EVENTS ON THE HORIZON

MARCH 9: Onslow County Beekeepers Assoc. Monthly Meeting: Onslow County Complex, 4024 Richlands Hwy. Jacksonville. 7:00 - 9:00 pm.

MARCH 11: Onslow County Master Gardeners Monthly Meeting: Onslow County Complex, 4024 Richlands Hwy. Jacksonville. 9:00 - 11:00 am.

MARCH 29: Plant Disease and Insect Clinic Opens: Onslow County Complex, 4024 Richlands Hwy, Jacksonville. 9:00 am - Noon and 1:00 - 4:00 pm daily.

APRIL 8: Onslow County Master Gardeners Monthly Meeting: Onslow County Complex, 4024 Richlands Hwy. Jacksonville. 9:00 - 11:00 am.

APRIL 10: Onslow County Farmers Market Opening Day: Onslow County Complex Location, 4024 Richlands Hwy. 8:30 am - 1:30 pm.

APRIL 13: Onslow County Beekeepers Assoc. Monthly Meeting: Onslow County Complex, 4024 Richlands Hwy. Jacksonville. 7:00 - 9:00 pm.

APRIL 15: Onslow County Farmers Market Opening Day: Western Blvd. Location, behind Dick’s Sporting Goods. Noon - 6:00 pm.

LOOKING BACK

The annual Agricultural Awards Banquet was held February 9th at the Multipurpose Complex. Approximately 150 people were in attendance in spite of inclement weather. Following an excellent meal, the talented Capparucia Family provided some very enjoyable entertainment. Recognition was given to the many cooperator and groups of volunteers that support and expand the work of the NC Cooperative Extension Service here in Onslow County. During 2009, Onslow County Master Gardener Volunteers gave over 3,600 hours of service to citizens in Onslow County, bringing the total time volunteered since 1994 to over 35,000 hours. Recognition was given to Marion Goodman, Jean Rebholz and Jim Van
Getord for reaching the 500 hour milestone in volunteerism. Leona Lilley and Barbara Walters were recognized for reaching the 1,000 hour milestone. Special recognition was given to Jim and Sally Van Gorder who were awarded the 2009 Master Gardener Volunteer of the Year Award for their dedication and service. Attractive table arrangements were again provided by Master Gardeners.

DIGGING UP THE DIRT

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT IN THE LANDSCAPE

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a common sense, holistic approach to pest control that promotes good management and environmental stewardship strategies. Contrary to popular belief, IPM is not an organic approach. Less toxic approaches to control are always implemented first. Broad spectrum residual pesticides are used as a last resort based upon treatment thresholds being exceeded by the target pest.

IPM had its genesis in the agricultural community as a way to combat increasing pest resistance, save money on the increasing cost of pesticides and yes, to protect the environment/farmland. Due to the large scale of production agriculture, the business community and universities responded by producing fairly accurate pest economic thresholds to help farmers reduce pesticide usage and it worked. Pesticides were only applied when the damage being done by the pest exceeded the cost of the application and then only to suppress the pest population.

The adoption of IPM in the landscape has lagged behind primarily due to the lack of an economic incentive to foster the development of realistic pest thresholds for landscape pests. The fact that much of the pest damage to landscape plants is really cosmetic and not economic as some homeowners think also adds to the problem. Surveys reveal that homeowners use pesticides at 10 times the rate of farmers on a per acre basis and 75% of homeowners never even bother to read the label.

The purpose of IPM is to manage pests and disease organisms to keep them at acceptable levels rather than attempting total elimination which is not practical or even wise. All creatures and organisms in nature have a role. Nature strives to maintain a balance and so should we as homeowners. For some people this requires a radical change in thinking.

Let’s look briefly at four common sense IPM steps that all homeowners can implement that don’t rely on a known treatment threshold and some practical ways to put them into practice. You are probably going to say, “I know that already”, but as the Irish say, “Ah, in the doing, now there is the rub”.

Get to Know Your Landscape and Garden:
• Make a written plan to scale of your existing landscape
• Make a plant listing & conduct an annual plant inventory
• Learn what a healthy plant should look like
• Remove problem plants & replace with more adapted plants

Build a Healthy Garden That Attracts Natural Enemies:
• Prepare and amend the soil based on a soil test
• Incorporate organic matter into beds regularly
• Start a compost pile & a worm bin
• Reduce turf to practical areas
• Mulch beds and natural areas
• Plant in beds whenever possible
• Avoid planting plants with known disease & insect problems
• Match plants to site conditions
• Keep newly planted trees and shrubs watered for six months
• Avoid overhead watering that wets foliage
• Promptly remove diseased, infested or dead plant parts/plants
• Make pruning cuts properly to reduce disease infections

Recognize Natural Enemies & Plants That Attract Them:
• Leading beneficials - Lady beetles, lacewings, hover flies, preying mantids, pirate bugs, dragon flies, spiders, assassin bugs, predatory stink bugs, ground beetles and parasitic wasps
• Leading plant families that attract beneficials - Milkweed, Figwort, Aster, Madder/ Bedstraw, Carrot, and Mint
Develop Your Diagnostic Skills:
- Inspect your garden closely on a regular basis
- Keep a garden log/journal
- Consult reliable reference materials
- Invest in a hand lens
- Don’t jump to conclusions
- Look for symptom patterns on problem plants
- Examine all parts of the plant to include roots
- Utilize your county extension office plant clinic

IF corrective action is needed...
- Start with the most environmentally friendly control
- Try biological control pesticides first
- Selectively apply pesticides whenever possible
- Target the most susceptible stage of the pest’s life cycle
- Continue to monitor a plant’s health to determine if further action is warranted.

BUILDING YOUR REFERENCE LIBRARY

Creative Propagation: by Peter Thompson.

SPOTLIGHT

Extension Volunteers Recognized

The annual Onslow County Agricultural Awards Banquet was held on February 9th at the Onslow Multipurpose Complex. Recognition was given to the various groups of volunteers that give of themselves to support and expand the work of the NC Cooperative Extension Service here in Onslow County. During 2009, Onslow County Master Gardeners volunteered over 3,600 hours of service to local citizens.

Special recognition was given to Jim Van Gorder, Marion Goodman and Jean Rebholz for their 500 hours of volunteer time and Leona Lilley and Barbara Walters were also recognized for 1000 hours of volunteer time as Master Gardeners.

Special recognition was also given to Jim Van Gorder, who were named the 2009 Master Gardener Volunteers of the Year for their devotion to increasing the knowledge level of other master gardeners and the public.

Several local farmers received awards for crop production contests:

Corn Yield Champion (non-irrigated division): Barry Shepard, DeKalb 6971 with 205.60 bushels per acre. Runner-Up: Richlands Farms with, Pioneer 31G71 with 199.06 bushels per acre.

Corn Yield Champion (irrigated division): Donnie & Franklin Riggs, Pioneer 31M57 with 223.16 bushels per acre.

Wheat Yield Champion: Richlands Farms, Inc, USG 3592 with 83.09 bushels per acre. Runner-Up was Winzell Taylor Jr., Coker 9436 with 71.65 bushels per acre.

The Onslow County Agricultural Hall of Fame award was begun in 1984. The nominee can only be inducted to the Agricultural Hall of Fame once,

TALES FROM THE CLINIC

YELLOW ROSE TURNS RED

Every so often we get reports of a plant with flowers of one color “turning” another color and folks naturally wondering what happened to their plant. In a few cases, such as hydrangeas, the color of the flower on a given plant can actually change over time as a reflection of the change in soil pH. Also in rare cases, a nutrient deficiency/toxicity or viral infection may be involved. In most cases, what folks are witnessing is either new growth from the root stock overtaking the scion in a grafted plant or nature randomly producing a genetic mutation causing a sport to develop.
as either a recipient of the Master Farmer Award or the James R. Strickland Service to Agriculture Award. This year’s inductee was for the Master Farmer Award and that inductee was Mr. Ronnie Cox.

On January 19th, 4-H recognized Tina Gill as the 4-H Volunteer Leader of the year. Along with Mrs. Gill all 4-H volunteers were thanked and recognized for the years of service at the annual 4-H Volunteer Leaders Banquet. The theme this year was “4-H. Let it Grow, Let it Grow, Let it Grow”.

The Onslow County Extension and Community Association (ECA) celebrated their 2009 achievements on February 23rd. The speaker for the event was Lisa Whitman Grice, Onslow County Museum Director.

The event started off with a memorial to ECA members that had passed away since the last Achievement Day.

Several members were recognized for special awards. They are as follows:

**Perfect Attendance** - Several members were recognized for attending all of the club’s monthly meetings.

**Reading Certificates** - 6 members were recognized for reading a total of books and submitting book reports of all books read. 3 members were recognized for their reading reports. 1st Place went to Ruth Clifton turning in 49 book reports, 2nd place, Donna Williams turning in 2 book reports, an 3rd place, Barbara Nichols for turning in 13 book reports.

**Cofer Leader Program Award** - Nancy Goad from the Sneads Ferry club received this award for a lesson she presented to her club. All clubs voted on a member that had presented information during the year. Judges then picked the overall winner from reports presented to them.

**Most Outstanding Club Member** - The following members were recognized after being voted on by the club members as the club’s outstanding member: Jean Ross - Harmony; Kathy Cook - Jacksonville; Kathy Maready - Meadow View and Nettie King - Sneads Ferry.

**Most Outstanding Club** - This award is voted on by judges after seeing all the work done by a club’s members. This year’s award was presented to the Meadow View Club.

**Extension and Community Associate of the Year** - This award is given to an outstanding member that goes above and beyond the call of duty. This year’s award was presented to Barbara Crossman.

Other awards were given by were not available at the time of this release.

For more information regarding the Extension and Community Association please call Peggie Garner at 455-5873.