Calendar of Events

October

Oct 3 and 17 - Demo Garden Workday, Senior Center, 10am

Oct 15 – CCMG Monthly Meeting

Oct 19 - Lecture-Trees & Shrubs, Selecting & Planting, Rose Creek Library, 10:30am

Oct 19 - GMGA Conference, Macon, online registration

November

Nov 7 and 21 - Demo Garden Workday, Senior Center, 10am

Nov 19 - CCMG Monthly Meeting

Photo *Agarista populifolia* courtesy Marcia Winchester

Several years ago some friends and I were visiting a garden. During the tour, as we turned a corner, one of them announced, "And this is the dark side." He didn't mean that it was shady. We were looking at a discarded toilet and some other hidden items.

Some gardeners are very neat and tidy, and their gardens reflect this quality. My garden isn't like that. My "dark side" is under my deck, where I pot up plants to donate to different plant sales. Most weekends I'm digging, dividing, and potting plants. That means I have stacks of empty pots, planted pots, buckets, bags of soil and amendments, and shelving units.

At one point my neighbor had tall Leyland cypress trees that blocked their view of my "dark side." Once they were removed, I felt I had to hide my work area. I dug out six Japanese azaleas that had topped out at 6 feet tall. I replaced them with two Florida leucothoe (*Agarista populifolia*). I love this plant. It gets 8 to 12 feet tall and 8 to 12 feet wide. It is evergreen with long arching branches. The new leaves are unique with a soft bronze-green color. It has tons of small white flowers in May and loves shade and even moisture. My herds of deer don't bother it, which is another plus in my garden. If 8 to 12 feet is too big for you, there are dwarf cultivars.

Fall is a great time to plant trees and shrubs. If you'd like more information on this topic, sign up at the Extension Office for our class on "Tree and Shrub Selection and Planting" at the Rose Creek library on October 19 at 10:30 a.m.

Marcia

In This Issue

Photo Rome Beauty Apple, courtesy https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org

It's Apple Time!

By Mike Lloyd, Cherokee County Master Gardener

It's apple time again! Late summer and fall mark apple harvest season. This is one of my favorite times of year. We are fortunate to be so close to Georgia's apple growing region, mostly in and around Ellijay in Gilmer County—a short drive north of Canton. The many local apple growers in that area not only sell apples in their "apple houses" but also allow visitors to pick their own in their nearby orchards. This is both a fun way to enjoy the outdoors and to give our kids (and the "kid" in each of us) an experience in the joy of picking our own "special" delicious apples.

Apple trees are native to Central Asia and have been grown for thousands of years both in Asia and Europe. In the biblical story of Adam and Eve, some have imagined the apple to be the "fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil." Although eating it may have contributed to our expulsion from the Garden of Eden, we have enjoyed the taste of this fruit ever since.

Apples were introduced to North America by the European colonists in the 17th century. William Blaxton (aka Blackstone), the first European settler of Boston, established a farm and the first American apple orchard there. Later, John Chapman, better known as "Johnny Appleseed," widely introduced apple trees to Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, West Virginia, and Ontario, Canada. Chapman was a professional orchardist and nurseryman. Despite popular lore, he didn't just scatter apple seeds randomly; instead, he established entire apple nurseries in order to establish legal land ownership. After planting these orchards, he let them grow for a while and then sold them to new settlers for profit. The small, tart apples that grew from seed in his orchards were mostly destined for distilleries. Regardless of his motivation, he helped establish many apple orchards in our budding country.

With time, apples were planted on nearly every farm as the settlers made their way westward. Although most of the early varieties would be considered poor quality today, some of these apples were very good for eating and cooking. Today, most of us are familiar with only a few types of apples since only 10 varieties comprise over 90 percent of the crop. These include such apples as McIntosh, Delicious, Rome, Fuji, Gala, and Honeycrisp. The sheer number of apple varieties that exist today (about 8,000) gives us a rich diversity of apples; some are tart, some sweet; some good for cooking, some for fresh eating; some grow best in cool areas, some grow in warm areas; some are more resistant to diseases; etc.

Photo courtesy UGA.

Apple trees are generally not grown from seed; instead, they are grown by grafting the desirable variety onto a standard apple tree root stock. The apples that grow above the graft are uniform and true, and the root stock allows the nurseryman to control the height of the resulting tree. We are lucky to have a local nurseryman living in our community who has made significant contributions to preserving this rich apple heritage. Jim Lawson, now retired, has spent much of his career locating, identifying, and grafting Southern varieties of apples. Jim is retired now, but in his heyday he could bench graft a thousand trees in a single day—this is an amazing feat, as you'll know if you've ever tried to graft an apple tree.

So, when you take that first flavor-filled bite into your favorite apple this fall, remember that it has come a long way, over thousands of years, and through many hands to make it taste so delicious.

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References:

- Vermont Tree Fruit Growers Association http://www.vermontapples.org/all-about-apples/a-brief-history-of-apples.
- American Orchard https://americanorchard.wordpress.com/tag/william-blaxton.
- "10 things you didn't know about Johnny Appleseed" https://www.mnn.com/leaderboard/stories/10-things-you-didnt-know-about-johnny-appleseed.
- "Visiting Jim Lawson, the Paul Bunyan of Bench Grafting" https://elizapples.com/2015/04/27/visiting-jim-lawson-the-paul-bunyan-of-bench-grafting.

Pumpkins: A Fun Fall Favorite

By Barb Schirmer, Cherokee County Master Gardener

One of my favorite activities in the fall is to visit the local pumpkin patch with my granddaughter in search of the perfect pumpkin to carve for Halloween and to pick up a few pie pumpkins for Thanksgiving. In the United States, pumpkins go hand in hand with these fall holidays, and children, young and old, love the fall traditions that involve pumpkins.

References to pumpkins date back many centuries. The name pumpkin originated from the Greek word for "large melon" which is "pepon." Seeds from related plants have been found in Mexico dating back to 7000 to 5500 BC. Native Americans used pumpkin as a staple in their diets centuries before the Pilgrims landed. They also dried strips of pumpkin and wove them into mats. Native Americans would also roast long strips of pumpkin on the open fire and eat them. When white settlers arrived, they saw the pumpkins grown by the natives, and pumpkin soon became a staple in their diets. As today, early settlers used them in a wide variety of recipes, from desserts to stews and soups. The origin of pumpkin pie is thought to have occurred when the colonists sliced off the pumpkin top, removed the seeds, and then filled it with milk, spices and honey. The pumpkin was then baked in the hot ashes of a dying fire.

The tradition of carving faces into vegetables dates to the Celts. As part of their autumnal celebration, they wanted to light the way to their homes for the good spirits, so they carved faces into vegetables such as turnips and squash. These carved vegetables were eventually called "Jack O'Lanterns" by the Irish who told a legend about a farmer named Jack who made a bargain with the devil that left him wandering the earth for all time. We credit the Irish for bringing this custom to the United States.

Cleaning the pumpkin seeds out of the middle of the pumpkin is one of the first steps in carving a jack-o-lantern. I will admit that I have been guilty of throwing away the pumpkin seeds from my carving and baking pumpkins. But no more! Once you discover how easy it is to roast pumpkin seeds, you will never toss those seeds again.

It's a fun project for kids in the kitchen, and pumpkin seeds are a healthy snack alternative.

- To clean pumpkin seeds the easy way, start by removing any large pieces of pumpkin guts/pulp from the seeds. Place the seeds in a large bowl and run cool water over them until the bowl is full of water. Use your hands to separate the remaining pumpkin guts from the seeds.
- Next, set aside some seeds for the following year for planting, and then boil the rest for ten minutes with about 1½ teaspoons of sea salt. (This step is optional but makes for a more flavorful salt-infused taste.)
- Strain the seeds.
- In a bowl, drizzle the seeds with olive oil, and sprinkle with sea salt to taste. I use 2 teaspoons olive oil and a generous ¼ teaspoon of sea salt for 1 cup of seeds. You can also add any other desired seasonings, such as black pepper, garlic salt, parmesan cheese, maple syrup or cinnamon.
- Spread them in a single layer on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper to keep them from sticking, and bake at 275 degrees for 30 to 40 minutes. You want them to be a nice and golden brown. Stir the pumpkin seeds every 15 minutes to help them cook evenly.
- Cool, then shell and eat, or pack in air-tight containers or zip closure bags and refrigerate until ready to eat.

Resource:
Pumpkins and More, University of Illinois Extension. https://web.extension.illinois.edu/pumpkins/

Shrubs and Trees to Feed Our Feathered Friends

By Carolyn Puckett, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Photo American beautyberry, *Callicarpa americana* courtesy UGA.

Do you enjoy watching the birds at your feeders in winter? You can lend additional help to our feathered friends by planting native shrubs and trees to provide food and shelter—and the plants are also pretty! The plants described below will grow in full sun to part shade. For pictures and a more-detailed description, visit the Missouri Botanical Garden website: https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/plantfinder/plantfindersearch.aspx.

Native viburnums are a great pick as they provide flowers in the spring, colorful foliage in the fall, and berries for fall and winter. Most viburnum species will produce more berries if you plant at least two of different provenance.

Photo *Viburnum nudum*, courtesy Alan Cressler, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.

Smooth withered or possomhaw (*Viburnum nudum*) has aromatic white flowers in spring. As the berries ripen, they change from light pink to dark pink to blue and then purple. The leaves turn red and burgundy in the fall. Compact cultivars include 'Winterthur' and 'Brandywine'.

Photo *Viburnum dentatum*, courtesy S. Brundage, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.

Arrowwood viburnum (*V. dentatum*), which Native Americans sometimes used to create arrow shafts, has lacy clusters of white flowers, blue fruit, and autumn color. Cultivars include 'Blue Muffin', 'Autumn Jazz', 'Morton', and 'Chicago Lustre'.

If you have dry shade, the native mapleleaf viburnum (*V. acerifolium*) is a good choice. It also has clusters of white spring flowers, followed in the summer by blue-black berries that birds love, and attractive fall color.

Rusty blackhaw viburnum (*V. rufidulum*), which can be grown as a shrub or a small tree, has lustrous leaves, 5-inch flower clusters, blue-black fruit, and purple fall color.

The hollies (*Ilex* spp.) are also a great genus to feed our birds. You will need at least one male of a species for the related females to make berries. If you have room, the evergreen American holly (*I. opaca*) will provide shelter to the birds as well as berries. The yaupon holly (*I. vomitoria*—what a name!) is another evergreen choice. Many people are unaware of the lovely native deciduous winterberry holly (*Ilex verticillata*). Because it drops its leaves in the fall, the masses of red berries really stand out—until the birds eat them in late winter.

Photo *Ilex opaca*, courtesy Wasowski, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.

The flowers of American beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*) are not particularly showy, but the bright purple berries in clusters all along the fall stems will delight you as well as your birds. It is a host plant for the rustic phinx caterpillar (*Manduca rustica*).

While our native dogwood tree (*Cornus florida*) is in decline from fungal diseases, two other native dogwoods have high wildlife value. Silky dogwood (*C. amomum*) and gray dogwood (*C. racemosa*) are adaptable shrubs with lacy spring flower heads and fall berries and color.

If you are selecting trees for your property, consider the serviceberry (*Amelanchier* spp.) and the blackgum (*Nyssa sylvatica*). These trees will provide excellent nectar for the bees as well as nutritious berries for the birds. The serviceberry, sometimes called Juneberry because of its early fruits, is covered in early spring flowers. Its berries are edible by humans, but it is unlikely you will get to the fruit before the birds do! The blackgum's flowers and berries are not showy, but bees make yummy honey from the flowers, and the leaves turn a spectacular scarlet and orange in early fall.

Oak trees (*Quercus* spp.) play a surprising role in helping our birds. Even birds that normally eat grains feed insects to their nestlings because of the high protein value. A single nest of chickadees requires over 6,000 caterpillars! Oaks support over 500 kinds of caterpillars, which in turn support the baby birds.

There are many more native plants that will help our birds. You can find a more extensive list in "Attracting Birds to Your Backyard" at https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C976&title=Attracting%20Birds%20to%20Your%20Backyard.

(Continued on page 5)

Fall Bloomer: The Georgia Aster

By Mary Schuster, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Photo *Symphyotrichum georgianum* courtesy https://botgarden.uga.edu

Both cultivating and enjoying the scenic beauty of the fall-blooming aster is something to look forward to each autumn. Asters resemble delicate daisies in shades of white, blue and purple. In North America, many asters reside in the genus *Symphyotrichum*. Asters are perennial plants, and when not in bloom, they may appear to be merely weeds as their leaves can be rough in texture and small in size. However, when they are in bloom they put on a real show! Although numerous species and varieties exist in our region, this article will concentrate on an aster that is native to Georgia, *Symphyotrichum georgianum*, commonly known as Georgia aster.

The Georgia aster is large, topping out at 1 to 5 feet tall with flower heads 2 to 2¾ inches across characterized by dark purple rays that encircle white to maroon disk flowers. Blooming lasts from early October to mid-November. The Georgia aster requires open, prairie-like areas in acidic soil (with pH of 6.0 to 6.5) and in soil ranging from sand to heavy clay. They do best in sunny locations.

Georgia asters can be found in 15 counties of Georgia*, as well as in certain counties of Alabama, South Carolina and North Carolina. It used to reside in Florida but is now extinct in that state. The population of this particular native plant in this defined region has dwindled from 146 populations down to 118. In 1999 the Georgia aster was considered for inclusion on the federal endangered species list; it is now on the Georgia Protected Plant list. It is believed, although not documented, that herbicides, highway construction, fire suppression as well as residential and industrial development have changed the landscape where these asters previously thrived.

If you are interested in growing the Georgia aster, check with nurseries that specialize in native plants, and then follow these simple steps to ensure a beautiful display:

- Provide an opportunity for good drainage.
- Maintain pH (as mentioned above) of 6.0 to 6.5.
- Plant seed or established plants in the fall or early spring.
- Irrigate as needed without relying on normal rainfall.
- Provide mulch such as pine bark, pine straw or wood chips.
- Provide simple wire, plastic or bamboo stakes as many plants may become top-heavy and require support.

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*Of particular note for readers, Cherokee County is not included on the list of 15 counties in Georgia where the Georgia aster is found. However, it is present in the contiguous counties bordering the east, west and south of Cherokee County. This plant is likely present in outlying, less congested areas of this county as a spontaneously growing plant. For instance, it has been verified to be present at Red Top Mountain State Park.

(Continued from page 4)

For more information on shrubs and trees to feed our feathered friends:

Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resource Division: "Plants that Attract Georgia Wildlife" at https://georgiawildlife.com/planting-flowers-yourself-and-birds.

Photo courtesy http://georgiacultivars.com

Seeding and Maintaining Fescue Lawns

By Ronald Fister, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Fescue turf is enjoyed by many in the Atlanta area nine out of twelve months. It performs best during the cooler months when it provides a beautiful green color to complement the landscape. In addition to the soothing green color, fescue survives with fewer sunlight hours than bermudagrass. Deciduous trees and shrubs shed their leaves in October, and thus create adequate sunlight on this turf during fall and winter. This means, you will appreciate the value of fescue from Thanksgiving holidays through the Christmas and Hanukkah season and into the New Year. Try that with bermudagrass!

Getting fescue to grow is not difficult if you follow the simple steps below. (Refer to UGA Bulletin 773 "Lawns in Georgia" for additional details.)

1. Do not start plant seed until September 20, which is when daytime sun has decreased sufficiently to allow for cooler temperatures. Specifically, sow the seed when the lowest nighttime temperature added to the highest daytime temperature does not exceed 150. For example, if the daytime high temperature is 90 degrees and the low nighttime temperature is 70 degrees (for a total of 160), then it is too hot to sow the seed. This high temperature will cause the seed to dampen off, and the turf will die. This causal disease is Pythium, caused by a soil borne fungi. In other words … wait.

2. Before planting any seed, test the soil by submitting a soil sample to the Cherokee County Extension Service. Be sure to state that you want to grow fescue, and include your email on the soil sample bag. The results and recommendations for soil amendment will be sent to you via email for review. (Refer to UGA circular 896 for soil sampling procedures.)

Photo courtesy https://extension.uga.edu

3. To establish an adequate root system for the turf to survive the summers, plant before November 1. After that date, it is anybody's guess how much of the turf will survive next year, due to poor root systems.

4. Chose a high quality two- or three-way blend of fescue seed (with more than one variety in the mixture). High-quality blends may cost more, but they are better for drought- and disease-resistance and cut appearance. Unless you are planting a pasture, do not plant Kentucky 31fescue. Fescue seed is sold in 10-, 25-, and 50-pound bags at most garden centers or major box stores. Plant only pure fescue seed with no ryegrass in the mixture; ryegrass will not survive beyond spring.

5. Follow the rates below for the proper quantity of seeds per 1,000 square feet. Increasing the rates encourages diseases and reduces airflow around the plants. Fescue is a clump grass, and it spreads from the base. As new seeds emerge, they may appear thin, but in weeks the grass thickens into healthy turf.

- Bare ground: 8 pounds per 1,000 square feet.
- Annual over-seeding of thin fescue: 5 to 6 pounds per 1,000 square feet.

6. Seeds must contact loose soil to germinate properly, so aerate or lightly till the soil before applying the seed. Sowing the seed on a hard surface will not produce adequate germination, and roots will not anchor to the soil.

7. After sowing, lightly water the surface in early morning and late afternoon for five to seven days. Fescue will germinate in five days if it receives this daily light watering. After germination, when the surface is green from the freshly germinated seeds, lightly water only once a day for the next three days. And of course if it rains, modify your manual watering accordingly.

8. Mow three weeks after germination at the height of 2 inches, and continue to mow at that height through March. Beginning in April, increase the height to 2.5 to 3 inches.

9. In February, spread 15 to 20 pounds of commercial fertilizer (10-10-10) per 1,000 square feet to provide adequate nutrition for spring growth. To minimize diseases do not apply nitrogen after June.

10. To avoid summer grassy weeds and some broadleaf weeds, apply a pre-emergent herbicide in February. For broadleaf weeds, apply post-emergent herbicide after reading the label carefully.

Incorporating Deer-Resistant Containers In an Established Garden

By Stephanie Howard, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Photo courtesy https://newswire.caes.uga.edu

I absolutely love to garden, but I have a particular problem common to many living in Cherokee County: deer! Foul-smelling deer repellents offered little relief, so my husband resorted to covering the beds with bird netting. This was not a practical solution, as I hated the appearance of two-thirds of my garden space under expanses of black netting.

After removing the nets and covers, I literally spent the last several years redesigning my beds with deer-resistant plantings. It helped, but the deer still nibbled from time to time. I created a courtyard Serenity Garden for hydrangeas, hostas, ferns, and other shade-tolerant perennials to thrive. We fenced the back and side yards, but the deer often jumped it to get to the azaleas, roses, daylilies, and other perennials that we transplanted there. A double fence provides better protection for the beds by keeping deer out. However, just when we thought we solved the deer problem, age crept up on us.

As we age, we start looking for ways to streamline our gardening duties and minimize our efforts as our strength and stamina decline, without diminishing the beauty to which we are accustomed. Every few years, renovating the beds meant digging out roots, amending the soil, and replanting the space. A fashionable option to consider is container gardening which involves minimal digging, bending, dragging hoses, and pruning! As we removed overgrown plantings, we began filling the spaces with containers. Container plantings help add depth, height, and scale to the garden spaces, and these plantings frame our home by creating more dimension.

Your garden is your personal outdoor living space. Create a single theme design, or divide the space into rooms—each with a different purpose or theme. Each vignette has a special meaning, and you should take particular care in selecting the plantings and materials. Without careful planning, a planted container is tantamount to a plate for deer. Their entire meal is available for them in one stop—no browsing needed.

Garden design is an art. Plant choice is personal, and combinations from lists of deer-resistant plants will give you many options. Once you select the planter, choose plantings based on size, theme, color, texture, location, and season. We know that a properly planted container usually consists of three components: fillers, thrillers, and spillers.

For example, container plantings in an established bed with a tropical theme may include thriller plants such as elephant ear (*Colocasia/Alocasia*), bird of paradise (*Strelitzia reginae*), *Canna* spp., peony (*Paeonia* spp.) or a banana (*Musa* spp.). Fillers such as *Lantana* spp., *Pentas* spp., *Caladium* spp., or *Ixora coccinea* 'Maui Red' or 'Maui Yellow' add splashes of color. Ostrich fern (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*) or marginal shield fern (*Dryopteris marginalis*), boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*), or fringe flower (*Loropetalum chinense*) are fillers which add structure. Consider creeping Jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*), ivy (*Hedera helix* 'Variegata'), Chilean jasmine (*Mandevilla laxa*) or *Bougainvillea glabra* for spillers.

If you are using perennials, do not overplant the container. Root systems of various plants will compete for space and nutrients if too many plants are sharing the container. Use materials sparingly to allow the plants to thrive and mature. If you choose to use annuals, plant the container more densely with seasonal materials.

I prefer to feature evergreen shrubs or ornamentals in most of my planters. Perennials, chosen for foliage interest or flower size and color, fill most of the remaining space. I use annuals sparingly for seasonal color; by using this strategy I avoid starting from scratch every year.

Consider irrigation, light, and fertilizer needs, as well as pH needs when designing a container planting. Every plant in the container has to be happy to thrive. So plant materials with common needs together. Keep in mind that "Deer Resistant" does not mean "Deer Proof," so it may be necessary to apply a repellent occasionally.

Deer are grazers and nibble on any plant when they are hungry. This is just an approach to encourage the deer to change their path. Remember, we encroached into their habitat. So be patient and have fun as you find creative plant combinations that work for your space!

For a comprehensive list of Deer-Resistant plants suitable for containers, please visit our website https://cherokeemastergardenersinc.wildapricot.org/.

OCTOBER Gardening Tips

Ornamentals

- October is the best month to plant fall annual beds. It is cooler for the transplants and gives their roots time to become established before winter cold hits. Try mixing dwarf snapdragons with pansies for color, and parsley, kale, mustard, and Swiss chard for background color. Make sure your beds have good drainage. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%201359_2.PDF
- Plant love-in-a-mist, poppy, bachelor buttons and larkspur seed now for early spring annuals.
- If climbing roses are in an exposed location, tie them up firmly with broad strips of rags or padded foam tape so the wind will not whip them against the trellis and bruise the bark.
- Don't prune roses this late as new growth would become subject to winter injury. The rose garden should be raked and cleaned, removing all fallen leaves and mulch to prevent black spot and other diseases next year. Replace mulch after the ground has frozen. Continue spraying for fungus.
- Clean up around perennial flowers, such as peonies. If left on the ground, leaves and stems can harbor diseases and provide convenient places for pests to spend the winter.
- Cut down stems and foliage of herbaceous perennials when the leaves begin to brown. Leave 3 inches of stem to ID the plant's location.
- October and November are generally considered the best months to plant trees and shrubs. Garden centers and nurseries usually stock a good selection of woody plants now. Select some accent plants for your landscape that will provide autumn colors. Trees that turn red include chokeberry, dogwood, red maple, red or scarlet oak and sourwood. Shrubs with spectacular fall foliage include viburnum, fothergilla, hydrangea, blueberries, Itea and Amsonia. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%20900_5.PDF

Acer leucoderme,
photo by Marcia Winchester

- Plant trees at least 6 feet away from sidewalks, concrete pools, and driveways so growing roots do not crack the concrete. Trees that get quite large need to be placed even further away from concrete.
- Small imperfections, such as nicks and loose skin, should not affect the quality of most bulbs. Store bulbs in a cool area (below 65° F). Do not plant before Nov. 1. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%20918_3.PDF

Fruits and Vegetables

- Tomatoes need an average daily temperature of 65°F or more for ripening. If daytime temperatures consistently are below this, pick fruits that have begun to change color and bring them inside to ripen. Use recipes that require green tomatoes or place a ripe apple in a closed container with green tomatoes to encourage the tomatoes to turn red. Ripe apples give off ethylene gas which causes tomatoes to ripen.
- Cure pumpkins, butternut, and Hubbard squash at temperatures between 70-80° F for two to three weeks immediately after harvest. After curing, store them in a dry place at 55- 60° F. If stored at 50° F or below, pumpkins and squash are subject to damage by chilling. At temperatures above 60° F, they gradually lose moisture and become stringy. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%20993_4.PDF
- A final weeding of your strawberries, blueberries, or raspberries will help keep weed problems down to a minimum. Strawberries covered in the fall with a spunbonded polyester material and uncovered in the spring just before bloom produced up to 60% more fruit than plants given the conventional straw or hay mulch cover.
- Make a note of any particularly unsatisfactory or productive varieties or crops. Such information can be very useful during garden-planning time in the spring.
- Clean up home orchard and small-fruit plantings. Sanitation is essential for good maintenance. Dried fruits or mummies carry disease organisms through the winter that will attack next year's crop.
- If there is a threat of frost at night, harvest your cucumber, eggplant, melon, okra, pepper, and summer squash so the fruits are not damaged by the frost.
- Hot peppers store well dry. Pull plants and hang them up, or pick the peppers and thread on a string. Store in a cool, dry place.

Miscellaneous

- Do not apply quick-acting fertilizers while tilling the soil in the fall; nitrogen will leach away before spring. Materials that release nutrients slowly into the soil, such as rock phosphate or lime, can be worked into the soil in the fall.
- When removing disease-infected plant parts/debris, do not place refuse on the compost pile. The disease pathogens will live in the compost pile and can be transmitted with the application of compost to other garden beds, unless compost temperatures reach above 180° F and decomposition is complete. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%20816_4.PDF
- Kudzu, poison ivy and other weedy vines are more susceptible to chemical control this time of year. Be sure to follow the directions, and protect other plants from drift of the spray. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%20867-10_4.PDF

NOVEMBER Gardening Tips

Ornamentals

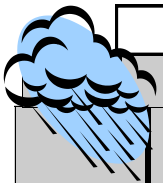
- Protect the roots of azaleas and rhododendrons with a heavy mulch of organic materials (i.e. oak leaves, wood chips, or pine straw) http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/B%20670_5.PDF
- For best growth, plant spring bulbs where they are out of the direct sun during the middle of the day. Bulbs have a chilling requirement that is satisfied by winter soil temperatures, so avoid planting bulbs near heated basements where the soil may not stay adequately cold. Do not plant bulbs before November 1.
- Watch for standing water in perennial beds after long periods of rain. Water that collects on the surface during winter will freeze and can damage perennials. Dig shallow trenches to help drain excess water away. Make a note to raise that bed in spring or plant with plants that like "wet feet".
- When placing plants around the home, remember as a general rule, plants with thick leaves can take lower light levels than those with thin leaves.
- If there is any evidence of scale on trees and shrubs, spray with dormant oil in late fall and again in early spring. Follow label directions.
- Avoid transplanting shrubs and trees on windy days; the roots can be exposed to too much light or drying winds, putting undue stress on the plant.
- Peonies that don't require a long cold winter perform better in the South. They can be planted now in full sun and fertile, well-drained soil that is rich in organic matter. Dig holes 18" and fill halfway with a mixture of soil, compost, and a handful of 5-10-10 fertilizer. Add a few more inches of soil and set the tubers so the buds are 1-2" below the soil surface. Backfill, firm the soil, and water thoroughly. Peonies do not grow well after being moved and will not bloom for several years.

Fruits and Vegetables

- Remove grass and weeds from trunks of fruit trees and grapes to prevent damage by mice and rodents. Leave a bare circle (one foot wide) around tree trunks when spreading mulch to keep mice from feeding on the bark. A collar or fence of poultry wire or a commercial tree guard approximately 18 inches high will deter rodents and rabbits.
- Plant lettuce and hardy vegetables, such as beets, cabbage, and spinach, in cold frames for winter or early spring crops. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%20910_4.PDF
- If you use aged manure as a soil conditioner, apply it now and till it under; it can be a source of weed seed.
- Rough plow or spade garden plots containing heavy, clay soil. Add organic matter and lime if indicated by a soil test. Leave the soil rough. Winter's thawing and freezing will break up the clods and kill some of the insects and slugs overwintering in the soil. A rough soil surface also catches more moisture and reduces erosion.
- When time or weather conditions prohibit plowing or cover cropping, you may let your garden lie under a mulch of compost, non-diseased plant wastes, or leaves all winter to be plowed/tilled under in the spring. If using heavy organic matter, chop fine enough so it can break down over the winter.
- Store pesticides in a frost-free location away from food and out of the reach of children. If a pesticide is in a paper container, put the whole package in a plastic container and seal it. Be sure that all bottles and cans are tightly sealed and well labeled. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%20998_3.PDF

Miscellaneous

- Keep an eye out for spider mites on your houseplants; they thrive in dry air. At the first sign of any insect infestation, isolate your plant. Several thorough washings with plain water may bring them under control. If not, apply an appropriate insecticide and follow the instructions on the label. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%201074_7.PDF
- During the cooler temperatures and shorter days of winter, the growth of most houseplants slows. Unless plants are grown under an artificial light source that is left on 16 hours per day, new growth will be minimal until spring. Reduce fertilization and water until late April or May when new growth resumes. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%201318_4.PDF
- African violets do well when potted in small pots. A good general rule is to use a pot one-third the diameter of the plant. To humidify African violets, surround the pot with moist peat contained in a second pot. http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/C%20660_2.PDF
- If you plan to lay newspapers as mulch in the spring, glue them end to end this winter and store them as rolls. The paper mulch unrolls easily and won't be lifted by wind before anchoring.



Rainfall Comparisons

	Cherokee County			State Wide		
	July 19	Aug 19	YTD	July 19	Aug 19	YTD
Actual	5.1	3.3	40.8	2.7	5.1	30.9
Normal	4.7	4.8	38.9	4.9	3.8	33.0
Deviation	+0.4	-1.5	+1.9	-2.2	+1.3	-2.1

Recipes

Send recipes to Pat Bowen at woodsgal1007@gmail.com

Tomato and Chorizo Stew

Dinner in minutes! Serve this tasty stew to family or add it to your potluck repertoire. You can add leftover veggies to it, or handfuls of fresh spinach, just before it's done. Garnish with parsley or some sautéed shrimp, and serve with crusty bread on the side.

Ingredients:
1 medium onion, sliced
7 oz dry cured chorizo (find it unrefrigerated, usually near the deli in your market)
2 cloves garlic
14 oz can chick peas, drained
1 tbsp olive oil
½ tsp thyme or oregano
½ tsp crushed red pepper
14 oz can fire-roasted diced tomatoes
1 bouillon cube (any kind)
1½ cups water
1 tsp sugar
1 tsp vinegar (any kind)
black pepper to taste

Slice the chorizo onto thin moons and sauté it in olive oil with the onion and garlic until the onion is soft. Add the tomatoes and spices and stir one minute. Add the water and the bouillon cube and bring to a boil. Then add the chick peas and cook for 15 minutes, until the liquids are slightly reduced. If you're adding other veggies, now is the time. Finally, add the sugar, vinegar and pepper. Stir, pour into bowls, garnish, and serve hot.

Makes around 5 cups.

Baked Oatmeal

This is a great make-ahead breakfast the kids, grandkids and grown-ups will love on cool mornings. You can prepare it the night before and pop it in the oven before everyone else wakes up.

Ingredients:
1 stick softened butter
¼ cup white sugar
½ cup brown sugar
2 eggs
1 cup milk
1 tsp cinnamon
½ tsp salt
1 tbsp baking powder
3 cups regular or quick oats
½ cup fresh or frozen blueberries
1 peach, frozen or fresh, chopped
1 tbsp vanilla

Beat together the butter and sugars. Mix in other ingredients except fruit, and beat well. Then add fruit and pour into 8-inch greased pan. Cover and refrigerate overnight, or bake right away. Preheat oven to 350 and bake uncovered for 45 minutes, or until oatmeal is firm. Serve hot with milk and/or honey or maple syrup on top. Leftovers can be refrigerated and reheated.

Serves 4-6

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UGA extension
CHEROKEE COUNTY

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https://cherokeemastergardenersinc.wildapricot.org/

Cherokee County Master Gardeners

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