

# Association News and More...

## Sunflower Festival

By Ed Novak,  
Master Gardener

The Sunflower Festival has come and gone, and well what can I say? Wow! What a day. Starting at 7:30, putting up the tent, helping to unload John Gladney's plants plus all those sweet potatoes, and helping Dot Parrish put out those Iris corms of pink, white and multi colored.

We sold Daylilies, Amaryllis, seeds of Star Hybiscus, potted Cone Flowers, corms of Iris *Interpol and varieties of pink, white and multi colored*, and of course sweet potatoes and more sweet potatoes. We gave out smiles, advice and handshakes. We had three of our trainee Master Gardeners join in the fun with eight of our regulars who delighted in the festival.

After all was said and done we all enjoyed the day, the people, and came away with \$225 for our efforts.

My thanks to all who participated in this wonderful event and make no mistake that the city of Statham is well aware of the Three County Master Gardeners Association.

## New Project Opportunity: Barrow County Animal Shelter

By Della Helfen,  
Master Gardener and  
Barrow County Coordinator

Now that summer is over and we can sit back and relax from the gardening chores for awhile, wouldn't it be nice to plan for our next growing season? We have our own gardens to attend and there will be projects coming up in 2009 for which we can volunteer.

The new Barrow County Animal Control Shelter will be needing assistance in the landscape and as I did that project as an intern in 2003 I'd like to see someone else head that one up.

The grounds will be way larger than the pitifully small area of the old facility and will take a bit more expertise than I have in planning. I do not "landscape," I GARDEN! One look at MY yard is convincing enough that I do not have a clue as to form or "curb appeal."

Perhaps a few of the new members would like the opportunity to get involved in this one. Steven, the Director, will be letting me know when we can begin to get over there to look it over. I think the facility is scheduled to open sometime this spring. I'll keep you all posted when I know something.

## Need a Rain Barrel?

By Della Helfen,  
Master Gardener

I have a source for 333 gallon water tanks or rain barrels if anyone is interested. The tanks sell for \$100, a really good price. The rain barrels sell for \$20 and DO NOT have holes drilled in them for a spigot. They do have lids and 2 holes on top so the water can be pumped out if you have a pump or access to one. The seller also has metal barrels, for burning. You can contact D.J. Variety at 770-652-7915 for more information.

Editor's Note: You can drill holes in the side to install a faucet. See design page.

## Have Gardening Specialty?

Della Helfen does! It's been a great year for my mealworm farm. I've increased my supply from a few thousand to many thousands & have actually been making some money. I did a "Growing Your Own Mealworms" instructional for the new class and it was a lot of fun. Share your interests with fellow Association members by talking at an Association meeting. Let your County Coordinator know of your interest.

## Treasurer's Report

By Della Helfen, Treasurer

We have \$757.63 in our bank account.

**Please remember to bring your annual dues of \$10 at the December meeting.** I will be collecting them and getting your information at the same time.

Everyone will be given a form to fill out with your name, address, telephone # and email address, if you have one. Please do not give me cash without filling out the form first, so that you will get credit for paying your dues. There will be file folders on the table when you come in which you can take to your table & fill out. This makes it easier for me and avoids the general rush & confusion of bringing it to my table after the meeting. I will collect the file folders from the tables.

## Association News

**News from Adult Day Health Services Center Project:** Team members have recommended the funds allocated for landscaping be used to extend the fenced area behind the Center (to include the new pergola) and to sod the area. Installation of these items will expand the outside area for the Center's clients' use.



### Want a fun Project?

Barrow County Schools (Early Learning Center, 6 Elementary, 1 Middle, 1 High, and Alternative School) have requested assistance from Master Gardeners. For more information, please call John King at 770-867-8877 or e-mail John at [kingjohn@alltel.net](mailto:kingjohn@alltel.net).



### Christmas Party

**Come celebrate the season  
with fellow Master Gardeners  
December 18, 2008 at  
Ft. Yargo State Park in Winder  
6:30PM – 9:00PM**

Go to through the Park's main entrance on Highway 11. Turn left to Willow Way. At the Willow Way entrance, turn right. Festivities will be in the Dining Room which is directly in front of you at the end of the street.

Set up starts at 6:00PM.

**News from Ft. Yargo:** The office gardens continue to be renovated since the new construction has been finished. If you have not recently been to the new Park office, you will be amazed at the transformation! A new Trading Post has been added with space for lots of new merchandise. Staff offices have been added and renovated. If you do visit, please expect the office gardens to look terrible. Nancy Kinsey and Margaret McCollum have removed the native flowers and are spraying to kill nutsedge and other weeds. Once the weeds are under control, Team members will develop a revised landscape plan and install the new plants.

# Birdscaping

By Master Gardener Susan Russell  
And ISA Certified Arborist

According to a 2006 survey by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services survey, 53 million Americans feed the birds in their yards. In addition to, or even in lieu of, purchasing bird food, gardeners can provide a nature bird friendly habitat for their feathered friends while enhancing their own with trees, shrubs, and perennials.

Birds' needs are basic—food, water, shelter, and security—and these can be easily provided through thoughtful planting.

Food: Consider including native plants. Not only are native plants hardier and less demanding, but “local” birds recognize them as places they can find the “local” bugs, seeds, and berries that they need.

Berry-bearing plants are as beautiful to us as they are delicious to birds. In addition to berrying trees such as viburnum, serviceberries and dogwoods, shrubs such as Indian Hawthornes, barberries, and small hollies can provide a good food source.

And don't forget blueberries! Blueberries are known to be low-care, insect and disease resistant, delicious and they provide spectacular fall color. Their #1 pest is birds, but since a full grown blueberry bush can produce up to 80 pounds of berries per year, there should be enough for everyone!

Resist totally deadheading your flowers at the end of the season. Coneflowers, marigolds, zinnias, and even your non-gardening neighbor's patch of the dreaded thistle, can provide a virtual “bird café” as seeds are set.

Water: A multitude of sources will do—birdbaths, ponds, saucers—but strive to keep the water clean and chemical free. You may enjoy seeing your birds bathe, but keep in mind that they also would enjoy a small area of lawn-free dirt in order to dust themselves!

Shelter and Security: For security reasons, birds like to “hop” from plant to plant. They usually start in trees, move to shrubs, and then to flowers before moving on to the feeds and water source. So try planting in “sweeps” with bird baths and feeders placed adjacent to plantings protected from wind and rain.



Evergreen plants can provide shelter and security, and berrying hollies can do “double-duty” providing shelter and berries. Even a few discarded Christmas trees along the edge of the property will be appreciated.

Nesting: Birds will nest in secure areas within trees and shrubs, and will choose a place they determine to be safe from predators. So thickets, briars, and other plantings that will discourage neighborhood cats and children can be a good thing!

You can help them in their search for nesting materials by placing pieces of twine, string, yarn, rags, hair, and twigs in the crotches of trees or draped over fences and shrubs. Just be sure that the items are no longer than 6” long and have no loops in them so that the birds don't get tangled.

And now it is time to grab some tea, a bird guide, and a lounge chair and enjoy the show the birds provide as “thanks” for our thoughtful, hard work.

# Autumn Color and Falling Leaves

By Britt West, Barrow County  
Cooperative Extension Service Agent

*Take the time to see the leaves  
in spite of the trees this fall.*

Every autumn leaves undergo an awesome change before they begin to fall. As you rake the brown leaves in the winter we forget the beauty the fall colors provided and the miracles that took place up in the tree. Trees and other plants contain several pigments in varying amounts that change throughout the seasons. Leaves are naturally green due to the presence of a green pigment called chlorophyll. The chlorophyll acts like a solar collector gathering sunlight to manufacture food for the tree. This special food is sugar molecules. But in early fall as our days shorten and become dryer, green chlorophyll production ceases and the green color starts to fade from the leaves.

Other pigments take over to splash on our fall color. Some of the colors are always present in the leaf but hidden by the intense green color of chlorophyll. With the cells of leaves you will also see two other kinds of pigments called carotene and xanthophylls. I can't pronounce them either but remember these are the pigments responsible for the yoke of an egg being yellow and the oranges of pumpkins and carrots. So as the green color disappears the yellows and oranges shine through. The beautiful reds come from a different source. Anthocyanin pigments cause the reds to appear in leaves and also in radishes, beets, morning glories, and hyacinths. But the interesting point here is the red pigment appears only after a small amount of sugar becomes trapped in the leaf and is exposed to bright sunlight and cool temperatures. It is trapped because the frost on the other hand kills leaves thus causing them to brown and fall. This explains why when fall arrives the color change takes place in stages: yellows fade into oranges, which give way to the reds and finally burgundies. So while the yellows and oranges are there all along hidden by the green chlorophyll; the red pigments have to form like a fine wine. Nature is glorious.

Okay now that you know why leaves change color the next important issue to understand what trees gives you the desired color for your yard. Some of the first ones that come to mind are trees that are in the wild and would be difficult to find in a nursery. First, the Tulip Poplar or Yellow Poplar is a very tall growing tree that loves low, wet sites. This tree has orange and yellow tulip looking blooms in

late April. The White Ash and Green Ash are plain looking leaves that produce a small sword-like seed but light up the forest with their brilliant yellow leaves. The Catalpa Tree (planted mainly for attracting Catalpa worms) and the Eastern Redbud are two trees with heart shaped leaves that turn a golden yellow in the fall. In addition the Catalpa Tree has 12 inch long cigar shaped seed pods which is very interesting while the Redbud has brown 3 inch long butterbean-like seed pods. The Redbud also has beautiful lavender flowers in the spring. The River Birch has golden brown leaves as do some Sweetgum Trees. Sweetgums are like a curse on the earth to me but they can also be the prettiest tree in your yard some years. I have seen domesticated Sweetgum on the market that is "fruitless" meaning it will not produce the prickly seed balls. The last tree that has the most glowing yellow has to be the Ginkgo Tree. With this tree make sure though, that you purchase a male tree because the female tree drops a fruit that smells and attracts yellow jackets. The Silver Maple is a yellow foliage tree I would not recommend due to its pest problems.

As the yellow leaves fall to the ground the oranges start to glow. The first one that comes to mind is a very small tree called Hawthorne. The Hawthorne Tree is usually multi-stemmed and no more than 12-15 feet tall. It has long thorns and produces small crabapple like fruit so plant it at the back of the yard or away from play areas. The crape Myrtle is another small tree or large shrub known for its beautiful fall orange color; but this tree also has great summer blooms and exfoliating bark which make it a winner for three seasons of the year. Bradford Pears are another 30-40 foot tall tree that can give you a loud splash of orange in the fall but as they age can suffer from limb splitting. The Smoketree is an usual tree which has developing fruit clusters which gives the tree a smoky appearance on the ends of the limbs. But when you talk about orange, the queen of this beauty pageant has to be the Sugar Maple. This tree will grow to 75 feet tall and 40 feet wide so give it room to grow. It can be the prettiest fall tree in any subdivision or community. The

## Autumn Color and Falling Leaves (continued)

Trident Maple, Florida Maple and Japanese Maple can also give some deep rich orange color for the fall landscape.

Though the red color is the last to develop it is worth the wait. My favorite is the Sourwood though it is hard to find in nurseries. Clusters of tiny white flowers hang on throughout the summer to become tan accents on a blood red tree. The prettiest Oak would have to be the Scarlet Oak (bicentennial tree for the University of Georgia) followed closely by the Northern Red Oak and White Oak. Remember most of the oaks will grow to become very large trees so plant them at least 25-30 feet away from a house, out building, street or power line. The last red tree that I can think of, which has many named varieties is the Red Maple. It is a great fall foliage tree which can get quite large so give it room.

So there you have it, the trees that can give your yard or farm the look of the mountains.



Fall foliage picture of a young Sugar Maple Tree. Sugar Maples are long-lived trees that eventually become massive.  
Courtesy of David Beaulieu at [About.Com](http://About.Com)

Elizabeth Von Arnim, from her book, Elizabeth and Her German Garden, written in 1898. "Gardening is not graceful, and it makes one hot; but it is a blessed sort of work, and if Eve had had a spade in Paradise and known what to do with it, we should not have had all that sad business of the apple."

Shared by Dora Fleming, Master Gardener and writer for the Barrow County News

## Christmas Fern

By Donna Hut, Master Gardener

Given the time of year, I thought what more appropriate native to write about than the Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*). There are quite a number of native ferns, but one of the most common here in the Southeast is the Christmas fern. It was even selected as the Georgia Native Plant Society's 2008 Plant of the Year.

The Christmas fern is evergreen, hardy and adaptable to a variety of growing conditions. The leaves are dark green and dimorphic (some are fertile, some are sterile). The vegetative (non-fertile) leaves are shorter and more arching, while the fertile leaves are more erect and longer. The fiddleheads – silvery green tightly coiled new leaves – emerge in early spring. The plant prefers acid soil, but will tolerate other soil types and is happiest in moist conditions but also surprisingly drought-tolerant. In the wild, it can frequently be seen growing along streams and can be quite useful for erosion control.

In the shade garden, this is a low-maintenance plant that provides four seasons of interest and is a good companion for other native perennials. It spreads by creeping rhizome – large clumps can easily be divided in spring or fall – and in the right growing conditions, will naturalize by spores. And finally, one more characteristic to recommend it for your garden - is rarely browsed by deer!

*Wishing you and your loved ones a blessed holiday season!*

### Helpful Hints

By Pat Coward

- Use coffee filters to line flower pots. Water flows through but dirt stays put.
- Pick up an old slatted window blind at a yard sale. Cut slats to size, use permanent pen to mark and use as plant or row markers.
- Use foam trays from meat under plant pots.

## *Cold Snaps Landscapes*

By Faith Peppers, University of Georgia

Recent freezing temperatures have taken a toll on some Georgia landscapes. If you were too slow to mulch or to cover tender plants, you may now see wilted, dark leaves dotting your flower beds. A University of Georgia expert has advice on how to handle the damage and to avoid it.

"On these first several frosts you are going to see obvious frost damage because many plants haven't dropped their leaves," said Bob Westerfield, a UGA Cooperative Extension horticulturist. "The damage will usually appear as brown tips on leaves that will then turn black. Just go a couple of inches below the damage and prune it out."

If you have planted wisely, the damage should only be temporary.

"Most plants that are established and have been in the landscape a year or two will survive these cold snaps," he said. "You might have to prune out the damage, but they will make it through."

If leaf burn is severe and unsightly, go ahead and cut it back. The plants won't produce more leaves now. But since this is only the first cold snap and not the last, he said, you can wait to prune "because we will get hit again, and you can prune it back harder in December or January."

### **Feed and Water**

Plants still need plenty of moisture now, he said. "Plants need that pressure within their stems to withstand the cold. If you don't have them fully moist they can't withstand the cold and will get cell damage. Now is the time to wet them down really well before a cold night."

Most winter annuals will survive fine with proper care. "Most annuals like mums and pansies are very tenacious," he said. "They might look bad right after the cold, but they will come right out of it."

Good nutrition helps, too. "Give them some liquid or light granular fertilizer once a month and water well throughout the season," he said. "They have limited root systems, so they need plenty of food and water."

### **Protect Plants**

Annuals and shrubs need some protection against the cold.

"Some really sensitive plants like hydrangeas or young figs need heavy mulch as a blanket of insulation against cold" he said. You can get a wire basket and fill it up with leaves and cover it to protect it." He also recommends making a windscreen from a cardboard box or plastic. But don't let the plastic touch the plant. It will make the plant colder. If you use plastic, make a tent with it over the plant.

For more tips on protecting landscape plants in winter, call your local UGA Extension agent at 1-800-ASK-UGA1 or look online at [www.ugaextension.com](http://www.ugaextension.com).



Once-vibrant landscape plants succumb to the cold. Photo: Stephanie Schupska/UGA

# How to Plant Seedlings

Submitted by Rosario Mumford

Winter is the time to plant forest tree seedlings in Georgia. Although the quality of trees has been greatly improved through research in recent years, survivability of seedlings depends largely on care taken in storing, transporting, and planting. Here are some tips:

## Storing

At delivery, inspect the packages of seedlings before accepting...make sure your order is correct and check for damages. Then unload immediately.

1. Minimize storage time, especially early in the season.
2. Do not wash or shake gel from seedling roots. Gel applied to roots at the nursery prevents drying out during transport and decreases transplanting shock.
3. Do not prune the roots of packed seedlings. Seedlings need every single tiny root to absorb moisture and nutrients from the ground, so the more root surface the better the growth. If some seedlings have roots that are excessively long, remove them individually, and trim slightly.
4. Do not allow seedlings to dry out from wind or sun. Ample moisture is the key factor - "if they dry, they die."
5. Allow air to circulate to prevent heating when in packages. Bags/bales should not be stacked over two deep per layer unless spacers are used to provide air circulation between layers. Spacers should provide 2-4" of air space.
6. Avoid temperature extremes. Fluctuations in temperature, especially excessive heat, during storage and transport can result in seedling trauma.
7. Do not attempt to plant seedlings that have been thoroughly frozen in the pack. Freezing irreversibly damages the root system, leading to seedling death. Slightly frozen seedlings, however, are acceptable and should be thawed naturally. Do not handle seedlings in this state, as it leads to cracking and breaking.

## Transporting

1. Do not transport seedlings in truck beds containing fertilizer, chemical, or fuel residues.
2. Protect plants from weather extremes when transporting to the planting site. Vehicles used for transporting seedlings should have a light colored tarp to shade and protect seedlings. At least 12" of air space should be left between the protective cover and the top of the bags/bales to avoid heat build up.

3. Transport seedlings carefully. Rough handling can damage can damage root systems and predispose seedlings to streeto stress.
4. Avoid extended transport time.

## Planting

1. Plant seedlings within a 2-week period after acceptance.
2. Plant when soil is moist.
3. Plant bare-root seedlings during cooler temperatures as they are more conducive to seedling survival and healthy growth. (after November 1 if soil moisture is plentiful – preferably after December 1 and before March 1.)
4. When hand planting, carry plants to site in container with sufficient mud, sawdust, or wet moss to cover and keep seedling roots moist.
5. Remove only a single seedling at a time from bucket when hand-planting, or enough seedlings from planter tray for immediate use. Do not expose roots to drying wind and sun.
6. Plant seedlings deeply. The correct planting depth should be at least as deep as the plant grew in the nursery. Greater exposure to the soil and its water content – even one-half inch of added depth of planting – significantly improves survival rates.
7. Use mechanical planting if possible. Although slightly more expensive, planting mechanically yields better results and is an investment that pays off. Make sure the machine is properly adjusted to get the proper planting depth and to avoid J-rooting.

This is basic information pertaining to reforestation. Some landowners will encounter problems that are peculiar to their specific lands. If you need advice in this area, contact a Georgia Forestry Commission District or County office. A qualified forester will help you. See information about local Georgia Forestry Commission Offices for information.

Want tree seedlings? Contact local Georgia Forestry Commission Offices for information Barrow and Jackson Counties 770-868-4041 and Walton County at 770-297-4204 or visit [www.gfcstate.gov.us](http://www.gfcstate.gov.us).

## For the longest time .....

By Dora Fleming, Master Gardener and  
Writer for the Barrow County News

For the longest time I had a problem with pansies. Though I felt that they are overused — one sees them everywhere — I always planted at least one flat in the fall.

Mine were always fine for a while, but the cooler the weather got the worse mine looked. One could feel sorry for them with their little shoulders hunched up against the cold, their unopened buds just sitting there for days.

Finally I threw myself on the mercy of a friend who had glorious beds of pansies blooming their little bright-faced hearts out in November.

I explained that I never planted mine until the late-blooming annuals in my flower boxes on the deck, died down after the first frost. This was my worst mistake, she said. Her advice — rip up everything you have and plant pansies the very first day they appear in the stores.

Apparently they need as much time as possible to establish a strong root system before the stress of frosty mornings.

Another important step that I was skipping was to keep them heavily fertilized. “Fertilize half strength every time you water with a fertilizer designed to encourage bloom,” she said, “and don’t ever let them dry completely out.”

Now I do exactly as she suggested)  
a strong root system before the stress of frosty mornings.

Another important step that I was skipping was to keep them heavily fertilized. “Fertilize half strength every time you water with a fertilizer designed to encourage bloom,” she said, “and don’t ever let them dry completely out.”

Now I do exactly as she suggested and success is mine. I

buy early and keep my watering can filled with a half-strength mixture of water and 10-60-10 fertilizer. I’m happy with pansies again.

Ornamental cabbage and kale are wonderful companion plantings with pansies. They will flourish through winter, too, unless challenged by consecutive days of hard freezes. All the plants prefer full sun and a moist, well-drained soil. If the cabbage and kale plants you find in the store are leggy, plant deeply leaving only the bottom leaves above the dirt. Colorful little violas are closely akin to pansies and the cultural mandates are the same — plant early and fertilize often. Violas reseed prolifically, so you may want to try to stay ahead of them by frequent deadheading.

Pansies and violas don’t like heat, so they will decline as the days warm no matter what you do. The cabbage and kale will have begun to look a little tired, too, so dump everything out and replant the petunias that had there last year.



# Three County Master Gardener Association Newsletter

Winter 2008

## President's Corner

Our **Christmas Party** will be held Thursday evening, December 18th, at Will A Way in Ft. Yargo State Park. Those who are helping set up should arrive at 6:00 P M. The Social get together starts at 6:30. It's an opportunity for the Master Gardener Interns from the Class of 2008 to socialize with our experienced Master Gardeners. I'd encourage everyone to wear a name badge. The business meeting will begin at 7:00. After a few "short remarks by me" we'll elect our new officers and County Coordinators. Our Christmas Party should be in full swing by 7:30. Please join us in for this night of fellowship and good food. Encourage your friends and fellow Master Gardener Classmates to attend. An Email will be sent with directions and additional information.

**Upcoming events:** William Carlan and Britt West will conduct a **pruning class** at Bird Berry Trail in Ft. Yargo on February 12th beginning at 10:00 A M. After some hands on experience we'll break bread together in one of the local restaurants. I am finalizing plans for 4 or 5 **landscape classes** to be held Thursday evenings in the Jackson County Extension Office beginning February 26, 2009 and ending either March 19th or March 26th. The tentative schedule is: Principals of Landscape Design 2-26-09; Landscape ideas and Guidelines 3-5-09; Drawing a Landscape Plan 3-12-09; Water Wise Landscaping 3-19-09; Hardscape and Practical Advice to Homeowners. Two years ago we presented four Thursday evening classes around the same time of year. We invited the public as well as Master Gardeners. We stopped taking advanced registrations after 43 pre-registered. If you plan to attend one or more of the classes please pre-register with Cindy at the Barrow County Extension Office.

At our Christmas meeting I plan to discuss holding our scheduled March Three County Master Gardener meeting before the landscape class. The alternative would be to hold it on a date most convenient to the membership. Several Master Gardeners recommended that we explore holding all future Three County Master Gardener meetings at the Barrow Extension Office in order to save on mileage. I plan to cover this suggestion at the Christmas meeting as well. I'm hoping we have a great turnout for the Christmas Meeting/Party. Please let me know if you're not in favor of either of these recommendations if you can't attend the Christmas meeting. Come help us elect our 2009 President and celebrate the holidays. *Harry*



## Our 2008 Executive Board

**President:** Harry Hauck  
hjh6249@windstream.net  
770.586.0921

**Vice President:** Ed Novak  
[edvisor@aol.com](mailto:edvisor@aol.com)

**Treasurer:** Della Helfen  
[dandhelfen@yahoo.com](mailto:dandhelfen@yahoo.com)  
770.867.7850

**Secretary:** Yvonne Pearce  
[creekfront1@alltel.net](mailto:creekfront1@alltel.net)  
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## County Coordinators:

**Barrow Co:** Della Helfen,  
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**Jackson Co:** Shirley Turner,  
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**Walton Co:** Rosario Lopez,  
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## Newspaper Coordinator:

Margaret McCollum  
[margaretandy@bellsouth.net](mailto:margaretandy@bellsouth.net)  
678.753.1030



## Seasonal Calendars

Courtesy of Walter Reeves Web Site

[www.walterreeves.com](http://www.walterreeves.com)

### January:

- ☼ Prepare beds for bare-root roses that will soon arrive in nurseries. Dig an area four feet wide and twelve inches deep for each plant, adding plenty of soil conditioner to the soil.
- ☼ Now is a great time to drain and replace the oil in your mower and to have the blade sharpened or to replace it completely.
- ☼ It is easy to see the limb structure of trees now. Tie ribbon around the ones you think should be removed then step back for another look before cutting them off.
- ☼ On a sunny day fertilize pansies and ornamental cabbage with a product that contains "nitrate nitrogen". This nutrient is best for plants growing in cold soil. Water pansies and ornamental kale after a hard freeze so they can re-hydrate their wilted leaves. Remember to regularly water window boxes and other outside plant containers.
- ☼ Small, leafless shrubs and trees can be transplanted easily now. Wait for a warm day when the ground is not frozen.
- ☼ Amaryllis flower stems and their faded blooms can be removed now. Treat it like a houseplant for the rest of the winter then plant outdoors in a sunny bed in May.
- ☼ Look out for poison ivy when working outdoors. Even the leafless vine and branches can cause a powerful skin reaction if touched.
- ☼ Check on the tender bulbs (canna, caladium, dahlia) you stored indoors for the winter. If they are beginning to shrink, mist each one with warm water.
- ☼ Prune apple and pear trees and grape vines. Postpone peach pruning until mid-March.
- ☼ Chop unwanted kudzu, English ivy and bamboo to the ground. Follow with weedkiller on the leaves in April.

### February:

- ☼ It's not too late to lightly and carefully spot-spray *completely dormant* Bermuda grass with glyphosate (Roundup, KleenUp, KleerAway) to kill green winter weeds. Make sure no green Bermuda sprouts are near the soil line.

- ☼ Redesign your lawn for easier mowing. Eliminate sharp angles and narrow turf areas. Use mulch, new flower beds or a groundcover like mondo grass there instead.
- ☼ How much fertilizer or lime does your lawn or garden really need? The only way to know for sure is to get a soil test kit from your local Cooperative Extension Service.
- ☼ Remove guy wires, stakes and trunk wraps from small trees you planted last fall.
- ☼ The brown foliage on pampas grass and maiden grass can be pruned away now. Leave only a "crew cut" of brown stems twelve inches high.
- ☼ Build raised beds for vegetables, roses and herbs. It's easy to do with four pieces of 2x8 wood planks. Choose lengths that fit your space; bolt them together at the corners.
- ☼ Set your mower to its highest setting and cut off the tattered leaves of lirioppe (monkey grass). They will quickly re-grow in March.

### March:

- ☼ Start seed of tomatoes and annual flowers indoors. You'll need six weeks to grow strong transplants.
- ☼ Plant bare-root roses in soil that contains plenty of organic matter and which has been thoroughly tilled.
- ☼ Planting fescue now? You can't use a pre-emergent weed preventer for six weeks after seeding.
- ☼ Examine the backside of euonymous and camellia leaves for scale insects. Thoroughly spray with horticultural oil if the pests are found. Remove spent camellia blooms from the bush and from the ground. You'll prevent camellia petal blight.
- ☼ Last chance to prune bush roses to approximately one half their present size.
- ☼ Building near a tree? Be careful - ninety percent of the tree's roots are in the top twelve inches of soil.
- ☼ Forsythia, quince and winter honeysuckle can be pruned to a smaller size after flowering.
- ☼ Wait to plant gladiolus, canna and caladium bulbs until mid-April - they all need warm soil in which to grow.
- ☼ Prune boxwood - but not with shears. Use a hand pruner to make foliage "holes" in the greenery so light can penetrate to the trunk. Prune giant holly shrubs back to a manageable size. Don't be shy - you can cut them to eighteen inches tall and they will come back.
- ☼ If your soil test indicates lime is needed on your lawn, spread lime on your lawn now at the rate recommended in your soil test.

## Training Opportunities

### January 2009

#### Native Plant Symposium 2009

When: Wednesday, January 21, 8:30 am - 3:30 pm

Where: The Garden Club of Georgia Terrace Room at the Georgia Botanical Garden, Athens, GA

Cost: Members \$40; non-members \$45; Includes box lunch: choose from roast beef, turkey, ham, or vegetarian; Call 706-542-6156 or register on-line at [www.uga.edu/botgarden](http://www.uga.edu/botgarden).

Description: The day-long program includes Landscape Design for Planet-Friendly Gardens, Inviting Bees to your Garden, Propagating Native Plants From Seeds, and Native Vines For Your Garden. Speakers include Jeannette Coplin, Director of Horticulture, State Botanical Garden of Georgia, Dan Harris, Beekeeper, UGA Bee Lab, Jan Midgley, Owner, Wildflower Nursery, Alabama, and Dan Long, Owner, Brushwood Nursery, Chester County, PA.

#### Propagating Native Plants from Seeds

When: Thursday, January 22, 8:30 am - 12:30 pm

Where: Georgia Botanical Garden Visitor Center, Classroom A, Athens, GA

Cost: Cost: Members \$40, non-members \$45; Call 706-542-6156 or register on-line at [www.uga.edu/botgarden](http://www.uga.edu/botgarden).

Description: Jan Midgley, Owner, Wildflower Nursery, Wilsonville, AL will discuss and demonstrate types of native plant seeds and how and when to collect, clean, and store them. She will also describe various treatments of seed required to initiate germination in certain species. Students will sow seeds and discuss containers, media, light, temperature, diseases, insects and fertilizer. Jan will also discuss and demonstrate transplanting seedlings: how? when? into what size container? and what media? This session will include information on forbs, grasses, and woody plants.

#### WinterGreen Georgia Green Industry Association Conference,

When: January 21-23, 2009

Where: Athens, GA

Cost: \$130 for each workshop; Register online at: [www.ggia.org](http://www.ggia.org) Call 706-632-0100 with any questions. Fax to 706-632-0300 Faxed registrations must use Credit Card or Purchase Order. Mail completed form and payment to: GGIA, P.O. Box 369, Epworth, GA 30541

Description: Topics include Fabulous Containers Hands-on, Basic Plant Breeding and Selection, Digital Catalog Design Using Photoshop software.

### February 2009

#### Plant Propagation

When: 8:30 AM – 12:30PM, Wednesday, February 04, 2009 Where: Georgia Botanical Garden, Visitor Center, Classroom A

Cost: Garden Members \$40; Non-members \$45; Call 706-542-6156 or register on-line at [www.uga.edu/botgarden](http://www.uga.edu/botgarden).

Description: This course will focus primarily on vegetative propagation methods applicable to native plants, providing students with basic knowledge of plant growth and morphology, as well as the technical and mechanical skills required for successful propagation.

Winter on the Flint: The Quest for Sustainable Landscapes in a Changing World: Winter Georgia Master Gardener Association Conference

When: February 7, 2009

Where: Darton College, Albany, GA

Description: Topics include "The Livable Landscape and Our Necessary Journeys," "What I Mean by Sustainable or Revolution in the Garden", "Native Trees of the Southeast", "Antique Roses and Other Great Heirloom Plants for Southern Gardens." and "Sustainable Landscapes." There will be a field trip to tour Massey Lane Gardens, headquarters of the American Camellia Society in Fort Valley, GA.

Further information: Jim Spivey, tel. 229 436 7216, e-mail, [uqe4095@uga.edu](mailto:uqe4095@uga.edu).

## Training Opportunities

February 2009 (continued)

Understanding Botanical Names (continued)

### Understanding Botanical Names

When: Saturday, February 07, 2009, 8:AM – 12:30PM Where: Callaway Building at Georgia Botanical Garden, Athens, GA

Cost: Garden Members \$40; Non-members \$45; Call 706-542-6156 or register on-line at [www.uga.edu/botgarden](http://www.uga.edu/botgarden).

Description: Overcome "botanical name phobia" by learning the basics of botanical nomenclature. You will quickly see how fascinating, informative, useful and entertaining scientific names for plants can be! Classroom instruction will be followed by applying what we have learned to plants in the garden. Highly recommended text: Stearn's Dictionary of Plant Names for Gardeners by William T. Stearn. (out of print, but relatively easy to find).

### Southern Garden Heritage Conference

When: Thursday, February 19 - 20, 2009, 9:00 AM

Where: State Botanical Garden of Georgia, Athens.

Call 706-542-6156 or register on-line at [www.uga.edu/botgarden](http://www.uga.edu/botgarden)

Description: This conference will be headlined by a tribute to the work of landscape architect Edward L. Daugherty. Other topics include gardening styles in the southeast, daffodils in Georgia landscapes, cemeteries as historic

landscapes and repositories of heirloom plants, old roses for the Southern Gardens, and native American Indian ethnobotany, crops and gardens plus case studies of three Georgia gardens. To request program and registration information, call 706-542-1244 or e-mail [garden@uga.edu](mailto:garden@uga.edu).

### The Winter Pruning Process

When: February 20, 2009, 9:30AM -11:30PM

Where: Georgia Botanical Garden, Visitor Center, Classroom A, Athens, GA

Cost: Garden Members \$10.00; Non-members \$12.00; Call 706-542-6156 or register on-line at [www.uga.edu/botgarden](http://www.uga.edu/botgarden)

Description: Learn various pruning techniques as well as the Do's and Don'ts of pruning your home landscape. Participants will have the opportunity to try different pruning tools and techniques.

### Winter Tree Identification

When: Saturday, February 21, 8:30 am - 12:30 pm

Where: State Botanical Garden Visitor Center, Classroom A

Cost: Garden Members \$40; non-members \$45; Call 706-542-6156 or register on-line at [www.uga.edu/botgarden](http://www.uga.edu/botgarden).

Description: Students will learn the basics of identifying deciduous trees in their dormant condition by observing and describing twigs, bark, leaf scars, fruits, branching patterns, and tree form. Students will use a hand lens and a simple dichotomous key for woody plants to identify species. Class time will be divided between classroom exercises and a field trip to the deciduous woods at the Botanical Garden.

### Tree Trail Ramble:

When: Saturday, February 21, 10:00 am

Where: State Botanical Garden Shade Garden Arbor

Cost: Free and open to the public

Description: This informal walk through the Garden will help you identify trees native to the Southeastern United States. Please dress appropriately for the weather and wear comfortable walking shoes.

### Flower Arranging Unit 3: Design for the Dining Table

When: Feb 25, 2009 09:00 AM - 03:00 PM

Where: Callaway Building, Georgia Botanical Garden

### Flower Arranging Unit 3: Design for the Dining Table (continued)

Cost: Botanical Garden Members \$20.00; Non-members \$23.00; Visit [www.uga.edu/botgarden](http://www.uga.edu/botgarden) or call for more information

Description: This is the third in a series of five units instructed by a National Garden Club Master Flower Show Judge and will focus on dining table arrangements. Participants will be provided with a list of materials to bring to class. Limited to 20. Priority will be given to those participants that have completed Unit 1-2. Bring a bag lunch.

The State Botanical Garden of Georgia is located at 2450 South Milledge Avenue, Athens, Georgia 30605

## *Two Kinds of Gardeners*

By Dora Fleming, Master Gardener and  
Writer for the Barrow County News

There are two kinds of gardeners in the world. One kind, upon seeing a snake in their yard seizes the biggest stick they can find and bludgeons the slithery, loathsome thing to death.

The other kind of gardener is much more welcoming of the snake, knowing it will eat bugs and rodents and its presence indicates that their garden is a healthy one. I'm a snake-welcomer.

If we want a place where wildlife flourishes, it requires some conscious decisions on our part. There are some basic needs food, water, protective cover and places to rear young. You are probably providing most of these things already and just a few changes could insure that you attract other interesting species to your yard.

Birds are easy. In addition to feeders, think about planting some plants that produce berries, fruits or nuts. Viburnums, dogwood, Holly, Pyracantha and Cotoneaster are all welcome additions to your landscape anyway –the birds are a bonus. Acorns from oak trees feed all manner of hungry wildlife.

The conifers that provide background for our borders are essential winter shelter that keep the birds around. Dead trees left on our property give the woodpeckers a place to nest and look for food. Bluebird nesting boxes are great fun and amazingly successful.

Butterflies and hummingbirds aren't very difficult to attract either. Plant some nectar-producing annuals and shrubs. Just about any herb that you plant is either a nectar source or a host plant for butterflies. (Those are monarch butterfly caterpillars that are mowing down your parsley.) Even a tiny patch of wildflowers increase the possibility of both butterflies and hummingbirds paying our yards a visit.

If we don't use insecticides we will get a lot of help with our insect problem from toads, box turtles, lizards and snakes. Mulched areas are good hunting and hiding places for these animals. You want to mulch heavily anyway.

Don't fret. None of these useful predators is going to hunt you down and eat you up – you may never know they are there. You will notice fewer insects, however.

Every little effort helps. A brush pile produced from limbs gathered while pruning provides cover for birds and small animals. The water source will attract as many birds as a well-stocked feeder. Seed pods left over winter provide food for local and migrating birds.

Things will go awry every now and then however. I put up a screech owl nesting box at great peril to my son who climbed a 40 foot ladder to secure it to a tree. A mother squirrel raised three babies in it. Oh, well.

## *Yes, Trees and Utility Lines Can Happily Co-exist*

By Susan Russell, Master Gardener  
and ISA Certified Arborist

The topping of large trees or “V-shaped” prunings of these mature specimens are so often necessary to insure uninterrupted electric services and as well as the safety of utility workers and the general public. Unfortunately, these pruning practices can cause structural instability and possible development of disease in the trees, and can result in additional safety hazards, property damage, expense, and service disruptions if these trees fail as a result.

If you are planning fall planting, pick the right tree for the right place, and you can avoid the heartbreak of disfiguring pruning or possible tree removal in the future, as well as insuring safety and service.

First decide what you want the tree or trees to accomplish. Do you want privacy screening? Do you want fall color? Do you want an ornamental or specimen tree?

The next step is to research the mature size of the tree. It is important to research the height, width, and shaped of the desired tree. Power lines are approximately 20 feet above the ground, so trees need to be of a size to avoid them.

Many trees will stay under the power line height. If height alone is an issue, there are many exciting trees to accomplish this purpose. These include the colorful purple leaf plum, trident maples, amalanichier or serviceberry, kousa dogwoods, and many other small trees and large shrubs.

Screening trees are usually evergreen and are usually shaped like an upside-down ice cream cone. Plan to plant the tree at least half the expected mature diameter of the tree from the power pole. Because the upper shape of the tree grows toward the center of the plant, forming a point, it will grow away from power lines. Arizona cypress, Green Giant Arborvitaes, and large hollies are good choices to provide the needed screening, proving height, while staying away from lines.

For fall color, maples are among the most desired. Unfortunately, the typical maple can have a mature canopy of 30-45 feet in width and, combine with its height, can mean future utility pruning. Why not consider the slender varieties of this species, such as the Bowhall or Armstrong maples, which have a width of approximately 15 feet, while achieving significant height and spectacular color. Try a Trident or Japanese Maple. A Sargeant Cherry or European Hornbeam can also meet these specifications.

If you are interested in ornamental or specimen trees, such as those that flower in the spring or summer, consider some tall shrubs that can be limbed up into delightful small trees or even left as dens shrubs. Some of these shrubs can reach 15 feet in height and included several varieties of evergreen plants, such as camellias, several varieties of purple leaf Lorapetalum, Ilicium, Banana Shrub, and the deciduous Rose of Sharon and Crape Myrtle, or several varieties of weeping trees.

And be sure to take into account whether your planting areas will be sunny or shady, wet or dry, and soil type.

A little research is a good investment before planting these permanent additions to your landscape. There are several excellent resources to help you decide on the right trees to meet you needs. These include the [Southern Gardeners Book of Lists](#) by Lois Trigg Chaplan, your local Extension Office or tree nursery, a local ISA Certified Arborist, or the International Society of Arboriculture websites, [www.isa-arbor.com](http://www.isa-arbor.com) or [www.treesaregood.org](http://www.treesaregood.org).