

Newsletter



for the Cherokee
County Master
Gardeners

October/November 2003

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Attention Cherokee County Master Gardeners!

Please join us for the
2003 Master Gardener Intern Graduation

November 13, 2003,
at the Ball Ground Community Center.

Look for more information coming soon...

What's Happening

10/2	Sr. Center Workday 9:30-3. Bring tools & water. Seed exchange with Srs @ 10:30 am.
10/7	Mid-term for interns. Master Gardeners will need to bring refreshments.
10/16	Senior Center workday 9:30-3. Bring tools & water.
10/18	Hickory Flat Library, 10:00am. Lecture on Japanese Gardening
10/21	Monthly Meeting @ RT Jones Library @ 7pm. Lecture by Eddie Rhodes.
11/6	Senior Center workday 9:30-3. Bring water and tools.
11/8	Wreath Making @ Cherokee County Senior Center. 10:00am
11/13	Final exam for interns. MGs will have a pot luck lunch to welcome them.
11/18	Monthly Meeting @ 10 am.
11/20	Senior Center workday 9:30-3. Bring tools and water.

From The Editor

Today I was adding up my monthly hours to fax in to the extension office. I put in a lot of hours each month and some of you may wonder why? Well I have an unquenchable thirst. It's not for soda or water but for knowledge. The more I volunteer, the more I learn. I then take that knowledge and share it with someone else. I think we should add a column on our Monthly Log Sheet for what we learned while volunteering. This month I relearned the different colors and veining that plants show with nutrient deficiencies. I also learned a lot about installing water saving irrigation system. I even learned how to put up a tent correctly. Did you know snakes will climb up bronze fennel to eat caterpillars? I really enjoy each time I'm with Todd, our Ag agent, and working with other Master Gardeners. I can watch the information flow back and forth and faces light up with gained knowledge.

Marcia Winchester

DUST OFF THE LONG JOHNS!

by: Jennifer Resuta, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Strange as it may seem, plants and trees communicate with me. They are telling me it is going to be a very cold winter. Stack up the firewood and get out your long Johns, it is going to be a long, cold snowy and icy winter.

Even if you don't buy the fact that they can communicate, just notice the profusion of berries on the Pyracantha, or the abundant acorns on all the Oak trees. They are laden with them. Mother Nature has a knack for supplying food naturally to wildlife by loading up trees and shrubs, in advance of harsh winters, with nuts and berries. Some years the fruit is scarce; this, however, is not one of them.

I recently was discussing my theory with a customer of mine and she replied that the Farmer's Almanac is in agreement with my conclusion. One of these days, I would like to put a book together with all of this trivia.

My favorite sign in nature is this: If we have thunder and lightning in January, we will have drought that year. If you remember we did not have any thunder and lightning last January; this author made careful note of it. And look at the rainy spring and summer we had this year. I would like to thank Tommie Adkins of Twin Branch Nursery for making me aware of his father's theory.

ASK THE LANDSCAPER

by: Jennifer Resuta, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Q: My lawn has brown spots on it that keep growing. Our lawn chemical company says that my mower blade is dull. I have recently purchased a new mower and the brown spots are still there after I mow. What is wrong with my lawn?

R: I have contacted your chemical company as well and the "experts" argued with me about the real cause of the spots. They also suggested that your ground is uneven, causing browning out when you mow off the top 1/3 of the grass. I have seen the brown patches growing larger each week—coupled with the heat and humidity we were

experiencing at the end of August and beginning of September. Which leads me to believe that what you have is brown spot or Rhizoctonia fungus. It needs to be treated when the grass is actively growing, which probably means next spring. The fungicide used to kill this fungus is about \$2.00 per pound to the professional (wholesale), which means about \$50.00 per bag. I suggest you treat the lawn in the spring, as it will come back if left untreated. Garden' Alive has a product that works as a long-lasting broad spectrum fungicide, called "Soil-Gard". It can only be used to prevent fungus from occurring.

RECYCLING

by: Myriam Zagarola, Cherokee County Master Gardener

The 3 R's of Recycling

REDUCE

- Use both sides of the paper to write.
- When printing, save scrap paper to print drafts.

REUSE

- Use plastic bags from retail stores as trash bags.
- Use coffee cans to store crayons, nails, crafts, etc.

RECYCLE

Recycle paper, plastic, steel, wood, etc.

Recycling Tips for Common Materials

- Glass – Separate by color; remove labels and lids, rinse
- Plastic - Separate by color and type; remove labels and lids, rinse. Cherokee County Recycling Center only accepts 2 and 4.
- Paper bags – Remove staples, and paper clips. Recycle only clean bags.
- Newspaper – remove the shiny inserts before recycling. Recycle shiny with magazines.
- Plastic bags – recycle clear, white, and light brown types 2 and 4. Reuse other colors and any other unidentified bag.

Remember that any wrong item in the recycling bin will ruin the mix and the purpose of recycling.

Attention:

Office Depot is offering a free package of recycled-content paper (500 sheets) for every empty ink cartridge brought to the store.

The cartridges need to be from first use.

PEST CONTROL IN YOUR GARDEN

by: Karen Lutz, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Harmful bugs account for only 1-2% of the insect population. Here, we review three basic ways to control pests in your garden without the use of chemicals but, rather, Mother Nature's way:

1. Use of Carrot Family—Umbelliferous plants attract beneficial bugs.

There are around 3000 species in the carrot family; mainly herbaceous plants native to temperate climates around the globe. What are common among them are their flower clusters, which resemble miniature flat-topped parasols. These are termed umbels from the Latin word *umbellula*, meaning "umbrella".

Niall Dunne of Brooklyn Botanic Garden notes that "Historically, umbellifers have been of enormous biological importance as crop plants. In modern times, however, they have something else going for them as well: they're very attractive to beneficial insects—the so-called "good bugs" that act as pollinators, soil builders, or predators of pest insects in the landscape. Plants with umbels are magnets for predatory bugs in particular".

Examples of embellifers are: Dill, Coriander, Fennel, Parsnips, Cumin, Anise, Parsley and Carrots. Lovage (*Levisticum officinale*) attracts ichneumon wasps, which parasitize the larvae of herbivorous insects. Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) attracts lady beetles that prey on aphids, scale insects, thrips, mealybugs, and mites. Dill (*Anethum graveolens*) is good at drawing such insects as lacewings, whose larvae are known for devouring aphids.

What makes them so attractive to beneficial bugs? Dr. May Berenbaum, Head of Entomology at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and author of [Bugs in the System](#) (Addison Wesley, 1995) says "Small flowers with accessible nectar and a nice landing platform.". So, gardeners interested in handling pests with natural predators are smart to incorporate members of the carrot family in their gardens.

2. Strategize—Increase the biodiversity of your garden.

One would think that by simplifying things, spraying pesticides and growing a few variety of plants, would control pests, however, it actually encourages problems. By making the environment more diverse, problems are less likely. Grow a wide range of plants (attracting beneficial bugs) and avoid broad-spectrum insecticides.

3. Release beneficial bugs.

There are about 50 beneficial bugs raised and sold commercially today. They are either predators or parasites. Examples include the following: ladybugs, lacewings, ground beetles, predatory stink bugs, spiders, wasps, dragonflies, damselflies, fireflies, praying mantis, predatory mites, minute pirate bugs, assassin bugs, predatory nematodes.

Releasing large quantities of good bugs in your garden can help in several ways. They may eliminate the pests

right away, then disperse and die off. They may establish a local population of beneficial offspring that live from year to year reducing pests. Or, they may consume a few pests and fly away.

How you release bugs is dependent upon the type of beneficial bug you buy. You must consider the bugs' lifecycles, local temperatures, time of day/night, food source and the method used to disperse the insects. Always keep purchased bugs cool and watered before release. Some general examples (excerpts from homestore.com/HomeGarden and Howard Garrett's Basic Organic Program):

- **Wasps:** Encarsia wasp parasitizes the whitefly especially well in greenhouses, but works outdoors as well when whiteflies attack tomatoes or other plants. Order this parasite as soon as you notice a whitefly population building. Good control occurs only when minimum average temperatures are at least 72°F (62°F at night and 82°F in day). At these temperatures the Encarsia wasp can develop as fast or faster than the whitefly population. Insecticidal soaps and horticultural oils that you might use on whiteflies don't harm the wasps seriously. Two releases 1-2 weeks apart will last the whole season.

Trichogramma wasps should be release from small containers or cards attached to plants that are having trouble with pecan casebearer, cabbage worms, tomato hornworms, corn earworms and other orchards pests. These beneficial insects are tiny gnat-like parasitic wasps that kill the eggs of all sorts of caterpillars. Because it's hard to spot pests' eggs and because the Tricho wasps are usually cheap, the best strategy is to plan on weekly or biweekly releases to keep up with new egg laying. The wasps arrive ready to emerge from eggs of their insectary hosts, which are glued to a card. A succession of releases allows 2nd generations to establish.

- **Lacewings:** larvae are voracious and sometimes called aphid lions. They will eat anything they can subdue including thrips and small caterpillars. They are most commonly sold as eggs, mixed with a carrier like bran or rice hulls. You can also buy the larvae, however, they cost about then times as much as eggs but may be a good value since ants and other predators often eat lacewing eggs. Purchased eggs or larvae are best used as a biological insecticide—sprinkle them near a serious outbreak of a pest. The larvae will feed in the area as long as there is plenty of prey, and then disperse. There is little point in buying adult lacewings. It's more economical to attract one of the dozens of species native to North America. No matter where you live, there should be wild lacewings nearby, though not in as dense a concentration as you get when you release 500+ eggs from a supplier. The adults feed on nectar and honeydew produced by sucking insects such as aphids, leafhoppers, whiteflies and mealy bugs. You can build up populations

(Continued on page 4)

PEST CONTROL IN YOUR GARDEN—CONTINUED

by: Karen Lutz, Cherokee County Master Gardener

(Continued from page 3)

of wild lacewings by applying a sugar and protein mixture that simulates this honeydew. Drizzle it onto the foliage near your garden and especially near a pest outbreak. Commercial preparations of these insect foods have names like Pred-Feed and Bug-Chow.

- **Beetles (ladybugs):** The most widely available biological control is the lady beetle, *Hippodamia* covergens, which feeds on small soft-bodied insects, especially aphids. These good bugs are field collected rather than reared in insectaries, largely because they aggregate in large masses in the foothills of California and are easily gathered when dormant. Releasing them in your garden is fun but does almost no good against a pest outbreak. Released preconditioned lady beetles (fed long enough to have mature eggs) will stay in your garden as long as the food supply lasts, eating aphids and laying eggs to produce larvae. Ladybugs can be purchased in mesh bags or in small box containers, which contain 1500 bugs in a pint up to 70,000 in a gallon. For aphid control, spray the foliage with water and release the bugs directly on the infested plants. Do it at dusk or early in the morning. You can concentrate local populations in your garden by attracting adults. Use the artificial honeydews and plants nectar and aphid-host sources, especially alyssum, legumes or flowers in the umbellifere family.
- **Predatory Mites:** Various species of mites are sold to control spider mites and thrips, especially on greenhouse crops and indoor plantings. Some of them also work on outbreaks on roses, strawberries, fruit trees, eggplant and other garden plants. Each species has different requirements for temperature and humidity, so discuss your needs with the supplier when you order. All predatory mites require high humidity (70% or more). They also prefer to forage on plants without hairy leaves.

Release predatory mites early in the season. Watch for incipient spider mite or thrips populations, then order predatory mites immediately by phone. The mites are perish-

able and require special shipping, around \$20 per 1,000. Your concentrated population of mites will disperse when the food source becomes scarce, so you will need to order more mites if outbreaks occur later in the season. Mites are very susceptible to soap sprays and other insecticides, so use soaps only before the mites arrive.

- **Predatory nematodes:** Nematodes, or roundworms, teem in the soil of lawns and gardens. Some are major plant pests but the majority feed on soil microorganisms. A few prey on insects, injecting them with lethal bacteria, then feeding on the resultant "goo". Several strains and species of predatory nematodes are produced and sold. Purchased nematodes generally need to be released annually to provide dependable control. New techniques of packaging mean nematodes can be stored several months at room temperature which is why they are showing up in garden centers.

Beneficial Insect Release Schedule:

- April—May: Release trichogramma wasps @ 10,000 to 20,000 eggs weekly for 4 to 6 weeks.
Release lacewings @ 4,000 eggs weekly for four weeks.
- May—Sept.: Release ladybugs as needed on aphid infested plants. Release green lacewings @ 2,000 eggs every two weeks as needed.

The smart gardener can adequately control pests by incorporating all three of these methods into the garden landscape.

Resources/Credits:

Beneficial Insects
www.planetnatural.com
www.hgtv.com/hgtv/gl_diseases_pests_insects
www.bbg.org/gar2/topics/sustainable/2001su_beneficialbugs
www.biconet.com/reference/HGbeneficials
www.homestore.com/homegarden/gardening/features/pestsinsects/goodbugs.asp

Q & A

by: Karen Garland, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Q: My Tree Peony is making seeds. What can you tell me about them?

R: Tree Peony seeds take up to 3 years to germinate. The plant will not be true to the parent. You would have to decide if you want to spend 3 years watering a seed. Tree Peonies are usually sold in the spring. When ordering from a catalog they tend to be expensive. You can take your catalogs to different retailers that sell them and be better informed on which ones are more valuable.

Q: Does the Joe pye weed cultivar Gateway reseed true to Gateway?

R: No; most cultivars do not reseed true to the cultivar. Try small stem cuttings in rooting hormone in early summer.

SCARLET ROSEMALLOW (*HIBISCUS COCCINEUS*)

By: Mary Tucker, Cherokee County Master Gardener

There are many plants I would not want to garden without, and scarlet rosemallow is certainly one of them. Many features recommend it, most obviously its huge, brilliant red bloom, 6 to 8 inches in diameter. The flower has that typical hibiscus shape; however, it is a bit more interesting in my opinion, for when fully open, the five petals separate out from one another, which gives it another common name, Texas star.

Hibiscus coccineus is a stunning plant, either up close or at a distance. If its height of 5 to 7 feet isn't enough to draw your eye, the bright red of the blossoms is sure to attract your attention – even from across the yard. Upon closer inspection, you can appreciate the elegant, deeply cut palmate leaves, the delicate pink cast on the stems, and the long, dramatic stamens.

The bloom time is another bonus, for scarlet rosemallow puts on its show during the months of July, August, and September, when many garden plants are flagging in the heat. The plant has an open, airy nature, giving it a somewhat delicate look, despite its size. This openness prevents the foliage from obscuring the blooms and makes the plant easy to incorporate into a mixed border, where it can mingle comfortably with other plants.

Scarlet rosemallow serves as a wonderful addition to the wildlife habitat garden. Its bright red blooms attract the ruby-throated hummingbird, and the plant is in bloom during the height of the hummingbirds' appearance in my yard. In my garden, even the songbirds make use of it; it is planted in the bed near my bird feeder, and its loosely spaced stalks provide numerous perches for the birds as they approach the feeder. The cardinals seem especially fond of the plant, as if they know that the scarlet blooms match their hue and enhance their

beauty. I purposefully leave the dried stalks when the plant dies back in winter so the birds continue to have their resting place.

I have found *Hibiscus coccineus* to be relatively problem-free. Occasionally, I may have to stake a stalk or two, especially if we have heavy rain or wind. A true bonus is that I rarely have any insect problems. Unlike many other plants in the mallow family, the Japanese beetle rarely attacks it, though I don't know why this is the case.

Scarlet rosemallow is a wonderful companion to other tall, late summer bloomers. In my garden, the vibrant purple flower heads of giant ironweed (*Vernonia gigantea*) contrast dramatically with the red blooms of the hibiscus. Blooming at the same time is the green-head coneflower (*Rudbeckia laciniata*) with its lemon-yellow, daisy-shaped blooms. This trio creates a riot of color that lasts for several months.

The large, round seedpods of scarlet rosemallow split open a bit as they dry, but hold together for a long time. They are attractive in dried arrangements or left on the plant for winter interest. I have read that fresh seeds germinate readily without any treatment, but that if the seeds are stored for a time, they will benefit from scarification or stratification. However, I started my original plant from seed some time ago, and I don't remember giving the seeds any special treatment, though I'm sure they weren't fresh.

Hibiscus coccineus is a Southeast native and is usually found in damp areas, hence another common name, swamp hibiscus. Take a hint, and plant it in a garden bed that will get ample moisture. Keep in mind that plenty of sun is required for the best bloom display.

GNPS 2003 PLANT OF THE YEAR: FOAMFLOWER

By: Mary Tucker, Cherokee County Master Gardener

The Georgia Native Plant Society is pleased to announce that foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*) has been selected as the organization's 2003 Plant of the Year. This charming perennial wildflower is found in rich woodlands throughout the eastern United States, primarily in the piedmont and mountain regions.

Foamflower grows in neat, mounded clumps, 6 to 8 inches tall. Its maple-shaped leaves are covered with soft hairs and are 2 to 3 inches wide and 3 to 4 inches long. The leaves are semi-evergreen and often take on a pleasing bronzy cast in winter.

The leaf shape of specimens may vary from almost heart shaped to deeply lobed. The leaf veins are often attractively tinged with burgundy, and color and pattern variations exist in naturally occurring populations. The nursery trade has employed these variable shape and color characteristics to introduce numerous named cultivars.

Indicative of its name, foamflower bears delicate, airy, white to pinkish flower spikes in spring, which are composed of tiny, star-shaped blossoms. These racemes ascend 8 to 12 inches above the foliage, creating a soft, mist-like effect. The blooms are surprisingly long-lasting, often persisting for well over a month.

Taxonomists have divided the species into two varieties: *Tiarella cordifolia* var. *cordifolia* and *T. cordifolia* var. *collina* (formerly *Tiarella wherryi*). The variety *cordifolia* is stoloniferous and spreads fairly quickly to form a ground cover. In contrast, var. *collina* grows in clumps. Otherwise, the two are similar in appearance, and both make worthy garden plants; however, var. *collina* is more southerly in its distribution, and is therefore more tolerant of heat and humidity.

Foamflower prefers a soil rich in organic matter that is evenly moist, yet well drained. Native to woodland habitats, this plant prefers shade or dappled sunlight, though it will tolerate more sun in cooler climates.

The white blooms will brighten dark, shady areas in the spring garden, and the attractive foliage will add year-round interest. In the woodland garden, foamflower is a fitting companion to other native plants, such as green-and-gold, dwarf crested iris, hepatica, and ferns, and it makes an impressive display either en masse or as a specimen plant. Foamflower also easily adapts to the cultivated garden bed, and even to containers, provided ample moisture is available during the growing season. Foamflower is easily propagated from seed or from division of mature clumps.

OCTOBER TIPS

ORNAMENTALS

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

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Tomatoes need an average daily temperature of 65° F or more for ripening. If daytime temperatures consistently are below this, pick fruits that have begun to change color and bring them inside to ripen.
- Place a ripe apple in a closed container with green tomatoes to encourage the tomatoes to turn red. Ripe apples give off ethylene gas that causes tomatoes to ripen, or use them for recipes that require green tomatoes.
- Cure pumpkins, butternut, and Hubbard squash at temperatures between 70 - 80° F for two to three weeks immediately after harvest. After curing, store them in a dry place at 55- 60° F. If stored at 50° F or below, pumpkins and squash are subject to

damage by chilling. At temperatures above 60° F, they gradually lose moisture and become stringy.

- Strawberries covered in the fall with a spun-bonded polyester material and uncovered in the spring just before bloom produced up to 60% more fruit than plants given the conventional straw or hay mulch cover.
- A final weeding of your strawberries, blueberries, or raspberries will help keep weed problems down to a minimum. Start collecting fresh pine needles or clean straw to mulch strawberries after the ground has frozen.
- Prepare your soil now for planting raspberries in the spring. A pH of 5.8 - 6.5 and sandy-loam soil are best for raspberries. When planting in a garden, avoid areas where tomatoes, eggplants or potatoes were planted to guard against verticillium wilt being in the soil.
- Make a note of any particularly productive or unsatisfactory varieties or crops. Such information can be very useful during garden-planning time in the spring.
- Smaller apples usually keep longer and bruise less. Allow for air circulation when storing.
- Clean up home orchard and small-fruit plantings. Sanitation is essential for good maintenance. Dried fruits or mummies carry disease organisms through the winter to attack next year's crop.
- If there is a threat of frost at night, harvest your cucumber, eggplant, melon, okra, pepper and summer squash so the fruits are not damaged by the frost.
- Hot peppers store well dry. Pull plants and hang them up, or pick the peppers and thread on a string. Store in a cool, dry place.
- Late-fall tilling can help control insects such as corn borer, corn earworm, cucumber beetle, squash bug, and vine borer because it exposes overwintering insects to winter conditions. It also makes spring soil preparation easier.

MISCELLANEOUS

- When removing disease-infected plant parts/debris, do not place refuse on the compost pile. The disease pathogens will live in the compost pile and can be transmitted with the application of compost to other garden beds, unless compost temperatures reach above 180° F and decomposition is complete.
- Do not apply quick-acting fertilizers while tilling the soil in the fall. Otherwise, nitrogen will leach away before spring. Materials that release nutrients slowly into the soil, such as rock phosphate, can be worked into the soil in the fall.
- When temperatures start dropping, be sure to check for any chemicals that should not freeze. Move them to a safe storage place where temperatures do not fall below 40° F. Frozen liquids can break jars and split plastic containers, spreading concentrated chemicals within reach of children or pets.
- Kudzu, poison ivy and other weedy vines are more susceptible to chemical control this time of year. Be sure to follow the directions, and protect other plants from drift of the spray.
- October is the best month to plant fall annual beds. It is cooler for the transplants and gives their roots time to become established before winter cold hits. Try mixing snapdragons and stocks with pansies for color and parsley, kale, mustard and Swiss chard for background color. Make sure your beds have good drainage.

NOVEMBER TIPS

ORNAMENTALS

- Fertilize wisteria after leaves have fallen to avoid excess top growth and lack of bloom.
- Protect the roots of azaleas and rhododendrons with a heavy mulch of organic materials (i.e. oak leaves, wood chips, or pine needles).
- For best growth, plant spring bulbs where they are out of the direct sun during the middle of the day. Bulbs have a chilling requirement that is satisfied by winter soil temperatures, so avoid planting bulbs near heated basements where the soil may not stay adequately cold. Do not plant bulbs before Nov. 1st.
- Watch for standing water in perennial beds after long periods of rain. Water that collects on the surface during winter will freeze and can damage perennials. Dig shallow trenches to help drain excess water away. Make a note to raise that bed in spring or plant with plants that like "wet feet".
- When placing plants around the home, remember as a general rule, plants with thick leaves can take lower light levels than those with thin leaves.
- After several killing frosts have occurred this fall, cut back dormant perennials to about 3 inches above ground. After the ground is frozen, plants can be mulched to guard against displacement due to soil heaving. These steps ensure a successful show of plant foliage and color next season.
- Invert large flowerpots over semi-hardy perennials, such as dusty miller, to protect the plants in winter. Uncover the plants during warm spells.
- Cut away suckers from the base of lilacs, forsythia, and crape myrtle.
- If there is any evidence of scale on trees and shrubs, spray with dormant oil in late fall and again in early spring.
- Avoid transplanting shrubs and trees on sunny or windy days. On these days, the roots are exposed to too much light or drying winds, putting undue stress on the plant.
- Tulips and Dutch iris need to be planted in cold soil so they do not send up shoots before roots are established. If tulips are planted deeply, they will produce large, uniform flowers for many years. Deep planting also makes the bulbs less susceptible to mouse and squirrel damage.
- Peonies can be planted now in full sun and fertile, well-drained soil that is rich in organic matter. Dig holes 18" and fill halfway with a mixture of soil, compost, and a handful of 5-10-10 fertilizer. Add a few more inches of soil and set the tubers so the buds are 1-2" below the soil surface. Backfill, firm the soil, and water thoroughly. Peonies do not grow well after being moved and will not bloom for several years.
- Now is the time to move established roses to a new spot and plant new ones. Top tall rose bushes to avoid wind damage.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Remove grass and weeds from trunks of fruit trees and grapes to prevent damage by mice and rodents. Leave a bare circle (one foot wide) around tree trunks when spreading mulch to keep mice from feeding on the bark. A collar or fence of poultry wire or a commercial tree guard approximately 18 inches high will deter rodents and rabbits.

- Plant lettuce and hardy vegetables, such as beets, cabbage, and spinach, in cold frames for winter or early spring crops.
- If you use manure as a soil conditioner, apply it now and till it under. Manure can be a source of weed seed. Composting before application can reduce the number of viable seeds.
- Rough plow or spade garden plots containing heavy, clay soil. Add organic matter and lime if indicated by a soil test. Leave the soil rough. Winter's thawing and freezing will break up the clods and kill some of the insects and slugs overwintering in the soil. A rough soil surface also catches more moisture and reduces erosion.
- If you've purchased gourds this year as decorations, plan to grow them yourself next year. They make great garden projects for kids.
- When time or weather conditions prohibit plowing or cover cropping, you may let your garden lie under a mulch of compost, non-diseased plant wastes, or leaves all winter to be plowed/tilled under in the spring. If using heavy organic matter, chop fine enough so it can break down over the winter.

MISCELLANEOUS

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

Every Monday, from 8:30-12:00, the Extension is having a Plant Clinic.

It is guaranteed you will learn something if you help. Call the extension to sign up!

LAWN CARE— OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER

by: Bill Slatton, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Warm Season Grasses (Bermudagrass, Centipede-grass, Zoysiagrass, St. Augustinegrass)

- October is the best month to overseed with Ryegrass. Use 5-10 lbs. of seed per 1000 square feet. It is still possible in November, but October is better.
- Overseeding is not advisable on Centipede or Hybrid Zoysia because the thick turf prevents good germination of overseeded grasses.
- Keep the Ryegrass cut about an inch above the base lawn or it could damage your permanent grass.
- October may be your last chance to apply winter pre-emergent to control chickweed and other winter weeds. November may be too late, but you could try. Do not use on lawns that you plan to overseed with Ryegrass or other evergreen grasses.
- Spot spray with broadleaf post-emergent to kill chickweed, dandelion, wild onion, etc.
- You do not need to fertilize in October or November, but fertilize overseeded lawns in October with 15-15-15 to start Ryegrass growing well.
- It is still possible to put down sod in October, but November would be marginal. Do not allow the sod to dry out, water as needed.
- Let Bermuda, Zoysia, and St. Augustine grow to about three inches before the first frost. This will help them harden up and provide protection during the winter. No need to cut until next spring. Centipede does best when always cut at 1 ½ inches.
- November is too late to plant new grasses, wait until spring.
- Keep leaves off the grass. Leaf buildup can smother grasses, even the dormant ones.

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

- The first two weeks of October are the best times to plant Fescue seed. This is also the time to overseed established lawns. Sod can be put down now through March.
- For seeding a new lawn, use 5-8 lb. Of seed per 1000 square feet.
- October and April are the best months to use a core aerator on Fescue lawns.
- To overseed an existing Fescue lawn, you should core aerate or verticut.
- If the lawn is 50% or less healthy fescue just touch the top of the soil with a verticutter.
- If the lawn is more than 50% healthy, use an aerator. You need 10 or more aerator holes per sq. foot. Aerate on moist soil to penetrate 2-3 inches.
- For overseeding an established lawn, use 3-5 lb. Per 1000 square feet.
- Drag the lawn with a carpet or section of chain link fence to crumble the aerator cores and cover the seed with soil.
- Cover bare spots with a thin layer of wheat straw.
- Apply ¼ - ½ inch of water each morning that restrictions allow. New seedlings and existing Fescue will not need more than ½ inch at a time. After 10 days, apply ½ inch every four days for two weeks, then ¾ inch every six days for two weeks. After this, one inch per week.
- Apply turf fertilizer in late November at the recommended rate.

Rainfall Comparisons

	Cherokee County			State Wide		
	July	August	YTD	July	August	YTD
Actual	11.3	4.3	48.5	8.7	4.3	46.3
Normal	5.3	4.6	41.1	4.9	4.0	38.2
Excess	5.9	-0.3	7.4	3.8	0.3	8.1

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PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

by: Marcia Winchester, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Each fall as the annuals develop their seeds we collect them at the Senior Center. During our regular workday on both the first and third Thursday of Sept. and Oct. we have a demonstration on where to find the seeds, when they are ripe and how to harvest them. We first harvest seeds to replant at the sr. center the next year. Then we bag some for each Master Gardener who wants some and then some to sell at our plant sales. Master Gardeners also harvest seeds from their own gardens to share.

In January, we meet at the Extension office and have a seed separation party. At the seed separation party Master Gardeners are taught how to separate and package the seeds into small envelopes. The packages are labeled with both the Latin and common name. We include other important information like color, perennial, annual, bi-annual, and preferred growing conditions. We stamp the appropriate ones native, butterfly or hummingbird favorites. Everyone gets to take home seeds to try in their own garden.

The packaged seeds are then sold in our spring and fall sales. The leftovers are then given to the seniors in an exchange and to school projects. Everyone is welcome to come and learn how to collect seeds. If you have seeds from your own garden to donate please mark on the container the Latin and common name and color. Drop them off at the Senior Center during a workday or give them to Marcia Winchester any time before January 10.

SUCCESSFUL FALL ANNUALS

by: Marcia Winchester, Cherokee County Master Gardener



The Atlanta area is lucky to have annuals that not only survive but thrive in the cooler temperatures of the fall and early spring. They perform best when planted in early to mid. October, when the heat of the summer is over and yet giving them time to establish roots before the onset of winter. If you plant your annuals later than October, it is recommended that you purchase larger containers where the plants already have larger rootballs.

The most popular fall annual is the pansy. It is available in a vast array of colors and flower sizes. Violas sporting smaller flower heads are great in plantings where they will be viewed up closer than with pansies. They also are attractive in informal plantings and containers. Panolas are brand new on the market. They are a cross between a pansy and a viola. The blooms are smaller than a pansy, larger than the viola and their colors are very vibrant. It is very important to buy healthy plants. Look for small compact plants with dark green foliage and lots of unopened buds.

Snapdragons are an old fashion annual that in the south performs best in the fall and spring. The dwarf varieties need less time to develop flowers. It blooms longer and suffers fewer setbacks on really cold days than the taller varieties. Stocks are another old fashion cool season annual. They have soft fuzzy leaves and give off a wonderful clove like fragrance.

Key to an exciting planting bed or container is more than the flowers you choose. You need to add some texture. Parsley is the most common plant added. It has nice

airy green foliage and can be trimmed and used in cooking. Ornamental cabbage and kale come in quite a few varieties and colors. The rounded form of ornamental cabbage can trap water in the leaves and rot if over-watered or in a rainy winter.

Swiss chard is an edible vegetable that now comes with bright yellow, fuchsia, and red stems. It can really add excitement to a planting bed. Mustard with it's reddish-purple and green leaves is great with purple, yellow and white pansies. In the spring it sends up 3 feet stalks with yellow flowers. I let them go to seed so I'll have new plants for the next fall. Evergreen herbs like golden thyme and rosemary also combine well with fall annuals.

There are several things to remember when designing and planting fall beds. One is that the plants need good drainage and winter is our wet season. Make sure you incorporate organic material in the soil. Fall season is different from spring in that the plants have a short growing time before it gets cold and they sit until spring before really continuing to grow. Plant your plants closer together and fertilize according to the directions on the package. From Dec.-Mar. be sure to use a fertilizer containing nitrate nitrogen. Plants cannot take up other forms of nitrogen when it is cold. Be sure to check the percent of nitrate in the fertilizer as some "Pansy" fertilizers can be quite low in nitrate.

Containers freeze before the ground, especially if on an elevated deck. The bigger your container the less it will freeze. Saucers have a tendency to crack when they freeze after a rain and really aren't needed in the rainy winter. Remember to add extra perlite or vermiculite to your potting soil for drainage. Arrange your plants close together both to fill up the container and if a dead plants needs to be removed it won't be as apparent.

Recipes

Send recipes to
Sharon Atcheson at
sharatch@aol.com

Cinnamon Loaves

1 (18 ¼ oz) package yellow cake mix with pudding
4 large eggs
¾ c vegetable oil
¾ c water
1 t vanilla extract
½ c sugar
3 T ground cinnamon

Beat first five ingredients at high speed with an electric mixer for 3 minutes. Pour half of batter evenly into 2 greased and floured 8x3 ¾ inch disposable loaf pans. Stir together sugar and cinnamon; sprinkle half of sugar mixture evenly over batter in loaf pans. Pour remaining batter evenly into pans and sprinkle with remaining sugar mixture. Gently swirl with a knife. Bake at 350 for 45 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cook in pans or wire rack. Store in freezer, if desired.

Squash Casserole

1 stick margarine
2 c toasted breadcrumbs
3 c cooked squash
1 medium onion, chopped
1 can cream mushroom soup
1 (8 oz) carton sour cream
1 small jar pimiento
1 c grated cheese
1 egg, beaten

Melt margarine in casserole dish. Add breadcrumbs, mix well. Remove one cup breadcrumbs and reserve for topping. Add all other ingredients and mix well. Pour over breadcrumbs in casserole dish and toss with remaining crumbs. Bake at 350 for 40 minutes or until brown.

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