

LANDSCAPE NEWS

MARCH 2011

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UPCOMING EVENTS SCHEDULE

March 11, 2011. Area Landscape Workshop: Winston-Salem, NC.

3 hours pesticide credit available for in LNDX. Contact (336)703-2850 for additional information. There is a \$5 registration fee. Must be pre-registered to attend.

March 16, 2011. Clean Streams Certification Training: Winston-Salem, NC.

1 hour pesticide credit applied for in LNDX. Contact Stephen Greer/Wendi Hartup (336)703-2850 for more information. See enclosed registration form.

*Additional information about events is detailed in newsletter.

PROTECT YOUR WATER RESOURCES WHILE FERTILIZING TURF

The rising cost of fertilizer along with the growing trend of organic landscaping practices has led many professionals to look at compost and manure as valid fertilizer options. Most organic fertilizers contain between 3 and 10 percent nitrogen. This form of nitrogen is usually slow to release as it is typically tied up in complex organic molecules. The nitrogen is released as soil microbes break down the molecules for food and as the molecules slowly dissolve in water. It is called a 'slow-release' because it may take several weeks or even months to become available to the plant. As such, growth response by the grass plants may be gradual over a period of 1-2 months. Therefore when fertilizing with organic fertilizers, expect a slower greening in the spring and extended growth in the fall if temperatures remain adequate for growth. Extended dry or cold periods may delay release of nitrogen from organic fertilizers.

Whether you use synthetic or organic fertilizer you should always base your applications on a soil test. A soil test will show the types and levels of nutrients in the soil. Most newly planted areas should be tested during the construction phase and every one to two years after that depending on the type of turf being grown. Coring compacted, sloped areas will reduce runoff. Time of the year coring is recommended depends on the turfgrass being managed.

The application of high rates of nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizer on slopes near surface water increases the risk for negatively impacting water quality. Use no more than 0.25 to 0.50 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square foot per application in these settings. Always maintain a buffer zone of



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low-maintenance grasses or natural vegetation between areas of highly maintained turf and water. This prevents erosion and produces a trap or filter for unwanted nutrients.

Consider using iron as a supplement to nitrogen for grass greening response. Iron can be used alone or in combination with nitrogen to provide a greening response. Reduced nitrogen applications will minimize possible nitrate leaching into groundwater. You should time your applications carefully.

Quick release fertilizers should not be applied before a heavy rainfall or irrigation. Nitrogen has the highest chance of leaching under cool and wet weather. Cold temperatures (55 to 60 degrees Fahrenheit) slow microbes and plant uptake, as well as loss through volatilization and de-nitrification. Irrigate after each application of quick release fertilizer. Irrigation of 0.25 to 0.50 inches of water moves the fertilizer off the foliage and into the ground where it can be used by the plants. It decreases loss by runoff and volatilization and minimizes the risk of foliar burn.

When practical, clippings should be allowed to remain on the lawn to decompose and recycle nutrients back into the turf. If clippings are removed, they should not be blown into ditches, streams, lakes, or placed in areas such as ditches or concrete areas where they have a high probability of running off into surface water sources. For more information on turf maintenance and protecting our water resources go to www.turffiles.ncsu.edu.

PROPER TIMING FOR PREEMERGENT HERBICIDES

Preemergence herbicides prevent crabgrass seeds and a few other annual weeds seeds from developing into mature plants. Many people have a somewhat foggy idea of how they work. They don't actually keep the seed from germinating; rather, the germinating plant takes up some of the herbicide and is killed. With few exceptions they will have no effect on existing crabgrass plants. Therefore, preemergent herbicides have to be applied before crabgrass germinates. Additionally, they don't last forever once applied to the soil. Microorganisms and natural processes in the soil begin to gradually break them down soon after they are applied. Therefore, if some products are applied too early, they may have lost much of their strength by the time they are needed. Most preemergent herbicides are fairly ineffective after about 60 days, although there is considerable variation among products. (Dimension and Barricade last longer. See below.)

For the Piedmont, crabgrass typically begins to germinate around mid to late April. Therefore, a good target date for applying the preemergent herbicide is before April 15; this gives the active ingredients some time to evenly disperse in the soil before crabgrass germination starts. Additionally, weather varies from one spring to the next, and with it the timing of crabgrass germination. For this reason it is often better to base timing on the bloom of ornamental plants. The Eastern redbud tree is a good one to use: when the trees in your area are approaching full-bloom, apply your preemergents. The first application should be on before the Dogwoods bloom. A follow-up application will be needed about 8 weeks later, unless you are using Dimension or Barricade.

Dimension and Barricade are the only two products that will give season-long control of crabgrass from a single application. In fact, they can be applied much earlier than April 15 and still will have sufficient residual strength to last the season. Barricade can even be applied in the fall for crabgrass control the next season. Dimension can be applied as early as March 1. Because of the added flexibility in timing, these products are often favorites.

Though Dimension cannot be applied as early as Barricade, it is the herbicide of choice if you must apply later than recommended. Dimension is the exception to the rule that preemergence herbicides do not kill existing weeds. Dimension can kill crabgrass as long as it is young (2 to 3 leaf stage). Note that products that contain Dimension and Barricade may use the common name rather than the trade name. The common chemical name for Dimension is dithiopyr and for Barricade is prodiamine. Remember, when using any pesticide, read the label and follow instructions carefully.



NCDA&CS SEEKS TO REDUCE POSTAGE COSTS, SAVE PAPER BY PUTTING SOIL TESTS AND OTHER AGRONOMIC REPORTS ONLINE

RALEIGH – As an update from our 2010 newsletter, the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services will no longer routinely mail out paper copies of agronomic reports. This policy will apply to reports for soil tests and nematode assays, as well as plant tissue, waste, solution and soilless media analyses.

All these reports are readily available through the NCDA&CS Agronomic Division's Web site, www.ncagr.gov/agronomi.

"By making the switch to electronic-only reports, the NCDA&CS will work within its limited budget to save significantly on postage, printing and paper costs," said Dr. Colleen Hudak-Wise, director of the Agronomic Division. "Although environmental and fiscal benefits are driving this change, clients should also see increases in convenience and efficiency. Online reports are available to clients faster than mailed reports and make record keeping much easier."

"Copies can be easily downloaded and saved, and the analytical data can be exported into spreadsheet format," Hudak-Wise said.

Eventually, the NCDA&CS would like to notify all clients via e-mail when their reports are available online. Clients who provide a valid e-mail address on their sample information form, or who register an e-mail address with the Agronomic Division online, can receive electronic notification. In the interim, all other clients will receive a postcard with instructions on how to find their reports.

Clients who visit the Agronomic Division home page should select the "Find Your Report" link from the left-column navigation bar. This link takes visitors into the division's laboratory-information site, known as PALS. For most people, using the "Quick Report Search" link is the most convenient way to access reports.

Basic instructions are outlined at www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/reportsearch.htm. Anyone who has difficulty using the PALS report-search feature or has questions can call (919) 733-2655 for assistance during regular weekday office hours.



CLEAN STREAMS CERTIFICATION TRAINING

A program of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Forsyth County office and the City of Winston-Salem Stormwater Division

Date: March 16, 2011

Time: 8:30 – 11:30 AM

Cost: \$10

**Location: Forsyth Agriculture Building
1450 Fairchild Rd
Winston Salem, NC 27105**

Pesticide Credits: 1 hour credit –HLNDX

Contact Person & Phone #: Annette Presley at 703-2850

The Clean Streams program trains green industry professionals on what it takes to protect area creeks while doing their jobs as well as introduces types of best management practices utilized to prevent or reduce water pollution.

As a result of this program, participants will:

- Learn about relevant water quality topics. -
- Receive 1 hour of pesticide credits. -
- Get a free window decal. -
- Have free use of the Clean Streams logo.
- Get free marketing and advertising, including recognition on the city website and in city-sponsored advertising in local newspaper(s).

AGENDA

- What is a Watershed and what are our WQ problems?
- Understanding a soil test report.
- Best Management Practices to Control Nitrogen & Phosphorus: Finding the Right Tools.
- Rain Gardens a New Attractive Solution to Water Runoff Issues.
- What is the Carolina Yards and Neighborhoods program?
- TEST

March 16, 2011

Clean Streams Certification Training Registration

Registration: \$10

Please print a completed copy of this form and mail to:
Forsyth County Cooperative Extension
Attn: Annette Presley
1450 Fairchild Rd
Winston Salem, NC 27105

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail address: _____

**Pesticide credits offered: 1 hour credit - H L N D X.
Contact Annette Presley 703-2850 for further information.**