

# JUNGLE TAMING

MONTHLY HORTICULTURAL NEWSLETTER

803.463.2655

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February, 2012

*Monthly Horticultural Newsletter is distributed free of charge each month by Jungle Taming, LLC, an upscale yard restoration landscaping company proudly serving the Columbia, SC area.*

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## Amy's February Horticultural Tasks

Written by Amy Bledsoe

### Annuals

Sick of winter? Start planning for color in your yard. Even those with physical limitations can have a garden by using colorful planting containers. Window boxes, hanging baskets, and pots placed near the entrance welcome visitors to the home. Limit use of annuals to those that can be planted easily in a small amount of time, and use perennials that return each year to provide the bulk of the color.

### Turf

Relax. Enjoy the break from the heat and mowing. Have you had a soil sample taken yet? Don't procrastinate any longer!

### Perennials

Cut back ornamental grasses now and plan for new plantings of ornamental grass in the spring. Consider these wonderful choices:

- **Pampas grass** is great for making a statement in a larger space but does have sharp blades of grass that can cut.
- **Muhly grass** is a smaller option that has soft leaves. Sweet grass baskets sold to Charleston tourists are made from this grass. When in bloom at the end of the summer, the pink plumes resemble floating cotton candy.
- Other great choices are all in the Miscanthus family of grasses such as 'Adagio', 'Gracillimus', 'Yaku Jima', and 'Morning Light'.
- Choices for dwarf grasses include 'Little Kitten', 'Hameln', and 'Mouldry'.



There are many more choices - you can't beat the low maintenance and drought tolerance of these ornamental grasses.

### Roses

February is a perfect time for planting roses! Instead of buying cut roses for your loved one on Valentine's Day, buy a rose bush to be enjoyed over a lifetime.



### Shrubs

One of the best winter blooming shrubs is the Flowering Quince. For a small space try 'Texas Scarlet'. These shrubs do have barbs, so consider placement carefully. This prickly bush can prevent trespassers and provide fruit for making quince jelly!

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## Upcoming Events

Bill and the Jungle Taming gang are very active in community activities around the Columbia area. They will be providing gardening information at a variety of events.

Details about each event are located on the website:  
[www.jungletaming.com](http://www.jungletaming.com)

**Chapin Garden Club**  
**Wednesday, February 22, 2012**  
**9:30 a.m.**

**Registration:** Open to members only. Contact Mary Lafond at (803) 345-1307 for more information about membership.

**Adaptive Gardening Seminar**  
**Thursday, April 5, 2012**  
**9:00 a.m.**

**Robert Mills Carriage House**  
**Registration:** (803) 296-2273  
<http://www.palmettohealth.org/body.cfm?id=3302&oTopID=3095>

**Midlands Plant and Flower Festival**  
**Thursday through Sunday, April 19, 20, 21 and 22**  
**8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Thurs-Sat;**  
**12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sun**  
**S.C. State Farmer's Market**  
**3483 Charleston Highway**  
**West Columbia**  
**Admission and parking: FREE**  
<http://agriculture.sc.gov/content.aspx?ContentID=736>

**Sparkleberry County Fair**  
**Saturday, April 28, 2012**  
**9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sat.**  
**Clemson Research Center, Two Notch and Clemson Roads, Columbia, SC**  
**Admission: \$5.00 per carload**

**Palmetto Health Employee Discount Advantage Fair**  
**Tuesday through Thursday**  
**May 29, 30 and 31, 2012**  
**Palmetto Health Employees Only**

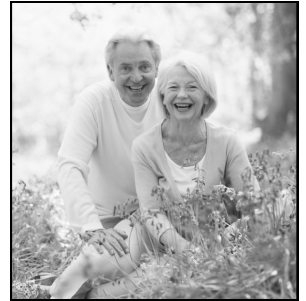


## Gardening for Everybody

*Written by Donald McInnes, Ph.D.*

I don't want to be climbing ladders twenty years from now.

For those of us that like to garden (and I mean that term in its broadest possible meaning), it makes sense to consider that we will likely be less able-bodied in the future. As we make decisions about garden design—choosing plants, hardscape materials, garden furnishings, etc.—it will pay to include in the decision calculus that someday physical challenges may make garden access limited and lessen the amount and types of activities and chores we can accomplish.



For those already dealing with physical challenges, such limitations should already be a factor in decision making. The same sorts of considerations should also play a role for those of us who like to minimize the amount of work we need to do to achieve the desired results. In other words, by careful consideration and forethought, we can minimize needless work in the future and do all we can to insure that we can handle our gardens as we age and our bodies senesce.

For example, consider a homeowner who wants to plant a crepe myrtle tree near his house, where, if the tree gets too large, it will block the desirable view from a second floor window. If this homeowner fails to do his research and buys the first crepe myrtle he finds on sale at the local big-box store, he's likely to take home a Natchez crepe myrtle, the



most common variety we're likely to find for sale. There's nothing wrong with 'Natchez'—it's popular with good reason; it has a long bloom time, is mildew resistant and has some of the most beautiful bark of any tree. Crepe myrtles, however, range in size at maturity from knee high to 40 feet, and 'Natchez' is one of the

larger varieties. If he plants a Natchez crepe myrtle under his window, in a few years this homeowner will face losing his view, having to prune his tree every year (which will likely spoil the tree's natural graceful architecture...and have him doing quite a bit of work while up a ladder), or removing it entirely. With a little bit of research at the library or online ([www.clemson.edu/crepemyrtle](http://www.clemson.edu/crepemyrtle)), and maybe paying five or ten dollars more for a different variety that won't get so tall, he can get a tree that will give him the attributes he wants and never block his window.

I have a friend who has a progressive disease that is slowly robbing him of his mobility. In the last ten years he has gone from often using a cane to being dependent on a walker. Some day in the not too distant future, he'll be restricted to a wheelchair. He has been planning for that day for a few years now. His backyard is crisscrossed with concrete paths that can take him everywhere he'd like to go, and he has a nice

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## Amy's February Horticultural Tasks

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### Tree Pruning



Pruning can improve a tree's structure or health, accommodate for human needs (spacing and accessibility), increase light penetration, and provide a view.

#### When to prune?

Prune when trees are dormant (no leaves) to minimize the risk of pest problems associated with wound entry, and to allow trees to take advantage of the full growing season to begin closing and compartmentalizing

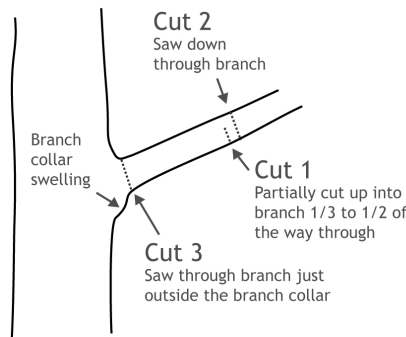
wounds. Most routine pruning and removal of weak, diseased, undesirable or dead limbs can be accomplished at any time with little negative effect on the tree.

#### Pruning Cuts

In most cases, the preferred place to make a pruning cut is back to the parent branch or trunk, just to the outside of the branch collar or shoulder. There are times when it is necessary to reduce the length of a limb by cutting it back to a lateral branch. However, trees do not respond well to this type of pruning cut because they cannot readily compartmentalize the wound; when possible avoid this type of cut.

Large or heavy limbs should be removed using three cuts:

1. The first cut undercuts the limb one or two feet out from the parent branch or trunk. A properly made undercut eliminates the chance of the branch "peeling" or tearing bark as it is removed.
2. The second cut is the top cut, which is usually made slightly farther out on the limb than the undercut. (When cutting large limbs with a chain saw, often the top cut is made directly above the bottom cut to avoid the saw bar getting caught in the kerf). This allows the limb to drop smoothly when the weight is released.
3. The third cut is to remove the stub. When removing a dead branch, the final cut should be made just outside the collar of living tissue. If the collar has grown along a branch stub, only the dead stub should be removed.



#### Pruning Mature Trees

A number of factors must be considered when pruning mature trees. These include the tree site, time of year, species, size, growth habit, vitality, and tree maturity. The amount of live tissue that should be removed depends on the tree size, species, and age, as well as the pruning objectives. As a general rule, mature trees are less tolerant of severe pruning than juvenile trees. Also, smaller cuts close faster and are more easily compartmentalized than large cuts.

Never remove more than one-fourth of a tree's leaf-bearing canopy. Removing even a single, large-diameter limb can create a wound the tree may not be able to close. The older and larger a tree becomes, the less energy it has in reserve to close wounds and defend against decay or insect attack. Further, the energy-producing capacity in relation to mass decreases as a tree matures. The pruning of large, mature trees is usually limited to the removal of dead branches or to reduce the severity of structural defects.

Topping or heading back a tree is not a recommended pruning practice.

Tree painting of the wound is not a recommended practice.

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## Gardening for Everybody

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ramp up to his porch. Because he had time to think about them and plan carefully, the paths and the ramp look nice and fit well with the design of the



home and garden—unlike so many ramps that are hurriedly constructed in the immediate aftermath of a physical tragedy.

So next time you want to make a change in your garden or landscape, don't be hasty (or pound-wise and penny-foolish), and consider carefully the long-term effects of your choices. If you think you're too young to think about issues of access and aging, plan your garden like an elderly family member will be a frequent visitor. Someday, that visitor may be you.

Any pruning that needs to be done near power lines should be done by the power company's tree crews. Call for assistance at (800)251-7234 then #, 4, and 0.

Use a professional tree service for pruning or tree removal that involves major climbing or trees near buildings.



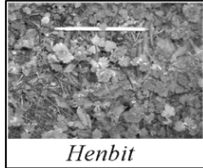
## Three Uninvited Guests

Written by Professor Ron Cowart

Now is the time for all good gardeners to come to the aid of their lawn! Your lawn is being invaded by these three Freddie-the-free-loaders:



Dandelion



Henbit



Wild Garlic

**Dandelion, Henbit and Wild Garlic.** Reach into your arsenal of pest weapons, draw out your trusty sprayer, take aim and fire away with a blast of 2,4-D herbicide (brand names include "Weed B Gon MAX", "PAR III", "Trillion", "Tri-Kil", "Killlex" and "Weedaway Premium 3-Way XP Turf Herbicide"). These three weeds are tough *hombres*, and you will have to re-load and give them another shot in 10 to 14 days. Read the pesticide label and always follow the directions on container.



### Points to Remember:

- Weeds compete with your lawn.
- Weeds decrease the economic value of your landscape.
- Weeds make your lawn slippery and increase the chance of injury to people.
- Weeds produce pollen that can cause allergic reactions.
- Weeds are sometimes poisonous to people.

## About the Authors

*Amy Bledsoe, who has a degree in horticulture, is a Certified Nursery Professional, Pesticide Applicator, Environmental Landscaper, Arborist, and Landscape Technician, and has been in the horticultural industry for several years as a garden center employee, lecturer, consultant, and designer. She was the recipient of the 2002 Horticulture Student of the Year award from the SC Nursery and Landscape Association. She is currently the landscape designer for the City of Columbia, and is a member of the SC Nursery and Landscape Association and the Greater Columbia Landscape Association. She has consulted on gardening articles for Columbia Metropolitan magazine and The State newspaper, appeared on ETV's "Making It Grow," and has also been a radio guest on "The Andy Thomas Show" to answer questions on gardening.*

*Ron Cowart has 40 years of landscaping experience. Since 1975, he has owned and operated Tookedoo Farms, a landscaping and nursery business. With two degrees from Clemson University, he is also a horticulture and landscape teacher at Midlands Tech, and was honored as the Adjunct Professor of the Year in Continuing Education in 2006. As owner of Cowart Landscaping Consulting, LLC, Ron's goal is to "arm the homeowner with knowledge." To contact Ron, call (803) 438.9324 or email [cowartconsulting@gmail.com](mailto:cowartconsulting@gmail.com). You can visit Ron's website at [www.cowartconsulting.com](http://www.cowartconsulting.com).*



*Donald McInnes has three degrees in Biology (B.S., M.S., Ph.D.) and works for Clemson Extension, assisting consumers with landscape, garden, wildlife and pest control questions. He is also the owner of Southeastern Environmental Design, a landscape design and consulting service, and chairs the City of Columbia's Tree and Appearance Commission. Email Dr. McInnes at [seenvdes@aol.com](mailto:seenvdes@aol.com).*

## About Jungle Taming



*Jungle Taming, LLC is an upscale yard and garden restoration company that specializes in pruning, cultivating and uncovering hidden beauty from overgrown landscapes. Call Jungle Taming for fence line cleaning, ivy and weed removal, bed improvement, trimming and cleaning shrubs, tree trimming, debris removal, herbicide application and much, much more.*

*Owner Bill Kunze, certified in Landscape Management, has over 15 years of hands-on experience in the Midlands area. For more information, contact Jungle Taming at (803) 463-2655 or email [info@JungleTaming.com](mailto:info@JungleTaming.com). Or visit the website: [www.JungleTaming.com](http://www.JungleTaming.com).*