

Gardening with the Masters

For the Cherokee County Master Gardeners

Volume XXIII Issue 2 February/March 2016

WHAT'S HAPPENING

FEBRUARY

- Feb 1- Fruit Plant Pre-Sale begins
- Feb 2 - 10am Mentoring Meeting @ Bluffs
- Feb 4 - 11:30 Trainee Meet & Greet @ Bluffs
- Feb 4 - Demo Garden Workday
- Feb 13 - Garden Planning & Seed Starting seminar @ Hickory Flat Library @ 10am
- Feb 15 - March 23 - Trainee Training
- Feb 16 - Monthly Meeting
- Feb 18 - Demo Garden Workday
- Feb 25 - GNPS symposium
- Feb 27 - Pruning Basics @Buckeye Creek Farm, 10am

MARCH

- Mar 2 - MG Trainee Midterm
- Mar 3 - Demo Garden Workday
- Mar 7 - Fruit Plant Pre-Sale orders & money due
- Mar 10 - 10am Seed Separating Meeting @ Bluffs
- Mar 15 - Monthly Meeting
- Mar 17 - Demo Garden Workday
- Mar 19 - Lawn Care Seminar @ Rose Creek Library, 10am
- Mar 22 - Gardening in Small Spaces @Harmony on the Lakes, 7pm
- Mar 23 - MG Trainee Final
- Mar 29 - 10am Trainee Training @ Bluffs

EDITOR'S CORNER

By Marcia Winchester,
Cherokee County Master Gardener



Master Gardeners are great at coming up with gardening ideas, and we've had numerous articles on "Cool Tools." This fall a Master Gardener broke her ankle. A few months later she emailed me that she was finally in a walking boot and would be at the next demo garden workday. I immediately knew I had a "Cool Tool" for her. Last winter I injured my ankle and was in a walking boot for several weeks, but I didn't let it slow me down. I still volunteered for two plant sales and worked at the demo garden in my boot. I talked to Gerald, another Master Gardener, who had to wear a boot a few years ago and asked him how he kept it clean. He said he covered it with a bag. So I looked through my collection of bags. Grocery bags were too flimsy, and bags for mulch and soil were dirty inside. Then I spotted the bags I buy my bird food in. They were super thick and clean inside. I cut one down to 18 inches tall and stuck my boot inside. I then folded it over and used packing tape to secure it. Presto! It worked wonderfully. I emailed Suzie back and let her know about Gerald's and my solution to keep our boots clean while we gardened. At the next few demo garden workdays, you'll see Suzie gardening in the "walking boot protective cover."

Marcia

IN THIS ISSUE

Editor's Corner.....pg 1	Nature's Ice Garden.....pg 6
Feb/Mar Calendarpg 1	Kroger VAC.....pg 7
Whoo's Callingpg 2	Turfgrass Tips.....pg 7
Roses in January.....pg 3	February Tips.....pg 8
Boxelder Bugs.....pg 4	Rainfall.....pg 8
Community Gardens.....pg 5	March Tips.....pg 9
	Recipes.....pg 10

WHOO'S THAT CALLING THIS TIME OF YEAR?

By Karen Garland, Cherokee County Master Gardener

On a chilly, mid-winter day, it's hard to imagine that any bird is nesting. Nonetheless, this frosty season is actually a great time to search for owls who may be sitting atop a nest of one to four eggs in your backyard right now. Most trees are without leaves, which makes it easier to see an owl's silhouette during twilight hours.



One species in particular that begins an early courtship is the great horned owl. Beginning in December into February, pairs begin their love calls back and forth regularly at night, with their monogamous engagement becoming a noisy affair of low-pitched "hoo hoo hoooo hoo hoo." The deep hoots are the males, and the slightly higher pitched hoots the larger females. On a side note, barred owls start announcing themselves with their deep "who cooks for you" calls a few weeks later and are breeding by mid-January, with barn owls following in March and screech owls in mid-April.

Yet, why risk it all during the year's most brutal weather by nesting now? Probably because great horned owlets, which hatch after a month of incubation, must remain near their parents a long time compared to many other birds. In fact, the owlets remain in the nest for about six weeks, and then climb out onto nearby branches. They begin taking short flights at seven weeks, and can fly well at nine to ten weeks. Both parents feed and tend the young for several months, often into early fall.

Years ago great horned owls nested almost exclusively in areas not frequented by people. Conversely, as development has taken over prime habitat, they are nesting in increasing numbers in urban and suburban sites. As with attracting any birds, the key to attracting owls is to provide their four basic needs: food, water, shelter, and nesting sites. This is especially beneficial if you are having a problem with pests, as owls dine on a menu of voles, mice, and other rodents that can pester urban or suburban homeowners, as well as large insects that can wreak havoc on your garden. In fact, over a single season, an owl can consume hundreds of garden-munching rodents and other pests.

Owl-friendly habitats include quiet, secluded areas with grassy areas, brush piles, fence rows, or thickets that serve as habitat for small animals. Mow lawn and other grassy areas infrequently, as a perfectly groomed landscape doesn't provide good hunting territory for owls. A landscape with either deciduous or evergreen trees is attractive to owls, as the birds require safe, shady areas to build nests and to rest during the day.

Five tips for attracting owls to your yard:

If you do not have hollow tree trunks or other natural shelter, install nesting boxes to provide owls with a safe home. However, if it's not waterproof and gets wet inside, an owl may pass it up.

Don't prune large branches from trees. Horizontal limbs give owls a prime location on which to perch as they search for prey.

While the majority of water an owl needs is obtained from the prey they consume, they do on occasion visit deep bird baths to bathe and drink, especially when the weather is hot.

Leave piles of brush in your yard and mow less often to provide a habitat for small rodents, which can provide a steady food source for owls. Remember, to avoid using poisons or traps to eliminate mice, and let owls take care of the problem instead. Poison baits are highly toxic and may kill owls that dine on poisoned pests.

Put outdoor flood lights on timers. A well-lit yard does not appeal to these night-hunters.

Johnson, Terry. "Great Horned Owls May Be Nesting in Your Yard." Georgia Wild E-Newsletter. Georgia Wildlife Resources Division, 1 Feb. 2010. Web. 5 Dec. 2015. <<http://www.georgiawildlife.com/node/1862>>.

Cornell University. "Great Horned Owl." All about Birds. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 2015. Web. 5 Dec. 2015. <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Great_Horned_Owl/id>.

ROSES IN JANUARY?

By Joan McFather, *Cherokee County Master Gardener*



It's January! And, of course you were thinking about roses—right? Well, you should be, if you plan to have glorious blooms all summer long. Yes, good preparation begins now. You may, of course, already have roses in the ground—that's another story, or you may simply go buy roses in pots. In the latter case, when you have prepared the ground as explained below, remember to plant your roses at the same level as they were growing in the pot. But I'm talking about hardcore new beginnings.

Let's say you're starting from scratch and are interested in those bareroot roses that will soon be available in local nurseries. First give some thought as to placement in the yard. Roses need a minimum of six to eight hours of sunlight each day. Maybe you can't avoid a bit of shade, but try for morning sun at least—that will give the dew a chance to dry and you a chance to avoid leaf disease as a result of wet leaves. It goes without saying that you will want to avoid watering from overhead, so give some thought also to how you might lay in soaker hoses. (That, of course, means you need to have a way to get water into the hose. Just sayin'...)

Now, get a head start: prepare your ground properly. You'll want to dig an area about 4 feet wide and at least 12 inches deep per plant. If you're planning a rose bed, it's really easier to till up the whole area. You'll want to add plenty of soil conditioner—especially since we live in the clay capital of the universe. Roses need well-drained, reasonably fertile soil, so whatever you can do to loosen up the clay, the happier your roses will be. A possible amendment might be a 3- or 4-inch layer of organic matter, like composted pine bark or aged manure, worked in thoroughly. You want a soil with a pH of 5.5 to 6.5 and plenty of space for air and water to circulate.

The spacing of your plants depends on their variety and growth rate, but a safe bet is 3 to 4 feet apart. In the bed, dig holes and construct a cone-shaped mound in the middle of each. As you set a plant on each, be sure that the graft union—that's the swollen area of the main stem—is situated about an inch above the soil level. Spread out the roots around the cone and start adding soil, spreading it between the roots. When they are covered, add water to soak into the soil. Then finish filling in the hole. If you build a ring of soil around the perimeter of each plant, say about 4 inches high, you will help direct further watering toward the roots. Thereafter, mulch with pine straw, fall leaves or something else organic to deter weeds and erosion and to keep the soil temperature uniform.

Any number of rose varieties will survive in our southern climate, but some will be happier than others. Hybrid teas are very popular, but they are also quite difficult to grow here. If you are easily frustrated, grow Knock-Outs—they seem to love the challenge. Oh, all right, if you really want to try the hybrid teas, the University of Georgia recommends 'Chrysler Imperial' for a dark red, 'Matterhorn' for white, 'Alabama' for pink, and 'Cayenne' for an orange blend. They are beautiful with their upright growth habit and large, single flowers on long stems.

Among the floribundas, medium-sized shrubs with flowers in clusters, look for 'Angel Face' (mauve), 'Apricot Nectar' (apricot blend), 'Charisma' (red blend), 'Bahia' (orange blend), 'Gene Boerner' (pink), 'Saratoga' (white), and 'Sunsprite' (yellow).

Or maybe you'd like to split the difference; grandifloras are tall—5 to 6 feet—with clusters on long stems. UGA suggests 'Arizona' (orange blend), 'Love' (red blend), 'Queen Elizabeth' (pink), and 'Scarlet Knight' (red).

My personal favorite is the climbing rose 'New Dawn'. Climbers have long arching stems that need some sort of support—I grow mine along a wall—or they can be allowed to sprawl as a ground cover. Others recommended are 'America' (pink blend), 'Crimson Glory' (dark red), and 'Peace' (yellow blend).

And then there are the shrub roses, perhaps 3 feet wide and tall, such as the Meidiland series, 'Carefree Wonder', 'Bonica', and the aforementioned Knock-Out series.

Continued on Page 4

BOXELDER BUGS

By Mary Schuster, Cherokee County Master Gardener



It may seem a bit odd to be thinking about bugs in the wintertime, but if your home is situated near female boxelder trees or even silver maple trees, you may get paid an unwelcome visit from the little boxelder bug. But you will usually not encounter just one bug. He always brings along his friends. Lots of them!

The boxelder bug (*Boisea trivittata*) is an insect, about 1/2 inch long as an adult. It is mainly black in color with three red lines behind the head, one red line appearing along each side, and red diagonal lines appearing on each wing of the insect. When lying flat and at rest, the wings form an upside-down V.

The big problem with boxelder bugs is that they are a nuisance. They like to congregate on dwelling exteriors (usually the south and west sides of structures) where they will bask in the sun on warm winter days. When they are able to find cracks and crevices in walls, doors, or under windows, they may successfully gain entry into your home where they can find an even warmer environment! These little creatures are able to detect changes in temperature as small as one degree! Hence, their seeming success in finding their way into your living room.

If you notice them in your home, it may be tempting to just step on them and crush them or squish them when you see them crawling on the floor, furniture, or draperies, but it is not advisable to do so for two reasons—their broken bodies may give off an unpleasant smell and emit liquids that will stain fabrics. So, keeping them from gathering on your clapboards and transitioning into your home is the best line of defense against this type of infestation.

In the late fall, just as you seal your home from potential drafts, keep in mind you will want to seal it from these little guys as well. If they manage to get inside, the best way to remove them is with a vacuum cleaner with a long-nose attachment, or they can be simply swept away with a broom. There are residual insecticides that can be sprayed on exterior walls, or you may use a non-toxic method by making up a solution of 1/2 cup dish soap to 1 gallon of water and spraying this mixture on the house. And, of course, how will you eliminate the possibility of encountering this nuisance pest once and for all? Right, you guessed it—remove boxelder and/or silver maple trees that live near your home.

To his credit, there are some good facts about the boxelder bug that bear mentioning. First, this insect will not bite or sting you, your family, or pets. He will not harm you physically. Secondly, he will not damage any houseplants you may have in your home. By the same token, he will not significantly cause damage to plants and trees living outdoors. And lastly, as far as bugs go, he's not bad looking. He's sleek and colorful as opposed to hairy and scary. So, when you find you have to scoop bunches of them away, it's not too creepy (like it is when dealing with spiders)!

Roses - continued from Page 3

I have been trying to grow carpet roses for years, so far with little more success than mere survival—if that. UGA is suspiciously silent on that subject.

So yes, now that it's January, start planning for those newbie summer blooms. Remember, however, that rose maintenance is ongoing. Planting is just the beginning. You can keep up with monthly rose needs by checking *Gardening with the Masters* newsletter's monthly tips.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

By Patricia Bowen, Cherokee County Master Gardner



Don't have enough land or enough sun on your garden to grow your favorite crops? Take a ride around your neighborhood, and see if you can spot a community garden where you might be able to rent a small plot for your plantings. You'll identify a community garden as a grouping of raised beds, typically rectangular plots surrounded by railroad ties or wood frames. There are many here in Cherokee County, some visible, some not. Locally, and around the country, new subdivisions are including them as the latest new amenity. Some are on public or vacant land that has been cleaned up, some on campus acreage or in public parks.

Community gardens are defined as any piece of land gardened by a group of people. Here in the States, their history goes back to Native Americans' group approach to agriculture, which was passed on to later settlers and evolved into public gathering places amid the gardens, some with the placement of art, ecological learning, communal living, and more. During World Wars I and II "victory gardens" were planted everywhere from private yards to public parks and sites in between to boost morale and supplement food rationing, and many of those gardens survive today around the country as community gardens.

In the UK and Europe, "allotment gardens" have a similar purpose, but more history, as many plots have been rented by the same families for generations. In the developing world, private land ownership is less typical, and commonly held public plots are popular in both rural and urban areas, where they function as market gardens as a source of both food and income.

You don't need a green thumb to get started with your own plot. One of the benefits of gardening with others is the chance to learn from them. It's a teaching opportunity for the entire family, a way to promote healthy habits by growing and harvesting and eating food you've grown yourself. Beyond sharing ideas, some community gardeners trade or donate extra produce, share gardening tools, and gain a fresh appreciation for the farm-to-table movement and the efforts behind local farmers' markets. Last, but not least, it's lots of fun to be rewarded for your hard work with an abundant harvest.

A popular local site is the Canton Victory Garden East off Highway 20. Funded by grants, there are 36 raised beds measuring 4 by 12 feet. The \$25 fee covers water and usage and garden tools to share. In 2016 two more beds will be available that will be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. For more information on this garden, contact Monte Schultz at monteschultz@icloud.com.

If you haven't found a local community garden in your ride around town, go online to the American Community Gardening Association at <https://communitygarden.org/find-a-garden/>. Enter your zip code and the distance you want to search. Of course not all gardens are registered with this group, but it can get you started on your search.

If you'd like some information on starting a shared community garden, there are extensive government resources available to you. Michelle Obama's focus on home gardening and healthy eating as a means to counter childhood obesity comes at a time of high interest in similar local endeavors. Check out <http://www.letsmove.gov/community-garden-checklist> for simple suggestions.

For more comprehensive news and information on community gardens, including grants available for local gardens and much more, visit the USDA site at http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=PEOPLES_GARDEN.

Continued on Page 7

NATURE'S ICE GARDEN

By Karen Garland, Cherokee County Master Gardner



Not all things in winter are bleak and drab. When conditions are just right, you may be a lucky witness to Mother Nature's artistry during an early morning stroll. Exquisite frosty "petals" unfurling from plant stems, filamentous needle ice piercing up from the soil, and smooth, silky ice hairs curling over rotting wood are fragile reminders that beauty can be found no matter the season. However, such splendor is short-lived, as they soon melt or sublimate (change directly from ice into water vapor) in the mid-morning sun or are easily shattered by touch.

You won't find seeds for *crystallofolia* or "frost flowers" in any garden catalog, since of course, they are not flowers at all, nor are they created by frost. In fact, these delicate formations are created by a phenomenon called "ice segregation," which occurs when water is slowly drawn up through the plant and oozes out in extremely thin layers from cracks of certain dormant stems, freezing into fragile ribbons of curling ice upon contact with the cold air. Continuing to slowly flow out past the first layer of ice, the water freezes, forming a second layer, and so on, until the telltale thin "frozen petal" shape emerges.

The water in the soil enters the root system by a process called osmosis. Osmosis is the term describing the movement of water across a cell membrane from a more dilute solution to a more concentrated solution. In this case the more concentrated solution is the sap in the root system and the less concentrated solution is the water in the soil. Plants use this as a transport mechanism for water, nutrients, and so forth, so it is not surprising that this same action also gives rise to the "frost flower" phenomenon.

Despite almost two centuries of scientific studies, "frost flowers" remain something of an enigma, with investigations ranging from plant roots to plant species. In fact, in 1850 naturalist John LeConte of the University of Georgia made many insightful observations about whole and cut-off dormant and dead stems, both of which grew ice. Therefore, the ice formation did not seem to be connected to the plant's physical functions. LeConte also observed, "At a distance they present an appearance resembling locks of cotton-wool, varying from four to five inches in diameter, placed around the roots of plants; and when numerous the effect is striking and beautiful." Additionally, only about 40 herbaceous plants worldwide exhibit these icy extrusions, including dittany (*Cunila origanoides*), frostweed (*Helianthemum canadense*), yellow ironweed (*Verbesina alternifolia*) and white crownbeard (*Verbesina virginica*).

This marvel continues with the formation of needle ice and hair ice too. Needle ice projections rise vertically from the surface or near the surface of the soil. If you ever heard the soil crunch underfoot on a cold morning then it is likely you were walking on needle ice. Capillary action brings the underground liquid water to the surface, where it freezes and contributes to a growing needle-like ice column, which can range in size from an inch to longer than a foot under ideal circumstances. Additionally, hair ice can be found growing outward from the surface of moist, rotting wood, as super-cooled water emerges. The "hairs" are brittle and take on the shape of curls or waves.

It is remarkable that something as common as ice can have so many forms that are not completely understood. Just remember to check the weather for a morning when the ground temperature is warm enough so that the plants' root systems are still active, and the air temperature cold enough to freeze water. Hopefully, you will have a chance to observe that an ordinary winter's day may not be so ordinary after all. So bundle up, fill the thermos with hot chocolate, and head outdoors!

Reference

Carter, James. "Flowers and Ribbons of Ice." *American Scientist*. American Scientist, Sept. 2013. Web. 25 Nov. 2015. <<http://www.americanscientist.org/issues/feature/2013/5/flowers-and-ribbons-of-ice/1>>.

Community Gardens - continued from Page 5

Even if you have a garden in your own yard, community gardening might make you a better gardener with first-hand exposure to the methods of others, more than you could get from any book or website. And even if you don't want to use the community garden as your own plot, you might want to hang out there now and then and observe how plants are planted, spaced, staked, and cared for.

KROGER VAC PROGRAM

Cherokee County Master Gardeners have a close alliance with the Cherokee County Senior Center. They've given us free garden space, teaching and celebration venues and more, all the while serving the frail, low income elderly in our county.

The Cherokee County Volunteer Aging Council (VAC) is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit that exists to support many of the needs of the Senior Center that are not funded by other means: meal supplements delivered by Meals on Wheels volunteers; emergency funds for rent, meds, dental care and home repairs; ramp building and other home needs to keep seniors safe and in their homes.

If you're a Kroger shopper you can painlessly give back to our county's seniors by signing up for Kroger's Community Rewards program. Once you register Kroger will donate a portion of all your store purchases to the VAC, and this will not affect your other Kroger rewards like fuel points. It costs you nothing but a few minutes to sign up. Just go to www.krogercommunityrewards.com and enter either the "NPO" number 17255 or Cherokee County Volunteer Aging Council. (You'll be required to renew your option to donate each August.) Then each time you shop you'll notice a statement at the bottom of your sales slip that a donation is being made in your name.

If any questions about this program or the VAC contact Patricia Bowen at 770-315-6246 or woodsgal@hotmail.com.

TURFGRASS TIPS FOR FEBRUARY AND MARCH

By A. Rachel Prakash, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Cool Season Grasses (Fescue, Kentucky Bluegrass) and Warm Season Grasses (Bermuda grass, Centipede, St. Augustine):

- Start planning for the coming growing season by getting a soil test done and repurposing shady areas for flower beds as grass will not grow well in shade.
- If you have any leaves on your lawn, they need to be raked up and removed so the grass is not smothered with all the rain North Georgia has been getting this year.
- When the weather begins to warm up, watch for invasive broadleaf weeds and pluck them up before they have a chance to set seed.
- If your lawn struggled with disease over the previous summer, try to identify ways to prevent the problem this year by adding an irrigation system on a timer so the lawn receives regular moisture. If the problem was caused by too much moisture, perhaps a drain under the area could help move water to a less problematic area. By addressing these issues now, you can save much time and money in the months ahead.

FEBRUARY TIPS

ORNAMENTALS

- Prune hybrid tea roses and knockout roses now, removing old canes and lowering plant to a height of 12-15". To care for rose bushes now, apply a fertilizer heavy in potassium (K). Prune rose canes back to about 6-10". Apply a drop of white glue to the end of fresh cut canes to prevent borers. Apply a dormant spray of lime-sulfur and dormant oil before active growth appears. Clean up rose beds, discard old foliage, pieces of canes, and remove old mulch with weeds. Re-apply a fresh layer of mulch to rose beds. For more rose pruning info: http://pubsadmin.caes.uga.edu/files/pdf/B%20671_2.PDF
- Winter is a good time to prune deciduous trees and shrubs that don't bloom in the spring. It allows you to view the trunk and branches when making your cuts. http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=7656&pg=np&ct=prune trees&kt=&kid=&pid=
- Change plant light bulbs over seedlings, as older bulbs do not give off as much light.
- Continue to fertilize pansies and other winter annuals with fertilizer high in nitrate nitrogen. http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=7840&pg=np&ct=pansies&kt=&kid=&pid=
- Prune clumps of ornamental grass before new growth appears. Tie large clumps with rope; cut

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES


- with a hedge trimmer.
- Remember that vegetable seeds have a short life and usually will not be good after a year or two. This includes sweet corn, onion, okra, beans, parsnip, and peppers.
- Consider the family vacation when planning your garden. Choose planting dates and varieties so your garden won't be ready for a full harvest while you are away. http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=6806&pg=np&ct=planting calendar&kt=&kid=&pid=
- Peaches grow best when maintained with an open center (no central leader). Keep 3 or 4 strong, scaffold branches evenly distributed around the trunk. Limbs that branch out at a 60° angle are preferred. Spreaders can be used to widen narrow crotch angles. <http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=C878>
- Prune fruit trees and grapes in late February or early March after the worst of the winter cold is

passed but before spring growth begins when temps maintain at 45°. For disease and insect control, cut out dead wood and dispose. Disinfect pruners with one part bleach -9 parts H2O or rubbing alcohol after each cut. Drift from both will damage grass or other plants.

- Before working an area in the garden for early spring planting, check the soil. It should be dry enough to crumble in your hands, so that you don't compact the soil while working it.
- Don't start your vegetable plants indoors too early. Six weeks ahead of the expected planting date is early enough for the fast growing species such as cabbage. Eight weeks allows enough time for the slow growing types such as tomatoes and peppers. http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=5963&pg=np&ct=vegetable seeds&kt=&kid=&pid=
- Handle seed packets with care. Rubbing the outside to determine how many seeds are inside can break the protective seed coats, thereby reducing germination.

MISCELLANEOUS

- To make old hay and manure weed-free, spread on the soil in late winter, water well, and cover with black plastic. Weed seeds will sprout after a few days of warm weather, and then will be killed by frost and lack of daylight.
- Hang or clean out bluebird houses now before the birds start looking for a home. Don't clean them on a windy day.
- Clean and disinfect clay pots by soaking them in a solution of 1 part liquid bleach and 10 parts water. Rinse thoroughly to remove all bleach residue. This will have your containers ready to plant with spring annuals.



RAINFALL COMPARISONS						
	Cherokee County			State Wide		
	Nov 15	Dec 15	YTD	Nov 15	Dec 15	YTD
Actual	8.4	9.9	61.6	8.4	13.7	60.8
Normal	4.5	4.7	54.1	3.8	4.1	47.3
Excess	3.9	5.2	7.5	4.6	9.6	13.5

MARCH TIPS

ORNAMENTALS

- Be aware that a brown plastic material that looks and feels like natural burlap, but does not break down in the soil, may be used to wrap root balls of B & B plants. Synthetic materials enclosing the roots of trees and shrubs must be completely removed to ensure success of the transplants. Planting techniques for trees can be found at: [http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=6085&pg=np&ct=burlap trees&kt=&kid=&pid=](http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=6085&pg=np&ct=burlap%20trees&kt=&kid=&pid=)
- Propagate deciduous shrubs, such as forsythia and winter jasmine, now by ground layering.
- Give your roses a starter application of complete fertilizer.
- Cut back butterfly bushes to 1/3 desired height.
- Fertilize spring bulbs after they bloom. Do not remove leaves until they turn yellow.
- Prune Crape myrtles only removing the old flower heads. Do not cut back to the same spot each year as it creates a weak joint and the branches can split and fall in the summer with the additional weight of heavy flower heads. Remove sprouts at the base of the tree. [http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=6861&pg=np&ct=crape myrtles&kt=&kid=&pid=](http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=6861&pg=np&ct=crape%20myrtles&kt=&kid=&pid=)
- If you have left a few inches of plant stems on your perennials to ID the plant's location cut them back before the new growth emerges. It is also a good time to cut back the tattered foliage on evergreen ferns and perennials.
- Cut foliage off tattered Liriope.
- Start fertilizing pansies and winter annuals with houseplant fertilizer.
- Divide daylily and hosta clumps when the leaves just start to emerge from the ground so you don't damage the new growth. More Hosta info: http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=7849&pg=np&ct=hosta&kt=&kid=&pid=

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Don't rush to remove mulch from strawberries. Leave it over your plants to protect them from late cold spells. When plants start to grow, the mulch must be removed to allow leaves to develop in the light. If leaves develop under the mulch, they will become etiolated (blanched) and yellow from lack

of chlorophyll, and may burn and die when exposed to the sun. http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=6859&pg=np&ct=strawberries&kt=&kid=&pid=

- Begin summer vegetable seedlings inside now.
- Spring applications of pesticides should be made on peaches, apples and pears. Correct timing for spraying depends on the stage of development of flowers. Check the label and follow the directions.
- Lettuce is very sensitive to low pH. Lime should be applied to the soil if the pH is below 6.0.
- If your garden is on a hillside, plant across the slope (not up and down) to help hold moisture in the soil and reduce erosion.
- Seed root crops, such as carrots, beets, radishes and parsnips, in your garden.
- Do not add lime to the area for potatoes. The lower pH helps control scab.

MISCELLANEOUS

- One way to avoid the danger of unusually cold nights is to set water-filled plastic jugs around each seedling. Warmed by the sun, these will radiate heat all night, preventing cold damage. Other ways to protect from the winter cold are at http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=7331&pg=np&ct=colddamage&kt=&kid=&pid=
- Place bird houses outdoors early this month. Birds will begin looking for nesting sites soon and the houses should attract several mating pairs. Ideally, houses erected on smooth metal poles where predators cannot climb are most often selected, but placement on top of fence posts or in trees will usually suffice.
- Put out hummingbird feeders in mid-March.
- Re-pot houseplants that have grown too large for their containers. Cut back leggy plants to encourage compact growth. Root the cuttings in moist media to increase your supply of plants.
- Houseplants can be watered more frequently with the onset of spring and new growth. Start fertilizing houseplants now for good growth. http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=7639&pg=np&ct=houseplants&kt=&kid=&pid=

Recipes

Send recipes to
Maura Watson at
mlw229@gmail.com

Pat Bowen's Brussel Sprout Chips

1 lb. fresh Brussels Sprouts 2 Tbsp olive oil
1/2 tsp garlic powder 1/8 tsp freshly ground pepper

Heat oven to 425 degrees. Mix all ingredients, except Brussels sprouts in small bowl. Trim off the ends of the sprouts & peel off the leaves into a large bowl. *Continue to trim the stem as you peel away the leaves.* Once no more leaves remain, chop the rest of the tiny stem & add it to the bowl.

Pour other ingredients over leaves, tossing thoroughly with your hands until all leaves are coated. Spread leaves in an even layer in a baking pan; roast until crisp & some leaves are browned. Stir once or twice during roasting (about 18-20 mins.). Serve warm, plain or with your favorite dip or dressing.

Linguine with Scallops and Broccolini

(serves 4)

8 oz. linguine 3 T parsley (chopped)
1 bunch broccolini (cut into 1 inch pieces) 1/2 t salt
1/2 t pepper
1 sweet red pepper (seeded and thinly sliced) 3 cloves garlic (finely chopped)
1 T olive oil 2 T margarine
1 lb. scallops (rinsed, tough muscles removed) 2 t cornstarch
1/2 cup vegetable broth
3 T flour 1 T lemon juice

Cook pasta till tender (about 9 mins.). Add broccolini & red pepper during last 2 mins. Reserve 1/2 cup cooking water. Drain.

Heat 1 Tbsp. **each** of olive oil & margarine in skillet over Med. High heat. Coat scallops with flour; season with salt & pepper. Saute 2 mins. per side. Set aside. Add remaining 1 Tbsp. of oil & margarine to skillet, then cook garlic for 30 sec.

Combine cornstarch & broth. Add to skillet & simmer for 1 min. Add pasta, parsley, lemon juice & scallops. Toss gently to combine; simmer for 1 min. *(Add reserve cooking water if needed). Serve over pasta.

UGA Cooperative Extension—Cherokee County
1130 Bluffs Pkwy, Suite G49
Canton, GA 30114

www.caes.uga.edu/extension/cherokee

To receive printed copies of the 2016 newsletters, please send a check for \$7 to

Pam Raines
702 Cherecobb Way
Woodstock, GA 30188



CHEROKEE COUNTY

The University of Georgia and Ft. Valley State College, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and 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.



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