

Gardening With The Masters

Growing, Gardening and Gaining Knowledge

June/July 2020

WHAT'S HAPPENING

JUNE

June 16, CCMG Monthly Meeting and Presenter, 10:00am via ZOOM

June 19 & June 20 - CCMG **EXTENDED** Plant Sale, Sr. Center, 9:00am - 12noon

June 22-28, National Pollinator Week, www.pollinator.org

JULY

July 20, CCMG Monthly Meeting, 10:00am via ZOOM

July 18-26, National Moth Week, <http://nationalmothweek.org/>

As recent worldwide health concerns continue, the Cherokee County Master Gardeners are in the process of evaluating the remaining year of activities. We continue to ensure the wellbeing of our members and community. Should we reschedule any of our events, you will be notified here, in our newsletter, on our website, or on Facebook. Please feel free to visit any of our web links posted here. They will keep you up to date with all our activities, events and changes, and help you to stay informed.

Please join us for the Great Georgia Pollinator Census! Saturday, August 22, 2020



Photo courtesy John Ruscilli

<https://extension.uga.edu/county-offices/chokeee.html>

<https://cherokeemastergardenersinc.wildapricot.org/>

<https://m.facebook.com/cherokeemastergardeners/>

or call 770-721-7803

Editor's Corner
By Marcia Winchester,
Cherokee County Master Gardener



Photo courtesy Gail Roos

A unique educational feature of the Cherokee County Master Gardener plant sales is our use of informational cards that we display with our plants. We started this practice quite a number of years ago. Over the years we have expanded and fine-tuned our information, and we also include a picture of each plant in bloom.

The info cards are laminated to protect them from the weather so they last a number of years. What makes them so educational and useful is that the information is gathered from right here in Cherokee County, Georgia,

and is not pulled off the internet from sources in other regions of the country. Our plants come from our own gardens, so when we assemble our information, the gardener donating the plant helps fill out the card on growing conditions using their hands-on expertise and experience. We then double check the facts before we print and laminate each card.

This system educates and benefits everyone that interacts with the info cards. The members of the plant sale committee learn about new plants, our Master Gardeners selling plants read the cards and learn about the plants, and then they turn around and use the information to teach our customers about our plants. Using this knowledge, customers find plants that will grow and thrive in their gardens. I know our info cards are a success when I see a customer take a picture of a card as they are selecting a plant.

We hope to see you at a Cherokee County Master Gardener plant sale soon. They are great learning experiences for everyone!

Marcia

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Maintain Summer Annuals for Peak Performance

By Mary Tucker, Cherokee County Master Gardener

When we think of a summer flower garden, beds of colorful, blooming annuals are often the image that comes to mind. These seasonal beauties can indeed be the stars of an attractive summer landscape. Annuals are generally easy to grow, and they bloom quickly and prolifically. However, annuals are by no means fool-proof. Here's how to make your annuals truly shine.

Watering

One of the most important factors in growing summer annuals is keeping them properly watered, and this can be tricky sometimes. Georgia's summer rainfall can be unreliable, so be prepared to apply supplemental water as needed. As a general rule of thumb, annuals require 1 to 1½ inches of water per week. More may be needed in times of extreme heat. Some annuals are more drought tolerant than others, so learn about what you're growing, and tailor watering to the needs of the specific plant.

Overhead watering can encourage fungal diseases, especially if foliage remains

damp overnight; therefore, a soaker hose or drip irrigation is preferred. Water from this method will seep directly into the soil and not wet the leaves or flowers. If you water from a hand-held wand, keep the nozzle close to the soil surface. Water thoroughly with an even distribution over the entire garden bed. Deep, slow watering will encourage deep, healthy roots.

If you are growing annuals in containers, you can reduce the chore of watering by using light-colored pots that are made of non-porous material, such as plastic, resin or glazed pottery. It also helps to place a large saucer under each pot to hold water that can then be absorbed by the plant as needed. If container-grown annuals are drying out too quickly, you have the advantage of moving them into more shade, which may be especially advantageous as the heat of summer progresses.

Mulching and Weeding

Adding a layer of mulch to your annual beds will provide several benefits. It will help the soil retain moisture, keep the soil cooler and aid in preventing weeds. Organic mulches, such as pine straw, bark chips or shredded dry leaves will also add nutrients to the soil as they break down. Do not use fresh grass clippings since this material can deplete nitrogen in the soil.

Even with a layer of mulch, some weeds are sure to pop up, competing with the annuals for water and nutrients, as well as looking messy. Check for weeds frequently so you can pull them while young. Avoid disturbing the soil any more than necessary so you will not harm any shallow roots on your annuals.

Fertilizing

Adequate nutrition will help ensure the best performance of summer annuals. Usually a general, balanced, all-purpose fertilizer, such as 8-8-8 or 10-10-10, will be sufficient. However, for optimum results, get a soil test early in the season from the Cherokee County Extension, and follow the test's recommendations. Slow-release fertilizers are often preferred since they are long lasting and reduce the chance of fertilizer burn.

Keep in mind that if you are gardening in containers, fertilizers are more likely to leach out of the planting medium. Therefore, you may need to feed plants more frequently.

Continued on page 6



Photo courtesy of Gary Bachman, Mississippi State University Extension



Photo courtesy of Barbara H. Smith, Clemson University Extension



Photo courtesy of Barbara H. Smith, Clemson University Extension



Houseplants: Welcome Visitors That Didn't Leave!

By Mary Schuster, Cherokee County Master Gardener

I have always been a big fan of houseplants. Growing up in Chicago, it was always a wintertime pick-me-up to see them thriving beautifully with their colorful GREEN foliage contrasted with GREY outdoor views. Over the years it seems I would have one or two around the house, caring for them casually as needed.

But, six years ago, with the passing of my husband, I suddenly became the recipient of a whole host of absolutely gorgeous flowers and plants from wonderful family, friends and associates. The plants, for the most part, remained alive and well, so I decided to find new uses for them.

Two of the flowering plants that started out as indoor houseplants transitioned outside and have matured nicely in that environment. The Kordes Eleganza® tea rose and the lantana (*Lantana camara*) show off their flowers in the summertime. Another plant, the shamrock (*Oxalis* spp.), enjoys both indoor and outdoor habitats.



All photos courtesy Mary Schuster

Happily, visitors always seem to compliment the display. All the plants I have kept have somehow landed in places of the home that best fit their requirements for light. Of interest (and curiously enough), I have a plant in an interior guest bathroom that gets virtually no natural light or watering but looks great in its little spot. It is the corn plant (*Dracaena massangeana*).

So, speaking of requirements necessary for growing houseplants, the following bullet points sum up what the usual houseplant needs for a long and healthy life.

- Light: This is the most important. After a while of moving a plant from place, you will find where it does best and leave it there.
- Temperature: The optimal range is between 70 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit during the day and 67 to 70 degrees at night.



A few examples of the gifted plants I've kept inside include the peace lily (*Spathiphyllum 'Clevelandii'*), heart-leaf philodendron (*Philodendron cordatum*), money tree (*Pachira aquatica*), parlor palm (*Chamaedorea elegans*) and the Chinese evergreen (*Aglaonema 'Jubilee'*).

The large peace lilies with their big white blooms are showcased separately in my house. Some of the other plants seem to do well clustered together. I have so many that, en masse, they serve as a welcome entrance display and room divider.

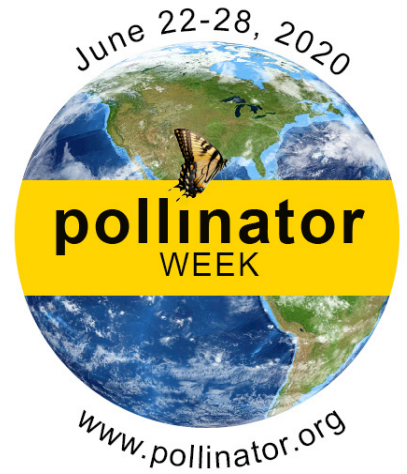


Continued on page 5

TIME to Celebrate Pollinators!

By Jennifer Ruscilli, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Lately we have had time. It's been a time of sheltering in place, and possibly getting caught up on things we have put aside. During this time of social distancing, many of us have had time to slow things down, watch the birds out our window and work in our own gardens. And being at home gives us the perfect opportunity to get outside and look for pollinators. They might be right in our own backyard and we've never had the time to notice, until now! Some are even nighttime pollinators. The images below represent just some of our pollinators highlighted during two incredible events: National Pollinator Week (June 22-28) and National Moth Week (July 18-26).



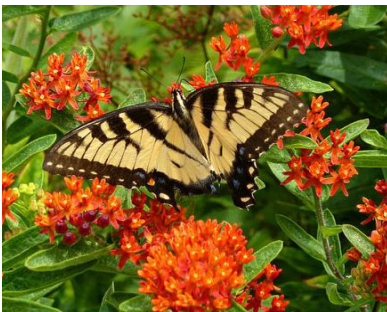
Ants, birds, bats, butterflies, moths, flies, beetles, wasps, small mammals, and most importantly, bees are pollinators. Most (75 percent) of the flowering plants on earth need pollinators. Without them we would not have most of the food we eat, or crops grown. They need us to create and protect their habitat, not destroy it. So, what better TIME to Celebrate Pollinators! Resources are listed below for more information about these two events, native plant suggestions for all pollinators, and resources for kids' activities to discover and track nighttime pollinators.

<https://www.pollinator.org/pollinator-week>

<http://nationalmothweek.org/>

"Beyond Butterflies: Gardening for Native Pollinators"

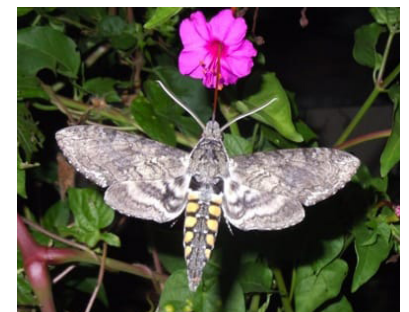
https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%201349_1.PDF



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio glaucus*), Georgia state butterfly forages on milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*).



Ruby-throated hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*) on the cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*).



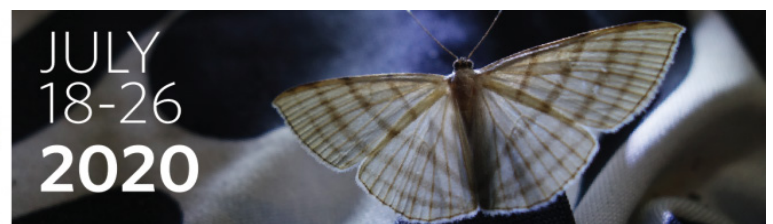
Hummingbird moth (*Sphingidae* spp.) courtesy Nancy Hinkle, UGA Entomologist, <https://ugaurbanag.com/hummingbirds-dont-fly-after-dark-but-hummingbird-moths-do/>



Hydrangea paniculata varieties like 'Chantilly Lace' and 'Pinky Winky' attract a lot of bees, butterflies and other pollinators.



The yucca moth (*Tegeticula* spp.) has a symbiotic relationship with yucca plants. Courtesy M.J. Hatfield, BugGuide.net <https://bugguide.net/node/view/15740>



Houseplants: Welcome Visitors That Didn't Leave!..... continued from page 3

Note: Both light and temperature are linked through processes of photosynthesis and respiration, a little fact you probably remember from a high school science class or from answering correctly on Jeopardy! Right? The mechanism: photosynthesis builds sugar and starch accomplished by daytime light levels, while a reduction of light (at night) lowers the respiration rates to allow more time for sugars to promote growth.

- Relative Humidity: Around 50 percent humidity is optimal. Sometimes wintertime brings dry indoor conditions to bear. I have found that putting a few big pots of water to boil in the kitchen will raise the humidity levels quite nicely in relatively short order.
- Water: All houseplants have different requirements, from a good dosing every day for peace lilies to a couple of ice cubes left to melt slowly into the planting medium for orchids.
- Soil: Houseplants have varying requirements depending on the type, but most will do well with a pH of 5.0 to 6.5.

Contemporary Note: It is a well-known fact that plants release oxygen into the environment. This is good for respiratory health. In the light of seasonal influenza outbreaks and, of course, the current pandemic, this might be a subject to consider currently and down the road. We should let experts lead the way, so keep an ear open to what they might have to say. While on the subject of considerations, make it your business to learn of possible toxicities some houseplants may carry if you have pets and/or toddlers around who may get access to them.

This has been a brief discussion about common houseplants. Another group of plants suitable for indoors includes the bonsai, of which I have quite a collection. I will be happy to present this topic all by itself at a later date.

Cherokee County Master Gardeners Expanded Summer Plant Sale

Friday, June 19 and Saturday, June 20 at the Sr. Center from 9am until 12noon
1001 Univeter Road, Canton Georgia 30115

Plants include daylilies, sedums, ferns, shade and sun perennials
including lots of pollinator plants.

**DUE TO COVID-19 CONCERNS WE WILL BE STAGGERING
CUSTOMERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH CDC GUIDELINES AND
PRACTICING SOCIAL DISTANCING REQUIREMENTS.**

To protect our volunteers and shoppers, **MASKS ARE SUGGESTED.**

IF you are sick or feverish, refrain from attending. Check our Facebook page <https://m.facebook.com/cherokeemastergardeners/>, and website <https://cherokeemastergardenersinc.wildapricot.org/> for plant sale items, plant lists for the shade and herb chairs and highlights. Contact us with any questions or comments you might have.



Shade chair planters are \$75.00. More photos continued on page 6.

Maintain Summer Annuals.....continued from page 2



Photo courtesy of Gary Bachman, Mississippi State University Extension

Pinching, Pruning and Deadheading

Many annuals have been bred to remain blooming and attractive all summer. However, others may benefit from occasional pinching or pruning. This can encourage new growth, more branching, prolific blooms and a nicely proportioned shape.

You may also find that annuals in a mixed bed or container grow at different rates, making them get out of proportion to one another. If this happens, you can prune back the plant that is getting leggy or out of hand. With annuals in containers, it is wise to occasionally rotate the pots to encourage even, straight growth.

Deadheading, or removing old flowers, is another form of pruning. This will encourage reblooming and keep the plant from spending its energy on seed production. However, if you want to save seeds for next year, allow some blooms to mature and form seeds so you can collect them when ripe. Note that some modern varieties are bred to be sterile so that they won't produce seeds. With these, deadheading is not necessary.

Another good reason to cut blooms from some annuals is to enjoy them in a vase. Many make excellent cut flowers, allowing you to enjoy their colorful blooms both in the garden and in the house.

Pests and Problems

Some varieties of annuals have been bred for disease resistance. In addition, good gardening practices can prevent many problems. Proper soil drainage will prevent root rot, and keeping foliage dry (especially at night) will reduce the likelihood of diseases, as will adequate air circulation.

Most annuals have quick growth habits and are not severely set back by minor insect damage. However, aphids, spider mites and some caterpillars can be problematic at times. It is best to catch these pests early before the population booms and to use the most environmentally friendly means of control. If you have to resort to a pesticide, apply it late in the evening to reduce the impact on pollinating insects.



Photo courtesy of Joey Williamson, Clemson University Extension

If you do suspect a disease or insect problem, it is extremely important to properly identify the issue before you attempt to treat it, and only use products that are specifically meant for that issue and approved for use on the plant in question. Consult the Cherokee County Extension for recommendations. And if you apply any pesticides, follow instructions carefully.

Many Georgia gardeners find that deer are the most common and most aggravating pest, and many annuals are readily browsed. Most garden centers carry a variety of sprays that act as deer deterrents. Just be prepared to apply these products on a regular basis.

Herb chair planter \$50.00



strawberry begonia



Check out our Facebook page and website for more plant sale items in the weeks to come.

<https://m.Facebook.com/cherokeemastergardeners/>
<https://cherokeemastergardenersinc.wildapricot.org/>

Pearl bush



Penstemon digitalis



LAWN CARE - JUNE AND JULY

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>For Established Lawns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cool-season grasses are not actively growing during the summer months. Maintenance needs are limited to irrigation, weed management, and mowing as needed. • Do not aerate during the summer months. • You may rake your lawn, but do not mechanically dethatch during the summer months. • If needed, apply a post-emergent for grassy weeds like crabgrass, but take care not to treat drought-stressed turf. You may also spot spray broadleaf weeds like chickweed or dandelion. • July may be a great time to do a soil test before turf enters the fall growing season. • Lime may be applied at any time. Apply about 50 lbs. per 1000 ft². However, do not fertilize during June or July. • A healthy lawn needs about 1 inch of water per week. Determine irrigation needs depending on the amount of rainfall received. 	<p>For Established Lawns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-season turf is typically stressed during the summer months. Take care to mow at the proper height and follow appropriate irrigation recommendations to maintain your lawn. • If needed, you can aerate or dethatch. Remember that these activities are not necessarily required every year. However, if you applied a pre-emergent in June, the chemical barrier will be disturbed. • It's not too late to apply a pre-emergent for significant weed control. Use a weed and feed product or spot spray for minor weed control. • Fertilize Bermuda, Zoysia, and St. Augustine at the beginning of July. The Zoysia lawn may not need to be fertilized at this time if it is healthy—dark green and thick. This application should be effective through September. For Centipede lawns, use a slow-release, low-phosphorus fertilizer in early July. • Follow water-wise irrigation methods to insure a healthy lawn and promote a strong root system. If irrigation is needed, apply 1 inch of water per week. Consider rainfall amounts. Do not overwater. 														
<p>For Newly Installed Lawns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You should not attempt to install new cool-season turf during this time, as fall is the best time to seed or install cool-season sprigs/sod. • If you are considering installing this year, use the summer months to research the best cultivars to fit your needs. Look for the "Blue Tag" certified seed to insure that you're purchasing a high-quality product. 	<p>For Newly Installed Lawns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irrigate daily for the first two to three weeks until well established. • Fertilize according to soil test recommendations. To promote good coverage, apply a complete fertilizer monthly. • To discourage weeds, extract manually or mow often. 														
<p>Disease & Insect Control for All Lawns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you're using proper irrigation methods, there should not be any major fungal issues during the hot, summer months. However, check for dead or dark patches with clearly defined edges. • Check for webworm, armyworm, and/or cutworm infestations. Webworms leave a veil-like webbing on the turf surface that 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. • 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. <p>Review specific requirements for your established lawn at: http://caes2.caes.uga.edu/commodities/turfgrass/georgiaturf/index/index.html</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="984 1325 1547 1692"> <thead> <tr> <th>Grass Types</th> <th>Mowing Heights (inches)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Bermuda Grass</td> <td>1 - 1.5 to 2.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Centipede Grass</td> <td>1 - 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>St. Augustine Grass</td> <td>2 - 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Zoysia Grass</td> <td>1 - 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tall Fescue Grass</td> <td>2.5 or More</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kentucky Bluegrass</td> <td>2.5 or More</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Grass Types	Mowing Heights (inches)	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
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JUNE GARDENING TIPS

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Strawberries picked early in the day keep best. Do not wash or stem berries until ready to use. Store berries in covered containers in the refrigerator.
- Set young melons and cantaloupes atop tin cans or flat rocks – they'll ripen faster, be sweeter and have less insect damage than those left on the ground.
- Yellow crook-neck squash tastes best when 4-7 inches long. Pick when pale yellow (rather than golden) and before skin hardens. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%20993_4.PDF
- Remove cucumbers by turning fruits parallel to the vine and giving a quick snap. This prevents vine damage and results in a clean break. Cut or pull cucumbers, leaving a short stem on each. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%201034_4.PDF
- Stop cutting asparagus in mid to late June when spears become thin. After the last cutting is made, fertilize by broadcasting a 10-10-10 formula at the rate of 2 lbs per 100 sq. ft. Allow the tops to grow during the summer to store food in the roots for the crop next spring.
- Avoid side dressing tomatoes, eggplants and peppers with fertilizer until they have set their first fruit.
- Corn needs water at two crucial times: when the tassels at the top are beginning to show and when the silk is beginning to show on the ear. If weather is dry at these times, you will need to water the corn. <https://site.extension.uga.edu/mitchellag/2015/05/water-needed-in-corn/>
- If weed plants are mature, weed your garden early in the morning when moisture is present to prevent the seed heads from shattering and dropping weed seeds in the garden. Hold as much of the seed heads in your hand and do not shake off extra soil as it may scatter weed seeds.

JUNE MISCELLANEOUS

- To protect bees that pollinate many of our crop plants, spray pesticides in the evening after bees have returned to their homes.
- The best time to harvest most herbs is just before flowering when the leaves contain the maximum essential oils. Cut herbs early on a sunny day. Herbs are best if watered the day before to wash off the foliage. <http://extension.uga.edu/story.html?storyid=7882>



Photo taken at the Sr. Center Demo garden, courtesy John Ruscilli, during the 2019 pollinator census count.



UGA2169035

Like a mountain path, the narrow squiggles are characteristic trails left by a group of insects known as leaf miners. Special-Lisa Ames, University of Georgia

ORNAMENTALS

- Use pliers to pull up tree seedlings after a rain when soil is moist. Grip the stem at the soil line; twist and pull straight up. Watering deeply the day before pulling weeds will make the job easier.
- Climbing roses don't really climb – they have long canes that require support. You will need to loosely tie the canes to trellises with broad strips of material or foam covered wire. Do not use wire as it can damage the cane. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%20671_2.PDF
- Miniature roses can be propagated from stem cuttings. Take cuttings with 4 leaves and insert them into pots filled with moist potting soil. Rooting hormone is optional. Place whole pot in a perforated plastic bag and place in a shady spot. Water as needed. By autumn, cuttings should be rooted.
- Control black spot and powdery mildew on rose foliage.
- Fertilize your roses at monthly intervals with either granular or liquid fertilizer. Inspect plants frequently for pests such as spider mites, aphids and Japanese beetles.
- Leaf miner larvae tunnel inside leaves, leaving whitish trails as they move about. Holly, boxwood, columbine, and locust are particularly susceptible to damage.
- Disinfection of pruners between cuts is recommended when removing diseased tissue from plants. UGA recommends a one to ten solution of bleach and water, but it can be cumbersome to carry a bucket of this mix about in the garden, and the solution is corrosive and must be rinsed from tools after use. Rubbing alcohol in a spray bottle also works. When spraying tools, spray over a trash can so you don't kill or injure grass or plants.
- Now is the time to prune azaleas and rhododendrons before they set next year's flower buds. <http://www.caes.uga.edu/newswire/story.html?storyid=4729>
- Divide and transplant iris now so they will have a long growing season and a better chance of blooming next year. Cut off and discard the older part of the rhizome that does not have white fleshy roots. Cut the leaves back to six inches so they don't blow over. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%20944_4.PDF



JULY GARDENING TIPS


ORNAMENTALS

- If your hosta and azalea stems have a white powder covering them, it is probably the waxy coating of planthopper insects. They don't do much damage, but can spread diseases. Spray with garden insecticide if unsightly.
- Lamb's ear tends to have their lower leaves die after a heavy rain. This forms ugly mats that will rot stems and roots. Pull away the yellow leaves to keep up airflow.
- Fertilize crape myrtles, butterfly bushes, and hydrangeas with 1 Tablespoon of 10-10-10 per foot of height. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%201065_5.PDF



Citrus flatid planthopper nymphs on an azalea stem. Photo courtesy J.R. Baker, NC University, <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/planthoppers>.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Pick squash regularly to keep up production. If the vines wilt, check the base of the stem for "sawdust". This means the plant has squash borers in the stem. Remove infected plants (thus removing the borers) and plant new seeds. It is good to change your planting location to hopefully prevent the new plants from being attacked.  <https://secure.caes.uga.edu/news/multimedia/images/958/SquashVine-Borer.jpg>
- Before you spray an insecticide on your vegetables, check the label. Each insecticide has a waiting period after application before you can harvest.
- Although tomatoes are self-pollinating, they need movement to transfer pollen. If it is hot and calm for several days, gently shake plants to assure pollen transfer and fruit set. Hot temperatures can interfere with blossom set. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%201150_1.PDF
- Most fertilizer recommendations are for 100 square feet, so keep your garden's square footage a simple fraction of that. For example, a 4 X 12 foot garden is very close to 50 square feet and would require one half the fertilizer required by a garden of 100 square feet.
- Okra pods get tough if allowed to grow too large. Pick regularly. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%20941_5.PDF
- Mulch strawberries heavily to protect them from heat and drought.
- The time of day vegetables are harvested can make a difference in the taste and texture. For sweetness, pick peas and corn late in the day; that's when they contain the most sugar, especially if the day was cool and sunny.
- Cucumbers are crisper and tastier if you harvest them early in the morning.
- Start a fall crop of Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower and kale indoors. Outdoors, sow pumpkin, beans, squash, cucumbers, and crowder peas. Plant carrots mid-month. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%201069_1.PDF

- Sunflowers are ready to harvest when the back of the head turns brown.
- Keep an eye out for the tomato hornworm. They can do enormous damage overnight.




Tomato hornworm courtesy UGA

- When you see damage, check under leaves and stems to find them. Hand pick to dispose of them. <https://extension.uga.edu/content/dam/extension/programs-and-services/integrated-pest-management/documents/insect-pdfs/hornworm.pdf>
- Don't plant all your beans at once. If you stagger the plantings every two weeks you will have fresh beans longer. Soak bean seeds overnight before planting for faster germination. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%201006_2.PDF

JULY MISCELLANEOUS

- If you keep your houseplants indoors all summer, keep them out of the draft of the air conditioner. Plants react to an air conditioner's cool air in various ways. Some drop their leaves, others don't bloom well and some fail to bloom at all.

RAINFALL COMPARISONS						
	Cherokee County			State Wide		
	Mar 20	Apr 20	YTD	Mar 20	Apr 20	YTD
Actual	10.0	6.2	38.7	7.5	7.1	31.8
Normal	5.4	4.5	20.8	4.8	3.6	17.0
Deviation	4.6	1.7	17.9	2.7	3.5	14.8



Recipes

FRESH FIG COOKIES - Courtesy of Lynn Knotts

It's that time of year, when you do battle with bees and squirrels for your own share of figs! Here's a recipe we love if you survive the battle.

Lynn says this is a thick cookie, very moist and not too sweet. Can substitute strawberries, peaches, plums, pears or pecans. I grind nuts into a meal or not quite powder and mix with flour. Almond extract goes nice with pears and peaches.

Ingredients:

1 stick butter (1/2 cup) softened
1/2 teas. baking powder
1/2 cup white sugar
1/4 teas. cinnamon
1/4 cup light brown sugar
1/8 teas. salt
1 egg
1/2 cup figs, chopped
1 teas. vanilla
1/2 cup ground walnuts
1 1/2 cups flour
extra fruit for topping



1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Grease or line 2 baking sheets.
2. Mix butter, sugars in a large bowl, and add egg and vanilla; mix well.
3. Combine flour, baking powder, cinnamon, nuts, and salt, and then add to the sugar mixture.
Note: It will appear dry.
4. Add fruit, and it will become soft cookie dough like magic.
5. Drop by teaspoons of batter on baking sheets, topping each with a small chunk of fruit.
6. Bake until edges are lightly browned, 12 to 15 minutes.

Note: Cookies are soft even when done, so beware they burn fast.

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Ramen Noodle Salad

Serves 4 as a hearty lunch salad

Salad Dressing:

Prepare first to allow time to cool

1/2 cup sugar
1/4 cup cider vinegar
1/4 cup olive oil
1/3 cup soy sauce

Combine all ingredients in a small saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring continuously. Cool in refrigerator before serving.



Salad:

2 bags green leaf lettuce
2 large ripe tomatoes
2 packages ramen noodles
1/2 cup sunflower seeds
1/4 cup slivered almonds

Break noodles in small pieces and brown them with the seeds and almonds on a cookie sheet in a preheated 350 degree oven until brown. Watch carefully as it just takes a few minutes.

When cooled, add to salad greens and tomatoes and serve with dressing. Add other salad veggies as desired.



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