

The Clod-Hopper



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Gardeners of Wake County, Inc. — Raleigh, NC

March 2024

You Can Divide Daffodils in the Spring

by Kathleen Thompson, Immediate Past President



Often, I'd read recommendations that daffodils should be moved, divided and replanted in late spring or summer. It seems to me that by the time this garden chore should be done, I

either forget to do it, or couldn't quite remember where they were to be moved to. So last year, I went rogue and just did the deed. Immediately after the blooms were spent, I cut off the old flowers, dug some very large clusters of daffodil bulbs and moved them, not sure what to expect.

Here's how it happened: Several areas of the garden were being redesigned, so everything in the affected areas had to be moved. There was no time to wait for the foliage to die back. With garden gloved fingers crossed, I dug these large clusters of daffodils with a garden fork, staying far enough away (about 4 inches) to not damage the bulbs and snipped off only the spent blooms. Brushing off the excess soil, and gently twisting the bulbs, pulled them apart with all their green strappy leaves still attached to separate them. Very few of the bulbs had soft or mushy spots, and those were discarded. With the new area ready to go, I replanted



In March

Monthly meetings begin officially at 7:30 PM at the Ruby McSwain Education Center, JC Raulston Arboretum, on the third Tuesday of each month (that's the 19th in March). Refreshments and social time start at 7:00. Visitors and prospective new members are always welcome!

In March we welcome the American Wildlife Refuge as our speaker. In addition to learning about raptors and vultures we will get the opportunity to see these animals in person. We will learn about things we can do in our gardens to encourage these magnificent birds and about the role they play in our environment. As gardeners we can learn a great deal from raptors. We share the top predator designation. Their acute vision and incredible speed allow them to hunt small animals, like rodents, rabbits, fish, lizards, and other birds. Vultures remove carrion from the environment, reducing the spread of disease and serve as key indicators of environmental contamination. We are fortunate to have many different raptors living in the Raleigh area. A fun fact is a group of vultures is called a wake. So, the next time you spot a dead skunk by the roadside being attended to by flock of vultures you can legitimately say you saw a wake being held for a skunk.

continued on page 2

Club Officers and Committees

Board members

President: Tom Packer

Vice President: Mark Boone

Secretary: Joanne Boone

Treasurer: Shay Campbell

Immediate Past President: Kathleen Thompson

At-large board members: Rob Bartos, Gail Posey, Nell Joslin, Charlie Leverett

Committee members

Activities Chair: Jim and Rita Shaloiko (seed swap), Christine Elliott and Marion Flint (refreshments), Joanne Boone (picnic), Kathleen Thompson (awards banquet)

Audit: Charles Gilliam, Mac Williamson, Reed Elliott

Azalea Sale: Charlie Leverett

Beautification Awards: TBA

Club Awards: TBA

Endowment Investment: Charles Gilliam, Mark Boone, Charlie Leverett

Friendship: Debbie Leverett

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Membership: Nell Joslin

Newsletter Editor: Reed Elliott

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Programs: Mark Boone

Projects: Sharon LaRusch, Lynn Swanson

Publicity: Charles Gilliam

Scholarship: Christine Elliott

Webmaster: Reed Elliott

You Can Divide Daffodils in the Spring (continued from page 1)

the bulbs in loamy well drained soil individually or in groups of two or three, close but not touching, about 6-8 inches apart and at the same depth as before being dug. It was easy to tell by the color change between the leaves and the bulbs. This experiment was a success for me, as the daffodils I divided and replanted last spring are happy and blooming just one year later!



My favorite feature of daffodils include the fact that rabbits and deer usually leave them alone. They can be planted in some shade under deciduous trees, too. What other flower could bring so much joy on a cold winter's day?



Contact Us

For additional information email our Club at GardenersofWakeCountyNC@gmail.com

Our Club webpage is online at <https://gardenersofwakecounty.weebly.com/>

Online membership applications are at: <https://form.jotform.com/232744428653158>

In March We Ask, “What Have Raptors (and Vultures) Done for My Garden Lately?”

by Mark Boone, Vice President



AMERICAN Wildlife Refuge ASSOCIATION

raptors, *Falconiformes* and *Strigiformes*.

Hawks, eagles, vultures, and falcons are all *Falconiformes*. They are diurnal birds of prey, which means they're awake during the day. Owls make up the other subcategory, *Strigiformes*, and are nocturnal. I suspect most of us have enjoyed trying to talk back to an owl at night asking “Woo” we are. Prior to the meeting you may wish to learn where owl's ears are, and why they are where they are.

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The meeting starts at 7:30 PM at the Ruby McSwain Education Center, JC Raulston Arboretum, on Tuesday, March 19, 2024, with refreshments and social time at 7:00PM. Visitors and prospective new members are always welcome!

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As gardeners we can learn a great deal from raptors. We share the top predator designation. Their acute vision and incredible speed allow them to hunt small animals, like rodents, rabbits, fish, lizards, and other birds. Vultures remove carrion from the environment, reducing the spread of disease and serve as key indicators of environmental contamination.

The word raptor derives from the Latin *raptare*, which means to seize and carry off. There are two groups of



The Cicadas Are Coming, the Cicadas Are Coming!

By Tom Packer, President



Boring old annual cicada.

There have been media headlines of an historical double cicada brood emergence not seen in over 200 years with a large number (millions, billions, trillions?) of cicadas emerging from the ground this spring. While true, it turns out that the only place where both broods will be overlapping is in Illinois. Nonetheless, North Carolina will experience the emergence of a periodic brood that emerges every 13 years (the “XIX” brood) in addition to the annual emergence of the annual or “dogday” cicadas which emerge each year in the middle of summer.

However, according to the Director of the Plant Disease and Insect Clinic at NC State, Wake County is unlikely to experience an overlap of the XIX and annual cicada broods emerging. It is predicted that the XIX brood will appear starting just west of the Durham area and be found with more frequency towards the western part of the state. However, this prediction is based on

past emergences, and our area is close enough that still is possible that Brood XIX cicadas may emerge among us. If you notice this distinctive type of cicada, report it via the cicada safari app, which can be accessed [here](#). A XIX type cicada has reddish/orangish and black colors while the annual cicada tends to be larger and green and black in color, as can be seen from accompanying images.



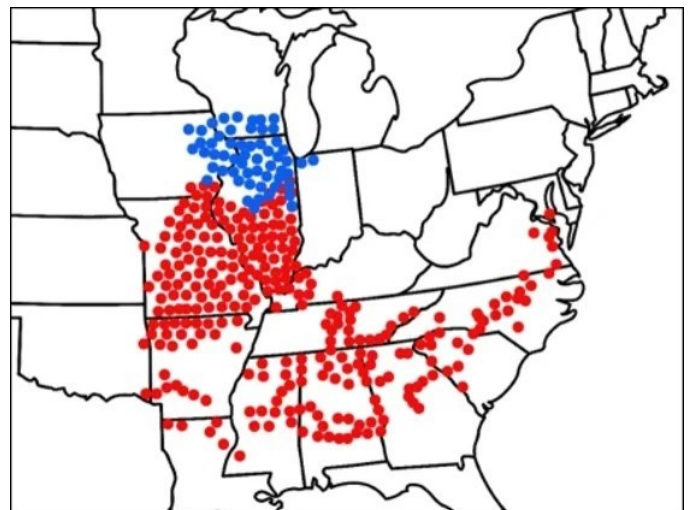
Terrifying brood XIX cicada.

The emergence of the annual cicadas does not pose a threat to gardens in our area.

They improve gardens by aerating the soil when they emerge from the ground and the carcasses left after their several week lifespan return nutrients to the soil. However, if there is an unusual event with a periodic emergence overlapping the annual cicada emergence then there are a couple of threats. One is that the cicadas literally saw into branches and twigs to lay their eggs which can cause “flagging,” or dead branches in a tree. This usually does not cause long term damage and may even be a good thing as it is a natural form of pruning, causing mature trees to flush out green replacements. Young woody plants, however, are at risk of more damage and can be covered with dense cloth within the week of the first signs of emergence from the ground and maintained for the six-week cicada life cycle.

By the way, the cicada’s familiar mid-summer chorus is created by males flexing drum-like organs found in their abdomens. Small muscles rapidly pull these organs in and out of shape. The sound is intensified by the cicada's mostly hollow abdomen. Click [here](#) to listen to the familiar mid-summer sounds made by the cicadas.

So, look forward to enjoying our annual cicada emergence, but we likely will not experience the double emergence happening further west of us.



The blue map dots denote Brood XIII cicadas and the red dots are areas where Brood XIX has emerged in the past. These areas will likely have periodical cicadas in 2024.

Highlight and Repeats: The 2024 Azalea Sale

by Charlie Leverett, Azalea Sale Chairman



The Azalea Sale is one of the most meaningful experiences in the life of Gardeners of Wake County. It is a life experience where we get to spend time together working and laughing and joking and getting to know one another. All of ye newcomers, please spend some time at the Sale getting to know us and letting us get to know you. Together, the Sale raises funds for our educational, community service, and scholarship programs and activities.

Set up and mobilization for the Sale is on April 1-3, Monday through Wednesday, generally from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, depending on delivery times. Sales begin on Thursday, April 4, and continue through Saturday, April 13. We are closed on Sunday, April 7. Sale hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. The Sale will be held in the same place it was last year, at the Flower Show area at the State Fairgrounds, Gate 6. Parking is free.

The highlight this year is the appearance for the first time of two kinds of deciduous azaleas. The first is seed propagated deciduous azalea. Yes, you can collect the seeds from these plants and grow your own. The varieties *probably* present for Sale will be Sweet, Coastal, Florida Flame, Flame, Piedmont, Pinxter, Plumleaf, and Swamp Azalea. This is a big development for gardeners in this area.

The second type of deciduous azalea to appear for the first time at the Sale is the Rhododendron Sunbow® Solar Flare™ and Solar Glow™. This line of hybrid deciduous is full sun to part shade, more heat tolerant, more disease resistant, and is known for its vivid coloring. This will bring another level of beautiful deciduous plants to our area.

We *probably* will also have other deciduous azaleas we've had before, like Gibraltar, Golden Lights, Klondyke, Mandarin Lights, Millennium, Northern Hi-Lights, Weston's Innocence, Weston's Lollipop, and White Light's. The stock of multi-blooming Encore and Perfecto Mundo azaleas is looking great! We'll have more abundant supplies of gardenias, camellias, and rhododendrons than in the past. The Dandy Man Color Wheel® rhododendron, which is a full sun rhododendron, may or may not make it to our Sale due to growth problems at the nursery. It's also hard to locate. There are currently three varieties of azaleas in the Dandy Man line. All create a great interest to gardeners and we'll do our best to get on hands on some – no promises. The evergreen traditional azaleas will be represented, with favorites like Spider, Hardy Gardenia (multi bloomer), George Taber, Midnight Flare, Hershey's Orange and Red, and Wolfpack Red in good supply.

Most amazing and important of all are the people who work almost year-round to make the Sale work so well. Due to many with a servant heart, we have 5 new area site signs to be placed at street corners, 3 new vinyl signs, some new plant information sign bases, and painted plant sign information bases.

So now's the time to [go to Sign Up Genius and pick some times and days to volunteer!](#) The Sale is a wonderful personal experience that molds our organization into more than a garden club. We are close friends who share the beauty of God's creation.

Wrapping Up the Joslin Winter Garden

by Sharon LaRusch and Lynn Swanson, Projects co-Chairs



One of the many things we have enjoyed about our volunteer time at Joslin gardens is the variety of tasks to help with. There is always something for everyone!



In February, we worked on installing a retaining wall, cleaned a frog pond, tidied area of larger sticks, weeded, spread leaf litter and hardwood mulch!



This also speaks to the many talents of our volunteers! Thanks to the crew of fifteen that came out and made quick and fun work out at Joslin.



Our next workday is March 23rd! More details to come!

The GWC Azalea Sale Can't Succeed without YOU!

by Tom Packer, President

Last year about this time, *Walter Magazine* published the following announcement in their April issue. If you missed it there, here it is again. Pass it on. Someone you know will be glad you did!

Stop by the spacious NC State Fairgrounds Flower and Garden area (enter at Gate 6) for the Gardeners of Wake County's annual Azalea Sale to find hundreds of varieties (including hard-to-find ones) of popular flowering bushes. The proceeds support scholarship grants for North Carolina State University horticulture students which has amounted to \$10,000 to \$20,000 in past years. "Our Club was founded to spread good gardening practices as well as enhance the beauty of Wake County. We are especially proud of the financial support we are able to offer NC State students in the Horticultural Sciences Program," says Club President Tom Packer. "One variety in particular, the Wolfpack Red,



Click on Uncle Sam to volunteer!

a traditional azalea developed by a horticulturist at NC State, tends to go quickly. Get there early because they often sell out." "We will exhibit about 120 varieties of azaleas, the largest in the Triangle area, including about 80 varieties of single blooming classic evergreens, 24 Encore multi blooming varieties, six varieties of Perfecto Mundo multi-blooming varieties and 14 varieties of deciduous azaleas, all NC grown and in a variety of astonishing colors and bloom designs," says Charlie Leverett, who chairs the sale. The sale runs from April 4 – April 13 (except for Sunday, April 7), 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; free admission & parking; Gate 6 off of Youth Center Drive, NC State Fairgrounds, 4285 Trinity Road, Raleigh.

And, while you're at it, [remember to sign up to help at this year's sale!](#)
Your Club needs you!



My Corner of the Garden

by Reed Elliott, Editor

Although it's only March, April 1st is the kickoff for the 2024 GWC Azalea Sale, so now's the time to begin thinking about and scheduling to help out! If you work the sale ([sign up now, it's fun!](#)) customers may ask you for some azalea advice. Let's begin with some thoughts from our friends at *Southern Living* (with thanks).

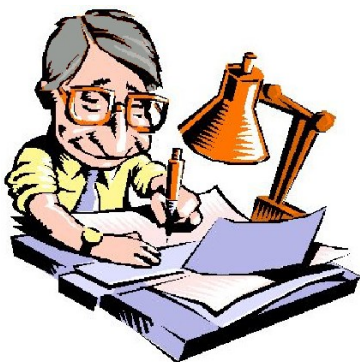
Although all azaleas are rhododendrons, not all rhododendrons are azaleas. Rhododendrons tend to prefer the Upper and Middle South, but there are azaleas out there that can grow in the Tropical plant zone. While you may associate them with early spring, some azaleas bloom in late summer and even fall. Encore azaleas can give you more than one bloom per year. Azaleas fall into two camps. Natives are indigenous to parts of the U.S. and lose their leaves in winter. Exotics are evergreens that come primarily from Japan, and most are hybrids. Surprisingly, exotic azaleas are more popular than natives in the South.

Let's start by talking about what NOT to do. Here are six deadly azalea sins to avoid:

1. **Don't plant a polka-dot garden**—a red one here and a white one there, here a pink, there an orange. Opt, instead, for sweeps of a single color. You can have more than one color in your garden—just let birds of a feather flock together for more impact and a better design.
2. **Don't plant azaleas in deep shade or scorching sun.** They might grow in deep shade, but they won't bloom. And while some azaleas can take the heat, most prefer filtered shade—picture the soft light beneath tall pines—or partial sun (a half-day, tops).
3. **Don't scrimp on soil amendment.** Azaleas don't like clay and they don't like limy, alkaline soil. What you're going for is moist, organically enriched, well-drained soil with a pH of 5.0 to 6.0.
4. **Don't send your shrubs to Soggyville.** Azaleas like a good drink of water on the regular, but they don't like wet feet in soggy ground.
5. **Don't mulch in the fall or fertilize before the bloom.** One delays dormancy, which might cause winter damage; the other encourages leafy growth when you don't want it.
6. **Don't wait too late to prune.** Do it right after the bloom. For most azaleas, next year's show will come from flower buds made this year, and if you prune too late, once buds have appeared, well, you'll be bringing the curtain down prematurely.

And what about some "should do" advice?

1. Normally, we'd start by telling you to **be careful only to buy azaleas that are appropriate to the climate zone you live in.** If you were buying azaleas anywhere other than the Gardeners of Wake County Annual Azalea Sale, that would be an important warning. At the GWC Azalea Sale, however, we've taken care of that problem for you. **We only stock varieties grown in, and suitable for, North Carolina gardens. If you see an azalea you like at the GWC Azalea Sale, you can buy it with confidence that it'll be happy in your NC garden!**
2. **Before planting, amend the soil with a natural fertilizer like Black Cow.** Never use chemical fertilizers such as *Miracle Grow* which, over time, add harmful salts to gardens.
3. **Plant azaleas with the top of the root ball just above the ground level.**
4. Azaleas can "drink" through their leaves, as well as their roots, so **give the leaves a spray whenever you're watering the base of your shrub.**
5. These plants have shallow roots, so **give them a 2-inch layer of mulch for heat protection and moisture retention.**



Do you or your customers want a lot more detailed advice? You can get it at [thespruce.com](#) in [an article entitled, "The Complete Azalea Guide: How to Grow and Care for Azaleas."](#)

Finally, don't forget to [sign up to help at the 2024 GWC Azalea Sale!](#)