

Home & Consumer Horticulture Newsletter

Spring 2023

2023 Plant Sale Underway



NC Cooperative Extension of Yancey County is now taking pre-orders for plants and fruit trees to help gardeners get ready for the 2023 planting season. This year's offerings include a variety of heirloom apple trees, strawberry, blackberry, raspberry, blueberry plants and much more. Pre-orders must be in by the close of the business day on March 17, 2023. To access the order form, see the complete list of what is available and prices, or learn how you can order plants, visit our "2023 Plant Sale Webpage" at <http://go.ncsu.edu/readext?848809>.

Opportunity To Learn How to Graft Fruit Trees



Grafting involves several different types of horticultural propagation techniques, some of which have been used for thousands of years to propagate plants. Grafting is a means of vegetative reproduction. Grafting is used extensively in nursery and fruit tree production.

We have several opportunities coming up for anyone that would like to learn how to graft apple trees. Participants of these workshops will gain hands-on experience learning how to implement whip grafting. Each workshop participant will be provided apple rootstock and scion, will get to experience grafting their own tree, and will be able to take their grafted tree home with them.



The cost to attend this workshop is \$10 per participant to cover the cost of supplies. Space is limited so pre-registration is required. Classes will be offered on Thursday March 2, 9 AM – 12 PM; Thursday March 2, 6-9 PM; Tuesday March 7, 9 AM – 12 PM and Tuesday, March 7 6-9 PM. Participants can attend 1 class, and can choose which class to attend until the classes are full. Classes will be filled on a first come basis.

If you would like information about the grafting workshop or to register, please contact the Yancey County Center by calling (828) 682-6186. You can also send an email to [Adam McCurry \(adam_mccurry@ncsu.edu\)](mailto:adam_mccurry@ncsu.edu).

NC STATE EXTENSION

Master Gardener | Yancey County

Become a Master GardenerSM Volunteer

Are you interested in becoming an Extension Master GardenerSM (EMG) volunteer? Do you want to give back to your community and help other gardeners succeed? Master Gardener Volunteers are an essential component of NC State Extension and assist local county extension agents in various aspects of home horticulture: from answering gardening questions to becoming involved with teaching about gardening. EMG volunteers work with NC State Extension to provide unbiased, science-based information on sustainable garden, lawn and landscape practices to the residents of the local community.

To become an EMG volunteer in Yancey County, volunteers must complete an intensive (but fun) hands-on training program, pass an exam and complete a 40 hour internship with NC Cooperative Extension of Yancey County. NC Cooperative Extension of Yancey County will be conducting the next EMG initial training for new volunteers beginning in August. The training is made up of 10 sessions. Each training session will begin at 9 AM. There is a \$55 cost for new volunteers that need to complete initial training to become NC State Extension Master GardenerSM Volunteers.

If you would like to become an Extension Master Gardener Volunteer and if you would like to participate in the upcoming training, please contact **David Davis (david_davis@ncsu.edu)** by email or by calling (828) 682-6186 in order to receive and complete an Extension Master Gardener Program Application. We also invite you to contact us if you would like to know more about the NC State Extension Master Gardener Program.

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**New Continuing Education and Volunteer Opportunities
for Extension Master GardenersSM of Yancey County**

If you are currently an "active" Extension Master GardenerSM (EMG) Volunteer, make sure to check out the updated "EMG Intranet". We have recently updated our county EMG Intranet page and have several opportunities listed for current EMG Volunteers to obtain the required hours for continuing education. We have also updated our EMG Intranet County page listing available volunteer opportunities.

Remember, to maintain your status as an "active" EMG Volunteer, you must complete 10 hours of continuing education and complete 20 volunteer hours each year. Not maintaining the continuing education or volunteer service hours by the end of the year results in moving volunteers from "active certified" to "inactive alumnus" status. Both continuing education hours and volunteer hours must be approved in advance of completion by David Davis, the NC Cooperative Extension Agriculture Agent in Yancey County. All opportunities listed on the EMG Intranet are "approved". If you are having difficulty accessing the EMG Intranet due to log in issues, please do not hesitate to contact the NC Cooperative Extension, Yancey County Center for assistance.

If you would like more information about your status as an Extension Master GardenerSM Volunteer in Yancey County, need assistance with the EMG Intranet, or have questions about the program, please do not hesitate to send an email to **David Davis (david_davis@ncsu.edu)**, or call (828) 682-6186.



Spring into Gardening Gardener's Toolbox Series



Are you or do you aspire to be an avid vegetable gardener? If so, you may want to consider joining us for the Spring into Gardening: Gardener's Toolbox Series. Gardener's Toolbox is a series of classes that are designed to provide gardeners with up-to-date garden recommendations. NC Cooperative Extension of Yancey County is planning to have spring, summer and fall sessions of Gardener's Toolbox this upcoming year. Although we are still planning out the details such as the meeting location at this time, here is a look at the classes we plan to offer:

Planning the Garden: Preparing for the Gardening Season

Thursday, March 16, 2023
Yancey County Center
5:30 PM

- Planning out the garden on paper
- Recommendations gardening supplies that should be purchased early in the garden season
- Properly preparing the garden soil before planting.

Selecting the Right Seeds And Transplants for Your Garden

Thursday, March 30, 2023
Reconciliation House Kitchen
5:30 PM

- Recommended process for selecting the seed and transplant varieties
- Considerations for purchasing high quality transplants
- Best management practices for growing your own transplants.

Gardening in Small Spaces:

Tuesday, April 18, 2023
Reconciliation House Kitchen
5:30 PM

- Raised Bed Gardening
- Container Gardening

Organic Gardening

Tuesday, April 25, 2023
Reconciliation House Kitchen
5:30 PM

- Soil Nutrient Management
- Pest Management Using Organic Methods
- Garden Cover Crops

If you would like more information or if you would like to register to attend our upcoming Gardener's Toolbox classes, please feel free to send an email to **David David (davis_davis@ncsu.edu)** or call the NC Cooperative Extension Yancey County Center at (828) 682-6186.

Gearing Up for Another Lawn Care Season

We have had some unusual weather for February and I am fairly certain we are not "out of the woods" just yet when it comes to winter weather. However, I have seen a few reminders lately that spring will be here before you know it and so will the lawn care season. Don't be caught off guard! Get your lawn care equipment ready now with some pre-season maintenance. Here are a few tips to help you:

- 1** ***Service your mower engine.*** Check the owners manual for your lawn mower engine to see what type of annual maintenance is recommended. Go ahead and order any filters, spark plugs, or other engine parts. Change out any old gas that may have been left in your mower from last season and make sure to change the engine oil. Consider if you need to take your mower to a mechanic if you don't want to do it yourself.
- 2** ***Sharpen or Change Out the Mower Blades.*** Maintaining sharp mower blades that are in good condition will minimize the wear on your mower. This practice will also reduce fuel usage. Most importantly, maintaining sharpened mower blades also reduces disease issues in your lawn grasses.
- 3** ***Inspect and Repair Other Mower Parts.*** Inspect all levers, cables, pulleys, belts and switches. Especially check battery cables to make sure rodents have not damaged them while your mower was being stored for winter. If you notice any parts that are damaged or heavily worn, consider replacing them. Now is the time to order any parts before you get into the busy mowing season. You don't want to wait until it is time to begin mowing your grass and then find out that your mower is not working due to broken levers, cables, pulleys, belts or switches.
- 4** ***Properly Grease and/or lubricate Fittings.*** Check the owners manual for your mower to see what type of grease or other lubrication is required to maintain your mower and where the application of grease or lubricant is recommended. Using the recommended lubricant, apply it as indicated in your owners manual.
- 5** ***Check Wheels, Tires, and Cutting Height Adjustment.*** Make sure that any tires are in good condition. Check them for signs of dry rot. Make sure wheels are secured properly to the mower. Also, don't forget to check the mowing deck and mowing height adjustment. You can check the owners manual for how to adjust the mowing deck and calibrate the mowing height adjustment properly.

Mowing season will be here before you know it. If you have any questions as you get your mower in working order or if you have other lawn care related questions, please remember that you can always contact us at NC Cooperative Extension of Yancey County by calling (828) 682-6186.