

Ellen Ashley's Hands-On Gardening Classes

2021 Gardening Course Schedule



The Details:

- Each class will last approximately 3 hours.
- Research-based course materials will be emailed prior to each course.
- Registration will be kept to approximately 15 students per class.
- Classes will be held at my home and garden at [8140 Witty Road in Summerfield on Saturday mornings, 9am-noon.](#)
- Part of every class will be held outdoors- experience the garden as it changes each month.

Course #1 – Understanding Soil: The Fundamentals of Organic Gardening, Soil Preparation, Vegetable Gardening, Weed control. Saturday, [May 8, 9am–noon.](#)

Soil Science and Why Organics Matter: (90 min) Organic gardening is a process, not a product, and it all starts with the soil. You will learn the importance of soil, why pH matters, how to take a soil test, how to create new planting beds and rejuvenate existing ones, organic soil amendments, nutrient balance, and the role of microorganisms.

You will receive **Soil Test Kits** from the NCSU Extension Service and instruction in how to use them.

There will be an outside “show and tell” (30 min) of the most cost-effective **organic soil amendments**, where to buy them and how to use them. You will also learn strategies for **weed control**.

Organic Vegetable Gardening: What to grow and When to plant. (60 min) There are beautiful ways to grow fruits, vegetables and herbs in your home landscape, including in container gardens! You will learn about:

- Spring veggies, herbs and flowers including asparagus (a beautiful, edible perennial), potatoes, onions, lettuce, arugula, beets, peas, spinach, parsley, cilantro, dill and edible flowers.
- Edibles that make a beautiful addition to your flower border.
- How to grow your own vegetable and flowers from seed.
- Planting schedules for spring, summer, fall.
- When and how to sow seeds vs planting seedlings.
- Where to buy seed, transplants, plant supports and fertilizers.
- How to read a seed catalog and a seed packet.
- Various types of organic fertilizers and the real meaning of those N-P-K numbers on the bag.
- Essential tools that make gardening easier.

Course #2 – Spring Pruning, Controlling Furry Pests, a Proper Planting demo, Fruits in the Urban Garden. [Saturday, May 22, 9am-noon.](#)

Pruning guidelines & demonstration: (1 hour) Bad pruning is the #1 mistake of homeowners and landscapers alike. Good pruning can transform your landscape into a thing of beauty. Improper pruning, including pruning at the wrong time, can destroy bloom buds, disfigure plants, invite disease, and do

permanent damage to an otherwise healthy plant. Whether you do it yourself or hire it out, it is important to know what to do!

Deterring furry pests in the garden: (40 min) Deer, rabbits, moles & voles – if you plant it they will come. Get the “varmints” under control. I will have organic Deer & Rabbit repellent available for sale.

Easy-to-grow Fruits for your urban garden. (40 min) How cool would it be to walk outside to snack on delicious ripe berries, kiwis, and figs right outside your back door? You may change your mind about adding some to your landscape when you learn about the easy, low maintenance fruits that are beautiful in your home landscape. I will show you the proven winners.

Demonstration of proper planting: (40 min) The costly demise of most garden plantings are a direct result of improper planting. We will address an array of misconceptions about techniques for planting, shrubs and trees. I will demonstrate how to deal with the problem that most intimidates would-be gardeners in the Triad - hard packed red clay!

Course #3 – Garden Design Strategies, Ornamental Trees and Shrubs for Sun and Shade. [Saturday, June 12, 9am-noon.](#)

Garden Design Principles - (60 min, indoors) Evaluating specific components of the scene will uncover ideas that you can use in your own landscape design. This class will help you to look at your home landscape with a critical eye. We will cover:

- Guidelines for judging size, scale & positioning of plantings
- Hardscaping to create outdoor living spaces and solve difficult problems
- Concepts of line, form, repetition, color and texture

This class will include an Interactive outdoor walk to show how different **trees & shrubs** can be used to create a low-maintenance landscape with beauty and color. You will see how plants look at maturity (vs. in a nursery pot) so you understand their size and features of cultivars you may want in your own garden.

Sun or Shade? Choosing the right plant depends on its requirements for light, water, soil pH. Shade lovers will wilt and burn in the sun and require lots more water. Sun lovers get leggy and lose their color in shade, fail to bloom and attract bugs and disease.

You will learn:

- How to read a nursery plant tag.
- Plants that deer don't like.
- Shrubs for sun and shade.
- Shrubs that flower in different seasons
- Choosing plants for year-round interest (bark, structure, leaf color, texture...)
- Plants as “structure” in the landscape
- Plants for screening and ‘ever-greening” your property

NOTE: Students should bring Soil Test results to discuss in this class. We will review how to create your best soil for growing a healthy disease resistant garden.

Course #4 – Reliable Perennials and Annuals for Sun/Shade, Cut Flowers, Weed & Disease Control. [Saturday, June 26, 9am-noon.](#)

Reliable perennials for Sun – (2 hours) Spend your money wisely on deer proof, heat/cold tolerant, disease resistant, long blooming, and long-lived perennials. Tour the garden with me to see which are magnets for butterflies and hummingbirds and learn which blooms make the longest lasting cut flowers for fresh arrangements.

While Black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia goldsturm*) are a bullet-proof perennial, a cut stem lasts only a day in a vase! A hydrangea bloom will wilt if not cut at the proper state of growth and conditioned well before arranging. You will learn what to grow, how to grow it, and how to treat the cut flower after it comes out of the garden to extend its vase life. You will see a wide variety of flowering shrubs, perennials and annuals that you can use to decorate your home as well as your garden.

Pest control & garden maintenance - (1 hour) Topics: Disease control, bug identification, what to do about the bad guys & how to attract more good ones, pruning and deadheading of spring bloomers and “preemptive pruning” of perennials to control size and help them hold up their heavy summer blooms.

Course #5 – Seed Saving, Composting, Organic Lawn Care **Saturday, August 14, 9am-noon.**

Seed Saving (1 hour) It is time to collect seeds from spring bloomers to sow now or save for next year. Your garden produces more seed than you will find in 100 ordinary seed packets. I will show you how to collect seeds, dry them, & store them (spring and fall) for more blooms next year. You will have seeds to take home too!

Bulbs, Corms & Tubers – (30 min) What to plant this fall for a fabulous spring!

Composting- (30 min) Leaves are your friend. Learn how to use them to start your best compost this fall.

Organic Lawn Care Presentation by guest speaker, Tommy Cowett of GrowinGreen (1 hour) will discuss the mind-blowing science of soil organics and why it matters for a beautiful lawn. Spouses & significant others welcome provided that you reserve your space ahead. This is NOT a sales presentation -Tommy is an exciting speaker. Bring your questions!

Please register by March 1, 2021

1. **Call or Text** me at 336-541-5699 or **email** me at ellen@learntogarden.net with your name, email address & phone to hold your place.
2. **The program is \$200 for 5 classes. (YES, you need ALL of them!)**
Mail or ‘Venmo’ \$200 made payable to “Ellen Ashley”, 8140 Witty Road, Summerfield, NC 27358
Your registration is confirmed when payment is received.
3. **Mark your calendar** with class dates & times.

Don't hesitate to call me with any questions -336-541-5699

I will let you know immediately if the class is full, and I will repeat classes if there is demand.

Gardening is a great thing to share with friends and family - please invite them. I look forward to seeing you in the garden!

Ellen Ashley

Landscape Designer and Gardening Enthusiast
Garden Happy!

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