



Left photo: Mary Jane Frogge • Right photo: Soni Cochran



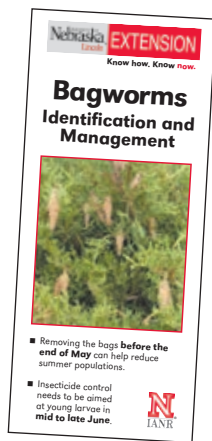
Bagworm Management

To help educate the public on the serious bagworm problem in our area, UNL Extension in Lancaster County has developed two educational tools to help tree owners identify and control this insect pest:

- a color brochure available at the extension office
- a YouTube video available online at <http://lanaster.unl.edu/hort>

Please take a walk through your landscape and check all your plant material, especially spruce and junipers. During the months of April and early May, the only means of control is hand picking the bags from your plants. Place them in a bag and put the sealed bag in the trash. If you have large trees or too many bagworms to effectively pick off your plants, chemical control will be needed after they hatch in June.

—Mary Jane Frogge, UNL Extension Associate



2009 Nebraska Garden Trends

Spring is here and with it is the emerging garden trends: landscape sustainability, native plants in home landscapes, container gardening and increased interest in vegetable gardening.

Vegetable Gardening

One of the biggest trends is increasing interest in vegetable gardening, said Dale Lindgren, horticulturist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln West Central Research and Extension Center in North Platte.

Last year, vegetable plant sales were up 10 to 15 percent and that trend is expected to continue. Vegetable gardening is becoming more appealing as people try to save money at the grocery store during these tough economic times. Some gardeners are focused on food safety and believe that food they grow themselves is safer, which is related to the burgeoning interest in organically grown food, Lindgren said.

"Last year, we got a lot of questions about local food and I think we'll see that again," said Kim Todd, UNL landscape horticulture specialist and Backyard Farmer host. "There are a lot of people who want to grow at least a little bit of their own food, and more people are intrigued with edible woody plants such as apples and apricots."

In the last few years, interest in heirloom vegetables and flowers also is on the upswing. Old-fashioned flowers, such as hollyhocks, are receiving more attention because they do not require much water. Heirloom vegetables, particularly tomatoes, are grown for their flavor, Lindgren said.

Blended Gardens

Another trend is blended gardens, which include both edible ornamental vegetables and flowering plants. Vegetables such as colorful peppers and

eggplant can provide visual pleasure as well as food. This can be a good option if garden space is limited, he said.

"One of the overall garden trends is landscape sustainability, which means the landscape is one that we can take care of without harming the environment," said Sarah Browning, UNL extension educator.

A critical aspect of sustainability is planting species that are well-adapted to the climate and do not need a lot of supplemental watering. Native plants often are good options, she said.

The Retree Nebraska initiative is part of the larger returning trend of planting trees. "People are more aware of the impact of the simple act of planting a tree to conserve energy," Todd said.

Container Gardening

"You can find big containers, small containers, containers in all kinds of shapes and materials," Todd said. "Container gardening is easy, it can be done near the house and containers are easy to move around and change."

Both flowering plants and edible plants can work well in containers. "And if you feel really creative, you can use woody cut florals and other materials in your container after the growing season," she said.

Other Trends

Every gardening season has some "hot" plants. **Plants with brightly colored foliage** seem to be popular, as are **smaller evergreens** that can add an architectural element to the landscape, Todd said.

Another trend is the **comeback of coleus**. This started a few years ago but is continuing with new varieties that include new leaf shapes and colors. Many of the new

varieties tolerate a lot more sun than the traditional shade-loving varieties, Browning said.

Interest in **ornamental grasses** continues. 'Shenandoah', a new switchgrass, has a compact shape and stays more upright than some other varieties. The leaves are green in spring, tipped dark red by mid-summer and entirely red and orange in fall.

Shrub roses continue to be popular because they require less maintenance than hybrid teas and there will be some new varieties. "They provide a lot of color and impact in the landscape but with low maintenance," Browning said.

New Plants

A new shrub is the **'Endless Summer: Twist and Shout' hydrangea**, Browning said. The reblooming lacecap, which has two kinds of blossoms, blooms in spring on old wood and again on new wood.

Also new is a **dwarf butterfly bush, 'Blue Chip'**, which is part of the Lo & Behold series. It only grows about 2 feet tall so it will work well in containers and smaller landscapes, Browning said.

Lindgren, an internationally known penstemon breeder, developed **Sweet Joanne penstemon**, which had limited availability last year. It will be easier to find this year, he said. He also has developed **Heart's Desire Dianthus**, which will have limited availability in 2009.

While many gardeners, especially the more experienced ones, try something new each year, prepare for some disappointment. Sometimes, newer varieties are not as resistant to disease or pests or do not perform as well as older varieties, which have been tested more, Lindgren said.

Source: University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension



Garden Guide

THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

By Mary Jane Frogge, UNL Extension Associate

The last Friday in April is National Arbor Day. Plant a tree or support an organization which plants trees.

Do not add organic matter to the soil when planting trees. It does not help the plant become established and it may create conditions that encourage the roots to stay inside the planting hole instead of spreading to surrounding soil. Do dig a large planting hole, but fill it with the original soil removed from it.

Cut flower stalks back to the ground on daffodils, hyacinths and other spring flowering bulbs as the flowers fade. Do not cut the foliage until it dies naturally. The leaves are necessary to produce strong bulbs capable of reflowering next year.

Prune spring blooming shrubs such as forsythia and spirea after they have completed flowering.

Remove sticks, rocks and other debris from your lawn to prevent damaging your lawnmower or injuring yourself when mowing. Check your lawnmower and other lawn-care equipment in preparation for the coming season.

Put a birdhouse in the garden to attract insect eating friends.

Seed bare spots in your fescue or bluegrass lawn.

Scatter annual poppy seeds in flower borders. The fine seeds need not be covered. The plants grow rapidly and provide colorful flowers in early summer.

In a sunny location with poor soil, plant nasturtiums for a colorful show. They require warm soil to sprout and start blooming in about 50 days. Too much water and fertilizer produces excess leaves and few flowers.

When chrysanthemums show signs of life, dig up and divide large plants. Discard woody portions and replant divisions 12 to 15 inches apart.

Measure the rainfall with a rain gauge posted near the garden so you can tell when to water. The garden needs about one inch of rain per week from April to September.

Consider planting flowers which may be dried for winter arrangements. Some of the best are strawflower, statice, celosia and globe amaranth.

Do not restrict yourself to buying plants in bloom. Petunias that bloom in the pack are often rootbound or overgrown and after planting will actually be set back and cease to bloom for about a month. Plants without blossoms will actually bloom sooner and will grow better as well.

To extend the blooming period of gladiolus, plant early, middle and late-season selections each week until the middle of June. Choose a sunny location and plant the corms four to six inches deep and six to eight inches apart.



Pharoah Haouid

Hybrid coleus of the 'Wizard' series



Champlain shrub rose



Endless Summer®

'Endless Summer: Twist and Shout' hydrangea



Denise Werner, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University

'Blue Chip' Butterfly Bush



Dale Lindgren, UNL Extension

'Sweet Joanne' penstemon