

**WE HELP GARDENERS GROW**

# The Seedling— January 2017

**The Men's Garden Club of Burlington NC**

Volume 51, Issue 1

**Next Meeting: Jan 24, 2017**

Occasions, 286 East Front Street  
Burlington NC

**Buck Cochran from PeaceHaven Farm**



## A message from President Tony Abbruzzi

Happy New Year Gentlemen,

2016 was a very good year for our club. The membership grew, we had a very successful day at the Dogwood Festival enabling us to continue and expand our philanthropic endeavors, we enjoyed a wide variety of excellent presentations, and an excellent time was enjoyed by all at our annual picnic. Life truly is good.

It is 2017 and another year is before us. I hope that you and your family enjoy health and happiness throughout the coming year. We have a schedule of very interest-

ing speakers this year that is sure to impart a bit of knowledge to even the most learned members. In addition to exciting programs I look forward to strengthening the camaraderie that exists among our members.

Your seed catalogs have probably started to arrive and you may be envisioning the layout of your 2017 garden. Johnny's Selected Seed Catalog, my personal favorite, is a great resource for gardeners as it contains a lot of specific information on many varieties of vegetables, fruits, and flowers. As a reference, it offers infor-

mation on disease resistance, insect pests, culture, harvest, storage, and germination temperature range.

This will be the last year Joe and I serve as president and vice-president and we would like to grow our club with active gardeners that will contribute to our organization. We have a number of members that did not attend many meetings last year and we are asking every one of you to reach out to them and encourage them to come. They may have a transportation problem that we can rectify or just need someone

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### Officers & Contacts

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**Treasurer: Alvis Webster**

**Vice President: Joe King**

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**Editor: Kurt Moore**



April 22 is the date for  
Mebane Dogwood  
Festival

to take an interest in them and urge them to attend. Joe tries to contact each member before our meetings, and that has been helpful, but we sure could use your help in getting members to the meetings.

This month we will be visited by Peace Haven Farm representatives, <http://www.peacehavenfarm.org/>. We normally make a financial contribution to the farm each year and it will be interesting to learn how the monies have been used to enhance their mission. We will also be surveying to find the best date to receive a guided tour of their facilities.

Lastly, I would like to thank Wayne Smith and Dirk Sprenger for their service as Secretary and Seedling Editor for 2016, your efforts contributed significantly to our club. Also, thank you Joe King, Alvis Webster, Melvin Martin, and Dudley Clinard for your continued efforts as club officers; you truly are the backbone of our organization.

*"There are two seasonal diversions that can ease the bite of any winter. One is the January thaw. The other is the seed catalogues."* - Hal Borland

*Happy gardening, Tony*



### Pruning and Spraying tips for February

From Blum's Almanac

Finish pruning grapevines and fruit trees. Do not prune early flowering trees and shrubs such as forsythia, and lilacs until after blooming. Prune late bloomers such as spirea, rose of Sharon, and vitex. Dormant spraying of trees, shrubs, and vines that need such treatments may be done if temperatures are forecast to be above 45.

What is Vitex? Vitex or chaste tree is a native of China, but it has a long history in the U.S. It was first cultivated in 1670, and since that time it has become naturalized throughout the Southern part of the country. Many southerners use it as a replacement for lilacs, which don't tolerate hot summers.

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/trees/chaste-tree/chaste-tree-cultivation.htm>

# PROGRAM

JAN	Buck Cochran, PeaceHaven Farm	Gardening Ideas For The Physically Challenged, Garden Design/Layout, Tools, Adaptive Equipment, Plants and more.
FEB	Rett Davis	Historical Horticulture
MAR	Gail Moore	Establishing a Butterfly Garden
APR	Dirk Sprenger	Cucumbers and Gourds
MAY	Steve Wright	Blessing of the 'best', drama of disease
JUN	*****	Annual picnic
JUL	Meet and Greet	Getting to Know our Donation Recipients
AUG	Gene Stafford, Col- fax	The Colfax Persimmon Festival
SEP	Sam Moore	Growing Apples in the Piedmont
OCT	Tony Abbruzzi	Africanized Honey Bees: Where Are They Now, and When Will They Arrive in North Carolina?
NOV	Prof. Michael Strick- land, Elon Univer- sity	Elon Community Garden
NOTES	No meeting in December  All club meetings at Occasions Restaurant	



## What We've Tried This Past Year (Kurt Moore)

[Editor's Note: *I would like to have members submit short stories about something they have tried in their gardens in the past or current year, whether it was something you grew, a new technique or tool tried, or anything you would like to share where we can all benefit from what you learned. Let us know if it was a success, failure, just okay and anything you learned from the experience. To get the ball rolling, I'll start with a couple of items from 2016.*]

Each year we try to grow something new in our vegetable garden, both to try to have some things on hand that we like and also to try some things that are hard to find. This past year we grew purple tomatillos and African Horned Melon (pictured below). We like tomatillos and can them as salsa verde, also using our own jalapenos, onions and cilantro, to use throughout the year. The purple ones are actually green and purple and are sweeter to the taste than the more citrus flavored green ones. However, like many purple fruits and vegetables, the purple begins to fade away when cooked. It still made a good salsa and makes for an interesting conversation piece. We'll do those again.

The African Horned Melon was interesting to grow. It is a late producer and needs constant watering. When it turns a golden orange/yellow color it is ripe. Most of what is consumable is the green pulp along with seeds (think pomegranate). It has a very slight cucumber taste and not very filling. Because of the seeds, not something I would recommend for anyone with diverticulitis. The interior flesh is also edible, but because our melons were small we did not have any usable flesh. We'll put this one in the "interesting, but won't do again" category. However, we did get one good laugh out of the experience. My wife took one with her in her carry-on baggage on a fall trip to visit family. The odd shape showed up on the TSA screener going through Greensboro airport security. So, they hauled her and her bag off to a corner for inspection, with the TSA people standing cautiously a few feet away. She had forgotten about it and when she realized it started laughing further confusing the TSA personnel. Fortunately, everything turned out well with everyone laughing and no one getting tased. Gail and the melon made it on time to Upstate NY.



The use of hops in beer dates back to the 700's and cultivation in central Europe was documented in 768 by the father of Charlemagne.

While on vacation in Germany, I became interested in hops seen in many fields, and learned that the British really needed them to increase the stability of their beer which they exported to the troops all around the world. They were tired of importing hops and began to grow their own in 1524.

There are several dozen cultivars (Wikipedia) and the top 3 producers today are Germany, United States and Ethiopia. They are toxic to dogs and about 3% of the men and women who harvest them develop dermatitis.

Hops increased in popularity during a period when the medieval church did not tax them, as they did other herbs which brewers used.

The botanical name for hops is *Humulus lupulus*. What a tongue twister!



What is your vision for **your** garden this year? What is your vision for your club?

The knowledge you have should be passed on to younger people. I saved an article from the November 9th News of Orange County. The new Greenhouse at New Hope Elementary School caught my attention. What are those kids doing with a greenhouse? The purpose of the program and the supporting grant is to teach where our food comes from and to encourage better nutrition. They have a 20-foot long hoop greenhouse. How can our club help young people to learn more about agriculture and horticulture? Is rooftop gardening an idea we need to reconsider?

I have started to plan some raised beds for cucumbers and for the saplings I received from Arbor Day. There are 2 Sargent Crabapples, 3 American Red Bud, 2 Washington Hawthorn and 3 White flowering Dogwood waiting in my yard to be replanted. **If you would like to have any of these, I will help you plant them, just text me at the number on page 1. Dirk Sprenger.**

**Bring a friend & see you soon!**

## Member's Birthdays

Dirk Sprenger                      January 4

Alvis Webster                      January 20

Note: more than 6 fellows have not divulged their date. So, we can sing to them on the 13th month.