

# FALL Home & Garden

## Fruits of our labor

Many fruit-growing hobbyists neglect the annual maintenance of their fruit trees due to lack of time or they are not exactly sure how to take care of them. Without training or pruning, fruit trees will not develop proper shape and form. Properly trained and pruned trees will yield high-quality fruit much earlier in their lives and live significantly longer.



**Charles Mitchell**  
Franklin County Cooperative Extension Director

There are many factors to consider if you want to be successful when planting fruit trees. First, you must select the right type of fruit and the right variety for your area. Site selection is important because you need to consider soil type, soil fertility, air drainage, sunlight, and if there are nematodes present or not. These are all areas that the average person overlooks. Then, you also have to consider weed control, insect control, disease control, and believe it or not rodent control.

The most common tree fruits grown here include apples, figs, peaches, pecans, and pears.

Not all of these fruit trees have the same pollination requirements. Did you know that pecan trees are monoecious? This means that they have separate male structures, called catkins, and female flowers on the same tree. However, the time at which the male catkins release pollen is not the time at which the female flowers can be pollinated. Pecan trees are separated into two pollination



groups referred to as Type I and Type II. Catkins on Type I trees release their pollen before the female flowers are receptive and catkins on Type II trees release their pollen after the female flowers are receptive. Because of this difference, both Type I and Type II pecan trees are required for pollination.

To ensure maximum pollination and production, at least three varieties should be planted together.

Apples should be considered self-incompatible, meaning that they cannot pollinate themselves or any flowers of the same apple variety. The best quality fruit is harvested when cross-pollination occurs with a suitable pollinizer variety. You will need to plant at least two varieties of apple trees together in order to maximize fruit production and quality. Make sure that the varieties you choose have overlapping bloom dates, so that both varieties bloom at the same time. When choosing a peach variety, the main features to consider are the chilling requirement and the time of ripening. Varieties with less than a 750-hour chilling requirement should not be planted in North Carolina because of the risk of crop loss due to spring frosts or freezes. Figs can be produced in our area,

however there are two limiting factors to their production. One being cold weather and the other nematodes. We can deal with the nematodes, but we cannot control the weather. Celeste and Brown Turkey are two fairly hardy fig varieties for our area.

If you would like more information about growing fruit trees, call Cooperative Extension at 919-496-3344 or visit our website: [franklin.ces.ncsu.edu](http://franklin.ces.ncsu.edu).

## Gardening in the shade

By Charles Mitchell  
Franklin County Center Director

Simply saying a plant will grow in the shade is too simplistic a statement because not all shade is the same.

There is filtered shade, partial shade, open shade, and dense shade. Shade changes with the time of day and from year to year as trees grow.

Sites that might be in full sun part of the year may become heavily shaded as the season changes or as trees leaf out. Light is also influenced by topography. For example, a south-facing slope receives more light than a north-facing slope.

### Types of shade

Filtered shade is suitable for growing many plants — even plants that prefer full sunlight such as iris or daylilies. Light intensity is relatively high with sunlight and shade constantly changing from minute to minute during the day. Filtered shade occurs under birch, mimosa, and honey locust trees. Partial shade changes as the day progresses. The



**SELECT CAREFULLY.** Take care when choosing the type and placement of plants in your garden.

area may be in the shade until some point in the day the sunlight shines on the area. Open shade occurs where there are no trees overhead to block sunlight but the plants

are in the shade due to the shadows of a building. Open shade is well lighted but does not receive direct sunlight.

See SHADE, page 16

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# FALL Home & Garden

## Make your list of fall gardening tasks



**Charles Mitchell**  
Franklin County Cooperative Extension Director

The following are questions that are often asked during the year.

1. When can I prune my azaleas?

If the right azalea variety is planted in the right location, then pruning would rarely need to be done. Formosa azaleas can easily get 10-15 feet tall in time. Satsuki hybrids (gumpo varieties) generally get 3-feet tall and 3-feet wide. Picking the best plant for the location should be at the top of the list. If you need to prune your azaleas wait until after they flower but before the first of July. In July the azaleas begin to set the buds for next spring's flowers, when pruning cut branches in the interior of the plant to a side branch. If you cut a 20-year-old plant com-



Pruning is an essential task in gardening

pletely down remember the plant still has a 20-year-old root system to put out new growth. Fertilize azaleas in March and while they are flowering.

2. When and how do I need to prune my roses?

When pruning roses, it depends on the type of rose you have. Do you have a shrub rose, hybrid tea rose, miniature rose or a floribunda rose? Most often you see hybrid tea roses planted in people's landscapes.

The drastic pruning of hybrid teas should be done in late winter or early spring just before buds break dormancy. Two-thirds of the growth can be removed to a side bud. Throughout the year you can prune to improve the shape; promote new, healthier growth; and eliminate dead, broken or diseased branches. This is also true for your knockout roses too. Remember, in order to have healthy roses you may need to follow a continuous fungicide and insecticide spray program.

3. Which plants are good to use as screening plants?

There are many plants that can be used as screening plants. The type of plant

you pick is dependent on the location you want to plant it. The main question you need to consider is whether the plants will be in the sun or shade. A few shade-tolerant screening plants include; camellias, wax myrtles, cherry laurel, rhododendrons, and osmanthus. A few sun-tolerant screening plants include; abelia, Nellie R. Stevens holly, American holly, wax myrtles, osmanthus, ligustrum, cryptomeria (tree), and Eastern Red Cedar (tree).

4. When do I need to fertilize my lawn?

If you have a cool-season fescue lawn you will want to fertilize in February with one pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. (The first number on the bag always represents the nitrogen content in the bag.) For example, if you have a 10-10-10 fertilizer divide 100 by 10 and you will get 10. That means you need to apply 10 pounds of fertilizer for every 1,000 square feet of lawn. The other two times you need to fertilize cool-season lawns is in September and November. If you need to fertilize a warm-season lawn such as bermudagrass, fertilize with one pound of nitrogen

after the grass turns green (April) and continue fertilizing through the summer. Centipedegrass has a different requirement than other grasses. It requires only 1/2 pound of nitrogen in June. If you have centipede and have questions about it give the Cooperative Extension Service a call.

If you have questions regarding any of the above topics, or any other questions you might have about gardening, feel free to call the Cooperative Extension Office at 919-496-3344, or checkout our website at [franklin.ces.ncsu.edu](http://franklin.ces.ncsu.edu).

## Shade

Continued from Page 15

Deep shade is found in heavily wooded areas and in landscapes where large evergreens or broadleaf deciduous trees (maples, oaks, hickories, beeches) occur. Deep shade can also occur in a narrow side yard on the north side of the house when another building is located close by.

Many shade plants are native to wooded areas and grow best in soils exposed to decomposing leaf litter and compost. Moisture in shaded areas is different than sunny areas. The cooler temperatures and less exposure to wind decrease water loss. However, competition from tree roots and the large, tender leaves of many shade-loving plants can cause moisture shortages. Trees vary in their competitiveness for soil moisture. Some shady sites can be quite dry. Many plants will grow in the direction of the strongest light; one side of the plant will be thick and full while the other side will be sparse.

Tree shaded gardens become more shaded with time. As trees grow taller and wider they cast larger shadows and less light will penetrate the increasingly dense shade. The quickest way to admit more light is by removing lower tree limbs thus raising the height of the shade. This will decrease humidity and allow some filtered light to reach understory plantings especially in the morning and afternoon. Some shrubs can be pruned into a tree form thus allowing more light to plants growing near their base.

### Tree Roots

Trees differ in the number and depth of their roots. Maples, for example, have numerous shallow roots which makes digging, planting, or growing plants under them difficult. While tilling, creating raised beds, and root pruning are methods to cope with tree roots, these methods can lead to the decline or even death of the tree. The worst location for starting a raised bed is at the base of a tree; the additional soil can lead to decay organisms attacking the trunk or the main roots that support the tree. These methods are temporary at best since tree roots will grow into the newly amended soil or raised beds. In order to protect the tree, limit tilling and the addition of topsoil to a small percentage. Dig individual holes for shrubs and flowers instead of preparing beds. Filling in natural areas with compost, bark, and sandy loam for a raised bed is another option.

The following is a list of shrubs that will grow in partial shade: mahonia, rhododendron, azaleas, acuba, American boxwood, fatsia, gardenia, mountain laurel, pieris, camellia, cleyera, burning bush, hydrangea, anise tree, ligustrum, waxmyrtle, viburnum, and chaste tree. The following is a list of perennials that will grow in partial shade: irises, daylilies, balloon flower, astilbe, bee-balm, ageratum, black-eyed susan, bleeding heart, calla lily, columbine, and coral bells.

For more information about shade gardening call your local Extension Office at 919-496-3344. You can also visit our website at <http://franklin.ces.ncsu.edu/> or our Facebook page.

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# FALL Home & Garden

## How to make your home more cozy

The meaning of the term "cozy" varies as it pertains to home decor. For some, cozy may mean intimate spaces with lots of quilts and throws. For others, cozy could indicate bright and airy spaces enhanced by plenty of fresh foliage.

Regardless of how they define cozy, homeowners typically want their homes to be inviting and comfortable. With that in mind, the following are some ways to impart a cozy vibe to any living space.

- Make use of a fireplace. Flames lapping wood (or faux wood in the event of gas-powered fireplaces) can put anyone in a tranquil state of mind. Fireplaces add instant ambiance and make great places for people to congregate and engage in conversation. During warmer months when the fire isn't blazing, decorative candles can be lit to mimic the same feel.
- Add texture in the design. Texture can be anything from a raised pattern on wallpaper to a knotty area rug to a mosaic piece of artwork. A home with texture tends to create cozier impressions than one with all sleek and smooth surfaces.
- Enjoy a soft rug. Although many design experts say hardwood floors or laminate options are easier for allergies and keeping a home clean, a



There are many ways to make your home more cozy, without breaking the bank.

soft rug underfoot can be welcoming. Rather than wall-to-wall carpeting, place area rugs in spots that can use some cozying up, such as beneath beds and even under the dining table.

- Light candles. The warm, flickering light of candles adds cozy vibes in spades. According to The Spruce and Paula Boston, a visual merchandiser for Festive Lights, candles can be used throughout a home to create instant atmosphere. Exercise caution with candles and fully extinguish them before retiring for the evening.
- Update bedding for the season. Crisp and light cotton and linen are cozy materials when the weather

is warm. But when the temperature starts to dip, flannel or jersey bedding makes a bed that much more inviting, says Real Simple.

- Invest in lots of pillows. Pillows can instantly make a spot more cozy, whether it's the living room sofa or an outdoor lounging nook. Look for materials that are durable for the space in which they're being used.
- Think about warm lighting. The transition from incandescent light bulbs to halogen and LED is beneficial from an environmental standpoint. However, LEDs illuminate with a more stark, blue light that can seem clinical in home spaces. Look for bulbs where the "tem-

perature" can be customized. The more the color spectrum leans toward warm light, the more cozy a space will feel. This can be enhanced by putting some lights on dimmer switches, and toning down the brightness as needed.

- Install a bookshelf. Even for those who are strict devotees of e-readers, a shelf full of actual books interspersed with some well-placed knickknacks can make a room feel more cozy. Books add texture, the feel of hallowed halls and libraries, and visual appeal.

Making a home more cozy doesn't have to be complicated. A few easy modifications can improve interior spaces.

## Winterize your home

As winter approaches, homeowners know they must do certain things to ready their homes for the coming months. Wrapping up the grill and closing the pool are no-brainers, but homeowners also must prioritize winterizing their homes to ensure homes withstand the winter.

Winterizing tasks range from small to big, but each can protect a home and its inhabitants and some can even save homeowners a substantial amount of money. The following are four simple ways to winterize your home.

### 1. Plug leaks

Leaky windows and doorways can cost homeowners money year-round, allowing cold air to escape on hot summer afternoons and letting cold air in on brisk winter nights. When such leaks aren't fixed, homeowners are more liable to turn up their air conditioners or heaters, unnecessarily padding their energy bills along the way. Before winter arrives, check areas around windows and door frames for leaks, as well as any additional openings, such as chimneys, that may allow cold air in. Use caulk or weather strips to plug these leaks, and enjoy your warmer home and lower energy bills as winter weather gets colder and colder.

### 2. Inspect your chimney

If your home has a chimney, chances are you have not used it since last winter. During that time, the chimney has likely accumulated some dirt and grime, and may even have served as home to some uninvited critters. As the season for fireside chats approaches, have your chimney serviced by a professional so it's ready for use and you are not greeted by some unwanted guests upon lighting your first fire.

### 3. Clear the yard

Autumn days, particularly late autumn days, can be gusty, and strong winds can cause branches to fall off trees. Branches big and small can cause damage to cars, siding and roofs, and smaller branches can get clogged in gutters, potentially causing gutters to back up and leading to leaky roofs that damage a home's interior. Take a walk around your property at least once per week during the fall, clearing any fallen limbs and trimming branches that appear one strong gust away from falling off of trees. Remove any branches that are hanging over your home and driveway so they don't pose a threat to your house or vehicles.

### 4. Turn off outdoor water supplies

When temperatures get especially low, pipes with water still in them can freeze and burst, potentially leading to significant water damage. When you no longer need to water the lawn and when temperatures get too cold to wash your car in the driveway, be sure to shut off the water supply to outdoor spigots and sprinkler systems. Once you do that, drain them so no water is sitting in the pipes when temperatures dip.

There are many ways to winterize a home, and homeowners should take every precaution necessary to ensure their homes are safe and warm as the cold weather season approaches.

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# FALL Home & Garden

## Maximize outdoor spaces this holiday season

The holiday season comes at a time when the weather can be anywhere from cool to frigid. But even if the weather outside is somewhat frightful, holiday entertaining in outdoor spaces can still be delightful. Making the most of outdoor spaces during the holidays and the rest of the winter can enable guests to spread out, which should make things more comfortable for them. With that goal in mind, the following are some tips for putting outdoor areas to good use when hosting loved ones this holiday season.

- Decorate first. An easy way to make outdoor entertaining spaces more welcoming is to coordinate the decor with the interior of the home. Greenery wrapped with lights around railings and fencing can create the perfect ambiance. Candles, wreaths and small, decorated Christmas trees can finish the effect.

- Consider a fire or heating element. Unless you live in a temperate climate, you'll need some way to keep guests warm. Center the outdoor entertaining space around a fire pit, outdoor fireplace or an outdoor heater. Make sure to illuminate the outdoor area so that guests can find their way around with ease.

- Host an early gathering. The sun sets early in fall and

winter, so it may not only get colder, but also darker at a time when guests typically arrive. Think about moving up the start time of your holiday event if you'll be having an outdoor area, so guests can see one another and stay a little warmer.

- Use the grill. Keep foods warm by using the grill or an outdoor griddle; otherwise, set up the food buffet-style inside so guests can make their plates and gravitate where they feel comfortable.

- Provide blankets or fleeces. In addition to warming elements around your entertaining space, stock a large basket with cozy throws, blankets or fleece jackets that guests can use to warm up. Hats and scarves also may be appreciated.

- Invest in waterproof furniture. Upgrade your exterior seating with plush outdoor couches and lounges that are decked out in weather-resistant fabrics. Make them more comfortable with throw pillows that coordinate with a holiday entertaining theme.

- Set up two drink stations. Set up beverages both inside and outside the home so guests can easily refill their drinks wherever they are relaxing. Think about having some warm drinks outside, such as mulled cider or hot chocolate, so guests can be warmed from the inside as well.



GET COZY. Homeowners are creating cozy outdoor living spaces, equipped with firepits and comfortable seating areas.

- Use a wireless speaker. A Bluetooth-enabled wireless speaker placed outside allows guests to listen to holiday tunes while they are enjoying themselves.

Using well-equipped outdoor areas for entertaining can expand the possibilities and guest list for holiday gatherings.

## Projected timelines for popular renovation projects

Renovations help homeowners customize their homes to align with their needs and wants. Remodeling may be necessary to replace outdated fixtures and features, address mistakes previous homeowners

may have made, or to make a home more functional. Homeowners often find it beneficial to hire professional contractors when they have work to be done around the house to ensure the job gets

done to code and to their satisfaction. Timelines for home remodeling projects vary depending on a number of variables, including the size of a crew as well as the scope of the project.

Once a project commences, the timeline can feel endless. The following are estimates of timelines for top remodeling projects to give homeowners an idea of how long their renovation projects may last, courtesy of Renofi, a company that provides a lending platform leveraged by credit unions nationwide to offer loans to consumers.

- Kitchen: There are a lot of moving parts to a kitchen renovation, involving the services of electricians, plumbers, structural experts, and even interior design professionals. Not to mention the needs of craftspeople who can make custom cabinetry and countertops. Kitchen remodels can take anywhere from six to 12

weeks.

- Bathroom: The process of a bathroom renovation typically involves demolishing the old bathroom, removing old fixtures and starting from the ground up. As with a kitchen remodel, bathroom jobs require the services of different professionals. That is why homeowners can expect three to 10 weeks for a bathroom, depending on the scope of the project.

- Finishing a basement: Finishing a basement can add valuable living space to a home. Establishing a home theater space or man cave may require installing framing, insulation, utilities, drywall, flooring, and any additional needs if the finished basement

will have a bathroom or necessitate additional plumbing. A finished basement project can last one to two months. But the good news is that typically the rest of the house is livable while the work is being done, so residents will not be disrupted.

- Whole home remodel: Hogan Design & Construction says that a whole house remodeling project can take anywhere from 16 weeks to 24 weeks. More involved projects can take longer.

Remodeling a home often involves a considerable investment of time and money. Knowing how long a homeowner will be inconvenienced by the work can help the household plan accordingly.



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