From the Agent

Hi Folks,

Happy spring! I’ve been enjoying working in my garden and yard and am thankful that the drought is over, for now, in our area. I wanted to let you know about several upcoming events [and apologize for the late notice].

The second and third parts of the Vegetable Gardening: Through the Seasons series are scheduled for May 2 (9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.) and Sept. 12 (9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.). The May 2 class will address planting seeds and transplants, watering, dealing with pests (diseases, insects, and weeds), harvesting, and preserving vegetables. Susan Garkalns, Extension Family and Consumer Science Agent, will teach the food preservation part of the class. Topics for the Sept. 12 class will include cleaning up the garden, composting, applying soil amendments, and using cover crops. There are limited spaces left in these classes, so call soon if you haven’t registered yet and want to come. For both classes, you can plan to either bring a bagged lunch or leave for a lunch break.

On May 4, we will have a Landscape Insects: Fire Ants and Other Key Pests class at the NC Zoo, in the Stedman Education Center (next to the North America entrance). It is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. – Noon. I will speak about fire ants, and Dr. Steve Frank, Extension Entomologist from NC State University, will talk about the “other” pests. Please call to pre-register. Space is limited, and fire ants are a hot topic, so call early to get a seat.

You may [or may not] have noticed that I did not send a newsletter during the first quarter of this year. I have decided to move towards e-mail as the primary communication line with home gardeners (and others) and have been announcing events that way. I also send information about upcoming events to the local newspapers. I will probably continue to send information by mail from time to time, but please sign up for e-mail news if you have computer access—it helps us to save money when we use less postage and paper.

Regards,

Mary Helen Ferguson
Extension Agent
maryhelen_ferguson@ncsu.edu

For events: For accommodations for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact Mary Helen Ferguson at 336-318-6000 (phone), 336-318-6011 (FAX), by e-mail (maryhelen_ferguson@ncsu.edu), or in person no later than three business days before the class.
Woodland Steward Series
1st Annual Piedmont Short Course for Private Landowners Offered
Adapted from press release by Amy Garascia

The health, productivity and ecological character of North Carolina woodlands rest largely in the hands of family forest owners. Woodland owners enjoy trees and other natural resources for their social, environmental and economic benefits. This course is designed to help property owners (especially those with 20 acres or less) understand the basic principles of forest stewardship to enrich their experience as a woodland owner.

Woodland owners interested in managing their land and developing an understanding of the basic principles of woodland stewardship are invited to participate in a unique educational event scheduled for this spring. A team of land management experts from federal and state agencies, universities, and the private sector are coordinating efforts to offer the Piedmont Woodland Steward Series through the Biltmore Forest School.

Forty-eight hours over 4 workshops will be provided with opportunities to engage with natural resource and land management specialists. Sessions include both hands-on activities in the field and instruction in the classroom. Introductory information on a wide variety of land management topics will be discussed.

Workshop Schedule:

Woodscaping Your Woodlands & Firewise Management (May 1 & 2)--A general overview of managing your forest land—how topography and soil affect the forest type and a tour of harvesting methods. Basic information on forest insects and diseases, pasture management, and secondary forest products. Reducing the risk of wildfire loss by becoming “Firewise” in your backyard.

Native Landscaping & Water Management (May 15 & 16)--A general overview of choosing and planting native plants for your property. Care of urban trees and basic information on invasive plants. Solving stormwater problems with plants and piedmont prairie restoration.

Stewardship, Recreation, & Liability (May 29 & 30)--Planning trails on your property, plus the basics of land ownership liability, recreational income opportunities, and conservation easements. Explore management practices in the field and apply your new knowledge and skills. Finalize your goals and objectives. Graduation ceremony and lunch will follow on Saturday for those who have attended at least 3 of the 4 workshops.

Registration
The cost is $50.00 per person per session, with spouse or other family member at $25.00. Registration includes lunch and snacks on the first day of each workshop as well as workshop-related materials. Reserve your spot for the whole course by registering early! Registration deadline is one week prior to the session desired. Credit toward NC Environmental Education Certification is available, as well as CEU credits. For more information and registration materials, visit www.cradleofforestry.org or contact Amy Garascia, Program Coordinator, at amysworkshopinfo@aol.com or 828-884-5713 ex. 26.

The course is sponsored by: the Cradle of Forestry Interpretive Association, North Carolina Division of Forest Resources, NC Cooperative Extension Service, USDA Forest Service, NC Zoo, NCWoodlands, Montgomery Community College, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, Land Trust for Central NC, and the US Fish & Wildlife Service.

(Note: I have a separate newsletter for forestry. Let me know if you’re interested in forestry events and news.)

Coming Up Later this Year
Watch for classes on lawn care and equipment, and small fruits in the home garden, in the late summer and fall. We will probably also have another horticulture-related lecture at the Zoo, as well.

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