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Gardening in July

Lawn Care

- ▶ Water your lawn when it shows signs of moisture stress: bluish-gray color, footprints that remain in the lawn after walking on it and possibly wilted, folded or curled up leaves.
- ▶ Cut the grass at the proper height: turf type tall fescue – 3-3 ½ inches; Zoysia – 1-2 inches; centipede – 1½-2 inches; hybrid Bermuda – 1-1 ½ inches; common Bermuda – 2 inches.
- ▶ Take soil samples from your lawn areas for testing so the results will come back before you do your fall lawn renovations.
- ▶ Remember to change directions when mowing your lawn to have a more even cut. Check to see that the blades on your lawn mower are sharp.

Edibles

- ▶ Cut basil, mint, and oregano to keep them compact and to keep these herbs from blooming and going to seed.
- ▶ Remove fruiting canes of raspberry and blackberry plants after harvest is over from now to fall of the year.
- ▶ May need to stake some of your tall vegetables now to keep them from falling over and keep soil off of the leaves.

Ornamental Plants and Flowers

- ▶ Stop pinching Chrysanthemums in July around the middle of the month.
- ▶ Check for caterpillars on azaleas, cherry, and pecan trees. Spray with insecticide if needed.
- ▶ Do not prune spring flowering shrubs after the middle of the month since they are now beginning to put their blooming buds on for next spring.
- ▶ Deadhead your annuals and perennials this month to encourage more bloom. Pick off the dead blooms. Where possible pinch to a node on the stem.
- ▶ Watch for white flies. You can help control them with yellow sticky traps, insecticidal soap, or ultra fine oil sprayed in the cool of the day less than 80 degrees.
- ▶ Prune bleeder trees such as maple, dogwood, birch and elm only to open them up for air flow. Prune hedges now if needed.
- ▶ Pinch off old bloom heads from Rhododendrons to encourage the late summer growth and bloom buds for next spring.
- ▶ Give landscape plants a second or last feeding of fertilizer to increase size if needed. Best to not fertilize trees and shrubs after July.

Local Produce, What's in Season?

In July the Piedmont has a variety of fresh produce to choose from including: **Blackberries, Blueberries, Peaches, Beans, Cantaloupe, Watermelon, Squash, Tomatoes, Corn, Cucumbers, Peppers, Eggplant and Field Peas!**

Plants That Tolerate Black Walnut Trees

Black walnut trees are toxic for many plants. All parts of the black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) tree contain juglone, a chemical that inhibits plant respiration. Inhibited respiration harms the plant health in general. The first sign of juglone toxicity is a yellowing on the leaves. The plant will soon begin to wilt and die. Juglone is present in a higher concentration under the canopy of the tree because of leaf and fruit drop and its where the root system is most dense. The roots continually release juglone so the trees affect plants outside the area directly under the canopy. Some plants tolerate juglone more than others but all plants seem to struggle. Some plants that have been found to be more tolerant are as follows:



Perennials: Some of the perennials that seem to survive fairly well include daffodil, daylily, bloodroot, crocus, and tulips. These perennials bloom early in the spring before the tree begins producing an abundance of leaves. Raised beds and annual additions of compost help with keeping plants established near walnuts. The raised beds keep a distance between the roots and the perennials. Clean up any leaves, nuts and sticks that fall into the beds to not allow any build up of juglone in the raised bed. Sometimes adding a net in the fall over the bed facilitates an easier cleanup of the leaves since the leaflets are small.

Annuals: Raised beds in annuals are also a good idea. Survival seems good with marigold, begonias, and lamb's ears. I have heard that Jerusalem artichokes work ok too.

Vegetables: Most vegetable require full sun to grow so we usually don't have a problem with walnut trees with vegetables unless the walnut trees are nearby or were present in the garden area before the garden was put in. The far reaching roots are the problem with vegetables. Some of the vegetables that I have heard do ok are snap beans, beets, onions, parsnips, and lima beans. I have also heard that melons, squash, carrots and corn do ok but have seen juglone toxicity on these fairly fast from my own experience. Again, the raised bed helps to minimize exposure to roots.



Upcoming Garden Programs

- July 13, 11am—Garden Floral Design at the Arboretum at Tanglewood.
- July 13, 7pm—Fall Vegetable Gardening at Rural Hall Library.
- July 15, 10:30am—Backyard Chickens at Reynolda Manor Library.
- July 20, 7pm—Fall Vegetable Gardening at Southside Library.
- July 21, 10:30am—Canning & Freezing Basics at Reynolda Manor Library.
- August 9, 3pm—Canning & Freezing Basics at Clemmons Library.
- August 17, 7pm—Shade Gardening at Central Library.
- August 18, 11am—Propagation of Woody Ornamentals at Tanglewood Arboretum.

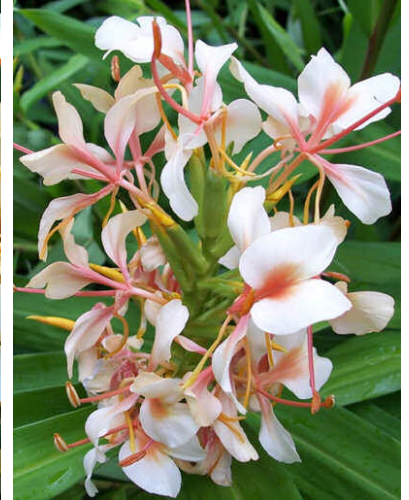
Ornamental Gingers

- *Derek Morris, Horticulture Assistant*

Ornamental gingers have been increasingly popular in the last ten years or so and several breeders have been busy at producing many hybrids most of which will grow very well in triad gardens. The most popular genus of ornamental ginger and the best for growing in our area is *Hedychium*. *Hedychium* includes several species and many hybrids. One of the most common is *Hedychium coronarium* commonly known as butterfly ginger. It's snow white blooms that indeed do resemble a butterfly are exceptionally fragrant and will fill a garden with its intoxicating fragrance in late summer and fall much as the gardenia does earlier in the year.



Most ornamental gingers grow from three to six foot tall with four foot being the average. The more fertilize and water the plants receive during the spring and summer the sooner they will bloom. The corn-like plants can grow quite fast in rich organic amended soil. Gingers will tolerate full sun but look much happier where they receive up to a half day of shade. If they are planted in full sun it is very important that they never dry out. Most varieties will not start blooming until September and will continue blooming up till the first freezes in November however there are a few types that may start blooming as early as late June. While the vast majority of ornamental gingers are quite fragrant a few are not and the colors vary from snow white to yellow, orange, and salmon or coral pink.



Clockwise from top: Butterfly ginger, Pink Flame, and Daniel Weeks.

They are great used in back of a perennial border or anywhere that you might desire a touch of the tropics. They also make good container plants and are perfect for planting near decks or any frequently used outdoor area where the fragrance can be appreciated.

The tops of the plants will naturally be killed back by freezing weather in fall and it is best to leave dead tops on removing them in spring just prior to new emerging growth. An added layer of mulch such as pine needles or straw will also give added protection from the winter cold.

Gingers multiply very easily from underground rhizomes and can easily be propagated. A well established clump is easy to divide in the spring or early summer. Aside from the aforementioned *Hedychium coronarium* three other highly recommended types are 'pink flame', 'Daniel Weeks', and 'Tara'.

Container grown plants will require storing during winter in a cool fairly dry and preferably dark area such as a garage or basement. They can be moved back outside once danger of spring frost is over to resume growing.



Below: Flame ginger.

Bag Worms on Conifers

July is a good time to continue to scout for bagworms on various conifers such as Leyland Cypress, Arborvitae, and Juniper. Below I have bulleted various information that should be helpful.

Description: Order-Lepidoptera; Family-Psychidae;
Scientific Name-Thyridopteryx ephemeraeformis.
Female bagworms are wingless, legless and grub-like (they never leave the bag). Males are small, brown, hairy moths with dark wings that clear with age.

Biology: Bagworms occur throughout North Carolina and are seen frequently in Forsyth County. Bagworms have a very wide host range but are usually associated with arborvitae or juniper. A single bagworm does relatively little harm as it feeds on leaves. Excessive defoliation may kill conifers within one or two seasons. Damage is most noticeable in landscapes rather than woodlands. Occasionally, prior to pupation, the silk band with which the bagworms attach themselves to a twig will cause twig girdling as the twig grows.

The worms spend the winter as eggs (500 to 1000) in the mother's bag. They hatch in May and June. The newly hatched larvae spin down on silken threads and are blown about by the early spring breezes. Most of the larvae land on the original host plant but some small worms may be "ballooned" for some distance on the silk thread.

Upon reaching a suitable host, the worm begins to spin its bag. As the bagworm grows, it enlarges the bag by incorporating fresh plant foliage to the outside of the bag for camouflage. In August, the worms mature and molt into the pupal stage. The bag is firmly attached by a sturdy silk band wrapped around a twig.

Male moths emerge to mate during August and September. After mating, females lay their eggs inside the pupal exuviae and die.

Control: When practical, bagworms can be removed with scissors or a sharp knife. Bagworms are parasitized by several kinds of parasitic wasps. Insecticides are effective when applied in June or early July when the bagworms are small and relatively sensitive. The North Carolina Agricultural Chemicals Manual should be consulted for current recommendations. Follow this link: <http://ipm.ncsu.edu/agchem/5-toc.pdf>, then go to page 175 in the manual for various pesticides labeled for bagworms.

(Information taken from Article by Dr. Jim Baker, NCSU)



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