



# EXTENSION

N.C. Cooperative Extension  
Gaston County Center  
gaston.ces.ncsu.edu

1303 Dallas Cherryville Hwy.  
Dallas, NC 28034  
704-922-2111

# Master Gardener | Gaston County

# RESOURCE GUIDE

Feb 2024-April 2024

## Extension Master Gardener<sup>SM</sup> (EMG)

### MONTHLY PROGRAMS

The following meetings are open to the public and free of charge. All meetings below are held at the Citizen Resource Center (Dallas NC) at 10am.

- 2/15/24 - Bruce Duncan "Conifers"
- 3/21/24 - Carol Reese "Don't Go All Native On Me"
- 4/18/24 - Adam Bigelow - "Wil Flowers of the Southern Appalachians"

### EMG MISSION

EMG Volunteers support the mission of North Carolina Cooperative Extension by educating residents about safe, effective and sustainable gardening practices that grow healthy people, gardens, landscapes and communities. Their vision is a healthier world through environmental stewardship.



### UPCOMING EMG EVENTS

The following meetings are open to the public and free of charge. All meetings below are held at the Gaston County Library (Garrison Blvd) in the Carol K. Reinhardt Auditorium at 11am

- February 3 - Garden Planning
- March 16 - Growing Herbs
- April 13 - Native Plants
- May 18 - Small Space & Container Gardening

### COMMUNITY SEED BANKS



The Community Seed Bank has been established by NC Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Volunteers of Gaston County in partnership with the Gaston County Public Library. Our goal is to ensure access to vegetable, flower and herb seeds and inspire community members to garden.

In 2024 all branches of the Gaston County Public Library will have a selection of seasonal seeds. The seed banks officially start back on February 1 and will have cool season crops along with peppers and tomatoes!

We also encourage you to save seeds from your successful crops to share with others by donating back to the seed bank at the end of the season. Seeds are available February - October.

For questions about the Seed Bank, contact 704-922-2138 or email [emgvfgastoncounty@gmail.com](mailto:emgvfgastoncounty@gmail.com)



## MASTER GARDENER INFO LINE

If you have gardening questions that you need answered, our EMG Volunteers are here ready to help. From April - October the Master Gardener Hotline is open. You can call 704-922-2138 and an EMG Volunteer will return your call throughout the week. Alternatively, you can email [emgovfgastoncounty@gmail.com](mailto:emgovfgastoncounty@gmail.com) with your questions or photos that can help our Volunteers better answer your question!

# HEALTHY HOUSEPLANTS

*By Robin Warren, Extension Master Gardener Volunteer*

Potted plants living in your house are useful in cleaning the air you breathe, they emit oxygen and humidity, and absorb carbon monoxide and harmful gases. This helps in keeping your home a bit healthier. They can also add a lovely colorful source of interest to your décor.

How are your houseplants doing these days? Sometimes at this time of year they can look a little stressed. Friends recently have mentioned they had forgotten to water theirs and keep procrastinating doing so until they fear they've hurt them. Do you wonder why they don't seem to be growing as much right now? Wondering why their leaves have been dropping? Do you have a plant that was blooming and now the blossoms have fallen off? Never fear, winter is their dormant season. They should survive and here are a few tips to help!

Most indoor plants are tropical in nature and require a good source of light, plenty of sunlight or a bright plant light throughout the day. A little warmth is helpful as well. They need to be watered regularly, but not overwatered, and like to stay on a consistent watering schedule, perhaps every two weeks or so. Plants require less water in general in the dormant months. Some will dry out quicker than others so keep an eye on them and water as needed, but if the soil is moist, hold on watering until the top inch of soil has dried out. Be sure your pots have drainage at the bottom. Roots can rot if they sit in too soggy of an environment for too long. A cool air humidifier will add moisture to your indoor air to help them thrive. During the winter months, fertilization should wait until after the first of the year. A balanced fertilizer is preferable. Fertilize quarterly until Fall.

Plants like to be clean. If you have leaves, stems or sections that seem to be dying by shriveling up or falling off, cut them from the plant and remove those from the pot. If you see signs of insects or white cottony fluff or anything unusual building up on the leaves and/or their connection to the stem, carefully wipe them off using a moistened cloth or cotton swabs to clean each infested plant section. They should also be dusted occasionally, dust can clog their pores.

Potted plants can become root bound when the plant becomes too big for the pot it is in. You will know it's rootbound when the soil it's planted in will not hold water - it will rush out the bottom, or you can see roots growing out the drainage holes. This is an opportunity to help your plant thrive by moving it into a larger pot, using a high quality and appropriate potting medium. If you have a plant with long or large leaves, plant it in a large pot so its roots have room to spread out. Loosen up the roots when you transfer the plant to a new pot.

During the growing season, when all chance of frost has passed, if you have the space, place your houseplants in a shady spot outdoors. There are some exceptions so you will want to keep an eye on them. As an example, Peace Lilies, Pathos, and Philodendron prefer to remain indoors. Continue to care for all of them by watering, fertilizing, and keeping them clean and shaped up.

Plants thrive in the warmth and humidity we have in this region, however, when temperatures drop below freezing, generally by October 31 in the Piedmont of NC, move all tender plants back into the house to be protected from frost. For best results, do a little research on each of your plants to find out more information and ways to care for them. The internet has several options listed under plant identification.

Happy Gardening!

## FREE HORTICULTURE RESOURCES



Gardening Publications



EMG Handbook



Organic Gardening



Soil Testing



Weed Management



Plants For Shade

### How do I use the QR Codes?

Open the camera on your phone to scan the QR Code and a link will appear for you to click. The link will open in your browser for you to review the information provided.

### Can I open the QR Code on my computer?

No. If you are wanting to access this information via a computer, we recommend opening the link on your phone then emailing that web address to yourself to access via a computer.

### Can I use my tablet/iPad?

Yes! As long as it has a camera on it, you can use it just like you would on your phone.

# GARDENING TIPS FOR THE SEASON

## FLOWERS

- Remove debris from garden beds before new growth occurs. Add a fresh layer of mulch (2 to 3 inches).
- When shopping for annual transplants, select short, stocky plants with well-developed root systems and more buds than flowers. Wait until after danger of frost (approximately April 15) before planting!
- Pruning back butterfly bushes to 12"-18" will induce more flowering and a stronger plant
- Wait until spring bulb foliage dies down naturally before removing it.
- Now's the time for pre-emergent application to help control weeds.
- Plant summer-flowering bulbs like iris, lilies and dahlias after the end of March.

## LAWNS

- Apply pre-emergent herbicides for crabgrass control before Dogwoods bloom
- Do not fertilize warm-season grasses at this time. Resist all advertisements and wait until after the grass is completely green before fertilizing.
- Cool-season lawn mowing season starts as it warms up. Maintain a height of 3"-4".

By Julie Flowers - Gaston County Cooperative Extension Consumer Horticulture Agent

## FRUITS & VEGETABLES

- Plant potatoes, onion sets, beets, and radishes, and transplant cabbage, broccoli and similar members of the cabbage family in February. These vegetables can withstand a light frost without damage.
- Direct seed sweet corn, pole beans, lima and snap beans, cantaloupe, cucumbers, summer squash and watermelons after April 15th. Wait until the end of April to set out tomatoes, peppers and eggplant.
- Plant blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, and muscadine grapes in late March or April.

## TREES & SHRUBS

- Complete any major pruning of fruit or shade trees in March.
- Do not prune winter or spring flowering plants such as camellia, daphne, or azalea until after they have finished blooming.
- Shape up evergreen shrubs in April



To view more gardening information and resources provided by Gaston County Extension visit <https://gaston.ces.ncsu.edu>

# 2024 EMG PLANT SALE

The annual plant sale will be held on May 4th, 2024 and will start at 8am. The Plant Sale is held at the Senior Center - 1303 Dallas Cherryville Hwy, Dallas NC.

There will be a variety of plants available consisting of annuals, herbs, perennials, vegetables, shrubs and a few trees. A Silent Auction will also be held. The auction will consist of items that our talented Extension Master Gardener Volunteers have created. Be sure to arrive early as many years we are sold out by 9:00 am! The Plant Sale will end when all plants have been sold.

If you have any questions, contact Donna Speed - Plant Sale Chairman - at 704-460-9402. We hope to see you there!!



## What is an Extension Master Gardener<sup>SM</sup> (EMG)?

The Extension Master Gardener program is an educational program designed to enhance public education in consumer horticulture. It provides educational assistance to the citizens of the county concerning lawns, fruits, vegetables, trees, and ornamentals through the utilization of a trained and supervised volunteer staff.



## How can I become an EMG?

Our next Extension Master Gardener course will take place Feb 1 - April 25, 2024 in a hybrid format. Coursework will be completed virtually and there will be one in-person meeting per week. Please contact Julie Flowers for an application form. Course fee is \$125 and includes all course material.

# GARDEN FEST

**Saturday, April 6, 9:00 am - 12:00PM @ Citizen Resource Center, 1303 Dallas Cherryville Hwy, Dallas NC**

The Master Gardener<sup>SM</sup> Group of Gaston County invites you to join us for our first outdoor drop-in event. Help us celebrate the 30+ year anniversary of our organization and Learning Garden. We missed the exact year due to COVID. There will be several pollination-themed craft stations for children, several adult educational stations and a scavenger hunt that will ensure you tour every corner of our beautiful Learning Garden (prize for completion). Other community organizations will be participating (still confirming) such as the Dallas Library and Keep Gastonia Beautiful. Stay tuned for more details on FB and Instagram. This event will take place between the back of the Citizens Resource Center and the park/track fence. Follow the 'Garden Tour' signs. Any questions may be directed to Barbara Linster, balinster@yahoo.com.

## Gaston County Extension Contact

### NC Cooperative Extension

Mailing Address:  
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28053

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### Website

[gaston.ces.ncsu.edu](http://gaston.ces.ncsu.edu)

### Instagram

@gaston\_county\_nc\_ces (Gaston Co. Cooperative Extension)

@MasterGardenersOfGastonCounty (Master Gardener of Gaston Co.)

### Citizen Resource Center

1303 Dallas-Cherryville Hwy.  
Dallas, NC 28034  
Phone: 704-922-2111

### Consumer Horticulture Agent

**Julie Flowers**  
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### Facebook

@GastonExtension (Gaston Co. Cooperative Extension)

@MasterGardenersOfGastonCounty (Master Gardener of Gaston Co.)

### EMG Info Line

704-922-2138