

Bucolic briefs

The 26th Annual Spring Conference will be held March 8-11 at Mars Hill University. The conference will offer more than 150 practical, affordable, regionally-appropriate workshops on organic growing, homesteading, farming and permaculture. Cost is \$99. Go to organicgrowersschool.org.

The Spring Equestrian Exchange Tack Consignment Sale is March 21-24 at the Holshouser Building at the State Fairgrounds in Raleigh. Participants can buy and consign anything related to equestrian sports, including saddles, tack, driving equipment, show clothing for all disciplines of riding, barn supplies, carts, other animal items and more. Horse trailers sold for representation fee only. Bar code tagging on our website allows consignor to view sales from home. Consignors drop off tagged items March 19 from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. and March 20 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sale dates are March 21-24. A special premier shopping night will be held March 21 from 5 to 10 p.m. Cost for the premier night is \$10 cash and free for ages 12 and under. Free shopping is held March 22 and 23 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., and March 24 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Some items are discounted half off on March 24. Consignors pick up unsold items March 26 from 3 to 8 p.m. or March 27 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Consignors earn 70 percent of sale price. Unsold items may be donated to non-profit equestrian organizations. Volunteers of all ages needed and can shop before consignors. Consignors shop before public. Forms of payment accepted are cash and credit cards with fee/per card transaction. For more details, go to www.EquestrianExchange.com or contact Lynn Beeson at 336-362-6248 or Tanya Wright at 540-977-1950.

The Jewel of the Blue Ridge Vineyard and Nursery hosts a series of workshops focused on grape production and winemaking. Each class/workshop, which runs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. unless noted is \$45 including lunch. Call Chuck at 828-606-3130 for more information or e-mail chuck@JeweloftheBlueRidge.com or go to our website www.JeweloftheBlueRidge.com to register and pay in advance by credit card. You will receive directions after you register for the class/workshop. Following is a list of the upcoming workshops: March 23 and April 3 – Pruning. Each class teaches how to properly prune muscadines (spur pruning) and regular grapes (cane pruning). May 11 - Planting tips, and trellis design/installation. Learn how to dig holes and prepare for planting grapevines in the mountains. We also offer tips on proper trellis design and installation for various types of grapes. June 5 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. - Grape Disease Identification and Treatment. Learn to identify the most common grape diseases and many look-a-like conditions. Sept. 18 - Harvesting workshop, where you learn how to harvest muscadines and the type of equipment used. Learn about the various types of equipment needed to harvest properly. Oct. 5 – Winemaking. Learn how to make wine in 5- and 6.5- gallon carboys.

Researchers in an undergraduate honors program at UNC Wilmington seek farmers to take a short survey that will examine variables that affect N.C. farmer enrollment in conservation programs under the Farm Bill. Participation is voluntary and anonymous. The goal of the project is to assess if certain types of farmers are more likely to enroll in conservation programs. This information could prove very useful for extension efforts in North Carolina. If interested, go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/22QPFJV> for the survey. For more information, contact Anthony Snider, associate professor of Environmental Sciences, UNCW, at 910-962-2423.

The Macon County Poultry Club meets on the third Tuesday of each month to discuss matters relating to raising poultry. Meetings are open to the public and to all ages. For more information, contact the Macon County office of the N.C. Cooperative Extension at 818-349-2046.

As a way to help farmers and agricultural workers stay safe at work, the N.C. Department of Labor offers safety videos on a variety of topics through its YouTube channel. Video topics include: preventing green tobacco sickness, hazard communication, tobacco harvester safety, heat stress, migrant housing requirements, forklift safety, and information about the NCDOL's Gold Star Growers program. The videos are in English and Spanish to increase understanding of safety hazards and preventing accidents. To learn more about the NCDOL and the Agricultural Safety and Health Bureau, go to www.nclabor.com or call 1-800-NC-LABOR (800-625-2267). NCDOL is also on Facebook and Twitter (@NCDOL).

Beekeepers with bees for rent and growers interested in bee pollination services can post their information on the BeeLinked website at www.ncagr.com/beelinked. The site is hosted by the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the N.C. State University Apiculture Program. Anyone interested in listing their information can do so by filling out an online Submit Your Ad form on the BeeLinked page or by contacting NCDA&CS at 919-233-8214 or by email at NCHoneybee@ncagr.gov or call NCSU at 919-515-1660. The NCDA&CS Plant Industry Division regulates the movement of agricultural or related items capable of spreading harmful insects, diseases, and other pests. Beekeepers participating in this program will be required to comply with all honey and bee industry regulations.

The N.C. Ag Finance Authority provides credit to agriculture in areas where financing is not available at reasonable rates and terms. The agency originates, services and finances farm loans, rural business loans, disaster loans and cotton gin loans. It also offers tax-exempt ag development bonds for agribusiness processing, ag-related manufacturing or ag waste disposal. For more about Ag Finance Authority programs or to request a loan application, call 919-790-3949 or email at RequestLoanInfo@ncagr.gov.
