EVENTS ON THE HORIZON

MAY 11: **Satellite Plant Disease and Insect Clinic:** Onslow County Complex, 4024 Richlands Hwy., Jacksonville. 10:00 am - Noon.

MAY 11: **Onslow County Beekeepers Assoc. Monthly Meeting:** Onslow County Complex, 4024 Richlands Hwy., Jacksonville. 7:00 - 9:00 pm.

MAY 13: **Onslow County Master Gardeners Monthly Meeting:** Onslow County Farmers’ Market Building, 4024 Richlands Hwy., Jacksonville. 9:00 - 11:00 am.

JUNE 8: **Onslow County Beekeepers Assoc. Monthly Meeting:** Onslow County Complex, 4024 Richlands Hwy., Jacksonville. 7:00 - 9:00 pm.

JUNE 10: **Onslow County Master Gardeners Monthly Meeting:** Onslow County Complex, 4024 Richlands Hwy., Jacksonville. 9:00 - 11:00 am.

JUNE 12: **Onslow County Farmers Market Summer Fest:** 4024 Richlands Hwy., Jacksonville. Activities for the whole family. 8:30 am - 1:30 pm. Call (910) 340-0009 for details.

LOOKING BACK

The Onslow County Farmers’ Market opened for the 2010 season on April 10th at the Highway 24/258 site, with the largest opening attendance to date! The Western Blvd. site behind Dick’s Sporting Goods opened on April 15th, also with very good attendance. We continue to be amazed at the growing public support for buying local produce and farm goods. It takes a combined effort of many people to make the Farmers’ Market successful, not the least of which is our dedicated group of vendors and market coordinator, Larry Kent. The Jacksonville Daily News has been a strong proponent of the buying local movement, as well as the Onslow County Farmers’ Markets in particular. This year the Hwy 24/258 site is open on Tuesdays and Saturdays, 8:30 am – 1:30 pm through the first Saturday in November. The market is pleased to announce that it is partnering with Sturgeon City to sell live, farm-raised Southern Flounder.
The market at Western Blvd. is open on Thursdays from noon to 6:00 pm. Both sites are now equipped with Electronic Benefits Transfer and can handle both Food Stamp Credit Cards and debit cards.

DIGGING UP THE DIRT

It’s with a little bit of sadness and nostalgia that I write this, as it will be my last newsletter to you as horticultural agent here in Onslow County. The good Lord willing, effective July 1st, I plan to enter retirement after a little over 30 years of public service. I began my career in 1982 working with Cooperative Extension in Robeson county for 2 years and then spent a little over 12 years in the Markets Division of the NC Department of Agriculture, working with the numerous Horticultural Commodity Associations here in the state, particularly the grape industry. I can still recall the period during 1994 of struggling in my mind over whether or not to pursue applying for the newly created horticultural position here in Onslow county. I naturally was attracted to the idea of being able to come home and work in my county of birth. However, I was established and fairly comfortable in my position with NCDA and felt a fair amount of trepidation over changing my career and uprooting my family with two young children. I finally did feel that the good Lord was leading me to pursue the job and made application. I recall the morning that I drove over to interview with Danny Shaw, the current CED at that time. I thought that I knew how to get to the office downtown that was located on College Street in the old hospital where I was born in fact. I was quickly confused by the maze of streets and the odd angles that they ran and thought that I was going to be late for the interview. Thankfully, I made the interview on time and was fortunate to be given the opportunity to work here in the county these past 16 years.

As I recall, that first month of February in 1995 was cold and rainy which as it turns out seems to be the norm in most years. I also recall running hard those first six months trying to learn the area, its people and relearn a lot of technical knowledge that had grown dim in my mind during my 12 years at NCDA. I actually lost about 15 pound in the process. Some folks wonder with the last name of Morton why I would not know the area and many of the people. I was born here but did not have the opportunity to grow up here. My father farmed until his early 30’s and then left the area to attend Campbell College and SE Seminary in Wake Forest, becoming a Baptist minister with churches in Lillington, Durham and Spring Lake, NC. I actually grew up as a teenager and attended college at NCSU while we lived in Spring Lake. We came back home every so often to visit my grandmother who lived in the southwest community but I never really had the opportunity to see much of the county. Folks are surprised to know that I had never even been aboard Camp Lejeune until I moved back here in 1995, but that was the truth. My grandfather was one of the individuals who was required to sell land to the base in the 1940’s. He owned several hundred acres of land on Peter Field Point along the river where New River Air Station now sits.

Folks have often asked me what I enjoyed or appreciated most about working back here in my home county. There are several aspects. One has been meeting individuals who knew my grandfather that I never knew because he died the year before I was born. Others knew my late father as a youth and passed along a few stories that I had never heard that give both my siblings and I a good laugh. I have enjoyed working here trying to make a difference in the lives of both people whose families have been here for generations and those who have been planted here or chosen to retire here as a result of the Marine Corps. We really do have a diverse and wonderful group of people who strive for the most part to make this a good place to raise a family. You can only have admiration and respect for our active military and their dependents when you see the sacrifices that they make for the rest of us to keep this country free and strong. I have also enjoyed being surrounded by a fine group of people with the Extension service with whom I have had the privilege of serving our rapidly vanishing agricultural community which is composed of individuals that are the salt of the earth and the backbone of America. Lastly, I have enjoyed immensely getting to know the dozens of Master Gardener volunteers who have worked along side of me and other agents here in the office striving to meet the horticultural needs and interests of so many here in the area, civilian and military alike. They typify the volunteer spirit that is such a vital part of what makes Onslow County truly a great place to live.
When I was given the opportunity to work here I was asked by the Extension Service to focus on developing a master gardener program in the county. The fruit and vegetable horticultural advisory committee composed of farmers stated that their number one need was to have a viable farmers market established to give them a place to sell their produce directly to the public. It has taken a lot of time, effort and energy by many different people over the years and the blessings of the good Lord to make both of them become a reality. It would not have been possible without the support of my family, an understanding wife, Onslow county commissioners & administration, both of my county extension directors and an excellent secretary. During the past few years we have also been able to re-establish an active beekeepers association here in the county of which I take some personal satisfaction since my father was a hobby beekeeper for years and developed a deep appreciation in me for this tiny, social insect that is so important to our food production.

Some folks ask me is there anything left undone and what are you going to do with yourself? I do intend to stay active and work part-time hopefully in the horticultural field for a while. I do plan to volunteer through the master gardener program and the Onslow county museum foundation. There is a large on-going extension and master gardener sponsored project, Discovery Gardens, that has yet to come to fruition on the grounds here behind the extension office. Hopefully these gardens will become a reality and improve the horticultural educational opportunities for youth, adults and seniors here in Onslow county as well as quality of life. My wife and I have undertaken the renovation of my grandfather’s 110 year old home, located in the southwest community and it is still not complete even though we have been living there almost two years. Plenty to do. I hope that the good Lord may even give me opportunity to do some short-term mission work in Central America.

I trust that the information contained in these newsletters have been of some benefit to you over the years and that you will continue to avail yourself of the many services offered to you through the Cooperative Extension Office here which is the outreach arm of North Carolina State University.

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**TALES FROM THE CLINIC**

**GALLS ON OAKS CAUSED BY WASPS**

During the past few weeks some folks have seen some unusual swellings (Galls) on the limbs and twigs of oaks. There are a whole host of insects and mites that can produce these swellings usually as a result of powerful enzymes being produced by the immature stages of the insect developing inside the stem tissue. The ones being seen recently were caused by a small cynipid wasp. They resemble small potatoes on the stem. Some have small horn looking structures and others don’t. Many have a stage that also produces galls on the oak leaves as well. Primarily these galls are cosmetic and do not pose a threat to the life of the tree. However sometimes they can become very numerous and unsightly. Chemical control is seldom warranted and if the tree is large not even practical. Pruning out infected twigs/limbs and cleaning-up/disposing of infested leaves may be all that is needed. If a spray is to be used then it’s important to try and time the application when the adult wasps emerge from the galls which can be in the winter, but often is late spring to early summer. The ideal route to go is to put some of the galls in a plastic bag in the shade or inside and spray when you see the tiny wasps emerge in the bag. Liquid Sevin is a product labeled for homeowner use.

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**BUILDING YOUR REFERENCE LIBRARY**

The 4-H motto is:

“To Make the Best Better”, so make the best better by enrolling now to learn something new and meet new people. The 4-H office along with those giving leadership to the activities hope you have an enjoyable summer and invite youth age 5 - 19 to take advantage of the many opportunities offered in the Avenues of Interest Summer Program.

We invite you to join us for an exciting summer!!! Any youth in Onslow County may enroll in one or more workshops, you do not have to be a 4-H’er to register, just come by the 4-H office at 4024 Richlands Highway, Jacksonville. Call us at 455-5873 or you can also check our web site to see what classes we offer and if they are full. (http://onslow.ces.ncsu.edu) All programs have a registration fee, which must be paid when you register. Registration will not be held at the workshop or activity.

All monies collected are used for supplies and or instructor fees. Again, do not miss out on an exciting summer of 4-H activities.