

Gardening with the Masters

For the Cherokee County Master Gardeners

Volume XVIII, Issue 2 February/March 2011

WHAT'S HAPPENING

FEBRUARY

Feb 3 - Demo Garden workday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Feb 5 - Lecture on Gardening for All Seasons-Winter Tips/ Pruning 10am-Sr Center
Feb 15 - MG Monthly Meeting
Feb 17 - Mid-term and Office Orientation for our MG Intern Training
Feb 16 - Demo Garden workday 10 - 3 - Hands on Pruning
Feb 18 - Georgia Arbor Day
Feb 19 - GNPS Symposium
Feb 19 - 10am Rosecreek Library Lecture on the ABC's of Gardening
Feb 21 - Landscape Classes begin, Mondays and Thursdays through March 10
Feb 26 - Lecture - Beginner Veggie Gardening - 10a.m. at Ball Ground Community Cntr

MARCH

Mar 3 - Demo Garden workday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Mar 6 - Lecture on Seed Starting and Guerilla Gardening at Canton Sr. Center 10a.m.
Mar 15 - Monthly meeting
Mar 17 - Demo Garden workday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Mar 19 - 10a.m. - Lecture on Fairy Gardening at Sr. Center

EDITOR'S CORNER

By Marcia Winchester,
Cherokee County Master Gardener



My youngest sister has decided to go back to college and get a degree in Ethnobotany. She has been teaching gardening at a small private school in California for several years. In my family, going back to school is normal. My mom started college in her 40s after having seven kids. She drove 40-50 miles to attend classes, getting a degree in elementary education. I've been so proud of her for doing something she loved. Several of my sisters have multiple degrees so when Gloria wrote she was going to go back for a 4 year degree after taking 10 years to get a 2 year degree I was proud of her. I told her, "You can't finish what you don't start."

finish or accomplish in 2011, then plan on how we are going to achieve that goal. Each of us should choose at least one master gardening project where we will learn something new in gardening which we then will pass on to others. You could participate at a plant clinic or Jr. Master gardening program, or you might research and write an article for the newsletter. The Demo Garden is a great project in which to learn gardening techniques and plant IDing. I've learned a lot by helping with different lectures. There are many topics from which you can choose.

It's your 2011. What do you want to finish?

As the new year unfolds each of us should think about what we want to



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COMMITTEE REPORT

By Steve Scott, Cherokee County Master Gardener

The Funk Heritage Center, *Georgia's Official Frontier and Southeastern Indian Interpretive Center* located on 40 acres at Reinhardt University, won a \$700 grant from the Georgia Master Gardeners Association (GMGA) to purchase identification signage for the native plants in the xeriscape gardens. The signs, which were installed by Master Gardeners, display both the common and botanical name for each plant, which will allow visitors to identify North Georgia-tolerant plants they could use in their own gardens. Cherokee County Master Gardeners have contributed many hours to the Heritage Center's gardens, including assisting with the installation of the xeriscape landscape and a dry stream bed.



One program for which the Master Gardeners contributed their services was the Nature Club. For the past four years, the Heritage Center has offered an after-school enrichment program for fifteen to twenty children 3rd through 6th grade. The Nature Club, which was the result of collaborations between the Cherokee Master Gardeners, the Heritage Center and Reinhardt University staff, a nearby public school, and a startup grant of \$500 from the GMGA. Weekly activities promoted the conservation of natural resources, advanced the study of horticulture, created an awareness of native plants and beneficial insects, and gardening history. Center staff members and Master Gardeners planned the activities and invited special guests to present programs. The students learned about basic soil science, composting and worms, birding, bees, native plants, archaeology, water conservation and many other topics. They planned and planted butterfly gardens, took nature

walks to study native plants, and visited the Reinhardt campus arboretum and greenhouse where they learned how to propagate plants. The students planted a "Three Sisters Garden" in mounds the same way Native Americans planted their gardens. Sunflowers and gourds were also raised. The children cared for their plants and measured them weekly. Sunflowers brightened the project, and the seeds were saved to feed wild birds.

Another activity at the Heritage Center that Master Gardeners have supported is the development and maintenance of the Lou Retta Barton Northcutt Native Garden. This Garden, which is a work-in-progress, displays representative, specimen plants native to North Georgia or naturalized plants used by the Natives in the area. In addition to planting additional plants and caring for plants in the garden, Master Gardeners assisted Heritage Center volunteer Kim Dicus in developing an attractive brochure listing plants in the Native Garden. The brochure not only has a color photo of each plant in the garden and the plant name, it lists how the plant was used by the Cherokee Indians and early Georgia settlers for food or medicinal purposes.

This year the Master Gardeners incorporated the activities at the Funk Heritage Center into the Heritage Gardens program with the goal of working in partnership with the Funk Heritage Center to use the facilities, grounds and gardens of the Center to increase awareness of plants used by Native Americans in North Georgia, to use the rain garden, herb garden, vegetable garden, butterfly garden and the xeriscape of the Heritage Center to demonstrate horticulture techniques, and to use the meadows, woodlands, and stream banks of the Center as resources for teaching about habitat, soil conditions, invasive plants, and the effects of insects and disease.

If you would like to participate with this committee contact Steve Scott at scott350ubt@earthlink.net or Marvin Colston at mcolston@windstream.net.

WINTER FEEDINGS

By Jennifer Resuta, former Cherokee County Master Gardener

I have used several variations of these great recipes. My daughter and I even tried the first one, which I made with sunflower hearts and cranberries boiled in the shortening till they popped. It was delicious, even if I am not a bird.



Suet Containers – All of the birds that visit your yard during the winter will eat suet for energy and warmth. Several kinds of containers should be used. Netted bags and plastic coated wire baskets are used by small clinging birds. Logs with holes

at various points are perfect for woodpeckers and coconut shell halves are used by all.

Ground Feeders – Your feeding station would not be complete without the addition of ground feeders.

Provide at least two. These can be wooden boxes or plastic containers about 3 inches deep with a few holes drilled into the bottom for drainage. Mourning Doves, Blue Jays, Juncos and Cardinals are ground feeders. Add grit in the form of parakeet gravel or clean play sand as needed especially after rain or snow.

About the Ingredients: Suet is very important in providing energy and warmth during the cold winter months. To prepare suet, always put it through a meat grinder before melting it down. This will make a smoother liquid. Reheat to make a solid suet cake. Grit is needed to grind and digest the coarse foods that birds eat. Ordinary beach sand will do or you can use commercial bird gravel.

Bluebird Betty

1 cup sugar	2 cups flour
1 cup raisins	1/2 tsp baking powder
1/2 cup water	1/2 cup shortening
1 tsp baking soda	
1/3 cup nutmeats [Shelled sunflowers work great]	

In medium bowl combine flour, baking powder and baking soda. Set aside. Boil sugar, water, raisins (and fresh cranberries if you like) for 5 minutes. Add this liquid mixture to the dry ingredients. Mix well. Add nutmeats. Spoon into well-greased 8x8 cake pan. Bake for 20-25 minutes at 350 degrees. Serve in pieces on feeder tray or ground feeder.

Flicker Fricassee

1 cup grape nuts	1/2 tsp sand	1 cup raisins
1 1/3 cups suet	1 cup peanut hearts	

Put grape nuts, raisins, peanut hearts and sand into an 8 x 8 cake pan. Set aside. Put suet through a meat grinder, melt down in a double boiler and set aside to cool and harden slightly. Reheat and pour over dry ingredients. Refrigerate until firm, cut in to pieces and serve in plastic coated wire basket on tree trunk.



Finch Fries

Raw beef suet
1/2 cup American cheese cubed
1 cup millet
1/2 cup bread crumbs
Sand for grit

Save tuna or cat food size cans. Spoon into 4 of these cans, a combination of 1 cup millet, 1/2 cup bread crumbs and 1/2 cup of American cheese cubed. Sprinkle each with a pinch of sand for grit. Put suet through meat grinder, then melt down in a double boiler. Set aside to cool and harden slightly. Reheat. While in liquid form, pour in enough suet to fill tins. Refrigerate to harden.

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SOUTHEASTERN
Flower Show
2011 | In Tune with Blooms

MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND!!!

FEBRUARY 25-27, 2011

SOUTHEASTERN FLOWER SHOW

THINK AGAIN, PART II

By Mary Tucker, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Continued from Part I article in Dec10Jan11 issue of Gardening with the Masters

Anytime you are evaluating an introduced plant for your landscape, consider the following: if it naturalizes or self sows; how far it spreads; how fast it grows; how its seeds are dispersed and if they will be carried by wind or eaten and spread by animals; if it is allelopathic; if it will be so hardy or drought tolerant that it will out-compete other vegetation. If you have any doubts about a plant, simply avoid using it in your garden.

Don't assume that if a plant is sold in a reputable nursery or recommended by an "expert" that it is not invasive. As I researched this article, I looked in national gardening catalogs, local nurseries, respected magazines, and well-known reference books to see how many of these problematic plants were touted. I was saddened to see invasive plants virtually everywhere I looked. And even worse, there was rarely mention of their invasiveness. I even saw them listed in "environmentally conscious" literature on xeriscaping. I know they are recommended because of their drought-tolerance, hardiness, rapid growth, etc., but that is just what makes them so invasive.

A few invasive plants are well known to most folks (even non-gardeners) as weedy plants, and they are unlikely to be for sale at nurseries. Among these obvious bad guys are common Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*) and kudzu (*Pueraria lobata*). Other invasives are less well known to the general public but are still unlikely to be sold simply because they don't have features that make them particularly marketable. Plants in this category include Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*), chinaberry tree (*Melia azedarach*), and tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*).



Paulownia tomentosa
Also known as the princess tree –its violet, bell-shape flowers bloom from April to May.



Nandina domestica
Tough and adaptable, this beauty has naturalized and invaded many habitats

On the other hand, there are invasive plants that are marketed to the unsuspecting consumer because of some feature they possess. Unfortunately, the consumer often thinks only of the beauty or utility of these specimens in their own garden and does not know about or consider the impact they may have on the surrounding environment. An uneducated or inexperienced gardener may mistakenly plant invasives such as privet (*Ligustrum* spp.), princess tree (*Paulownia tomentosa*), mimosa (*Albizia julibrissin*), and the running bamboos (such as those in the genus *Arundinaria*, *Phyllostachys*, or *Pleioblastus*). I was extremely surprised to find most of these plants in mail-order catalogs along with beautiful descriptions that could entice an unwitting homeowner to order them.

Surprisingly, some seemingly innocuous landscape plants are proving to be invasive in certain habitats. Among these are Chinese holly (*Ilex cornuta*), Japanese holly (*Ilex crenata*), butterfly bush (*Buddleja davidii*), Japanese pachysandra (*Pachysandra terminalis*), aguga or bugle weed (*Ajuga reptans*), creeping Jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*), and Georgia's state flower, Cherokee rose (*Rosa laevigata*).

Once you have educated yourself about the invasive plant problem, you will be a more responsible gardener on your own property, and you may have opportunities to make a difference beyond that. If you are involved with schoolyard projects or community gardens, you can use that work to help educate the public. As native plant lovers, we can all influence the nurseries by informing them about the damage caused by specific exotic plants, discouraging them from selling those plants, and by requesting that they stock native or non-invasive alternatives. Remember that "money talks" and if we, as consumers, don't buy a plant, the nurseries won't carry it.

Below are some of the plants that you are likely to find for sale in nurseries or through mail-order catalogs and that are often listed as “recommended” in gardening publications. Others are “pass-along” plants that a well-meaning friend may offer you. You may also find gardening websites or forums that tout the advantages of some of these plants. However, all of these are invasive to one degree or another in the Southeast and/or East. The list below concentrates on plants that are likely to be problems throughout the region, rather than in narrow or specific climates. You may very well have incorporated some of these plants into your garden; others may have crept in unbeknownst to you. Learn to recognize them, and then remove them from your landscape – or at least control them and prevent their spread outside your property. This can be done by pruning to prevent seed dispersal or by mowing or spraying to prevent vegetative spread.

Due to space constraints, the plants are simply listed below. However, on the GNPS website <http://www.gnps.org/> you will find an expanded version of this article that explains the invasive characteristics of each plant.

INVASIVE TREES: mimosa (*Albizia julibrissin*), Chinese parasoltree (*Firmiana simplex*), white mulberry (*Morus alba*), princess tree or empress tree (*Paulownia tomentosa*), white poplar (*Populus alba*), Bradford pear or callery pear (*Pyrus calleryana*), sawtooth oak (*Quercus acutissima*), Chinese tallow tree (*Triadica sebifera*)

INVASIVE SHRUBS: Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), elaeagnus (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*, *E. pungens*, *E. umbellata*), burning bush or winged euonymus (*Euonymus alatus*), rose of Sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus*), privet (*Ligustrum* spp. such as *L. vulgare*, *L. sinense*, *L. japonicum*), bush honeysuckles (*Lonicera* cultivars and species such as *L. fragrantissima*, *L. maackii*, *L. morrowii*, *L. tatarica*, and others), leatherleaf mahonia (*Mahonia bealei*), nandina or heavenly bamboo (*Nandina domestica*), Japanese spiraea (*Spiraea japonica*)



Mahonia Bealei
Native to China, now invading woodlands in southern United States

INVASIVE VINES AND GROUND COVERS: fiveleaf akebia or chocolate vine (*Akebia quinata*), porcelain berry (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*), oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), sweet autumn clematis or virginsbower (*Clematis terniflora*), wintercreeper or climbing euonymus (*Euonymus fortunei*), English ivy (*Hedera helix*), liriop or lilyturf (*Liriope muscari*, *L. spicata*), Japanese honeysuckle cultivars (such as *Lonicera japonica* ‘Halliana’ or ‘Purpurea’), Japanese climbing fern (*Lygodium japonicum*), periwinkle or vinca (*Vinca major*, *V. minor*), oriental wisterias (*Wisteria sinensis*, *W. floribunda*)

INVASIVE ORNAMENTAL GRASSES AND KIN: running bamboos (such as those in the genus *Arundinaria*, *Phyllostachys*, or *Pleioblastus*), giant reed (*Arundo donax*), pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*, *C. jubata*), Chinese silvergrass or eulalia (*Miscanthus sinensis*)

INVASIVE ANNUALS, PERENNIALS, AND AQUATICS: water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*), orange daylily (*Hemerocallis fulva*), hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*), yellowflag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), ox-eye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*, *L. virgatum*), parrotfeather, (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*), perilla or beefsteak plant (*Perilla frutescens*)



Perilla frutescens
Asian origin, Perilla or beefsteak plant is a member of mint family; self-sows freely



Leucanthemum vulgare
Introduced as an ornamental, Ox-eye daisy can produce from 1-40 stems

WATER IN THE GARDEN - ROUTINE POND MAINTENANCE

By Kathy Queen, former Cherokee County Master Gardener

The sight and sound of water can bring a restful quality to even the busiest backyard. Water can mask the sound of unwanted noises, such as traffic or the neighbor's dog. Another benefit of water is that it draws such graceful creatures as butterflies and birds to your yard. If you already have a pond in your landscape, you already know about these qualities, but maybe you don't know all the little tips and techniques in keeping your pond at peak performance. In researching this article, I learned that I did not treat my pond very well last year, but vow to do better this year.

With spring right around the corner, let's discuss spring maintenance; if you didn't clean your pond last fall, spring is a good time to do it. Remove fish from the pond while doing this by placing them in a bucket with water from the pond. Clean out the muck on the bottom of your pond and remove any leaves or plant residue. Do not use chemicals or soap to clean. Then replace about 1/3 of the pond's volume with fresh water. If using tap water, let it sit for several days before adding the fish so some of the chlorine can dissipate. If you're using a dechlorinator, add it according to package directions. When adding the fish back to the pond, put them in plastic bags filled with the old water and float them on top of the newly cleaned pond until the water in the bag and the water in the pond are the same temperature. If you over-wintered any plants, return them to the pond as soon as the danger of frost is over; this is a good time to divide them if needed. After placing your plants back in the pond, the water may turn green with algae before the submerged plants can take effect. Be patient, it will eventually clear up on its own. To expedite the process, move some of the submerged plants closer to the surface - the more sunlight they receive will allow them to grow more quickly. Once you change the water in the pond, use the old water for your garden. You can't find a richer source of organic nutrition.

Summer maintenance is lower than in spring and autumn. Chores should include feeding your plants at least once a month. The easiest way to feed them is with tablets that are simply inserted into the pot. If any plant has yellowing leaves, remove them. Cut back oxygenating plants from time to time to keep them in check. In periods of drought, you may need to top off the water level in the pond. When topping off, don't submerge the hose into the pond. If you situate the hose where the water is splashing off a rock, some of the chlorine will dissipate. Depending on how much water you need to add, you may consider using a dechlorinator.

Autumn is the time when pond life begins to slow down, but to get ready for winter; you should cut off any spent flowers and yellowing foliage. Stop feeding the plants.

Consider covering your pond with netting or nursery shade cloth BEFORE the leaves begin to fall. The objective is to keep leaves out of the pond because obviously they will fall to the bottom, rot and pollute the water, which can be lethal for the fish. If you have oxygenating plants, cut back the foliage sharply so they won't rot in the water. Remove floating plants from the pond before they decay. Cut back hardy plants and drop them to the bottom of the pond.

In winter, there is very little activity. Keep an eye on the water level and replenish it as needed. Weather in this area would rarely ever completely freeze the pond surface, but if it does, do not break the ice; the shock waves will injure or kill the fish. Instead, melt a small patch with hot water. You may ask yourself why you would even need to break the ice. The reason is that if there is no contact between air and water contact, oxygen depletion can kill the fish.

For a garden pond to be successful, it must contain a balance of plants and fish. This balance will ensure proper water conditions, reduce insects (especially mosquitoes, since the fish consume their larva), and plants will greatly reduce the development of algae. Ideally, 60% of your pond surface should be covered with plants unless your pond is in deep shade. Potted surface plants such as lilies need at least five hours of sun per day to flower. Of importance to remember, lilies do not like water splashed on them. Place them away from waterfalls and fountains.

On a monthly basis, the pump filter should be cleaned. During the hottest parts of the summer, especially if your pond is in full sun, clean it more often. Fertilize water lilies from the time the leaves reach the surface in the spring until the lilies go dormant, usually around the first of November.

Whether or not you feed your fish is a matter of personal preference. If you choose not to feed them, they won't starve. They will feed off the algae and insects and will actually help to keep your pond cleaner. However, many people enjoy feeding the fish and if this is the reason you have fish in the first place, then go ahead and feed them. The rule of thumb in feeding fish is to stop feeding them when the water temperature drops below 50 degrees and begin feeding them only when the water temperature reaches 50 degrees or more. As the temperature starts to drop in the fall, switch the food to a food high in wheat germ, as this helps their metabolism and prepares them for dormancy.



I hope this article has inspired you to make your pond the best it can be. I'm very happy with my pond and find it so relaxing to be near. Now that I have the knowledge I need, maybe this year I won't kill my fish!

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LAWN CARE - FEBRUARY AND MARCH

by: Bill Slatton, former Cherokee County Master Gardener

Cool Season Grasses (Tall Fescue, Kentucky Bluegrass, Creeping Red/Chewing Fescue)

- Spring is the second best time of the year to plant cool season grass seed. Wait until the danger of hard frost has passed and soil temperatures have reached 55 degrees, usually when the Bradford pears are in full bloom. Cultivate before seeding and keep the soil moist for two weeks. Mow often at the recommended height and gradually cut back on watering until you are watering deeply and infrequently by May. This is also a good time to put down fescue sod.
- It is very important to keep cool season grasses mowed at the proper height in the spring. This encourages the grass to spread and develop deep roots.
- February usually has enough rain, but March can have some warm dry spells. If there has been no rain, water at the rate of 0.5-1 inch a week, according to watering restrictions. Newly seeded lawns should be watered frequently while they are germinating. Gradually reduce over a period of 4-6 weeks. Water will evaporate more quickly, reducing the risk of fungal diseases.
- In late February to early March you can begin fertilizing cool season grasses. Soil temperature should be a consistent 50 degrees. Use a fertilizer like 18-0-4 making sure it doesn't have a slow release nitrogen. If you don't use one with a pre-emergence for weed control then apply a separate pre-emergence for weed control. Apply at the rate of 1 pound of actual nitrogen per 1000 square feet. It should last 4-6 weeks.
- You can aerate cool season lawns with a core aerator in February. Aerate before fertilizing, but not after applying pre-emergence weed control, or it will disrupt the chemical barrier.
- Insects and disease should not be a problem this month.
- Your cool season lawn may need lime. Have it tested. Most lawns will need about 50 pounds per 1000 square feet. Apply after aerating.

Warm Season Grasses (Bermuda, Centipede, Zoysia, St. Augustine)

- February and March are still too early to start a new warm season grass lawn. Wait until the soil temperatures reach 75-80 degrees. Sod may be available in March, but it could still be damaged by a freeze or frost.
- Mow your warm season grasses in mid-March (or when the Bradfords are blooming), to remove the dead top-growth. Mowing below 0.5 inches can damage stolons, roots, and rhizomes. Remove the clippings to help prevent thatch build-up. Dethatching can be done in March before the lawn begins to green up. Try not to use a vertical mower this early in the season, because it can damage the stolons and roots before they are strong. You can use a vertical mower in the summer if needed.
- Do not fertilize until lawns are 50% green. You don't want to encourage any new growth until the danger of frost has passed. This will probably be in April, when the Dogwoods are in bloom. Do not aerate at this time.
- A pre-emergence weed control can be used when soil temperatures are a consistent 50 degrees. This might be February or early March. Make sure it does not contain fertilizer. It will last 2-3 months. Water after applying. Use post-emergence sprays in March with caution, your grass may be coming out of dormancy and may be harmed.
- Fungal diseases may arrive in March when lawns are moist with day temperatures of 65-80 degrees and night temperatures of 50-60 degrees. They will look like off-color or dead areas with clearly defined edges. Use a lawn fungicide appropriate for your type of grass.
- You can add lime at any time of the year. A soil test will determine the amount needed. Do not lime Centipede lawns.
- Spray or dig wild onions and garlic out of lawns. <http://pubs.caes.uga.edu/caespubs/pubcd/C867-3.htm>

FEBRUARY TIPS

ORNAMENTALS

- This is a great time to plant bare root roses. Select a quality plant with at least 3-5 strong canes.
- Prune hybrid tea roses now, removing old canes and lowering plant to a height of 12-15". To care for rose bushes now, apply a fertilizer heavy in potassium (K). Prune rose canes back to about 6-10". Apply a drop of white glue to the end of fresh cut canes to prevent borers. Apply a dormant spray of lime-sulfur and dormant oil before active growth appears. Clean up rose beds, discard old foliage, pieces of canes, and remove old mulch with weeds. Re-apply a fresh layer of mulch to rose beds. For more rose pruning info: http://pubsadmin.caes.uga.edu/files/pdf/B%20671_2.PDF
- Winter is a good time to prune deciduous trees and shrubs that don't bloom in the spring. It allows you to view the trunk and branches when making your cuts. http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/displayHTML.cfm?pk_id=6180
- Change plant light bulbs over seedlings, as older bulbs do not give off as much light.
- Continue to fertilize pansies and other winter annuals with fertilizer high in nitrate nitrogen. http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/displayHTML.cfm?pk_id=7840
- Prune clumps of ornamental grass before new growth appears. Tie large clumps with rope; cut with a hedge trimmer.

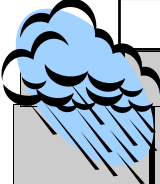
FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Remember that vegetable seeds have a short life and usually will not be good after a year or two. This includes sweet corn, onion, okra, beans, parsnip, and peppers.
- Consider the family vacation when planning your garden. Choose planting dates and varieties so your garden won't be ready for a full harvest while you are away. http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/displayHTML.cfm?pk_id=6848
- Peaches grow best when maintained with an open center (no central leader). Keep 3 or 4 strong, scaffold branches evenly distributed around the trunk. Limbs that branch out at a 60° angle are preferred. Spreaders can be used to widen narrow crotch angles: http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/displayHTML.cfm?pk_id=6365

- Prune fruit trees and grapes in late February or early March after the worst of the winter cold is passed but before spring growth begins when temps maintain at 45°. For disease and insect control, cut out dead wood and dispose of the prunings. Disinfect pruners after each cut.
- Before working an area in the garden for early spring planting, check the soil. It should be dry enough to crumble in your hands, so that you don't compact the soil while working it.
- Don't start your vegetable plants indoors too early. Six weeks ahead of the expected planting date is early enough for the fast growing species such as cabbage. Eight weeks allows enough time for the slow growing types such as tomatoes and peppers. http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/displayHTML.cfm?pk_id=6806

MISCELLANEOUS

- Handle seed packets with care. Rubbing the outside to determine how many seeds are inside can break the protective seed coats, thereby reducing germination.
- To make old hay and manure weed-free, spread on the soil in late winter, water well, and cover with black plastic. Weed seeds will sprout after a few days or warm weather, and then will be killed by frost and lack of daylight.
- Hang or clean out bluebird houses now before the birds start looking for a home. Don't clean them on a windy day.
- Clean and disinfect clay pots by soaking them in a solution of 1 part liquid bleach and 10 parts water. Scrub with a stiff brush. Rinse thoroughly to remove all bleach residue. This will have your containers ready to plant with spring annuals.



RAINFALL COMPARISONS						
	Cherokee County			State Wide		
	Nov 10	Dec 10	YTD	Nov 10	Dec 10	YTD
Actual	3.4	3.3	44.8	3.8	2.1	45.3
Normal	4.0	4.7	55.6	4.0	4.0	51.6
Deficit	-0.6	-1.4	-10.8	-0.2	-1.9	-6.3

MARCH TIPS

ORNAMENTALS

- Be aware that a brown plastic material that looks and feels like natural burlap, but does not break down in the soil, may be used to wrap root balls of B & B plants. Synthetic materials enclosing the roots of trees and shrubs must be completely removed to ensure success of the transplants. Planting techniques for trees can be found at: http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/displayHTML.cfm?pk_id=6085
- Propagate deciduous shrubs, such as forsythia and winter jasmine, now by ground layering.
- Give your roses a starter application of complete fertilizer.
- Cut back butterfly bushes to 1/3 desired height.
- Fertilize spring bulbs after they bloom. Do not remove leaves until they turn yellow.
- Prune Crape myrtles only removing the old flower heads. Do not cut back to the same spot each year as it creates a weak joint and the branches can split and fall in the summer with the additional weight of heavy flower heads. Remove sprouts at the base of the tree. http://pubsadmin.caes.uga.edu/files/pdf/C%20944_2.PDF
- If you have left a few inches of plant stems on your perennials to ID the plant's location cut them back before the new growth emerges. It is also a good time to cut back the tattered foliage on evergreen ferns and perennials.
- Cut foliage off tattered Liriope.
- Start fertilizing pansies and winter annuals with houseplant fertilizer.
- Divide daylily and hosta clumps when the leaves just start to emerge from the ground so you don't damage the new growth. More Hosta info: http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/displayHTML.cfm?pk_id=7849 More on Daylily propagation: http://pubsadmin.caes.uga.edu/files/pdf/C%20545_2.PDF

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Don't rush to remove mulch from strawberries. Leave it over your plants to protect them from late cold spells. When plants start to grow, the mulch must be removed to allow leaves to develop in the light. If leaves develop under the mulch, they will become etiolated (blanched) and yellow from lack

of chlorophyll, and may burn and die when exposed to the sun. http://pubsadmin.caes.uga.edu/files/pdf/C%20883_2.PDF

- Begin vegetable seedlings inside now. http://pubsadmin.caes.uga.edu/files/pdf/C%20943_2.PDF
- Spring applications of pesticides should be made on peaches, apples and pears. Correct timing for spraying depends on the stage of development of flowers.
- Lettuce is very sensitive to low pH. Lime should be applied to the soil if the pH is below 6.0.
- If your garden is on a hillside, plant across the slope (not up and down) to help hold moisture in the soil and reduce erosion.
- Seed root crops, such as carrots beets, radishes and parsnips, in your garden.
- Do not add lime to the area for potatoes. The lower pH helps control scab.

MISCELLANEOUS

- One way to avoid the danger of unusually cold nights is to set water-filled plastic jugs around each seedling. Warmed by the sun, these will radiate heat all night, preventing cold damage. Other ways to protect from the winter cold are at http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/displayHTML.cfm?pk_id=7331
- Place bird houses outdoors early this month. Birds will begin looking for nesting sites soon and the houses should attract several mating pairs. Ideally, houses erected on smooth metal poles where predators cannot climb are most often selected, but placement on top of fence posts or in trees will usually suffice.
- Put out hummingbird feeders in mid-March.
- Re-pot houseplants that have grown too large for their containers. Cut back leggy plants to encourage compact growth. Root the cuttings in moist media to increase your supply of plants. http://pubsadmin.caes.uga.edu/files/pdf/B%201318_2.PDF
- Houseplants can be watered more frequently with the onset of spring and new growth. Start fertilizing houseplants now for good growth.

Recipes

Send recipes to
Maura Watson at
mlw229@gmail.com

Roasted Carrots (Makes 4 servings)

2 large bunches carrots with greens
2 Tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp. chopped fresh herbs: sage, thyme & rosemary
Salt & pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Scrub carrots well, but do not peel. Trim all but the top inch of green stalks from carrots. Slice any especially large carrots in half lengthwise. Place carrots in baking dish & toss with olive oil & herbs. Sprinkle with salt & pepper. Cover with foil & bake for 15 mins. Uncover; toss to recoat with oil & herbs. Roast until tender (about 15-20 mins. more)

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Cherokee County Extension Service
100 North St., Suite G21
Canton, GA 30114



<http://www.ugaextension.com/cherokee/>

Eggplant Maryann

This serves 3-4 depending on the eggplant

1 medium eggplant (3-4 slices per person), peeled and cut into ¼ inch slices
Flour for dredging
One egg, beaten
Butter & olive oil
½ cup chopped onion,
3 garlic cloves, crushed
1½ bags fresh spinach (more if cooking for 4)
¼ tsp. nutmeg,
1 Tbsp. sugar
Salt & pepper to taste
1-15oz. can tomato sauce (more if desired)
½ container of a small ricotta cheese
1 sm. bag mozzarella cheese
Cooked pasta or orzo

Preheat oven to 400°. In large frying pan heat oil and butter. Dredge eggplant thru flour then egg. Sauté until golden brown on both sides. Put on paper towel to soak up excess oil. Sauté onion & garlic until translucent. Add spinach & 2 Tbsp water. Add salt, pepper, nutmeg, and sugar. Heat and stir until spinach is wilted. In glass baking dish sprayed with PAM, place ½ of the tomato sauce, ½ of the eggplant, ½ of the ricotta, ½ of the spinach. Then rest of eggplant, rest of ricotta, rest of spinach and top with remaining tomato sauce and then the cheese. Bake 30 minutes or until done. Serve over pasta or orzo.

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.