

Gardening and home landscape news & information from the UGA Cooperative Extension in Houston County . Our newsletter provides research based horticulture information to assist middle Georgia gardeners. Each edition is researched, compiled and printed as a free service.

Lawn Care Alert

Many lawn problems are due to poor cultural practices. Water only when needed and then water deeply with $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch of water. This practice will ensure deeper root development and prevent diseases caused by excessive watering.

Another important practice for a healthy lawn is to keep it mowed at the right height. Don't remove more than $\frac{1}{3}$ the grass blade height at a mowing. Check mower blades to ensure a sharp cut that will not damage the lawn by tearing grass blades.

Bermuda, St. Augustine, Zoysia, and Centipede lawns can be fertilized in July. Do not fertilize if the lawn will not be watered properly or is water stressed.

From the UGA Landscape Alert we note many lawns in central Georgia are infected with **Take All root rot**. This fungus disease affects Centipede, St. Augustine and Bermuda lawns, though we are mainly seeing it now on Centipede and St. Augustine.

Affected lawns may have round or irregular dead or dying patches. The grass may yellow or wilt even though the soil is moist.

The organism that causes Take All rots the lawn's roots and above ground runners (stolons).

To identify the disease:

- * Look for the black, rotted roots.
- * Affected stolons may be brown or black at the nodes or have dead patches.

* One of the best ways to identify this disease is to look for the black, thread-like fungal hyphae growing on the undersides of the stolons.

Take All infects lawns in the fall, grows through the winter and begins to slow growth in late spring. Unfortunately, by the time we see the symptoms of this disease, much damage is already done.

Affected lawns are also more susceptible to other stresses – herbicides, drought, etc. Affected lawns may not even show evidence of this disease on the leaves until the turf is stressed by herbicides or other stresses. Expect the disease to be less active as temperatures increase.

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Note pot feet for good drainage and air flow.

Container Tips & Tricks

- * Use a good quality, sterile potting soil to reduce
- * Use insulated containers for full sun locations.
- * Use a thin sheet of bubble wrap around the inside walls (just below soil line) for non-insulated pots.
- * Use pot feet on containers to protect against high heat and ensure good air flow.

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State Climatologists Predict A Hot, Dry Summer

Recent rains have been very welcome but our state climatologists are predicting a hot, dry summer in middle-Georgia. We are getting a lot of questions from home gardeners regarding watering restrictions. Currently, we are at **Level 2 water restriction**. Outdoor water use may

occur on **scheduled days from midnight to 10 a.m.** Scheduled days for odd-numbered addresses are Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday. Scheduled days for even-numbered addresses are Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. **No outside watering is allowed on Friday.**

Food gardens may be watered anytime. Washing hard surfaces, such as streets, gutters, sidewalks and driveways, except when necessary for public health and safety, is prohibited.

Avoid fines and possible disconnection of water service by following the restrictions.

Vegetable and Herb Gardening Tips:

Keep vegetables harvested, well watered and fertilized to continue production. Fertilize every four weeks. Water twice a week with 3/4 inch of water. Mulch to control weeds and slow water loss.

Plant the following vegetables no later than July 20th to allow time to mature before frost: tomatoes, okra, corn, pole beans, lima beans, cucumbers, squash, and snap beans. Plant carrots August 20th – September 15th. Start plants for broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, collards, and kale in a half-shaded area or in pots.

Time to get those planting beds ready for September and October planting of cool season vegetables. Till, fertilize, and prepare the seedbed to give it time to settle.



Beautiful gardens begin with a plan. Ensure you know what each plant needs to thrive not just survive.



The University of Georgia

The University of Georgia and Fort Valley State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the counties of the state cooperating. The Cooperative Extension Service offers educational programs, assistance and materials to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability. An equal opportunity/affirmative action organization committed to a diverse work force.

Herbs need loamy soil that drains well. One method for checking your soil is to wet the soil and then squeeze a handful of it. Sandy soil will remain loose. Clay soil will form a thick ribbon. Loamy soil will form a short, thin and soft ribbon in your hand. Amend sandy soil with compost. If your herb bed has mostly clay soil, consider using containers for your herbs.

Use a good quality potting soil for container herb gardening. Preferably one with no moisture beads or additives to retain moisture. Herbs like dry feet after watering!

Given regular watering herbs thrive in hot, dry environments. For best flavor and scent, harvest herbs in early morning.

Additional online garden and landscape information can be found at:

<http://apps.caes.uga.edu/urbanag/>

Lawn Care Alert:

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For now, the best control for Take All Root Rot is to improve cultural practices to prevent the disease and to increase the vigor of the grass so that it will recover quickly.

These practices will slow disease progress:

- * Make sure the soil pH is not too high.
- * Water deeply and infrequently. Do not allow the soil to remain wet.
- * Remove thatch if the thatch layer is thicker than one-half inch.
- * Use slow release fertilizers that contain equal amounts of nitrogen and potassium.
- * Do not apply high nitrogen fertilizers in the fall.

Resource for Take All data is The Landscape Alert written by Willie Chance, Extension Agent Houston County

Tree and Shrub Care:

Do not prune or fertilize spring flowering shrubs like azalea, camellia, and viburnum after mid-July. It may interfere with next year's flowers.

Don't over fertilize trees and shrubs. Actively growing plants use more water. Over fertilizing leads to a landscape that will be a water hog. A soil test from your Extension Office will tell you the soil's fertilizer and lime requirements.

Crape Myrtles are in full bloom. To encourage a second bloom on crape myrtles, remove faded flowers, fertilize and water.

Be careful not to cut off the newly emerging flowers. We have had calls to the Extension Office from gardeners reporting powdery mildew on their Crape Myrtles. Generally, powdery mildew affects the leaves and will not kill a tree or shrub. Clean up any fallen

leaves.

The best way to prevent powdery mildew on crape myrtles is to plant resistant varieties. For a list of resistant varieties see: <http://www.pubs.caes.uga.edu/caespubs/pubcd/L331.htm>

Mulch around trees out to the edge of their canopy. This practice helps soil retain moisture and will enhance the appearance of your landscape.