Landscape Contractor Training

For those who wish to take the Landscape Contractor Exam, Chatham County Center of North Carolina Cooperative Extension will offer training beginning June 3. The two-hour classes will begin at 4:00 p.m. in the downstairs auditorium of the Agriculture Building in Pittsboro. (This is later than dates previously announced.)

One of the Landscape Contractor exams involves plant identification, and that part of the class will involve travel to other locations. Extension Agent Al Cooke is coordinating the training. The following schedule has been prepared.

June 3 - Introduction to Landscape Contractor registration
          Legal issues, Landscape documents, landscaping and weather
June 10 - Plants – location TBA
June 17 - Plants – location TBA
June 24 - Soils, grading, slopes, plant installation
July 1 - Building Materials, Irrigation, Plans and measurements
July 8 - Plants – location TBA
July 15 - Plants – location TBA
July 22 Exam Williamston (application deadline is May 22)
September 24 Exam Flat Rock (application deadline is July 24)

Details on application to take the exam are available online at http://www.nclcrb.org/application-exam.aspx

A registration fee of $40 will include the North Carolina Landscape Contractors’ Registration Board Manual, a current copy of the Certified Plant Professional plant list, and light refreshments. Pre-registration is required and will be confirmed when payment is received. For those who already have the study manual or wish to purchase it in advance, the fee will be $5.

To order the study manual in advance, contact the North Carolina Landscape Contractors’ Registration Board at PO Box 1578, Knightdale, NC 27545 or phone 919.266.8070.

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Registered Landscape Contractor Training

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To register for the Extension classes send a check to Chatham County Extension, PO Box 279, Pittsboro, NC  27312, ATTN:  Al Cooke.

To become a Registered Landscape Contractor requires verification of at least 3 years of experience or combination of experience and education.  Contractors must pass 3 exams to qualify.  The landscape design exam consists of multiple choice questions on interpreting a landscape design, the kind of questions necessary to figure a job proposal.

An additional multiple choice exam includes 200 questions based on the study manual available from the NC Landscape Contractors’ Registration Board or by registering for this series of classes.

The Plant Identification exam requires applicants to pass the plant ID section of the Certified Plant Professional exam.  This exam requires identification of 125 plants from a list of more than 300 commonly used landscape plants.

There have been attempts in the past to require contractor certification in order to perform certain landscape work.  It is likely this legislation will be considered by the State Legislature again this year.

For more information on becoming a Registered Landscape Contractor, see the NC Landscape Contractors’ Registration Board website at http://www.nclcrb.org/

With lots of “landscapers” available, clients often look for some way to narrow the list.  Some kind of credentials can determine whether you make the cut.  Your contractor registration is evidence that you are experienced, knowledgeable, and professional.  If you would like to participate in the training and prepare to be a Registered Landscape Contractor, please contact Chatham County Center of Cooperative Extension at 919.542.8202.

North Carolina Landscape Contractors’ Registration Board
PO Box 1578
Knightdale, NC  27545
T: 919-266-8070 | F: 919-266-6050
nclcrb@msn.com
http://www.nclcrb.org/

Paper Reduction

Each issue of Grounds Manager is posted online at http://chatham.ces.ncsu.edu/content/GroundsIndex

If you prefer to receive email notice when the newsletter is posted online, you can simply send us an email with your request.  We can advise you when the newsletter is posted and eliminate unwanted paper in your mailbox.
Getting a Good Diagnosis:
How to Take and Submit a Sample for Plant Disease or Insect Diagnosis

In February, Dr. Barbara Shew, Director of the Plant Disease and Insect Clinic at NC State University, spoke to the Chatham Landscape Conference on how to get help with identifying plant problems. Following are some of the items she discussed:

Know what is normal for the plant and the time of year. Regular monitoring helps you recognize the abnormal.

Contact your County Agent to arrange for delivery. There is no charge if your County Agent can identify the problem for you.

Arrange to deliver the sample on the same day it is taken. Use an insulated cooler to protect the sample from heat or cold.

Do not collect dead plants.

Keep foliage and fruits dry.

Keep soil off foliage.

For small plants dig (do not pull) several examples; leave the roots and soil intact.

Enclose roots and soil in a plastic bag secured around the top of the soil.

Plants in containers should be left in the container.

For woody trees or shrubs dig ½ to 1 gallon of soil including an ample amount of small roots. Ideally these should come from several areas around the drip line. 90% of disease problems on woody plants are related to factors in the soil.

Place roots and soil in a plastic bag and tie securely.

Cut several branches below the point of injury to show the fullest range of symptoms. Include some live wood. Where practical, collect the entire plant.

For Turfgrass collect a 6-8 inch sample from the margin of the damaged area including the transition zone from healthy to unhealthy turf. Wrap in foil or waxed paper to keep the sample intact.

Place insects in a vial of alcohol. Small insects may be submitted on the plant; place the cutting in a plastic bag. If possible collect and submit several specimens.

Remember: the diagnosis can only be as good as the sample submitted. Do a good job of collecting specimens that show a complete range of symptoms.

Contact your County Extension Office to arrange for shipment. Specimens sent through the Extension office are cheaper than those sent independently. To avoid specimens deteriorating on a loading dock over the weekend, plan to collect and deliver specimens early in the week. Deliver specimens to your Extension office no later than Wednesday. Your Extension Agent can help you submit the sample by an online form and arrange for delivery to the clinic. www.cals.ncsu.edu/plantpath/extension/clinic/Submit/submit.htm

Be prepared with information such as the client contact information, name of host plant, full description of symptoms, distribution of problem on the plant and around the site, site conditions, and parts of the plant affected. If you have digital pictures, they may also be submitted and sometimes help with or speed up diagnosis. Your eyes on the site have information that may assist diagnosticians.

Fee for samples submitted in cooperation with your Extension Agent are $20. Samples submitted independently are $30. Out of state samples $75. There is currently no charge for digital samples which may be sufficient for diagnosis in some cases.

Often by the time we get samples the plant may not be salvageable. But with good diagnosis, we may be better able to prepare for or prevent problems in the future. Contact your County Extension Office for more information on how to get a good sample.

Plant Disease and Insect Clinic
Campus Box 7211
100 Derieux Place, 1227 Gardner Hall
North Carolina State University
North Carolina Pest News

You may have noticed that certain pests are pretty predictable. They have one generation per year and show up about the same time every year (bagworms, Japanese beetles). Or they have several generations and seem to be a nuisance throughout the growing season (aphids, scales, whiteflies).

In the busy-ness of running a business, it can be difficult to keep up or to remember something you see often. North Carolina Pest News offers several ways to help. From April through September a weekly email provides observations on insects and plant diseases from Extension Specialists at NC State University. These emails are being forwarded to my email listserv. If you are not on that list and would like to be, send an email to al_cooke@ncsu.edu and ask to be added to my email for commercial landscapers and grounds managers.

All of the past emails since 1996 are also available online at http://ipm.ncsu.edu/current_ipm/pest_news.html. This web page allows you to look for pest issues in a variety of ways. A valuable tool is to be able to look through what pests have been a problem about this time in past years. Sometimes that will help you put your finger on a current problem. Each year also has a subject index. So if you know the problem and want help understanding it, there is another valuable tool.