Choosing Plants for Your Yard: What to think about

- Local Climate
- Growing conditions in your yard
- What do you want?
  - Evergreen or deciduous
  - Color - Flowers, etc.
  - Landscape use: specimen, screen, seasonal interest
- What is available?
Select plants hardy to at least Zone 7
Right Plant, Right Place

Exposure: Sun versus Shade

- **Full sun**: at least 8 hours direct sunlight each day
- **Part sun**: at least 4 hours direct sunlight each day
  - **Morning sun**: gentler, shade plants are usually okay with morning sun
  - **Afternoon sun**: hotter, harsher – choose sun tolerant plants for sites that get direct afternoon sun
- **Light Shade**: a bright shade such as that cast by pine trees – as opposed to a dark shade cast by buildings or hardwood trees
Right Plant, Right Place

Drainage and Soil Type

– **Poorly Drained/Wet**: water stands for days after rainfall, high clay content
– **Moist**: Moist most of the time, water drains within 24 hours day of rainfall ending
– **Well Drained**: water drains away within a few hours of rainfall ending, sandy loams
– **Xeric**: Extremely sandy, water never stands

• In shade, competition from tree roots cause soils to be drier
Right Plant, Right Place Space!

- **Plants grow!** – often larger and faster than you anticipate
- In many new landscapes, plants are placed too close together, too close to the house, and will eventually get too large!
Space: Look Up!

Know how tall and wide a tree will grow before planting!

Tall trees such as: Maple, Spruce, Oak, Pine

Low growing trees and shrubs only such as: Gray Dogwood, Hawthorn, Tecoma Arborvitae, Nannyberry.

Medium trees (40’ or less at maturity) such as: Cherry, Honey Locust, Horsechestnut, Mountain Ash.
WRONG! This is called topping and is extremely detrimental to tree health!
What Do You Want?

- Color (flowers, foliage)
- Fragrance
- Screening
- Shade
- Low maintenance
- ?????
Other Considerations

• Wildlife - Birds, Pollinators
• No serious pest problems
• Not invasive!
• Available from nurseries

Powdery Mildew – many resistant varieties available
Learn more about landscaping for wildlife

http://www.ncsu.edu/goingnative/

**Going Native: Urban Landscaping for Wildlife with Native Plants**

You can go native!...with native plants in your landscape.

- See why landscaping with native plants is better for wildlife and for the environment.
- Find out about the problems caused by invasive, exotic plants. Odds are you have invasive exotics in your own backyard!
- Discover the native plants you can use as alternatives to exotic plants. We even tell you where you can buy natives!
- Create your own native plant landscape that’s attractive to wildlife and people with our step-by-step guide that helps you choose the right plants for your landscape.
Invasives

• Link on top bar, “Invasive Exotic Plants of the SE”

• Examples: Bradford Pear, Japanese barberry, Eleagnus, Ligustrum (Privet), Mahonia
RIGHT PLANT =
adapted to local climate +
adapted to site conditions (exposure, drainage, other issues) +
right size for the space +
something you like + not invasive +
available to purchase!
Recommended Trees and Shrubs for NC Piedmont

- Hardy to Zone 7
- Tolerant of warm, humid summers
- At least moderately deer resistant
- Available from nurseries
- Native or non-invasive
- No major serious pest issues
Deer Favorites:

- Arborvitea, Thuja
- Redbud
- Cherry Trees
- Fringe Tree
- Indian Hawthorn
- Pittosporum
- Euonymous
- Azaleas
- Camellias
- Roses
- Itea
Understanding Plant Names

• Common Names
  – “Heavenly Bamboo”

• Scientific Names
  – *Genus species*
  – *Nandina domestica*

• Cultivar Names
  – ‘Cultivar’
  – *Nandina domestica* ‘Firepower’
  – ‘Firepower’ Nandina
  – Cultivars are genetically identical
Trees for Shade

• Plant on west side of house to shade from hot afternoon sun for maximum energy savings
• Leave east and south sides open to allow morning (east) and indirect all day (south) sunlight into home
• All prefer full sun; okay in afternoon sun
Oaks

- The best shade trees for wildlife
- Many species native to NC
- Considered slow growing
- Very long lived
- Plant for the future!
Fastest Growing Oaks

- **Willow Oak**
  - *Quercus phellos*
  - 100’ x 50’

- **Pin Oak**
  - *Quercus palustris*
  - 60’ x 40’
  - Needs acid soil

- Both native

- Wet – well drained soil
Red Maple
*Acer rubrum*

- 40’-60’ x 40’-60’
- Native
- Wet – well drained soil
- Excellent fall color
- Varieties:
  - ‘October Glory’
  - ‘Brandywine’
- Spring blooms are early nectar source for bees

Blooms (right)
Seeds (left)
River Birch
*Betula nigra*

- Native
- 40’ x 30’
- Single or multi-trunks
- Papery bark
- ‘Heritage’ older variety, ‘Duraheat’ newer with better leaf spot resistance
- Grows fast, tolerates wet to well drained soil
Ginkgo

- *Ginkgo biloba*
- Large Tree
  - To 80’ x 40’
  - Slow growing
- Extremely tough, drought tolerant
- Moist – well drained soil
- Plant male trees

Yellow fall color
Shrubs for Screening

Time to move beyond Leyland Cypress!
Upright Hollies

**Llex hybrids**

- Best choice for hedges
- Full – part shade, well drained soil
- Most are hybrids between native and Asian species
- Prickly leaves, lots of red berries
- ‘Needlepoint’
  - 15’ x 10’
- ‘Nellie Stevens’
  - 20’ x 15’
- **Red Hollies** – 15’-20’ x 10’
  - ‘Oakleaf’
  - ‘Cardinal’
  - ‘Festive’
  - ‘Robin’
Upright Chinese Junipers

*Juniperus chinensis*

- **‘Spartan’**
  - 10’-15’ x 3’- 4’
- **‘Hetzii Columnaris’**
  - 15’ x 8’
  - More pyramidal and slightly more open than ‘Spartan’
- **Drought tolerant**
- **Full sun, well drained soil**
- **Watch for bagworms!!!!**
Cleyera

- *Ternstroemia gymnanthera*
- Full sun to full shade
- Well drained soil
- 8’+ tall x 6’+ wide, to 15’ tall
- Tolerates heavy pruning but more attractive when grown natural
- Deer browsing may be a problem
Southern Wax Myrtle

*Morella cerifera*

- Full sun – lt. shade
- Moist to xeric soil
- 10’-15’ x 10’-15’
- Native
- Evergreen but may lose some leaves in cold winter
- Exceptionally tough, drought tolerant
- Prone to ice and wind damage
Small Evergreen Shrubs

Resist the temptation to turn them into little green meatballs!
Low Growing Evergreens

- **Dwarf Yaupon**
  - Very small leaves
- **‘Carissa’ Holly**
  - Larger leaves, single spine on tip
- Both 3’-4’ tall, 4’-5’ wide, full sun – part shade, moist – well drained soil
- Drought tolerant
‘Duke Gardens’
Japanese Plum Yew
*Cephalotaxus harringtonia*

- Shade or sun
- Well drained soil
- 3’-4’ x 4’-5’
- Very deer resistant
- Very similar to yew but better adapted to our climate
‘Firepower’ Nandina

- Sun to part shade
- Well drained soil
- One of the smallest shrubs – 2’ x 2’
- Never blooms or produces berries – no invasive potential
- Deer browsing may be a problem
Trees and Shrubs for Seasonal Interest and Wildlife
Mt. Airy Fothergilla

- Native
- *Fothergilla major* 'Mount Airy'
- 4’-5’x 4’-5’
- Sun to part shade
- Moist or well drained soil
- Honey scented spring blooms, beautiful fall color
Red Buckeye

- *Aesculus pavia*
- Native, blooms mid-spring
- 10’-20’
- Attracts hummingbirds
- Understory tree, best in part shade and moist soil
Sweet Bay Magnolia
Magnolia virginiana

- Native
- Grows 20’-30’ tall, often with multiple trunks, 15’-20’ wide
- Full sun to part shade
- Wet to well drained soil
- Semi-evergreen
Crapemyrtles

- Consider:
  - Mature Size
    - Range: 5’ – 35’!
  - Growth Habit
  - Bark
  - Fall Color
  - Mildew Resistance
  - Flower Color

- Learn more:
  [http://www.clemson.edu/crapemyrtle](http://www.clemson.edu/crapemyrtle)
National Arboretum Hybrids

• ‘Miami’
  – upright to 20’, dark pink flowers, good bark

• ‘Choctaw’
  – upright vase to 20’, clear bright pink flowers, good bark

• ‘Natchez’
  – spreading vase to 25’, white, exceptional bark

• ‘Muskogee’
  – lavender pink, Upright to 20’ x 15’

• ‘Osage’
  – clear pink, Pendulous branching to 12’ x 10’

• ‘Sioux’
  – bright pink, Upright to 15’ x 12’
Vitex, Chaste Tree

- Vitex agnus-castus
- Full sun
- Well drained soil - drought tolerant
- 10’-15’ high and wide
- Aromatic blue flowers all summer
- Honeybees love it
Vitex, Chaste Tree

When grown as a shrub, can cut back each year like butterfly bush (back to 2’ tall)

Tree form specimens usually have multiple trunks
Gardenia

- Sun – part shade
- Well drained soil
- Most varieties 5’ x 5’ or larger
- Extremely fragrant
- New Variety: ‘Crown Jewel’
  - 3’ x 4’
  - Developed at Oakmont Nursery, Siler City
- Deer may browse in late winter
Sweet Pepperbush
*Clethra alnifolia*

- Native
- Sun – part shade, well drained or moist soil
- Cultivars:
  - ‘Hummingbird’, ‘Sixteen Candles’, dwarf white, 3’ x 6’
  - ‘Ruby Spice’, upright pink, 8’ x 5’
- Blooms in June-July, exceptional fragrance, attract butterflies and pollinators
Sweet Pepperbush

‘Ruby Spice’

‘Sixteen Candles’
American Beautyberry
*Callicarpa americana*

- Native
- Tough native shrub for sun to part shade
- Magenta berries late summer and fall
- Grows 3’-6’ tall and wide
- Can be cut back to 1’ in early spring to produce denser shrub
- Well drained soil
Gardening News

• **Chatham Gardener** email list
  – Sustainable gardening information
  – Weekly email updates
  – What to plant, pest alerts, timely tips

  Upcoming classes and events

• To subscribe:
  – [http://go.ncsu.edu/subscribecg](http://go.ncsu.edu/subscribecg)
North Carolina Cooperative Extension

Chatham County Center
919-542-8202

Visit http://chatham.ces.ncsu.edu to submit questions to our ‘Ask an Expert’ widget

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- Hwy 64 west, Pittsboro - adjacent to CCCC campus
- Will house:
  - Cooperative Extension
  - Soil and Water Conservation
  - USDA Farm Service Agency
  - NC Forestry Service
  - 800 seat auditorium!

Coming in 2016!