



Cumberland Gardener

Cumberland County Cooperative Extension

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Happy New Year!

As the new year begins, Cumberland County Cooperative Extension would like to wish each of you a very happy and prosperous new year! We also extend our appreciation for the unwavering support we have received. It is our privilege to enrich, educate and empower the lives of Cumberland County citizens. We look forward to providing up-to-date educational information and programs in 2015 for our community residents.

IT'S WHAT'S IN BLOOM!

Winter Wonders

Although it is winter, your landscape and garden can be bright and vibrant by including winter blooming plants. Below are three plant selections that are absolutely "must haves" for the winter garden.

Camellia

What evergreen shrub cheers up a dreary winter day? Is versatile, elegant, reliable, and absolutely gorgeous in any landscape? Why the answer is Camellias! This old southern favorite is prized for its iridescent showy flowers and lush dark green leaves. Camellias provide a permanent framework for your landscape as borders, bonsais, low or tall hedges, and will thrive in containers. These shrubs can grow to a very old age. One is recorded at the Emperor's house in Japan to be over 500 years old. The International Camellia Society has recorded over 40,000 cultivars in the world. Every garden should have at least one.

Camellias are evergreen shrubs that bloom from November to April depending on the cultivar. They exhibit a wide range of flower size and forms from 2 to 5 inches in diameter. Flower colors are pristine white, pinks, the deepest of reds, and all shades in between, including speckled and bicolor ones as well. There are even yellow camellias.

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Camellia's growth habits vary from low and spreading to tall, upright and densely bushy. Camellias are so diverse in size, habit, and flowers that they can enhance every landscape with elegance.

There are many species of camellias to include: *Camellia sasanqua*, *C. japonica*, *C. reticulata*, *C. sinensis*, *C. nitidissima*, *C. oleifera*, and *C. salvenensis*. These species have been crossed to make the many hybrids of today. Let's take a look at a few of them individually.

Camellia sasanqua, or as commonly called Sasanqua, blooms in November and December. They are evergreen with dark green glossy leaves about 2 inches in length. Their flowers may be single or double bloom, 2 to 3 inches in diameter and very fragrant. Sasanquas are fast growing and easy to espalier and train along a wall or fence.

Camellia japonica produce flowers from February through April with blooms ranging in size from 3 to 5 inches across. There are several forms of flowers including single, double, anemone, peony, formal double and semi double. These plants have larger leaves than Sasanquas and grow to a height of about 12 feet in our area. *Camellia japonica* is spectacular in full bloom.

Camellia sinensis is the original tea camellia. Generations have harvested the leaves of this camellia for thousands of years to make tea. It flowers in the fall with small white to

creamy colored blooms. The tea camellia can grow up to ten feet tall and like other camellias is evergreen as well.

Camellia reticulata produces very large and showy flowers. This species is not very cold tolerant or conducive to our hot, humid summers. The shrub itself is rather open in form. However, hybrids of *C. reticulata* crossed with *C. japonica* and *C. saluensis* create quite extravagant flowers and cold hardy plants.

Ackermann hybrids are very cold tolerant camellias. The late 70's winters all but destroyed the *C. sasanqua* and *C. japonica* collection at the U.S. National Arboretum. Dr. Ackermann, a research horticulturist, at the arboretum noticed that the species *C. oleifera* was untouched by the cold. Subsequently he made interspecific crosses between Sasanqua and *C. oleifera* among others and produced the Ackerman hybrids. These plants proved to be cold hardy to zone 6b which was quite a breakthrough in the camellia world. These cultivars are available at nurseries and garden centers today.

C. nitidissima are the yellow flowered camellias. These were discovered in China and Vietnam. Hybridizers have had some success crossing these with *C. japonica*. The flowers are smaller than *C. japonica* but come in many shades of yellow and forms. There are many cultivars of camellia with yellow flowers available today.





Camellias are relatively easy to grow and all require the same growing conditions.

Provide shade at sunrise and during the hottest part of the day to prevent leaf scorch and flower bleaching. They prefer slightly acid soil with plenty of organic matter or humus such as peat moss, leaf litter or cow manure. Good drainage is absolutely necessary as camellias do not like “wet feet”.

At planting, dig the hole three to four times as wide as the root ball. Mix in the humus for a 50/50 mixture. Provide almost constant moisture to help establishment of newly planted camellias.

Give extra water during the summer because flower buds are forming at this time of year. Bud drop or smaller flowers may result if the plant dries out. Place the neck, which is the part of the main stem that meets the roots, slightly above ground because camellias are shallow rooted and planting too deep is sure death. Apply a 2-3 inch layer of mulch to keep roots cool and moisture in. Fertilize with 8-16 ounces of cottonseed meal or a slow release commercial fertilizer. Be sure to follow directions since camellias are sensitive to fertilizers and overfeeding can kill them.

Pests are minimal on camellias; however, there are a few to be on the lookout for.

Aphids attack the newest growth. They are easy to control with applications of insecticidal soap or simply wipe them off.

Camellia tea scale and spider mites live on the undersides of the leaves with overlapping generations. Tea scale is white in color but spider mites are practically microscopic. The symptom of tea scale is yellow mottling on the upper sides of the leaves. The symptom of spider mites is a bronzing color to the leaves. Scout for these insects in May and spray with horticultural oil. Be certain to get good coverage and follow up with another scouting later in the year and possibly a second application of the oil.

There are three main fungi which can cause problems for camellias. The fungus *Phytophthora cinnamomi* causes root rot from having wet feet. The whole plant may wilt, especially in summer months, and the roots will be brown. Another fungus, *Glorerella cingulata* causes branch dieback. It enters the plant through wounds and causes a limb to die. Good sanitation helps prevent the spread of the fungus. Flower blight is caused by *Ciborinia camelliae*. This fungus causes discoloration and brown splotches on the flowers only. It helps to remove all fallen flowers; however, there is no cure for fungal infections, only prevention and treatment.

Visit the Cape Fear Botanical Garden in Fayetteville or the J.C Raulston Arboretum in Raleigh to see what is in bloom at different times during the year. A trip to either garden will allow you to experience firsthand the growth habit, flower color and size of various cultivars in all their glory. For a real prize in your yard – plant camellias.



Suggested camellia cultivars
that do well in our area:

<i>Camellia japonica</i> cultivars	
'Ack-scent'	'Governor Moulton'
'Professor Sargeant'	'April Dawn'
'April Blush'	'April Snow'
'Silver Waves'	'Betty Sheffield'
'Nuccio's Gem'	'Nuccio's Pink'
'Tama'	'Pink Perfection'
'Lemon Glow'	'Kramer's Supreme'
'Greensboro Red'	'Lady Clare'
<i>Camellia sasanqua</i> cultivars	
'Cleopatra'	'Hanajiman'
'Kanjiro'	'Shishigashirs'
'Bonanza'	'Crimson Candles'
'Mine-no-yuki'	'Yuletide'
'Leslie Ann'	'Setsugekka'
'Star Above Star'	
Ackermann Hybrids	
'Winter's Rose'	'Winter's Beauty'
'Winter's Waterlily'	
<i>Camellia nitidissima</i> cultivar	
'Jury's Yellow'	

Paperbush



Would you like a shrub that looks tropical in the summer but blooms in winter? Then you need *Edgeworthia papyrifera*, commonly called Paperbush. This deciduous umbrella shaped shrub holds its beautiful long, blue-green leaves until late fall when they turn golden and drop to the ground. Immediately afterwards, flower buds form at the tips of each branch. They resemble fuzzy silver balls hanging conspicuously for us to touch. By April the buds have completely opened into large two inch clusters of golden yellow flowers.

If that isn't enough to make you go out and buy one right now, perhaps its alluring fragrance and ease of growing will convince you. The flowers perfume the air with a sweet and spicy aroma no one can resist.

The Paperbush is shaped like a small tree that grows to about 8' tall and wide. Place it in half a day of sun or even bright shade in well drained soil. Add compost, water and mulch, and you will both be happy for years to come.

Daphne



This small shrub has it all! It is evergreen, blooms in late winter and is intensely fragrant. *Daphne odora* leaves are leathery, dark green and glossy. The common cultivar 'Variegata' has an irregular

yellow margin along the leaves creating interest. A wonderful cultivar ‘Carol Mackie’ leaves are also variegated but grow in whorls creating a medium to fine texture.

Daphne grows to about four feet tall and four feet wide forming a mounded shape. They prefer to be planted in a partially shaded area and can tolerate some sun. Once established they become drought tolerant but would rather be watered regularly. They do not transplant readily; however, they grow well in containers with ample water. Propagation is difficult and their growth rate is slow lending to their price tag.

The flowers are in clusters, similar to the paperbush only facing upward. Carol Mackie blooms later in the spring than ‘Variegata’ which blooms in February to March. The flower buds ripen as burgundy or pink colored then open to a pure white to pale pink on the inside with dark pink on the outside. Both varieties are extremely fragrant. Place this small shrub near the patio, walkway or porch to enjoy its incredibly sweet but lemony, magnolia flowered scent.

Get A Head Start on Spring



It’s cold outside now, but spring is on the way. It’s time to curl up with our favorite garden and seed catalogs and get a head start planning our dream gardens. Planting seeds indoors gives an early start to the growing season and allows us to grow hard to find or unique plants. There are questions to ask when planning.

What seeds to plant? How to plant them? When to plant them? What do the seeds need to germinate? Here are the answers to the questions!

First some general rules are needed. Only purchase seed from reputable sources. Seed for one year’s use is all that is needed since fresh seed is best and viability diminishes as time passes. The best way to store seeds is at 40 degrees F. in low humidity such as in a plastic bag in the refrigerator or in paper bags in a tightly sealed jar. Remember, if you saved seeds from your own plants that were hybrids, those seed may not produce the same exact plants as the parents

Pay close attention to the information in your seed catalog. Some seeds need light to germinate such as begonia, impatiens and snapdragon. Temperature affects seed emergence, but in general 65 to 75 degrees F is best for most plants. Choose plants that grow in this area and mature to the size best for your garden. Lastly, take note of the time it takes for the seed to germinate so you may plan when to plant them.

Gardening Quiz?????

What is the best technique to use for pruning a tree?

- A. Cutting flush with the trunk
- B. The three (3)-part cut
- C. The flush-cut-paint technique
- D. Prune only small branches - not recommend to prune large branches



Look for the answer later on in the newsletter

Sowing seeds is easy; however, a common mistake is planting them too early indoors. Our frost free date is mid-April. April 15 is a good average for figuring when to plant seeds. For example, if the catalog states for transplanting 6 weeks before the last frost, then count backwards from April 15. You would plant the seeds on or about March 4.

There is a difference between seed germination time and transplant time. Seed germination time only tells how long it should take for seeds to sprout. Transplant time is how long it should take from planting the seed until transplanting into the garden. It is important to consider both and your catalog should provide this information.

Choose containers that drain well and a peat-lite media if possible. Garden soil can be too heavy for seedlings. Seeds that need darkness to germinate benefit from a light layer of vermiculite over them. Some seeds are like dust. Just sprinkle them onto your hand and blow them onto a tray of media. Larger seeds may need larger starting containers or make furrows in trays of soil. Moisten the soil before planting and mist after planting so tiny seeds won't get splashed out of the container. Keep the containers warm but out of direct sunlight. Keep humidity levels high by placing plastic around the containers but do not allow it to touch the soil.

Once seeds have sprouted move them to a brightly lit area such as a south facing window. Seedlings will become tall and spindly

or leggy, weak plants without sufficient light. Positioning the sprouts approximately 6 inches under 40 watt fluorescent tubes will also provide enough light for them to grow. Raise the lights as needed to accommodate plant growth.

Soon your seedlings will need more room to grow and branch out. Gently scoop them up with a popsicle stick, or spoon, or other small tool to transfer into separate larger containers. Ease them apart gently so the roots are as undisturbed as possible. Provide some shade for these newly planted seedlings for a couple of days after transplanting them. Remember to water them. You may also apply a very weak solution of a balanced soluble fertilizer such as 20-20-20 at this time.

The last step before transplanting into the garden is hardening the seedlings off. In other words, they need to become acclimated to the outside world and meet Mother Nature. Two weeks before transplant place the plants outside in the shade and well protected area from harsh sun and wind. They may go out as long as the temperature is above 45 degrees F. and it is not very windy. Gradually give them more sunlight each day until all danger of frost is gone. You may now transplant your seedlings into the garden. Enjoy!



Pruning Trees



February is a great time of year to prune dead, diseased and damaged limbs from trees, or to simply thin the tree canopy. Why would you want to prune at all? Do you know the correct technique when pruning large limbs from trees? Pruning is quite beneficial to trees and landscapes.

There are several objectives of pruning. First we want to create and maintain a strong structure for aesthetics and safety. Pruning maintains health by removing diseased branches or broken/split limbs where disease may enter. We also prune for increased flower and fruit production. Pruning can direct growth and create a central leader for an excurrent growth habit. A tree with a decurrent growth habit has many main branches with a spreading crown such as Bradford pear trees. Pruning trees has many purposes.

It is best to begin pruning young plants to train them for correct growth. This increases vigor and mechanically strong trees. It is also easy to train young trees into our preferred shape, size and form such as espalier, topiaries, bonsai or pollard.

Proper thinning of the canopy increases vitality of trees. This allows more light and air into the canopy which produces more leaves and food for internal cell process of the tree. It also reduces the chances of disease to attack. Thinning also reduces wind resistance which is desirable in heavy gusts of wind or hurricanes.

It is best to use the 3-part cut when pruning larger limbs, specifically ones over two inches in diameter. This pruning technique prevents splitting back of the branch and tearing the bark. Make the first cut about twelve inches from where the branch is attached on the underside of the branch. This cut should only go into the branch one fourth of the way. The second cut should be on the upper side approximately one inch outwards from the first cut. This cut goes all the way through the branch to remove it. The final cut

removes the one foot stub. It should be made just beyond the collar and the branch bark ridge. The cut should not be flush with the trunk. Pruning paint is no longer recommended for wounds. The tree will heal properly if the cut was made proper.

Using the 3-part cut for pruning trees is the safest method to use for you and the tree.

February

LANDSCAPE CHECKLIST

- ◆ Spray fruit trees with dormant oil after pruning when the temperature will be above 45 degrees F. for a few days afterwards.
- ◆ Prune crape myrtles now.
- ◆ Prepare gardening beds now by adding compost/organic matter into the dry soil.



Gardening Quiz Answer:

The 3 part cut is the safest and most effective for reducing damage and disease to the tree. Cumberland County Cooperative Extension provides literature explaining different types of pruning in more detailed publication titled "General Pruning Techniques". You may receive a copy of this publication by calling the Extension Master Gardeners at 910.321.6882 or by accessing our website at cumberland.ces.ncsu.edu. In the search bar enter AG-780-04, then select Pubs & Factsheets.

Recommendations for the use of agricultural chemicals are included in this publication as a convenience to the reader. The use of brand names and any mention or listing of commercial products or services in this publication does not imply endorsement by North Carolina Cooperative Extension nor discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned. Individuals who use agricultural chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conforms to the product label. Be sure to obtain current information about usage regulations and examine a current product label before applying any chemical. For assistance, contact your county Cooperative Extension agent.

Upcoming Events		
2015 "Grow It" Gardening Workshop Series		
February 26	6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	<p style="text-align: center;">Poisonous Potions and How to Use Them Safely</p> <p>Are you keeping your children and pets safe? Do you know the correct and safe way to mix and handle organic and chemical pesticides? Do you know how and when to use them? Are you disposing of those empty or outdated pesticide containers safely? FREE Call Horticultural Agent Theresa Williams to preregister at 321-6870</p>
March 26	6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	<p style="text-align: center;">Right Plant - Right Place</p> <p>It's time to begin planting again and the garden centers are bursting with beautiful flowers. But, do you know what plants will grow in that hot sunny spot, or which plants need a cool shady area? Will the plant grow too big for your area? Learn how to select and place the purchased plants in order to create a successful landscape or garden area. FREE Call Horticultural Agent Theresa Williams to preregister at 321-6870</p>
April 23	6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	<p style="text-align: center;">Wood You Believe?</p> <p>Trees are amazing! They cool our cities and homes, purify our air, provide shelter and food for wildlife, build our homes, its furnishings, and increase our home values. Trees are truly marvelous resources. Join the Cooperative Extension staff to learn how to plant, select and care for trees. FREE Call Theresa Williams at 321-6870 to preregister.</p>
May 28	6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	<p style="text-align: center;">Some Like it Hot!</p> <p>Enjoy the summer vacation in your own beautiful blooming backyard! Find out what magnificent plants can beat the heat and color your world all summer long! FREE Call Horticultural Agent Theresa Williams to preregister at 321-6870</p>



Cape Fear Botanical Garden Camellia Show



March 7 & 8	Time varies	<p>Join the Cumberland County Extension Master Gardener Volunteers for the Camellia Festival on March 7-8 at the Cape Fear Botanical Gardens. The Master Gardeners will be available to answer your gardening questions of all kinds. They will also have seminars and children's activities. Enter your own camellia blossom for judging—you may have a real winner! Call the Master Gardeners at 321-6882.</p>
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