

Newsletter



for the Cherokee
County Master
Gardeners

October/November 2001

Volume VIII, Issue 12

In This Issue

TIPS

October	6
November	7

ARTICLES

Try Something Different	1
Gardener's Library	2
Cool Tool	2
Fire Ants - Dan Rahn	3
Recycling	3
My Favorite Plant	4
Bird's Eye View	4
On The Wild Side	5
Helpful Hints	8
Ponds	8
Question & Answer	9
Committee Highlights	9
Recipes	10

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Fellow Master Gardeners:

Gardeners like to push the limits. If the books say a plant is hardy to zone 8 only we try to find a protected spot to plant it.

If the books state a plant needs alkaline soil we amend our soil and cross our fingers. There are thousands of plants that love Atlanta's mild winter and hot humid summers yet we're not satisfied. Each fall I cram my garage full of zone 8-10 plants that I keep in pots. My first thought when we got a mini-refrigerator for the basement was that I could store tulip bulbs in it for the necessary cold chill that they need to

perform well in the south.

How many times after a plant dies do you purchase it again and say to yourself this time it will live? My personal limit is three times and then I give up. It's especially tempting when another gardener tells you their secret to keeping a plant thriving. Which means just one more attempt. When we push the limits it's not the failures we notice but the successes. It is such a gardening high to get a lilac to bloom or petunia to over-winter. What's your limit?

Marcia Winchester, Editor

WHAT'S HAPPENING

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

Oct 4 SR Center work day, 9:30 - 3:00. Bring your tools, water & lunch. We will harvest seeds and do fall clean up. Bring envelopes if you want seeds to keep.	Nov 1 SR Center work day, 9:30 - 3:00. Bring your tools, water and lunch.
Oct 16 10:00 - Monthly Meeting	Nov 17 Library Lecture - Hickory Flat Library at 10:00am. Late Fall and Winter Garden Planning - Monty Bores and Jean Garner.
Oct 20 Library Lecture - Hickory Flat Library at 10:00 am. Create a Backyard Wildlife Habitat - Roxanne Rutledge and Susan West.	Nov 20 10:00 - Monthly Meeting at Courthouse

Try Something Different

by Marcia Winchester, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Container gardening is a challenge. In the summer the heat, humidity and need for lots of water is the challenge. The fall/winter challenge for container gardening is too much water, cold temperatures, and freezing winds. However, on a dreary winter day, looking out the window at a container of greenery and pansies goes a long way to cheer anyone up.

If you have seen the Atlanta Botanical Garden's containers, you can see what using your imagination and experimentation can create. For flowers, besides using pansies, try snapdragons, stocks or wallflowers. Rosemary blooms off and on all winter making it a great draw for returning hummingbirds. When not blooming, it is a pretty addition to your greenery in containers. Parsley, creeping jenny, thyme, oregano, kale, mustard and Swiss chard add color and texture to round out your containers. I love to add evergreen carex to my containers for a rich spiky texture. Look at what evergreen ground covers you have and try some of them.

Depending on the winter, some plants will do better than others. Plants sheltered in a covered entrance avoid the biting winds. Containers on decks freeze more quickly than at ground level. I usually do only my larger pots and alter my usual potting mix - 1/3 bagged topsoil, 1/3 peat, 1/3 perlite - to less peat and more perlite for better drainage. I also remove my saucers in November when we start getting more consistent rain so they don't freeze and break. Decorative feet are an attractive way to elevate pots for less breakage.

Pots should be planted tightly or with larger plants as they grow slowly in the winter and don't fill out until spring. Don't plant until late September or early October when the heat is less intense, but give the roots time to become established before it gets cold. During the cold weather, switch to a fertilizer with calcium nitrate nitrogen, as it is difficult for plants to absorb other forms of nitrogen in cold weather.

THE GARDENER'S LIBRARY

By Mary Tucker, Cherokee County Master Gardener



We have two more additions to the Master Gardener library at the Extension Office. One is the *Southern Living Garden Book*, edited by Steve Bender and published in 1998 by Oxmoor House. This 512-page book is tailored to the South and rather than using the typical USDA Hardiness Zones, it divides the South into five gardening regions: Upper, Middle, Lower, Coastal, and Tropical. It shows Georgia in the Middle, Lower and Coastal South.

After a brief description of the Southern regions, the book lists landscape plants, dividing them into groups according to such features as showy flowers, seasonal color, autumn foliage color, fragrance, drought tolerance, etc. But the meat of the book is the A to Z Plant Encyclopedia, which lists plants alphabetically by botanical name and describes more than 5,000 plants. Under each listing, you will find a description of the genus along with its climatic and cultural requirements. Species and cultivars are also described. In the back of the book is a Practical Gardening Dictionary with information and illustrations on such things as gardening techniques and pest and weed control. The book ends with a Resource Directory, which lists botanical gardens and mail-

order suppliers and includes a few pages on the meaning of botanical names.

The second new addition is *Month-by-Month Gardening in Georgia* by Walter Reeves and Erica Glasener. This 368-page book was published just this year by Cool Springs Press. The beginning of the book includes a brief introduction to the basic horticultural practices for all gardeners, then it gets specific by concentrating on Georgia and dividing the state into gardening regions.

The body of the book is divided into sections based on type of plant: annuals, bulbs, edibles, houseplants, lawns, perennials and ornamental grasses, roses, shrubs, trees, vines, and ground covers. Each section covers specific gardening techniques as they relate to the type of plant discussed. Included are such things as planning, soil preparation, planting, watering, fertilizing, pruning, and diseases and pests, along with garden chores for every month. Also included are recommendations of specific plants for Georgia. An appendix includes a glossary of gardening terms, garden chemical use, information on growing fruit, and gardening resources in Georgia.

Cool Tool!

MY FAVORITE TOOLS—SUPERSIZED! Joan McFather, Cherokee County Master Gardener

There's really nothing special about these particular tools—my wheelbarrow and my rake—except their size. And left to my own devices I never would have bought either of them, being, as I have often been told, “set in my ways.” I prefer to think of myself as knowing what I want, and, having gotten it, seeing no need to make changes.

However, on the day in question, the man who frequently makes this personal observation when I fail to agree with him had accompanied me to Home Depot where he stood transfixed—in love with a giant orange wheelbarrow. It wasn't so much tall as DEEP, apparently big enough to haul two garbage cans, and very orange. It had two front wheels, “to give it strong stability,” my companion said with equally strong conviction. “You need it.”

“What for?” I scoffed—my usual reaction. But in the long run it was easier to give in and buy rather than listen to the litany of things I couldn't do without it. And wheeling “Big Orange,” as he had instantly named it, toward the checkout, we encountered its soul mate, the wide-angle rake. This is your usual fan-shaped affair, green plastic—just twice as wide across as a normal metal one.

“And just look at the ergonomically correct curve of the teeth!” I swear he said that. While I was contemplating “teeth”... “tines”?... “ribs”?... “prongs”?!, to say nothing of what ergonomics had to do with anything, we were out the door and headed for the truck.

So now I have these two huge tools—and I love them! They really are helpful. Whereas once I was continually running back and forth with my puny one-wheeled wheelbarrow, now I can prune great mountains of shrubbery or gather heaps of downed branches or pull acres of weeds before I have to go empty it. And the woodpile! I can pile in enough cut logs to replenish the woodpile in one trip. I'll grant you that I look somewhat peculiar shoving it up the hill and even funnier chasing it down hill, BUT I CAN DO IT IN ONE TRIP!

The rake, too, I love. Living in the woods means lots of leaves, and I spend hours raking the drive and car turn around. I have perfected the art of dragging the rake around to collect swaths of leaves; I have mastered turning the rake over and using it like a giant shovel, hoisting a bushel of leaves at a time over the edge. I AM WOMAN, SEE ME RAKE!

I don't listen to “I told you so.”

FALL BEST TIME TO TROUNCE FIRE ANT COLONY

By: Dan Rahn, Extension News Editor
University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

Fall is the best time to kill fire ants, said Beverly Sparks, a research and Extension Service entomologist with the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. "Reducing their numbers in the fall can help push them over the edge in the winter." Sparks said people don't normally think of fire ants as vulnerable in the fall. But they really are. "If I could treat fire ants only once a year," she said, "I'd do it in the fall."

The young colonies are especially vulnerable because they don't have many workers. So they can't respond very quickly to the need to escape freezing temperatures.

The networked tunnels of a fire ant mound are constantly collapsing, she said. Moving deeper into the ground requires a lot of work. Anything you can do to reduce the number of ants available to gather food and maintain the mound structure makes the colony less able to survive winter weather.

Fire ants are most active in spring and fall, when daytime temperatures are between 70 and 85 degrees, she said.

"Actively foraging ants will pick up a bait and carry it into the nest within minutes," she said. If the ants are inactive and don't find the bait quickly, it will become

rancid. By the time the ants find it, it no longer appeals to them. Also at this time of year, fire ants are not too deep in the ground. That makes them easier to kill with a mound-drench, granular, dust or aerosol contact insecticide. When you use those products, Sparks said, "it's critical to treat when the queen and brood are close to the surface."

A final advantage unique to the fall is that you're treating when many of the fire ant colonies in your yard are very young.

"Fire ants mate all during the year, but they're most actively mating in the spring," Sparks said. Mated queens go off and establish new colonies. By fall, these colonies are well established but still very small.

"Quite often you don't even know they're there," she said. "But if you don't treat them, they'll become the big mounds you see next year."

How do you treat them if you don't know where they are? Broadcast a fire ant bait. That's the first step in the three-step, ongoing program Sparks recommends for fire ant control. First use a fresh bait and apply it according to label directions; next, treat individual problem mounds with an approved contact product; finally repeat the first step once or twice a year.

RECYCLING TIPS

By: Miriam Zagarola, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Coming back from the summer months and the long vacations is not easy, and most of the time adjusting comes very slowly. So I'll be brief on this article of recycling issues. Following are a few recycling tips:

Use for Old Toothbrushes

- ❖ Cleaning difficult to reach areas in the kitchen or bathroom and working on craft projects.

Use of Newspapers

- ❖ As a substitute for landscape fabric, they will decompose rapidly and are friendly to the environment. Place the newspapers down, and cover with pine straw or leaves.
- ❖ For paper mache projects
- ❖ As packing material
- ❖ Comic section can be used as wrapping paper for children's gifts.
- ❖ Cover for carpets and floors when going out of town to prevent pet soiling.
- ❖ Cover carpets and floors when painting the interior of a home.

Old Books

- ❖ Give to charity, a school, or a library. If you itemize, you can take a deduction on your income tax return but be sure you request a receipt for your records.

- ❖ Start a book exchange with friends and family.
- ❖ Take to a bookstore. Some stores will take your old books, resell them, and give you a store credit toward new purchases. Other stores will sale on consignment in exchange for a percentage of the proceeds.

Composting

- ❖ Buy a small decorative container and put by the sink to store composting discards such as coffee grinds/filters, tea bags, vegetables and fruits, houseplant leaves, napkins, paper towels. Exclude anything with oil.
- ❖ Use citrus discards to clean the kitchen counters and disposal. They are very efficient and leave a very pleasant smell.

Energy Tip:

This can save you up to \$500.00 a year on electricity. Turn off your PC when it is not in use. The experts agree that this won't hurt your PC. If you feel uneasy about shutting down your PC every time you are not using it, there is another solution that will lower your use of electricity. Right click on your desktop screen, select Properties, select Screen Saver, select Settings and make your changes on that panel. Your PC will go to sleep; substantially reducing the energy use .

MY FAVORITE PLANT

By: Marcia Winchester, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Anemone's are like Smith's - lots of them and in many different forms. Allan Armitage lists nine different Species. They range from the three to six inch woodland native *Anemone thalictroides* that blooms in the spring to a six-foot Japanese Anemone or *Anemone hybrida* and *Anemone hupehensis* that bloom in September. The species that I want you to fall in love with this time is the Japanese anemone. It is a very under used plant in the Atlanta area and once you see it blooming you will have to have it.

The usually evergreen leaves resembling maple leaves are in threes on top of a sturdy stalk two feet off the ground. The flower stalks rise from four to six feet with the only leaves where the stalk separates into the multiple gingival flower stems. The flowers resemble a single rose with five fat petals in white or shades of lavender to pink. The centers are green and surrounded by a yellow fringe of stamens. Before the flowers open they are like little round balls on top of fingers. Some Japanese anemones come in a double form but I like the simple beauty of the single form.

Japanese anemones thrive in rich, well-drained soil in semi-shade. They multiply by woody underground roots with very few root hairs. This makes them wilt for a while when dividing. Dividing is best done in the spring or fall and they must be well watered until they come out of transplant shock. I think they do better when they are transplanted into pots then, after they have gotten over transplant shock, plant them in their new spot.

Last year I didn't deadhead them after they finished blooming and they formed beautifully cottony seed heads thus adding another month of interest in my garden. They really don't have much pest damage. When a leaf starts looking ratty I just remove it. They continuously send up new leaves. They are poisonous so I bet the deer won't eat them, which just adds to their value in the garden. I have seen them for sale at local nurseries, catalogs, and sometimes I have some at the Master Gardener plant sale.

BIRD'S EYE VIEW

By: Helen B. Ogren, Cherokee County Master Gardener Intern

Folks with nectar feeders are delighted with many spring hummingbird visits and are dismayed with a sudden drop in visits in early summer. The birds have merely continued northward in their migration, or if local, have dispersed to their own territories to mate, nest, and raise young. An abundance of spring rains brings an increase in flowers and insects, so more food resources are out there.

Fall brings us another increase in feeder activity.

The Ruby-throated hummingbird, our only Eastern breeding hummer isn't very successful at surviving cold temperatures, as are the Western species, in a state of torpor. To escape certain death on frosty nights, their tiny brains are programmed to begin migration as early as mid-July from Canada and the northern United States. Males generally migrate first, then females and then this year's young. They feed voraciously as they go, on nectar and insects, building up body fat as fuel to make it to Mexico and Central America. About half their intake will be soft-bodied insects. As they feed, they also aid in pollination of their nectar flowers. Don't worry, your flowers and feeders will NOT entice them in to overstay. They know when to depart and WILL. Folks are now encouraged to keep a feeder up throughout the winter. By November 15th, all Ruby-throats are likely gone and hummingbirds now seen are



probably Western species very uncommon to this area.

Twelve species of hummers have been recorded in the Southeast - eight of these in Georgia. Each record is an exciting and important event. If you have a winter hummingbird visitor, you can add scientific documentation by notifying one of the following:

The Atlanta Audubon Society

770/955-4111 or www.atlantaaudubon.org

The Georgia Ornithological Society's Rare Bird Alert

770/493-8862 or gos@hom.net

A local veteran birder will visit at your convenience to confirm the sighting. Then a specially trained and authorized bander will make arrangements with you to band, record, and release the bird. This is very exciting and educational to watch.

Don't despair over having to clean feeders and make nectar all winter. In cold weather the nectar lasts much longer (thank goodness!). I plan to erect a feeder on my Lake Allatoona dock this winter and will be keeping my fingers crossed. After all, one of these rarities, a Broad-tailed hummer, common in the Rockies, appeared at a lady's lakeside feeder near Galt's Ferry, off Kellogg Creek Road last December. It could happen again.

ON THE WILD SIDE - SQUIRRELS IN THE GARDEN, IS IT THE BEAUTY OR THE BEAST?

By: Cicinda Richardson, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Squirrels fall within the order of Rodentia, forming an extensive family Sciuridae, consisting of 50 genera and 200 species. Animals within the squirrel family range in size from that of a mouse to some larger cats.

Squirrels have body fur, which sheds twice a year, spring and fall. They possess typical rodent teeth, in particular a single pair of chisel-like incisors in each jaw that grow continuously. These incisors must be worn down by gnawing, perhaps by gnawing holes in nuts for food or by nibbling in search of a warm winter nest.

Squirrels have strong claws on their fingers and toes and these ensure a firm grip when sunk into the bark of a tree. They also provide an excellent way to dig holes.

Most types of squirrels have large protruding eyes with sharp vision that can distinguish vertical objects particularly well. Their strategic eye action enables them to see behind, overhead, and underneath without turning their heads, thus giving them the ability to quickly survey the area for danger.

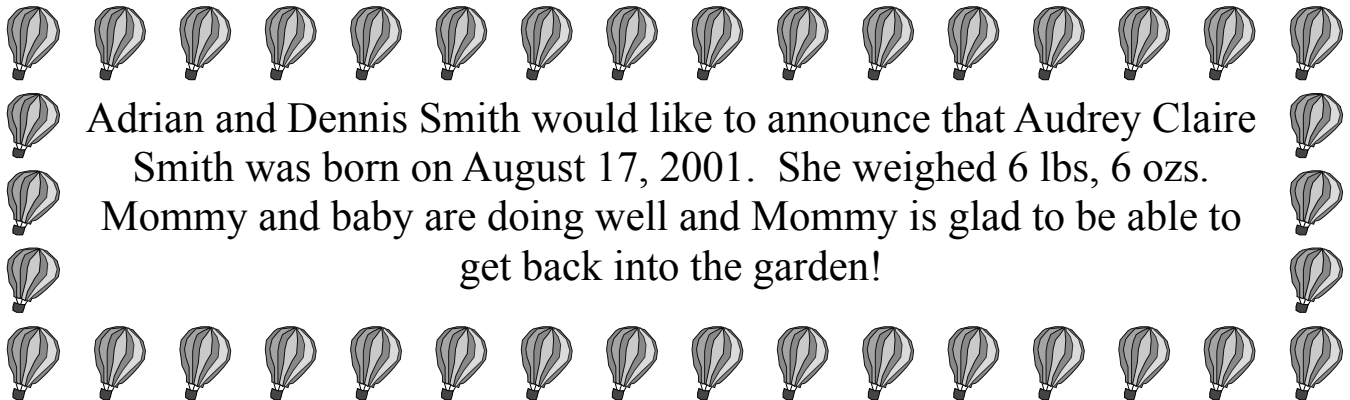
Although watching the squirrels provides enjoyment or entertainment, I must confess they cause equally as much frustration when raiding the bird feeders and garden. The following are a few helpful hints for attempted garden squirrel proofing:

- Digging: Spread chicken wire or burlap over new gardens then disguise them with a layer of mulch. You can also plant bulbs in bulb baskets made of plastic or wire. Create your box shape by turning the wire up on the sides after layering with soil and bulbs then complete by covering the top with an additional section of wire.
- Bulbs: Try planting more pest-resistant bulbs such as daffodil, allium, hyacinth, and crocosmia. (Interplanting garlic and onion among vegetables works to repel some critters.)
- Chewing on tender plants: Using an organic spray

with a hot pepper sauce once a week can discourage chewing.

- Predatory pets: Dogs and cats are great allies in the fight against animal pests.
- Bird Feeders: Place bird feeders at least six feet from launching pads. Another technique is to hang the feeder on a line stretching from one structure to another, covering the line with curlers, thread spools, or beads so they can't get a grip.
- Trees: Protect trees by wrapping them with a two feet band of aluminum six feet from the ground. Fold a two-inch flap at the top, outward.
- Plant Barriers: Animal pests, as a general rule, do not like pungent plants; so try to incorporate plantings like wormwood and marigolds for discouragement.
- Fabric Hoops: Protect tender new plants with fabric row covers secured at the bottom with a wooden frame of 2X4's.
- Protecting Fruit: Ripening fruit can be protected with coverings such as plastic containers cut in half with punched drainage holes.

There are other critter control tips but many may not be allowed in your community. They include: live or death traps, electric fencing, fumigation, and toxic baits (rodenticides). Please contact local authorities prior to using these. Although they are certainly active deterrents, I only mentioned them as a matter of fact. I enjoy watching these furry fellows far too much to go to such extremes to eliminate them totally from the garden.



OCTOBER TIPS

ORNAMENTALS AND TURF

- Be sure to clean up around your perennial flowers, such as rose and peony. If left on the ground, leaves and stems can harbor diseases and provide convenient places for pests to spend the winter.
- It is not unusual for some spring-flowering bulbs to send up a few leaves in the late fall or early winter. The bulbs will remain safe over the winter and will still produce flowers next spring.
- If your climbing roses are in an exposed location, tie them up firmly with broad strips of rags so the wind will not whip them against the trellis and bruise the bark.
- It is too late this year to prune roses as they would become subject to winter injury. However, the rose garden should be raked and cleaned to prevent black spot and other diseases. Additional mulch should be added after the ground has frozen. Continue spraying for fungus.
- Fall is the time to control certain broadleaf weeds in the lawn including chickweed, white clover, dandelion, wild onion, plantain and thistle.
- For an elegant, dramatic effect in your garden, plant a dwarf Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum Dissectum*) near a water garden. This small, slow-growing tree has an artistic branching pattern and intricately cut leaves that will provide some shade for fish while adding beauty to your water garden.
- October and November are generally considered the best months to plant trees and shrubs. Garden centers and nurseries usually stock a good selection of woody plants now. Select some accent plants for your landscape that will provide autumn colors. Trees that turn red include dogwood, red maple, sweet gum and red or scarlet oak. Shrubs with spectacular fall foliage include viburnum, fothergilla, hydrangea, blueberries, itea and amsonia.
- Don't retire the lawn mower when the growth of your lawn slows down this fall. As long as the grass continues to grow, it should be mowed.
- Plant trees at least 6 feet away from sidewalks and concrete pools so growing roots do not crack the concrete.
- Small imperfections, such as nicks and loose skin, should not affect the quality of most bulbs. Store bulbs in a cool area (below 65° F) if unable to plant immediately.
- Cut down stems and foliage of herbaceous perennials when the leaves begin to brown.
- As you clean out the flower beds, mark the spots where late starting perennials will come up next spring to avoid damaging them while working the beds.
- To minimize the look of open spaces between new shrubs, plant a low-growing ground cover, such as bugleweed or winter creeper.
- Apply a half dose of fertilizer at the beginning of the month.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Cut back perennial herbs to encourage well-branched growth next year.
- Tomatoes need an average daily temperature of 65° F or more for ripening. If daytime temperatures consistently are below this, pick fruits that have begun to change color and bring them inside to ripen.

- Place a ripe apple in a closed container with green tomatoes to encourage the tomatoes to turn red. Ripe apples give off ethylene gas that causes tomatoes to ripen, or use them for recipes that require green tomatoes.
- Cure pumpkins, butternut, and Hubbard squash at temperatures between 70 - 80° F for two to three weeks immediately after harvest. After curing, store them in a dry place at 55- 60° F. If stored at 50° F or below, pumpkins and squash are subject to damage by chilling. At temperatures above 60° F, they gradually lose moisture and become stringy.
- Strawberries covered in the fall with a spun-bonded polyester material and uncovered in the spring just before bloom produced up to 60% more fruit than plants given the conventional straw or hay mulch cover.
- A final weeding of your strawberries, blueberries, or raspberries will help keep weed problems down to a minimum. Start collecting fresh pine needles or clean straw to mulch strawberries after the ground has frozen.
- Prepare your soil now for planting raspberries in the spring. A pH of 5.8 - 6.5 and sandy-loam soil are best for raspberries. When planting in a garden, avoid areas where tomatoes, eggplants or potatoes were planted to guard against verticillium wilt being in the soil.
- Make a note of any particularly productive or unsatisfactory varieties or crops. Such information can be very useful during garden-planning time in the spring.
- Smaller apples usually keep longer and bruise less. Allow for air circulation when storing.
- Clean up home orchard and small-fruit plantings. Sanitation is essential for good maintenance. Dried fruits or mummies carry disease organisms through the winter to attack next year's crop.
- If there is a threat of frost at night, harvest your cucumber, eggplant, melon, okra, pepper and summer squash so the fruits are not damaged by the frost.
- Hot peppers store well dry. Pull the plants and hang them up, or pick the peppers and thread on a string. Store in a cool, dry

MISCELLANEOUS

- place.
- Late-fall tilling can help control insects such as corn borer, corn earworm, cucumber beetle, squash bug, and vine borer because it exposes overwintering insects to winter conditions. It also makes spring soil preparation easier.
- When removing disease-infected plant parts or debris, do not place refuse on the compost pile. The disease pathogens will live in the compost pile and can be transmitted with the application of compost to other garden beds, unless compost temperatures reach above 180° F and decomposition is complete.
- Do not apply quick-acting fertilizers while tilling the soil in the fall. Otherwise, nitrogen will leach away before spring. Materials that release nutrients slowly into the soil, such as rock phosphate, can be worked into the soil in the fall.
- When temperatures start dropping, be sure to check for any chemicals that should not freeze. Move them to a safe storage place where temperatures do not fall below 40° F. Frozen liquids can break jars and split plastic containers, spreading concentrated chemicals within reach of children or pets.

NOVEMBER TIPS

ORNAMENTALS AND TURF

- Fertilize wisteria after leaves have fallen to avoid excess top growth and lack of bloom.
- Protect the roots of azaleas and rhododendrons with a heavy mulch of organic materials, such as oak leaves, wood chips, or pine needles.
- For best growth, plant spring bulbs where they are out of the direct sun during the middle of the day. Bulbs have a chilling requirement that is satisfied by winter soil temperatures, so avoid planting bulbs near heated basements where the soil may not stay adequately cold. Do not plant bulbs before Nov. 1st.
- Watch for standing water in perennial beds after long periods of rain. Water that collects on the surface during winter will freeze and can damage perennials. Dig shallow trenches to help drain excess water away. Make a note to raise that bed in spring or plant with plants that like “wet feet”.
- When placing plants around the home, remember as a general rule, plants with thick leaves can take lower light levels than those with thin leaves.
- After several killing frosts have occurred this fall, cut back dormant perennials to about 3 inches above ground. After the ground is frozen, plants can be mulched to guard against displacement due to soil heaving. These steps ensure a successful show of plant foliage and color next season.
- Invert large flowerpots over semi-hardy perennials, such as dusty miller, to protect the plants in winter. Uncover the plants during warm spells.
- Cut away suckers from the base of lilacs, forsythia, and crape myrtle.
- If there is any evidence of scale on trees and shrubs, spray with dormant oil in late fall and again in early spring.
- Avoid transplanting shrubs and trees on sunny or windy days. On these days, the roots are exposed to too much light or drying winds, putting undue stress on the plant.
- A November application of fertilizer is very beneficial to a lawn of cool-season grasses. It promotes root development without excessive top growth. With a strong root system, your lawn will be better able to withstand drought conditions next summer.
- Small low spots in the lawn can be raised by carefully removing the turf and filling in the low spot with good topsoil. Remove the turf by cutting 2 inches deep into the lawn with a flat-bladed spade, then angle the blade under the sod to cut it free, keeping at least 2 inches deep to get most of the roots. After filling the low spot, replace the sod, and keep it well watered until it is reestablished.
- Tulips and Dutch iris need to be planted in cold soil so they do not send up shoots before roots are established. If tulips are planted deeply, they will produce large, uniform flowers for many years. Deep planting also makes the bulbs less susceptible to mouse and squirrel damage.
- Peonies can be planted now in full sun and fertile, well-drained soil that is rich in organic matter. Dig holes 18 inches and fill halfway with a mixture of soil, compost, and a handful of 5-10-10 fertilizer. Add a few more inches of soil and set the tubers so the buds are 1-2 inches below the soil surface. Backfill, firm the soil, and water thoroughly. Peonies do not grow well after being

moved and will not bloom for several years.

- Now is the best time to move established roses to a new location and plant new roses. Top tall rose bushes to avoid winter wind

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- damage.
- Remove grass and weeds from trunks of fruit trees and grapes to prevent damage by mice and rodents. Leave a bare circle (one foot wide) around tree trunks when spreading mulch to keep mice from feeding on the bark. A collar or fence of poultry wire or a commercial tree guard approximately 18 inches high will deter rodents and rabbits.
- Plant lettuce and hardy vegetables, such as beets, cabbage, and spinach, in cold frames for winter or early spring crops.
- If you use manure as a soil conditioner, apply it now and till it under. Manure can be a source of weed seed. Composting before application can reduce the number of viable seeds.
- Rough plow or spade garden plots containing heavy, clay soil. Add organic matter and lime if indicated by a soil test. Leave the soil rough. Winter's thawing and freezing will break up the clods and kill some of the insects and slugs overwintering in the soil. A rough soil surface also catches more moisture and reduces erosion.
- If you've purchased gourds this year as decorations, plan to grow them yourself next year. They make great garden projects for kids.
- When time or weather conditions prohibit plowing or cover cropping, you may wish to let your garden lie under a mulch of compost, non-diseased plant wastes, or leaves all winter to be plowed or tilled under in the spring. If using large or heavy

MISCELLANEOUS

- organic matter, chop if fine enough so it can break down over the winter.
- Store pesticides in a frost-free location away from food and out of the reach of children. If a pesticide is in a paper container, put the whole package in a plastic container and seal it. Be sure that all bottles and cans are tightly sealed and well labeled.
- Keep an eye out for spider mites on your houseplants; they thrive in dry air. At the first sign of any insect infestation, isolate your plant. Several thorough washings with plain water may bring them under control. If not, apply an appropriate insecticide and follow the instructions on the label!
- Check attic vents, building joints and loose siding. Seal any openings that would allow squirrels and mice to enter.
- During the cooler temperatures and shorter days of the winter months, the growth rate of most houseplants slows. Unless plants are grown under an artificial light source that is left on 16 hours per day, new growth will be minimal until spring. Reduce fertilization and water until late April or May when new growth resumes.
- African violets do well when potted in small pots. A good general rule is to use a pot one-third the diameter of the plant. To humidify African violets, surround the pot with moist peat contained in a second pot. When buying new plants, avoid those with any signs of yellowing leaves.
- If you are planning to lay newspapers as mulch in the spring, glue

HELPFUL HINTS

By: Arleene Ward, Cherokee County Master Gardener

- You can grow better onions if you know day length for different varieties. Most fall into two classifications. Short-day onions grow best in Southern gardens and long-day onions produce the best crop in Northern gardens. Length of the day influences their bulbs size.
- Once harvested, drop your onions in legs cut from ruined panty hose one at a time and tie a knot in the hose between each onion. Air is allowed to circulate and they seem to last longer. Hang the onion-filled hose up in your pantry and cut off each onion as you need it.
- When you're done in the garden shake your gloves out, brush off the dirt, and put them in a large size plastic zip-lock bag. You'll be able to store them in your garage or shed, safe from unwanted 'tenants' who might like to live inside them (black widow, brown recluse, etc.)
- Save old pill bottles and film canisters. They come in handy for storing seeds. They are easily marked and stored in the refrigerator until planting time next spring.
- Store bird seed in 2-liter soda bottles. It stores easier, pours easier and it doesn't attract mice.
- Picking a poinsettia (from Garden Gate email tips): Look for loners. Poinsettias need space to flourish, so crowded displays aren't the best growing conditions. Choose plants whose pots and leaves aren't wrapped so tightly in cellophane or foil. These materials don't let air get through to the bracts, making them weak and flimsy. And they hold in lots of water, which can cause mold.

POND EQUIPMENT

By: Arleene Ward, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Fall is an excellent time to think about installing a pond in your garden. This is also the time we start thinking about shutting things down for the winter. A discussion of tools and equipment will be helpful for anyone new to ponding.

With autumn right around the corner, leaf netting is essential for all pond owners. Even though your pond is hopefully not situated beneath deciduous trees, leaf litter will still be a problem because winds will see to it that a maximum amount of autumn's color finds its way to your pond. Leaf netting is stretched over the area and secured to keep leaves out of the water. You want to reduce as much decaying matter as possible in your overwintering pond. This is important to the health of your fish, and also prevents nitrogen build-up, which will feed spring algae bloom.

A few stray leaves still find their way into your pond, so you will want to include skimmer nets or fishnets among your pond tools. These nets can be used to scoop out any decaying material that sinks to the bottom of your pond throughout the year. They are also useful in snagging any suspicious-looking fish to check on their health.

Vinyl patches are good to keep on hand so that repairs can be made as soon as you find leaks. These come in a variety of styles. I like the thick, pre-glued patches that can be cut to any size. They are quick and easy to use.

Chemicals for testing water quality are essential, especially when first setting up a new pond, or in the event you suddenly find symptoms of stress in your fish. You will want to monitor pH, ammonia levels and nitrite levels. Some kits have the supplies for all three tests, or you can purchase kits individually for each purpose. You

will also need dechlorinator. This will remove the deadly chlorine in your tap water in the event you must refill your pond more than 1 inch at a time.

If you want a water feature such as a waterfall or fountain, you must have a pump to recirculate the water from the deepest part of your pond to the water feature. A pump will also be necessary if you keep koi, or just have a larger sized pond that needs mechanical filtration in order to keep water crystal clear. The size of your pump will depend on the size of your pond and the amount of water that must be moved.

Large ponds and koi ponds can greatly benefit from a pond vacuum. There are several makes and models available. Use of a pond vac can greatly reduce cleaning time when you find lots of muck at the bottom of your pond.

The addition of a good book or two to your gardening library can also be considered a good tool. Several I have found to be most valuable are the following:

The Pond Doctor, by Helen Nash; The Pond Builder, by Helen Nash; The Water Garden, by Peter Robinson; A Creative Step-by-Step Guide to the Water Garden, by Yvonne Rees & Neil Sutherland

With these basic tools at your disposal, pond maintenance will be much less of a hassle, and far less time consuming. After all, we intended our water gardens to be places of beauty and serenity. They should erase the stresses of our day and impart peace to our souls.



QUESTION AND ANSWER

Send your questions to Angie Yabrow at yardbird_mabs@msn.com or call her at 770-592-9399

Q: How long does it take for the different types of mosquitoes to hatch?

A: This is a difficult question. There are 2500 different species of mosquitoes in the world, with 150 in the U.S. and 73 of those species located in Florida. In the Atlanta area we have 3 varieties - Anopheles, Culex and Aedes. In general when a mosquito lays eggs those will hatch within 48 hours to the larvae stage. From the pupa to adult stage may take about 2 days. However, and there are always exceptions to every rule, this can vary from species to species and be dependent on weather conditions. There is one variety that lays eggs in dry areas and when the rain or water source is present will hatch and be adults within a week to 10 days. But, they can remain dormant in the "dry" stage for months on end. Also, weather can affect the hatching times. For example, the variety Culex tarsalis will go from egg to adult in 14 days at 70 degrees, but only need 10 days at 80 degrees. As you see the hatching time is only partly predictable, but in general expect to see a new swarm of mosquitoes appearing approximately every 10 days after wet weather.

Q: I noticed a landscaper took all of the leaves off of his Stella d'or daylilies at the end of July. Why would he do this and is it a good practice?

A: I have researched this in many areas and checked many sources, but cannot find a good reason to do this. This is not to say that it will hurt the lillies, but could prevent any late summer blooms that might appear. I did find that as summer progresses, the lillies start to look somewhat ragged with dead foliage accumulating around the plant. It is a good idea to remove this dead foliage and "clean them up". They will continue to bloom until fall. Blooms will be somewhat scarce in the drought conditions that we see, but a few will appear. It is good practice to remove all flower stalks after the blooms are spent and after the leaves have died back naturally, remove and compost.



COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

FRAGRANCE GARDEN - CHEROKEE COUNTY SENIOR CENTER

By: Arleene Ward, Cherokee County Master Gardener

The Cherokee County Senior Center Garden is an ongoing teaching project of the Cherokee County Master Gardeners. Centrally located, the facility is used daily for various activities by seniors in our county. The garden was established in 1996, and has expanded yearly in size and scope to provide enjoyment and educational opportunities to the entire community.

The fragrance garden is one of several themed gardens at the site. It sits just outside the back door of the center, surrounding an arbor-covered patio. As visitors relax in one of two wooden swings, we envisioned a garden that would surround them with wonderful scents as well as beauty. Grant money from GMGA is helping us realize this goal.

Many hours of research went into plant selection. A multitude of considerations were analyzed. As with any typical garden, cold and heat tolerance were considered. Drought tolerance was also a major factor. Scheduling volunteers who can provide regular irrigation can be a difficult task. Couple this with watering restrictions and it is easy to see why drought tolerance was such an important criterion. Fragrance became the next consideration. Lists were prepared of all plants celebrated for their fragrance. These lists were divided into the categories shrubs, vines, herbs, annuals, perennials, bulbs, and groundcovers. Many resources were consulted, and notations made as to soil requirements, pest resistance, growth habits and maintenance requirements. Any plant with invasive tendencies was

eliminated, as was any plant that demanded TLC in order to look its best. It was also important to be sure we included many evergreen species. We didn't want the garden going completely dead in winter. Color coordination and bloom schedules were the next factors to look at. A site plan was made, and initial plant choices placed in the plan. These selections were color coded as to bloom time, and the site map was scrutinized and tweaked to ensure a balance of blooms in each month of the year. Most gardens could stop here in their planning, but a fragrance garden must look at one more criterion – fragrance! Care was taken to make sure there were not too many odors going on at once. We've mixed spicy scents with sweet ones, and done our best to make sure subtly flavored fragrances are not placed too close to a scent that would overpower it.

We are still in the process of installing plants for our garden. This past fall we planted fothergilla "Mt. Airy," a tea olive, and a number of bulbs, including lemon daylilies, hyacinth "Blue Jacket," Amaryllis belladonna, Lilium "Scheherazade" and saffron crocus. Rosemary, lemon thyme, golden thyme and golden oregano have been added. Our latest addition has been a "Kleim's Hardy" gardenia. Coming soon will be lavender "Hidcote," phlox "David," and lilac "Miss Kim." As each plant goes in, it receives a plant marker for identification. By the end of our project we hope to have in place over 30 varieties of fragrant offerings with which to entice and educate visitors to our garden.

RECIPES

Submit your recipes to our Garden Recipe Editor, Dan Searcy, at dmsearcy@aol.com

Pecan Pie

(from the book Biscuits, Spoonbread and Sweet Potato Pie by Bill Neal, 1996, published by Alfred A. Knopf)

- 9-inch glass pie ban, lightly buttered
- 5 Tb. butter
- 1 cup lightly packed light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 2 Tb. all-purpose flour
- 2/3 tsp. salt
- 4 eggs
- 1 1/4 cups pecan halves
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 Tb. dark rum
- Pie dough for 9-inch single crust pie

Beat the butter until light and add the sugars slowly. Beat in flour and salt. Beat the eggs separately, just enough to make them smooth. Stir into the butter mixture, add pecan halves, vanilla, and rum. Roll out 1 piece of dough to fit into the bottom of the pie pan. Pour the filling into the pie and place in the lower part of an oven preheated to 450° F. Immediately reduce heat to 325°F. and bake 40 minutes until set in the middle. 8 servings.

Paul James Caesar Salad

Recipe for large group

- 2 heads Romaine Lettuce - torn
- 1 large egg or egg substitute
- 1 tsp Worcestershire Sauce
- 1 tsp red wine vinegar
- 1/2 lemon
- 1/2 lime
- 2 Tb. anchovy paste
- 2 cloves garlic - crushed
- Pepper

Recipe for 4 servings

- 1 head Romaine Lettuce - torn
- 1 small egg or egg substitute
- 1/2 tsp Worcestershire Sauce
- 1/2 tsp red wine vinegar
- 1/4 lemon
- 1/4 lime
- 1 Tb. anchovy paste
- 1 clove garlic
- Pepper

Blend all ingredients in blender except lettuce. While motor is running slowly, add 2/3 cup olive oil. To serve, mix dressing, lettuce, 1/3 cup fresh parmesan cheese and 1 1/2 cups croutons.

The University of Georgia and Ft. Valley State College, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and counties of the state cooperating. The Cooperative Extension Service offers educational programs, assistance and materials to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability. An equal opportunity/affirmative action organization committed to a diverse work force.

Cherokee County Extension Service
130 East Main Street, Suite 120
Canton, GA 30114



**Mailing
Label
Here**

Mission Statement of the Georgia Master Gardener Association:

To stimulate the love for and increase the knowledge of gardening and to voluntarily and enthusiastically share this knowledge with others.