

JUNGLE TAMING

MONTHLY HORTICULTURAL NEWSLETTER

803.463.2655

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April, 2012

Helping to minimize the effects of original sin in your Garden of Eden!

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.

Visit www.JungleTaming.com for more information.

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Amy's April Horticultural Tasks

Written by Amy Bledsoe

Annuals

Keep transplants well watered and mulched to help them get rooted in before the arrival of summer's heat and humidity. Liquid



fertilizers can be applied every two weeks to get new plants off to a good start. Slow release fertilizers should be used at planting time and should not be needed again until mid summer. Watch for aphids and whiteflies.

Turf

Repair bare patches or replant large areas using seed or sod when the average daytime temperatures remain above 60 degrees. Water newly seeded or sodded turf to encourage rapid establishment. Wait at least two or three weeks after the turf has completely greened up before fertilizing according to soil test recommendations.

Fire Ants

If fire ants have cropped up in the turf, now is the best time to control them using the two step method:

Step 1: Broadcast a fresh-bait insecticide over the entire landscape. Apply the bait when the workers are foraging for food. In the spring and fall, this is during the warmer daylight hours. In the summer, apply the bait in late afternoon or evening when the ants are foraging. Distribute the bait with a handheld seed spreader. Make one or two passes over the area at a normal walking speed to apply the recommended rate. Most mounds that receive this slow-acting bait treatment will eventually be eliminated.

Step 2: No sooner than seven days after applying the bait, treat only those mounds that pose a threat to people. These mounds are located near walkways, play equipment, and other areas where paths cross. Use an approved fire ant insecticide product and follow label directions.



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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

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.
Clemson Research Center, Two Notch and Clemson Roads, Columbia, SC
Admission: \$5.00 per carload

Forest Acres Festival
Saturday, May 19, 2012
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
AC Flora Athletic Field
Poison Ivy Identification Booth
Admission: FREE

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

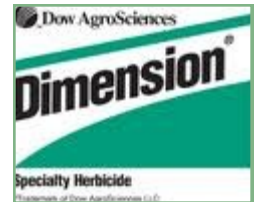
Professor Ron's Timely Turf Tips

Written by Professor Ron Cowart

April is the month when nature is waking up from a winter's nap and the lawns are responding to the warm days and spring showers. Remember the following tips.

Fertilizing: Apply a 16-4-8 analysis fertilizer containing 50% slow release nitrogen at the rate of 6.25 lbs. per 1,000 square feet of lawn three weeks after full grass green-up. The above rate is for centipede, Bermuda and zoysia grasses. Since St. Augustine is a heavy feeder, increase the rate to 12.5 lbs. per 1,000 square feet.

Herbicide: Pre-emergent herbicide should have been applied in March at the beginning of forsythia bloom to the end of dogwood bloom. However, it is not too late to apply approved pre-emergent herbicide to inhibit late germinating, grassy weeds (for example **Dimension® Specialty Herbicide**). Carefully follow the directions.



Applying too much herbicide can inhibit new root development of your lawn during the hot, dry summer months.

Disease Control: Lawn areas that have not greened-up and should be growing may have a disease. Dying patches, thinning-out and yellowing at base of grass leaf blades are some of the symptoms of disease. April is the beginning of many diseases:

	Bermuda	Zoysia	Centipede	St. Augustine
Large Patch	X			
Dollar Spot	X			
Spring Dead Spot	X			
Fairy Rings	X	X	X	X
Slime Mold	X	X	X	
Centipede Decline			X	
St. Augustine Decline				X

Consult a professional landscaper to identify the pathogen and recommend a treatment.

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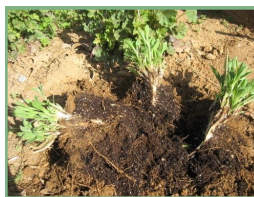
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Amy's April Horticultural Tasks

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Perennials

Plant perennials now and apply slow release fertilizers. Many perennials can be divided now or in the fall. Watch for aphids, whiteflies, and slug or snails.



Roses

Prune roses to buds that point outward. This encourages good air and sunlight penetration. Dark colored canes indicate dead wood. Cut back an inch below these darkened areas. If the center of the cane is discolored, cut back further until white pith is exposed. If there are no live buds, remove the entire cane or branch. Last year's mulch may contain fungal disease spores that can infect your rosebushes. If you have not done so already, apply fresh mulch to blanket the old mulch to a depth of two to three inches. If you prefer to remove the old mulch, apply it to other areas of the landscape not occupied by roses or till it in as compost. Fertilize once-blooming roses in early spring before growth begins. Repeat-

blooming roses should be fertilized only if necessary. Evaluate the growth and appearance of the plant to decide if fertilizing is necessary.

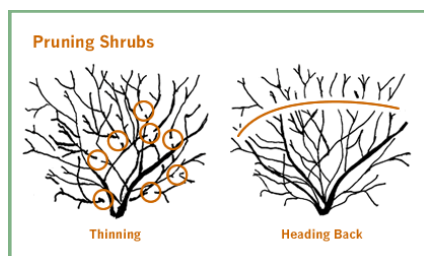
Only one or two applications may be necessary during the season if you use a slow-release fertilizer. Water after application to make sure the nutrients are available to the rose. Inspect your roses for aphids and spider mites.



Shrubs

Continue to plant shrubs. Pay strict attention to watering to help them get established. If you're unsure of extent of winter injury, wait until growth starts before removing dead wood. Prune spring-flowering shrubs as their blossoms fade. Prune out dead, damaged, or pest-ridden branches first. Avoid using **heading** cuts to prune them into mushrooms or meatballs. Rather, use **thinning** cuts to remove renegade limbs and to accentuate their natural shapes. To prune forsythia, quince, nandina, or other multi-stemmed shrubs, cut off a few of the older central stems right at ground level so new ones can spring up and take over. Prune azaleas only if they require it. Thin wayward branches. Cut back branches that

have just a ring of leaves at the top. Watch out for aphids, whiteflies, and spider mites. Azalea lace bugs suck sap from the undersides of azalea leaves, creating damage that appears as stippled or blanched areas on the surface of the leaves. Look for tea scale on the un-



Professor Ron's Timely Turf Tips

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Sod Replacement: Replace sod in areas that need re-sodding after addressing the problem of the previous sod decline. If the problem has not been corrected, grass may decline over and over again.



Irrigation: Check all sprinkler heads for even distribution and unclog stopped-up heads. Set sprinkler zones for 30 to 35 minutes duration for large pattern sprinkler heads that distribute water 26 to 28 feet; set misting or small spray head zones for 10 to 15 minutes duration. Irrigation start time should be in the early morning, 5:00 a.m. for example and be finished by mid-morning. Water clay soil 1" per week, sandy soil 1.5" week.

dersides of leaves on camellias and hollies. It will appear as white spots.

Trees

Fertilize palms with a slow-release fertilizers having an analysis such as 18-6-12 or 15-5-10. Palms also benefit from fertilizers containing magnesium and other micronutrients.



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Growing Little Green Thumbs

Written by Ruby Haycock DeLoach



Oh! How You Grow

**The more you read the more you know;
You learn of seeds and how they grow.
In their protective coat they hide
Roots and stems and leaves all inside.
Oh! How they grow.**

When we eat sweet potatoes we are eating roots. They are not just good for eating. They make fabulous house plants, which are cheap and fast growing. These characteristics make them the perfect green thumb growing project to share with a child. Reading this article together and write about your potato in a Garden Journal. Include the rhyme and marvel at the child's love of word play and ability to recall it from memory.

It's time to put away our winter coats and time to grow. Plan a trip to the grocery store and choose a firm sweet potato with a pointed end and eyes. Stick 5 toothpicks about 1/3 of their length into the large upper third of the potato, being careful not to poke the eyes. The toothpicks rest on the jar rim to hold the potato. The pointed end goes in the water. A quart, glass Mason jar or a large mouthed mayonnaise jar filled with water and a teaspoon of fertilizer will make it easy to observe the rapid growth and learn the basic plant parts and sequence of growth. In about three days, roots and stem will appear. Then, spring green leaves with purple undersides begin to appear. After about three weeks, the potato can be planted in a pot of dirt. If left in the jar, change water weekly and continue to fertilize.



Gardening for Everybody

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beneficial to wildlife as plastic or silk plants, and to start reducing the size of our lawns and replacing some of the plants that belong here, the natives that evolved here with the animals that depend on them. And that's why I will never plant another non-native azalea.

[See www.americanforests.org/magazine/article/backyard-biodiversity for a summary of some of Doug Tallamy's research. Native alternatives to some of the most common exotic landscape plants can be found at www.scnps.org/PDFs/articles/Alternatives_0209.pdf.]



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Gardening for Everybody

Written by Donald McInnes, Ph.D.

As I write this, the Asian azaleas along my driveway are at their peak, putting on quite a show. I like azaleas. They're evergreen, have an unmatched floral display in the spring, and when sited correctly (so they get shade in the afternoon), they are almost maintenance-free, only requiring some light pruning to keep them looking neat. But from the perspective of the bees, butterflies, birds and other critters I'd like to share my property with, my Asian azaleas are nearly worthless. And that's why I'll never plant one again.



I did see an occasional bumblebee visiting my azaleas today, but the bees would only enter a few flowers and then fly off, lingering a few seconds at most. They were fooled by false advertising. The azaleas, despite the great display of flowers, produce very little of the pollen and nectar the bees are seeking to get their families growing this time of year.

There are 46 million acres of lawn in the U.S. This is an area larger than that of 36 of the US states. It's about the size of North Dakota, about 2½ times the land area of South Carolina. Again from the perspective of wildlife, lawns are ... well, they're better than concrete, but not much.

Doug Tallamy and his students at the University of Delaware have been studying how birds and insects utilize plants in home landscapes. Native plants support much, much more wildlife than do their exotic counterparts. In one study, native hedge plants were found to support five times more species and 22 times the number of caterpillars than hedges of exotic plants. Tallamy reports that native woody plants support on average 29 times the amount of wildlife than their exotic counterparts.

When my wife and I moved into our current home about seven years ago, we inherited half a dozen bird houses from the previous owners. Every winter I clean out the birdhouses, but none of them has supported a family of birds. Not once. A few times birds have started to make a nest, only to abandon it after a few days. I've changed the location of the birdhouses several times, but still no birds. After hearing a talk by Doug Tallamy last weekend at the State Master Gardener Conference, I'm convinced the reason for my lack of resident birds is that there's not enough for them to eat. The landscape that came with our house is dominated by Asian plants—azaleas, camellias, pittosporums, hydrangeas, crepe myrtles, Japanese and Chinese hollies. These plants support little insect life and produce no fruit and almost no seed. What's a bird to eat?



The seven billion humans on the planet share it with tens of millions of other species (no one has counted exactly how many; they haven't all been discovered). And every day the irrevocable and increasing changes we have made drive a few of those species to extinction. In my opinion, this is more than a shame—it's a crime against Nature. And I think we should do what we can to preserve and aid those species in peril. In the eastern U.S., one way to do this is to stop planting our landscapes with exotic plants, which are about as

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Colonial Beef Hash

This beef hash recipe was handed down by Miss Patsy's mother, Mildred Ross. As far as we know, this is only cooked and served in the Kershaw county area, and was probably perfected during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Ingredients

- 3 lbs. beef stew meat
- 3 lbs. chopped onions
- Meat drippings from pot
- 3 tablespoons prepared mustard
- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 package onion soup mix (Not in original receipt)



Boil beef until done, cool and pull. Add remaining ingredients and boil to gravy consistency. Serve over rice.

About the Authors

Amy Bledsoe, who has a degree in horticulture, is a Certified Nursery Professional, Pesticide Applicator, Environmental Landscaper, Arborist, and Landscape Technician. She is currently the landscape designer for the City of Columbia. 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. Email Amy at abledsoedesign@msn.com.

Ron Cowart has 40 years of landscaping experience. Since 1975, he has owned and operated Tookeedoo Farms, a landscaping and nursery business. With two degrees from Clemson University, he is also a horticulture and landscape teacher at Midlands Tech, and owner of Cowart Landscaping Consulting, LLC. To contact Ron, call (803) 513.4242 or email cowartconsulting@gmail.com. You can visit Ron's website at www.cowartconsulting.com.

Ruby Haycock DeLoach has an Ed. D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of South Carolina. After retiring as an educator, she developed her artistic abilities and illustrated her first nonfiction children's science book, **Earth Turns on Its Axis, and...** She has another book under production called **Growing Little Green Thumbs**. To contact Ruby, email rhdeloach@aol.com. Also visit her website at www.crookedcreekart.org/deloach.htm.

Donald McInnes has degrees in biology from Duke, Northwestern and Florida State. He has worked for Clemson Extension in Richland County for more than a decade, assisting thousands of consumers with landscape, garden, wildlife and pest control questions. He is also the owner of Southeastern Environmental Design, a landscape coaching, consulting and design service, and chairs the City of Columbia's Tree and Appearance Commission. He can be reached at 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. Or visit the website: www.JungleTaming.com.



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