

Catawba County Extension Center

Tips offered for buying plants

BY DER XIONG
Immigrant Agriculture Agent

One key to having a healthy and lasting garden is starting with the correct plants.



Der Xiong

With all the slight variations in species, purchasing plants can be quite bewildering. As spring rolls around the corner, take some of these tips into consideration before you purchase any plants for your garden.

If you tend to buy on impulse or without a plan, take a list of what you're looking for before heading into garden centers. Try to decide in advance on what to buy and make sure to do research on growth size, height and spacing. If you're not sure what you like, take a look at planting schemes in different magazines or catalogs. Remember to choose plants that are suitable for your garden, and plan accordingly whether the site is sunny or shaded.

The first places people look for plants are the local garden centers. Garden centers tend to have a large stock of plants, but only a small selection of each species. It might be tempting to choose plants that are similar varieties of the same species. However, check the tag, because some varieties may come from the same species but grow differently. If there is not enough selection at the local garden centers, the next place to check is specialty nurseries.

Plants can be sold in many different forms. Bedding plants are usually sold in individual pots, or flats. Flats are often divided into packs. Annuals bedding plants are typically sold in packs. Choose packs that have large, deep cells (containers) to keep the roots from drying out too quickly. The larger the cell, the more developed their root system. Remember that the smaller the pot or cell,

the quicker the soils dry out and will require more nutrients. Some plants are sold bare-rooted. Bare-rooted plants are grown in the field instead of a pot. Bare-rooted plants tend to be less expensive but will require more attention and care.

Make sure you inspect the plant before purchase. There are five key areas to look for: new buds and shoots, well-branched and new growth, healthy roots, signs of correct watering, and pest and disease free.

Some plants are grown indoors and have been forced to bloom earlier. Remember that flowering plants that are forced to bloom earlier for market will bloom a bit later in the gardens. Choose flowering plants that have plenty of buds for a longer blooming season. Check the roots before purchase to see if it has a healthy root system. Plants that have healthy roots hold the soil intact when the plant is pulled from the pot and have lots of young roots. Plants that fall apart when pulled from the pots are not fully established. Plants that are pot bound will be harder to establish in the garden.

Plants with large foliage should have no blemishes, and leaves should be intact, with new growth. Don't choose plants that are leggy or limp. Leaves should have a healthy color and not yellowed or mottled. Signs of overwatering are rotting foliage around the crown, grey mold, and smelly soils. Plants that are under watered will have signs of severe wilting and premature flowering. A good indication of inadequate water is yellowed lower leaves. Check the plants for signs of pest or diseases. Always double check the underside of the leaves. Avoid any plants that are twisted, yellowed, or have gray mold on the top or loss of foliage.

For more questions about buying or purchasing plants, please visit our website at CatawbaCES.ncsu.edu or call the Catawba County Cooperative Extension Center at 828-465-8240.

HUMANE SOCIETY DONATION



The Humane Society of Catawba County was the recipient of a \$750 check from the Friends of the North Carolina Veterinary Medical Association Foundation to assist in their efforts to help animals in need. Dr. Bradley Mills, NCVMA District 10 representative, serving Catawba County and surrounding areas, recommended the humane society for the contribution. Shown with Mills is Jane Bowers, executive director of the society.

Rotary Club sponsors career day for students

HICKORY — The Thursday Rotary Club of Hickory recently sponsored Career Day for Hickory High School Interact Club members. Partnering with Catawba Science Center, the Thursday Rotary Club of Hickory provided students a field trip to CSC, where students participated in hands-on experiences related to careers in science, technology, engineering and math.

STEM education is an integrated, interdisciplinary approach to learning that provides relevant learning experiences for students. Students are engaged in activities that equip them with critical thinking, problem solving, creative, and collaborative skills. Through STEM education, students establish a connection between what they are learning in high school and future careers. Introducing students to science-related fields often results in students choosing an occupation in a STEM-related area.

The students completed a cow-eye dissection, an activity that is a notable component of STEM education: investigation and discovery. Melinda Wallrich, CSC School programs coordinator, led the activity. She noted that "STEM related activities,



Participating students visited the Catawba Science Center.

such as dissection, pique student interest and inspire learning." Students were then toured through the numerous exhibits at CSC by Bruce Beerbower, CSC lead naturalist, which included the new Ocean Bound exhibit where students embark on a journey through watersheds to see how everyone's actions on land affect Earth's oceans.

The Thursday Rotary Club of Hickory has sponsored the HHS Interact

Club for the past 18 years with teacher Cheryl Rhea, math department chair, as the club's adviser. Hickory High Interact Club is the largest service club at HHS and boasts more than 100 members who are required to volunteer in the community. Examples of volunteer service projects include Operation Christmas Child for Samaritan's Purse, Salvation Army soup kitchen and bell ringing, and volunteering at the Brian Center Nurs-

ing Home. At the conclusion of the field trip, the students were welcomed at the club's Rotary meeting and luncheon by Mark Seaman, president, and Linda Lutz, Interact Club liaison. Wallrich was guest speaker and spoke to club members and student guests about the importance of STEM education.

Students participating in Thursday Rotary Club of Hickory 2016 career day were Olivia Belcher, Heather Bruhn, Elena Cheek, Monee Clarke, Kaitlyn Dang, Sierra Easton, Leah Elmer, Meg Einfalt, Kendall Gouge, Sydney Hall, Christina Hart, Grecia Hernandez, Maitam Huynh, Simmons Mikaela, Israel Negrete, Rachel Paquin, Krisitn Reynolds, Emma Salyards, Mimiya Shinn, Quanisha Smith, Emily Snyder, Kristina Stuckey, Virginia Tanner, YenVan Truong and Makenna Vieira.

The Thursday Rotary Club of Hickory was founded in 1921 by Watt Shuford. In adherence to Rotary's motto of "Service Above Self," the club has a history of giving back to the community through its primary service avenue of education. For more information about The Thursday Rotary Club of Hickory, visit www.hickoryrotary.org.

Hickory Girl Scout honored with Gold Award

HICKORY — Girl Scout Carolinas Peaks to Piedmont announced an honor in a need that Faith Hilton, of Hickory, has earned her Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest award in Girl Scouting.

Hilton, daughter of J. Lee and Judith J. Hilton and a member of Troop 10313, wanted to beautify the grounds at her church, Mountain Grove Baptist, so she planned and constructed a prayer garden for the congregation.

"Earning the Girl Scout Gold Award designation is truly a remarkable achievement, and this young woman exemplifies leadership in all its forms," said Lane Cook, chief executive officer of Girl Scouts Carolinas Peaks to Piedmont. "She saw a need in her community and took action. Her extraordinary dedication, perseverance and leadership, is making the world a better place."

The Gold Award recognizes girls in grades nine through 12 who demonstrate extraordinary leadership through sustainable and measurable Take Action projects. After the minimum requirements

are completed, the Gold Award project is the culmination of a girl's demonstration of self-discipline, leadership ability, time management, creativity, initiative and a significant mastery of skills.

Each girl must dedicate a minimum of 80 hours to planning and implementing her project, which must benefit the commu-

nity and have long-lasting impact. Some universities and colleges offer scholarships unique to Gold Award re-

ipients, and girls who enlist in the U.S. armed forces may receive advanced rank in recognition of their achievements.



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Spring Dance

\$2,000 CASH GIVEAWAY!

SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 2016

MUSIC BY SHAKEDOWN

\$50 per couple

Ticket Must Be Bought In Advance

Ticket Includes:

RIB-EYE STEAK DINNER Band & Setups BYOB

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TOWN OF LONG VIEW
MAY DAYS FESTIVAL
SATURDAY, APRIL 30, 2016
10:00 AM - 9:30 PM

ENTERTAINMENT • VENDORS • CHILDREN'S RIDES • AND MORE!

ENTERTAINMENT

12:00 NOON SHELLEN CLINE, JIM SHELDON, AND BEV MCCANN	2:30 PM 28690	4:30 PM VIC WHEELER & GRUV DAWGS	7:00 PM TIM CLARK BAND
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Town of Long View May Days Festival
Website: www.ci.longview.nc.us

Questions:
Town Hall: (828) 322-3921
events@mail.ci.longview.nc.us

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