



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

Thanks to those of you who visited *Extension's Successful Gardener* Learning Center at a home and garden show this spring. We thank CORTAID® for sponsoring both our March and April newsletter issues, which were available at the shows. We want to let you know that this 10-month-per-year, award-winning newsletter is available by subscription and is packed with useful information for the North Carolina gardener. To order your own subscription of this magazine-quality newsletter, visit www.successfulgardener.org.

Special Thanks to Our Sponsors

CORTAID®

Extension's Successful Gardener newsletter, March and April issues.

Green Industry Council, Brazeal Stone, Super Sod, Outdoor Lighting Perspectives,
Extension's Successful Gardener Learning Center, Southern Ideal Home Show, Raleigh

DeWayne's Home and Garden Showplace,

2007 Container Gardening Contest, Southern Ideal Home Show, Raleigh

April Gardening Tips

- The severe freeze event of earlier this month has damaged flowers, fruit, leaves and stems of some plants. Although the damage is obvious on some plants, it may not be obvious on other plants. There is nothing that you can do at this time other than normal plant care. We typically don't recommend fertilizer for plants under environmental stress so wait until the plant gets a new set of leaves and starts growing before fertilizing. The plant will respond to this damage and determine which part of the plant will live and which parts won't. It isn't necessary to remove dead foliage or plant parts but you may want to remove them so the plant doesn't look so ugly. Waiting a few weeks will make it easier to see what is dead and what isn't.
- A single loss of leaves will not hurt a healthy tree. Elms, oaks, ash and poplar trees lost a set of leaves. Hickory trees in cooler sites (generally below 600 feet)

had leaf damage, while hickories on warmer sites still have their leaves. If the stem tissue wasn't hurt, these dead leaves will hang on most of the summer but new leaves will push out and produce food for the plant. In cases where there has been some stem damage, the stems will die later in the year. New buds should develop from the parts of the stem that are still alive.

- Plants with obvious stem damage now include Japanese maples and figs. Some plants may show the damage in a few weeks. Obvious suspects at this time include regular maples, ornamental cherries, dwarf yaupon, blackberries, blueberries, 'Forest Pansy' redbud and Oriental persimmons. Only time will tell how many other plants may have hidden damage. Muscadine grapes may not show the injury until they have a large crop load in late summer.
- Potatoes just coming up that were burnt back by frost one time should be okay. If they were more than 2 to 3 inches above ground before the freeze, then they may be spotty in reappearing or there may be skips. Yield will be reduced.
- Most typical strategies for protecting plants from late-season frost will only provide a few degrees of protection. They didn't provide enough protection to work this time around. The wall of water system did work if the plants were still below the water level. As an experiment, one gardener placed two-liter bottles filled with water in a circle around newly planted tomatoes. The tomatoes survived a dip to 16 degrees in that location. The bottles don't have to be airtight, but they do have to provide radiant heat to all sides of the plant.



- Most of the piedmont can look at the long-range forecast now and know whether to plant tender annuals. You should be able to plant beans, sweet corn, squash and cucumbers and transplant any tender annual.

- When purchasing bedding annuals this spring, choose properly grown plants with good color (green not pale yellowish). Buy plants with well-developed root systems that are vigorous, but not too large for their pots.
- Transplant in the late afternoon if you have a choice. This allows the plant to establish overnight.
- At this time of year, honeybees swarm, leave their hives and seek new hives. New swarms are not aggressive and should be left alone. During March, April, May and June, beekeepers will collect swarms that haven't picked out a home. Check with your Cooperative Extension Center for a list of beekeepers.
- Don't let the words other people say mess up your relationship with a plant. Just because everybody labels something a vegetable doesn't mean you can't plant it in the flowerbed. Tomatoes, peppers, Swiss chard, and asparagus will likely feel right at home in the flowerbed. Just because everybody labels pansies, daylilies or violets as flowers, doesn't mean you can't eat them. All these make colorful additions to salad. Just make sure you know something is edible and identify it correctly before you eat it.
- Do not throw out your Easter lilies; plant them in your garden. Select a bright, sunny spot and amend the soil with good organic matter. Remove the plant from the container and plant the lily with the bulb several inches deeper than it had been in the container. Fertilize with a general, all-purpose garden fertilizer and water thoroughly during the summer. The top of the plant may wither shortly after planting and then you may have new shoots emerge. The lily will probably not bloom this season and in the future the natural flowering time will be in June. Apply a 4-inch layer of mulch to the lily during the winter.

Cooperative Extension at Southern Women's Show

- Visit Extension's Successful Family Learning Center at the Southern Women's Show at the State Fairgrounds in Raleigh this coming weekend, April 27 – 29. Spin the prize wheel, pick up the new Healthy Eating Guide and attend cooking stage presentations. Visit www.ces.ncsu.edu/successfulfamily for details and a \$1 off coupon.

Until next month, Happy Successful Gardening!

