

# Gardening with the Masters

For the Cherokee County Master Gardeners

Volume XV, Issue 4 June/July 2010

## EDITOR'S CORNER

By Marcia Winchester



Have you ever purchased a tool and used it but not for what it was designed? I know most of us have recycled an old knife or used a Jet Dry plastic container in the garden. Several years ago I bought a net to clean debris out of my small pond. I don't use it for that, instead I make sure there aren't any snakes and then just pull stuff out of the pond with my hand. However this tool is still cool because I use it to save hummingbirds that fly into my garage and then can't get out. Once I used it to gently hold a snake still so my brave friend Sheri could cut nettings away from it. My most recent usage was to coax a small snake into the net to take to the back woods.

As a master gardener it is fun to share and receive gardening hints from one another. In this vein I'd like to ask for your help. I've been writing the Letter from the Editor since 2000. After all these years, I'm running out of ideas and I know you all have lots to share. If you'd like to help me by writing a short editorial for this newsletter, please contact me at [mwinc@comcast.net](mailto:mwinc@comcast.net) or 770-592-4022. Marcia

### The Summer is Packed!!!

Extra space was needed this time for all the upcoming events: plant clinics, seminars, new interns, a festival, farmer's markets, volunteer opportunities, and our favorite MG meeting, held each June at Merrily McGlaughlin's home! Wow!

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

### JUNE



- 6/3 -Demo Garden Workday 9:30-3  
-Plant Clinic, Waleska Farmers Market
- 6/5 -Hydrangeas Seminar - Ball Ground Library 10:00 am  
-Plant Clinic, Canton Farmers Market
- 6/10-Demo Garden Workday 9:30-3  
-Burgess Arboretum @ Reinhardt University Workday
- 6/12-Hydrangeas - Woodstock Library 10:00 am  
-Plant Clinic, Canton Farmers Market
- 6/14-New Intern Class starts at Metro Tech
- 6/15-Monthly meeting at Merrily Gardens, Woodstock
- 6/17-Demo Garden Workday 9:30-3
- 6/19-Plant Clinic, Woodstock Farmers Market - opening day
- 6/25-Intern Graduation (after Lunch) Metro Tech
- 6/26-Plant Clinic, Canton Farmers Market  
-Choosing Green Festival 8am-2  
Historic Downtown Canton  
-Waterwise Gardening, Hickory Flat Library 10:00 am

### JULY



- 7/1-Demo Garden Workday 9:30-3  
-Plant Clinic Waleska Farmers Market
- 7/10-Plant Clinic, Canton Farmers Market
- 7/15 Demo Garden Workday 9:30-3  
-Plant Clinic, Waleska Farmers Market
-  7/16-MG Picnic-Clara Mae Van Brink hosting
- 7/17-Birds of the South Seminar - Woodstock Library  
-Plant Clinic, Woodstock Farmers Market
- 7/20-Monthly MG meeting
- 7/24-Composting - Senior Center  
-Canton Farmers Market

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## TAKING THE “SQUEAK” OUT OF PLANT RUST

By Karen Garland, Cherokee County Master Gardener

*Each type of rust has its own distinctive symptoms and its own specific plant hosts. They have complex life cycles that include up to five different spore stages at different times of the year and two or more distinctly different hosts. For example cedar rust grows on cedar and on apple trees, needing both for development.*

Rust does not happen on only iron or steel surfaces. There is also a very different type of rust that is a family of more than 6,000 known species of fungi that attack plants. They are known as an “obligate parasites,” which means that they require a living host for survival.

Rust is a problem that can affect nearly every green and leafing plant from trees and shrubs to annuals and perennials. It gets its descriptive name from the reddish, brownish or yellowish colored pinhead-sized blisters that form on leaves or twigs that looks similar to the metal corrosive rust.

The fungus can survive the winter on leaves and stems that were infected during the growing season. In the spring spores produced by the fungus spread to other host plants. It will start out as flecks and will eventually grow into larger bumpy spots that mostly appear on the underside of the leaves of the plant. These blister-like spots are filled with a powdery mass of spores.

Rust takes its nutrition from the plant, which can weaken its host and in severe cases reduce its flowering or productivity. Bad infestations may result in defoliation, stunting or branch dieback and occasionally in death of the plant.

Like most fungal diseases, once it appears on the plant it is difficult to control. The good news is that it is plant specific, which means that if it is seen on one type of plant that particular species of rust will not be seen on different types of plants in the garden. Unfortunately there is no single control measure for rust. Therefore, the best defense is prevention that includes:

- Rust thrives in a wet environment, so do not over-water plants and try to water only in the morning, so the plants have time to dry during the day.
- Water the base of plants, with care to avoid splashing the foliage.

- Space the plants appropriately to make sure they have good air circulation around the branches. This will help the leaves dry faster.
- Keep the area under the plants clean to increase the chances of successfully combating this fungal disease.
- Use rust-resistant varieties of plants when available.
- Disinfect pruners with a mild bleach solution when pruning plants prone to rust.

Removal of any known alternate host plants within the vicinity may not be practical, since rust spores can be blown in great distances. So, if it does attack the most effective means to rid your garden of this menace is to:

- Identify the fungus early and remove affected leaves, including fallen leaf debris or clip infected twigs or branches.
- The leaves should be placed in a sealed bag for disposal or burned.
- *Never compost the infected debris* because it can infect the resulting compost material.
- Always use the least toxic method of pest control as your first step, as fungicides are among the most toxic chemicals used in the garden. There are a number of natural, organic spray recipes on the Internet.
- After dormant-season pruning, spray with a lime/sulfur spray or a Bordeaux mixture to kill overwintering fungal spores. Remember to wear protective clothing including neoprene gloves, a respirator, long sleeves and pants, and goggles when applying fungicides.

### References:

Morris, Tracy S., Cures for Rust on Plant Leaves, <<http://www.gardenguides.com/85029-cures-rust-plant-leaves.html>> May 13, 2010.

Wikipedia, Rust (Fungus) (10 January 2010) <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rust\\_\(fungus\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rust_(fungus))> May 13, 2010.



Daylily Rust



Corn Rust



Soybean Rust

## STRAW BALE GARDENING

by Karen Garland, Cherokee County Master Gardener

*I was extremely intrigued by this type of gardening, so I joined the movement by planting ten straw bales of my own this growing season.*

Do you have rocky, uneven, or unyielding clay soil? Are you unable or unwilling to dig up a big plot of ground to prepare the soil for a garden? No problem! There is a growing movement of gardeners that have chosen to create straw bale gardens, which is an interesting alternative for those that wish to expand their gardening options. Plants are grown in straw bales rather than in soil.

### How to Get Started

- When choosing bales wheat or oat straw work best, as they are made from stalks left from harvesting grain with very few seeds left. Hay bales are less popular because they contain numerous seeds. Also, try to purchase bales that are bound with synthetic twine, which does not rot, causing your bale to collapse.
- Place the bales in the exact place you want them because once they are watered they will become extremely heavy and difficult to move. Lay them vertically, which allows for better root penetration. A straw bale garden can be created in any shape or size. They can either be grouped in close squares or rectangles next to each other or arranged end-to-end to create long gardens. The twine should be running around each bale and not on the side touching the ground in case it is degradable twine. Keep the twine there to hold it all in place and if it does rot, bang some stakes into the ground at both ends of the bale to keep it intact.
- Thoroughly soak the bale with water to begin the curing process, keeping them wet for the next 7 days. The temperature will begin to rise inside the bale as it begins to decompose. By day 10 it should begin to cool and the straw will be softer for planting. (Some gardeners speed up the process of decomposing by following a 10-day pre-treatment regime. The initial process is the same, but on day 4 through 6 the bale is sprinkled daily with a half a cup of ammonium nitrate and watered well.)
- The “soil” preparation is different for sowing seeds and planting seedlings. For seeds, a 2 to 3 inch layer of weed-free soil and compost should be

placed on top of the bales. Seeds are sown in the same way as they are sown in the ground or containers. Seedlings can be directly transplanted in the bale by pulling apart the bale with sharp trowel to make a hole. Adding additional soil or compost to the transplant hole is optional, but is recommended.

- It is very important to keep the straw bale watered throughout the growing season, especially in the beginning. However, the bales will retain water surprisingly well as they begin to decompose. The good news is that it is difficult to overwater, since the excess water drains away quickly.
- Unlike traditional gardening, plants do not have access to many nutrients, other than what is added to the straw. Therefore, once every one to two weeks water in a small amount of fertilizer or compost tea. Reminder: It is more harmful to over-fertilize than under-fertilize.



Tip: You may get two seasons out of a bale. After this it can be composted or broken apart where it sits, with a new bale being placed on top of it. This will enrich the soil below and encourage worms to move in to help with the composting process.



Enjoy your harvest!

### RAINFALL COMPARISONS

	Cherokee County			State Wide		
	Mar 10	Apr 10	YTD	Mar 10	Apr 10	YTD
<b>Actual</b>	5.8	5.8	19.8	4.3	3.1	16.6
<b>Normal</b>	5.8	4.3	21.3	5.8	3.9	20.0
<b>Deficit/ Excess</b>	0.0	1.5	-1.5	-1.5	-0.8	-3.4

## LAWN CARE - JUNE AND JULY

by: Bill Slatton, Cherokee County Master Gardener

### Warm Season grasses (Bermuda, Centipede, Zoysia, St. Augustine)

- Warm season grasses can still be planted during June and July. Be sure to keep new lawns watered in the summer.
- Mow at the correct height.
- Fertilizer applied in April and May will still be good in June. Bermuda and St. Augustine should be fertilized at the beginning of July. Use fertilizer recommended for your type of grass. Zoysia should be fertilized at the beginning of July if it is not dark green and thick. These applications should last until September. Centipede should be fertilized at the beginning of July with a Centipede fertilizer. You need a slow release fertilizer with as little phosphorus as possible. Centipede should not be fertilized again.
- Warm season lawns can be aerated in June and July. It will help water to get into the soil during those really hot, dry spells. Dethatching can also be done in June and July, but don't do it if you applied pre-emergence weed control in June. You will destroy the chemical barrier.
- You can apply pre-emergence weed control in June. If your lawn is mostly weed free, wait until fall. Follow the directions on the bag. Most granular forms will need to be watered in to activate the chemicals. Morning dew won't be enough. Weeds can be sprayed with a post-emergence spray in June/July. If there aren't very many, handpicking can be effective.
- Webworms and cutworms feed on grass blades at night. Spidery webbing on the surface of the lawn in early morning are a sign of webworms. Patches of cut grass blades are a sign of cutworms. Control both with a soil insecticide approved for your type of grass. Armyworms feed in masses during the day and can do severe damage. Chinch bugs can be a big problem on Saint Augustine and Centipede. Look for patches of yellow or wilted grass in sunny areas. Treat with an approved soil insecticide. Fungal diseases should not be a problem during these months. But watch for dead or off-color areas with clearly defined edges.

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

- Do not aerate cool season lawns during the summer. Wait until early September.
- Lawns may be raked, but do not mechanically dethatch during the summer.
- You should not fertilize during June or July.
- Do not plant seed or sod during this time. Mow at the recommended height. Try not to cut more than one third of the height at a time. Mow right before leaving on vacation and as soon as you get back. You may have to mow at the highest possible setting and at the recommended height a couple days later.
- At the beginning of June you can apply a granular pre-emergence. Existing weeds can be sprayed with a post-emergence spray. As always, read the labels and use the correct product approved for use on your grass.
- Soil insecticides may be applied if insects are causing damage.



### Recommended Mowing Heights:

Type of Grass	Mow When: (height in inches)	Mow To: (height in inches)
Kentucky 31 Fescue	4.5 - 6	3 - 4
Creeping Red/ Chewing Fescue	3 - 3.75	2 - 2.5
Turf-type Fescue	3.75 - 4.5	2.5 - 3
Kentucky Bluegrass	3.75 - 4.5	2.5 - 3
Common Bermuda	3	2
Hybrid Bermuda	1.5 - 2.25	1 - 1.5
Centipede	2.25 - 3	1.5 - 2
St. Augustine	3 - 4.5	2 - 3

## SOMETHING DIFFERENT - ESPALIER

By Carolyn Mills, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Last spring, as my husband and I made one of our first 2009 trips to a local nursery, there was a surprise awaiting us. As soon as we parked and walked toward the entrance, there sat the single most beautiful specimen of design and color I had ever seen! It was a large Nuccio's Pearl Camellia Japonica in full bloom, espaliered and trained over a large trellis. The horticultural label on the new plant described the Nuccio's Pearl vividly: "*Spectacular, fully double blooms with pure white petals edged with an orchid pink blush. Flowers make a dazzling contrast with the glossy, dark evergreen foliage. Quite elegant in appearance!*"

This was to be my mother's day gift but, as the listed price of \$799.00 was not in our budget, we decided to go looking for a Nuccio's Pearl to modify and a large trellis to support it. Finding both, we began a truly interesting and rewarding adventure

An 'espalier' (pronounced es-PAL-yer) is any plant trained to grow in a flat plane against a wall, fence, or trellis. A French word, *espalier* is derived from the Italian *spalliera*, meaning 'something to rest the shoulder (spalla) against.' It also may be used to describe the technique of training a plant to the flat plane. Though the technique originated with the Romans, later generations of Europeans refined it into an exacting but rewarding art.

The practice originally was used in the old world to conserve space. The English located espaliered fruit trees against a wall with a southern exposure for cold protection. Today, espaliers are used mostly for decorative accents in the landscape; however, as landscape spaces become smaller around single family dwellings, an espaliered plant may have considerable appeal. "More than one espalier design is seldom used in a given landscape." *Excerpts from University of FL, IFAS Extension.*

After we arrived home with our tree and trellis, the first step was where to locate it and how to prune back the smaller version we bought without destroying it. The next couple of hours were frustrating. Finally, I was able to convey the espalier concept well enough to my husband so he could trust me with the special pruning process.

Next came the form design decision. I found quite a few patterns suggested in the *University of FL, IFAS Extension* article. I chose the Palmette Pattern. It has grown very nicely over the months with many blooms that are ready to open. It is planted directly behind my autumn fern and rhododendron in a small front yard space at the porch, leaning against a blank wall.

The espalier is a small challenge and risk because the initial severe pruning can weaken the plant to some degree. But if you are willing to follow the directions, I think you'll find it well worth the risk. It certainly has been for me!



*NOTE: The camellia is a suitable plant to espalier locally but be sure to check with a knowledgeable nursery horticulturist or your county extension office for help in selecting a plant that can be trained to an espalier pattern or to find other plants that fit our climate zone.*



"Nuccio's Pearl"

## BUG TIPS

By Mary Tucker, Cherokee County Master Gardener

I guess there is still some of the kid in me, because I love bugs and “creepy, crawly” things - including lizards, snakes, frogs and most insects. However, I have no love for the bugs that destroy and disfigure my garden. Those I am willing to cold-heartedly destroy, though I prefer the least toxic method available. I figure the less toxicity involved, the less harm done to any of the other of my beloved creepy-crawlies. With that in mind, I was anxious to go to the Master Gardener training class where entomologist Dr. Beverly Sparks spoke, and I want to share with you some of what I learned from her about some of our most troublesome insect characters.



**Aphid** - These sucking insects tend to congregate on tender, new growth. Some aphids have specific host plants and some are more general feeders. They have a rapid rate of reproduction, making them difficult to control. Prune out heavily infected plant material, and then treat with insecticidal soaps or oils or with contact insecticides. Because of their rapid reproduction, treatment should be made every five to seven days.



**Scale** - These insects are in the same order as aphids, and control methods are similar, including pruning out heavy infestations. In the adult stage, they have a hard shell, and are resistant to insecticides. However the crawler stage, which lasts only a day or two, is soft bodied and any insecticide will be effective.



**Thrip**-These tiny pests cause bud and blossom deformity and can also spread diseases and wilt viruses. They are especially attracted to white, yellow and light blue and are a common problem on roses. If thrips get deep into buds they have to be pruned out, so try for early detection and treatment with insecticide



**Whitefly**-These pests are persistent, difficult to control and have a broad host range. At the immature stage, when the nymph is attached to the underside of leaves, whitefly is

difficult to detect. This makes whitefly easy to introduce to the home or yard through the purchase of infected plants. Insecticides may not be effective on the egg or pupa, so several applications are important to control the pest as it goes through its life stages.



**Azalea Lace Bug** - Signs of these pests are a chlorotic upper leaf and black, tarry material on the underside of the leaf. Recent studies show that most effective means of control is to eliminate the first generation of nymphs, which usually appears in mid to late March. The lace bug has up to four generations per year, but with this early control, future generations will be eliminated. Recommended controls are insecticidal soap or a product containing pyrethroids or carbaryl.



**Asian Ambrosia Beetle** - A sign of this pest is a tube, similar in appearance to a toothpick, protruding from the bark of a tree. The ambrosia beetle usually infects young trees with a caliper of 2 to 3 inches. Eggs are laid in galleries in the tree and insects remain in the tree, protected and unable to be affected by insecticides. The arteries of the tree are clogged and the tree quickly dies. The tree must be removed and destroyed. The ambrosia beetle has many host plants, including crape myrtle, dogwood, Bradford pear and redbud. *Article reprinted from Apr/May 1999 issue*

## JUNIPER BLUES

By Rachel Prakash, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Growing up in the suburbs of Atlanta, I grew quite familiar with junipers. One in particular, *Juniperus horizontalis* “Wiltonii”, otherwise known as Blue Rug juniper, was planted liberally on any slope too steep for a lawn. While it is a pretty shrub, there can be too much of a good thing and it certainly is not pleasant to have to scramble through one during a game of flashlight tag.

Now that I have matured some, I have come to appreciate the beauty of junipers and apparently other people are as well since they are again becoming popular in the garden centers. Fortunately, the growers have started selling new and different types of juniper to accent that spot in the yard, whether or not it is too steep for grass.

The ones listed on page 7 are not too hard to find; I selected them mostly for their beautiful color and texture in combination with their acceptance of less than perfect growing conditions. While most junipers do well in a variety of soils, they will not tolerate wet feet or shady conditions. Most need to be fertilized once or twice a year. If you have a sunny well-drained area, the juniper can be your go-to plant for year round color and can be a wonderful foundation plant, just so long as you are not planning a game of flashlight tag in the general vicinity.

*continued on page 7...*

## GRAY CATBIRD: DUMETELLA CAROLINENSIS

By Mary Tucker, Cherokee County Master Gardener



For many bird lovers, the return of the hummingbirds signals the true coming of spring. For me, it is the sight of the gray catbird, though this dull gray bird has none of the bright plumage or fanciful flight of the more popular hummingbird.

I suppose the catbird holds a sentimental attachment for me since it was my mother's favorite bird, and it was from her that I gained my appreciation of nature in general and birds in particular.

The gray catbird is one of three birds found in the Atlanta area that is a member of the Mimidae family. This group is named for the fact that they mimic the songs of other birds or even noises. The other two in our area are the northern mockingbird and the brown thrasher. All three birds prefer brushy habitats, thickets and wood margins and are frequently seen in residential areas. Of the three, the catbird is less likely to be a permanent resident of the Atlanta area, tending to migrate to warmer climates for the winter. I can count on seeing a pair of catbirds back at my feeder by late April to early May.

The catbird is a bit smaller in size than the more common mockingbird, but has a similar slender silhouette and long tail. Like the mockingbird, the catbird is a mimic, though to a somewhat lesser extent. However, it is best known for its alarm call which, though not imitative, is very distinctive and is reminiscent of a cat's plaintive mewing.

Both sexes are similar in appearance with plain, solid, dark gray plumage, a rusty-red patch under the tail and a black cap on the head.

The gray catbird is an insect and berry eater, and I was happy to learn that Japanese beetles are one of its favorite foods. It is fond of the fruits of dogwood, winterberry, yaupon holy, crabapple, blackberry, raspberry, blueberry, elderberry, mountain ash, sassafras and serviceberry. At my feeder, it is attracted to a mix of peanut butter, cornmeal and lard, a favorite of many backyard birds.

The catbirds are regulars at my feeder throughout the summer, and from their regularity, I have to assume they nest in the yard or very close by. Though I have never seen their nest, my research indicates it is usually built in shrubbery or hedges, and I was interested to learn that the genus name, Dumetella is Latin for "little thicket," in reference to the catbird's preferred habitat. The nest is usually built 3 to 10 feet off the ground and is constructed of sticks, stems, grasses, leaves, pine needles and similar natural material. Two to six glossy blue-green eggs are laid during the months of May through August, and often two broods are raised in one season. The catbirds are dear to my heart and I enjoy their presence from their arrival in spring through August, then they seem to suddenly disappear in September. That leaves me waiting for this not-so-colorful, but still delightful, harbinger of spring to return again next year.

Article reprinted from Jun/July 2000 issue

## JUNIPER BLUES

by Rachel Prakash ..continued from page 6

- *J. horizontalis* Andorra: Grows to about 2' high and can spread up to 5'. The foliage is very fine and has a very soft feathery appearance with a medium green color. There is also a compact version which only grows to about one foot in height and gets a pretty green-bronze color in the winter.



- *J. sabina* Broadmoor: tolerates a variety of soils and is drought and heat tolerant. It has a nice mound-ing habit reaching three feet tall in the center with the ability to spread up to 10'. Maintains nice thick foliage with a rich green color that can sometimes have a bluish tint. Broadmoor works well as a groundcover, but can also adapt to topiary forms.

- *J. Sabina* Monna: Calgary Carpet juniper is a soft green color that has a lovely texture with minimal prickliness. It is also much shorter reaching only 9-12", but can cover an area of 5-6' making it a perfect groundcover for the front of a border.



- *J. chinensis x pfitzeriana* Gold Lace: A taller juniper that can reach 4-5' tall and spread 5-7' across, the bright gold tips on the leaves contrast with the darker green interior. Nice for hedges or corner plantings.

- *J. scopulorum* Pathfinder: A striking columnar juniper that grows 12-15' and 4-5' across. The foliage color is the clincher on this plant as it is a silvery blue color. It will need good airflow to help it overcome its sensitivity to humidity, but should be worth the little bit of extra effort.



Nature Hills Nursery (888) 864-7663 [www.naturehills.com](http://www.naturehills.com)  
Evergreen Nursery (423) 775-2138 [www.evergreenplantnursery.com](http://www.evergreenplantnursery.com)

## JUNE TIPS

### ORNAMENTALS

- Tall fall bloomers such as chrysanthemums, swamp sunflowers, and phlox can be cut back by about one half now to reduce their fall height and make them fuller.
- Use pliers to pull up tree seedlings after a rain when soil is moist. Grip the stem at the soil line; twist and pull straight up. Watering deeply the day before pulling weeds will make the job easier.
- Climbing roses don't really climb – they have long canes that require support. You will need to loosely tie the canes to trellises with broad strips of material. Do not use wire as it can damage the cane. <http://pubs.caes.uga.edu/caespubs/pubcd/B671/B671.htm>
- Take stem cuttings of woody and perennials now.
- Miniature roses can be propagated from stem cuttings. Take cuttings with 4 leaves and insert them into pots filled with moist potting soil. Rooting hormone is optional. Place whole pot in a perforated plastic bag and place in a shady spot. Water as needed. By autumn, cuttings should be rooted.
- Control black spot and powdery mildew on rose foliage.
- Fertilize your roses at monthly intervals with either granular or liquid fertilizer. Inspect plants frequently for pests such as spider mites, aphids and Japanese beetles.
- Leaf miner larvae tunnel inside leaves, leaving whitish trails as they move about. Holly, boxwood and locust are particularly susceptible to damage.
- Disinfection of pruners between cuts is recommended when removing diseased tissue from plants. Most authorities recommend a one in ten solution of bleach and water, but it can be cumbersome to carry a bucket of this mix about in the garden, and the solution is corrosive and must be rinsed from tools after use. Rubbing alcohol in a spray bottle also works. When spraying tools, spray over a trash can so you don't kill or injure grass or plants.
- Now is the time to prune Azaleas and Rhododendrons before they set next year's flower buds. <http://pubs.caes.uga.edu/caespubs/pubcd/B670/B670.htm>
- Divide and transplant iris now so they will have a long growing season and a better chance of blooming next year. Cut off and discard the older part of the rhizome that does not have white fleshy roots. Cut the leaves back to six inches so they don't blow over. <http://pubs.caes.uga.edu/caespubs/pubcd/B670/B670.htm>

### FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Strawberries picked early in the day keep best. Do not wash or stem berries until ready to use. Store berries in covered containers in the refrigerator.
- Set young melons and cantaloupes atop tin cans – they'll ripen faster, be sweeter and have less insect damage than those left on the ground.

- Yellow crook-neck squash tastes best when 4-7 inches long. Pick when pale yellow (rather than golden) and before skin hardens. Scalloped (patty pan) squash is best when grayish or greenish white (before it turns ivory white) and is still small, even silver-dollar size.
- Remove cucumbers by turning fruits parallel to the vine and giving a quick snap. This prevents vine damage and results in a clean break. If you have trouble mastering this, take a sharp knife to the garden for harvesting. Cut or pull cucumbers, leaving a short stem on each.
- Stop cutting asparagus in mid to late June when spears become thin. After the last cutting is made, fertilize by broadcasting a 10-10-10 formula at the rate of 2 lbs per 100 sq. ft. Allow the tops to grow during the summer to store food in the roots for the crop next spring.
- Avoid side dressing tomatoes, eggplants and peppers with fertilizer until they have set their first fruit.
- Corn needs water at two crucial times: when the tassels at the top are beginning to show and when the silk is beginning to show on the ear. If weather is dry at these times, you will need to water the corn. <http://pubs.caes.uga.edu/caespubs/pubcd/B670/B670.htm>
- If weed plants are mature, weed your garden early in the morning when moisture is present to prevent the seed heads from shattering and dropping weed seeds in the garden. Hold as much of the seed heads in your hand and do not shake off extra soil as it may scatter weed seeds.
- To protect bees that pollinate many of our crop plants, spray pesticides in the evening after bees have returned to their homes.
- The best time to harvest most herbs is just before flowering when the leaves contain the maximum essential oils. Cut herbs early on a sunny day. Herbs are best if watered the day before to wash off the foliage. <http://pubs.caes.uga.edu/caespubs/pubcd/B670/B670.htm>

### MISCELLANEOUS

- The use of milky spore disease (*Bacillus popilliae*) for Japanese beetle control is most effective in neighborhoods where most residents use it. Otherwise, Japanese beetle larvae hatching in other yards will re-infest your property.
- June is a great time to clean out the greenhouse. Discard dead or diseased plants and old potting soil. Good sanitation is necessary to control greenhouse pests.
- If you keep your houseplants indoors all summer, keep them out of the draft of the air conditioner. Plants react to an air conditioner's cool air in various ways. Some drop their leaves, others don't bloom well and some fail to bloom at all.

## JULY TIPS

### ORNAMENTALS

- If your hosta and azalea stems have a white powder covering them, it is probably the waxy coating of planthopper insects. They don't do much damage, but can spread diseases. Spray with garden insecticide if unsightly.
- Keep pinching back mums to keep them blooming longer and make them bushier.
- Lamb's ear tends to have their lower leaves die after a heavy rain. This forms ugly mats that will rot stems and roots. Pull away the yellow leaves to keep up airflow.
- Fertilize crape myrtles, butterfly bushes, and hydrangeas with 1 Tablespoon of 10-10-10 per foot of height. <http://pubs.caes.uga.edu/caespubs/pubcd/C944/C944.htm>

### FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Before you spray an insecticide on your vegetables, check the label. Each insecticide has a waiting period after application before you can harvest.
  - Although tomatoes are self-pollinating, they need movement to transfer pollen. If it is hot and calm for several days, gently shake plants to assure pollen transfer and fruit set. Hot temperatures can interfere with blossom set.
  - Water stress in sweet potatoes can result in cracked roots. A potassium deficiency causes long, slender roots. Too much nitrogen reduces yield and quality.
  - Most fertilizer recommendations are for 100 square feet, so keep your garden's square footage a simple fraction of that. For example, a 4 X 12 foot garden is exactly 50 square feet and would require exactly one half the fertilizer required by a garden of 100 square feet.
  - Okra pods get tough if allowed to grow too large. Pick regularly.
  - Mulch strawberries heavily to protect them from heat and drought.
  - The time of day vegetables are harvested can make a difference in the taste and texture. For sweetness, pick peas and corn late in the day; that's when they contain the most sugar, especially if the day was cool and sunny. Other vegetables, like lettuce and cucumbers, are crisper and tastier if you harvest them early in the morning before the day's heat has a chance to wilt and shrivel them.
  - Start a fall crop of brussel sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower and kale indoors. Outdoors, sow pumpkin, beans, squash, cucumbers, and crowder peas. Plant carrots mid-month. <http://pubs.caes.uga.edu/caespubs/pubcd/B670/B670.htm>
  - Pick squash regularly to keep up production. If the vines wilt, check the base of the stem for "sawdust". This means the plant has squash bores in the stem. Remove infected plants (thus removing the bores) and plant new seeds. It is good to change your planting location to hopefully prevent the new plants from being attacked.
- Sunflowers are ready to harvest when the back of the head turns brown.
  - Keep an eye out for tomato hornworm. They can do enormous damage overnight. They also attack Nicotiana. When you see damage, check under leaves and stems to find them. Hand pick to dispose of them.
  - Don't plant all your beans at once. If you stagger the plantings every two weeks you will have fresh beans longer. Soak bean seeds overnight before planting for faster germination.
  - Use bamboo poles to form a large teepee-like structure. Use twine to create a trellis though all but one section of the teepee. Plant pole beans along the twine. Watch the beans grow into a house that kids love to play in. The section that was not tied the twine is the entrance to the bean teepee.

### EARTH911.COM -

#### A FABULOUS RECYCLING RESOURCE

By Mary Tucker, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Before I toss anything in the trash, I try to ask myself, "Is this recyclable?" Now I can easily answer that question by going to a single website, Earth911.com.

This fabulous website maintains a recycling database to help you find over 100,000 recycling locations across the country. The information on the site is provided by local governments, industry insiders, organizations, and everyday consumers, and it will help you recycle everything from appliances to aluminum, bicycles to batteries, computers to corks (who knew corks were recyclable!?).

Simply type in the item or material you want to recycle, type in your address or Zip Code and Earth911.com will present recycling options available to you. For each recycling location, you will see the name of the establishment, its address and phone number, and how many miles it is from the address you have keyed in. Even a handy map to the location is included.

You can also access the database by calling 1-800-CLEANUP (1-800-253-2687). An automated system will walk you through the process of finding a recycler for your particular item.

I encourage you to browse around on the Earth911.com website. You'll be amazed at the number of materials that are recyclable, and you can then feel good about keeping those items out of our landfills.

# Recipes

Send recipes to  
Maura Watson at  
toyot@mindspring.com

## Fresh Fruit Chutney - serves 6 (great side for grilled fish or pork)

- 5 peaches or nectarines (rinsed & peeled)
- 2 Tbsp. light brown sugar
- 1- (6 oz.) can pineapple juice
- 2 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- ¼ cup fresh diced red onion
- 2 Tbsp. peach preserves
- ¼ cup raisins
- 3-5 fresh mint leaves (rinsed & chopped)
- Pinch of cayenne pepper (optional)

Chop peaches into bite-size chunks. Place in a large saute` pan with all remaining ingredients, except mint. Bring to a boil on high, stirring occasionally. When boiling, reduce heat to medium-high; cook 8-10 mins, stirring until liquid is reduced by one half. Remove from heat & add chopped mint.

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



[http://www.cescherokee.org/Master\\_Gardeners.htm](http://www.cescherokee.org/Master_Gardeners.htm)

## Sunday Breakfast Casserole - serves 8 (may be made the night before & refrigerated)

- 1- (7 oz.) reduced fat ground sausage
- 5 slices whole wheat bread
- 6 beaten eggs
- 1½ cups shredded cheddar cheese
- ½ cup milk
- 1 (7 oz.) can sliced mushrooms, drained
- Salt & pepper to taste
- paprika



Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

Brown sausage in a nonstick skillet. Drain off excess grease. Coat an 8x11 inch baking dish with cooking spray. Place bread slices in the baking dish; cut slices to fit. Sprinkle the cooked, drained sausage over the bread. Scatter mushrooms on top of the sausage. Whisk together eggs, milk & seasoning. Pour over the mushrooms & sausage layer. Top with shredded cheese. Garnish with paprika.

Bake for 40 mins. or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Let stand for 10 mins. before serving.

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.