

Gardening with the Masters

For the Cherokee County Master Gardeners

Volume XXII, Issue 3 April/May 2015

WHAT'S HAPPENING

APRIL

- April 1 - MG tour of Soil and Water Lab and the State Botanical Garden
- April 2 - Lecture on composting @Hickory Flat Library, 10am
- April 7 - Demo Garden Workday @Senior Center
- April 16 - Lecture on Organic Gardening @ Hickory Flat Library, 10am
- April 19 - Monthly Meeting
- April 21 - Demo Garden Workday @ Sr Center

MAY

- May 5 - Demo Garden Workday 10am @ Senior Center
- May 7 - Lecture on Native Plants In the Garden @ Senior Center, 10am
- May 14 - Hands on class on Gardening methods
- May 17 - Monthly Meeting
- May 19 - Demo Garden Workday, 10am @ Senior Center
- May 21 - Lecture on Container Gardening @ Senior Center, 10am
- May 27 - Plant Sale Setup @ Senior Center
- May 27 - Plant Sale, 10-1 @ Senior Center
- May 28 - Lecture on Succulents @Sr Center, 10am

Editor's Corner

By Marcia Winchester,
Cherokee County Master Gardener



A lot of colleges are known for their wild life. Berry College is known for a different kind of wildlife. At Berry you might come across whitetail deer browsing on the grass outside a classroom. Or you might notice one of their 50 bluebird houses with a family of bluebirds. Or you might observe their pair of bald eagles in their nest. Yes, that's correct—a nest of bald eagles right there on campus. This is the first documented eagle nest in Floyd County. Bald eagles, once on the Federal Endangered Species list, are making a comeback. They are still protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act enacted in 1940, but they have been removed

from the Federal Endangered Species list.

This pair was first discovered in 2012 in a loblolly pine on the campus by a parking lot. Each year they have successfully raised one to two eaglets. This year, the first hatched on February 14 and the second February 15. We know this because it was filmed! Berry College, led by Professor Renee Carleton, has installed two web cameras to watch and record the eagles and their eaglets in the nest. The nest has grown to the size of a king-size bed. The nest has viewers from Japan to New Zealand with over 17 million viewers and 118,000 Facebook likes. It has been recognized by National Geographic magazine as one of the best nest cameras in the world.

There are now chairs that you can sit in to watch the eagles in person, or you can access the nest cameras at www.berry.edu/eaglecam. The babies will remain in the nest until late April. Check out the book *Strength and Beauty: The Bald Eagles of Berry College* by Gena Flanigen for a beautiful collection of photographs of the eagles.

In This Issue

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Hydrangeas - the Sun Lovers

By Joan McFather, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Oh yes, I can hear you thinking: wrong title. Hydrangeas must have shade. Well, they do, and I well understood that when years ago I planted half a dozen oakleaf hydrangeas in the shade at my old house with absolutely underwhelming results. Years went by; they stood there, sulking no doubt. So let's have full disclosure up front: ALL hydrangeas need sun; it's just that in our blistering South they want it in the morning with shade to follow. The tricky part is figuring out just how much sun, and how much shade thereafter. In general, four to five hours a day of full sun means strong stems, healthy growth, and the best flower color. However, in very hot climates like ours, you can scale down those numbers, perhaps compensating with dappled afternoon shade. Currently I have mophead hydrangeas growing on both sides of my driveway, and in the summer those on the west side wilt on hot afternoons, while the same species are fine on the east side. (A word to the wise about watering: if your hydrangeas are fine in the morning, don't be in a hurry to flood them in the afternoon—it's the sun, not the lack of water.)



But are there hydrangeas that actually love sun? Yes! The most well known are the panicle hydrangeas (*Hydrangea paniculata*), but I am even more partial to mountain hydrangeas (*Hydrangea serrata*).

Let's look at the paniculatas. Panicle hydrangeas grow from 3 feet to 10 feet tall, or even higher—it depends on what variety you choose. You can even prune them into trees. These hydrangeas are extremely cold hardy: their USDA Hardiness Zones range from Zones 3 to 8. They grow in moist, well-drained soil and bloom on new wood. The flowers will bloom in a conical shape, unlike the round mopheads, and that adds a different look to a landscape. In general, panicle hydrangeas are a large species that during

the summer months develops large, ivory blooms that turn a dusty rose or pinkish hue with age. These blooms stand out against stems covered with green foliage that turns yellow during the fall.

Probably the most famous of these is 'Limelight', an astonishing hydrangea with bright lime-green flowers. The flower color is unusual, and because it blooms in late summer, it adds a nice feature in the landscape during that time. It covers itself with huge flower heads measuring from 6 to 12 inches. In time the flower heads turn a light pink. The leaves turn shades of yellow in fall. 'Limelight' hydrangeas will grow 6 to 8 feet wide by 6 to 8 feet tall. *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Little Lime' has been on the market since 2011 and is a smaller version of 'Limelight', thus a good alternative for the smaller garden or as a foundation plant. It grows about 3 to 5 feet tall and has sturdy stems that hold its flower heads up well. Proven Winners says it is hardy from Zone 3a to 9b.

But what about color? You can have that, too. Try the newer variety 'Pinky Winky'. It has unique, large bi-colored white and pink flowers set against dark green foliage. Its sturdy red stems hold the large, 12- to 16-inch blooms upright on the plant and don't droop. As the flower heads on 'Pinky Winky' continue to grow throughout the season, the older flowers turn dark pink, and the new flowers continue to emerge white. 'Pinky Winky' blooms on new wood. It's an excellent choice for a specimen plant or in creating a massive flowering hedge. Or you could use it in groups or mass plantings and shrub borders. 'Pinky Winky' hydrangeas grow 5 to 6 feet wide by 6 to 8 feet tall. Their USDA Hardiness Zones are 3 to 8. An earlier bloomer is 'Quick Fire', which begins blooming in late spring, about four weeks earlier than other hydrangea varieties, extending from early summer into fall. It has large, cone-shaped flower heads that turn from white to rich deep pink much earlier than other panicle hydrangeas. Flower buds are produced on new wood and will bloom even after harsh weather. This is a great plant for shrub borders, hedges, and screens. 'Quick Fire' hydrangeas grow 6 to 8 feet wide and 6 to 8 feet tall. The Hardiness Zones are 3 to 9.

There are plenty of other named panicle varieties, but I do want to move on to my true favorite, the mountain hydrangea (*Hydrangea serrata*)—also called sawtooth hydrangea. This is a sun-loving, cold-hardy species of hydrangea that grows in USDA Hardiness Zones 5 through 9. This compact, flowering shrub only reaches

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Fertilizer

By Patricia Bowen, Cherokee County Master Gardener

To fertilize or not to fertilize, that is the question. The answer lies in your soil, in what nutrients it contains or lacks that are needed by your plants. You have two primary tools to determine if, when and how much to fertilize, and what type of fertilizer to use: the first is a soil test to determine your soil's pH; the second is finding the needs of your plants that will live in that soil. To test your soil yourself, you can purchase a simple pH soil tester at plant nurseries and most hardware stores.

The abbreviation pH stands for "potential of hydrogen." Soil pH is a measure of hydrogen ions in the soil. In other words, a soil pH value is a measurement of the concentration of ions held to soil particles and organic matter. Soil pH is very important because it directly affects how much of the soil nutrients will be available to plants. Plant roots can only absorb nutrients after they have been transformed into certain ionic forms. The pH scale ranges from 0 to 14, with pH 7.0 being neutral. Readings below 7.0 indicate the soil is "acidic," and readings above 7.0 indicate "alkaline" soil conditions. Most of the plants we grow in our home gardens require a soil that is slightly acidic, usually within a pH range of 6.2 to 6.8. Only within certain pH ranges can sufficient amounts of these nutrients be transformed into these usable ionic forms. When the soil pH is outside the desirable range, the nutrients are literally "tied up in the soil" and are not in a form useful to plants. Soil pH can be lowered by adding sulfur if it is too alkaline or increased by adding limestone if it is too acidic.

Though you can test your soil yourself, the most accurate way to determine your soil pH and the necessary corrective measures (if any) is to submit a soil test sample to the Cherokee County Extension Office. Contact the office for instructions at 770-721-7803 or visit <http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension/chokeee/documents/soilsamplepublication.pdf> for a full overview of how to submit your sample and what to expect when you get back your report. When submitting a soil sample, make sure you specify what crop you intend to grow, since different crops require specific pH levels. You will receive a report noting your soil pH and the type and amount of additives to correct any problems. The best time for a soil test is the fall. You can work the additive into the empty garden and give it time to work into the soil, as well as plan fertilization needs for the coming year.

Different plants will need different pH levels and may require amendments of fertilizer to produce best results. Whether you're growing flowers, vegetables, fruits, grasses, trees or houseplants you'll need to research their specific needs. I've found the easiest online search for this purpose to be: nutrient needs of _____ (whatever plant you're gathering info for), and you'll find pH, fertilizer and other important tips on care.

All plants need carbon, hydrogen and oxygen, and they get these from the air. They need nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K), which are the nutrients most commonly found in packaged fertilizers. And finally, they need smaller amounts of secondary nutrients and micronutrients. Without nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, the plant simply cannot grow because it cannot create the cells and membranes it needs to produce for growth. If any of the major nutrients are missing (needing fertilizer) or hard to obtain from the soil (needing pH adjustments), this will limit the growth rate for the plant. In nature, the nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium often come from the decay of plants that have died. People then get the nutrients we need from the plants we eat or from the meat of animals that ate plants. Plants are factories that do all of the work to process the basic elements of life and make them available to us.

The goal of fertilizer is to make plants grow faster and stronger by supplying in readily available forms the elements that the plants need. Most commercial fertilizers supply just nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium because the other chemicals are needed in much lower quantities and are generally available in most soils. Nitrogen is important in the growth stage to help plants achieve leaf growth. Phosphorus stimulates root development and is important to flowering, fruiting and seed development. Potassium enhances disease resistance and overall vitality of plants, including cold hardiness.

The numbers on a package of fertilizer relate percentages of available nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium found in the bag. So 12-8-10 fertilizer has 12 percent nitrogen, 8 percent phosphorous and 10 percent potassium. In a 100-pound bag, therefore, 12 pounds is

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The Truth about Kissing Bugs

By Karen Garland, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Triatomine bugs, also known as conenose or kissing bugs (Triatoma spp.), are in the insect family Reduviidae (assassin bug family), which have been linked to a recent public health scare. Before you panic, however, get the facts you need to know about kissing bugs.



Contrary to the headlines you have seen, kissing bugs are not new to the United States, nor are they invading North America. In fact, they have lived here for thousands of years, establishing themselves in 28 states. Moreover, 11 different species currently call the southern United States home, including Georgia. With more than 130 species though, triatomine bugs are found primarily in the Americas, although a few species inhabit Asia, Africa, and Australia.

Most kissing bugs are hematophagous, which means they predominantly feed on the blood of birds, reptiles, and mammals, including humans. Primarily active during the warmer months, these nocturnal bugs received the nickname “kissing bug” because of their habit of feeding on blood after biting around the lips and faces of people while they sleep. They are guided by the light in our houses, the carbon dioxide we exhale, and the warmth and skin odors of our bodies, and those of our pets.

Undergoing incomplete metamorphosis, the adult female lays eggs May through September, which hatch three weeks later. The wingless nymphs enjoy meals of blood, molting through five instars before developing into a winged adult. At this point, they leave the host nest in search of other blood sources. The majority will live in ground burrows with rodents or in tree-dwellings with bats, birds, or opossums. Less than five percent will actually take up residence in human homes. Once inside your home, however, the bugs tend to hide in cracks or under beds and mattresses, including pet bedding. They then come out at night, just like bed bugs.

As with all members of this suborder, kissing bugs have piercing, sucking -type mouthparts that are stout and straight, as opposed to the chewing mouthparts found on some other insects. While there are a variety of species, they generally have a pear-shaped, black or brown body with distinct red, yellow, or brown markings on the abdomen. Sporting six, relatively thin legs, adults range in size from 1/2 inch to over 1-1/4 inches long.

Even within the states where kissing bugs are known to live, people often misidentify kissing bugs and believe they are more common than they really are. Actually, there are many beetles and non-triatomine bugs that resemble the kissing bug, including the wheel bug, assassin bug, squash bug, box elder bug, and stink bug. In fact, researchers running a citizen science project at Texas A&M University asked the public to send them kissing bugs for analysis. They received over 600 samples of insects to identify, with only six of them being kissing bugs. Therefore, the likelihood that you will run across a kissing bug is not impossible, but probably not as common as you might think.

It's not the bite that's deadly, but rather the kissing bug's other unfortunate habit of defecating on the bite afterward. Some are infected with the parasite *Trypanosoma cruzi*, which can be transmitted in the fecal material, and cause the potentially deadly Chagas disease. Most of the species that inhabit the United States do not defecate after feeding on a host such as a dog or human. This reduces the chances of being infected. For more information visit <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/chagas/>.

Thus, what can you do if find one of the bugs? The usual pesticides you have around your house may not work on kissing bugs, so if you have an infestation, check with your local pest control professional to select the appropriate insecticide for your situation. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) says you should not “touch or squash the bug.” Instead, they recommend placing it a container and drowning it in rubbing alcohol or freezing it in water. Then take it to your local extension service, university laboratory, or local health department for species identification.

There are precautions that can be taken against kissing bugs and

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Is There a Goat in Your Future

By Joan McFather, Cherokee County Master Gardener



I didn't set out to write this article. I was researching another item, and there it was: a piece about goats as lawnmowers. Couldn't be resisted. Not that I'm particularly familiar with goats—I did know one briefly when I was twelve, though now that I think about it, the fairly constant butting was probably not as affectionate as I remember.

But back to the lawnmower concept. Sounds great, doesn't it? No more loud gas-guzzling machine? A pretty little herd daintily nibbling your lawn into perfect turf? Except that's not

what happens. What you actually get is ragged....with bare spots and spindly bits left behind. So why the current interest in goats for your landscape? It's where you have overgrown brush that the animals really shine. Start thinking of them as living weed whackers rather than living lawnmowers. Goats like variety—especially the plants you'd least want to have in your yard. Think kudzu, English ivy, blackberry brambles, Japanese honeysuckle, poison ivy or oak, thistles...the sticker-y the better. That's when you need goats. But remember they're eating machines: if they get near your flowers or vegetables...not a pretty thought. And in fact, some plants are poisonous to them, such as tomato vines, rhododendron, oleander and yew.

Okay, let's say you've got brush. How many goats will you need? Remember that goats are social animals—you can't in good conscience have just one. Besides, it may take more. Here's a general consensus: three to four full-sized goats per acre. Obviously, if you just want to trim up some edges in your backyard you'll want fewer. But at least two. And note "full-sized." There are pygmy goats that are half the size, but then you need twice as many. Maybe a combination; the big goats for general foraging followed by pygmies, which are useful in tidying up and which can reach hard-to-get areas. True, big goats have their own advantage: they will typically stand on their hind legs to reach vines in trees. Some can clear up to about 7 feet in height. It probably goes without saying that you should avoid goats with horns—they tend to get their heads stuck in branches, fencing and debris, not to mention using the horns as weapons.

Actually there is a specific type of goat loosely labeled "brush goat" by many goat breeders. These are simply crossbreeds of various registered breeds—any combination will do. As one writer summarizes: "a goat that is just a goat." The point is that the animal is valued for its willingness to eat brush. Brush goats tend to be hardy, healthy and good-tempered. Like all goats, they have narrow, triangular mouths that crush what they eat, so seeds that are ingested are no longer viable.

Then there is the issue of containment. Although they can be escape artists, generally goats are docile and stay where you put them. You will probably opt for portable fencing, giving the animals a controlled area to forage before moving it—and them—over to the next bit. They tend to respect electric fence as well. And they don't like stepping in water, so a stream or lake is a natural fence. In our area, where there are coyotes, it isn't safe to tether goats. If you have uneven terrain, goats tend to want to start at the bottom of a hill and work upwards. You will need to think about protection from weather: a well-ventilated shelter to keep out wind and rain.

Does all this sound intimidating? It should, and there is much more to learn about the care and nurturing of these animals. Still...you don't want to get rid of that kudzu with a tractor, or chemicals, or your bare hands. What to do? You RENT goats! Check online: my first hit got me "Rent A Goat: Cost-effective, eco-friendly, and super-cute weed removal." They even offer free estimates.

LAWN TIPS

By Rachel Prakash ,
Cherokee County Master Gardener

Cool Season Grasses

(Tall Fescue, Kentucky Bluegrass, Creeping Red/Chewing Fescue)

- ◆ Time to make sure the watering and mowing are being done. Water no more than one inch per week unless rainfall contributes the needed water. This will prevent shallow roots that can be easily damaged in the hotter and drier months of summer. Mowing should be kept at 2-3" for fescue without taking off more than 1/3 of the grass blade height at one time.
- ◆ If thatch is accumulated, rent a core aerator or make sure your lawn company has done this. If the thatch has accumulated to more than an inch or two, it is time to get this done. If you have a small amount of organic matter next to the ground, wait until next spring to check again.
- ◆ Sodding can be done at this time for a new

lawn or filling in bare spots. Make sure you water regularly until the roots are established.

- ◆ Keep weeds in check now before they produce seed. This can be done by hand-pulling or spot treating with a post-emergent weed killer

Warm Season Grasses

(Bermuda, Centipede, Zoysia, St. Augustine)

- ◆ Check the blade on your lawn mower to make sure it is sharp. A dull blade can cause ragged cuts which causes more water loss and stress on your lawn.
- ◆ Water the lawn if the weather does not supply the needed moisture, especially if new sod has been put down.
- ◆ Wait until after the last frost to fertilize or seed to prevent wasted money on run-off fertilizer and germinated seed that can be killed by late spring frosts.

Kissing Bugs

other potentially harmful insects. The CDC recommends the following:

- Seal cracks in your home, attic, or crawl space;
- Remove wood, rocks, and brush piles near the home;
- Screen your windows and doors, repairing holes or tears;
- Place lights, which may attract kissing bugs, away from the home;
- Bring pets indoors to sleep;
- Keep your house and any outdoor pet resting areas clean, and periodically check both areas for bugs.

References

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Hydrangeas

heights of between 4 and 6 feet, and it produces blooms in a wide array of colors including blue, white, pink, green, or violet. And yes, I know, that means blue for us with our acid soil. The mountain hydrangea is a subspecies of bigleaf hydrangea that has slightly smaller leaves and flowers. It is often listed in nursery catalogs as *H. serrata*. Cultivars may have either mophead or lacecap type flower arrangements. Delicate in appearance, mountain hydrangea is particularly well suited for placement at the edge of a wooded area.

And that's why I am smitten by Proven Winners' lacecap hydrangeas 'Tuff Stuff' and 'Tiny Tuff Stuff'. I love the lacecaps. While the developer talks about attractive reddish pink flowers on 'Tuff Stuff', we all know they'll turn purple at best. But the plant is sturdy, blooms in early summer, and produces flowers up until frost. The semi-double to double florets begin with creamy coloration in the center before maturing to an intense...hum, blue, on new wood. It is hardy in Zones 5a to 9b. And just in case that one is too big for you, last year Proven Winners came out with their hardy reblooming 'Tiny Tuff Stuff', growing to a height of 18 to 24 inches. Something for everyone.

I realize the various species and cultivars I've mentioned just barely scratch the surface—there are plenty more out there. And, as I have admitted, you can grow almost any type of hydrangea in the sun. You just have to calculate how MUCH sun...in the South...and have shade waiting.

Fertilizer

nitrogen, 8 pounds is phosphorous and 10 pounds is potassium. The other 70 pounds is known as ballast or filler and has no value to the plants, but it makes it easier to apply the fertilizer in a manner that will not burn the plants.

Fertilizers come in different forms for different types of plants, and for ease of application. Organic fertilizers contain lower nutrient levels than synthetic fertilizers and are less likely to "burn" plants. They're also affected by temperature, and some of their nutrients may not be released until spring or fall. Granular, synthetic fertilizers work well with vegetables and perennials, and care must be taken to apply them evenly. Water soluble fertilizers are good for annuals and container plants as they're taken in rapidly by the plant.

When you take good care of your soil, your soil will take care of your plants, and your plants will then provide their best nutritional care back to you. One of the best cycles of life.

Cherokee County Annual Summary of Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Hours

7 # of New Master Gardener Extension Volunteers (completed training this year)

76 # of Active Master Gardener Extension Volunteers returning

3,813 Total # of volunteer hours this year x \$23.07 per hour = \$88,024

8,680 Total # of in-person contacts

3,496,751 Total # of telephone/email contacts

6 Total # of continuing education hours this year

20,837 Total # of mile traveled x \$0.50 per mile = \$10,247

APRIL TIPS

ORNAMENTALS

- If your spring bulbs have been shaded by new growth of a tree or shrub plantings, consider moving them to a sunny location or pruning back the plantings. Mark over-crowded clumps; dig up and divide them after the tops have died back. Note where you want to add color for next spring. http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/displayHTML.cfm?pk_id=6076
- Upon emergence of foliage, fertilize bulbs with a 10-10-10 fertilizer, at a rate of 3 pounds per 100 square feet. Repeat the application after the bulbs have bloomed.
- If you plant an Easter Lily outside, don't plant it near other lilies as it may carry a virus that can infect them.
- Prune spring-blooming shrubs, such as forsythia, quince and early spirea after they have completed flowering.
- Do not fertilize azaleas and camellias until they have finished blooming. They should be pruned after blooming. http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/displayHTML.cfm?pk_id=7732
- Many gardeners plant annual and perennial flowers to attract hummingbirds; woody plants can also be added to the yard to provide nectar for our smallest native birds. Some trees to add are buckeye, horse chestnut, apple, crabapple, hawthorn, redbud and tulip poplar. Shrubs include red and bottlebrush buckeye, rhododendrons, Georgia basil, azaleas, New Jersey tea, Salvia greggii, and rosemary. <http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=C976>
- Once new growth emerges on trees and shrubs, cut back to green wood any twigs affected by winterkill.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- When planting orange, yellow or chocolate peppers, be sure to plant extra since they stay on the plant longer to mature and produce fewer peppers
- To hinder early blight on tomatoes, mulch to keep the soil borne diseases from being splashed on the plant during rains. Remove mulch and dispose of at end of season. [http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=7803&pg=np&ct=tomato blight&kt=&kid=&pid=](http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=7803&pg=np&ct=tomato+blight&kt=&kid=&pid=)
- To have fresh raspberries, raise them in your own backyard. Fifteen or twenty plants, spaced 3' apart, in rows 6' apart, will produce a good supply of fruit. http://pubsadmin.caes.uga.edu/files/pdf/C%20766_2.PDF
- If fruit trees are lacking pollinators nearby, pick bouquets of blossoms from good pollinators and place them in buckets under blossoming trees. Make plans to plant pollinating varieties this fall or plant perennials or shrubs that bloom at the same time as your fruit trees.
- Thin young fruits of apples, pears and peaches within 25 days of the peak bloom, leaving 4-7" between fruit to insure larger, healthier fruit.

- Grapevines with excessive vegetative growth generally have less high-quality fruit. In early spring, prune out the canes with the fewest buds to allow light, moisture, and air circulation within the plant to improve the quality and quantity of the fruit. [http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=7641&pg=np&ct=grape vines&kt=&kid=&pid=](http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=7641&pg=np&ct=grape+vines&kt=&kid=&pid=)
- Erect trellises now for beans and cucumbers. Don't plant tomatoes, peppers or other warm season plants until the soil temperature warms up. Usually in Cherokee county that will be April 15 or later. Plants if planted early will just sit there and not grow or be killed by a late frost.
- When weather is wet and cold, allow about twice the germination time listed on the seed packet. If there is no sign of growth after this time, dig around a little to check for sprouted seeds; if you find no signs of life the seed has probably rotted and you will need to replant.
- If your garden is small and you do not have adequate space for the long-vine varieties, plant a bush-type, squash and green beans.
- Root crops must be thinned, no matter how ruthless this practice seems. Thin carrots, beets, parsnips and onions so you can get three fingers between individual plants.
- When planning your vegetable garden, consider that leafy vegetables need at least six hours of sunlight to develop properly. Fruiting vegetables like squash, tomatoes, eggplant, beans and peppers need 10 hrs of full sun.
- When transplanting seedlings in peat pots to your garden, be careful not to allow the rim of the peat pot to protrude above the soil level. If the rim is above the soil, it will act as a wick and draw moisture away from the transplant. To prevent this from happening, break away the uppermost rim of the pot before planting and make sure the pot is completely covered with soil.
- When tomato seedlings have 5-7 leaves, they are ready to transplant into the garden. To increase root growth and produce a sturdier plant place tomatoes in soil up to the bottom leaves.
- Drive stakes for future supports at the same time you plant tomatoes. If you try to install stakes later, you may damage the plant roots.



MAY TIPS

ORNAMENTALS

- Keep an eye out for aphids and other insects on roses. Spray if necessary. Begin spraying for blackspot at least twice a month. Removing and replacing mulch under roses will cut down greatly on black spot. http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=7941&pg=np&ct=rose&kt=&kid=&pid=
- Red and silver maples, willows, poplars and elms can clog septic lines with their roots. Don't plant near water/sewer lines.
- If you are building a home on a wooded lot, save young, vigorous trees. They will adapt to changes in their environment better than older trees. Trees that once grew in shade and are suddenly exposed to increased sunlight, wider temperature changes, and drying winds may not survive.
- Lightly sidedress perennials, including spring bulbs, with a 5-10-10 or 10-10-10 fertilizer, being careful to avoid the center or crown of the plant.
- Prune off sprouts from the base of crape myrtles.
- Check the leaves on Azaleas and Camellias for leaf galls. They are white to green growths and can be pruned out and disposed of. <http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=B961>

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Protect developing strawberries from birds with spun bonded row covers. Netting can trap and kill beneficial snakes and birds. <http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=C883>
- Technically, berries are fruit that are soft throughout, such as blueberries. The raspberry is not a true berry, but a fruit that is made of many small sections each with a seed or pit. Fruits with fleshy material surrounding a hard seed are called drupes. Thus a raspberry is not a berry but is a cluster of small drupes or drupelets.
- Thin peaches 4-6" apart for large, high-quality fruit.
- If spraying fruit trees near a vegetable garden, cover vegetables with a sheet of plastic to protect them.
- Place a thick layer of newspaper under tomatoes to cut back on leaf diseases. Cover with mulch. This helps prevent fungus spores from splashing on leaves. Remove and dispose of at end of the season.
- To ensure pollination of sweet corn, plant several rows together in a block, rather than in one long row. Side-dress with 3 Tbsp of 10-10-10 per 10 feet of row when 12-18" high. http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/displayHTML.cfm?pk_id=7638
- When thinning beans, watch for "snake heads", seedlings that have lost one or both of their cotyledons and produce poor, weak sprouts. Also, watch for "bald heads", seedlings that have the growth point damaged so severely that they cannot develop. Both types will be weak and delayed in growth and should be removed.
- Mark the handle of your spade/hoe in inches for a handy

measuring device for row width and planting distances. Paint or tape the measurements on the handle. A coat of varnish can make the marks last longer.

APRIL/MAY MISCELLANEOUS!

- Try trapping earwigs and sowbugs with rolled-up newspapers moistened with water. Insects will hide in the paper by day. Frequently gather and dispose of traps.
- When you see ants crawling on garden plants, look for aphids. Some ant species protect aphids, moving them from plant to plant and even taking them into the anthill for overnight safety. The ants do this to ensure a supply of honeydew, a sugary water substance secreted by aphids, on which ants feed. <http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=B1074>
- A garden use for plastic milk jugs: Seep Irrigation. Punch holes in the sides of a jug about 2" apart. Bury the jug leaving the neck protruding from the soil. Fill jug with water (solutions or liquid fertilizer may be used to water and feed at the same time) and screw on the cap. The water will seep out, providing a slow, deep irrigation for plants.
- Trellis and stake downwind from the prevailing winds so plants lean against the supports when the wind blows.
- Don't be too anxious to move your houseplants outdoors. A slight chill can knock the leaves off tender plants.
- Replace bulbs on plant lights yearly. They gradually lose their strength causing plants to stretch and stop blooming.
- Moles are tunneling insect eaters and particularly attracted to grubs. When bulbs are missing or shrubs have root damage, look for voles or field mice to be the culprits. These rodents often use mole tunnels as their runs.



	RAINFALL COMPARISONS					
	Cherokee County			State Wide		
	Jan 16	Feb 16	YTD	Jan 16	Feb 16	YTD
Actual	4.9	5.8	10.7	3.6	4.8	8.4
Normal	5.9	5	10.9	4.1	4.5	8.6
Excess	-1.0	0.8	-0.2	-0.5	0.3	-0.2



Recipes

Send recipes to Maura
Watson at
mlw229@gmail.com

Kentucky Derby Pie

1 refrigerated pie crust	brown sugar
1 1/2 cup chopped pecans	1/4 cup water
1/2 cup semisweet chocolate morsels	4 large eggs
1 cup dark corn syrup	1/4 cup margarine
1/2 cup granulated sugar	2 tsp cornmeal
1/2 cup firmly packed	2 tsp vanilla

Fit pie crust into a 9 inch deep-dish pie plate. Fold edges under & crimp. Sprinkle pecans & chocolate pieces evenly onto bottom of pie crust; set aside.

Combine corn syrup, granulated sugar, brown sugar, & water. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Cook; stirring constantly for 3 minutes. Remove from heat.

Whisk together eggs, melted margarine, cornmeal, & vanilla. **Gradually whisk about 1/4 of hot mixture** into egg mixture. Add this to remaining hot mixture, whisking constantly. Pour filling into prepared pie crust. Bake at 325 degrees for 55 minutes or until "set." Cool on wire rack.

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CHEROKEE COUNTY

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Sweet & Sour Grilled Napa Cabbage

(4 servings)

1 small Napa cabbage
1/2 cup peach preserves
1/3 cup apple cider vinegar
2 Tbsp sugar
2 Tbsp margarine
2 Tbsp canola oil
Salt & pepper to taste

In medium bowl whisk together: preserves, vinegar, sugar, oil, margarine, salt & pepper. Set aside.

Trim outer leaves off cabbage, **keeping stem end intact**. Slice lengthwise into 4 equal pieces. Heat grill to Med. High; lightly grease grates. Generously brush cabbage with peach sauce. Close lid & grill for 5--7 minute, turning if necessary to avoid burning. Brush with additional sauce as needed. Serve warm.

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Mission Statement of the Georgia Master Gardener Association:
To stimulate the love for and increase the knowledge of gardening and to voluntarily and enthusiastically share this knowledge with others