

# Gardening with the Masters

For the Cherokee County Master Gardeners

April/May 2018

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

### APRIL

- April 4 - Field Trip to Atlanta Botanical Gardens, Gainesville
- April 5 - Demo Garden workday, Senior Center, 10am
- April 7- Cutting Garden 101 Hickory Flat Library, 10am
- April 7 - GNPS Plant Sale
- April 14 - Gardening in Cherokee County, Hickory Flat Library, 10am
- April 14 - Rabies Clinic
- April 17 - Monthly Meeting
- April 18 - MGEV Appreciation Day @ Southern Belle Farm, McDonough, Ga. RSVP by April 11
- April 19 - Demo Garden Workday, Senior Center, 10am
- April 27 - Plant Sale Setup, 10am
- April 28 - Bog Gardening, Senior Center, 10am
- April 28 - Plant Sale, Senior Center, 10am-1pm

### MAY

- May 3 - Demo Garden Workday, Senior Center, 10am
- May 5 - Safe Landscaping for Pets and Children, Hickory Flat Library, 10am
- May 15 - Monthly Meeting
- May 17 - Demo Garden Workday, Senior Center, 10am
- May 19 - Floral Design from the Garden, Senior Center, 10am
- May 22 - Field Trip to Green Meadows Preserve Park

## Editor's Corner

By Marcia Winchester,  
Cherokee County Master Gardener

Last year each of my editorials touched on a different aspect of pollinator gardening. If you missed one or want to refresh your memory, all are on the website at <http://ugaextension.org/cherokee> under the Master Gardener link. I thought I'd pretty much covered the topic of pollinators. However, since gardening is such a large topic, and I have so many knowledgeable friends, I've continued to learn more about pollinators.

I have numerous containers of pansies on my deck and a patch in front of the house. I rarely see bees around them, yet I have carpenter bees, honeybees, bumblebees, and even tiny fly-like bees in my yard. This made me realize that to attract bees and other pollinators I needed a bigger attraction. I walked my yard and found some. I had a lot of bees on my blueberries (*Vaccinium* spp.) pollinating the flowers, which will make berries for the summer. My redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) tree has been covered by bees as it blooms. A spirea (*Spiraea prunifolia* 'Bridal Wreath') has hundreds of tiny bees gathering nectar. Even maples (*Acer* spp.) are attracting bees in their orange glow of flowers. I concluded that spring blooming trees and shrubs are a very important link in helping my pollinator friends. I've decided that as spring progresses I'm going to observe my trees and shrubs and see which ones contribute to feeding my pollinators and which ones could be replaced.

*Marcia*

## In This Issue

Editor's Corner .....	pg 1
April/May Calendar .....	pg 1
Death To Bugs .....	pg 2
The Cutting Edge .....	pg 3
Tent Caterpillars .....	pg 4
Kid Superheroes .....	pg 5

Lawn Tips .....	pg 6
Continued Articles .....	pg 7
April Tips .....	pg 8
May Tips .....	pg 9
Rainfall .....	pg 9
Recipes .....	pg 10





Senior Center photograph taken by Dr. Megan Hilf.

## DEATH TO BUGS: The Carnivorous Pitcher Plants

By Hope Sorrells, Cherokee County Master Gardener

The carnivorous plants drawing the most attention at the CCMG Demonstration Garden bog located at the Cherokee County Senior Center are the pitcher plants (*Sarracenia* spp.). Seven of the eight pitcher plants native to North America grow in Georgia wetlands, and fortunately all of them are protected in our state.

Georgia has a particular asset with its wetlands, which cover 13 percent of our state. Examples of wetlands include swamps, coastal salt marshes, and bogs. Wetlands function to provide habitat for plants (like pitcher plants) and many animals, boost and filter water supplies, and absorb carbon dioxide from our atmosphere. Unfortunately, many of the pitcher plant's preferred bog sites have been lost to development, agriculture, wild hog rooting, and the overgrowth of woody shrubs and trees that block sunlight.

Pitcher plants and other carnivorous plants grow in bogs. A bog is usually a spongy, soft, water-logged portion of the wetland that accumulates a deposit of decaying plant material, frequently sphagnum or other mosses. This material tends to be low in nutrients and somewhat acidic. This is a perfect environment for pitcher plants and their other carnivorous friends.

Just what makes a plant carnivorous? These interesting plants are capable of trapping and then digesting insects for their needed nutrients, primarily nitrogen. These plants have traps ranging from the simple to the elaborate to catch their meal.

Let's take a closer look at these colorful, exotic-appearing, bug-eating lovelies. In particular, let's focus on pitcher plants. These plants have jug-like or trumpet-shaped, tubular leaves that hold digestive juices which break down the soft insect bodies that fall inside, and the leaves of most pitcher plants have a hood that looks like a flap at the top. These leaves range in height from a few inches to several feet. The purple pitcher plant (*S. purpurea*) grows close to the ground, and its leaves look more like jugs. The coloration of the leaves of the various species can include many hues including green, white, yellow, red, pink, and maroon.

If the plants' colorful trumpet-like foliage was not enough feast for the eye, in spring they have very intricate blooms which extend on tall stems above the trumpet flap. This reproductive feature prevents the unwanted trapping of pollinators, among which bees are primary. Flowers are strongly scented in most species, with the fragrance of some described as unpleasant. The striking flower heads point down umbrella-style, and the flowers fade after two weeks when the petals drop. In five months or so, if it has been successfully pollinated, the seeds are produced, and the dry pod splits open, scattering seeds that are 1 to 2 millimeters in size.

Insects like ants, bees, and butterflies are lured to the pitcher openings by their color and scent and by nectar that the leaves produce. Once the insect crawls inside, it loses its footing on the extremely slick secretions. This starts the hapless insect on its death descent. Downward pointing hair-like structures prevent the insect from climbing back out to safety. One pitcher variety (*S. flava*) offers a nectar that is laced with what amounts to an insect narcotic to the unsuspecting victims!!! They are now doomed with no way to escape, and into the digestive brew they drop. After digestion, pieces of wings, legs, or other hard insect parts remain. By the end of summer the tubes fill with these parts, which can be observed.

If you are reading this article you may be thinking, "Can I grow these interesting plants?" YES you can!

What do they require?

1. At least five hours of sunshine (less light is needed in winter).
2. Soil imitating bog conditions: use three parts sphagnum peat moss and one part sand - do not use any fertilizer!
3. Constantly moist soil (bogs are wet!). However, they will rot if left in standing water.

Continued on page 7



Photo provided from Norman Winters,  
[www.caes.uga.edu/newswire/](http://www.caes.uga.edu/newswire/).

## THE CUTTING EDGE: It's Never Too Late for a Cutting Garden

By Stephanie Howard, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Who doesn't love the beauty and aroma of fresh flowers in their living spaces? You can pick up a couple of readymade bouquets from your local grocery or floral shop, or you can grow your own. The advantages of designing your own cutting garden are that it reflects your personal tastes, your favorite flower groupings, your preferred coordinating colors, and the satisfaction of realizing your hard work. To the extent possible, you want blooms throughout the year. However, your ability to do this depends on four factors: site, space, soil, and plant selection.

### Site Selection

When choosing the site, consider a well-drained area that gets at least six hours of sunlight a day. However, in our USDA Hardiness Zone 7, plants may burn in six to eight hours of full afternoon sun. If this is the case, some of the site may benefit from partial sun. If you favor the blooms of hellebore (*Helleborus orientalis*), hosta (*Hosta* spp.), hydrangea (*Hydrangea* spp.), bleeding heart (*Dicentra spectabilis*) or astilbe (*Astilbe* spp.) in your arrangements, incorporate a shade or partial shade area in the design. Remember, this is a cutting garden. Its beauty is not necessarily for the benefit of neighbors and passersby. Choose a site in an area less visible from the street, rather than a border along the driveway. Design a garden with narrower beds and with paths between them for easier access to the plants. Beds abutting the house or fences are not optimal.

### Space

The number and variety of flowers in the cutting garden depends on the amount of space available. About 300 plants can fit in a 435 square foot dedicated cutting garden. Most of us have much smaller spaces to work with. On the average, you can fit about 20 plants in a 3-foot by 6-foot raised bed. For perpetual blooming in a small garden, it's decision time! Which plants would you eliminate? Larger plants like peony or dahlia? On the other hand, seasonal plantings such as chrysanthemums or asters? Is overplanting an option?

### Soil

Be sure to conduct a soil test. These kits are available at your local extension office. The results will make you aware of pH, mineral composition, and organic content of the soil to help ensure plant success. Prepare the soil well in advance of actual planting. Consider installing separate areas (beds) for acid-loving plants and for those that prefer alkaline conditions.

### Plant Selection

Employing a variety of plant categories will enhance the character of your flower arrangements. Aim for a mix of bloom size, color, and texture in your selection, and remember that there are many species and cultivars to choose from.

As you create your design, you may want to subdivide the space as follows:

**Annuals:** dianthus (*Dianthus chinensis*); cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*); snapdragon (*Antirrhinum majus*); spider flower (*Cleome hassleriana*); zinnia (*Zinnia* spp.)

**Biennials:** hollyhock (*Alcea rosea*); foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*)

**Perennials:** euphorbia (*Euphorbia* spp.); coral bells (*Heuchera* spp.); astilbe (*Astilbe* spp.); columbine (*Aquilegia* spp.); gaura (*Gaura lindheimeri*); lantana (*Lantana camara*); phlox (*Phlox* spp.); salvia (*Salvia* spp.)

**Bulbs:** ornamental onion (*Allium* spp.); gladiolas (*Gladiolus* spp.); daffodil (*Narcissus* spp.)

**Grasses:** liriopse (*Liriope* spp.); purple fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum* 'Rubrum')

**Showstoppers!** peony (*Paeonia* spp.); rose (*Rosa* spp.); hydrangea (*Hydrangea* spp.); agapanthus (*Agapanthus* spp.); lilies (*Lilium orientalis*), (*Lilium asiatica*)

Continued on Page 7



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[www.caes.uga.edu/newswire/](http://www.caes.uga.edu/newswire/)

## EASTERN TENT CATERPILLARS: Pesky Invaders

By Karen Garland,  
Cherokee County Master Gardner

Let's face it, moths do not have the same reputation as butterflies. Often being categorized as pests, especially in the caterpillar stage, one of the earliest native moths to appear in spring is the Eastern tent caterpillar (*Malacosoma americanum*). Its silken "tent" is an excellent sign that spring has arrived! However, for many gardeners its appearance is little cause for celebration, as these caterpillars can quickly defoliate a host tree when present in large numbers.

Yet, oftentimes these spring ephemeral larvae are confused with two other species of tent caterpillars. Unlike the Eastern tent caterpillars, the fall webworms (*Hyphantria cunea*) cause minimal damage to their host trees, as they create a loosely woven web at the end of tree branches, surrounding the foliage. The other species, forest tent caterpillars (*Malacosoma disstria*), are akin to the Easterns in that they too emerge from an egg mass that is laid in a similar fashion. However, they do not build an enclosed nest like their relatives. Instead, they huddle together on silk pads spun on the bark of their host tree. In addition, they emerge later in spring.

Eastern tent moths lay 150 to 400 eggs that overwinter in an egg mass resembling a foam bracelet encircling a twig of the host tree. The 1-inch form looks like it has been varnished. Emerging in early spring as tiny feeding machines, the caterpillars will hungrily devour the foliage of their host tree for the next four to six weeks. The fuzzy larvae are black with a white stripe down the back, and their sides are marked with brown and yellow lines and a row of oval blue spots. They will begin building a silk nest in the fork of their preferred host trees, which are typically wild cherries (*Prunus avium*) or apples (*Malus* spp.) However, they will also consume the foliage of other tree species, including ash (*Fraxinus* spp.), birch (*Betula* spp.), blackgum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), willow (*Salix* spp.), maple (*Acer* spp.), oak (*Quercus* spp.), and poplar (*Populus* spp.).

The tents are typically oriented so that the most expansive side of the structure faces the southeast, taking advantage of the morning sun. Walking back and forth, the caterpillars will typically add silk, which is produced in glands in their heads, to the tent at the onset of each day, thus making it larger, as they grow larger. The silk is laid down under slight tension, and it eventually contracts, causing the newly spun layer of silk to separate from the previously spun layer. These layered tents are multifunctional by providing protection from predators, affording a basking location by trapping the heat of the morning sun, and operating as a staging site from which they can depart for their feeding forays. The elevated humidity inside the tent also aids in molting.

Conversely, larvae do not feed within their webs. They emerge to forage, if it is not too cold, in the early morning, after dusk, or sometime near the middle of the afternoon. The developing larvae produce a fine thread of silk that is laid down wherever they crawl, and in a few days, well-defined pathways can be seen leading from the nest to various feeding sites in the tree. During this time, caterpillars continue to expand the tent until it is a foot or more in length, and they enter the last phase of their larval life.

During this time, the sixth-instar caterpillar conserves its silk for cocoon construction and adds nothing to the structure. Soon it will wander away from the nest in search of a protected area to spin a whitish-colored cocoon that will be about 1 inch long. The pupae may be found on tree trunks, fences, or buildings. Emerging about three weeks later, the adult moths are reddish-brown and have two whitish stripes running across each wing. Mating and egg laying usually occurs the same day that moths emerge from their cocoons, whereupon they will produce one generation per year that will overwinter, thus beginning the process again.

Fortunately, for gardeners, tent caterpillars are not the end of the world. With populations fluctuating from year to year, many homeowners see the unsightly tents and defoliation of their landscape trees as an eyesore. However, unless a tree is already suffering from other stresses, it should recover quickly with a new crop of vegetation. Furthermore, the loss of leaves can actually benefit smaller trees lower in the canopy by allowing them to receive more sunlight than usual. The plentiful caterpillars may also provide a feast for their predators and frass fertilizer for the forest floor.

*Continued on Page 10*



# KIDS CAN BECOME SUPERHEROES with Worm Farms

By Jennifer Ruscilli, Cherokee County Master Gardener

We care about planet Earth, eating healthier foods, and creating less garbage, but have you ever thought about composting by vermiculture? Vermiculture, the process of raising worms in a controlled environment, is a simple and great way for kids to be superheroes for the planet. Kids can easily become vermiculturists by creating a micro worm farm to provide healthier soil for our gardens, yards, and plants, while helping to recycle. Micro worm farms use a power house of a worm called the red wiggler (*Eisenia fetida*). These tough, hungry worms eat your ordinary organic food waste and paper waste, and then they turn all this waste into a nutrient-rich product called castings, or worm poop. We can then use this in our gardens, on our yards, in our flower beds, and in hanging plants and potted plants, giving us hardy vegetables, lawn fertilizer, and healthy plants.

The materials you need to set up a micro worm farm are simple and inexpensive. Basic supplies you need are a suitable container, bedding, worm food, and of course worms, with red wigglers being the worm of choice.

You probably already have a suitable container somewhere in your house. Popular worm bin containers include a plastic tub with a lid, such as those made by Rubbermaid or Sterilite. This bin will serve as the home for your worms. Your bin should be around 10 to 16 gallons and at least 10 inches deep. Use a drill or sharp nail and make many very small holes in the lid for air. You may also place a few holes right below the lid, on each side, around the bin. Plastic worm bins are perfect for indoor use — with temperatures between 55 and 75 degrees, NO direct sunlight, and no rain.

Next, you want to fill your worm bin with five inches of shredded newspaper. Ball up your newspaper, soak it, wring it out, fluff it, and add it to your bin. The bedding should feel moist, but not wet. If more than a few drops of water drip out after being squeezed, your bedding is too wet. Worm bedding needs to be moist for a couple of reasons. Your red wigglers breathe through their skin, and they can only do this when moist. Plus, moist bedding helps to break down their food particles. Fluffing the paper helps increase air flow, and the worms can crawl through it. Shredded cardboard can also be used, or mix the newspaper and cardboard. Then throw a handful of garden soil on top of the newspaper. Why garden soil? Worms use soil like we use our teeth, and it helps to grind up the food scraps you will feed them.

You are now ready to add red wigglers that you have either ordered online or bought from a local bait shop. Your worms should immediately start to “bed down” and will be completely covered by the bedding in 15 to 30 minutes, making themselves a new home. Let your worms get used to their new environment over the next few days.

After about a week, start adding food scraps. Gradually you will be able to give them a half pound of scraps daily (for 1000 worms). Worms can eat almost three times their body weight in one week! Give a ratio of **ONE GREEN** (nitrogen) scrap to **TWO BROWN** (carbon) scraps when feeding.

**GREEN** (nitrogen) scraps are food and vegetable scraps, fruit peels, coffee grounds, tea bags, grass clippings, plant stalks and flowers, stale/moldy bread.

**BROWN** (carbon) scraps are dried leaves, shredded newspaper, brown paper bags, toilet paper rolls, paper, crushed egg shells, cereal boxes, cotton, linen, or wool dryer lint.

**DO NOT FEED** meat, bones, oils (butter, dressings), dairy, citrus, onion, pet feces. Bury the scraps when feeding and spread some around when adding new bedding.

Enjoy being a vermiculturist, while helping the planet, gardens, yards, and plants. Watch a video about two men who created a business with the help of worms by pressing the CTRL key and clicking on this link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUy\\_4Ih7ahY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUy_4Ih7ahY). For any other questions about vermiculture, contact the Cherokee County Extension Office.

# LAWN TIPS

By Stephanie Howard,  
Cherokee County Master Gardener

Cool Season Grasses (Tall Fescue, Kentucky Bluegrass, Creeping Red Fescue, Chewing Fescue)	Warm Season Grasses (Bermuda, Centipede, Zoysia, St. Augustine)
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>For Established Lawns</i></p> <p>Continue using a pre-emergent through April. A spray post-emergent may be applied for pesky weeds.</p> <p>Aerate in April to encourage root growth and water infiltration.</p> <p>If needed, set your irrigation for 1 inch per week. Less frequent and deep watering encourages growth of a strong root system. Morning irrigation is optimal. Do not overwater, as April rains may contribute to turf needs. Consider using a rain gauge.</p> <p>Apply equal amounts of a fertilizer approved for cool season grasses during the months of September, November, February, and April.</p> <p>Inspect during April and May for fungal disease. These pathogens thrive in warm temperatures and moist conditions. Use an approved fungicide, if needed.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>For Established Lawns</i></p> <p>Continue using a pre-emergent through April. For persistent weeds, begin using post-emergent sprays in May after mowing at least twice.</p> <p>Aerate in May to encourage root growth and infiltration of water.</p> <p>Remember to adjust irrigation if April brings lots of showers. Too much water may allow fungal pathogens to thrive. Healthy turf needs about 1 inch of water per week. Morning irrigation is best.</p> <p>Apply fertilizer after the last frost once the lawn is 50% green. Most warm season grasses require 1 to 5 pounds of nitrogen per 1000 square feet. Take special care not to over-fertilize Centipede grass. <b>*See Link below.</b></p> <p>Inspect often for signs of fungal problems. Check edges for discolored, wilted, or spotted blades or dead areas with defined edges. Use an approved fungicide if needed.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>For Newly Installed Lawns</i></p> <p>The <i>best</i> time to install a cool season turf is in the fall before the first frost. It may also be planted in the spring after soil temperatures reach above 55°F.</p> <p><i>Shade-tolerant grasses</i> for cool season turfs include Fine Fescue (Red) grasses and Kentucky Bluegrass in partial shade.</p> <p>Mow newly installed lawns at least twice before application of a pre-emergent.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>For Newly Installed Lawns</i></p> <p>The best time to install warm season turf is late spring or early summer.</p> <p><i>Shade-tolerant</i> options for warm season turfs include Zoysia grasses (El Toro, JaMur, Zeon, and Zorro) or St. Augustine grasses (Palmetto, Mercedes, and Raleigh).</p> <p>Mow newly installed lawns at least twice before application of a pre-emergent.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>For All Lawns</i></p> <p>Check for webworms, cutworms and armyworms. Mature white grubs may be found near the surface. Newly-hatched grubs may be treated with an approved insecticide in late July or early August.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>For All Lawns</i></p> <p>Check for webworms, cutworms, armyworms and chinch bugs. Indications of webworm or cutworm infestations are spiderlike webs on the lawn that are visible in the morning. Armyworms leave patches of cut grass blades throughout the lawn. Treat with an insecticide approved for your specific turf.</p>

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

**\* Review specific requirements for your established lawn at:**

<http://caes2.caes.uga.edu/commodities/turfgrass/georgiaturf/index/index.html>



**DEATH TO BUGS...***Continued From Page 2*

4. Locate plants near a source of food. Anywhere outdoors in Georgia should provide a readily available buffet of insects. Do not feed them “people food,” such as hamburger.

By far the easiest “mini bog” for me is an ordinary container of plastic, clay, or ceramic, with or without a drainage hole. If using a pot with a drainage hole it should be kept in a tray or saucer of water to keep it moist. My preference is no drainage so I do not have to worry with keeping water in the saucer.

A word is needed about creating an in-ground bog. You can shovel out a hole in your garden in the desired sunny location and place a tub, pond liner, or even a child’s plastic wading pool in the hole. The larger pitcher plants require a soil depth of 12 to 16 inches. Use the same peat moss and sand mix, and fill the container with water. It will take a few hours for the water to be absorbed, and more water may be required. The mix should have the consistency of mud.

Spring would be the best time to start your pitcher plant bogs or to separate plants growing in crowded pots. These plants are very forgiving and can probably survive other planting seasons. I confess mine have been divided in summer and in fall with no problem. After planting your pitcher plants, consider placing live sphagnum moss around the plants to enhance the bog’s appearance. As for winter, most American pitcher plants will survive outside in our Zone 7. A light mulch of pine straw or leaves may be helpful.

Lastly, finding pitcher plants to bring home to grow can be a challenge. I have found them at home improvement stores, koi fish stores, and some nurseries. They will be gone fast so grab them when you see them. For others, shopping by mail order may be an option. **NEVER** collect pitcher plants in the wild. Best yet, find a “bog buddy” who will share some starter plants. I promise these plants will please and entertain.

Please sign up for the Master Gardener seminar on bog plants, April 28, at the Cherokee County Senior Center.

**THE CUTTING GARDEN...***Continued from page 3*

This subdivision of space will make maintenance much simpler. Fertilizing, irrigating, dividing, deadheading, and cutting plants with similar needs will make your gardening life easier. In order to keep your garden blooming, stay on top of all these activities. In a small cutting garden space, you may prefer to plant larger bloomers behind smaller ornamentals, or feature them in perennial beds. Doing so may allow you to maximize space in the actual cutting garden.

Your floral arrangements would not be complete without filler & foliage plants that add sparkle to your creations and help anchor your arrangements. Examples include: yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), green love-lives-bleeding (*Amaranthus* ‘Emerald Tassels’), artemisia (*Artemisia stelleriana* ‘Boughton Silver’), hostas, and Japanese painted fern (*Athyrium niponicum* ‘Pictum’). **NOTE:** some are perennials and some annuals.

Your cutting garden should inspire! It should not be overtaxing. Start from seed under a grow light in the winter or purchase transplants in season. It is your choice! Have fun with design—there are no fixed rules!

Thomas, Paul A. “Flowering Annuals for Georgia Gardens”. UGA Extension Bulletin 954.  
Thomas, Paul A. “Flowering Perennials for Georgia Gardens”. UGA Extension Bulletin 977.  
McIntire, Suzanne. “An American Cutting Garden”. University of Virginia Press. 2002.  
Newbery, Georgie. “The Flower Farmer’s Year”. Green Books. Cambridge, England. 2014  
LaLiberte, Kathy. “Feed Your Soul: Plant a Cutting Garden”. <https://www.gardeners.com>. 2/2/18.

**Note:** I have listed only a few examples of plants in each category. To learn more about installing your own cutting garden sign up for the Cutting Garden Seminar on April 7, 2018 at the Hickory Flat Library.

## 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 crowded clumps; and dig up and divide them after the tops have died back. Note where you want to add color for next spring. [http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/B%20918\\_3.PDF](http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/B%20918_3.PDF)
- 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://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/B%20918\\_3.PDF](http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/B%20918_3.PDF)
- 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/files/pdf/C%20976\\_2.PDF](http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/C%20976_2.PDF)
- 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://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/B%201271\\_5.PDF](http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/B%201271_5.PDF)
- 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](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://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/B%20807\\_2.PDF](http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/B%20807_2.PDF)
- 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 that are planted earlier will just sit there and not grow, or they will 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 to 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 and 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://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/C%201001\\_2.PDF](http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/C%201001_2.PDF)
- 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://blog.extension.uga.edu/bulloch/2015/04/what-is-this-strange-growth-on-azalea-leaves/>

## 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/files/pdf/C%20883\\_4.PDF](http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/C%20883_4.PDF)
- 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://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/C%20905\\_3.PDF](http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/C%20905_3.PDF)
- 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

## APRIL/MAY MISCELLANEOUS

- 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, and apply varnish to make the marks last longer.
- Trap 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/files/pdf/B%201074\\_6.PDF](http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/B%201074_6.PDF)
- 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 of 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 17	Feb 17	YTD	Jan 17	Feb 17	YTD
<b>Actual</b>	2.4	7.2	9.6	2.9	4.8	7.7
<b>Normal</b>	6.0	5.0	11.0	4.1	4.5	8.6
<b>Excess</b>	-3.6	2.2	-1.4	-1.2	0.3	-0.9

# Recipes

Send recipes to Pat Bowen at [woodsgal1007@gmail.com](mailto:woodsgal1007@gmail.com)

## Ribs and Kraut

My Eastern European grandmas would have loved this one. It's a great melt in your mouth supper on a rainy April day. Easy to put together, but it cooks for hours so you have to hang around the house while it's in the oven. I've tried making it in the crock pot, but it just isn't the same.

The proportions are up to you, based on what you and your family enjoys most. Put in as much or as little of the ingredients as you like.

Cut ribs into serving size pieces and sear lightly in oiled deep ovenproof pan. Pour a cup of broth over the ribs and cover. Bake at 300 degrees for two hours, checking every half hour or so to be sure there's enough broth in the pan.

Carefully remove the pan from the oven and tuck the other ingredients under and around the ribs. Add more broth if needed. Cover again and bake another hour or more, until potatoes are soft.

Serve in bowls with pan juices. Put mustard and horseradish on the side to spice it up, dip bread in the juices, and enjoy. Leftovers, if you have any, are even more tasty.

Meaty boneless pork ribs	Your favorite mustard and
Bagged or canned sauerkraut, drained	horseradish
Chicken broth	Bread for dipping
Peeled and quartered potatoes	
Peeled and quartered onions	

## Pesky Invaders...continued from page 4

If blight is still a concern, prevention and early control are important. Removal and destruction of the egg masses from trees during winter greatly reduces the problem next spring. Small tents can be removed and destroyed by hand, with the best time being around dusk or early morning when most of the larvae are home. Larger tents may be pruned out or removed by winding the nest upon the end of a stick. Burning the tents with a torch is not recommended, since this can easily damage the tree. However, the good news is that natural enemies play an important role in reducing Eastern tent caterpillar numbers in most years, leaving most homeowners to enjoy the beauty and shade of their ornamentals.

## References

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Howell, J. (2015, November 30). Eastern Tent Caterpillar. Retrieved February 20, 2018, from <https://ugaurbanag.com/eastern-tent-caterpillar/>

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