

# YARD & GARDEN REPORT

September 21, 2015

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## Simple and beautiful

Let's start with a Tibetan fable: Once upon a time, there was a kind farmer named Nima. He raised golden pheasants, a common animal in the rural village. Nima went to the market one day and saw a rare blue peacock for sale. He became determined to have it. Nima sold his entire flock of pheasants to buy the peacock.

When he brought the bird home, it struggled and became weak. Looking for help, Nima trekked to the farm of a wise village leader, who also raised pheasants.

When Nima arrived at the farm, the leader's pheasants flew and scattered all over the yard. The enlightened old man smiled at the excitement and said: "Welcome! Did you see the birds? Did you see their golden wings glisten in the sunlight? Our lives are surely glorious!"

Nima was taken aback and realized his error. He foolishly pursued rare "beauty" when his common golden birds had been filling his life with beauty every day.

This Tibetan story reminds me of hydrangea. We are all fascinated by the blue flowers, rare as they are. But they struggle here. We have the wrong soil and climate for blue hydrangeas (*Hydrangea macrophylla*). We can fight Mother Nature by pouring sulfur in our soil and hoping for mild winters, but there is simpler approach: We can appreciate the beauty of healthy, hardy, white-flowering "common" hydrangeas.

'Annabelle' hydrangea (*H. arborescens*) produces an abun-



Photos courtesy of Bailey Nurseries, Inc.

*Figs. 1–3. 'Annabelle' hydrangea is easy to grow and blooms prolifically. Blue hydrangeas such as BloomStruck™ are alluring but require meticulous care.*

dance of snowballs in June and July. It tolerates our soil and is one of the best shrubs for partial shade.

'Annabelle' is easy to maintain. Apply shredded bark around the plant to keep it cool. Prune it back to 12 inches in spring when its buds break. Give it a light fertilization. The plant will grow quickly and bloom all summer. It's simple and beautiful.

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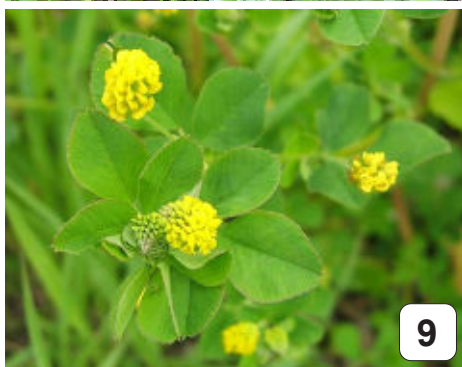


# Do you know your lawn weeds?

Now is the best time to kill *perennial* weeds in your yard. These weeds are channeling their nutrients down into their roots in preparation for winter. Spray now and the weeds will carry the herbicide throughout its root system. Goodbye weed!

*Annual* weeds do not need to be sprayed. They will die from a hard frost. Keep them mowed so they do not go to seed.

Can you name these weeds? The answers and information on controlling them are on page 5.



- \_\_\_\_\_ Absinth wormwood
- \_\_\_\_\_ Black medic
- \_\_\_\_\_ Canada thistle
- \_\_\_\_\_ Crabgrass
- \_\_\_\_\_ Field bindweed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Foxtail
- \_\_\_\_\_ Foxtail barley
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ground ivy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Quackgrass
- \_\_\_\_\_ Violet





## MISSION POSSIBLE: GROWING APRICOTS

Apricot crops are often lost due to frozen blossoms. The key is to delay blooming. Plant on the north or east side of a building. Mulch with shredded bark to keep the soil cool.

Plant two varieties for pollination and fruit set. 'Scout and 'Westcot' from Canada or 'Sungold' and 'Moongold' from Minnesota are good partners. Space 12–18 feet apart.

Place tree guards around trunks. Rake and remove any fallen fruits. A couple sprays of insecticide (after petals fall and then 2 weeks later) reduce worm problems. Enjoy!

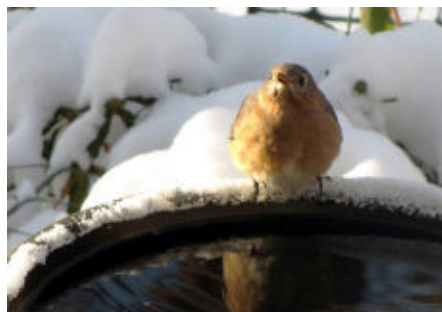


## A STUNNING JOLT

Jolt™ dianthus is absolutely electric. This new series was a stunner at the NDSU Summer Field Day in Fargo and it received top honors in trials at the U of MN North Central Research

and Outreach Center in Grand Rapids. Jolt™ shows superior heat tolerance among dianthus. The blooms are vibrant, uniform and last for weeks longer than comparable types. Plants grow 16–20 inches tall.

The flower-filled spikes are great for containers and well suited for flower bouquets. You can get jolted in cherry or pink. Look for this annual flower at your garden center next spring.



## WATER FOR BIRDS

All creatures need water to survive, and water may be scarce in winter. Choose a bath with a rough surface, gentle slope, and no more than 2–3 inches deep. Metal or plastic resist cracking in winter. Arrange branches

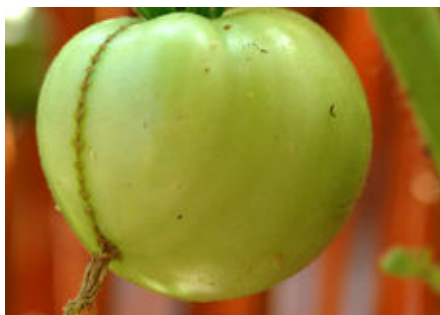
or stones that emerge from the water to let birds drink without getting wet (this is important in winter).

Keep the bath full. Clean every few days; remove algae. Set your bath above ground and near trees/shrubs to provide sanctuary from predators.

Movement of surface water will attract birds. Products are available that drip or spray water; or poke a tiny hole in a plastic bottle and let the water drip down. Thermostatically controlled heaters are available to keep water from freezing.

# Timely topics in North Dakota yards and gardens:

## VEGETABLES



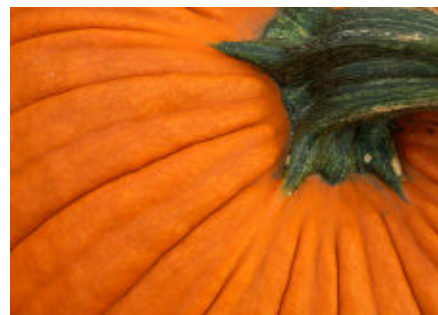
### F23. Tomato zippering

Thin, longitudinal scars are caused when anthers of blossoms get stuck on the fruit, scratching it as the fruit grows. These tomatoes are edible.



### F24. Slow to ripen tomatoes

Be patient. Optimal ripening temps are 68–77°F. The more temps stray from this range, the slower ripening occurs. Clipping vines won't help. Tomatoes with a blush may ripen indoors.



### F25. Harvesting pumpkins

Light frosts will not harm the fruit, but harvest before a killing frost (28°F). Leave a few inches of stem attached. Do not bruise. Cure in a warm (80°F) spot for 10 days for long-term storage.

## FRUITS



### F26. Frosty apples

Apples on trees can tolerate temps approaching 25°F before freezing damage occurs. If they freeze, wait to thaw before picking. Use promptly.



### F27. Apple maggot

Fruits develop dimples where flies laid eggs. Maggots hatch and create trails into fruits. Pick up fallen fruit. Hang traps in July to monitor for flies. Insecticides can protect fruit in future.



### F28, 29. Codling moth

Slice the fruit to reveal the tunnel and worm. Remove fallen fruits. Use traps in spring for monitoring. Spray insecticide after petal fall and 7–10 days later. Spray again if needed.

## FLOWERS



### F30. Deadheading roses

Stop deadheading roses. The maturation of seed pods (rose hips) will help plants harden for winter. The pods add color to winter landscapes.



### F31. Sowing wildflowers in fall

Kill existing perennial weeds with glyphosate. Cultivate two weeks later and sow seed. Seeds will begin to germinate next spring. Prairie Nursery ([www.prairienursery.com](http://www.prairienursery.com)) has a good guide on establishing prairies.



### F32. Planting chrysanthemums

Plant ASAP to get established before winter. Purchase at garden centers. Florist mums usually bloom too late and may not be hardy. Plant in a sunny, well-drained spot sheltered from winter winds. Mulch when ground freezes.



# Timely topics in North Dakota yards and gardens:

## TREES AND SHRUBS



### F33. Fall needle drop

Don't worry; old needles (located near the trunk) are supposed to turn brown. As long as the young needles (located near the tips of branches) are healthy, the tree is full of life.



### F34. Sooty mold on pine

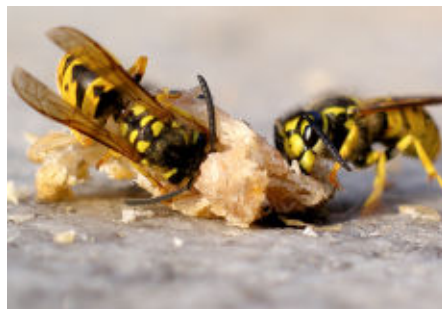
Black fungus grows on the excrement of aphids and scale. The sugary substance attracts wasps. It can suffocate needles but is mostly an aesthetic problem. Look for white scale; treat if needed next year.



### F35. Tree planting

Fall is a great time to plant trees but this must be done ASAP to allow roots sufficient time to get established before winter. Plant evergreens by the end of this month. Consider delaying the planting of large trees until spring.

## MISCELLANEOUS PESTS



### F36. Aggressive wasps

Populations soar until a hard frost kills them. If a nest is in a hazardous place, identify and destroy it. Apply a knock-down spray in hole of nest. Spray at night; a cool night in the 50s is best.



### F37. Boxelder bugs

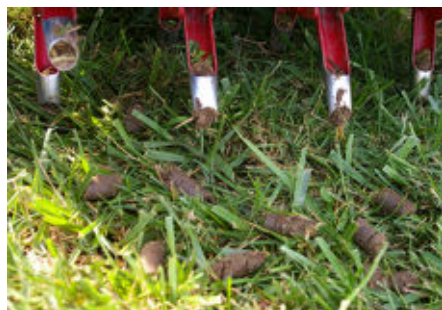
Bugs will congregate on sunny walls to stay warm. Seal crevices along doors and windows. Spray with detergent (3 tbsp) per gallon water. Continue spraying as bugs appear.



### F38. Sun spiders/windscorpions

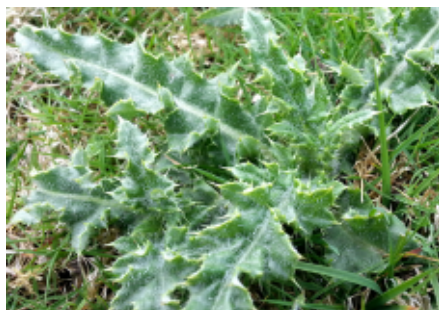
Large (0.6–1.8 inch), short-haired, solitary spiders with prominent jaws. More common in dry, sandy sites. Keep doors and windows sealed to prevent home invasions. Nonpoisonous.

## LAWNS



### F39. Core aeration

Now is the best time to aerate a lawn. Use a self-propelled unit with vertically operating, hollow tines. Two to four passes are best. Aeration is especially beneficial in compacted or thatchy soils.



### F40. Thistle, perennial weeds

Spray in mid to late September when weeds move nutrients (and herbicide) down to their roots to prepare for winter. Products with dicamba or triclopyr are recommended.

**Weed Matching Game Answers**  
 Annual (A); Perennial grass (PG) and broadleaf (PB); 1. Foxtail barley (PG); 2. Field bindweed (PB); 3. Violet (PB); 4. Canada thistle (PB); 5. Foxtail (A); 6. Absinthe wormwood (PB); 7. Ground ivy (PB); 8. Quackgrass (PG); 9. Black medic (PB); 10. Crabgrass (A).  
 Annuals will die from frost. Keep them moved to prevent them from setting and spreading their seeds.  
 Perennial grasses can be controlled with a spot-spray of glyphosate (Roundup); avoid spraying desirable plants. Perennial broadleaves can be controlled with broadleaf weed killers now. Formulations with dicamba or triclopyr are effective in most cases.

# Weather Almanac for September 1–15, 2015

Site	TEMPERATURE				RAINFALL				GROWING DEGREE DAYS <sup>1,2</sup>			
	September 1–15				Sep. 1–15		2015		Sep. 1–15		2015	
	Avg	Norm	Max	Min	Total	Norm	Total	Norm	Total	Norm	Total	Norm
Bottineau	61	60	94	29	0.53	0.75	9.37	14.48	197	163	1921	1951
Bowman	65	61	98	40	0.28	0.60	12.30	12.49	223	178	1965	2023
Carrington	64	61	97	32	0.76	1.05	13.94	16.24	214	171	2025	2100
Crosby	61	58	97	39	4.16	0.62	12.57	12.40	176	158	1946	1812
Dickinson	66	60	99	39	0.53	0.74	10.17	13.71	223	179	2097	2001
Fargo	68	62	91	41	0.36	1.44	16.29	17.47	248	179	2307	2252
Grafton	64	60	92	40	1.66	1.31	25.18	16.70	210	166	2068	1961
Grand Forks	65	60	94	38	0.31	1.10	12.58	16.33	228	164	2151	2011
Hazen	64	62	98	32	1.14	0.72	11.00	13.78	224	193	2039	2197
Hillsboro	66	61	91	39	0.31	1.14	12.91	16.86	232	168	2124	2127
Jamestown	66	61	97	37	0.36	1.28	16.35	15.78	231	165	2186	2086
Langdon	63	58	91	37	1.74	0.92	13.34	15.80	195	141	1871	1680
Mandan	67	61	102	36	0.16	0.80	13.31	14.74	237	171	2175	2094
Minot	64	60	94	36	0.76	0.75	13.37	14.76	199	154	2052	1915
Mott	66	61	98	34	0.09	0.65	12.47	13.51	231	189	2057	2090
Rugby	64	59	102	35	1.68	0.91	11.30	16.03	204	163	2000	1944
Wahpeton	67	64	92	37	0.32	1.58	13.12	17.41	254	191	2228	2350
Watford City	65	60	99	40	1.95	0.52	10.89	12.11	211	173	2152	2014
Williston	65	63	100	44	2.24	0.61	10.40	11.82	207	194	2196	2271
Wishek	66	60	96	38	1.44	1.06	14.48	17.04	229	163	2074	1910

## DAYLENGTH (Sept. 16, McClusky, center of ND)<sup>3</sup> LONG-TERM OUTLOOKS<sup>4</sup>

Sunrise: 7:20AM | Daylength: 12h 35m | Sep. 26–30: Temp: Above Normal; Precip.: Above Normal  
 Sunset: 7:54PM | Change since Sep. 1: –50m | Sep. 28–Oct. 4: Temp: Above Normal; Precip.: Above Normal

<sup>1</sup> GDDs for garden vegetables are not available. GDD data in this table are for corn, which responds to temperature as most vegetables grown in gardens. Data begin May 1 with base minimum and maximum temperatures of 50 and 86°F., respectively.

<sup>2,3,4</sup> Sources: North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network, www.sunrisesunset.com, and National Weather Service, respectively.

## Credits

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and Everything, http://life-birding-etc.blogspot.com/2009\_02\_01\_archive.html; 23. postbear eater of words, .../postbear/6039655219/; 24. Tom Kalb, NDSU; 25. Cindy Funk, .../84858864@N00/1478356424/; 26. Fredrik, Alpstedt, .../alpstedt/11025803586/; 27. H.J. Larsen, Bugwood.org; 28. Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado St. Univ., Bugwood.org; 29. Ward Upham, Kansas State University, Bugwood.org; 30. Marilylle Soveran, .../86953562@N00/8062761905/; 31. Bill Dickinson, .../skynoir/19415676458/; 32. Costel Slinco, .../cost3l/15674892727/; 33, 34. Tom Kalb, NDSU; 35. samuel bietenholz, .../sunnyshine80/1361433444/; 36. Alan Wolf, .../alumroot/40877243/; 37. Martin LaBar, .../martinlabar/4325120192/; 38. michel candel, .../84942480@N03/16070177234/; 39. Paul Tukey, http://www.safelawns.org/blog/2010/10/now-is-the-time-to-aerate-if-you-must/; 40. Thistle-Garden, .../63026284@N05/8687240201/.

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