



**Dear *Extension's Successful Gardener* E-tips Subscribers:**

Happy New Year! We have a full slate of *Extension's Successful Gardener* Learning Centers, seminars and other events scheduled for this spring. Visit us at one of the home and garden shows around the state and learn about research-based gardening techniques that work for North Carolina. Several dates are posted at the end of this month's gardening tips.

**Special Thanks to our January/February Newsletter Sponsor**

We extend thanks to Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation for getting 2007 kicked off to a great start for *Extension's Successful Gardener* team. Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation is the sponsor of our January/February issue. Ask for it now at your local garden center or order you own subscription at [www.successfulgardener.org](http://www.successfulgardener.org).

**Tips for January**

**Edibles**

- Continue to order garden seed.
- By the end of the month, seed cabbage, broccoli and other spring cole crops in the piedmont and coastal areas.
- Prune muscadine grape vines this month. The warm weather may cause the sap to drip but it won't hurt the grape vine.
- Prune bunch grapes now or wait until February.
- In the piedmont and coastal areas, start pruning peaches and plums this month. February would be the ideal month to prune them, but you need to prune before they bloom. In the mountains, do not prune peaches and plums until March.

**Lawns**

- With the warm weather, consider pesticide applications on some weeds.
- Most postemergent pesticides require active growth. (Definition: "post" means "after" and emergent means "coming out of the ground" so postemergent herbicides are herbicides used on the plant after it comes out of the ground. A preemergent herbicide, on the other hand, is for plants that have not emerged from

the ground.) An extended spell of weather above 50 degrees will cause some growth in winter annual plants and cool-season grasses like fescue. During a warm winter like we've had thus far, use broadleaf weed killers to kill winter weeds. Glyphosate will work on tall fescue during these warm spells. It's too early to apply preemergent herbicides.

- Do not burn off centipede grass to remove excessive debris because of possible injury to the grass and potential fire hazard. Do not fertilize centipede grass at this time. Apply broadleaf herbicides as necessary for control of chickweed, henbit and broadleaf weeds. Centipede grass is sensitive to certain herbicides such as 2,4-D, so follow label directions for reducing rates, and use with caution.
- There is no need to rush fertilizer lawn applications for cool-season grasses such as tall fescue. Prepare to apply fertilizer by the end of the month or the middle of next month.
- Make sure all the leaves have been removed from your lawn.
- This is a good month to have your lawn mower serviced and repaired. Sharpen your blade before spring mowing.

### **Ornamentals, Large Trees & Construction, Houseplants, Bluebirds**

- If you didn't get perennial beds mulched after leaf fall last year, do it quickly. Bulbs will start coming up soon and it is easier to put down mulch before that happens.
- If you are expanding your home or building a new house, you may want to consider these tips when it comes to deciding which trees to save and which need to go due to construction. As a rule of thumb, don't save any trees closer than 30 feet to the structure and only save selected trees closer than 60 feet. Trees closer than 30 feet are likely to be damaged during construction and may have to be removed anyway. If left close to the house, they will typically cost more to prune and also to remove if they become damaged during construction. Trees between 30 and 60 feet that are old or have potential hazards need to be removed prior to construction. Trees to keep are ones that still have plenty of life and will perform for several years in the landscape. Protect these trees with physical barriers that extend over their root system, and with penalties in a written contract for any breach of the barrier.
- If you have houseplants inside next to a window, make sure you give them extra care on cold nights. The cold temperature on the windowpanes can damage tender leaves and flowers. Pull plants away from the glass or close curtains or blinds at night.
- Houseplants do not need as much water during the winter months as they do in the summer, so reduce your watering and use little or no fertilizer. You can easily kill a houseplant by overwatering.
- During periods of cold, make sure your shrubs or trees have adequate moisture. You may have to water your shrubs and trees during predicted cold temperatures to protect roots. Cold temperatures can damage roots that are in dry soil.
- Clean out bird houses and put up new ones. Bluebirds and some other songbirds start scouting for spring nest boxes in February.

## *Extension's Successful Gardener Learning Centers and Seminars*

- **Feb. 23 – 25, Triad Home Show, Benton Convention Center, Winston-Salem.** Saturday, Feb. 24 will feature *Extension's Successful Gardener* seminars "Successful Lawns and Landscapes," from 10 a.m. to Noon. Extension agents and Master Gardeners will be available to answer your gardening questions throughout the show.
- **Feb. 28 – March 4, Southern Spring Home & Garden Show, Charlotte Merchandise Mart.** Every day features *Extension's Successful Gardener* Learning Center. Friday, March 2, is *Extension's Successful Gardener* and Master Gardener Day and will feature seminars by Bryce Lane of In the Garden with Bryce Lane TV show, Todd Meier of *Fine Gardening* magazine, and Linda Blue and Jim Monroe, N.C. Cooperative Extension horticulture agents and members of the *Successful Gardener* team. The day will feature a container gardening contest and a showcase of winning Extension Master Gardener volunteer efforts.
- **March 9 – 11, Southern Ideal Home Show, Greensboro Coliseum.** Will feature *Extension's Successful Gardener* Learning Center and seminars, and a container gardening contest.
- **March 23 – 25, Carolina Home & Garden Show, Cumberland County Crown Center, Fayetteville.**
- **April 13 – 15, Southern Ideal Home Show, State Fairgrounds, Raleigh.** Will feature *Extension's Successful Gardener* Learning Center and container gardening contest.

### **North Carolina Cooperative Extension**

We offer educational programs in all 100 North Carolina counties and the Cherokee Reservation. Visit [www.ces.ncsu.edu](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu) and click on County Centers to learn more about programs in your county and to find local contact information.

**Until next month, Happy Successful Gardening!**

