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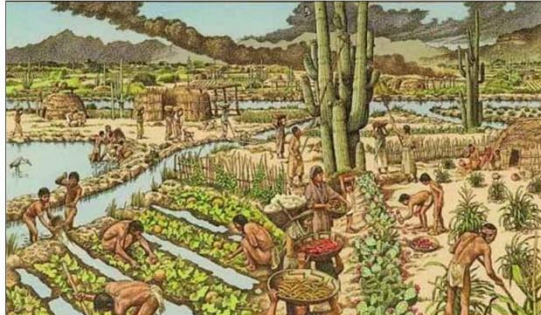
Granville Gardeners Gazette

Promoting Education and Recreation through Gardening Activities

Oxford, North Carolina

www.thegranvillegardeners.org

April 2024, Volume XIV, No. 4



FROM PRARIE TO PLATE

By Kathy Schlosser, Greensboro, NC

Monday, April 22 at 7 p.m., Granville County Expo Center, 4185 U.S. Hwy 15 S, Oxford, NC

About the Program

This program highlights what we have learned from Native American gardeners, farmers, and cooks, including knowledge about the bounty of their foods and flavorings. With the assistance of those native to this land, early Colonists quickly learned how to identify, prepare, use, and preserve what was available. The lessons weren't always easy – corn was once thought fit only for swine!

About the Speaker

Kathy is a native of Washington D.C. and moved to Greensboro for college, where she met and married Steve. After retiring, she began studying her passion: native plants and herbs.

She was on the board of several plant societies for several years each: the NC Native Plant Society, the Friends of Plant Conservation, and the NC Plant Conservation Program. She was Chairman of the National Herb Garden Committee at the US National Arboretum in Washington, DC for 10 years, and she was twice on the national Board of the Herb Society of America.

Kathy's writing includes: a monthly column for 16 years on nature and native plants for the *Greensboro News & Record*, the book *Essential Guide to Growing and Cooking with Herbs*, published by LSU Press, and articles in several national magazines. Her current interests are our national grasslands, prairie restoration efforts, and hedgerows.

By Kathy Schlosser and Marty Finkel

Photos and credits: Left, American ground nut (*Apios Americana*) by c. Charlotte Brill cc-by-nc; Middle, Hohokam Irrigation by AZ Arch. Soc.; Right, Nodding onion (*Allium cernuum*) by Kathy Schlosser

President's Notes

Dear Members,

It's almost that time! April 27th and the Granville Gardeners Expo is fast approaching.

For the newer members in the Garden Club, this is our big event of the year!

It's a lot of fun, a lot of work and is the largest fund raiser we have for our NCSU Agriculture Scholarship.

If you have not been before, I hope you come out and see what all the excitement is all about.

You are going to find some wonderful vendors, good food, great programs and of course, lots of plants.

If anyone has the ability to volunteer, please do so. If only a few hours or the day, we can always use the help somewhere.

Looking forward to seeing all of you there,

David Quinn

Comments and Corrections

In the **March Q&A** on how to make a dispenser for nesting materials for birds, the website source should have been on the credit line: <https://www.mudandbloom.com>

In the **February 2024 Q&A** comparing the sweetness of different varieties of corn: What prompted writing this article was curiosity about supermarket corn's super sweetness, which is typically the only kind of corn offered. I asked Johnny Coley, Granville/Person County Ag Extension agent, which of the corn types this would be, and I received the reply too late to include it.

Johnny said it is most likely a Sh2 type. There is 28 to 44% sugar in their kernels, depending on the variety. They also have the longest shelf life of any of the other types, typically 9 to 10 days.

So if you just can't wait for local corn and get some at your supermarket, just be warned that it will be super sweet (which you may love – it's too sweet for some of us), and it may have been on the shelf a while. If it still has shucks, you can tell as they will be much drier than those of one or two day-old corn. If the corn is shucked and packaged, there's no way to tell!

If you want to know more about types of corn, the February issue is archived on the GGG website.



COOL CONNECTIONS: GARDENING RESOURCES

General Resources:

[NC State Extension Gardener Handbook](#)
[NC State Extension for Lawn and Garden Publications](#)
[Field Guide to Southern Piedmont](#)
[NC State Extension Gardening Portal](#)
[Pesticides and Pesticide Safety](#)
[NC State Extension Plant Database](#)

[Cooperative Extension Search](#)
[Homeowner's Product Guide to Managing Diseases](#)
[Diseases & Disorders](#)
[Garden Tool Guide](#)
[How to Become a Beekeeper in North Carolina](#)
[Youth, Community, & Therapeutic Gardening](#)

Soil Section:

[Soil Testing for Lawns and Garden Form](#)
[Soil sample guidelines for homeowners](#)
[A gardener's guide to soil testing](#)
[Raised Bed Vegetable Garden? Do you need a Soil test or Soilless Media Test?](#)
[Find your soil test report](#)

[NCDA&CS Current Estimated Time for Processing Samples](#)
[Understanding your soil test report](#)
[How to take a Proper Soil Sample \(video\)](#)
[Frequently Asked Questions about soil test and fertilizer](#)

Lawn Section:

[What Type of Lawn to Plant](#)
[Organic Lawn Care – A Guide to Organic Lawn Maintenance & Pest Management](#)
[Information on Weeds](#)
[How to Care for Warm Season Grasses](#)
[How to Care for Cool Season Grasses](#)
[Establishing a New Lawn?](#)
[Caring for a New Lawn](#)

[Maintaining an Established Lawn](#)
[Renovating a Lawn](#)
[Lawn Alternatives](#)
[A complete guide for lawn care in North Carolina; Carolina Lawns](#)
[North Carolina Sod Producers](#)
[Selecting & Managing Lawn Grasses for Shade](#)

Fruit Trees & Small Fruit:

[Apple](#)
[Blackberry](#)
[Blueberry](#)
[Figs](#)

[Japanese Persimmon](#)
[Muscadine](#)
Peach
[Pear](#)

[Pecan](#)
[Central NC Planting Calendar](#)
[Guide for Small Fruits](#)

Native Plants Section

[Wildlife Friendly Landscapes](#)

[Plants Grown in Containers](#)

Landscape Section

[Plan Before you plant](#)

[Basic Steps for Home Landscaping](#)

[Landscape Design](#)

[Permaculture Design](#)

[Checklist Landscape Uses](#)

[Checklist Developing Use Areas](#)

[Landscaping for Wildlife with Native Plants](#)

[Fire Resistant Landscaping in North Carolina](#)

Shrub Section

[Database on Shrubs](#)

Pruning, Mulching, and Fertilizing Trees & Shrubs

[General Pruning Techniques](#)

[How to Prune Specific Plants](#)

Vegetable Section

[Central NC Planting Calendar for Annual Vegetables, Fruits, & Herbs](#)

[Diagnostic Table for Vegetables](#)

[General Vegetable Garden Care](#)

Landscape Pests

[Moles and Voles](#)

Informative Video Section:

[Homegrown – Videos with tips and tools for gardening, cooking & sourcing food in North Carolina](#)

[Comprehensive Resources for Fruit Trees](#)

[Horticulture at N.C. State University Youtube Channel](#)

[Brown Patch in Home Lawns](#)

Resources from:

[NC State Master Gardener Program Youtube Channel](#)

This video is part of a continuing educational series:

[Glyphosate: Can we separate fact and fiction? And, how do we control weeds without it?](#)

Written by [Marshall Warren](#) Extension Agent, Agriculture - Horticulture N.C. Cooperative Extension, Johnston County Center (Edited for central NC readers of the *Granville Gardeners Gazette*)

Did you know that there is a way of calculating when it's safe to wash your car, i.e. when the pollen fall is over?

The past winter was one of the warmest on record for this part of the state, and that has led to an earlier than usual blanket of pollen. The wind drifts it in hazy clouds – when will it clear?



Pine cone with pollen



Blooming ornamental grass



Birch tree bloom with pollen

Wouldn't you know that a professor from NCSU has developed a mathematical formula for predicting when trees will begin to release pollen -- it's Dr. Robert Bardon, Associate Dean of Extension and Professor of Forestry and Environmental Resources. "Here's his formula: Every day the high temperature exceeds 55 degrees, the excess is added to a running total. At around 300, Bardon says, pollen starts to fall. At 636 excess degrees, tree pollen production peaks. Three days to a week later, it's over." He starts recording daily temperature February 1, noting when the daily temperature is above 55 degrees.

" 'We're probably a third to half-way through, based on projections,' Bardon said last week, since some trees began releasing pollen in late February. Unless they're allergic to the pollen from hardwood trees, most people probably didn't notice anything in the air until the pine trees released. In North Carolina, pine pollen is the one that coats cars and sidewalks, crunches between the teeth and signals it's time to give up on the fantasy of a late-winter snowfall and start trying to remember where we put away the summer clothes."

Tree pollen will continue to be produced until around April 13, peaking by about April 6, using Bardon's formula, and taking into account current weather forecasts (if a little cooler, the peak will be later and if warmer it will be somewhat earlier). So, wait until April 13 to wash your car – and the windows!

We don't notice the pollen from spring grasses and weeds as much since it typically isn't heavy enough to visibly coat surfaces – only those with allergies know when it comes and goes!

By Marty Finkel from an article in *The News & Observer*, March 29, 2024 by [Martha Quillin](#)
Photo credit: Left: In Extension post by Robert Bardon "Predicting the Start of the Pine Pollen Season;"
Middle and left: Pixabay free photos



To-Do, April

- Again – RESIST the temptation to work the soil when it is wet. Here’s the test from *The Old Farmer’s almanac*: “Grab a handful of your garden soil. If you can form it into a ball, the soil is too wet for planting. (Chances are the seeds will rot.) If it crumbles through your fingers, it’s ready for planting.”
- “Warm weather” vegetables (green beans, sweet corn, cucumbers, melons, squash, and tomatoes) can be planted after the average last frost date in mid-April. Wait until May for “hot weather” vegetables (lima beans, eggplant, okra, southern peas, peppers, and sweet potatoes.) See [Home Vegetable Gardening AG-06](#) for fertilizer and pest control recommendations (also has a super-helpful chart on when to plant what vegetables, seed and/or transplants). They are available at the Ag. Extension Centers and on-line.
- Once the ground has warmed, plant summer annuals seeds
- April is the best time to plant warm season grasses – Bermuda, centipede, zoysia, & St. Augustine
- Prune azaleas after flowering
- Spray roses every 7 -10 days with a fungicide until frost, beginning with the onset of new growth
- Control aphids on roses and other plants with insecticidal soap
- Apply pre-emergence herbicide to reduce spring-germinating weed seeds
- If you didn’t get your perennials planted last fall, plant now so they can become established before hot weather
- Mulch well to prepare for summer heat and to prevent weeds
- Experiment with watering devices to conserve water: soaker hoses, drip irrigation systems with timers will help deliver water to plants efficiently
- Maintain your spray program for apples, nectarines, peaches, and plums. Follow label instructions and observe waiting times before harvest.
- Apples, nectarines, peaches, and pears need to be thinned to produce the best crop of full-size fruit. Fruit should be thinned by the time they are nickel size so that they are spread 4-8” apart along the branches.
- If you have blueberries, cherries, or strawberries, have bird netting ready unless you want to share your crop. If you are thinking of starting or expanding small fruit plantings, it is getting late for bare-root plants, but local retailers have many container-grown plants. Before buying, check that the varieties are appropriate for this area. Everbearing and day-neutral strawberries are not recommended because of the summer heat.

RESOURCES: Look for Marshall Warren’s GARDENING RESOURCES in this issue. There are links to resources for information on these topics – General resources, Soil, Lawn, Fruit Tree and Small Fruits, Native Plants, Landscape, Shrubs, Pruning, Mulching, and Fertilizing Trees and Shrubs, Vegetables, Landscape Pests, and there are Videos.

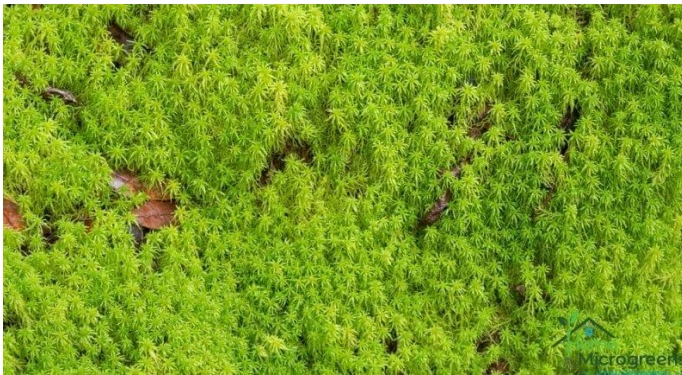
Q: Is there a difference between peat and peat moss? I've seen bags of both in stores.

A: Yes. They both started life from the same plant, a moss growing on the surface of the soil, and there are varieties that grow all over the world where the climate is mild, humid, gets plenty of rain and shade, although there are varieties that grow in full sun. Most of the commercially available sphagnum moss and peat moss come from parts of Canada, Peru, New Zealand, Ireland, and Scotland.

Sphagnum moss is harvested as a living plant and then thoroughly dried. When ready to be sold, it is in two forms: *long-fibered* which is left in its natural state, and *milled*, which has been finely chopped. Generally, its pH is neutral, and it is soft, pliable, and retains water. We use it in many ways – to line baskets, to start seeds, to grow orchids in (particularly the Phalaenopsis sold in big box stores), as an amendment in potting soils, and in other ways. It is pure moss.

Peat moss is often labeled Sphagnum Peat Moss, and it is very different although it started out the same way as sphagnum moss. However, its form is changed when, over hundreds and even thousands of years, a cycle of new sphagnum moss growing over old, dead moss is repeated until these hundreds of layers of dead, compacted moss become a bog. In order to become a bog, water is necessary, and a bog can be up to 70% water, meaning that the peat moss is saturated. But – it is not pure moss because of all the other plant material that died along with the moss. It nearly always has twigs and dead insects mixed in. Potting soil is usually a soilless, sterile mixture of peat moss, perlite, coconut coir, vermiculite, and others in different amounts. Such a mixture prevents the diseases, fungus, bacteria, weed seeds, and other bad things commonly found in the soils.

Unlike sphagnum moss (pH around 7.0, or neutral), peat moss is very acidic (around 4.0 for most) and is high in tannins. It's sold in compressed bales and is also used in potting soil mixes and as an amendment for garden soils.



Sphagnum moss growing in a peat bog



Peat bog in its natural state

There has been and continues to be controversy about using peat products at all since it is considered non-renewable and not eco-friendly (the carbon it has stored for thousands of years is released when it is mined). In Great Britain where the retail sector accounts for 70% of peat products sold, a voluntary reduction in their use was requested in 2011. There was some progress, but it was too slow, and in August 2022 the government asked for a ban on sales in the retail horticultural sector starting in 2024. Commercial growers are supposed to stop using peat-based growing media by 2030.

A news story from GOV.UK in August 2023 states that “. . . 87% of England’s peatlands, including lowland peatlands are degraded, damaged and dried out, emitting tonnes of carbon dioxide each year. . .” Contributing to this condition is the fact that dried peat was used for centuries as fuel in Great Britain and in some parts of Europe (only Ireland and Finland still use peat for fuel, but they’re working on phasing this out.) This news story announced that government funds are being appropriated to restore “. . . thousands of hectares of peatlands. . .” Quotes from GOV.UK News story August 2023.

It’s a different story in Canada, which has over 25% of the world’s peatland area and is the largest peat moss producer globally, accounting for over 60% of global production. In the *Grower Talks* article “Is Peat Sustainable” by Jennifer Zurko, Susan Parent (Premier Tech Horticultural Specialist for 35 years) writes “In Canada, 81% of the peatlands are ‘virgin peatlands’ that have remained untouched. After that, 15% is used for agriculture and then other uses (including harvesting for horticulture, urban development and forestry) is less than 1%.” Peat has never been mined for use as fuel. In North America, peat moss is used only for horticultural purposes.

Even with the vast expanses of peatlands in Canada, questions about sustainability have been and presently are being asked, especially as licenses to mine are being granted under certain circumstances.

Susan Parent: “Depending on which Canadian province you live in, the regulations surrounding peatlands can slightly differ. But all have strict requirements and compliance guidelines, including permitting, when it comes to harvesting and maintaining a peat bog.” Parent continues: “. . . The peat suppliers, through the Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss Association (CSPMA), have had a decades-long partnership with a number of Canadian universities to help research the best tools and methods that would give them the chance to figure out how to manage peat bogs. . .” There are several approaches being used to manage peatlands sustainably.

“Harvested bogs are allowed to re-flood and then seeded with shredded peat “grafts” that grow together. It takes about five years for the moss to cover the site and 10 to 15 years for the bog to go back to its natural condition.” “Is Peat Sustainable” in *Grower Talks* Parent states that they don’t go back to the restored bogs – they let nature take its course.



Harvesting peat from a bog

by Marty Finkel Sources: As cited, *Grower Talks*; Also Waterloo Climate Institute at the University of Waterloo, Canada; GOV.UK Defra Press Office “Defra in the News” March 2023; Premier Tech ProMix Training Center “Horticultural Sphagnum Peatland Management” Jan. 4, 20224 by Ed Bloodnick; several other internet articles

Photos: Home Microgreens <https://homemicrogreens.com/what-is-peat-moss/>



GRANVILLE GARDENERS EXPO

H O M E - G A R D E N - D E C O R

**SATURDAY
APRIL 27, 2024
9AM-3PM**

**GRANVILLE EXPO CENTER
OXFORD, NC**

**FREE ENTRY - VENDORS - EDUCATION
PLANTS - FOOD - FUN - RAFFLE
FARMING - HONEY - HOMESTEADING
KIDS ACTIVITIES - SHOPPING & NETWORKING**

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**NOW SEEKING VENDORS, SPONSORS,
WORKSHOPS & MORE!**

JCRA March Auction Plants Bids Winners

What a wonderful way to get, in most cases, almost impossible to find enviable plants for the garden. These are nearly always easy to spot since they immediately draw the eye of a gardener with the inevitable resulting questions, “What is that plant?” and “WHERE did you get it?”

Pittosporum tobira ‘Kansai Sunburst’



The bid for Kansai Sunburst was won by **Judy McHugh**

Camellia vernalis ‘Hiryu’



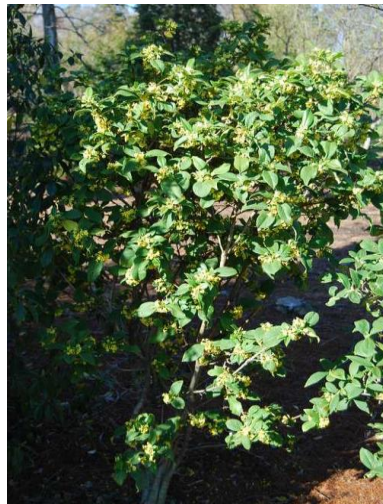
‘Hiryu’ Sasanqua Camellia went home with **Kay Nutt**

Chamaecyparis obtuse ‘Kosteri’



Lynn Duncan had the winning bid for Koster’s Hinoke false cypress

Pittosporum illicoides



Judy McHugh now has this Anise-leaf Pittosporum

Sambucus canadensis ‘Blond Envy’



This beautiful golden elderberry was won by **Mark Arnott**

And finally, **Cindy Snipes** won the bid for the large hanging basket tomato plant brought by our speaker, Gerald Adams.

Thanks to the JCRA and to all who won these bids, the NCSU scholarship fund gained \$280!

By Marty Finkel

Photo credits: ‘Hiryu’ Camellia by almostedenplants.com; ‘Blond Envy’ elderberry by plantdelights.com; all others by the JCRA Photo Collection

PLANT OF THE MONTH: PIEDMONT AZALEA (*Rhododendron canescens*)



This beautiful shrub is a large N.C. native shrub found growing in moist woods, swamp margins, and along streams from NC to FL and west to TN, AR, and TX. From the middle of March to the end of April, its fragrant blooms attract butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds. It typically reaches 6-8' tall by 6-10' wide. It does well in dappled sun to light shade but will be more compact and have more flowers with more sun. It requires good drainage and will not tolerate dense clay or poorly draining soil.

Also in Bloom This Month * indicates native plant

Note that bloom times vary, depending on climatic and meteorological conditions, and many plants bloom several months in a row (and sometimes rebloom). *Source: JCRA Showtimes for April*

Choisya 'Aztec Gold'

Rockrose

Bush clematis *

Hollies *

Irises (*Iris cristata* *)

Virginia sweetspire *

Magnolias (some native)

Catmint

Oaks *

Chinese foxglove

Roses

Spireas

Blueberries (some native)

Foam flower *

Dusty zenobia *

Golden alexander *

Viburnums (some natives)

Tulips

Mock orange

Fringe Tree *

Yellowwood tree *

Spanish bluebells

Star flower

False rue anemone

Twinleaf *

Narcissus

Alabama snow-wreath *

Indian hawthorn

Wild azaleas *

Salvias

Weigela

Variegated spike tail

Yucca (some are native)

Atamasco lily *

Calla lily

Veronica

Spiderwort

American snowbell tree *

Compiled by Marty Finkel

Photos of Some More Plants in Bloom This Month

NOTE: Red asterisk means it's a native plant: *



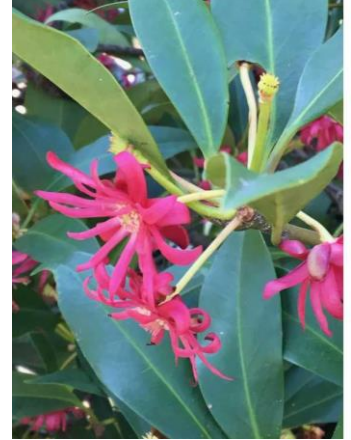
Pink Lady Slipper *



Red horse chestnut



Baptisia 'Royal Candles'*



Woodland Ruby Anise Tree*



Primrose



Green and Gold *



Alabama wild ginger *



Rose deutzia



Bird's foot violet *



Chinese fringe flower (Loropetalum)



Trumpet honeysuckle 'Leo'*



Fairy wings, Bishop's cap



Woodland phlox 'Blue Moon'*

Compiled by Marty Finkel Photos: Pink Lady Slipper by John Gerwin CC-BY-SA 2.0; Primrose and Green & Gold by Marty Finkel; all other photos from JCRA Photo Collection