



# The Hancock Gardener

APRIL 2009 The Monthly Gardening Newsletter from The UGA Cooperative Extension – Hancock County

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## **WELCOME**

2009 has been everything but predictable so far. Think about it. We've had record heat, surprising cold, wind, snow, sleet and everything in between. Don't forget that you can go on line to [www.georgiaweather.net](http://www.georgiaweather.net) to get the most current weather information for Hancock County.

Greg Glover, UGA Cooperative Extension

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## **GENERAL GARDENING**

Great gardens start with the basics. Know the requirements of the gardens you grow. The right soil pH, nutrients and plant location result in vigorous and healthy gardens that require less pesticides or problem-solving. If you haven't tested your soil in a year or two, you may want to get a soil test for your lawn and garden areas.

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## **LAWN CARE**

Applying fertilizer at the right time is as important as knowing what fertilizer to apply. Generally, spring and fall fertilization with a complete fertilizer is recommended for warm season grasses such as bermudagrass and centipede. The spring application should be made about the time your grass greens up and starts to grow. In the absence of a soil test recommendation, the complete fertilizer used can range from 16-4-8 to 10-10-10 and 5-10-15.

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## **SOIL TEST NOW!**

You should pull a soil test now to determine your lime and fertilizer needs. If your ph is low, you should apply the recommended amount of lime before rototilling your garden area so that the lime can be mixed with the soil as you till. A ph of 6.0 to 6.5 is recommended for most vegetables.

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The Hancock Gardener is a gardening publication from the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension in Hancock County.

## **FLOWERS**

You can prepare your beds for annual flowers. Do a soil test and add lime and fertilizer as needed. Do a soil test and add lime and fertilizer as needed. You can also fertilize your perennials once the threat of frost damage has passed. In terms of planting in sunny areas here are some choices – zinnias, ageratum and marigolds and for shady areas consider begonias, impatiens, caladiums, coleus and hostas. Other easy to grow annuals include: four-o'clock, vinca, ageratum, California poppy, cleome, purple fountain grass.

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## **VEGETABLE/HERBS REMINDERS**

If you haven't already started on this task, plan your vegetable garden now. Remember that leafy vegetables need at least 6 hours of sunlight to develop properly. Fruiting vegetables such as tomatoes, squash, eggplants and peppers prefer 8 to 10 hours of sunlight. You can maximize the use of sunlight by running your garden rows east-west. You should plant your tallest vegetables on the north and west sides of your garden.

Prepare rows for warm season vegetables as the weather permits. Your choices of warm season or frost tender crops; beans (snap, pole, or lima) cantaloupe, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, okra, field peas, peppers, squash, tomatoes and watermelons should be added to your planting schedule during April or more specifically mid to late April.



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**Learning for Life**