Climate

USDA Hardiness Zones 6 B
Minimum Temp in Zone 6
-5 to 0 deg F
Rainfall – annual average
70”–100”
Snowfall – annual average
10”
Last Frost (approximately)
May 10th
First Frost (approximately)
October 20th
Elevation Range
Connestee Falls 2400’-3280’
Brevard & Rosman 2200’
Lake Toxaway 3010’
Blue Ridge Pkwy 4600’-5700’
Humidity
High
Predominant Winter Wind from NW
Predominant Summer Wind from SW
Chilling Hours 1400+/ yr

Gardening in Transylvania County is greatly affected by microclimates. A microclimate is the local modification of the general climate that is imposed by the special configuration of a small area. Topography, the ground surface, plant cover, and man-made forms influence it. It may be warmer or colder, wetter or drier, or more or less prone to frosts. Buildings, fences, hedges, the location on, and direction of slopes and bodies of water can have a definite effect on what plants will do well in an area.

Soils

Transylvania County soils tend to be poor, and if unaltered, do not provide the conditions that allow plants to flourish. Except for the silt in the flood plains, much of the county has rocky and/or clay soil. Applying mulch, incorporating organic matter, phosphate and lime, fertilizing and proper watering are key for establishing and successfully growing plants.

Determining what amendments the soil needs to allow plants to thrive is best accomplished by submitting soil samples to the County Cooperative Extension Service. Soil sample boxes and directions are available at the Extension Office. It is suggested that you submit soil samples in the fall or early winter. This way you will receive your results quickly and have ample time to incorporate the recommended amendments prior to planting season.

Problems associated with rocky soils are:
- Poor nutrient and water retention

Problems associated with clay soils and compacted soils from construction are:
- Drainage and Oxygen are inadequate at the root zone
- Roots cannot penetrate surrounding soil
- Surface water runs off
- Lack of Phosphate

Planting Trees and Shrubs

To aid in drainage when planting in heavy clay soil, prepare the planting hole at least two to three times as wide as the plant root ball. The depth of the planting hole should keep the top of the root ball above the level of the ground by several inches, up to one-third the height of the root ball. Use the amended soil dug from the hole to form a slight hill around the raised root ball.

Adding a half cup of phosphorous (0-46-0) to the planting hole is highly recommended as phosphate tends to be low in our soil.

Incorporating organic matter into the soil serves to improve tillage and add needed nutrients and microorganisms.

Organic amendments:
- Compost
- Composted pine bark fines
- Natural fertilizers and manures, both green and animal

Inorganic amendments:
- Chemical fertilizers add nutrients and minerals
- Lime raises pH and assists in nutrient absorption

Using peat or sand to increase the drainage of clay soil is not recommended as they actually allow the soil to retain more water.

Other options for gardens with poor soils:
- Bring in topsoil
- Create raised beds
- Garden in containers with soil less potting mix

Rules of thumb for improving soil:
- Work 3”– 6” of organic matter and the recommended amount of inorganic amendments into the top 8” – 10” of soil.
- Apply 10 pounds of 10-10-10 fertilizer per 1000 square feet.
- Spread 40 pounds of lime per 1000 square
- Ideal pH for most plants in this area is 5.2 – 6.5

Common Lawn Diseases
- Fairy Rings
- Dollar Spot
- Leaf Spot
- Powdery Mildew
- Red Thread
- Rust
- Slime Mold
- Southern Blight
- Stripe Smut

Lawn Care

Cool weather grasses, planted mid August to early September, are recommended for Transylvania County.

Suggested varieties are:
- Fine Fescues
- Perennial Ryegrass
- Kentucky Blue Grass

For a new lawn, if a soil test has not been done, till into the top 6-8 inches of soil (per 1,000 square feet):
- 1– 2 cubic yards of organic matter
- 75 pounds of lime
- 40 pounds of 5-10-10 fertilizer

For optimum health of your lawn:
- Maintain a pH of 6.5–7.0, lime annually if needed
- Provide one inch of water per week if rainfall is inadequate
- Mow to a height of 3 inches, but do not remove over half the height of the grass blade
- Leave clippings on the lawn
- Maintain a sharp mower blade
- Fertilize in February, September and November with 1/3 the annual recommended amount of 5-10-10
- Apply pre emergent & broadleaf weed killers in February & in August for Annual Bluegrass
Plant Recommendations

Use Native Plants as they:
- Provide food and cover for wildlife
- Resist Pests and diseases
- Usually aren’t invasive
- Improve water quality near streams
- Lower maintenance
- Provide variety in shapes, heights, textures and colors
- Offer an historical and cultural link to the past

An excellent way to determine what plants will do well in this area is to visit the local nurseries to see what is available.

The following plants, while not all native, have performed well in our county and are suggested for your consideration

**Shrubs**
- Rhododendron
- Azalea
- Hydrangeas
- Beautyberry
- Kerria
- Pieris
- Burning Bush
- Nandina
- Hollies
- Viburnums
- Virginia Sweetspire
- Summersweet
- Fothergilla
- Sweet Shrub
- Mountain Laurel

**Trees**
- American Holly
- Carolina Silverbell
- Eastern Redbud
- Fringe Tree
- Green Hawthorne “Winter King”
- Kousa Dogwood
- Oaks, white and red
- Red Maple
- Serviceberry
- Sourwood
- Yellow Wood

**Perennials**
- Hellebores
- Daffodils
- Iris
- Peony
- Hostas
- Ferns
- Phlox Subulata
- Purple Coneflower
- Black Eyed Susan

**Fruit and Nut Trees**
- Apples
- Asian Pears
- Pears
- Hazelnuts
- Chinese Chestnut

**Small Fruits**
- Blueberry (do not lime!)
- Blackberry
- Raspberry
- Grapes
- Strawberries

Common Pests to Watch For

**Diseases**
Our cool, moist evenings are responsible for various types of leaf spot, most of which are not fatal.

**Mammals**
- Moles and Voles
- Deer

**Insects & Mites**
- Aphids
- Azalea Lace Bugs
- Azalea/Rhododendron Borer
- Bagworms
- Hemlock Woolly Adelgid
- Spider Mites
- Spruce Spider Mite
- Southern Red Mite
- Boxwood Leaf Miner
- Armored Scale
- Japanese Beetle
- Fall Web Worm
- Azalea Leaf Gall
- White Fly
- Black Vine Weevil

**Invasive Plants**
Non-native plants are invading our landscapes. These non-natives are displacing native plants and should be removed whenever possible. There are many invasive species in our area and some of the most common ones are:
- Tree-of-heaven, *Ailanthus altissima*
- Japanese honeysuckle
- Chinese, Common & Japanese privet
- Multiflora rose
- Kudzu
- Oriental bittersweet
- Japanese and Chinese wisteria
- Miscanthus
- English Ivy

Additional information on these and many other gardening topics is available from the Master Gardener Clinics and on the Cooperative Extension Website shown on the front cover of this brochure.