

Horticulture Hints



Surry County Center

October—December 2017

Inside This Issue

Forgotten Figs

AgVentures Grant Program

GAP Training Scheduled for Fruit and Produce Growers

NC State Extension Master Gardener Training Course Offered

Household Hazardous Waste and Pesticide Disposal Day

Calendar of Events

Final Vinedressers Meetings Of 2017

It has been another grape year for the books. The Vinedressers have held numerous workshops throughout the year and have distributed much needed information to the industry. Guest speakers have included well known viticulture specialists from universities and the industry. If you have missed meetings up until now and have been disappointed, you still have time. There are two more workshops scheduled this year at the N.C. Cooperative Extension, Surry County Center in Dobson.

“Retailing North Carolina Wines and Wholesaling Wine and Working with Distributors” will be held Thursday, October 19 at 6:00 pm. Guest speakers will be Jamie Mingia, co-owner and manager of The Wine Sampler and Christina Clark, vice president of sales with Shelton Vineyards. This workshop is anticipated to be one of the best around on marketing local wines.

The second workshop will be held on Thursday, November 16 at 6:00 pm. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss this year’s grape season with our new viticulture specialist, Dr. Mark Hoffman from NC State University.

Holiday Wreath Workshop

This ever-popular “Holiday Wreath” workshop produces a gratifying and tangible end product: a beautiful holiday wreath. Ellen Reynolds from Beagle Ridge Herb Farm will lead participants in this three-hour workshop on November 14 beginning at 1:00 pm at the N.C. Cooperative Extension, Surry County Center in Dobson.

All materials (wreath forms, pins, wire, etc.) will be provided, including a cornucopia of naturally dried materials. Bring hand pruners. Space is limited to registered participants only; one wreath per registered guest. Workshop fee of \$40 must be paid BEFORE the workshop registration deadline of November 3. *Workshop is recommended for 18 years or older.*



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Produce Safety | Growers Training ALLIANCE

There will be a one-day training course on the Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) standardized curriculum for produce growers on December 6, 2017 from 8:30 am - 5:00 pm at the Elkin Center of Surry Community College, 1461 N. Bridge St., Elkin. This course meets the regulatory requirements of the FDA’s Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule. Registration is required and limited to 40 participants. To register visit: <https://ncfreshproducesafety.ces.ncsu.edu/2017/fsma-produce-safety-rule-growers-training/>

The registration fee is \$50 for NC residents and \$100 for out-of-state participants. The fee includes lunch, notebook, and certificate (A Golden Leaf grant is supporting this training and offsetting the registration costs for a limited time). If you are a produce grower and have questions on if you should or are required to attend, call Elena Rogers at (828) 352-2519 or elena_rogers@ncsu.edu, Area Specialized Agent for Food Safety-Fresh Produce for the Piedmont and Western NC.



Forgotten Figs

Adapted from
Charlotte Glen, Horticulture Agent, Chatham County

Every few months questions come in regarding figs. Many folks have never thought to try their hand at growing figs. Home gardeners would if they have ever tasted fresh figs. There is nothing like them. They are delicious and sweet. They can be made into some great tasting jelly. Before you plant a fig you need to know that figs do not store well and have a shelf life of only a few days, at best. If you want fresh figs your best option is to plant a fig bush. Luckily, figs thrive in our region. They are also one of the easiest fruits to grow organically.

Figs are typically very productive and easy to grow if a couple of important needs are met. First is sun. Figs produce best in full sun, meaning a location where they get at least a good eight hours of direct sun each day. Next is water. Once established, fig bushes are relatively drought tolerant, but they will often drop fruit during dry weather. To ensure a good crop, figs need a constant supply of moisture. This is best accomplished by amending sandy soils with compost and peat moss before planting, keeping a thick layer of mulch around the bush, and watering during drought.

One thing figs do not need much of is fertilizer. In fact, over fertilizing figs can reduce fruit production, cause fruits to split open, and increase cold damage during winter. In very sandy soils, applying slow release fertilizer in the spring will benefit bushes but in clay soil fertilization is rarely needed. Unlike other fruits, figs require little to no pruning. In our climate they more often grow as large shrubs, rather than as trees with a single trunk. Since they can reach several feet in height and width, be sure to give them plenty of room when you plant.

The two most common fig varieties you will find for sell locally are 'Celeste' and 'Brown Turkey'. 'Celeste' bears small purplish brown, sweet fruit and is a favorite of many fig lovers. The larger, reddish brown fruits of 'Brown Turkey'

are also tasty, and the preferred choice for preserves.

A few less common types you may find for sell include 'Alma' and 'Magnolia' (also known as 'Brunswick'). 'Alma' produces small fruits, similar in size to 'Celeste', that are light yellow when ripe and is another favorite for fresh eating. 'Magnolia' has handsome, deeply lobed leaves and produces large bronze fruits often used preserves. Unfortunately the fruits sour quickly in wet weather making it a poor producer in rainy years. Since figs do not require cross pollination you do not have to plant more than one variety. Within a few years a single bush should be able to supply plenty of fresh fruit.

Fig varieties are often confused, with the same variety sometimes sold under three or four different names. If you find a fig bush whose fruit you like but you do not know its identity the best thing to do is to ask the owner if you can take a cutting. Figs are very easy to root from cuttings taken during winter or summer. In winter take six to eight inch long cuttings. Stick them in sandy soil or a container of potting soil in a shady area outside and wait until they leaf out in spring to transplant. Cuttings taken in summer should be stuck in a container of potting soil, watered well and placed inside a plastic bag to maintain high humidity. Put the container in a shady spot, where the cuttings should root in four to six weeks. Figs can also be layered by pulling a lower branch down to the ground in spring.



Figs are rarely bothered by insects or plant diseases, though root knot nematodes can be a problem in sandy soils. Our dominate soil type here is more clay than sand. I have seen rust on figs. This is not a common problem but it can cause issues with figs. Usually fungicide applications are recommended for control.

The only other problem figs sometimes experience in our area is cold damage. This is more common in particularly cold winters or when extremely cold temperatures follow a stretch of unseasonably mild weather in late winter. It is very rare for figs to be killed completely, though they may have to be cut back to the ground and allowed to re-grow if heavily damaged. Cold damage can be minimized by planting fig bushes against a south facing wall.



Grant Program

Farmers are resourceful and innovative when it comes to solving problems on their farm. Sometimes these great ideas get started off the ground quicker with additional funding sources. The NC AgVentures grant program is a program of N.C. Cooperative Extension. The goal is to strengthen agriculturally dependent families and communities by providing support and funding directly to North Carolina farm operators, who have innovative plans to diversify, expand, or implement new entrepreneurial plans in their operations or communities. The 2018 grant cycle should be gearing up soon. If you have an idea for your farming operation from using a resource in a new way, or experimenting with an unusual solution to resolve an old problem or re-purposing old tools and equipment then keep this grant in mind. The application deadline is usually in January.

Get more information at the NC AgVentures Grant website at:

<https://agventures.ces.ncsu.edu/grant-program/>

Disclaimer:

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.

GAP

Good Agricultural Practices

Training Scheduled for Fruit and Produce Growers

Surry Community College and N.C. Cooperative Extension, Surry County Center has partnered together to offer a food safety course. The training course is intended to improve fruit and produce grower's understanding of Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) and to guide assessment of risks and implementation of practices to reduce risks on fresh produce farms on the farm. GAP Certification is driven by produce buyers and this training is recommended, and in some cases required, by buyers.

Course participants will receive information and tools needed to create a plan of action and food safety manual for their farming operation. These manuals will help prepare participants for GAPs certification. The course will be conducted using the USDA GAPGMP audit protocol.

Training will be offered on October 17, 2017 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the N.C. Cooperative Extension, Surry County Center located at 210 North Main Street, Dobson. Through the Surry Skill-Up grant the registration fee is reduced to \$25 per participating farm. The training is limited to the first 20 participants to register.

Call Surry Community College at 336.386.3618 to register.

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NC STATE

Extension Master Gardener

TRAINING COURSE OFFERED

Would you like to promote sustainable gardening and landscaping in your community, increase your knowledge of science-based gardening practices, and be part of an active volunteer program with other passionate gardeners? You should become an Extension Master Gardener Volunteer!

The Master Gardener program is an outreach of N.C. Cooperative Extension. You will receive 40 hours of beginning to advanced horticulture. You will learn about growing plants in the garden and throughout the landscape. Training topics will include but are not limited to soils & fertilizers, to insects and disease management, planting, and pruning.

As a certified Master Gardener, you become a volunteer of N.C. Cooperative Extension, capable of working with and educating others in various areas of horticulture. Volunteers agree to return 40 hours of service to the public through Extension and Master Gardener events and activities in the first year. The upcoming 2018 class will begin on Thursday, February 1 from 1:00 pm - 4:30 pm and will continue every Thursday until April 26. Some sessions will feature specialists in various fields of experience and Extension Agents from surrounding counties as well as hands-on activities. There will also be a one day field trip.

The cost of the program is \$50, which will cover the cost of the training materials. The local Extension Master Gardeners offer scholarships to interested individuals. The application deadline is January 15, 2018. You may contact our office (336.401.8025) for an application for scholarship and/or the program. Applications may also be found at: <http://surry.ces.ncsu.edu>.

Household Hazardous Waste & Pesticide Collection Day



October 28, 2017
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Veterans Memorial Park

Bring:

- Paints
- Paint Stripper
- Pesticides
- Weed Killers
- Drain Solvents
- Gasoline
- Dry Cell Batteries
- Oil
- Acids
- Thinners
- Solvents
- Antifreeze
- Pool Chemicals

Don't Bring:

- Ammunitions
- Radioactive Materials
- Unidentified Materials
- Explosives
- Medicine & Syringes
- LP & Propane Gas Cylinders
- Infectious Waste
- Automotive Type Batteries

Label all containers, close all lids tightly, cushion glass bottles.

Household Only - No Commercial Waste Accepted

For more information contact:
Surry County Public Works
(336) 401-8376

Surry County Center
 210 N. Main St.
 Post Office Box 324
 Dobson, NC 27017-0324

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Surry County Beekeepers Meeting
 October 9, 2017 / 7:00 pm
 N.C. Cooperative Extension, Dobson

Extension Master Gardener Meeting
 October 11, 2017 / 12:00 pm
 N.C. Cooperative Extension, Dobson

GAP Training
 October 17, 2017 / 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
 N.C. Cooperative Extension, Dobson

Vinedresser Meeting
 October 19, 2017 / 6:00 pm
 N.C. Cooperative Extension, Dobson

Household Hazardous Waste & Pesticide Collection Day
 October 28, 2017 / 9:00 am - 2:00 pm
 Veteran's Memorial Park, Mt. Airy

Extension Advisory Council Meeting
 October 30, 2017 / 6:00 pm
 N.C. Cooperative Extension, Dobson

Extension Master Gardener Meeting
 November 8, 2017 / 12:00 pm
 N.C. Cooperative Extension, Dobson

Surry County Beekeepers Meeting
 November 13, 2017 / 7:00 pm
 N.C. Cooperative Extension, Dobson

Holiday Wreath Workshop
 November 14, 2017 / 1:00 pm / \$40
 N.C. Cooperative Extension, Dobson
This workshop is for those 18 years or older. Space is limited to registered participants only; one wreath per registered participant. \$40 workshop fee must be paid BEFORE the registration deadline of November 3.

Vinedressers Meeting
 November 16, 2017 / 6:00 pm
 N.C. Cooperative Extension, Dobson

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Horne Creek Corn Shucking Frolic (Surry County Beekeepers will have a booth)

November 21, 2017 / 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
 Horne Creek Historical Farm, Pinnacle

FSMA Training
 December 6, 2017 / 8:30 am - 5:00 pm
 Elkin Center of SCC, Elkin

Surry County Beekeepers Holiday Meeting
 December 9, 2017 / 6:00 pm
 The Lantern Restaurant, Dobson

Extension Master Gardener Meeting
 December 13, 2017 / 12:00 pm
 N.C. Cooperative Extension, Dobson



Accommodation Statement: If you are a person with a disability or desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact the Extension office during business hours of 8:15 AM—5:00 PM at least two weeks before the event to request accommodations.

Special Note: Registration for events listed in this calendar are required unless otherwise noted. Register by calling (336) 401-8025.