



Christmas Tree & Nursery Update

Mitchell County Center

January 2017

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Upcoming Events

Avery/Mitchell Christmas Tree Production Workshop

Date: January 27, 2017

Place: Sam's Center Auditorium, Mayland Community College,
Spruce Pine, NC

Time: 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

This year's workshop will include updates on Post Harvest Studies in 2016, 2016 Insect Pest Trials, What's New With the Worker Protection Standards and Ornamental Production Update. 3 hours of pesticide recertification credit will be available. To receive lunch you must call and register by 1/25/17. Register by calling 828-688-4811.

Foothills Greenhouse Production Workshop

Date: January 31, 2017

Place: Banner Greenhouses in Nebo, North Carolina.

Join us for a great day of education featuring researchers from NC State University and industry representatives. Three hours of NC pesticide credits (categories L, N, D, and X) will be provided. For more information or to register, go to go.ncsu.edu/17gh

Avery/Mitchell Landscape Educational Workshop

Date: February 8, 2017

Place: Best Western Mountain Lodge,
Banner Elk, NC

Time: 8:30 am – 4:00 pm

The workshop will consist of two parts: the morning session will deal with insect and disease management in landscapes and pesticide safety and use. Beginning at 1:30 pm the workshop will change gears and offer business education on how to submit bids for landscape projects. Cost for the morning session is \$20 and \$50 for the afternoon session. Four (4) hours of pesticide recertification credit will be available and seven (7) hours of certified landscape contractor recertification credits will be available. You can call and register at the Mitchell County Extension Center 828-688-4811 or the Avery County Extension Center 828-733-8270.

Farm Safety Workshop

For farmers, workers in outdoor jobs, and others on how to respond to accidents and emergency events in the workplace.

Topics include:

- * Scene safety
- * Response to traumatic injuries
- * Response to medical emergencies
- * Other topics

Training conducted by an instructor from the North Carolina Agromedicine Institute. Attendees will receive a free fire extinguisher and a free First Aid Kit.

The meeting will be held at the Mitchell County Senior Center on Tuesday, February 21, at 6:00 pm. The class is limited to the first 45 people that call and register with the Mitchell County Farm Bureau at 828-688-3745.

New Markets for Mountain Farms

Gain expert information and market analysis on the latest specialty crops that have a promise of being profitable. Sponsored by the Mitchell County Cooperative Extension and the Mayland Small Business Center, this four class series will equip growers with information about market potential and best practices to successfully produce each crop. Conducted on Thursdays in February, this series is scheduled just in time to plan for 2017 crop selection. Those who attend all four classes will receive a certificate of completion from the Mayland Community College Small Business Center. Call 828-766-1258 to pre-register or click the hypertext below to register

online: <https://www.ncsbc.net/Events.aspx?mode=4&area=26370+Mountain+Ridge+Rd%2C+Albemarle%2C+NC+28001&miles=25&zip=00000¢er=75310&topicnum=10&days=60&sort=L&layout=0>

Emerging Markets: Agroforestry

Are you looking for ways to make your woodland pay other than cutting timber? This workshop will examine the opportunities and profit potential of growing alternate crops such as ginseng and others in your woodlands. Find out which sites work best for what crops.

Instructor - Dr. Jim Hamilton, Watauga County Extension Director.

2/9, TH, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Mayland Spruce Pine Campus
Phillips Building: Room 204

Market Analysis: Small Fruit Production

Small fruits, strawberries, blackberries, raspberries and blueberries, are easy to grow in this area, but how do you grow these fruit and make money doing it. Learn variety selection, pest control, post-harvest handling and marketing of these fruits.

Instructor - Jeff Vance, Mitchell County Extension Director

2/16, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Mayland Spruce Pine Campus
Phillips Building: Room 204

Market Timing: Season Extension/High Tunnel Production

As the demand for local produce continues to grow buyers are looking to purchase product earlier and later in the growing season. To take advantage of this market opportunity, join us for strategies on

season extension techniques and the benefits of high tunnel production.

Instructor - Richard Boylan, Area Specialized Agent Agriculture

2/23, TH, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Mayland Spruce Pine Campus
Phillips Building: Room 204

Niche Markets: Specialty Crops

Come learn about a variety of crops that you can grow to earn extra income. Many of these specialty crops are high value crops and do not have to be produced on large acreages in order to make a profit from them. Learn site selection, crop selection and marketing options for a variety of vegetables, herbs, flowers and ornamentals.

Instructor - Jeff Vance, Mitchell County Extension Director

3/2, TH, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Mayland Spruce Pine Campus
Phillips Building: Room 204

Energy Grants

The WNC Energy Cost-share Assistance Program (EnergyCAP) is now accepting grant applications from WNC farmers looking to fund energy projects for their operations through its Small Farm Energy Grants Program, a new program funded exclusively by the NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission. The program offers 25% cost-share grants for energy technologies that reduce farmer operating costs, lower environmental impacts, and increase the farm's bottom line, such as LED lighting, greenhouse insulation and heating upgrades, and renewable energy generation from

(Energy Grants Continued)

solar panels and other sources. The grant can be combined with USDA's REAP grant (also a 25% cost-share) for possible combined 50% cost-share.

"We get a lot of interest in grant funding for these projects from WNC farmers, but a lot of the time they need the process to offer more funding at the other end, or to be easier," said Alex Arnold, the project coordinator for EnergyCAP. "We're hoping this grant can be that funding bridge for farmers trying to cut down on their energy costs and energy usage."

EnergyCap is a nonprofit program that provides free on-site or over-the-phone consultations on farm energy needs, as well as application assistance for farm energy grants. Since 2009, the program has facilitated over \$480,000 in cost-share funding for the installation of over 70 energy projects for WNC farms, including 37 photovoltaic systems, 7 wind turbines, 7 solar hot water heating systems, a micro-hydro system, a biomass project, 3 passive solar greenhouses, and 2 geothermal greenhouse heating systems.

"We have tried to make this application much more straightforward and easy to complete than what you might experience with the federal grant programs. But we can help farmers with the federal grant applications, too," said Arnold.

To be eligible for the program, applicants must be persons engaged in agricultural production; current or former tobacco farmers will be given priority.

Applicants should contact the EnergyCAP Project Coordinator immediately to set up a time to discuss their projects (info@energycap.org, 828-

649-5115). Resources for finding local energy professionals and self-assessing your energy needs can be found at www.energycap.org. Applications and further program details can be found at www.energycap.org/smallfarmenergy.

2017 Tax Tips



Today's Tax Tip

Changes are occurring to due dates for 1099 forms this year. The recipient due date and the IRS due date is now January 31,

2017. If you miss the deadline the penalty for each form 1099 not timely filed is \$250.

Who do you need to send a 1099 to anyway?

Vendors you pay over \$600 during the calendar year for the following:

- ◆ Services for custom harvesting, spraying or other field work
- ◆ Services for professional fees
- ◆ Veterinary services
- ◆ All rents paid for cash rents, machinery rentals, etc.
- ◆ Interest paid out to non-financial institutions

Pesticide Exam

On Wednesday and Thursday, May 10 & 11, 2017 the Avery and Mitchell County Centers of North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service will

be offering a private and commercial applicator pesticide licensing school. This school is for farmers needing to purchase restricted use pesticides to apply on their own or rented land. The school will also be for those individuals desiring to get a license to apply pesticides commercially to landscapes, agriculture plants and animals, right-of-ways and golf courses. Other licensing areas include regulatory, demonstration and research, forestry, aquatic and dealer. The two (2) day school will run from 9:00 a.m. til 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday and from 9:00 a.m. til 12:00 noon on Thursday. At 1:00 p.m. on Thursday a NCDA&CS Pesticide Inspector will be on hand to administer the test. The pesticide school and test will be held at the Avery Campus of Mayland Community College in Newland.

For questions about the licensing class or to register, contact Jeff Vance at the Mitchell County Extension Center 828-688-4811.

Voluntary Agriculture Districts

Voluntary agricultural districts (VAD) recognize the importance of agriculture to the economic and social well-being of North Carolina by encouraging the voluntary preservation and protection of farmland from non-farm development.

Districts are made up of the contiguous acres of qualifying farmland or the number of qualifying farms deemed appropriate by the county agricultural advisory board.

Presently the Mitchell County Voluntary Agricultural District program has twenty-nine (29) landowners enrolled representing over 4,000 acres of farmland in the program.

What Qualifies a farm to Be in an Agriculture District?

—Farmland, forestland, and horticultural lands must meet the following criteria

- The land must be part of the present-use-value taxation program or be determined to be eligible for present-use-value; and
- The land must be managed in accordance with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service guidelines with respect to highly erodible land.

What are the requirements for the Program?

- The land must be subject to a conservation agreement between the landowner and the county or local municipality that prohibits non-farm use or development for a period of at least 10 years, except for the creation of not more than three lots that meet applicable county zoning and subdivision regulations.
- This agreement may be revoked by the landowner at any time, usually with only a short period of advanced notice, such as a 30-day notice. Ending the agreement will result in the property no longer qualifying for the VAD program and its benefits.

What are the Benefits of Participating in the Program?

- Increased protection from nuisance lawsuits if notice is provided through computerized

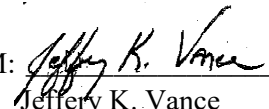
county land records system or the county register of deeds office.

- Public hearing for proposed condemnation of enrolled land.
- Water and sewer assessments may be suspended or waived if the land is in VAD but not connected to the utility in question.
- Possible signage to publicize the land's enrollment in the program.
- Greater public awareness of the local community and increased pride in its way of life.
- An agriculture advisory board will be formed to approve applications and to also be a voice for agriculture in county government.
- District members may be eligible for farmland preservation funds as local, state, or federal funds become available.

What Next?

For more information or to enroll in the Mitchell County Voluntary Agriculture District Program you can contact Jeff Vance at the Mitchell County Extension Center 828-688-4811 or Mark Byrd at the Mitchell Soil and Water District Office 828-592-6099.

FROM:



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Or Current Resident