Sandhills Horticultural Gardens Update

Jim Westmen

This Spring has had a lot of challenges for the Sandhills Horticultural Gardens. We experienced an early warm up in February and up and down temperatures through late April. That seems somewhat minor when you compare it to the two weeks of 18-degree temperatures as the high and with low temperatures in some areas between 6 and 0 degrees. We had a lot of damaged or dead plants in both containers and in the landscape. Some removal and drastic renovation pruning to many plants in the gardens has also occurred as a result. Its like Mother Nature keeping us and our landscapes in check.

There are many continued improvements in the Gardens for the year 2018.

The Sir Walter Raleigh has newly planted Oakland Hollies installed, replacing the failing hedges as well as new drip irrigation added to support their growth.

The Hoad Children’s Garden is beginning it’s planting phase this Spring with drip irrigation being installed throughout and a wonderful mixture of trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants. This garden will have a greener look by mid-summer for sure.

The Fruit and Vegetable Garden is looking great with this year’s crops planted and some tasty edibles already being harvested.

With 32 acres and over 16 garden areas to explore and enjoy, we invite you to come out anytime sun up to sun down. Please be respectful of the Gardens while visiting and thank you for your continued support.

I also encourage you to become a member of the Sandhills Horticultural Society and reap the many benefits and rewards.

It’s always a great time to visit the Gardens!

Meet Our New Board Members

With the start of 2018 several members of the Sandhills Horticultural Society terms expired. We would like to introduce our new Board members and tell you a little bit about them. We are pleased to have them join us.

Frances Kruitbosch

A lifelong avid gardener from Virginia, Frances and her husband moved to Whispering Pines in 2015. She retired from the Defense Contract Management Agency as a management analyst in 2014. Additionally, she worked with safety and health programs for nearly 300 personnel.

Soon after her move to Whispering Pines she discovered the Sandhills Horticultural Gardens and was immediately “hooked”. She grew up on a farm, always enjoyed gardening and is now learning how to garden in our unique sandy soil, thanks to the Sandhills Horticultural Society programs and workshops.

J. Alan Butler

Born in Pinehurst and reared in Southern Pines, Alan is a graduate of Campbell University.

His work experience includes Senior VP/Client Services for Weaver Cooke Construction, Greensboro NC and J.M. Thompson Construction, Raleigh NC. Additionally, he was Marketing Director for O’Brien Atkins Architects, Chapel Hill, NC and Hayes Howell Architects, Southern Pines, NC. He served as Program Director for the North Carolina Arts Council and was a staff member for U.S. Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr. in Washington DC.

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Containers and Watering

Johanna Westmen

There is nothing like a beautiful mixed container for adding color and texture to your porch or patio. After planting your containers, watering may be your number one influence on how well it really turns out. Check moisture of your containers before watering by first looking at the soil surface. But don’t be fooled. The surface can look either dry or moist and sometimes can be a false indicator. Using your finger to touch and feel for moisture works well in most cases. Be careful if you use any type of pesticide in your pots. The pesticide can transfer to your hands.

A valuable tool for checking the moisture of containers is a moisture meter. Moisture meters are relatively inexpensive and handy to use. I have one and use it on my interior plants to help prevent overwatering. Stick the probe in the soil and the meter tells you whether to water or not.

When watering - remember this. If you water deeply, you can reduce the frequency of watering. It also helps wash out any salts that may be there from a fertilizer application or even fertilizer that may have been in your potting soil. The way I do it, is water the container, allow the water to absorb into the growing media and then water again to ensure a good soaking. Always look for some water to drain from the bottom so that you know you have accomplished your goal of deep watering.

If the pots dry out completely, you may notice the sides of the container. In this case, you will probably need to water two or three times in order to completely wet the soil. If you do not do this, the water may run to the outside of the pot where the soil has pulled away and run out the bottom, not wetting the container soil at all.

Watch your plants for signs of water stress by getting to know how different plants use water. The sun exposure they are placed in will have a big effect on their watering needs. Whether the container is in all day full sun, morning or afternoon sun, or in the shade all day will greatly affect its water needs.

The time of day you water can also have an affect. Morning watering would be best to supply all the water they need for the day. Sometimes, particularly during mid-summer, with high temperatures and when the plants have filled out the container they may need to be watered more than once a day. Syringing the foliage can help reduce water loss for many plants. Be careful though, there are plants prone to mildew diseases. By keeping water off the leaves you can keep the disease pressure down.

If you are away or want to reduce the frequency of watering containers, there are some commercially available soil additives that can be added to the soil mix prior to planting which absorb water and release it over an extended period. Be sure to follow the recommendations on the package when adding to your soil mix. These products swell up like jello and if you put too much it will cause the soil to heave up along with the plants. I have had personal experience with this!

Lastly, don’t rely on the rain to do the job completely. It is always a good idea to check your containers moisture level after a rainfall. When plants really fill out the containers most of the rainfall will drip outside the containers rim.

I hope this bit of information will help those who enjoy the beauty of containers. Watering will give you the chance to observe and enjoy your containers closely and while there, stop and appreciate your hard work. Happy watering!

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He brings a wealth of organizational experience to the Sandhills Horticultural Society having served on the Board of Directors with North Carolina Advanced Energy Corp. and North Carolina Green Power among others.

Tracye Reiland

A resident of Pinehurst since 2014, Tracye has a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Resources from Eastern Kentucky University. She worked for the Kentucky Department of Natural Resources as an inspector of industrial facilities. And, a US Army Civilian she was a Program and Project Manager for environmental programs. She is married with two sons and a German Shepherd.

Since moving to Pinehurst she has completed the Moore County Master Gardener Program, joined the Pinehurst Greenway Wildlife Committee and become a member of the Garden Club of the Sandhills. As a member of these organizations she has worked with the school garden program at West Pines Middle School and assisted with maintenance of the Pollinator Habitat Garden at First Health Fitness.

Larry Allen

Larry is a native of Durham NC and graduated from North Carolina State University with a Master’s Degree in English in 1980. That same year he took a job with Sandhills Community College. He worked two years in the Continuing Education Department before joining the President’s Office as Director of Public Relations and Development. He moved to the English Department in 2003 and became the department chair in 2009.

Since his retirement in 2014 Larry has completed the Moore County Extension Master Gardener Program and serves as a docent for the Sandhills Horticultural Gardens.

Carol Lucas

A graduate of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, Carol’s focus has been business information, support systems and marketing. She joined Sandhills Community College in 1994 as professor and coordinator, Medical Office Administration. Additionally, she taught marketing at Lee County Senior High School, Sanford, NC and was a business teacher and Department Chairperson, vocational department at North Moore High School in Robbins, NC.

Carol retired from Sandhills Community College in 2017. She has a passion for gardening and is recognized for her award-winning floral arrangements. She brings strong sales, organizational and communication skills to the Sandhills Horticultural Society Board.
**Upcoming Events...**

Register by emailing, landscapegardening@sandhills.edu, or call Tricia Mabe at 910-695-3882.

**Concrete Leaf Casting**

*June 22 (Friday) 10AM to Noon and 1:30PM to 3:30PM*

*Outside of Steed Hall, Sandhills Community College*

This popular workshop is coming back with the choice of a morning or afternoon session. Instructors Pat Banville and Peggy Hudson will show participants how to cast a leaf using cement. Please bring rubber gloves and a trowel. All material will be furnished. Horticultural Society Members $25, non-members $30. Register early and indicate which session you would like to attend. Space is limited to 12 per session.

**Lunch & Learn**

*June 25 (Monday) Noon to 1PM – Ball Visitors Center*

Learn everything about Houseplants from A-Z. Keely Harpster, SCC Landscape Gardening Program graduate and Landscape Design contractor will share personal successes and failures with houseplants. **FREE** Bring your lunch, the Gardens will provide drinks.

**Lunch & Learn**

*July 30 (Monday) Noon to 1PM – Ball Visitors Center*

**Circle of Life**

Dr. Mike Rowland, retired surgeon and Master Gardener, will cover five things to help improve your life.

1. Healthy Soil, Healthy Food and Healthy People – Understanding the history of the problem.
2. Magnesium – Why it is important, why we have become deficient and how you can improve it.
3. Boron – A story similar to Magnesium.
4. Vitamin D – Understand why Vitamin D is important and suggestions to successfully evaluate yourself.
5. Gut Microbes – Influences (controlled) by diet, gut microbes are the new frontier of human health.

**FREE** Bring your lunch, the Gardens will provide drinks.

**Children's Treasure Trail**

*August 25 (Saturday) 9AM to Noon – Sandhills Horticultural Gardens*

Join us for a morning of fun for kids. All ages are welcome but the event is geared for children ages 5 to 12. There will be crafts – painting garden stones and face painting. Plus educational programs – learning about pollinators, snakes, gems, minerals and planting veggies. There will be music and refreshments. **And best of all it's FREE**

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**Growing Successful Students**

*A research based approach to helping students transition into college*

As visitors walk through the Sandhills Horticultural Gardens they notice the beautiful plants, the variety of landscapes, and the serenity of the natural environment. What they don't always notice is the blood, sweat, and occasional tears from the students, who over the past fifty years, have built the gardens from the ground up. In some cases, carting in truckloads of compost and soil, they've actually built the ground! Each of these students came to the Landscape Gardening program (LSG) at Sandhills Community College with their own history and had to make adjustments in their lives as they transitioned into the college program. The college and LSG is focusing extra effort on improving the experience of new students, helping them transition into college and laying a strong foundation for their future success.

In the Fall of 2016, the college implemented a new online course for first time students in Associate of Applied Science programs called Success & Study Skills. As described in the course catalog, it “provides an orientation to the campus resources and academic skills necessary to achieve educational objectives. Emphasis is placed on an exploration of facilities and services, study skills, library skills, self-assessment, wellness, goalsetting, and critical thinking. Upon completion, students should be able to manage their learning experiences to successfully meet educational goals.” The last six weeks of the course focuses on the specific program a student is entering into. Our version of the course serves students entering the landscape gardening and golf course management programs.

Earlier this year, Rebecca Rodriguez, a former LSG instructor, partnered with Dee Johnson, LSG Program Director, to make improvements to the LSG portion of this course. Ms. Rodriguez, while currently living in Germany, is working on a Doctorate in Educational Leadership & Management while staying connected to the happenings in the garden and academic program. As her capstone project, Rebecca is researching which type of study skills align with success in the courses LSG students take. Coursework includes plant identification, greenhouse operations, landscape design and maintenance, propagation techniques, and integrated pest management. Updates to the LSG portion of the Success & Study Skills course could be in place as early as Fall 2018. Program alumni can participate in the research by completing a short survey at bit.ly/SCCLSGsurvey.

As many alumni will attest to, the LSG program becomes more than just coursework, feeling like a family, it becomes part of your personal story. Improvements to the Success & Study Skills course is just one of many ways we strive to help students succeed from the time they initially transition into the program through graduation and beyond.
First Director of the Gardens – Jim Westmen

The Sandhills Horticultural Gardens will have its first formal director this year and yours truly has accepted the newly created position. I’m not, by far, the first person that has influenced, guided and directed this garden as many people before me have greatly contributed to its success from its early concept and creation through its continued growth over the years. I personally am excited for the future of the Gardens and this new appointment. While teaching in this program since 1988 I have seen a lot of growth and changes occur over the years and am aware of many challenges for the future. I will continue as a faculty member of the Landscape Gardening Program and will work hard to continue the learning experience gained by our students in this outdoor laboratory. This I believe is “priceless” in molding students, academics and capabilities. I also will continue to promote the experience and enjoyment of our visiting public and society members through the Gardens. I am honored to be a part of this wonderful “Gem” in the Sandhills.

Sincerely, Jim Westmen

Summer Gardening Tips

- Fertilize annuals regularly with liquid feed for continuous blooms.
- Remove spent blooms on annuals to encourage blooms rather than seed production.
- Collards for fall harvest need to be planted in August.
- Do not prune spring blooming shrubs after the first of July.
- Provide at least one inch of water per week during the summer to your lawn.
- Aerate turfgrasses in the summer when they are actively growing.