

## UPCOMING + PAST EVENTS

### 2022 Energy Saving Trees

Save Energy, Money and the Planet!

All Saints Creation Care in partnership with the City of Concord and The Arbor Day Foundation is offering a limited number of free trees to hometown owners through the Energy-Saving Trees program. When you plant the right tree in the right place, it can help improve air and water quality, manage stormwater runoff, sequester carbon, help you save money on your utility bills, and make neighborhoods more enjoyable. It's a 'win' for you and your entire community! Beginning September 12, 2022 reserve your free tree at [arborday.org/concord](http://arborday.org/concord)

### Pollinator Garden

Laying the Foundation

In the coming weeks, both Extension Master Gardener Volunteers and Horticulture Extension Agent will be putting the finishing touches on a yearlong project at the Cabarrus County Cooperative Extension office. Be on the lookout for a garden filled with native plants as you drive by on U.S. 601 South. The last steps of bordering, irrigation installation and planting will all be completed after the second week in October. Be ready to book a garden tour in the Spring of 2023 through [Rec1](#) and come see what we have been working on!

### School Gardens Program

Youth Gardening in Elementary Schools

A recent partnership between Shady Brook Elementary and the Cabarrus Master Gardener Volunteer program has placed our very own, Gerri Harris, right in the middle of a school garden! Gerri was able to start volunteering in time to help students harvest a crop of sweet potato! The schools STEM teacher and Gerri are off to a great start. The Cabarrus Extension Master Gardeners hope to build more connections like this as the group rebuilds its momentum.

### Drip Irrigation Workshop – Rowan County

Drip Irrigation for the Home Garden or Commercial Grower

Don't miss out on this exciting opportunity to learn from Horticulture Extension Agents from Cabarrus, Davidson, Rowan, and Davie County on how to install and manage drip irrigation in your garden or your farm! This one-of-a-kind workshop will be held on September 23<sup>rd</sup> from 9:00am – 4:00pm at Elium Farm. Lunch will be provided. Click the link to register, there is only availability for the first 20 people.

Visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/384089230227>

### Cabarrus County Fair

This past week, the Extension Master Gardener Volunteers and I have been at the Cabarrus County Fair. What a blast! On Monday evening, I had the pleasure of teaching some residents about asexually propagating houseplants and they loved it. It really makes my day when I can pass on some useful information.

I was happily surprised by the number of people who were beginning gardens of all sizes; from purchasing a few acres to a windowsill herb garden. You all are really getting after it!

The Extension Master Gardeners have been busy handing out seed packets, educating about the importance of soil testing and talking about our Basil variety trials. There is still time to stop by the booth and get your fill of garden know-how.

We were excited to see you this year and can't wait to see you all again soon.

-Morgan Menaker

# Cabarrus Horticulture Extension Newsletter

Published by your Cabarrus County Horticulture Agent and Extension Master Gardener Volunteers

September 2022

## Third Friday Newsletter

Join us the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month to read educational content and more!



Cabarrus County Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Mark Robinson (left) and William "Bill" Oros (right) till and edge the Pollinator Garden plot at the Extension office in preparation for an October planting.

The months just keep on rolling by, don't they? I know you all are beginning to feel that crispness in the air, that chill on the breeze... Fall is fast approaching! Now is a good time to think about bringing those beloved potted plants indoors. I was certainly surprised to see nighttime temperatures getting down into the 50's. The window for pruning most perennial plants back before the Winter has now closed. Any new shoots are likely to be too young and tender to handle the cool temperatures we will be experiencing soon. It is best to leave them be until Spring of next year.

If you are considering bringing plants indoors for the winter, there are a few things you should consider. One, while your plants may not be foreign to you, they are certainly foreign to your indoor spaces. Fluctuations in temperature, humidity, and light will all change when a plant is brought indoors. Your plants may have trouble adjusting to their new environment. There isn't any AC outside, and once you turn the heat on for the winter the humidity is going to plummet...

Tropical plants like Pothos, Elephant Ear, Monstera and Ficus are going to sorely miss the warm blanket of moist air they grew accustomed to in the Summer. Before you run to grab your plants off the porch and zip them inside, you should do a few things. Look for pests! We call this 'scouting.' Look for pests on the top and bottom of leaves and in the space where the leaves meet the stem, and you may even want to pop them out of the pot and look for any critters before they start living with you rent free. By critters I mean ants... If you do find anything, it is best to treat them before coming inside. If you have a question about it call us here at the office.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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- Your Problems, Solved!
- Diamondback What?

Started in the Summer of 2022, the Cabarrus Horticulture Extension Newsletter was formed for the purpose of informing you, the reader, of all thing's Horticulture-related going on in Cabarrus County. Join us every month as we explore the vast realm of Horticulture from plant pathogens and pests to composting and more! Current and future events will be advertised here as well.

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### ABOUT N.C. COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

North Carolina Cooperative Extension is a strategic partnership of NC State Extension, The Cooperative Extension Program at N.C. A&T State University, USDA-NIFA, and 101 local governments statewide. Extension professionals in all 100 counties and the Eastern Band of Cherokee translate research-based education from our state's land-grant universities, NC State and N.C. A&T, into everyday solutions. Extension specializes in agriculture, youth, communities, food, health and the environment by responding to local needs.

## Gardening Tip-of-the-Month

Hope Duckworth, Extension Master Gardener Volunteer

You can begin Dividing Spring and Summer blooming perennials this month. You can also prepare for Fall planting! September is still too early to plant trees and shrubs, but you can start preparing your planting sites and selecting plants. Consider planting a native tree, a native perennial that will provide food for birds, or a larval host for butterflies! If you'd like help selecting or planting, please feel free to reach out to the Extension Master Gardener volunteers. We're more than happy to help.

Resist the urge to tidy up your garden!! Seedheads left on spent flowers can feed many species of birds all winter long, and provide some good opportunities for bird watching, too (like the Goldfinches on my spent sunflowers - more below). Do not prune trees or shrubs after August 15, as doing so promotes new growth that will be too tender to withstand fall frost. They should not be fertilized this month for the same reason.

If you plan to reseed your fescue lawn, September is a great month to do so.



Black eyed Susan or *Rudbeckia* seedheads after a long productive season.



### Wildlife Highlight:

From the Cabarrus Extension Master Gardener Volunteers

Goldfinches may be one of our cheeriest local bird species! Goldfinches are year-round residents, though they're harder to spot in the Winter when their bright yellow plumage turns a yellowish-brown color. Females and juveniles are olive-yellow in Summer and yellowish-brown in winter. Goldfinches are unusually late nesters and wait until July or August to make their nests for the year. If you see a nest, don't automatically assume it's abandoned - goldfinches are still nesting! Goldfinches are acrobatic and can hang completely upside down to pull seeds from old flowers. They will visit feeders but seem to prefer fresh flower seeds. Goldfinches do well in meadow and forest edge habitats and have adapted well to suburban conditions. You can help Goldfinches by planting native flowers and leaving seeds on spent flowers over the winter. Good options for Goldfinches are Sunflowers, Coneflowers (*Echinacea*), Black-Eyed Susan's (*Rudbeckia*), Bee Balm (*Monarda*), Joe Pye Weed (*Eupatorium*) and Asters. Zinnias, Cosmos, and Daisies are also popular choices.

## Your Problems, Solved!

Morgan Menaker, Horticulture Agent Cabarrus County

Every Friday, I post an article to the Cabarrus County Cooperative Extension/4-H Facebook page highlighting a different call-in clients plant predicament. I describe the issue, the pest pathogen or problem and the options for treatment or control.

Last month, I highlighted issues Cabarrus County residents were having with compost, orange-striped oak worm, carpenter ants in trees and Japanese Maple Tree dieback.

Visit our Facebook page to read the full stories by scanning the QR code on the right or visiting <https://www.facebook.com/cabarruscountyce>



## Feature Story

### *Diamondback what? Diamondback moth!*

Morgan Menaker, Horticulture Extension Agent

Chances are you have never heard of Diamondback Moth (DBM) or *Plutella xylostella*. And for good reason. This pesticide-resistant lepidopteran moth has plagued Brassica crop growers for decades. The larval stage of the pest exclusively feeds on crops found in the *Cruciferae* family. In my personal experience, if the pest is not controlled early in the season than it is better cut losses on the crop and move on. If you do have a run-in with this pest, it is an experience you will not soon forget.

Where most BT or *Bacillus Thuringiensis* products work to control larval or caterpillar pests the Diamondback Moth has acquired resistance. Conventional pesticides listed for use in the [2022 North Carolina Agricultural Chemicals Manual](#) can struggle to provide adequate control.

The problem in the Southeastern portion of the United States is that we do not experience cold enough temperatures in the winter for a long enough period to cause "dieback" or natural reduction of pest populations. The pests overwinter (live through the winter) on cruciferous weed species and then migrate to the cash crop once it has been planted in Autumn or early Spring.

It is such a problem in certain areas that researchers at NC State university have begun to monitor them across all three regions: Coastal plain, Piedmont, and Mountains. County Extension Agents have been reporting populations on select farms to identify what management practices will work to control this pest. Fallow periods, physical distance between spring and fall crop locations, and the use of new products are some of a few.

There is hope on the horizon, however. New products marketed as "mating disruptors" have been used for the first time in recent history. The premise is that this synthetic mating hormone, when sprayed, confuses adult males from being able to find a mate. No mating, no larvae and therefore no damage to the crop. This new product shows great promise and is even being trialed in peach orchards to try and control Peach Tree Borer or *Synanthedon exitiosa* another Lepidopteran pest.



DBM damage to a cabbage plant. Photo courtesy of Purdue Extension Entomology

## Diamondback Moth Adult & Pupa



**A diamondback moth with indistinct "diamond" patterns across its back.** The winged adults often fly off of crops when approached or rustled and quickly settle back down close by. Photo by J.R. Baker, NC State University.



**A diamondback moth pupa inside of its flimsy cocoon.** They can be found on the underside of leaves and are a sure sign you have a diamondback moth presence. Photo by J.R. Baker, NC State University