

Horticulture Tips

March 2007

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources
Oklahoma State University

GARDEN TIPS FOR MARCH!

David Hillock

Lawn and Turf

- Remove excessive thatch from warm-season lawns. Dethatching, if necessary, should precede crabgrass control treatment. ([F-6604](#))
- Broadleaf weeds can easily be controlled in cool-season lawns at this time with post-emergent broadleaf herbicides. ([F-6421](#))
- Preemergent crabgrass control chemicals can still be applied to cool- and warm-season turfgrasses. ([F-6421](#)). Heed label cautions when using any weed killers near or in the root zone of desirable plantings.
- March is the second best time of the year to seed cool-season turfgrass; however, fall is the best time to plant. ([F-6419](#))
- Cool-season lawns such as bluegrass, fescue and ryegrass may be fertilized now with the first application of the season. Usually, four applications of fertilizer are required per year, in March, May, October and November. ([F-6420](#))
- Begin mowing cool-season grasses at 1 ½ to 3 ½ inches high. ([F-6420](#))

Flowers & Vegetables

- Cultivate annual flower and vegetable planting beds to destroy winter weeds.
- Apply mulch to control weeds in beds. Landscape fabric barrier can reduce the amount of mulch but can dry out and prevent water penetration. Thus, organic litter makes the best mulch.
- Prune roses just before growth starts and begin a regular disease spray program as the foliage appears on susceptible varieties. ([F-6403](#) & [F-7607](#))
- Avoid excessive walking and working in the garden when foliage and soils are wet.
- Start warm-season vegetable transplants indoors.
- Divide and replant overcrowded, summer and fall blooming perennials. Mow or cut back old liriopse and other ornamental grasses before new growth begins.
- Your cool-season vegetables like broccoli, cabbage, carrot, lettuce, onion, peas, spinach, turnips, etc. should be planted by the middle of March (see table in February Hort Tips).
- Watch for cutworms that girdle newly planted vegetables during the first few weeks of establishment. Cabbage looper and cabbageworm insects should be monitored and controlled in the garden. ([F-7313](#))

Trees & Shrubs

- Prune spring flowering plants, if needed, immediately following their bloom period.
- Plant evergreen shrubs, balled and burlapped, and bare root trees and shrubs.

- Anthracnose control on sycamore, maple, and oak should begin at bud swell. ([F-7634](#))
- Diplodia Pine Tip blight control on pines begins at bud swell. ([F-7618](#))
- Chemical and physical control of galls (swellings) on stems of trees should begin now. ([F-7168](#) & [F-7306](#))
- Dormant oil can still be applied to control mites, galls, overwintering aphids, etc. ([F-7306](#))
- The first generation of Nantucket Pine Tip Moth appears at this time. Begin pesticide applications in late March. ([F-7306](#))
- Control Eastern tent caterpillars as soon as the critters appear.

Fruits

- Continue to plant strawberries, asparagus and other small fruit crops this month.
- Start your routine fruit tree spray schedule prior to bud break. ([F-7319](#))
- Remove winter mulch from strawberries in early March. ([F-6214](#))

Education Programs for the Public and County Educators

Eric T. Stafne

As in the past, the Grape Management Short Course and the Pecan Management Short Course are being offered this year. These courses still have space available to anyone who is interested. There are a few county educators who have decided to take the Pecan Management Short Course for graduate credit this year. This option is open to any county educator who needs to fulfill coursework for graduate education requirements.

A new innovation that we hope will have some impact for the grape industry is the Viticulture Education Program. This is an integrative program that combines coursework from OSU-Stillwater, OSU-Oklahoma City and Tulsa Community College, as well as the short courses and workshops done through OCES. If anyone needs more information on this program, please contact me. A county educator who deals a lot with grapes can go through this program and gain a substantial amount of knowledge.

In addition to the short courses, I will be offering grape-related workshops throughout the year. Right now the plan is to hold workshops on vineyard floor management, introduction to interspecific hybrids and small fruit management. I will advertise these through various avenues. Again, if you are interested in attending any of these workshops, please contact me. The potential time frame for these workshops is vineyard floor management (probably to be held at OSU-Oklahoma City in June or July), introduction to interspecific hybrids (probably to be held at a winery or Perkins in August) and small fruit management (may be held at OSU-Oklahoma City and in Tulsa in June or July). More workshops may be held in the future on other topics. Three that come to mind are organic viticulture, wildlife control in vineyards and assessment of bud and trunk winter damage.

I am always looking for willing participants to help host and present workshops, demonstrations, tailgate meetings, etc. If you believe there is sufficient interest in your county to do an educational program like this (or on any other fruit crop), let me know.

Pruning Roses

David Hillock

The pruning of roses varies according to flowering habit and plant vigor. Most Oklahoma roses should not be pruned before March 15. Pruning tends to cause new growth which is often killed by late spring freezes. However, most modern roses should be pruned annually. Prune to maintain plant shape, remove dead or diseased wood (often dark or blackened canes) and regulate desired flower size. If only a few large flowers are preferred, cut the plants more severely. Too much spring pruning can weaken plants. If a large number of average-sized flowers is preferred, only light or moderate pruning is necessary. Long-handled pruning clippers (loppers) and hand clippers are needed for pruning roses. A sharp, fine-toothed pruning saw is also useful for cutting large dead canes.

Leaves and stems grow from buds. Bud position determines the shape of the plant. Prune for an open-centered plant. Thus, make all cuts just above outward-facing buds. Make the cut slightly above and angling downward away from the bud. Remove branches that grow toward the center of the plant. When two branches cross, the smaller one should be removed. Any growth originating below the union with the understock should be removed from such budded roses as hybrid teas and floribundas. If the average number of leaflets on the stems of such roses is more than five, the cane is probably understock.

Hybrid tea roses usually require relatively severe pruning because of winterkill of the canes. In the spring, remove dead or diseased canes. Then, cut back remaining canes to six to 24 inches, depending on plant vigor and desired flowering.

Grandifloras, floribundas and polyanthas require less pruning. Remove dead or diseased canes and shape the plant.

Ramblers and small flowered climbers that bloom only in the spring should be pruned immediately following bloom. Spring flowering roses and shrubs set flowering buds in late spring and summer. Remove canes that have flowered from the base or crown of the plant. Train or tie up developing new shoots.

Large flowered climbers that bloom only in the spring are also pruned right after flowering. Cut back side shoots that have flowered, and remove the oldest canes. Train up only enough new canes to cover the desired area and remove the rest.

Remove only very weak or dead branches of climbers that bloom all summer. These climbers can be pruned lightly after the first burst of bloom.

Heavy cutting of flowers, particularly with long stems, should be avoided during a plant's first year of growth. This will allow the plant to become established more readily. Remove all flowers or flower clusters just above the first five leaflet leaves when the petals begin to fall. Even when cutting flowers from established plants, do not remove more foliage than necessary. Let autumn roses produce hips (seed pods) to induce early freeze hardiness.

Winter Damage to Broadleaf Evergreens

David Hillock

This year I have noticed a significant number of broadleaf plants affected by recent weather conditions. Winter burn seems to be the most common, which occurs on such plants as azalea, boxwood, holly, magnolia, euonymus, nandina and viburnum, but it can affect narrow-leaved evergreens like pines and deciduous species as well. Winter burn is often misdiagnosed as an infectious disease or damage from excessively cold temperatures. Winter burn is caused from desiccation, which is a type of dehydration injury. When roots are in dry or frozen soil, water lost through transpiration cannot be replenished by the roots and dehydration occurs. Water loss through transpiration is normally low during winter months, but it increases when plants are subjected to drying winds or are growing in warm sunny spots.

Symptoms of winter burn include scorching of leaf tips or outer leaf margins, complete browning of needles or browning from the needle tips downward, or death of terminal buds and /or twigs. Broadleaf evergreens affected by winter burn will likely survive and send out new shoots and leaves this spring, depending on the severity of the damage. Where death of tips and/or small twigs has occurred, simply prune back to live, undamaged tissue.

Several means of eliminating or minimizing winter burn may be used. Avoid planting broadleaved evergreens in areas of high wind exposure. Deep water plants during dry periods throughout winter months when temperatures remain above freezing for prolonged periods. Erect physical windbreaks. Burlap "walls" can help cut down wind and subsequent moisture loss to evergreen shrubs and small trees. Antitranspirants of various types are available, but have shown limited success under Oklahoma's climatic conditions.

Association for Butterflies

David Hillock

A new association for butterflies was formed by several butterfly farmers in several states. Their goals are to promote butterflies through conservation, research into diseases, butterfly releases, and encourage planting of butterfly gardens and habitats. You can read more information at <http://www.forbutterflies.org/>.

Individuals are able to join the association for \$15 (as a supporter) and will be able to take advantage of many association benefits. Some of the benefits are discounts through seed companies and discounts on courses. Certified classes in butterfly gardening, raising specific butterflies and other topics will be offered. The courses are written by butterfly professionals and upon completion of the coursework certificates will be issued to the participants. The courses will be offered to AFB members and non-members. Members will receive a discount on all courses.

A percentage of all association income is mandated through the bylaws to be used toward butterfly conservation and butterfly research. All members can know that a portion of their dues

will be used for these purposes. The first conservation project has been undertaken in Virginia and Maryland, raising and releasing Baltimore Checkerspots and planting gardens with their host plants. You can read about it and more by visiting the association web site.

Safer Slug and Snail Bait

David Hillock

Iron phosphate snail and slug bait is safer to use than its counterpart metaldehyde. Both are quite effective in reducing damage due to slugs and snails, but iron phosphate products are safer for use around pets, children, fish, birds and other wildlife. Products that contain iron phosphate are available under many trade names such as Bayer Advanced Dual Action Slug & Snail Killer Bait, Garden Safe Slug & Snail Bait, Slug Magic, Sluggo, Spectracide Slug & Snail Killer Bait and Worry Free Ferromol Slug & Snail Bait. These products can be used on the lawn, vegetable garden, ornamentals and fruits.

Baits are not as effective during hot, dry or cold times of the year because slugs and snails are less active during these periods. Before apply baits irrigate so the area is moist. Apply baits to areas where the slugs and snails are likely to travel. Generally, they like to hide during the day in areas where it is moist and dark such as under boards, stones, debris, around foundations, under decks, etc. coming out at night to feed. Eliminating hiding places if possible is the first step to good control. A good IPM approach would include eliminating hiding places, handpicking, traps, barriers, encouraging natural enemies and the use of baits. The iron phosphate products fit well with a good IPM program for control.

Lynn Griffith's updated book offers expert advice for growing and maintaining tropical foliage plants!

David Hillock

Batavia, IL – February 9, 2007 – One of the hottest trends in horticulture is using tropicals inside and out, even as annual plants in locations where they will not survive a cold winter. Growers can make a profitable niche for themselves by providing high-quality tropical foliage plants to their customers.

The first edition, published in 1998, quickly became the primary reference for tropical foliage plant production. Now this updated, second edition of *Tropical Foliage Plants: A Grower's Guide* (Ball Publishing, April 2007) gives commercial growers the latest cultural information, insider tips and tricks for successfully growing the most popular foliage crops—and some unusual plants that can set a grower apart from his competition. Interiorscapers will find much useful information for maintaining indoor collections and for controlling pest and disease problems.

Tropical Foliage Plants details over 100 genera of foliage plants, explaining their habitat, uses, varieties, propagation, culture, nutrition, diseases, insect and mite pests, disorders, interior care,

tricks and most common problems. In addition to exclusive cultural information, *Tropical Foliage Plants* features over 150 color photos showing plants' habitat and/or disorders. *Tropical Foliage Plants* provides everything growers, horticulturalist, educators and propagators of any size with all of the information they need to successfully grow the best tropical foliage plants possible.

Lynn P. Griffith, Jr. is President of A&L Southern Agricultural Laboratories, Inc., an agricultural testing and consulting firm located in Pompano Beach, Florida. He and his coworkers provide laboratory testing and consultation for thousands of clients throughout Florida, the Caribbean, and Latin America. He also provides horticultural consulting services to clients in fourteen countries and conducts contract research for a number of fertilizer, chemical, and potting soil companies. Griffith is also the author of a primary reference for the trade. *Tropical Foliage Disorders* came out in 2002 and is an essential tool for growers, interiorscapers and retailers for detecting and treating many problems found in diverse genera of foliage plants. 2007 brings the second edition of *Tropical Foliage Plants: A Grower's Guide*, providing the latest information available on a more than 100 genera of commercially important foliage plants.

Book Details:

Title: Tropical Foliage Plants, A Grower's Guide, Second Edition

Author: Lynn P. Griffith Jr.

Publisher: Ball Publishing, Distributed by Independent Publishers Group

Publication: April 2007, \$69.95 (CAN \$87.95), Cloth, ISBN: 978-1-883052-51-5

Horticulture, 376 pages, 7 x 10, color photographs

Available at bookstores everywhere and through Ball Publishing, 335 N. River St., Batavia, IL 60510. Toll-free number for orders only 1-888-888-0013. Visit us online at www.ballpublishing.com.

Master Gardener Corner

David Hillock

The 2007 Annual Oklahoma Horticultural Society Lecture Series Presents Renowned Garden Author and Lecturer, Ken Druse

Ken Druse is nationally known as a garden expert. The huge success of his five book titles, The Natural Garden, The Natural Shade Garden, The Natural Habitat Garden, The Collector's Garden and Making More Plants: The Science, Art and Joy of Propagation makes him one of America's best-loved gardeners. His newest book, Ken Druse: The Passion for Gardening, won best book of the year from the American Horticultural Society in 2004.

In April 2004, Ken received the Sarah Chapman Francis Medal for "Literary Achievement" from the Garden Club of America for his lifetime work of communicating about gardening and the environment.

Ken has contributed both articles and photographs to nearly every gardening and decorating magazine and is a frequent contributor to the New York Times. He divides his time between his New York City studio, an organic garden in New Jersey, his radio program and his lecture engagements around the country.

Lecture Times and Locations:

“*Small Space Gardening*” - Friday, March 16, Tulsa, 7:00 p.m. Tulsa Garden Center, 2435 S. Peoria, Tulsa, Oklahoma

“*Adventures in Horticulture, In My Garden*” - Sunday, March 18, Oklahoma City, 1:30 p.m., OKC Zoo and Botanical Gardens Education Center, OKC Zoo and Botanical Gardens, East parking lot (General Membership meeting at 3:00 p.m.).

Author's books sold and signed at each location (In Oklahoma City, both before and after his program).

Open to the public – free admission is made possible by the underwriting sponsorship of the Kirkpatrick Family Fund, The Oklahoma City Zoological Park, Tulsa Garden Center and the Educational Endowment of the Oklahoma Horticultural Society.

More information at www.okhort.org or call Vicky at 405-330-9150.

**2007 Oklahoma Master Gardener Continued Training Summer Conference!
June 7-8, 2007**

“*The Perennial Gardener – Planting the Seeds of Hope. Come Grow with Us!*” is this year’s State Master Gardener Conference theme, which by the way, is shaping up to be an awesome event. The conference will be held at the Claremore Expo in Claremore. The conference will include an evening social on Thursday, many wonderful speakers, garden tour to a local garden, door prizes, and of course – lots of food!

The preconference social is scheduled for Thursday evening at the home of Master Gardener Evelyn Clark from 6 to 8 p.m. Evelyn has a wonderful garden with quite a plant collection. If you are arriving early, please join us for a relaxing evening of socializing with fellow Master Gardeners strolling through a lovely garden and enjoying a light snack.

Speakers for the conference include keynote speaker C. L. Fornari, Master Gardener with Barnstable Cooperative Extension, writer, speaker, radio host of GardenLine on WXTK, and works at Hyannis Country Garden Center on Cape Cod. Her presentation will be “Myths, Lies and all the Latest Dirt.” Much commonly held knowledge often turns out to be misinformation. This straight talk from a fellow gardener will sort out garden fact from garden fiction.

Breakout topics and speakers include Digging into Your Garden Psyche, Leslie Barnes, PhD., psychologist and gardener; Enduring Roses, Phil Pratt, Tulsa County Extension Director; A Garden Pond: Your Private Oasis, Conrad Kleinholz, PhD., Program Leader, Langston

University Aquaculture/Fisheries; Beyond Hostas: Other Socially Acceptable Shade Perennials, Russell Studebaker, horticulturist, author, and garden columnist; Drying Flowers – Preserving the Floral Season, Vicky Hensley, Rogers County Master Gardener; What’s Really Bugging Oklahoma Gardeners?, Allan Storjohann, Manager, Myriad Botanical Gardens, Host, KRMG Gardening Show; Gardening In Spite of Oklahoma Weather, Al Sutherland, Mesonet Ag. Program Coordinator, OSU Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering; Our Best Foot Forward, C.L. Fornari, Master Gardener, Radio Talk Show Host and Landscape Consultant; Easy Care Plants for Diverse Oklahoma Landscapes, Larry Ahrens, Greenleaf Nursery, Park Hill; Landscaping with Shrubs and Ornamental Trees, by Larry and Jared McClure, Green Valley Nursery, LLC Tree Farm and Sanders Nursery, Inola; The Garden Tour, Master Gardeners Association of Rogers County.

For more information about the conference and speakers go to our conference web site at www.hortla.okstate.edu.

Special door prizes from local businesses will also be a feature of the conference. Hope to see you all there! Program and registration information will be sent out in mid-April. For more information contact David Hillock, Master Gardener Coordinator, Oklahoma State University, Dept. of Horticulture & Landscape Architecture, 360 Ag Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078. E-mail: david.hillock@okstate.edu; phone: 405-744-5158.

Spring 2007 OK Vegetation Management Association (OKVMA) Meeting

Dennis Martin

The Oklahoma Vegetation Management Association (OKVMA) has announced that the Spring 2007 OKVMA Continuing Education Conference will be held in Oklahoma City, OK on March 7, 2007. The conference will be held at the Clarion Meridian Hotel & Convention Center, 737 S. Meridian, Oklahoma City. For room reservations call (405) 942-8511.

The OKVMA’s webs site is at: <http://www.okvma.net/demo/> The Spring Conference Agenda is at web address: <http://www.okvma.net/Spring2007/2007SpringAgenda.pdf>

A registration form for the event is available at web address:

<http://www.okvma.net/Spring2007/2007ConferenceRegistrationSpring.pdf>

This year the OKVMA will also offer a pre-test study session on March 8 and an Oklahoma Department of Agriculture test for hopeful Certified Applicators and Service Technicians.

The Spring OKVMA conference was submitted for the following continuing education units (CEU) credits:

- 4 – Category 6 Right-of-way
- 4 – Category 10 Research & Development
- 2 – Category 5 Aquatic
- 2 – Category 3a Ornamental & Turf

If you have questions concerning the spring program, please contact Kathy Markham, OKVMA Secretary at 918-256-9302. For questions concerning registration for the conference, please contact OSU Ag Conference Services at 405-744-6489.

Putting Green Fertility and Soil Testing For High Sand Greens

Dennis Martin

Charles 'Bud' White, Senior Agronomist with the USGA Green Section, will discuss "Fertility and Soil Testing For High Sand Greens" on Monday, March 12, 2007 in Oklahoma City. The presentation is sponsored by the Oklahoma Golf Course Superintendents Association (OGCSA). Attendance is opening to both non-members and members of the OGCSA.

The meeting will be held at Lincoln Park Golf Club, Oklahoma City. Jim Wood is host superintendent.

Agenda.....

9:00 a.m. - Registration

9:30 a.m. - OGCSA Business Meeting

10:00 a.m. - Guest Speaker Charles "Bud" White Fertility and Soil Testing For High Sand Greens (GCSAA Education Points will be given for attending this meeting.)

11:00 a.m. - Lunch

12:00 p.m. - Golf, weather permitting

Lincoln Park is just west of I-35 on NE 36th Street-Exit 131 towards the west. Directions can be found on Map Quest.

Cost. Non-member or OGCSA member \$30.00 pre-registered/\$35.00 on-site, Non-members intending to play golf need to pre-register no later than 12 noon on Monday, March 5. Golf will not be available for non-OGCSA members who do not pre-register. Please be prepared to pay at the meeting. If you need an invoice, please let Pam Wooten know by phone or email so your receipt can be ready for pick up at the meeting.

To pre-register call Pam Wooten or fax (800.936.7071) with your name and if you are planning on playing golf after the meeting. It is important to let Pam know who are playing golf so we can plan tee times. You can also email your registration to ogcsa@cox.net. *NOTE: OGCSA members that are pre-paid for the year will still need to call and pre-register for the meeting.*

Dates of the 2007 Oklahoma Turf Conference and OSU Turf/Landscape Field Day Set

Dennis Martin

The 62nd Annual Oklahoma Turf Conference & Trade Show is now set for November 13-15, 2007 (Tuesday – Thursday) at the Watkins Center on the campus of OSU-Stillwater. The conference was moved up one day so it would not conflict with Oklahoma Statehood Day on Friday, November 16, 2007. Additional information on the conference and show will be available by this newsletter later this year.

The 2007 OSU Turfgrass, Nursery & Landscape Field Day will be held at the Oklahoma Botanical Garden 1 mile west of Stillwater on Wednesday, September 12. More information will be distributed via this newsletter when the agenda for the event is finalized.

Upcoming Horticulture Events

State Master Gardener Continued Training Conference

June 7-8, 2007, Claremore, Oklahoma

Oklahoma Gardening Summer Gardenfest

June 9, 2007, OSU Botanical Garden, Stillwater

Greenhouse Production Short Course

June 27-28, 2007, OSU-Oklahoma City

Contact Mike Schnelle for additional information at Mike.schnelle@okstate.edu or 405-744-7361.

Oklahoma Greenhouse Growers' Fall Update

October 10, 2007, OSU-Stillwater

Contact Mike Schnelle for additional information at Mike.schnelle@okstate.edu or 405-744-7361.

For more information about upcoming events, please contact Stephanie Larimer at 405-744-5404 or stephanie.larimer@okstate.edu.