. Frost moves downhill and will fill in low areas much like water in a pond. A beautiful spring bloom along with frost or freeze equals no fruit.

Select fruit based on family preference and available space. Available time and pollination requirements also determine the size of the planting. Don't plant more than you can care for properly.

Consider planting several varieties of the same kind of fruit so that they mature at different times to prolong the harvest season. Some varieties are best for special uses, such as freezing, canning and other preservation methods. Purchasing some varieties in season from commercial growers may be more economical than growing them yourself.

Cross-pollination is necessary for satisfactory fruit set in many tree fruits. Select varieties that have overlapping bloom dates. To be certain of adequate cross-pollination, plant at least three varieties of apples. Many varieties will not cross-pollinate. Golden Delicious is used by many commercial growers as a pollinizer for other varieties of apples in their orchards.

Plant at least two varieties of pear, plum and sweet cherry. Japanese and European type plums are not generally effective as pollinizers for each other, so plant two varieties of the same type. Home production of sweet cherries is usually difficult in North Carolina. Sour cherries cannot be used to pollinate sweet cherries because they are different species. All of the sour cherry, peach and nectarine varieties are sufficiently self-fruitful to set

satisfactory crops with their own pollen. Apricots are not adapted to North Carolina.

### Buying Trees

Obtain the best nursery stock available. Buy only from reputable nurseries that guarantee their plants to be true to name, of high quality and packed and shipped correctly.

It's best to obtain 1-year-old trees. Trees from 3/8" to 5/8" caliper are preferred choices. Large, oversized trees are not recommended for the home orchard. Younger trees will bear almost as soon, are easier to keep alive and develop into healthier, more vigorous trees than do the oversized stock.

### Orchard Management

Test your soil prior to planting and adjust soil pH to 6.2. Add phosphorus, if needed, prior to planting. After planting, apply a complete fertilizer such as 10-10-10 at about 3 ounces per year for each year of growth. Apply one third of the total year's requirement, or 1 ounce, in early March, 1 ounce in late April and 1 ounce in early June. It is best to spread the fertilizer outside of the planting hole.

Mulch young fruit trees until they begin to bear. Eliminate weeds so they will not compete for available moisture and fertilizer. Cultivation must be shallow to avoid injury to roots near the surface. The cultivated or mulched area should extend a little beyond the spread of the branches.

Pest control is essential for production of tree fruit. Our climate provides the heat and moisture to grow numerous disease and insect pests that will damage and destroy your fruit. Proper timing and application of pest control sprays in the early season help bring the fruit to harvest season.

### Proper Pruning

Proper training and pruning are essential to help regulate growth, improve fruit size and quality, control tree size and reduce production costs. Pruning is necessary to shape the trees for convenience of culture and for repair of damage. Most pruning is done during the dormant season, preferably just before active growth begins in the spring.

This brief article touches only on the basics. Learn more before you invest time, energy and money in a home orchard. Contact your local Cooperative Extension Center and visit [www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/ag28.html](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/ag28.html) for a Home Orchard Production Manual. **Terry Garwood**

### gardentalk

*"Be merry all,  
be merry all,  
with holly  
dress the  
festive hall."*

Author unknown





## Q&amp;A

## How can I propagate some of my favorite plants in my landscape?

Layering is an easy way to multiply new plants from old ones. The principle of layering encourages the development of new roots on stems that are still attached to the parent plant. The rooted stem is then cut, producing a new plant growing on its own root system.

For simple layering, bend a low-growing, flexible stem, cover it with soil and peg it to the ground. Peg to the ground by placing rocks on tops of the stem to hold it in place and to ensure the plant stem has contact with the soil. Leave the remaining 6 to 12 inches above the soil. Bend the tip to a vertical position and secure to a small stake.

The sharp bend will often induce rooting, but slightly cutting or wounding the lower side of the bent branch (the part that is pegged) with a sharp knife may also help.

Most plants that have low-growing branches are suitable for layering. Use simple layering techniques to propagate climbing roses, forsythia, rhododendron, honeysuckle, boxwood, azalea, dogwood, magnolia and wax myrtle. Use this technique in early spring with a dormant branch, or in late summer using a mature branch. Periodically check for adequate moisture and for the formation of roots. It may take one or more seasons before the layer is ready to be removed for transplanting. *Carl Matyac*

ENVIRO-  
TIP

## Yes, You Can Recycle Your Christmas Tree

This year when the holiday season comes to a close, plan to give your Christmas tree back to the earth by having it recycled. Many municipalities have Christmas tree collection programs that give the trees extended use by shredding and using them as mulch and compost.

In order to recycle a Christmas tree make sure to remove all ornaments, tinsel, lights, hardware and stand. Christmas trees that have been sprayed with artificial snow will not be accepted for recycling. If the tree is taller than 5 feet, you will need to cut it in half. Avoid placing Christmas trees in the garbage with the rest of the trash. Instead, place on the curbside along with yard waste for recycling. Check your local paper for listed times and dates for Christmas tree removal.

If there isn't a Christmas tree recycling program in your area, here are other options for recycling and disposing of your tree.

- Submerge tree into a private fishpond. The tree becomes a fish feeding refuge.
- Place in the garden and use as a bird feeder and refuge. Eventually the tree will become brittle and then can be taken apart and chipped into mulch.
- Use as a soil erosion control barrier in a riverbed.

Don't burn Christmas trees in a fireplace or wood stove. Doing so will cause the buildup of creosote. Creosote buildup reduces the efficiency of your fireplace and is also highly flammable and therefore a potential fire hazard.

Recycling your Christmas tree will help to improve the soil and environment, provide wonderful smelling mulch and substantially reduce the amount of waste entering the landfill.

*Michelle Wallace*



## Nature's Gifts

The most imaginative and creative decorations for the holidays often come from Nature. Walk around your landscape and keep an eye out for possibilities. Look for greenery, colorful fall leaves, seed pods, berries, interesting bark, nuts, acorns, pine cones, moss, dried blossoms and flowers.

Always remember that when you are clipping materials, you are actually pruning the plants. Look at the overall shape of the plant before you start to prune, and carefully consider where you make cuts. Be sure to preserve the natural form of the plant.

The best way to keep the greenery material fresh is to use sharp, clean pruners, immediately place cut ends into water, keep material out of sunlight and immerse the greenery in water for 24 hours before using. This allows the cuttings to absorb a maximum amount of moisture.

Dried plant material can become flammable near heat sources. Use caution when using the material around candles, fireplaces, space heaters and lamps.

## Plant Material for Holiday Creations

Consider pine, juniper, cedar, fir, holly, ivy, boxwood, magnolia, nandina, pyracantha, acorns, pecans, pine cones, sweet gum balls, berries, hydrangea blossoms, cranberries, rose hips, grapevines, grasses, and fruits such as lemons, apples, oranges, pineapples, limes and kumquats. *Emily Revels*





Garden Spot

Established in 1963, **Weymouth Woods**, located near Southern Pines, became the state's first nature preserve. This 898-acre tract of land sits amidst the Sandhills of central North Carolina where vast forests of longleaf pines once flourished. Most of these magnificent trees have long since vanished but some fine specimens remain protected within the park. Weymouth Woods is home to endangered species of both wildlife and plants, and visitors enjoy the unique opportunity of seeing them in their natural habitat when they visit this carefully preserved bit of North Carolina history.

The park features hiking trails, a natural history museum and a regularly scheduled slate of educational programs. It is open year-round at no cost to the public. Special exploration tours of the preserve may be scheduled for school classes and other groups. Learn more about Weymouth Woods at [ils.unc.edu/parkproject/visit/wewo/home.html](http://ils.unc.edu/parkproject/visit/wewo/home.html).

Donna Teasley

## Gardening in December

### Gift Idea

▪ Treat your gardening friends and family to a gift subscription to *Extension's Successful Gardener*. Call (919) 513-3112 or visit [www.successfulgardener.org](http://www.successfulgardener.org).

### Lawns

- Remove all tree leaves from the lawn; add to compost pile.
- Monitor moisture levels in your warm-season lawn. Occasional irrigation may be necessary if drought occurs. Cool-season lawns generally require one inch of water per week.
- Apply a selective herbicide to manage annual bluegrass.
- Apply broadleaf herbicides as labeled to manage henbit, chickweed and wild onions or garlic.

### Ornamentals

- Keep newly planted evergreens on a regular watering schedule, especially if it doesn't rain. Dry, cold winds can harm foliage on plants that aren't yet established.
  - Fertilize winter annuals like pansies for good flower production. Don't forget to deadhead them.
    - Take leaf cuttings of your favorite houseplants like African violets and begonias.
      - Keep living Christmas trees outside until you are ready to decorate.

### Edibles

- Use cold wood ashes on your vegetable garden. They provide two-thirds the effect of a lime application in changing pH and are a good source of potassium.
  - Plant one- or two-year-old asparagus crowns. Select all male hybrids to prevent seed production.
    - Put pine needles or wheat or barley straw over strawberry plants.
  - Order seed catalogs for your summer vegetable garden.
    - Order fruit trees and grape vines for February or March planting.

Amy-Lynn Albertson



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