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Extension Solutions for Homes and Gardens

by Paul J. Pugliese

“Gifts for the Gardener”

If you're searching for that perfect holiday gift for your favorite gardener, why not pick from this list: heirloom seeds, gardening books, garden tools, a garden scooter or a load of compost. Another great gift idea is a rain barrel, to capture water from your home gutter system for use during extended droughts and watering restrictions. A rain barrel can be easily assembled as a do-it-yourself home project or purchased online from various mail-order companies.

If your favorite gardener is a newcomer to North Georgia, they may have quickly discovered that gardening in Georgia is quite different from other areas of the United States. Our office regularly meets clients who recently moved to Cherokee County from as far north as New Hampshire and as far south as Florida. Many of these newcomers are shocked at how different and challenging gardening can be in our climate and infamous Georgia red clay soil (also known as the brick yard). Probably the best tool and gift for a new Georgia gardener (besides a pick ax) is a good garden book that is specific to our region's plant culture, diseases, and insects.

For former Floridians and other folks from more tropical areas, the challenge of moving to Georgia is learning which trees, shrubs, flowers, and turfgrasses are cold hardy and which plants have to be moved indoors to survive the winter. For former northerners and westerners, the biggest challenge is dealing with the many insects and plant diseases unique to our climate. Georgia's warm summers and high humidity provide the ideal climate for insects and diseases that rarely become a problem in other parts of the U.S. For plant pathologists (people who study plant diseases), Georgia and the Southeast are considered the disease capital of the U.S., which makes our jobs very interesting and challenging!

While your local Cooperative Extension office is always a great resource for answering your home and garden questions, sometimes gardeners want more information than can be covered in a free brochure or pamphlet. For these special circumstances, there are several for sale publications and books written by various University of Georgia experts to appease one's pallet for more knowledge. One such book was recently compiled by the Cherokee County Master Gardeners, a group of volunteers trained and certified through the UGA Cooperative Extension service.

The Cherokee County Master Gardeners are pleased to offer a gardener's resource book titled, *'Gardening with the Masters; A Planner with Proven Garden Techniques for Zone 7'*. This compilation contains excerpts from the University of Georgia publication library that advises gardeners on responsible water use, pruning, pests and diseases, seasonal gardening, turf management, plant choices and much more. The planner includes over 200 pages that will help you develop and personalize the North Georgia (Zone 7) garden of your dreams, with techniques proven and recommended by the University of Georgia. You may obtain a copy for \$15 from the UGA Cooperative Extension office in Cherokee County, 100 North Street, Suite G21, Canton, GA 30114. Call 770-479-0418 for more information. If you prefer that we mail your book, there will be a shipping and handling fee of \$3.50 per book.

For more information on gift ideas for your favorite gardener, feel free to contact our office and speak with one of our Master Gardener volunteers.

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