

The Potting Shed is a free monthly newsletter from the University of Georgia Extension in Bryan County. We provide science-based information to help Coastal Georgia gardeners. Have a question or need help, contact your local County Extension Office.
David Moulder dmoulder@uga.edu



David B. Moulder
*Bryan County Extension,
CEC*



Barbara S. DuBose,
Secretary

Bryan County Extension

P. O. Box 250
131 N. College Street
Pembroke, GA 31321

Phone: (912) 653-2231

Fax: (912) 653-2236

Web Site:

[http://www.caes.uga.edu/
extension/bryan/](http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension/bryan/)

E-mail:

dmoulder@uga.edu
or: uge3029@uga.edu

Are you looking for winter color?

The shopping frenzy for winter plantings has begun. As you shop for pansies and snapdragons, keep in mind flowering kale, cabbage and mustard.



With their foliage in brilliant shades of lavender, purple, pink, red and white, remember that kales, cabbages and mustards add pizzazz to the fall and winter garden like no other plants can do. This isn't a temporary show either. These tough plants give a "wow-effect" to gardens from October through April.

These plants have seen a minus 10 degrees. Since they are so cold hardy, they usually come through the winter unscathed. If record cold is forecasted, you can completely cover these plants with pine straw until the weather warms.

The fall season has been super for planting, and now would be a good time to put some in your beds. These plants are among the easiest to grow. Prepare soil by

incorporating 3 to 4 inches of organic matter and 2 pounds of a slow-release, 12-6-6 fertilizer per 100 square feet of bed space.

Set the transplant to a depth just slightly below the bottom set of leaves. Space them 12 to 18 inches apart, and the plants will reach 6 to 12 inches in height. Add a good layer of mulch after planting to help stabilize soil temperatures and conserve moisture.

Kale, cabbage and mustard all need good drainage, yet must remain moist and fed to keep them growing vigorously. Pay especially close attention as dry, cold fronts have a tendency to deplete the available moisture. Feed with light applications of the pre-plant fertilizer every four to six weeks. The colors will intensify as the temperatures start to get cold.

Flowering kale, cabbage and mustard excels with beds of brightly colored pansies, violas, panolas and snapdragons. . Try planting a large bed of narcissus behind the kale or cabbage.

Kale and cabbage also are exceptional in large mixed containers. No matter which variety you select, you can rest assured you are getting a great, cool-season performer.

2007 Master Gardener Program

Classes will start on Jan 11, '07 and conclude on Mar. 29th. Class hours are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. every Thursday. Program will be held at the Bamboo Farm and Coastal Garden.

For more information on this program, visit our web site at: <http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension/bryan>

Coastal Georgia Master Naturalist

We just completed the Fall session of the Coastal Georgia Master Naturalist program. We are taking applications for the Spring 2007 course. This is an environmental educational program for people who wish to know, change and preserve the relationships between habitats and our ecosystems. There are ten days of study, one day a week. Classes are conducted on pertinent sites in coastal Georgia.

Areas of Study:

Geology
Plant Succession
Birding
Endangered Species
Forestry Management
Wildlife Habitats
Water Management
Agriculture-IPM
Aquatic & Wetlands
Marshes
Tree Identification

What to do in December?



If a sudden cold front threatens a hard freeze you should make sure that your plants are **well watered**. Most cold damage of Camellia plants is due to strong, cold winds drying the tissues. A well hydrated plant that is protected from north winds will fare much better. Bloom buds that are still tight will not normally be damaged by a typical Bryan County freeze but open (or nearly open) blooms can be severely damaged. Much of the damage can be avoided if the blooms are covered so that frost does not settle on them.

Alga

Leaf

Spot



Alga Leaf Spot. Symptoms of this pathogen include: Pale green or pale red superficial colonies that have a netlike pattern on leaf surfaces. The colonies are usually circular and appear as rough and/or raised spots on host leaves. The margins of the colonies are often times wavy or feathered. Twigs and branches are also sites of infection. Symptoms include cracking, formation of a shallow canker, and subsequent girdling and death of the limb/twig. The pathogen remains conspicuous until symptoms occur which usually follows rainy, wet weather in the fall and spring. The pathogen *C. virescens* is most damaging to weakened, stressed plants growing in direct sunlight after abundant rainfall.

Management of algal leaf spot can be achieved primarily by sanitation. If the infection is superficial, (on leaf surfaces), remove infected, attached and fallen leaves and destroy and/or eliminate them from the planting site. If the infection is occurring on woody tissue such as limbs or branches, prune the affected areas and discard them properly. Also, increasing air circulation around the plants and improving soil drainage will help prevent future infections. Copper sprays, such as Bordeaux's mixture (8 tbsp. /gal.) or Kocide 101, can be used preventively but are usually unnecessary. Remember-when applying fungicides to ALWAYS read and carefully follow label directions

December

Mulch Flower Beds Before You Plant

Before adding plants to any flower or shrub bed, make sure you rework the soil. Add 2-3 inches of organic matter by scattering it over the bed and working it into the existing soil. For the past eight months microorganisms, fungi, mold and earthworms have been feasting on the existing organic matter and breaking it down. This is the reason that the beds seem to shrink. Adding organic matter annually keeps the beds fluffy and workable. It is also a great source of slow release fertilizer. Pull off the existing mulch ONLY if you plan to use it again after the bed is worked up, otherwise till it in. This will help enrich the soil even more. Once all of this is accomplished, then re-mulch the bed and stick in the plants. Always mulch and then plant. Doing it the other way only creates a lot more work.

Annuals

You should have finished planting annual flowers by the end of November. Your selection starts to decline or look really picked over by mid-December. Pansy is the most popular cool season flower. Snails, slugs and pill bugs (rolley-polley) are always a problem this time of year. These critters feed at night. It is so frustrating to spend all weekend beautifying your yard and then find half your plants clipped off at the soil line on Monday. An organic way to discourage snails and slugs is to encircle the flowerbed with diatomaceous earth. They do not like crawling over the tiny, razor sharp particles. Another method is to bury, only to the rim, small cups of beer. They are attracted to the yeast smell and crawl right in. Pelletized poisonous baits applied every couple of days will also help save your plants.

Bulbs

Tulip and hyacinth bulbs that have been in the refrigerator should be planted by late December. They will not bloom fully if they have not received the required chilling. Dormant amaryllis bulbs should be plentiful at stores and make great Christmas gifts. When planting, make sure not to bury the neck. The tall bloom makes the bulb top heavy, so plant it in a clay or heavy decorative pot. Place the pot in a sunny location and keep it moist. When the flower stalk appears, start turning the pot to keep it growing straight upward.

House Plants

It is not unusual for us to want to cheer up our homes with blooming plants during the early winter. Seasonal favorites include poinsettia, Thanksgiving or Christmas cactus, cyclamens, gloxinia, African violet, kalanchoe and crown-of-thorns. None of these will tolerate deep shade for long periods of time. In order to keep the plants alive, you must rotate them in and out of dark rooms every other week. Water only when the soil two inches down feels dry. This means sticking your finger into the soil, not just looking at it. Never leave water sitting in the plant saucer for longer than 6 hours. The plant has soaked up all it can and the roots will start to suffer.

Lawns

Warm season grasses are going dormant. By December the Zoysia, Bermuda and Centipede should be mostly a tan color. St. Augustine will be the last to harden off during the winter. This is the reason that it is so susceptible to freeze damage. Sow ryegrass seed if you want a green lawn during the winter or have just finished building a new home. You will have to mow on a regular basis to keep it

looking good. Continue to mulch or rake up leaves/needles as they fall. If you are raking up piles of leaf blades and dead stolons/runners, then there's a good chance you have a turf disease (brown patch, take-all, dollar spot, etc.) Take a small sample of the grass blades and stolons/runners to your local Extension office for analysis, free of charge.

Perennial Flowers

Tidy up perennial plants by cutting back faded foliage and spent flower heads. Save only the largest, most filled out seed. Mark the location of existing plants before removing all of the foliage if you plan to add new selections. This will keep you from damaging or digging up established dormant plants. Plant debris (flower stalks, dried foliage, fallen leaves and pine straw) can be added to the compost pile. Any diseased (daylily rust) or insect (scale) infested plant material should be raked up and bagged or destroyed.

Prune the chrysanthemums after they have finished blooming. Basically, lower the plant by cutting it in half. This helps keep them from getting too spindly and breaking apart. Chrysanthemum cuttings are extremely easy to root. Simply take the healthiest pieces, remove the spent flowers and cut into 6-inch sections. Remove the large leaves from the bottom 2 - 3 inches of the stem and then stick the cutting in potting soil. Some people will dip the cutting in rooting hormone, but with mums this is not necessary. You're guaranteed success, if you stick these cuttings in a shallow, 6-inch plastic pot. The only way to kill them is if you forget to water or if you keep the soil too moist. The correct amount of moisture is the key. Transplanting rooted cuttings is a great way to fill in bare spots between the mum plants and expand the evergreen planting. The most productive flowerbeds are located in well-drained soil that is exposed to full sun or light shade.

Trees and Shrubs

Camellia is the South's most prized winter flowering shrub and tree. Camellia sasanqua and japonica are the most common varieties grown in the south. The sasanqua types have a better cold hardiness track record and mainly bloom in the fall and early winter. Japonica blooms are generally larger and start in the winter and early spring. If you mix these two types then you are guaranteed to have something flowering all winter long. Camellias have a smorgasbord of flower types and colors. The flowers are classified as single, semi-double, anemone, peony, rose form double and formal double. The colors are just as varied but basically grouped into white, pink, red or variegated. I will list a few varieties that are considered perfect for beginner camellia growers, such as: 'Sparkling Burgundy,' 'Donation', 'Debutante', 'Royal Velvet', 'Pink Perfection', 'Professor Charles S. Sargent' and 'Grand Slam'. Camellias grow best in partial shade. In sunny locations, the plants may not go dormant and suffer damage during severely cold winter. Too much sun may also cause scald or yellowing of the leaves. Camellias like well-drained, slightly acid soil with a good dose of organic matter (3-4 inches tilled deep). Removing all but one bud per branch gives bigger and better quality flowers. Blooms that are open during freezing weather will be destroyed, so pick and float them in a bowl inside. The tight unopened buds will not be affected and will bloom later. As far as insect and disease problems, the Camellia is susceptible to scale and flower blight. For scale problems, spray the entire plant with a summer weight or dormant oil and insecticide mixture when the temperature is between 40F and 85F. For flower blight, pick off and destroy infected flowers then spray with a fungicide to break the fungus' spore release cycle.

Vegetables

Transplants of broccoli, cauliflower, onion and cabbage are still available and can be planted without fear of freezing weather damaging the heads. Vegetables such as red leaf mustard, curly leaf mustard and curly parsley are grown more for ornamental flowerbeds rather than food for the table.