How Can I Propagate My Favorite Landscape Plant?

Layering is an easy way to multiply new plants from older ones. The principle of layering encourages the development of new roots on stems that are still attached to the parent plant. The rooted stem is then cut, producing a new plant growing on its own root system.

For simple layering, bend a low growing, flexible stem, cover it with soil and peg it to the ground. Peg to the ground by placing rocks on tops of the stem to hold it in place and to ensure the plant stem has contact with the soil. Leave the remaining 6 to 12 inches above the soil. Bend the tip to a vertical position and secure to a small stake. The sharp bend will often induce rooting, but slightly cutting or wounding the lower side of the bent branch (the part that is pegged) with a sharp knife may also help.

Most plants that have low-growing branches are suitable for layering. Use simple layering techniques to propagate climbing roses, forsythia, rhododendron, honeysuckle, boxwood, azalea, dogwood, magnolia and wax myrtle. Use this technique in early spring with a dormant branch, or in late summer using a mature branch. Periodically check for adequate moisture and for the formation of roots. It may take one or more seasons before the layer is ready to be removed for transplanting.

Do’s & Don’ts of Small Fruit Production

February 20, 2007

Since the recent Dole Foods, Inc. announcement of the building of a fresh market research/production facility in Kannapolis there has been an increased interest in the small fruits market, especially Blueberries and Blackberries. An evening long workshop on the Do’s and Don’ts of Small Fruit Production with emphasis on blueberries and blackberries will be presented at the Stanly County Agri-Civic Center in Albemarle. Dr Gina Fernandez, Extension Small Fruits Specialist, and Dr. Bill Cline, Extension Specialist, Horticulture Crops Research Station, Castle Haynes, NCSU, will be conducting the workshop on February 20, beginning at 3 pm with Dr. Fernandez. Following dinner, Dr. Cline will continue the program at 6 p.m. Both Fernandez and Cline will discuss cultivars suitable for our area, basic disease and insect issues, budgets, and pitfalls to avoid when beginning a small fruit operation. This workshop is a must for those of you interested in small fruit production on a commercial level. Workshop is free but seating is limited so call 704.983.3987 by 5 p.m. February 13, 2007, for your reservation!!

4-H Plant Sale In Progress

If you did not receive information about the 4-H Plant Sale, call 704.983.3987 or visit the Extension website - www.stanly.ces.ncsu.edu and follow the links for varieties available and the order form. Orders may be called in to the Extension office, mailed or delivered directly to the office. Expected delivery of plants will be the first week of March. Note: All plants are bare root except for blueberries, blackberries.
**Top 10 Landscaping Mistakes**

1. Landscapes that are the result of no plans or designs
2. Over planting
3. No consideration for mature height or width of plants
4. Plant material inappropriate for soil type/drainage
5. Improper pruning practices of both trees and shrubs
6. Too labor and capital intensive
7. Improper mulching or lack thereof
8. Little use of hardscape
9. Limited plant diversity
10. Not recognizing when to start all over!!

**Soil Sample Turn Around**

Turnaround on soil samples at NCDA is currently 3-4 weeks. So please be patient, sample turnaround will probably be slow through February. If you have any questions on sampling procedures or packing procedures call me at the Stanly County Cooperative Extension Office.

**Liming Your Pond**

Some ponds benefit from the occasional addition of lime. Ponds with soft, acidic water (less than 20 parts per million total alkalinity) will not be very productive, and also may not respond to fertilization, unless they are limed. Ponds with acidic waters (water having a low PH value) are common in many areas of North Carolina.

Fishing will be poor if the pH is below 6.0. A pH value between 6.5 and 9.0 is considered optimum for fish ponds.

Water pH and alkalinity can be measured with inexpensive water testing kits available from most swimming pool supply stores. Or, you can send a water sample to the North Carolina Department of Agriculture Water Testing Laboratory (919-733-2657) for analysis, for a small fee.

However, a soil test from the NCDA Soil Testing Laboratory is the best way to determine how much lime your pond needs. For existing ponds, collect soil from 8-10 areas throughout the pond from a boat using a can on the end of a pole. Mix the sample thoroughly and allow it to dry. Then place the sample in a shipping box available at the Stanly County Cooperative Extension Office, label it as a pond sample, and mail it. The soil analysis you receive will indicate how much lime your pond needs. As a general rule, about 1 ton of agricultural lime per acre is required to raise the pH level 1 point.

The lime should be distributed as evenly as possible over the entire pond. A common method for applying lime is to shovel it or wash it from a plywood platform while moving around the pond in a boat. Late fall or early winter is the best time to apply lime. A typical pond requires retreatment with lime every three to four years, although ponds with high rates of inflow and outflow require more frequent applications.

New ponds are easiest to lime while they are still empty. Before the pond is filled collected soil samples for analysis following the procedure described above. Lime, if required, can be spread over the bottom of the pond and disked in before the land is flooded.

Hydrated or builder’s lime (calcium hydroxide) is generally not recommended, as it is caustic and has the potential to increase pH too quickly, killing the fish. If fish are not present or if agricultural lime is not readily available, hydrated lime can be applied carefully at the rate of 50 pounds per surface acre. Retreatment every few months is often required with hydrated lime.

**Christmas Trees for Pond Use**

Don’t just throw away your Christmas tree…put it to a good use! Cedars and discarded Christmas trees make an excellent habitat for fish in your pond. Simply attach Christmas trees to cement blocks secured with polypropylene rope and set upright on the ponds bottom. Sinking cut Christmas trees into ponds and reservoirs cause fish to concentrate in these areas and improves fishing. Some fish hide in the branches to escape predators, others feed on snails and aquatic insects found on the structures, and most fish seek the shaded areas during hot and sunny days.
**Winter Bramble Chores**

**Plant growth and development**
- Plant is “dormant” and accumulating chilling hours
- Some differentiation may be occurring in the flower buds

**Pruning and trellising**
- Pruning should occur late in winter or early spring. Wait until early spring to prune floricanes raspberries so winter injured wood can be removed
- Make trellis repairs after plants have defoliated but before pruning and training

**Erect blackberry types**
- Prune out spent floricanes
- Tie canes to wires in a fan shape
- Cut lateral branches back to 8-12”
- Thin canes to 6-8 canes/hill (4 ft spacing)

**Trailing blackberry types**
- Prune out spent floricanes
- Tie or weave canes to wire so that they do not overlap
- Prune side laterals to 12-18”
- Thin canes to 6-8 hill (6-8ft spacing)

**Primocane fruiting raspberries**
- Prune (mow) primocane fruiting types to the ground

**Floricane fruiting raspberries**
- Prune out the spent floricanes
- Tie canes to wires so they are spread out
- Cut any lateral branches back to 6”
- Thin canes to 6-8/ hill (3 ft spacing) or 3-4 canes per linear ft. of row

**Weed control**
- Many summer weed problems can best be managed in the fall and winter using pre-emergent herbicides. Determine what weeds have been a problem. Then contact me at the Stanly County Cooperative Extension Office for chemicals labeled for the control of these weeds.

- Establishing new blackberry or black raspberry plants into rows of black plastic or landscape cloth can reduce weed problems significantly. For red raspberries, straw mulch works best since new canes will emerge within the row, and must be able to push through the mulch.

**Insect and disease scouting**
- Scout fields for insect and disease damage and remove those canes
- If possible, remove any wild brambles by the roots that are within 600 feet of your planting during the winter, or treat them with Roundup in autumn.
- Apply liquid lime sulfur to dormant canes, just prior to bud break, for disease control.

**Planting**
- Take soil tests to determine fertility needs one year before planting. Amend the soil in the fall prior to spring planting.
- Prepare list of cultivars for next year’s new plantings. A commercial small fruit nursery list can be found at [www.smallfruit.org](http://www.smallfruit.org).

**Water management**
- Plants generally don’t need supplemental water in winter.

**Marketing**
- Order containers for next season
- Make contacts for selling fruit next season
- Attend grower meetings

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**Do’s & Don’ts of Small Fruit Production**

**Emphasis on Blueberry/Blackberry Production**

**February 20, 2007**

3 - 7:30 p.m.
Stanly County Agri-Civic Center
Albemarle NC

Deadline to Register - February 13
Call 704.983.3987

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Recommendations for the use of chemicals are included in this publication as a convenience to the reader. The use of brand names and any mention or listing of commercial products or services in this publication does not imply endorsement by North Carolina State University, North Carolina A & T State University or North Carolina Cooperative Extension nor discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned. Individuals who use chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conforms to the product label. Be sure to obtain current information about usage regulations and examine a current product label before applying any chemical.
Dormant Pruning of Muscadine Cordons for the First Time

In order to move the fruiting area of the vine slightly away from the cordon it is desirable to make the first dormant pruning cuts on the side shoots coming off the cordons (arms) at ten inches on the single wire trellis and six inches on the Geneva Double Curtain System. This will allow the cluster of grapes to be far enough away from the cordon for easy harvest and improve air circulation. Shoots coming off the cordon at about a 45-degree angle are the ones preferred for forming the spur system. Shoots coming straight up or straight down should be removed if not needed. In subsequent years, the previous season's growth should be cut back to two to four buds to keep the canopy from becoming too wide.

What should be done on first time dormant pruning!

What a spur system on a 4-year-old muscadine vine should look like!