

# The Garden Bench September / October 2009

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.

## Fall Events & Gardening in Middle Georgia

**Come to the Fair!** We are celebrating **20 Years of Georgia's Best** at the [2009 Georgia National Fair](#) in Perry, **October 8 - 18.**

**Come join Master Gardeners in the Heritage Building near the Georgia Grown Pavilion.**

**Our theme is Twenty Years of Georgia's Best in The Garden: People, Plants, and Practices.** Master Gardeners will present demonstrations on gardening and environmental topics. Check out [www.MGCCG.org](http://www.MGCCG.org) for a complete list and times. We will also be available to answer your gardening questions. Copies of the Gardening Journal will be available at a cost of \$5.

### *Flowers, Trees and Shrubs*

Plant some excitement! **Fall planting** gives perennials a head start. They will out-perform spring-plantings.

**Plant evergreen perennials and shrubs** to give color and interest to your winter garden.

**Shrubs, including roses and trees, have a much greater chance of success when planted in the late fall and winter.** Winter planting gives plants a chance to develop their root systems before the summer heat stress.

Seeds of annuals, flowers or vegetables that are not hybrids may be saved and used in your garden next spring. Save those seeds!

One of the most exciting activities in the fall is choosing and planting **bulbs** for color in the spring garden. Order early to get your first choices. When **planting bulbs**, if you're not sure which end is the top, plant it on its side. The stem will always grow upright.

Protect your landscape: 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, **water shrubs, trees, and vines. This is especially important for new plantings.** Direct water to the root ball on new plants.

**Bring some excitement to flower beds** and container plantings with fall color. **Chrysanthemums add color** and texture to the fall garden. They generally grow well in any soil capable of producing a good crop of vegetables or turf. They grow in poorer soil if ample nutrients and organic matter are incorporated.

**Ferns** can be planted or transplanted in the fall. Move, divide, and plant **irises and daylilies.** Arrange for swaps with friends and neighbors.

As you clean out the flower beds, **mark the spots where late starting perennials will come up** next spring to avoid damaging them.

Turn off and **drain irrigation systems before freezing weather.** We expect the first frost around Nov. 15 - 20.



Snapdragons  
Perennial color

### Fall Color Tips & Tricks

- \* Add color through the use of snapdragons, dianthus, pansies and violas.
- \* Add texture to the garden through the use of ornamental cabbage and herbs such as rosemary and parsley.
- \* Plant pansies and violas from Oct. 15—Nov. 15. They need to develop strong root systems before frost but can be damaged by heat.
- \* Use water soluble slow release fertilizer to feed pansies and violas in winter.

**Website:**  
<http://www.ugaextension.com/houston>

Newsletter compiled by:  
Diane Stephens, Master Gardener  
Willie Chance, Extension Agent  
Extension Office: 801 Main Street  
Perry, GA 31069  
Telephone: 478.987.2028  
E-mail: [mg@uga.edu](mailto:mg@uga.edu)

## Fall Landscape & Garden Tips

Take the time to evaluate this year's garden results. **Plan for next year.** Consider changes and improvements for your gardens. Begin planning new beds.

Compost is great for building up garden beds. Till in at least two to three inches when using compost. Make sure the compost is well composted first. It should look and smell like rich soil. The Georgia National Fair & Ag Center and other locations offer free compost for pick up. See a list of [sources](#) for this.

Be sure to [soil test](#) each garden site.

### Vegetables

**Cool season vegetables may be planted** at this time. Now is the perfect time to **add some salad greens with a variety of lettuces.** Loose-leaf lettuce varieties are easy and fast to grow at this time of year. You can grow these in large planters even if you don't have a big garden.

**Transplant broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, collards, and kale** into the garden in September or October. Plant seeds for turnip, spinach, mustard greens, lettuce, radishes, beets, carrots, and Chinese cabbage.

Be sure your vegetables are adequately watered this time of year. Many crops will not mature correctly if stressed due to lack of water. **Mulch to control weeds** and slow water loss. Till the soil as the days get cooler to destroy soil-burrowing insects.

### Fruits & Nuts

Plant fruit and nut trees once temperatures cool and fall rains begin. Till soil well. Plant fruit and nut trees in a sunny, well-drained spot. Plant at the same depth they originally grew. **Plant only [UGA recommended varieties.](#)**

**Do not prune new fruit or nut plants** until January or February.

Fall **weed control around fruit trees is crucial** because weeds act as hosts to over-wintering insects.

**Prevent disease** by promptly disposing of all fallen fruit, leaves, and dead limbs.

**Apply mulch around fruit trees,** but do not place it right up against the tree.

**Check grapevines for mummified berries**—victims of black rot. Pick and dispose of them before they spread the disease. Do not put them in the compost pile.

**Keep strawberry beds weed free.** Every weed you pull now will make weeding much easier next Spring.

### Lawns and Turf

Continue to mow until the grass goes dormant. Keep leaves and pine straw raked up off the lawn. **Apply a [pre-emergent herbicide](#)** labeled for your type of grass.

### Tasks in the Garden

Fall is the best time to **kill perennial weeds like poison ivy** and other woody weeds. Persistence is the key to success. Repeat treatments will often be necessary.

Wait for cooler temperatures to ensure the successful **transplant of pansies for winter color.** Remember we're in Georgia, and it can be hot even in October!

Let us leave you with this thought: In the garden, **Autumn is the crowning glory of the year.** Take time to enjoy the season.

*A note from Extension:*

*In an effort to make **The Garden Bench** accessible more quickly and efficiently, we will no longer be producing printed copies. The Garden Bench is always available on our website,*

*[www.ugaextension.com/houston](http://www.ugaextension.com/houston) along with archived editions.*

*If you wish to receive an email notice that the latest edition is available, please send an email to*

*[tberry1@windstream.net](mailto:tberry1@windstream.net)*

*You'll be added to our list and will receive notifications of other gardening events that may be of interest to you as well.*



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 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.

Call your local  
Extension Agent at  
(800) ASK-UGA1

### Web Page Links

Houston County Cooperative Extension  
Homepage

<http://www.ugaextension.com/houston>

Cooperative Extension Home Page

<http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension/>

Gardening & Landscape Information

UGA Urban Ag web site:

[www.gaurbanag.org](http://www.gaurbanag.org)