

Gardening with the Masters

Growing, Gardening and Gaining Knowledge
August/September, 2018

WHAT'S HAPPENING

AUGUST

Aug 1 - Papa's Pantry
(Plant-a-Row) Workday, 9:30am

Aug 2 - Demo Garden Workday,
Sr. Center, 10am

Aug 4 - Fall Vegetable Gardening
Lectures, Hickory Flat and
RT Jones Libraries, 10am

Aug 8 - Papa's Pantry
(Plant-a-Row) Workday, 9:30am

Aug 15 - Papa's Pantry
(Plant-a-Row) Workday, 9:30am

Aug 16 - Demo Garden Work-
day, Sr. Center, 10am

Aug 21 - CCMG Monthly Meeting

Aug 25 - Saving Herbs and Seed
Lecture, Hickory Flat Library,
10am

SEPTEMBER

Sept 6 - Demo Garden Workday,
Sr. Center, 10am

Sept 6 - CCMG Board Meeting

Sept 14-Nov 2 - CC Master
Naturalist Training

Sept 14 - CCMG Plant Sale Set Up
9am

Sept 15 - CCMG Plant Sale, Sr.
Ctr, 9am-noon

Sept 18-23 - Cherokee County
Fair

Sept 18 - CCMG Monthly Meeting

Sept 20 - Demo Garden
Workday,
Sr. Center, 10am

Sept 22 - Ready, Set, Grow
Summit, Sr. Ctr.,
10am-2pm,

Editor's Corner

By Marcia Winchester,
Cherokee County Master Gardener

Have you ever attended a Master Gardener lecture? We started our lectures over 20 years ago. They are held at our community libraries and the Senior Center in Canton. Some classes are so popular that we are presenting the same class twice to allow more to attend. These classes are at no cost except for an occasional charge to cover the costs of materials.

Last year we expanded our lectures to include a round-robin summit featuring several concurrent classes, with some classes being repeated. On September 22 at the Senior Center in Canton we will present our fourth Ready Set Grow summit.



Gerald Phillips, Cherokee Master Gardener, presenting the Pollinators Lecture during a Ready, Set, Grow summit. Photo taken by Mary Ellen Roos.

Topics will include Tree Selection and Planting, Cool Season Veggies, Bulbs, Dividing Perennials, and Mulching and Lawn Care. Between classes we will have four tables set up for informal questions, plus the Demonstration Garden will be open for tours. To register to attend this free four-hour summit, contact the Extension Office at uga1057@uga.edu or call 770-721-7803.

Marcia

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Photo provided from *Bird Watcher's Digest*.

Call of the Cranes

By Karen Garland, Cherokee County Master Gardener

One of the greatest joys I experience when gardening extends beyond my plants to also include wildlife sightings. Have you ever been in your yard in late fall or late winter and heard an unusual rolling, high-pitched trumpet-like sound coming from high in the sky? If you were lucky enough to be at the right place, at the right time, you heard greater sandhill cranes (*Antigone canadensis*). Starting at the end of November and continuing into December, the birds leave their nesting habitat in the northern United States and Canada, migrating to their wintering grounds in the southern United States and Mexico. The cranes that are sighted in Georgia are members of the Great Lakes population, which extends from the western Great Lakes, Wisconsin, and Minnesota to Illinois and Iowa. Due to wildlife management, sandhill cranes have thankfully undergone an impressive recovery from an estimated 25 breeding pairs in the 1930s to a population exceeding 600,000! However, there is a new concern amongst wildlife biologists that as their habitat is being developed the numbers could fall again.

Oftentimes, you can hear the calls of sandhill cranes long before you can see them, and sometimes you may never see them at all. Sandhill cranes can fly at altitudes exceeding 1 mile high, and their calls can be heard from more than 2 miles away. Unfortunately, if you are not familiar with these long-legged birds you might mistake them for Canada geese (*Branta canadensis*).

First, to help discern the differences, listen to the calls made by the birds. Sandhills sound like a rolling "karoo, karoo," while Canada geese sound more like a musical "ka-honk." Additionally, the cranes have long legs that extend behind their tails when flying, while the legs of the geese do not. Another clue is the V-shape formation of the migrating flocks. While geese typically maintain this shape, the cranes' formation seems to constantly change. The flocks often fly in long, undulating V-shaped waves, with groups of three to four individuals trailing the main group.

Furthermore, sandhill cranes are very social birds. On migration, their flocks number into the hundreds. They are composed of family groups and unmated birds. While migrating, the travelers constantly communicate with one another. Interestingly, males and females often sing duets as they fly. During migration, the birds may fly as much as 400 miles in one day.

If you are lucky enough to see a crane on the ground, you will then be able to truly appreciate the size and beauty of this bird. Look for them late or early in the day in large fields or open, shallow wetlands. Sometimes these visits are associated with fog or other inclement weather. Occasionally, they will even make unscheduled stops on golf courses and other open areas. Standing upwards of 4 feet high, these gray birds have a wingspan of 6 feet from tip to tip. The top of the head is red, which is actually red skin, and the cheek is a bright white.

Sandhill cranes are a long-living species, surviving 20 years or more. Unfortunately, they do not successfully breed until five to seven years old and have one of the lowest reproductive rates of any bird in North America, with only one nest in three producing a chick that survives to migrate in the fall. Unlike many wildlife species, they do mate for life and have a very interesting dance they perform together, in which they hop around on their long legs, dip their heads and open their wings. They may even throw grass into the air to show off a bit.

Just as you may have observed them during the fall migration, keep your eyes and ears open again from mid-February through late March, as they migrate back to their northern homes. No matter whether you are a serious birder or not, if you hear the bugling of the sandhill cranes you will certainly take notice.



Photo provided from *Bird Watcher's Digest*.

Continued on page 6

Venus Flytraps and Sundews: Carnivorous Plants, Not Celestial Bodies

By Hope Sorrells, Cherokee County Master Gardener

In the April/May issue of this newsletter, we looked at pitcher plants. Now let's look at other fascinating carnivorous plants. They may seem "other worldly" when we consider that they obtain much of their nutrition from trapping insects. There is even a tropical flytrap that captures small rodents. Even more remarkable, these plants have survived by growing in nutrient-poor, acidic soil by this ability to trap and digest prey.

First, let's look at the Venus flytrap (*Dionaea muscipula*), probably one of the most readily identifiable of all the carnivorous plants. These plants have fascinated us for centuries. Thomas Jefferson corresponded with Timothy Bloodworth, an early American teacher and statesman from North Carolina, requesting seeds for the Venus flytrap, and he indeed obtained them in 1804, according to the Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia. It was appropriate that he checked with a Carolinian since these plants are only found growing wild in Carolina wetlands.



Photo of Venus flytrap, by Marcia Winchester

When propagated from seed it takes four to five years for them to reach maturity. National Wildlife Federation classifies the Venus flytrap as "vulnerable," and they should not be collected in the wild. In North Carolina it is a felony to disturb naturally growing flytraps.

Different carnivorous plants trap insects by different style traps. The Venus flytrap has open leaves with very sensitive hairs lining the inner surface. The first time a hair is touched, the plant trap prepares to close. It is not until a second strike occurs within 20 to 30 seconds of the first strike that the trap quickly shuts tightly around its prey. Speed of closing is dependent on light, size of prey, humidity, and growing conditions. The time it takes to close is an indicator of the plant's health.

The movement of the trapped insect inside the closed trap stimulates the plant to make digestive juices. In addition to digestive juices, an antiseptic secretion is produced that helps purify the prey perhaps reducing chances it will rot. Prey is limited to mostly crawling insects. Wikipedia notes that the Venus flytrap diet consists of 33 percent ants, 30 percent spiders, 10 percent beetles, and less than 5 percent flying insects. Venus flytrap grows no taller than 2 to 5 inches, a perfect height for trapping crawlers. The Venus flytrap takes five to twelve days to digest and absorb its meal. At that time the trap opens and the insect remains fall out.



Photo of Sundew blooming,
by Marcia Winchester

A close relative of the Venus flytrap is the sundew. *Drosera*, its scientific name, is taken from the Greek meaning dew. They definitely sparkle in the sun like dew. Unlike flytraps, they have a more widespread distribution, and several species live in Georgia swamps, bogs, and marshes. As with other carnivorous plants, sundews require moist, acidic, nutrient-poor soil, and of course sunlight.

Sundews also need digested insects for vital nitrogen. The sundew has tentacle-like hairs that are coated with sticky sweet liquid, luring insects to it. Very quickly the insect is stuck to the plant like flypaper. This triggers the leaf's hairs to rapidly close over it. More digestive juices flow, and the sundew digests and absorbs the nutrients from the trapped insect.

You may at this point want to know how to grow these intriguing plants at your home. First know they do better if grown outside. Both Venus flytrap and sundews are winter hardy in our USDA Hardiness Zone 7. If grown in containers above ground they may need some protection if temperatures dip and stay below freezing for more than a couple of days.

Continued on page 6

Native Alternatives to Invasive Evergreen Shrubs

By Mary Tucker, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Photo of Scotch broom, canstockphoto.com

Evergreen shrubs are one of the most functional plants for the homeowner's landscaping needs. Their uses are many, including foundation plantings, short privacy screens, and accent plants.



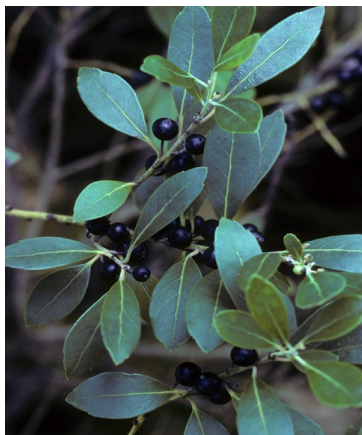
www.invasive.org. Photo of *Nandina domestica* by John Ruter, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org.

Unfortunately, some of the most commonly used evergreen shrubs are non-native plants with invasive or weedy tendencies. In the June/July issue of this newsletter, I wrote about nandina or heavenly bamboo (*Nandina domestica*), which is one of the most ubiquitous landscaping shrubs. Sadly, in addition to being invasive, the berries are toxic to birds. In my opinion, this is a shrub that should never be planted or sold! Despite the damage it causes, you'll find it offered at almost every nursery and used by most commercial landscapers.

But the story does not end there. Other commonly used evergreen shrubs are also extremely damaging to our native habitats and the wildlife that inhabit them. Examples include leatherleaf mahonia (*Mahonia bealei*), silverberry or thorny elaeagnus (*Elaeagnus pungens*), Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), and the many species of privet (*Ligustrum* spp.).

These shrubs invade natural landscapes either through seeds (usually dispersed by birds and other wildlife) or through vegetative means. The harm they can do is extensive, taking over woodlands, meadows, and other natural areas. Here they shade out or outcompete native species, degrade natural ecosystems, and reduce food and shelter for native wildlife. Large stands of invasive plants can also change the course of waterways and affect the water table.

Fortunately, there are many worthy native evergreen shrubs that will serve as excellent alternatives to these invasive shrubs. The ones listed below typically grow to a height that makes them appropriate for foundation plantings, privacy screens, and accent plants. Many are also available in dwarf forms that are especially useful for the home landscape.



Ilex glabra, Photo from the Wasowski Collection, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Inkberry (*Ilex glabra*) – simple, alternate, glossy leaves, 1 to 2 inches long; typically grows 5 to 8 feet tall; tiny white blooms in spring, followed by black berries on female plants; often found in wet areas, but adaptable to average soil; mounded growth habit; sun to part shade; dwarf form 'Compacta' grows 3 to 4 feet tall; large gallberry (*I. coriacea*) is similar but with larger leaves, a more open growth habit, and taller (to 15 feet).

Dwarf yaupon holly (*Ilex vomitoria* 'Nana') – simple, leathery, dark green, shiny, oval or oblong leaves, ½ to 1½ inches long and ¼ to ½ inch wide; typically grows 3 to 5 feet tall; tiny white flowers in early spring;

rounded red drupe on female trees in fall; tolerates a variety of soil types and moisture conditions; shade or full sun; the non-dwarf yaupon holly typically grows to 25 feet tall, and cultivars include weeping forms and selections with

yellow or orange fruit; other dwarf cultivars of *Ilex vomitoria* include 'Oscar Gray', 'Stoke's Dwarf', and 'Taylor's Rudolf'.



Ilex glabra,

Photo from the Wasowski Collection, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center



Morella cerifera,
Photo from the Wasowski
Collection, Lady Bird Johnson
Wildflower Center

Wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera* or *Morella cerifera*) – finely textured, aromatic leaves that are simple, oblanceolate, 2 to 4 inches long and ¼ to ¾ inch wide; typically 15 to 25 feet tall; tiny, relatively insignificant flowers; fruits on female plants are an attractive bluish white and are relished by many songbirds; damp to dry soil; sun to shade; fast growth habit; often multi-trunked; colonizing root system may form a thicket; dwarf forms, such as ‘Tom’s Dwarf’, are available that typically grow no more than 5 feet in height; dwarf forms may be called *Myrica pusilla* or *Myrica cerifera* var. *pumila*.



Morella cerifera,
Photo from the Wasowski Collection,
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Doghobble (*Leucothoe fontanesiana*) – glossy, deep green foliage 3 to 6 inches long on arching branches; bronzy cast to new foliage; typically grows 3 to 6 feet tall; lightly fragrant, white, bell-shaped flowers borne in racemes in spring; often found in moist, acidic soil; part sun to part shade; dwarf form that may be sold as ‘Zebliid’ or ‘Scarletta’ typically grows to 3 feet tall and is denser, more compact, and more symmetrical than the species; coastal leucothoe (*L. axillaris*) is similar but with racemes and leaves that are a bit smaller.



Florida hobblebush (*Agarista populifolia* formerly *Leucothoe populifolia*) – shiny, simple foliage 2 to 4 inches long on arching stems; new foliage coppery red in color; small, creamy white, bell-shaped flowers in early spring; typically 5 to 10 feet tall; prefers moist, acidic soil; shade to part sun; dwarf form ‘Leprechaun’ or ‘Taylor’s Treasure’ averages 3 to 5 feet in height with a dense, compact habit.

Agarista populifolia,
Photo from the Wasowski
Collection, Lady Bird Johnson
Wildflower Center

Fetterbush (*Lyonia lucida*) – simple, alternate, glossy foliage 1 to 3 inches long borne on arching branches; typically 3 to 6 feet tall; small, pinkish white, bell-shaped flowers dangle from branches in early spring; moist, well-drained soil in partial shade.

Florida anise (*Illicium floridanum*) – glossy, spicily fragrant, dark green leaves that are simple, elliptical, and 3 to 6 inches long; grows to 10 feet tall; flowers typically maroon to red, star-shaped and 1 to 1½ inches wide; moist, rich soil in full to partial shade; ‘Pebblebrook’ is a dwarf cultivar that grows to about 5 feet tall; star anise (*I. parviflorum*) grows to 15 feet, bears leaves in a lighter shade of green, tolerates drier, sunnier conditions, and has small, light yellow flowers.



Illicium floridanum,
Photo from the Wasowski
Collection, Lady Bird Johnson
Wildflower Center



Rhododendron maximum,
Photo from the Wasowski
Collection, Lady Bird Johnson
Wildflower Center

Great laurel or rosebay (*Rhododendron maximum*) – leathery, simple, elliptical leaves that grow up to 8 inches in length; early summer flowers clustered in trusses; typical bloom is white to pink with each flower up to 1½ inches wide; typically 6 to 10 feet tall, but can grow taller; well-drained acidic soil; shade to filtered sun; *R. maximum* var. *leachii* is more compact than the species; other evergreen native rhododendrons include Catawba rhododendron (*R. catawbiense*), which typically grows 6 to 10 feet tall, and piedmont rhododendron (*R. minus*), which grows 3 to 6 feet tall.

Mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*) – dark green, glossy, elliptical leaves 3 to 4 inches long; pink to white flower clusters in late spring to early summer; typically grows 6 to 15 feet tall, though can grow taller; rich, acidic soil; tolerates moist to dry conditions; part sun to shade; the dwarf cultivar ‘Elf’ grows 2 to 3 feet tall.



Kalmia latifolia,
Photo from the Wasowski
Collection, Lady Bird Johnson
Wildflower Center

Call of the Cranescontinued from page 2

The migration of the sandhill crane remains one of nature's most spectacular annual events. What is truly amazing is that you do not have to travel to some distant wilderness area to enjoy them...your own yard can become a front row seat!

Resources:

Johnson, T. (2018). Out My Backdoor: Harbingers of Spring. [online] Wildlife Resources Division. Available at: <https://georgiawildlife.com/out-my-backdoor-harbingers-spring> [Accessed 10 Jul. 2018]

Nature.org. (2018). About the Sandhill Crane | The Nature Conservancy. [online] Available at: <https://www.nature.org/newsfeatures/specialfeatures/animals/birds/sandhill-crane.xml> [Accessed 10 Jul. 2018].

Ripma, R. (2016). Sandhill Crane Migration is Underway - Birds and Blooms. [online] Birds and Blooms. Available at: <http://www.birdsandblooms.com/blog/sandhill-crane-migration/> [Accessed 10 Jul. 2018].



Photo of Sundew,
by Marcia Winchester

Venus flytraps and Sundewscontinued from page 3

A soil mix of 50 percent sphagnum peat moss and 50 percent sand (play sand) is recommended. Never use potting mixes or attempt to grow in your garden soil. You will need to keep the soil moist. Try to use rainwater or distilled water since tap water contains chemicals that may harm your plants. No fertilizers!

Plastic pots often are best at retaining moisture. If there is a drainage hole in the pot, place the pot in a saucer or tray of water. Metal containers work but should be lined with plastic or rubber first. The acid soil may break down the metal, releasing undesirable chemicals into the soil.

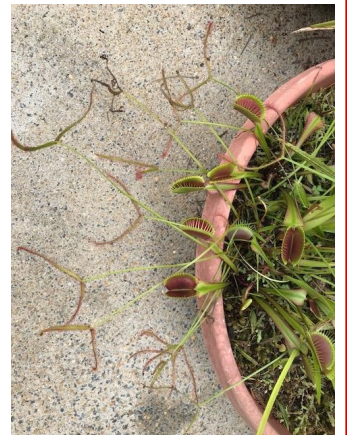
There is no need to feed your plants if grown outdoors. Mother Nature provides all the insects a carnivorous plant could need here in Georgia. Don't be tempted to feed your plant hamburger, pasta, fruit, or any such fare. This could rot and kill it. Remember they require live, moving creatures in their trap to stimulate the flow of digestive juices.

Why not create a mini bog? Flytraps and sundews look stunning and add texture to a container of tall pitcher plants. Of course your bog size could increase beyond deck pots by shoveling out an area in the garden and inserting a plastic liner or child's plastic wading pool. Fill with the recommended peat/sand mix and keep soil moist. Then the fun begins: plant your bog with carnivorous beauties.

Venus flytraps are fairly easy to find at garden centers, but sundews may be more difficult to locate. Watch for local plant sales from gardening groups or nature centers. Some specialty nurseries or even home improvement stores may have them in spring.

Please visit the Cherokee County Master Gardener Demonstration Garden located at the Cherokee County Senior Center. There is a small but delightful native bog garden there where you can observe these and other carnivorous plants.

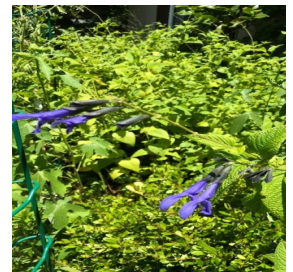
Photo of Venus flytrap and
Sundew, by Marcia Winchester



Pink Hibiscus, photo by Marcia Winchester

Master Gardener Plant Sale, September 15, 2018
@ Canton Senior Center, 9am—12pm

Browse our selection of bulbs, perennials, ground covers, pollinator plants, and garden art. Master Gardeners will be available to answer questions, and give tours of the Demo Gardens.



Blue Salvia, photo by Marcia Winchester

LAWN CARE-AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

By Stephanie Howard, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Warm-Season Grasses (Bermuda, Centipede, Zoysia, St. Augustine)

For Established Lawns

- Lawns may still be aerated or dethatched in August, but is not necessary every year.
- Once the soil temperature is consistently 70°F, you may apply a winter pre-emergent herbicide, usually in early September. Consider applying a granular pre-emergent unless you plan to overseed. Use a post-emergent to spot spray for minor weed control.
- Fertilize Bermuda, Zoysia, and St. Augustine grasses in late August or early September. This is the last feeding for the season. Do not fertilize Centipede lawns at this time.
- Follow “water-wise” irrigation methods to ensure a healthy lawn and promote a strong root system.
- Set irrigation to apply 1 inch of water per week. Consider rainfall amounts. Do not overwater.

For Newly Installed Lawns

- Install warm season turf through early August to establish the root system before dormancy.
- Irrigate daily for the first two to three weeks to establish turf.
- Fertilize according to soil test recommendations.
- To discourage weeds, extract manually or mow often.

Grass Type	Mowing Height(in)
Bermuda grass	1 - 1.5 to 2.0
Centipede grass	1 - 2
St. Augustine grass	2 - 3
Zoysia grass	1 - 2
Tall Fescue grass	2.5 or more
Kentucky Bluegrass	2.5 or more

Cool-Season Grasses (Tall Fescue, Kentucky Bluegrass, Creeping Red Fescue, Chewing Fescue)

For Established Lawns

- Dethatching should not be necessary if proper mowing heights have been followed.
- Aerate in late September, if needed.
- Apply an approved pre-emergent in early September, unless you plan to sod or reseed. You may also use a post-emergent spot spray for broadleaf weeds. Apply lime (50 lbs/1000 sq ft) if needed.
- A healthy lawn needs about 1 inch of water per week. Determine irrigation needs depending on the amount of rainfall received.

For Newly Installed Lawns

- Install new cool season turf, sprigs, or seed from late September to early October.
- Look for the “Blue Tag” certified seed to insure that you are purchasing a high-quality product.

Disease & Insect Control for All Lawns

If you are using proper irrigation methods, there should not be any major fungal issues during the hot summer months. However, this has been an unseasonably wet season. As nights become cooler, check for dead or dark patches with clearly defined edges. Apply an approved fungicide as needed.

Check for webworm, armyworm, and/or cutworm infestations. Webworms leave a veil-like webbing on the turf surface, which is easily seen in the morning before the dew burns off. Circular, sunken patches of cut leaf blades might indicate the presence of cutworms.

Armyworms leave significant damage by chewing patches of blades to the ground. White grubs feed on grass roots. Control them during August with an approved insecticide before they move deeper in the soil.

Patches of wilted, yellow grass might indicate the presence of chinch bugs. St. Augustine and Centipede are especially susceptible, but other grasses are also at risk.

If needed, treat the soil with an approved product for the specific type of infestation. Control strategies differ so be sure to follow instructions on the product label.



RAINFALL COMPARISONS

	Cherokee County			State Wide		
	May 18	June 18	YTD	May 18	June 18	YTD
Actual	5.3	5.0	28.8	7.7	5.1	29.3
Normal	4.4	4.1	29.1	3.2	4.0	24.1
Excess	0.9	0.9	-0.3	4.3	1.1	5.2

AUGUST Gardening Tips

ORNAMENTALS



goingtoseed-
inzone5.files.wordpress.com

- Take root cuttings of woody shrubs and evergreens (such as azaleas, holly, and hydrangeas) to propagate.
- Powdery mildew diseases attack a great many ornamentals, most often in late summer when the days are warm and nights are cool. Some mildews, particularly those on roses, apples, and cherries, also are increased by high humidity. Prevention by proper cultural techniques is the first defense. Grow resistant varieties; space and prune plants to improve air flow and reduce shading; water early in the day and at the base rather than on leaves; and reduce nitrogen applications to avoid excessive, late-season growth http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/B%201238_6.PDF
- Water shrubs deeply once a week during August. Many plants including camellias and rhododendrons, are forming buds for next season's bloom at this time. Do not prune or you will be removing the flower buds. Immature berries of hollies may drop if the plants are water stressed. During hot, dry August days, avoid deep cultivation in your flower beds. Loosening the soil under these conditions reduces water uptake by increasing loss of soil water and damaging surface roots. Plants often look much worse after cultivation than before.
- Water roses at least 1" of water per week. Remove spent blooms (deadheading) to encourage quicker rebloom. Prune 1/4" above an outward facing five-leaflet eye. Watch for spider mites on the underside of the upper leaves. A blast of water from underneath will discourage them. Continue fertilizing once a month for both August and September.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES



Stock Photo, Wikimedia.org

- Strawberries, blueberries, and bramble fruits are forming buds for next year's crop; keep them watered for better production.
- Fertilize strawberries in August. On plants set out this spring, apply 4-6 oz. of ammonium nitrate (33% actual nitrogen) or 12-18 oz. of 10-10-10 per 25 feet of row. Spread the fertilizer uniformly in a band 14" wide over the row when foliage (not the ground) is dry. Brush fertilizer off leaves to avoid leaf burn. For plants in the second year of growth, increase application rate to 6-8 oz. ammonium nitrate or 18-24 oz. of 10-10-10 per 25 feet of row http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/C%20883_4.PDF.

- Heavy rains at harvest can dilute the sugars in melons. Watermelons can reconcentrate sugar if left on the vine for a few dry days, but cantaloupes can't.
- Harvest cantaloupes when the melons pull easily from the stem; honeydews when the blossom end is slightly soft or springy; watermelons when there is a hollow sound when thumped and skin loses its shine. Also, run your hand around the middle of the watermelon. When fully ripe, most varieties develop low, longitudinal ridges, rather like flexed calf muscles.
- Start seeds of cool weather vegetables like broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, collards and lettuce in order to transplant to the garden in early September. http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/AP%20105_2.PDF
- White fly may be a serious problem this month on tomatoes, peppers, eggplants and squash. There are no effective preventive measures, so it's important to control the population before they increase to damaging levels. Hang sticky yellow strips among your plants to trap these pests.
- Plant bush beans now for your fall crop. Watch out for insects, such as Mexican bean beetle.
- If going on vacation this month, be sure to harvest all your vegetables and then arrange for someone to pick fast maturing crops, such as squash and okra; otherwise, they will become overmature and stop producing.
- Spider mites leave webs on the underside of leaves and eggs are laid in these webs. Spider mites thrive in hot, dry weather. For mild infestations, hose the foliage to wash off the mites. For severe problems, spray with an approved chemical according to the label. <http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=B1074&title=Control%20of%20Common%20Pests%20of%20Landscape%20Plants>



The best remedy for spider mites on plants is a good, heavy rainfall.

<http://www.caes.uga.edu/newswire/story.html?storyid=4459&story=Spider-mites>

MISCELLANEOUS

- Water your plants several hours before applying pesticides, especially during dry weather. Drought-stressed plants have less water in their plant tissues. The chemicals that enter the leaves will be more concentrated and may burn the leaves.
- The last two weeks of August is the time to spray kudzu with a non-selective weed killer or mow all visible foliage, since it is at its weakest at this time.

SEPTEMBER Gardening Tips

ORNAMENTALS

- Fall is a great time to plant and divide perennials and shrubs for next year's garden. Plants planted in the fall do not endure the summer heat during establishment and will form sufficient root systems before winter dormancy. http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/B%20944_4.PDF
- Many B & B trees and shrubs are now sold wrapped in synthetic burlap that will not rot in the ground, resulting in a root-bound plant that doesn't grow well if the burlap is left in place. Some of this material strongly resembles cotton burlap; if in doubt about the burlap's makeup, cut it away from the root ball once the plant is in place. http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/B%20932_3.PDF
- If you are not sure which end of the bulb is the top, plant it on its side. The stem will always grow upright.
- Plant peonies now, but make sure the crowns are buried only 1½ -2" below ground level. Deeper planting keeps the plants from blooming. Look for varieties that perform well in the South.
- Divide, cut back and fertilize daylilies now to promote root growth for next year's flowers.



From left to right: *Lycoris radiata*/spider lily, *Hyacinth*, *Narcissus*/Daffodil, *Crocus*, *Muscari armeniacum*/Grape Hyacinth, Photo by Marcia Winchester.

- Winter-type pumpkins and squash, such as acorn, butternut, and spaghetti keep for several months in a cool, medium-dry basement, garage or tool shed. Allow the fruit to ripen fully on the vine, and cure in the sun to form a hard rind. Harvest before frost, and leave a piece of stem on each when they are cut from the vine. If the floor is damp, elevate them to reduce the possibility of rot. The best storage temperature is about 60°F.
- Keep basil, parsley, garlic, mint and sage producing by pinching off the flowers. Herbs can be used fresh, frozen, or dried. When the dew dries, cut a few stems, tie a strong cord around this little bouquet, and hang in a cool, dry place until fully dry. Place in a jar for use during the winter. http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/B%201170_3.PDF
- Don't prune or fertilize fruits now; it may disturb bud formation.
- Do not store apples or pears with vegetables such as potatoes and squash. Fruits give off ethylene gas that speeds up the ripening process of vegetables and may cause them to develop "off" flavors.
- Beets, carrots, collards, mustard greens, onions, parsley, radishes, spinach and turnips seeds can be planted in the garden all month.
- Near the end of the growing season, pick off all tomato blossoms that won't have time to bear fruit so that plant nutrients go into existing tomatoes.
- Hot peppers will keep best if stored after they are dry. Pull the plants and hang them up, or pick the peppers and thread on a string. Store in a cool, dry place. Wash your hands after handling them.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- During the fall, be sure to water vegetables adequately; crops such as corn, pepper, squash and tomato won't mature correctly if stressed due to lack of water. Snap bean, tomato and pepper flowers may fail to develop fruit when daytime temperatures rise above 90°F.
- Harvesting guidelines: Pears should be picked at the hard ripe stage and allowed to finish ripening off the tree in a paper bag. The base color of yellow pears should change from green to yellow as the fruit approaches maturity.
- Cucumber beetles, squash bugs, Colorado potato beetles and European corn borers pass the winter in debris left in the garden. Remove dead plant material and compost it or till it under. This limits your pest population next year to the insects that migrate into the garden.

- To harvest sunflower seeds, wait until the seeds are fully grown and firm, then cut the head, leaving one foot of stem. Hang in a dry, airy spot to finish ripening. Do not store sunflowers on top of each other or they may rot.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Autumn is a good time for improving garden soil. Add manure, compost and leaves to increase the organic matter. Before adding lime, have soil tested to determine if your soil is acidic. http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/C%20896_5.PDF
- Do not spray pesticides when it is windy or temperatures are over 85°F; and always follow directions carefully.
- Washing clothes worn while applying pesticides is important. Use heavy-duty detergent & hot water ASAP.
- Some pesticides are sold as dusts. Dusts cannot be applied as precisely as sprays and may drift to non-targeted areas.
- Ready porch and patio plants to bring inside before the first frost; check under the pots for sowbugs and pillbugs.



Stock Photo, Wikimedia.org



Asian Pasta Salad

I've tried several variations on this easy recipe that's been passed around on social media, and they're all delicious. But I never alter the tasty dressing.

Ingredients:

SALAD:

8 ounces bow tie pasta
4 cups spinach or other greens
½ cup raisins or cranberries
½ cup nuts such as cashews, pecans, walnuts or pine nuts
1 four ounce can mandarin oranges, drained
¼ cup chopped cilantro or parsley

DRESSING

1/3 cup teriyaki sauce
1/3 cup vinegar, either rice wine or apple cider
½ tsp garlic powder
½ tsp onion powder
¼ tsp salt and pepper
1 tbsp sugar
½ cup oil, either olive or vegetable

Combine all dressing ingredients in a jar or bottle. Cover and shake until combined. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Cook pasta, drain and rinse. Toss all salad ingredients in a large bowl. When ready to serve, pour dressing over salad, toss again, and serve. (serves 4)

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Green Chili Chicken Enchilada Casserole

This recipe is from Janet Nicholson who brought her covered dish to the CCMG plant swap at Marcia's house in May. It was a favorite that disappeared first pass around the buffet table.

Ingredients:

FILLING

10 oz chicken breast cooked and finely shredded
16 oz bottle of green chili enchilada sauce
4 oz can of chopped green chilies
12 oz Monterey Jack cheese
1 cup sour cream
10 medium tortillas

TOPPINGS

3 springs cilantro chopped
3 green onions chopped
1 medium tomato chopped

Instructions:

Preheat your oven to 425 F degrees.

In one bowl mix the chicken with half of the green chili enchilada sauce, all of the green chilies, and half of the Monterey Jack cheese.

In another bowl, stir together the remaining enchilada sauce and the sour cream. Pour half of this mixture into a 9x13 inch baking dish.

Take a tortilla, top with a couple of tablespoons of the chicken mixture, then roll it up and place over the sauce in the baking dish. Continue with all the tortillas until they are all filled and rolled.

Pour the remaining sauce over the top of the tortillas, then sprinkle the remaining cheese evenly over the top.

Place the dish in the oven and bake for 25 minutes.

Top with chopped cilantro, green onions, and tomatoes before serving.



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