



ONLINE RESOURCES

NORTH CAROLINA BOTANICAL GARDEN

www.ncbg.unc.edu/

NORTH CAROLINA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

www.ncwildflower.org/

NORTH CAROLINA HERBARIUM

www.herbarium.unc.edu

NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE/ ORANGE COUNTY

orange.ces.ncsu.edu/

NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE/ CHATHAM COUNTY

chatham.ces.ncsu.edu/index.php

ORANGE COUNTY'S FARM WEBSITE

orangecountyfarms.org/

CAROLINA FARM STEWARDSHIP ASSOCIATION

carolinafarmstewards.org/

CARRBORO FARMERS' MARKET

carrborofarmersmarket.com

ORANGE COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

www.co.orange.nc.us/MasterGardener

OWASA

owasa.org

Rosinweed (*Silphium compositum*)



Extreme gardening in times of extremes

BY JOHNNY RANDALL

NORTH CAROLINA BOTANICAL GARDEN

Natural plant distribution and abundance are largely dictated by the climatic extremes rather than by averages. Our current extreme and killing drought will likely cause a habitat shift in many areas: The plants that can tolerate the drought will remain and possibly expand their territories and those that can't will perish and find themselves restricted to the more mesic (moist) sites.

Extreme drought is not beyond the genetic memory of many of our native plants, whose ancestors made it through equally harsh times. Within the more recent Piedmont geologic history, during the Hypsithermal period (between 2,000 and 4,000 years ago), prolonged drought and high temperatures caused an expansion of prairie and a contraction of forests across North America. Piedmont North Carolina still houses refugees from this period in specialized habitats and on roadsides, power-line clearings and other managed rights-of-way. These mostly shade-intolerant herbaceous roadside attractions are coming into their own here at the end of summer and are particularly prevalent in the county. But keep your eyes on the road! These plants are also adapted to fire and buffalo grazing, but that's another story...

So in this time of a seeming climate shift to warmer

and drier conditions, consider extreme rather than average gardening. The average high temperature in Carrboro for September is 81° F (with 4.5 inches of rain). The extreme temperatures for the same period are 102° F (1953) and 36° F (1990)! If we paid attention to these numbers when selecting plants, our cultivated landscapes would probably look quite different.

It is also important to consider from where your landscape plants come. For most species, there are ecotypes or individuals that are adapted to particular local environmental conditions. That's why it's better to have a Baptisia grown from locally collected seeds than one grown from seed collected in the mountains or New England. For a list of plant nurseries that typically grow local stock, please visit the North Carolina Botanical Garden's webpage (www.ncbg.unc.edu) for "Recommended Plant Sources for Native Plants," or come by the garden for the booklet and visit our own plant sale area. See the list below of plants that are adapted to drought, but please see a more complete list on the garden's webpage.

Celebrate and take advantage of the Piedmont prairie-like flora's genetic memory. And let our natural history guide your fall plantings and the way you regard that patch of weeds along the roadside. *

Happening this Spring at the Garden

Advance registration for all programs; call 962-0522 ncbg.unc.edu



Family Programs ...

Nature Tales Storytime Thursdays, beginning April 3, at 10 am
Children 3–5 years old, with adult

Discovering Magic in the Garden
May 18th, 2–4 pm, rain or shine
Space is limited: *register early*

Workshops ...

Spring Flora Mondays, beginning April 14, 9 am–noon

Digital Camera Workshop Fridays, beginning April 11, 12:30–4 pm

Botanical Illustration: Mixed Media
Tuesdays, beginning May 6, 1–4:30 pm

Lectures ...

What a Book Can Do: 40 Years after *Silent Spring* March 19, 5 pm
Morehead Planetarium Banquet Hall

From Tobacco Farm to Botany Laboratory: Alma Beers, Carolina's First Female Botanist April 9, 7pm,

Why We Garden April 27, 2 pm at The Carolina Inn. Presented by Ken Moore (*Citizen* columnist)

Tours & Plant Sales ...

Guided Tour of the Gardens
Every Saturday, 10 am

Guided Tour of Coker Arboretum
3rd Saturday of each month, 11 am

Self-service Plant Sale Every day behind the Totten Center, featuring information on gardening during a drought and drought-tolerant plants

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THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL 