



The Gardening Gazette

The Gardening Gazette is a free quarterly newsletter from the Clayton County Master Gardener volunteers. We provide information on Master Gardener projects and tips to local homeowners.

www.claytoncountymastergardeners.org

(A 501(c)(3) organization)

Fall 2011

SEASONAL CALENDAR

OCTOBER – The month for digging, dividing and transplanting

- The pansy planting season begins now.
- Dig/divide/transplant perennials.
- If you want your poinsettia to turn color by Christmas, now's the time to begin giving it 14 hours of darkness and 10 hours of bright light each day.
- Plant parsley, radishes and onions.
- Plant new shrubs and trees now thru Feb.
- Bermuda/Zoysia/Centipede: Apply pre-emergent early in the month.
- Blooming: Toad Lily, Tea Olive, Sasanqua Camellia and some Witchhazels.

NOVEMBER – The month for planting

- Plant shrubs, trees, vines and groundcovers
- Dig up caladium, elephant ear and dahlia bulbs while you can still find them. Store in boxes of peat moss.
- Plant spring bulbs when the soil is cool, around Thanksgiving.
- Now is a good time to take a soil sample to the County Extension Office.
- Apply lime to vegetable beds, if necessary.
- Transplant material as it goes dormant.
- Fertilize Fescue lawns; pre-emerge Bermuda and Zoysia lawns for winter weeds.
- November 21st is the average date for the first frost.
- Blooming: Sasanqua Camellia

DECEMBER – The month for relaxing

- Plant Sweet Peas.
- Last chance to plant bulbs.
- Continue to plant new shrubs and trees.
- Buy new seeds and make plans to install in spring.
- Repair garden tools – sharpen mower blades.
- Shut down and drain irrigation system.
- Observe the yard/garden. It is often easier to see areas that need improvement when many plants are dormant.
- Blooming: Lenten Rose, Camellia

STORING PESTICIDES SAFELY

Safety is the primary concern in storing pesticides during the winter months. It is important that products are kept out of the reach of those who should not come into contact with them and to guard against accidental contamination of the environment in case of a spill, flood or fire.

Pesticides should be stored away from feed and seed. The structure should be sound, dry and airy and must be able to protect pesticides from extreme temperatures and moisture.

In addition, you're trying to protect your investment in the products you have. If they are stored properly, most can last for at least two years on the shelf and still function effectively. Check the product label for specific storage directions.

Winter also is a good time to take inventory of all the products in the storage area. That way when you go to purchase chemicals for next year, you will know what

you need. Check products in storage for damaged packaging and make sure the label is still readable.

Homeowners may not have specific storage buildings for pesticides and typically they don't have significant quantities, but storage still is important. Homeowners should at least put products in the garage and get them up out of the reach of children.

WEED CONTROL

Weeds have a seasonal life cycle. Some germinate in the winter and grow into the spring. These are cool season weeds, i.e. henbit and annual bluegrass. Warm season weeds come up in the spring and grow into the summer, i.e. crabgrass and lespedeza.

The key to weed control is prevention and persistence. For best weed control, it is highly recommended that pre-emergent lawn treatment be used in early September and then 8 weeks later to prevent cool season weeds. Follow up with a post-emergent broadleaf weed treatment for weeds that escape the preventative herbicide. Herbicides applied in the fall will not control warm season weeds that come up in the spring.

Carefully select the correct herbicide for your lawn type and type of weeds you have. When using herbicides, follow the label directions! Do not use near trees, shrubs or their roots unless that herbicide is labeled for use around that shrub or tree.

DIG AND DIVIDE

Dig them up, chop into pieces and replant. By dividing your perennials, you'll not only get more (free) plants, but, as harsh as the process sounds, your perennials will actually appreciate it. In fact, most perennials grow best when divided every three to five years. You'll know your perennials are ready for dividing when flower size diminishes and the center of the plant becomes brown and dead.

If possible, choose a cool, cloudy or even misty day for dividing plants. For most plants, it's critical that the roots don't dry out so have a hose or bucket of warm water nearby. After planning, firm the soil around roots to eliminate air pockets and water the plants thoroughly. Mulch the plants with organic mulch, such as bark chips or straw.

HOUSEPLANTS

Most houseplants are tropical in nature and our homes do not mimic the tropical growing environment, i.e. insufficient light, high temperatures and improper watering are the usual causes of plant failure. Here is a partial list of some tough plants for the home: Philodendron, Peace Lily, Corn Plant, Dumb Cane, Snake Plant and Weeping Fig.

TREES & SHRUBS

Fall is an ideal time to plant balled-and-burlapped or container plants into the landscape. Days are warm enough for you to enjoy the outdoors and the nights are cool. These cool nights allow roots to develop a strong system before the onset of winter

Shrubs, including roses and trees, have a much greater chance of success when planted in the late fall and winter.

Monitor rainfall in your yard. The rule of thumb is $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch of water a week. If there has been no significant rainfall for one week, it is important to add supplemental water on new plantings. Direct water to the rootball for new specimens.

It helps to plant deciduous trees on the south and west sides of the house. This will provide summer shade yet allow the winter sun to warm the home.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Noontime Knowledge, "Bulb Trickery", October 27th, MG Deborah Cannon; 12:15 PM – 1:00 PM.
- "Garden Symphony", Master Gardener Symposium @ Eula Ponds Perry Learning Center, 137 Spring Street, Jonesboro, GA 30236; four great speakers: Jan Nauck, "What's Ne" Tried and True?"; John Newsome, "Camellias, A Southern Tradition"; Brooks Garcia, "Fine Design"; Mike Francis, "Conifers for the South"; door prizes and a raffle; Saturday, October 29th; 9:00 AM-4:00 PM; \$35.00.

Call the Extension Office @770-473-5434 for more Symposium information and to register for the free class on October 27th. Please join us!