

# Gardening with the Masters

From the Cherokee County Master Gardeners

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## CLEMATIS: QUEEN OF THE VINES

by: Susan Wyman, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Don't tell my husband, but I have fallen in love -- This time with a vine! Actually, a whole family of vines. I must be somewhat fickle because I can't make up my mind, I've never met a clematis I didn't like. Well, in the name of full disclosure, I will admit that if you, like me, plant one at the base of your mailbox and it grows 30 feet long, it can be *a tad unruly*, (O.K. It threatened to obscure our neighbor's house) but it was the said gardener's fault for not doing enough research into that particular cultivar's growth habit.

Clematis embrace the whole color spectrum from orange to pure red, and pure blue, from royal purple to creamy white and yellow, (every color but green and black) and from gargantuan urn shaped flowers to delicate tiny bells or stars, and some are very fragrant. They have begun to challenge the rose in popularity polls. America's clematis are a diverse group providing shrubby to vining plants for borders, arbors and trellises and for naturalizing and climbing over shrubs and structures. In our area they can be chosen to give a steady succession of flowers from early spring to frost. They add a special beauty of form and color to vertical gardens growing up walls or fences.

We are used to thinking of clematis as climbing vines but there is also a significant subgroup whose members are herbaceous. Well, sort of. Left alone they lean or flop, and can be encouraged to use a neighboring shrub as a prop, or allowed to trail along the ground. A favorite is *C.xdurandii* a hybrid between 400 year old, diminutive *C.integrifolia* and the well-loved *C. Jackmanii*. Its brittle stems are clothed with large (5 inch) leathery, dark green leaves and a procession of four-petaled indigo blue flowers with cream-colored stamens. These are followed by the familiar Medusa-like seed heads. The plant takes up so little space that it fits easily into even a crowded border where it will enchant you for a good two months, from June to late August.

I saw a picture of a duet that is especially good for brightening up the dog days of summer. It had the small, white star flowers of Clematis terniflora gracefully trailing over the pink pom-poms of Hydrangea paniculata "Grandiflora." These two old reliables of uncommon growing ease contrast beautifully. Autumn blooming Clematis tangutica Radar Love has a weird name but will produce masses of bright, 3-6 inch canary yellow blossoms only three months after sowing, (these claim to grow easily

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## FROM THE EDITOR

We received 32 suggestions of names for our newsletter. Some of you sent in quite a few suggestions. I think it might have had to do with it being a snow day and you couldn't get out in the yard. We really laughed over some of the puns and cute names. But as we thought about all the different topics we cover in our newsletter we didn't want our name to mislead any readers. The title we chose, while not "catchy" is factual, which is what we strive for in our newsletter. Welcome to Gardening with the Masters.

Marcia Winchester

## ONWARD AND UPWARD

by: Todd Hurt, CEA Cherokee County

You may ask yourself after you finish your first 50 hours as a Master Gardener where is that garden of Eden or more simply where does the time go? First let me say every hour you contribute as a volunteer is greatly appreciated by Extension. I read a message from the Dean yesterday that reported President Bush proposes cutting the Federal Budget for Agricultural Research and Extension by \$100 million dollars in 2005. This is nearly 10% of our Federal Funds. As our state and federal budgets decline I feel like I am watching a train wreck in slow motion. If it were not for volunteers like you the research done in the Universities would not reach the public. Over the past 13 years Georgia Extension has lost 1/3 of their staff due to budget cuts yet the demand for service continues to increase. With over 1800 active Master Gardeners in Georgia you outnumber Extension Agents 10 to 1. Therefore you can see that you are the cornerstone of our organization.

So where does the time go? Besides the obvious, I have used your reported hours to impress upon local and state legislators the value of our service. Marco uses the state summaries to do the same on the state and federal levels. Also by maintaining your 25 hours annually you are eligible to attend state, national, and international Master Gardener conferences.

Mary Ellen and I often get questions about what counts for Master Gardener volunteer hours. Sometimes the answer is obvious; sometimes it is not so easy. I decided to ask Marco Fonseca our State Master Gardener Coordinator how he would address the following question. If I am working on a project with my garden club may I count the hours as Master Gardener time? He responded with two criteria. Is the event open to the public? Are there any other Master Gardeners involved? I want to add an objective criterion. Which hat do you feel you are wearing at the time? Are you wearing your garden club hat or your Master Gardener Badge? If you are actively teaching others in your garden club something you learned as a Master Gardener then by all

means count the time. If you are doing the same things you did before you joined our group then you may not want to count the time. One last thing before I begin to sound like a broken record; Is it Educational?

Here is a quick break-down of the Master Gardener certification levels:

- Master Gardener Intern – completed the training course.
- Certified Master Gardener – completed the training course and 50 hours of volunteer time. (25 hours annually necessary to remain certified)
- Out-of-State Transfers – Completed training in another state and transferred to our group with a letter of good standing from previous state's agent, required to take 4-6 training classes, and purchase GA Master Gardener Handbook and badge.
- Advanced Master Gardener – Certified Master Gardener in good standing that has attended and passed competency exams for 5 Advanced Master Gardener trainings.
- Master Gardener Trainer – (this is new) A Certified Master Gardener in good standing that has attended a Train the Trainer course (i.e. The Water Quality Workshop on April 23-24<sup>th</sup>) and has agreed to teach at least five programs on that subject matter over the next 12 months. In order to maintain this status you must attend at least 5 hours of continued education in your subject area and teach a minimum of 3 related classes a year.
- Lifetime Master Gardener – After ten years as a Certified Master Gardener in Georgia you are eligible to apply for Lifetime status. Lifetime members no longer have to pay dues or maintain the 25 annual hours. We have two Lifetime Master Gardeners in our group and several people that are getting close. Please let me know when you are eligible.

## TOUTING TURTLEHEAD

by: Melissa Zimmerly, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Perhaps you have won this plant as a door prize. Maybe you noticed turtlehead seeds at the CMG Plant Sale this year. Likely, you will find it in one form or another at the upcoming Georgia Native Plant Society Plant Sale on April 24<sup>th</sup>. Turtlehead is an herbaceous perennial and one of our native wetland (and moist woodland) plants.

While there are several species of turtlehead and even more varieties, we are most likely to encounter red turtlehead (*Chelone obliqua*), white turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*), and perhaps pink turtlehead (*Chelone lyonii*) in northern Georgia. Generally, species of turtlehead have been found in habitats scattered from eastern to central United States, as far north as Newfoundland, Canada and as far south as FL (zones 3-8). If you plan any hiking or camping trips in the more mountainous parts of VA, NC, SC, or TN, be on the lookout for even more pink turtlehead and Cuthbert's turtlehead (*Chelone cuthbertii*) as well, as their habitats are concentrated in that particular mountainous region.

Preferring partial shade and moist, organic soil, turtlehead can be found along stream banks, bogs, swamps, and in wet, wooded areas. Its habit is clump-forming with foliage that can reach more than 3 ft. in height and a spread of 2 ½ ft. Given less

light, as is often the case in turtlehead's natural habitat, our own Marcia Winchester notes turtlehead's growth is less compact, with flower spikes tending to flop, but continuing to grow sprawling along the ground. As growth sprawls, nodes along the plant have a tendency to root right there on the spot!

In bloom, turtlehead resembles snapdragon, beardtongue, and even foxglove plants. All of these plants, including turtlehead, happen to be members of the same taxonomic family *Scrophulariaceae*, or the figwort family. Turtlehead's blooms appear late in the summer. Depending on the species and the location, blooms appear from July or August through September or October as racemes, or spike-like flower clusters. Each bloom in the cluster is approximately 1" to 1 ¼" in length. Flowers of red turtlehead are actually closer to deep pink in color and resemble, you guessed it, an openmouthed turtle's head. *Chelone glabra* has white flowers tinged with pink, while the flowers of *Chelone lyonii* are, as expected, pink. Last but not least, *Chelone cuthbertii*, considered to be threatened or endangered in parts of the Appalachian region, has purple flowers with a yellow "beard" beneath the lower "jaw" of the turtlehead bloom.

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**Q & A**

by: Karen Garland, Cherokee County Master Gardener

**Question**

What are the best varieties of bunch grapes to grow in north Georgia for eating and making jelly? How do I grow them?

**Answer**

Harvesting your own grapes can be a delicious and rewarding experience during the summer growing season. But, before you get started there are a few facts to consider. The keys to a successful harvest demand selecting the proper grape variety and a good planting site and carrying out a season-long spraying, pruning, and weeding program.

**Selecting the Proper Grape Variety**

In the United States two primary species of bunch grapes are grown: the European bunch grape (*Vitis vinifera*) and the American bunch grape (*Vitis labrusca*). Georgia's climate is not well suited to the backyard garden cultivation of European bunch grapes. However, due to Georgia's climate and topography American bunch

grapes do quite well. In fact, the amount of rainfall and humidity has helped produce many delicious varieties of grapes, since James Oglethorpe first colonized the state in 1733.

Many varieties of these same grapes also perform well in the Mountain and Piedmont areas of Georgia. Most of these varieties are sold as one-year or two-year-old plants. Generally, the two-year-old plants are worth the extra investment, as they fair better during the growing season. If American bunch grapes are well cared for and sprayed when diseases and insects threaten, yields can equal 20 to 30 pounds of fruit per vine.

See the table below for the recommendations by the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences of grapes for eating and jelly-making in this region.

**For more information on selecting a good planting site, planting grapes, trellising a grape vine, care of established plantings, and pruning and harvesting grapes check the CCMG website [Http://cescherokee.org](http://cescherokee.org)**

Variety	Ripening	Description	Comments
Aurora	Early-mid season	Small pink/white grape	Delicious for eating/good yield
Cascade	Mid/late season	Dark blue grape	Good yield
Alwood	Mid-season	Blue fruit	
Fredonia	Early-season	Very large blue grape, large clusters	
Delaware	Early-mid season	Reddish fruit, small berry size but sweet	Very productive
Venus	Mid-season	Seedless, blue-black medium sized grape	Long shelf life, slight mescat flavor, good yield
Reliance	Mid-season	Seedless, red fruit	
Miagara	Mid-sesaon	Golden fruit with seeds	Good yield, often called a greed concord
Agawam	Mid-season	Reddish fruit	
Suffolk Red	Mid-late season	Medium sized reddish black grape	
New York Muscat	Early-mid season	Medium sized reddish-black grape	Good yield
Golden Musca t	Mid-late season	Medium sized yellowish-green grape	

**TOUTING TURTLEHEAD (CONTINUED)**

by: Melissa Zimmerly, Cherokee County Master Gardener

(Continued from page 2)

Popular among caterpillars, turtlehead leaves are opposite and toothed, taper to a point, and may or may not have a petiole present. Without blooms present, the four aforementioned species may be identified by distinct differences in their leaves. Leaves of both red and white turtlehead are tapered at both ends. White turtlehead however, is narrower and may or may not have a petiole. Red turtlehead's leaves have a petiole and are wider than the leaves of white turtlehead. Leaves of both pink and Cuthbert's turtlehead have a rounded base. Pink turtlehead also has a petiole present, whereas Cuthbert's turtlehead has no petiole present.

Plant turtlehead to attract the Baltimore Checkerspot butterfly to your landscape! Checkerspot butterflies inhabit parts of southern Canada, the Great Lakes area, and eastern US as far south as northern GA. They have even been found in northern parts of MS, OK, TX, and NE. Where turtlehead is prevalent, female Checker-

spots lay their eggs on these plants. The young caterpillars that emerge feed on this host plant almost exclusively until winter hibernation. After hibernation, the older caterpillars will feed on a wider variety of usually related plants until they pupate around June.

Turtlehead will add a bright spot to your moist woodland garden. It will also do well on the periphery of your water or bog gardens. Its abundant foliage is present throughout most of the growing season and is another one of turtlehead's assets.

Whether buying turtlehead at a plant sale or from mail-order or online nurseries, it can be found for sale as a live plant and also as seeds. Plants can be propagated later by division, easily from stem cuttings, and of course, from seeds. Plant your seeds in fall, or let them stratify in the refrigerator for six weeks before spring planting. Then, wait for the butterflies!

**Melissa Zimmerly [zplacel@bellsouth.net](mailto:zplacel@bellsouth.net)**

# BUY RECYCLED

by: Myriam Zagarola, Cherokee County Master Gardener



Over the years there has been an increase awareness of the value of recycling for the good of our environment and society. This awareness has increased the amount of recyclable items put in the marketplace. We, as consumers, are doing our part when we buy recyclable items, and recycle them. However, we can do more! We can buy products made or that use recycled content material. Every time you buy products that can be recycled or those made with recycle content materials, you promote more recycling. Why is that? Because this actually promotes demand for recyclables and ensures the continuation of recycling programs. When consumers buy products with recycled content, manufacturers will continue using recycled content materials in their products and expand their use in new products.

When going shopping look for products packaged in packages made of recycled materials. Read the labels; look for recyclable products, and for the highest percentage of recycled content. You will find high percentage of recycled paperboard in cereal, cracker, cake mix boxes, puzzles and game boards. Steel can and glass bottles also contain high percentages of recovered materials. Same goes for paper towels and tissues. If you are planning on buying some gardening supplies for this coming gardening season considered buying hoses, and patio furniture made with recyclable content materials. Also, remember that there are many types of mulch that contain recovered materials.

Office supplies provide a wide range of prod-

ucts made with recovered materials. Some good examples are: paper, ink cartridges, rechargeable batteries, pencils, rulers, mailers, tape dispensers, trays, calendars, binders, computer disks, furniture, etc.

The following five materials almost always have a significant amount of recycled content even when they are not labeled “recycled”:

1. Steel – includes food cans, cars, appliances, bicycles, furniture, and nails to name a few.
2. Aluminum – includes beverage cans
3. Glass – includes bottles and jars
4. Paperboard – mailing containers, puzzles, game boards
5. Rechargeable Nickel Cadmium (Ni-Cd) batteries – contain cadmium recovered from recycled Ni-Cd batteries

Another way to buy recycled products is buying remanufactured products. Remanufactured products are products returned to the factory. These products are completely refurbished and they are as good as new products. They offer the same warranty granted to new products. Some remanufactured products easy to buy are: computers, telephone equipment, machinery, appliances, furniture, photocopiers, engines, etc. Big Lots usually sell remanufactured products at a fraction of the price of the same item new.

- Remember, when you buy products made with recycled content materials you close the loop!
- Visit [www.americarecyclesday.org](http://www.americarecyclesday.org) for more information.

## What’s Happening!

### April

4/1	Senior Center Workday 9:30. Bring water and tools
4/9-11	Autumn Hill Perennial Sale
4/10	Master Gardener Day @ Redbud Nursery
4/10	The Right Plant for the Right Place, Hickory Flat Library 10-11:30
4/13	PAR Meeting
4/15	Senior Center Workday 9:30. Bring water and tools
4/20	Monthly Meeting @ RT Jones Library 11am
4/24	GMGA Spring Conference GNPS Native Plant Sale
4/23-24	Advance MG Training—Water Quality
4/24-25	Farm Days @ Cagle Dairy

### May

5/1	Hands-On Container Gardening demo @ Sr. Center 10-11:30
5/6	Senior Center Workday 9:30. Bring water and tools
5/8	Herb Lecture @ Hickory Flat Library 10-11:30
5/15	Bird Feeding, ID’ing, etc. Lecture @ Sr. Center 10-11:30
5/18	Monthly Meeting @ RT Jones Library 11am
5/20	Senior Center Workday 9:30. Bring water and tools
5/22	Hands-on Training: Constructing a Concrete Planter @ Sr. Center

## PLANT PROPAGATION 2: VEGETATIVE PROPAGATION

By: Patricia Bowen, Cherokee County Master Gardener

The easiest forms of vegetative propagation are divisions, cuttings and layering. Grafting is another form of vegetative propagation, but is more complex and typically used by professionals. Division is the separation of one plant into several self-supporting plants. It is also known as “vegetative” propagation, as certain types of plants reproduce by forming genetically identical vegetative offspring. Gardeners will typically get fewer plants from division than they would from seed, but plants from division are “ready to go”, known entities.

Remember, as you’re laying out your propagating materials, to expect that around 50% of your divisions will take root and survive their first year, so pot or plant many more than you want to wind up with. Also, many of your first year divisions and cuttings may not bloom profusely, or even at all, but as long as the new plants appears to be thriving, your patience will pay off next blooming season.

### DIVISION

This is a great time of year to begin dividing perennial plants as they begin to emerge in your garden. Hosta, lilies, and iris, and succulents such as cactus are just a few of the clump-forming plants that are easily divided while their size is small. Since they’re going into high-growth mode, newly divided plants are more likely to survive and flourish at this time of year.

To begin propagating, ease your entire plant out of the ground and shake off as much dirt as you can to reveal natural lines of division. Young crowns are easier to work with than old, woody ones, and are more likely to successfully transplant. Either pull or cut the plant apart with at least one good bud (preferably 3-5 buds) and strong roots on each division. Cut out brown or dead roots, or parts of the plants that have no roots and discard them. Be sure to sterilize your cutting tools between divisions so you don’t pass on harmful bacteria. A simple way to do this is to dip and swish tools in a solution of one part bleach to 5 parts water that you keep close by. You will want to spray your tools with WD40 or some kind of oil once you have finished for the day because many disinfectants are corrosive to metal. Then immediately plant each healthy division in prepared soil.

### CUTTINGS

Cuttings are taken from stems, leaves or roots. Softwood or greenwood cuttings are the easiest to propagate, and are

usually taken from the first spring shoots in their most active growth stage. The softwood stage of growth is reached when the twigs snap under pressure rather than bend. If the cutting is too soft the rooting percentage is lessened. It is also possible to take cuttings later in the growing season, as long as you allow cuttings enough time to root and establish themselves prior to frost, typically 8-10 weeks.

Take cuttings from the parent plant’s node, or leaf joint, as this is where growth cells are most concentrated. Use a clean, sharp knife and cut straight across the node. To encourage rooting, you may want to prepare some rooting hormone compound: pour only the amount you’ll be using into a small container, and discard whatever is unused so you don’t contaminate future cuttings with latent bacteria. Then, dip the sliced surface of each cutting into the compound, shake off excess, and plant the cutting in prepared soil. You can also clip the leaf tips of your cuttings to redistribute the plant’s natural growth hormones to the rest of the plant for root and shoot growth. Keep the cutting moist by covering to prevent water loss, either with a clear plastic bag if in a pot, or an inverted soda bottle if in the ground. Roots should form in 3-5 weeks.

### LAYERING

Some plants can form roots from their own stems at places where they touch the soil, and these plant portions with roots attached can be replanted independently from their parent plant. Hydrangea, azalea, rosemary, many vines and other plants propagate very easily from layering.

Select a branch that can touch the ground and create a small wound in the branch: gently twist the branch until the bark cracks, then scrape off just a little of the bark, 1/8” to 1/4”. Then peg the wound to the soil with a large staple or plant tie pressed into the ground. Cover it with an inch or so of soil to promote rooting. When strong roots have formed, cut the plant from its parent and replant it in a new location.

These are the simplest and most common forms of vegetative propagation. Several variations on the methods described include dividing bulbs, corms and tubers, planting succulent leaves directly in prepared soil and many other ways to expand the number of plants in your garden, and provide plants to share with others.

Watch for a future article in late summer on gathering seeds and bulbs for propagation. Until then, I wish you enjoyable and successful propagating!



***Don’t be tempted to plant annuals, tomatoes, or peppers before the last frost. The soil temperature is very important for plants to take off and grow. Studies have found that if tender annuals are planted early they don’t get a head start on plants planted after the soil warms up. In fact, they are susceptible to root rot and insect attacks. The frost-free date in mid-Georgia is April 15.***

## APRIL TIPS

### ORNAMENTALS

- Many herbs are excellent for natural-appearing rock gardens or formal plantings with brick pathways. These herbs do well in soil with good drainage and full-sun locations: creeping thyme, sage, santolina, garlic, rosemary and oregano.
- Observe your spring bulbs while in bloom to be sure they have not been shaded by new growth of tree or shrub plantings. If so, you may need to move your bulbs to a sunny location or prune the plantings. Also, mark over-crowded clumps. Dig up and divide them after the tops have died back. Make notes on where you want to add color for next spring.
- Fertilize bulbs upon emergence of foliage with a 10-10-10 fertilizer, using a rate of 3 pounds per 100 square feet. Repeat the application after the bulbs have bloomed.
- Lift, divide and replant chrysanthemums as soon as new shoots appear. Each rooted shoot or clump will develop into a fine plant for late summer bloom. Pinch out the top when the plants are about 4 inches high to thicken the plant.
- If you want an Easter Lily outside, don't plant it near other lilies. Easter Lilies may carry a virus that can infect other lilies.
- Plant clematis in locations that receive at least 6 hours of sun a day. Use an organic mulch or ground cover to shade roots and keep them cool. Plant in rich, well-drained loam.
- Layering has been found to be successful on more species of trees and shrubs than any other style of vegetative propagation. Layering consists of wounding a branch of the plant, then covering the wounded area with a rooting medium, such as soil or sphagnum moss. The branch will usually form roots around the wound while it is still attached to the parent plant. Layering is most successful if done in the spring or late fall as rooting is most vigorous in cool weather.
- Prune spring-blooming shrubs, such as forsythia, weigela and early spirea after they have completed flowering.
- Do not fertilize azaleas and camellias until they have finished blooming. They also should be pruned after blooming.
- Many gardeners plant annual and perennial flowers to attract hummingbirds. Woody plants can also be added to the yard to provide nectar for our smallest native birds. Some common trees visited by hummingbirds are buckeye, horse chestnut, apple, crabapple, hawthorn, redbud and tulip poplar. Shrubs include azaleas, beauty bush, coralberry, honeysuckle, New Jersey tea, and salvia greggii, and butterfly bush.
- Once new growth begins on trees and shrubs, cut back to green wood any twigs affected by winterkill.

### FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- When planting orange, yellow or chocolate peppers, be sure to plant extra. They produce fewer fruits due to staying on the plant longer to mature.
- To hinder early blight on tomatoes, mulch under tomatoes to hinder early blight, a soil borne disease, from being splashed on the plant during rains.
- Fresh raspberries are tender and perishable, so they are rarely sold in stores. To have fresh berries, raise them in your own backyard. Fifteen or twenty plants, spaced 3' apart, in rows 6' apart, will produce a good supply of fruit for home use.

- If fruit trees are lacking pollinators nearby, put bouquets of blossoms from good pollinators in pails under blossoming trees. Make plans to plant pollinating varieties this fall or plant perennials or shrubs that bloom at the right time.
- Thin young fruits of apples, pears and peaches within 25 days of the peak bloom, leaving 4-7" between fruit to insure larger, healthier fruit.
- Grapevines with excessive growth generally have less high-quality fruit. In early spring, prune out the canes with the fewest buds to allow light, moisture, and air circulation within the plant to improve the quality and quantity of the fruit.
- Erect trellises now for beans and cucumbers, if you are going to train them on trellises later in the season.
- When the spring is very wet and the soil too muddy to work, plant your seed potatoes on top of the ground. Lay the cut seed flat on top of the wet earth with the eye up, spaced in rows 24" apart and 12" apart in the row. Cover them with 6" of oak leaves and water the leaves heavily enough to pack them so they won't blow off. This saves digging and planting furrow, hilling, and digging up the potatoes. Just pull back the leaves and there they are, nice and clean and not sunburned.
- When weather is wet and cold, allow about twice the germination time listed on the seed packet. If there is no sign of growth after this time, dig around a little to check for sprouted seeds. If you find no signs of life. The seed has probably rotted and you will need to replant.
- Plant a bush-type, winter squash if your garden is small and you do not have adequate space for the long-vine varieties.
- Root crops must be thinned, no matter how ruthless this practice seems. Thin carrots, beets, parsnips and onions so you can get three fingers between individual plants.
- When planning your vegetable garden, consider that leafy vegetables need at least six hours of sunlight to develop properly. Fruiting vegetables such as tomatoes, squash, eggplant and peppers need 10 hours of full sun.
- When transplanting seedlings in peat pots to your garden, be careful not to allow the rim of the peat pot to protrude above the soil level. If the rim is above the soil, it will act as a wick and draw moisture away from the transplant. To prevent this, break away the uppermost rim of the pot before planting and make sure the pot is completely covered with soil.
- When tomato seedlings have 5-7 leaves, they are ready to transplant into the garden. For a sturdier plant, be certain to place the plant in the soil up to the bottom leaves. This increases the root growth of the plant.
- Drive stakes for future supports when you plant tomatoes. If you try to install stakes later, you may damage the plant roots. Tie the plants to the stakes with a soft material such as stockings or old bed sheets that will not cut into the stems.

### MISCELLANEOUS

- Don't be too anxious to move your houseplants outdoors. A slight chill can knock the leaves off tender plants.
- Replace the bulbs on plant lights yearly. They gradually lose their strength causing plants to stretch up and stop blooming.
- Moles are tunneling insect eaters and particularly attracted to grubs. When bulbs are missing or shrubs have root damage, look for voles or field mice to be the culprits.

# MAY TIPS

## ORNAMENTALS

- Keep and eye out for aphids and other insects on roses. Spray if necessary. Begin spraying for blackspot at least twice a month. Remove & replace mulch under roses and you will cut down greatly on black spot.
- Red and silver maples, willows, poplars and elms can clog septic lines with their roots. Do not plant these near water or sewer lines.
- If you are building a home on a wooded lot, save young, vigorous trees. They will adapt to changes in their environment better than older trees. Trees that once grew in shade and are suddenly exposed to increased sunlight, wider temperature changes, and drying winds may not survive
- Lightly sidedress perennials, including spring bulbs, with a 5-10-10 or 10-10-10 fertilizer, being careful to avoid the center or crown of the plant.
- Caladiums need generous amount of water and fertilizer to encourage continuous production of new leaves during the summer. Apply a light sidedressing of 5-10-5 fertilizer every two weeks and water thoroughly.
- If you are looking for plants that flower each year, require little care, and are rarely bothered by pests or disease, try some of these perennials: coneflower, bleeding heart, liatris, daylily, gaura, hosta, Virginia bluebell, veronica and foamflower.
- To maximize a small space, try annual vines. They can disguise ugly walls and enliven fences. When trellised, they create shade and privacy while hiding undesirable views.

## FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Protect developing strawberries from birds with spun-bonded row cover or plastic netting.
- Technically, berries are fruit that are soft throughout, such as blueberries. Thus the raspberry is not a true berry, but a fruit that is made of many small sections each with a seed or pit. Fruits with fleshy material surrounding a hard seed are called drupes. So a raspberry is not a berry but is a cluster of small drupes or drupelets.
- Thin peaches 4-6 inches apart for large, high-quality fruit.
- If spraying fruit trees near a vegetable garden, cover vegetables with a large sheet of plastic to protect them from the spray.
- To ensure pollination of sweet corn, plant several rows together in a block, rather than in one long row. Side-dress with 3 Tbsp of 10-10-10 per 10 feet of row when 12-18

inches high.

- When thinning beans, watch for “snake heads”, seedlings that have lost one or both of their cotyledons and produce poor, weak sprouts. Also, watch for “bald heads”, seedlings that have the growth point damaged so severely that they cannot develop. Both types will be weak and delayed in growth and should be removed.

## MISCELLANEOUS

- Mark the handle of your spade/hoe in inches for a handy measuring device for row width and planting distances. Paint or tape the measurements on the handle. A coat of varnish can make the marks last longer.
- Experiments in England suggest that sugar water might be more effective bait for slugs than beer. Slugs preferred an agar gel containing 2-5% sucrose (table sugar).
- USDA entomologists are testing the biological control potential of an insect that preys on the azalea’s worst enemy, the lace bug. Lace bugs suck nutrients from azaleas and other plants producing unsightly white spots on leaves. An adult of the insect predator, Stethoconus japonicus, can consume 2-6 lace bugs per day.
- Birds have 5 basic needs: food, water, shelter, nesting sites, and predator protection. Supply these and you will have many more birds around your home to entertain you and control insect pests.
- Try trapping earwigs and sowbugs with rolled up newspapers moistened with water. The insects will hide in the papers by day. Gather up the traps and dispose of them frequently.
- When you see ants crawling on garden plants, look for aphids. Some ant species protect aphids, moving them from plant to plant and even taking them into the anthill for overnight safety. The ants do this to ensure a supply of honeydew, a sugary water substance secreted by aphids, on which ants feed.
- A garden use for plastic milk jugs: seep irrigation. Punch holes in the sides of a jug about 2 inches apart. Bury the jug leaving the neck protruding from the soil. Fill the jug with water (solutions or liquid fertilizer may be used to water and feed at the same time) and screw the cap on firmly. The water will seep out, providing a slow, deep irrigation for nearby plants.
- Trellis and stake downwind from the prevailing winds so plants will lean against the supports when the wind is blowing.

## 2004 Georgia Gold Medal Winners

- Annual:** Chartreuse Joseph’s Coat or Alternanthera
- Perennial:** Hybrid Hyssop or Agastache Hybrids Tutti Frutti, Firebird, Apricot Sunrise and Blue Fortune
- Shrub:** Viburnum plicatum var. tomentosum or Summer Snowflake Viburnum
- Tree:** Perrotia persica or Persian Parrotia

## SPRING LAWN CARE

by: Bill Slatton, Cherokee County Master Gardener

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

- Seed as soon as possible if you're going to. The best time is in September/October. Seedlings need to establish before the summer heat.
- Mow at the recommended height. Never cut more than one-third at a time.
- If there has been no significant rainfall, give 1 inch of water per week. In April, it is best to water during the day so the moisture will evaporate quickly, helping to prevent fungal diseases. Remember that May is one of the driest months of the year. Watering deeply and infrequently encourages grass roots to grow deeper into the soil.
- Established evergreen lawns should be fertilized early in April with fertilizer that has a slow release form of nitrogen at the rate of 1.5 pounds per 1000 square feet. This should last through the summer. Newly seeded lawns should be fertilized four weeks after sowing. Do not fertilize in May.
- If you have not already done so, you can still apply pre-emergence weed control in April. Do not apply to newly seeded or sodded lawns until they have been mowed at least twice. You can spray visible weeds with a post-emergence spray.
- Fungal diseases can appear in April and early May. They like daytime temperatures of 65-80°, nighttime temperatures of 50-60°, and moist lawns.
- Keep an eye out for webworms, cutworms and armyworms in April and May. Mature white grubs will move closer to the surface in May. Wait until late July/early August to apply insecticide to treat the newly hatched grubs. The insecticides are not very effective on mature grubs. Use sharp mower blades. Dull blades will rip the grass and cause the tips to turn brown.

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

- Warm season grasses can be planted after the danger of frost has passed, usually in mid to late April, however they will do better if planted in May. It is best to have soil temperatures of 75-80°. Cultivate and fertilize before planting.

- Mow when the grass reaches the recommended height. If you mow lower than the recommended height during the spring green-up you could shock the grass. After green-up, mow consistently at the correct height.
- If there has been no significant rainfall, water at 1-inch per week. It is best to water during the day in April to allow the grass to dry out. Fungal diseases love cool weather and damp grass. May can be a dry month, so make sure your lawn gets its 1-inch per week.
- When the lawn is 50% green you can begin fertilizing. Use fertilizer with a slow release form of nitrogen. An application of 1.5 pounds of actual nitrogen per 1000 square feet should last 2-3 months. Centipede lawns should have a fertilizer specifically designed for Centipede lawns and be applied at a rate of ¾ pounds per 1000 square feet. A slow release fertilizer with as little phosphorus as possible can be substituted for a Centipede fertilizer. If the soil is too cold for the roots to absorb nutrients, Centipede and Zoysia may emerge yellow. The grass should green up in a couple of weeks.
- Aerating is best if you wait until the soil temperatures reach 80°. This will usually be around mid May. Aerating in April can allow the introduction of weed seeds and interfere with the pre-emergence weed control.
- Your pre-emergence weed control is still effective in April. You can start using post-emergence sprays in May once you have mowed at least twice.
- April is a great time for fungal diseases. They can have all kinds of fun with your lawn. They are really happy with warm days, cool nights and moist lawns. Diseases can appear as discolored or dead areas with clearly defined edges. Check the edges for discolored, wilted, or spotted blades. Use a fungicide approved for use on your grass.
- Sod webworms, cutworms, armyworms and chinch bugs can all start to show up in April and May. Webworms and cut worms feed on grass blades at night. Watch for spider like webs on the lawn early in the morning or patches of cut grass blades. Armyworms feed in masses and can be very destructive. Treat with a soil insecticide for your type of grass.

### Rainfall Comparisons

	Cherokee County			Statewide		
	Jan	Feb	YTD	Jan	Feb	YTD
Actual	3.7	4.2	7.9	3.2	4.6	7.8
Normal	5.8	5.2	11	5.3	4.9	10.2
Deficit	-2.1	-1.0	-3.1	-2.1	-0.3	-2.4

## CLEMATIS CONTINUED

by: Susan Wyman, Cherokee County Master Gardener

(Continued from page 1)

from seed.) They resemble golden bells hanging from a charm bracelet. The subsequent seed heads look like exotic, silvery feathers in flower arrangements.

You want hardy? Clematis Montana Rubens is native to the Himalayas! With classical looking strawberry-pink blooms and masses of twining stems that envelop a shed or tall fence, it blooms in April in GA to coordinate with dogwoods and azaleas. It is said that the effect is enchanting, even paradisiacal. This deciduous vine is hardy to zone 4. Not a mailbox clematis; but a great specimen for a cottage garden. One gardener strung it up and over double garage doors for a floral archway.

As Clematis "Roguchi" matures it forms an 8 foot tall filigreed curtain of plum purple hanging bells with a glossy true blue on the inside. A repeat flush six to eight weeks later yields flowers well into late summer. It's especially beautiful cavorting amid hostas in a woodland setting. Like its cousins, it likes it's feet in the shade, but this one will also do well with it's head in part shade. (*C. alpina* is a very early blue-flowered choice that does well in considerable shade) to the very hardy ruby-red *C. texensis* and its cultivars which are a great choice where summers are hot and dry.

### **PLANTING:** Feet in the shade, head in the sun.

- Take care to situate clematis so that the roots have a cool, moist, well-drained soil and that the tops will receive direct sun at least four hours daily. Clematis need neutral to slightly alkaline soil, never acid. If your soil is on the acid side of the pH scale, add horticultural limestone at planting time – about a quart to a bushel of soil, and in succeeding springs, add a handful of limestone around each bush and cultivate it into the soil.
- Keep clematis away from cedar, arborvitae and other evergreens that harbor the cedar rust. When clematis are first planted, the crowns and emerging shoots are vulnerable.
- Since the most vital rule for successful culture is to keep the roots cool, maintain a 2-inch organic mulch and always water generously. (Although my wayward mailbox variety was very far from the house yet it thrived in dry weather with only rain.) Yellowing of lower leaves indicates that the roots are either too hot or too dry

- Securing that vine: Attach vines to brick or masonry walls with plant anchors. (Tumax Plant Anchor Kit is one I found at: [www.tumaxgardenproducts.com](http://www.tumaxgardenproducts.com)) Excellent for securing any trailing or vining plant, also works well for training espaliers, or even as a permanent method of attaching holiday lights to walls and eaves.

### **PRUNING:**

Pruning of clematis is simpler than most gardeners think. If your type blooms in late summer or fall on new growth, prune it in late winter or early Spring, to about 1 foot from the ground. Spring-flowered varieties which bloom on the previous season growth need to be pruned only to remove dead wood or to control the plant's size and reduce tangling. Those which flower on both old and new wood, often blooming in both late spring and fall, should have dead wood pruned out and weak shoots cut back to a strong pair of buds. To encourage the production of woody tissue on the lower stem, pinch out the tips of new shoots when they reach two to three inches in length. Cut back young plants halfway to encourage branching and an increase in the size and number of flowers.

Potential Problems: Large flowered clematis are highly susceptible to the notorious fungal disease, clematis wilt. It strikes in early summer, often when plants are about to flower. Wilted leaves and stems that droop and turn black are the first signs, but the fungus initially attacks the stem close to the soil line, invading cracked, damaged, or weak tissue. (Remember when you learned of the necessity of cleaning up plant debris, and pruning out and destroying damaged sections?) There is no registered fungicide for controlling clematis wilt, but despite its nasty appearance, it is rarely fatal. Even if all top growth is killed, new, healthy shoots can emerge from basal buds below the soil surface. (This is the reason it is recommended to plant clematis with the crown at a depth of 2 ½ inches below soil level.) Fertilize and water to encourage regrowth.

And lastly, beware; because although the clematis wilt may not be fatal, this clematis love affair is highly contagious and shows no sign of waning.

**If you can't find the clematis you are looking for locally, call for catalogs from: Completely Clematis, (978-356-3197); Joy Creek Nursery 503-543-7474; Louisiana Nursery, Opelousas, La; We-Du Nurseries, Marion, NC; Woodlanders, Aiken S.C.;**

Please see the CCMG web site for more information on pruning of Clematis

[Http://cescherokee.org](http://cescherokee.org)

# Recipes

Send recipes to  
Sharon Atcheson at  
[sharatch@aol.com](mailto:sharatch@aol.com)

## HOT CHEESE PUFFS

One recipe makes only 10-12 puffs

- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 3 Tbsp soft butter or margarine
- ½ cup sifted all purpose flour
- ¼ tsp salt
- ½ tsp paprika
- olives stuffed with pimento, onions, hot peppers

Mix all ingredients well except olives, wrap approx. 1 tsp cheese mix around each stuffed olive and roll into ball, covering olive completely. Arrange on ungreased pastry sheet and bake at 400 degrees for 10 minutes or until slightly brown. Best served warm.  
You can freeze balls for up to 3 months and pull out any time to bake.  
Recipe from Helen Dunham, Merrily McLaughlin's mom.

## SPINACH AND ARTICHOKE IN PUFF PASTRY

- 1 10 oz. pkg. frozen chopped spinach, thawed and well-drained (Press between paper towels to get all liquid out)
- 1 14oz. can artichoke hearts, drained and chopped
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- ½ cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1 tsp. onion powder
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp. pepper
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 cup whipped cream cheese
- crab meat (optional)
- 1 17.3 oz. pkg frozen puff pastry [found in frozen dessert section] two in each box.

Stir together spinach and chopped artichokes and next 7 ingredients. Unfold Allow pastry sheets to sit at room temperature for 30 minutes, and then unfold. Place pastry puff sheets on heavy duty plastic wrap. Spread ½ spinach mixture evenly over each pastry puff sheet, leaving ½ inch border. Roll up pastry jelly-roll fashion pressing seams to seal. Wrap in heavy duty plastic wrap.  
Freeze 30 minutes and then remove wrap and cut into ½ inch slices. Place on lightly greased pan. Bake at 400° for 20 minutes or until golden brown. These can also be kept rolled up and frozen until ready to bake.  
Recipe from Southern Living 2001

The University of Georgia and Ft. Valley State College, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and counties of the state cooperating.  
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[http://county.ces.uga.edu/cherokee Master\\_Gardeners.htm](http://county.ces.uga.edu/cherokee_Master_Gardeners.htm)

### 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.