

# Gardening With The Masters

Growing, Gardening and Gaining Knowledge  
December 2020/January 2021

*Ilex vomitoria*

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

We end this year and begin the next with great uncertainty. But rest assured the Cherokee County Master Gardeners will continue to evaluate the new year's activities and events, and will continue to follow UGA Extension protocols and state guidelines.

Should it be safe to schedule any of our events, you will be notified here in our newsletter, on our website, or on our Facebook page.

Feel free to visit any of our website and Facebook links posted below. They will keep you up to date with our activities, events and changes, and help you to stay informed.

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

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

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

or call 770-721-7803



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

from **ALL**  
The Master Gardeners

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

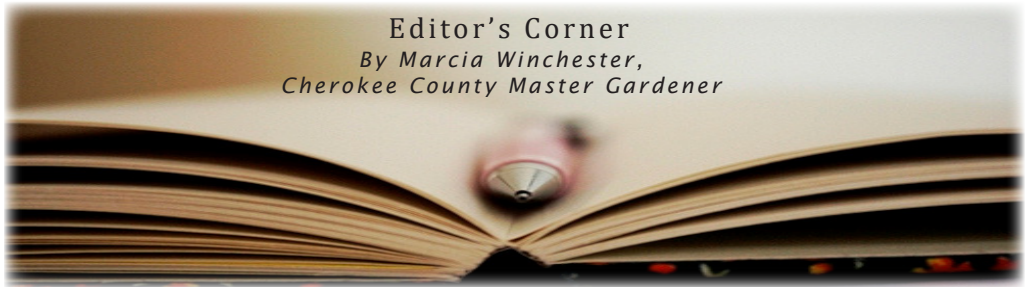


Photo *Magnolia ashei*

I love magnolias, which means I have many more than one in my garden. In fact, I have six different species or cultivars. The magnolia family (Magnoliaceae) is large and diverse, with species that range from huge evergreens to ones with deciduous leaves. The foliage can range from 6 inches to 2 to 4 feet long. The flowers are usually huge and white and are from 4 to 12 inches across. But of course there are the yellow cultivars, and a group of *M. liliiflora* with lavender to deep red-purple flowers that are 3 to 5 inches wide.

If you are impatient and want a magnolia that blooms young, try *M. ashei*. It starts blooming when only 4 to 6 feet tall. It is related to our native *M. macrophylla*, or bigleaf magnolia, that can be found in much of north Georgia's natural woodlands. While *M. macrophylla* gets quite tall at 30 to 40 feet, *M. ashei* fits in a smaller garden only reaching 10 to 20 feet tall. Despite its shorter size, the creamy white flowers can be 6 to 12 inches across. That's a lot of flower power!

Another magnolia that fits in a smaller garden is the star magnolia, *Magnolia stellata*. Its size is 15 to 20 feet tall with a spread of 10 to 15 feet. There are over 20 cultivars of *M. stellata*, with 'Waterlily' being a very popular one. I love the hundreds of frilly, multi-petaled blooms that cover my tree. This cultivar also blooms at a young age.

Winter is the best time to plant trees and shrubs, so check out your favorite nursery, and consider adding a magnolia (or several) to your garden.

Marcia



Photo *Magnolia stellata*





Photo courtesy Cornell University

# A “Berry” Good Garden for Winter Birds

By Karen Garland, Cherokee County Master Gardener

The only thing better than a beautiful landscape is one that naturally attracts local wildlife, in particular birds. Yet, with winter looming, you might be feeling down, as you observe many of your favorite species heading south. Don't fret because others are coming to take their place in search of a steady and varied food supply.

Most gardeners typically select trees and shrubs for their showy blossoms, fall color, or attractive form. However, additional considerations can provide an invitation to your garden for winter visitors. Foraging birds require a regular diet full of sugars and fats to thrive during these chilly months. Therefore, including various trees and shrubs that will hold onto their fruit throughout the winter will provide a significant food source, ensuring regular visits from your guests. A bonus is the birds will reward you by adding song, color, and flight to your landscape.

Shrubs are a vital component of effective birdscaping, which is all about choosing and planting the type of plants that will attract many different species of birds to your garden. But which ones are best for our feathered friends in winter? Hundreds of birds find various shrub species useful, and it is essential to add these plants to make the landscaping as inviting as possible. Consider the natural diversity in fruit availability throughout the season, with some berry-producing shrubs fruiting earlier, and others persisting deeper into the winter months when food is exceedingly scarce. Though many of these winter fruits will appear earlier in the season, the berries will not become palatable to birds until they have gone through several freeze-and-thaw cycles.

Furthermore, you may be thinking that birdfeeders should suffice for your winter visitors. While they are a great addition, they are only part of the solution. Native trees and shrubs provide things that these feeding stations cannot. First, some species, such as cedar waxwings, cannot eat seeds. Secondly, berries provide high levels of beneficial fats needed for winter survival. Thirdly, providing a variety of trees, shrubs, and vines with natural food sources and shelter can double the number of bird species that visit your yard. Lastly, in the spring, flowers are a nectar source for pollinators.

This winter, if you already have fruit-bearing shrubs, pull out your binoculars and enjoy your feathered guests who have an appetite for berries. If not, pull out your favorite plant catalog, or visit a nursery or plant sale since spring is a great time to start birdscaping your yard. Adding a couple of berry-producing natives is a significant first step to feeding birds naturally. Check out some of the native plant options below.



Photo American beautyberry courtesy Karan A. Rawlins, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org

American beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*) bears tiny spring flowers that produce clusters of magenta, purple, or white fruits that remain on the spreading understory shrub after the leaves drop. The fruits become a good food source for many birds, including mockingbirds, robins, towhees, catbirds, and brown thrashers.

Mountain ash (*Sorbus americana*) is a small, deciduous tree with leaves turning bright golden orange on red leaf stalks in the fall.

The small, white flowers in spring are held in flat-topped bundles and are followed by broad clusters of bright, coral-red berries. The fruit invites many different species, including cedar waxwings, robins, bluejays, and grouse.

Red chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*) is a multi-stemmed shrub with four-season interest. In spring, flat-topped clusters of white flowers with red anthers appear. They give way to dark green, glossy leaves that turn a rich, orange-red in fall. Also appearing in fall are the bright red, pear-shaped berries that remain throughout winter. Because the berries are low in fat, the birds will wait until the other desirable food is depleted.



Photo red chokeberry courtesy Marcia Winchester



## “Berry” Good Garden for Winter Birds .....continued from page 2



Photo sparkleberry courtesy Chris Evans, University of Illinois, Bugwood.org

Sparkleberry (*Vaccinium arboreum*) is a large deciduous shrub that produces small, white, urn-shaped flowers in profuse sprays. Once pollinated, the flowers produce small berries, which turn from green to a shiny black, like blueberries. The fruit attracts a wide range of birds, including brown thrashers, tufted titmice, mockingbirds, and American robins.

Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) is a deciduous shrub with clusters of tiny, aromatic flowers blooming along the branches in early spring before the foliage emerges. Both the fruit and foliage are aromatic. Leaves turn a colorful golden yellow in fall. Female plants need a male pollinator to set fruit, which will be enjoyed by thrushes, bluejays, and tanagers.

Strawberry bush or hearts-a-bustin' (*Euonymus americanus*) has leaves that turn to various yellow, orange, and red shades before they are dropped for the winter. The bright red fruit matures in early autumn and is enjoyed by thrushes, eastern bluebirds, warblers, mockingbirds, and wild turkey.

Viburnum (*Viburnum* spp.) bears dark green, ruffled foliage that turns bright yellow to red in fall. Creamy white, flat-topped umbels give way to large clusters of showy blue-black berries that will be enjoyed by robins, bluebirds, thrushes, vireos, kingbirds, juncos, cardinals, and warblers.

Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*) is a dense multi-stemmed deciduous shrub with dark green foliage throughout the season. The pointy leaves do not develop any appreciable fall color. Robins, bluebirds, cedar waxwings, mockingbirds, and catbirds love the vibrant red fruits of this common holly, especially in late winter when food is scarce.



Photo winterberry courtesy John Ruter, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org

## Georgia Weather Website: nifty data to assist with gardening

By Mary Tucker, Cherokee County Master Gardener

The temperature of both the air and the soil can be important factors to help you determine when to plant and how your plants will perform. For instance, when planting spring-flowering bulbs in the fall, it is best to plant them when the soil temperature is warm enough to stimulate root growth but not so warm that foliage develops. The success of other gardening chores, such as the sowing of seeds or the timing of pre-emergent weed control, is also affected by temperature.



It's pretty easy to know the air temperature at your house, but what about the soil? Here's a University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences website that can come to your aid regarding this and other nifty weather statistics: <http://www.georgiaweather.net/>.

The Georgia Weather website collects weather information from close to 100 reporting sites around the state. This monitoring network was established in 1991 with the goal of providing accurate weather data for agricultural and environmental applications. Each reporting station monitors the following conditions at its location: air temperature, relative humidity, rainfall, solar radiation, wind speed, wind direction, soil temperature (at depths of at 2, 4, and 8 inches), atmospheric pressure, and soil moisture. A recording is taken every second. Every 15 minutes data are summarized, and then at midnight each day, a daily summary is tabulated.

When you visit the Georgia Weather website, on the left you'll see a drop-down list of monitoring stations, or you can search by Zip Code for the station closest to you. And the map displayed on the home page shows pin points for all the locations.

I happen to live in Woodstock, and there is not a station in that town right now. However, I did find several that are relatively close: Kennesaw, Ball Ground, Alpharetta, Dallas, and Dunwoody. Depending on where you live in Cherokee County, you can check whichever is closest.

I encourage you to visit the Georgia Weather website. You'll learn about conditions near you, and this will help you determine when your gardening tasks will be most effective.





Photo courtesy Maurya Jones

## Amaryllis

By Maurya Jones, Cherokee County Master Gardener

There are a myriad of bulbs that I love, from the Dutch tulips (*Tulipa* spp.) I plant in the fall to bloom in the spring to the exotic Casa Blanca Oriental lilies (*Lilium* 'Casa Blanca') I enjoy in mid-summer—and oh, yes, I love the huge elephant ears (*Colocasia* spp.) that catch the summer rain. However, my all-time favorite bulbs are the *Hippeastrum* cultivars (commonly called amaryllis) that I force indoors so that they will bloom during the winter season. I love using the showy, bright flowers as part of my holiday display.

*Hippeastrum* is a genus in the amaryllis family (Amaryllidaceae) with 70 to 75 species and 600-plus hybrids and cultivars. There is also a genus by the name of *Amaryllis*; this can cause some confusion since the *Hippeastrum* bulbs go by the common name amaryllis.

Amaryllis is a popular flowering bulb for growing indoors during cold months of the year. It produces large, showy blooms with rich and vibrant colors. It is also one of the easiest flowering bulbs to force into bloom.

I received my first amaryllis as a Christmas gift, enjoyed it several months and then tossed it. I no longer do that. I save the bulbs and plant them in a sunny spot in my garden after April 20. I have had amaryllis come up every May for the last five years, and I have read they may come up for many more years with the proper care and if the garden has the right conditions.

Amaryllis can be purchased in local nurseries, big-box stores and online. They are usually available around early October in order to plant indoors for the holidays/winter season. They come in a variety of colors—white, pink, red, coral and even striped. They make wonderful gifts for friends and family.

You can buy *Hippeastrum* bulbs in a kit, which has everything you'll need—container, soil and bulb, or you can purchase bare-root bulbs.

### POTTING THE BULBS

Plant the bulb in well-drained potting mix. Fill the pot about half full with potting mix, set the bulb on top of the mix, and fill in around the bulb with additional mix. Adjust the position of the bulb as needed, so that the top third of the bulb is exposed. The final level of the mix should be about ½ inch below the rim of the pot to allow for watering. Firm the mix and water lightly to settle it around the bulb.

### PRE-BLOOM CARE OF AMARYLLIS

Place the pot where the temperature stays above 60° F. The warmer the temperature the faster the bulb will sprout and grow. Water only when the top inch of potting mix is dry to the touch. Watering more often could lead to root rot. Growth generally starts in two to eight weeks. Provide ample sunshine as soon as the bulb sprouts. Rotate the pot frequently to prevent the flower stalk from leaning towards the light. The flower stalk may need support to keep from toppling.

### GROWING AMARYLLIS OUTDOORS

Though we are most familiar with amaryllis as an indoor holiday plant, many gardeners in the South have luck with them surviving and thriving in a garden setting. This success may depend on exactly which cultivar you are trying to grow. I have certainly had good luck with them in the garden, and I am always thrilled when they bloom in early May. I plan to buy more amaryllis this fall and start the plants to give as gifts and for myself. After blooming, I will save the bulbs and plant them in my garden this spring.



Photo courtesy Maurya Jones

More about the cultivation of amaryllis can be found at these Extension websites:

Clemson <https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/amaryllis/>

University of Georgia <https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=B918>



# Great Zukes! The Rampant Rampicante Squash

By Veronica Steffensmeier, Cherokee County Master Gardener

One of my favorite summer vegetables to grow is zucchini. I layer it in my eggplant vegetable lasagna, slice it raw into salads and stuff it with cheese and homegrown tomatoes.

If you love to grow zucchini then you are no doubt familiar with the dreaded squash vine borer. This garden invader can reduce a thriving healthy squash to wilt seemingly overnight.

The vine borer, a common clearwing moth, is often mistaken for a wasp or bee. Active from mid-June through July, the moth lays its eggs at the base of summer squash, winter squash and pumpkin vines. When the eggs hatch, the larvae burrow (or "bore") into the lower stems, weakening and killing the plant. Once in the soil, the worm borers overwinter as pupae in cocoons and reappear each season to wreak havoc on your squash plants.

I've heard plenty of suggestions from fellow gardeners to fend off the borer: wrap the plant stem in aluminum foil; grow the plants through holes in Dixie cups; and my favorite, attempt to cut the little buggers out of the vine with a pocket knife.



Photo courtesy Veronica Steffensmeier



Photo courtesy Veronica Steffensmeier

To quote an article on the University of Georgia website, "There is no guaranteed way to control squash vine borers aside from planting a resistant variety of squash."<sup>\*</sup>

In the search for such a squash, I finally came across an article that described a variety impervious to the borer: the gigantic Zucchini Rampicante. The squash has a vine that is so thick, the borer cannot breach it.

Also known as tromboncino squash, it will grow up, over and curl around anything in its path. Like something in a prehistoric jungle, this prolific heirloom grows fast and furious with leaves the size of dinner plates and vines stretching as long as 15 feet. One fruit can grow to 4 feet in length and weigh as much as 6 pounds. It is crookneck squash on steroids!

Rampicante zucchini can be grown from seed, taking about 7 to 10 days to germinate. It needs full sun, fertile, well-drained soil and plenty of room to grow either vertically or horizontally. If grown vertically, the squash will hang long and straight making it much easier to use in recipes that call for stuffing or making zucchini noodles. I started my plant from seed and grew it in a 20-gallon grow bag. For support, I used several 8-foot stackable tomato cages to snake it along.

If harvested in early summer (60 days), the fruit has a variegated lime color and the smooth texture of porcelain. The flesh is firmer than most squash varieties. The taste is rich, full and sweet with a slightly nutty flavor. If you leave them on the vine until fall (90 days), they will turn yellow, harden and develop into a winter squash similar to butternut squash. I kept one on the counter in the kitchen for over a week cutting off chunks as needed.

If you'd like to grow zucchini next spring, Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds, Eden Brothers, Pinetree Garden Seeds, and Trade Winds are several online vendors that offer the Rampicante variety. You can sow them indoors before the last frost or direct sow the seeds after the last frost. I've collected, dried and stored the seeds from what I grew this year and will give some to the Master Gardener seed library at the Hickory Flat Seed Library when they open again.

Footnote:

\*Published on 05/24/17

"Weather and pests can make summer squash a frustrating crop for home gardeners" by Sharon Dowdy for CAES News.



## RECIPE: Garden Vegetable Lasagna

From Veronica Steffensmeier

Three vegetables that grow in abundance in our Southern gardens are peppers, eggplant and zucchini. Here's my recipe for using all three.

Use enough of the vegetables to make one double layer of eggplant, one double layer of zucchini and one single layer of peppers in any size baking dish. I also bake smaller casseroles in foil containers for freezing.

Rampicante squash works best in this casserole because the flesh is denser and contains less water than other zucchini varieties. Both the Rampicante and eggplant have thick skin so they bake and taste better peeled.



### INGREDIENTS:

Rampicante squash, peeled  
Eggplant, peeled (preferably larger varieties like Black Beauty)  
Peppers (red, yellow, orange)  
Grated parmesan cheese  
Shredded mozzarella cheese  
15-oz. container of ricotta cheese  
Good quality tomato marinara sauce  
Garlic powder, dried oregano, salt and pepper



### INSTRUCTIONS:

Set your oven broiler to high.

Using a mandolin, slice the eggplant in ¼-inch rounds and the zucchini lengthwise into ¼-inch strips. Cut the peppers into wide strips.



Line a large baking sheet with aluminum foil and spray with olive oil. Spread the peeled eggplant slices on the baking sheet and season with garlic powder, dried oregano, salt and pepper. Spray lightly with olive oil and grill in the oven until slightly brown. Repeat the procedure with the peeled zucchini slices and pepper strips. Set the vegetables aside.

Mix together one 15-oz. container of ricotta cheese and 2 cups of grated parmesan.

Cover the bottom of your baking dish with tomato marinara (enough to sink the eggplant in). Build the lasagna layers starting with the eggplant. Make one double layer. Spread a generous layer of the ricotta mixture, covering the eggplant. Cover the mixture with tomato marinara. Add a double layer of zucchini and cover generously with shredded mozzarella cheese. For the topping, lay the pepper strips completely covering the mozzarella cheese.



Bake in a preheated oven at 350 degrees for at least 40 minutes or until casserole bubbles.

It took a few tries to get the right amounts of cheese and sauce. You can make a super healthy version or a rich and creamy yummy version. Everything works!

Hope you enjoy it!

*\*\*All photos courtesy of Veronica Steffensmeier*



# Hardy Palms for Georgia Gardens

By Mary Tucker, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Most folks (gardeners included) likely hold a misconceived stereotype of palms. The image that comes to mind is probably of a parlor plant, a conservatory specimen, or a coconut palm towering over the sandy beach on a tropical island. Though many palms are native to tropical regions, some species are surprisingly cold hardy, and we can grow several here in Cherokee County, Georgia.

Below are profiles of three palms suitable for most regions of our state. All create effective evergreen accents in the landscape, and their spiky foliage contrasts well with other plant forms. When designing with palms, keep in mind that many are difficult to move once established, so plan carefully.

## **Needle Palm (*Rhapidophyllum hystrix*)**

Some palm enthusiasts describe this Southeast native as the world's hardest palm. In its native range, it is found from Florida to South Carolina and west to Mississippi. It also extends inland to areas in central Georgia and Alabama. This palm generally can take temperatures down to -10 or -15 degrees Fahrenheit, giving it potential for gardens even in USDA Hardiness Zone 6.

Needle palm's evergreen leaves are fan shaped and grow up to 3 or 4 feet wide. They are deep green with a silvery underside. Each leaf segment has a blunt tip that looks like it was snipped with giant pinking shears. Another unusual feature of this palm accounts for its common name. Sharp spines, up to 8 inches long, protrude from the stubby crown of the plant, protecting the seeds from predators.

Needle palm grows relatively slowly and typically reaches 5 to 9 feet tall with a similar spread, giving it a shrubby appearance. This palm makes an attractive specimen or can be equally effective when grouped as a mass planting or hedge. In its natural range, needle palm grows in low, moist areas, where it is most frequently found as an understory plant.

## **Dwarf Palmetto (*Sabal minor*)**

This palm is also a Southeast U.S. native with a wide natural range, occurring from Florida to North Carolina to Arkansas, and as far west as Oklahoma. In general, it is only slightly less cold tolerant than needle palm, enduring temperatures of 0 degrees (or perhaps less) and making it appropriate for gardeners in Zones 7 and warmer, though some especially cold-hardy selections will survive in colder zones.

The evergreen, fan-shaped leaves can grow up to 5 feet in width, and each leaflet tapers to a sharp point. Dwarf palmetto reaches a mature height of about 6 to 8 feet, though the foliage can be cut back periodically to keep the plant shorter.

The dwarf palmetto appears to be non-trunked, with the leaf stalks emerging directly from the ground. Yet actually a "trunk" or stem, which can be rather long, grows into the ground rather than above, making transplanting a mature specimen difficult.

Flower stalks rise above the leaves and mature into clusters of black, pea-sized fruit. Dwarf palmetto will reseed readily, but young seedlings are easy to remove if they sprout in unwanted spots. In its native range, dwarf palmetto is found in swampy areas or floodplains and is often found growing in the understory, where it may colonize to form a tall ground cover.

## **Windmill Palm (*Trachycarpus fortunei*)**

For those who want a palm that forms a true tree shape, the windmill palm is by far the most cold-hardy choice. A native to China and India, it has the potential to reach 10 to 30 feet in height, typically growing tallest in warmer climates, and it is hardy down to -5 degrees, making it suitable for many regions of Georgia.

Light shade is recommended for the windmill palm, and it is not fussy about its soil, even performing in clay. However, it is not as tolerant of damp soils as the native palms are. The round, evergreen, fan-shaped leaves are flat and stiff and grow to about 3 feet wide. The trunk is relatively slim, but it appears thicker due to a dense, fibrous matting that covers it. Yellow flower clusters appear below the leaves in spring and yield a dark blue seed.

The windmill palm can be planted in groups for an impressive landscape feature, but it is equally effective as a specimen plant.



Photo windmill palm courtesy Mary Tucker



Photos courtesy Mary Tucker







Photo courtesy <https://ugaurbanag.com/growing-pansies/>

## ORNAMENTALS

- Yews, juniper, holly, boxwood, broad-leaf evergreens and many deciduous trees, roses, and shrubs can be propagated this month. Insert evergreen cuttings in vermiculite or sand in a cool greenhouse or tie bundles of the cuttings together and bury in a cold frame. Remove in early spring and plant in a nursery bed.
- December is a good month to replace overgrown shrubs - don't fertilize until early spring.
- Fertilize pansies and other winter annuals with a fertilizer containing nitrate nitrogen. The higher the ratio of nitrate nitrogen the better the fertilizer. [https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%201359\\_2.PDF](https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%201359_2.PDF)
- Finish winter clean-up by pruning deciduous perennials 3-4 inches from the ground. Leaving part of the stem helps mark the location and size of the plant. [https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%20961\\_5.PDF](https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%20961_5.PDF)
- When it is too cold to work in the yard, work on putting your landscape on paper; mark existing plants, site conditions (wet, dry, sunny, shade) then make a list of what you want to add. <https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C1032-4&title=Drawing%20a%20Landscape%20Plan%20-%20Site%20Analysis>



Photo raised bed at Encompass Ministries courtesy Gerald Phillips, Master Gardener

# DECEMBER GARDENING TIPS

## FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Pick mummied fruit off trees and rake up leaves under fruit trees to remove insects and diseases.
- December is a good month to construct raised vegetable beds. Any length is fine but it's good to build them no wider than 30-40 inches for easy access and to minimize compacting soil. [https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%201027-5\\_1.PDF](https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%201027-5_1.PDF)
- To protect winter veggies from extreme cold, apply a thin layer of mulch or cover with a row cover. [https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%20984\\_3.PDF](https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%20984_3.PDF)
- Top dress unused areas of veggie beds with 2-4 inches of composted manure or shredded leaves.
- Fruit trees can be pruned at any time during the winter provided the temperature is above 45°.
- Get asparagus beds ready to plant when weather and soil conditions permit. The planting site should be in areas that will not interfere with cultivation of other crops. Bed preparation should include heavy applications of compost or aged animal manure plus 25 lbs of 6-12-12 per 1000 ft<sup>2</sup> applied broadcast. Till deeply and smooth soil surface. Set asparagus crowns any time in late December or early January when soil is not frozen.

## DECEMBER MISCELLANEOUS

- Keep all indoor plants away from drafts and direct heat sources - inexpensive plastic draft hoods help redirect heat away from plants. <https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C951>
- Keep checking house plants for insect infestation. Isolate and treat infected plants immediately.
- Winterize your lawnmower, tiller and weed-eater. Drain out gas and replace the oil with fresh oil. Remove the oil filter and either clean or replace it. Check all nuts and bolts to be sure they haven't vibrated loose. Mower blades and tiller tines can be sharpened. Inspect wheels, belts and other moving parts.
- To keep your shears and loppers in good shape for next year, clean them with mineral spirits or Lysol bathroom tile cleaner. Adjust the tension screw and give them a good sharpening. Be sure to use a broad file while sharpening. Tools sharpened by a power grinder will overheat and lose their tempering, making the metal likely to chip or break.
- Clean garden hand tools with liquid detergent and bleach, drying thoroughly. Then oil to prevent rust.
- Blades of shovels and hoes can be sharpened with a file. Apply a light coat of household oil. Treat all wood handles with a coat of linseed oil.
- Drain garden hoses and sprinklers checking for leaks. Replace any old washers. Do not store hoses in direct sunlight or freezing temperatures as both will shorten the life of your hose.
- Clean all pressure sprayers and dusters before putting them away for the winter. Make sure they are functioning properly prior to storage.
- Clean and sanitize all stakes and trellises before putting them up for the winter. Use either rubbing alcohol or 1 part liquid bleach to 9 parts water.





# JANUARY GARDENING TIPS

## ORNAMENTALS

- Watch for camellia buds that have brown spots on the edges and then spread to the entire flower. This is petal blight. Remove and destroy any buds showing symptoms. Don't confuse it with cold damage. It's a good practice to remove spent flowers from the ground. <https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/camellia-diseases-insect-pests/>
- January is a good month to plant trees. Do not add fertilizer to planting hole - it could burn the roots. [https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%20932\\_3.PDF](https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%20932_3.PDF)
- Fertilize annuals in colder months with a fertilizer high in nitrate nitrogen.
- Keep pansies and violas dead headed.
- If squirrels are digging bulbs, cover the bulbs with 1-inch wire mesh so foliage can grow through. Then place mulch over wire.
- Pull up winter weeds now before they form seeds.
- If a few, consecutive warm days have caused your bulbs to nose out from under protective mulch, plan to thicken the mulch layer as soon as cold weather returns to prevent freezing by exposure.
- Analyze last year's planting, fertilizing and spraying records. Make notations to reorder successful varieties.

## FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Plant B & B, bare-root and container-grown fruit.
- Water newly planted fruit trees thoroughly, even if the ground is wet, so the soil around the roots will settle.
- Prune grapes in January or February. If this job is left too late in the season, bleeding from cut ends will occur. Train them onto a one or two wire fence. <https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=B1505>
- Don't plant strawberries or figs until February or March. <https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C883&title=Home%20Garden%20Strawberries>, and <https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C945&title=Home%20Garden%20Figs>
- Some mail order seed companies offer pelleted seed of lettuce, carrot, and a few other small-seeded crops. Pelleted seed has a special coating to make them larger. This is especially valuable for children and gardeners with arthritic hands, weak eyesight, or poor coordination. Wide spacing of seed helps eliminate thinning.
- When using pelleted seed, plant in moist soil and keep it moist because the coating has to dissolve before the seed can germinate.
- Organize your seeds for inside planting. Take each seed packet and count back from the last frost (April 14) taking into consideration the number of days for germination.
- Remove brown raspberry and blackberry canes that bore fruit last year; tie up green canes for this year's fruit. [https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%20766\\_3.PDF](https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%20766_3.PDF)
- Spray dormant oil on fruit trees, per label instructions.
- Prune apple and pear trees. Remove dead limbs first, then the pencil-sized, vertical "water sprouts". <https://site.extension.uga.edu/franklin/2018/01/when-to-prune-fruit-trees/>
- Sterilize tools, pots, and anything you use around your plants. Use one part household bleach to nine parts water. Soak for about 15 minutes, rinse well and let dry.




UGA1436148

Camellia flower blight rapidly turns flowers brown. Clemson University – USDA Cooperative Extension Slide Series, Bugwood.org

## JANUARY MISCELLANEOUS

- Protect liquid insecticides from cold weather to preserve their effectiveness. If any product is stored below the manufacturer's suggested minimum storage temperature, it loses its potency. The most important factor in determining if the product is usable is the complete absence of crystals. If crystals remain after the product returns to room temperature, do not use it. Dispose of it according to the directions on the label.
- Chop unwanted kudzu, English ivy, and bamboo to the ground. Follow with herbicide on the new leaves in April.
- Clean indoor plant leaves with a damp rag. Sandwich the leaf between folds of cloth and wipe gently. Change the cloth for each plant to avoid transferring insects or diseases.
- Make sure houseplants are misted and not touching windows. Cut back on fertilizer except for plants you are trying to force to bloom. <https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C951&title=Care%20of%20Holiday%20and%20Gift%20Plants>

RAINFALL COMPARISONS						
	Cherokee County			State Wide		
	Sept 2020	Oct 2020	YTD	Sept 2020	Oct 2020	YTD
<b>Actual</b>	7.0	7.1	71.8	6.8	4.4	58.4
<b>Normal</b>	4.1	3.7	45.7	3.8	3.1	39.7
<b>Deviation</b>	2.9	3.4	26.1	3.0	1.3	18.7

# Recipes

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## Crockpot Dressing and Waffles

From Pat Bowen

Make some extra stuffing / dressing with your holiday turkey, and then use the leftovers for the treat that follows.

### Dressing Recipe:

7 cups packaged stuffing cubes  
1/3 cup pecans, chopped fine  
1/2 cup dried cranberries  
1 tsp sage  
1/2 tsp pepper  
1/2 lb bulk pork sausage  
1 large onion, chopped fine  
2 celery ribs, chopped fine  
2 cups chicken broth  
2 tbsp butter

Combine first five ingredients. In large skillet, cook crumbled sausage, onion and celery over medium heat until sausage is no longer pink. Drain. Add to stuffing mixture. Stir in broth and butter. Transfer to greased 5-quart crock pot. Cook on low 4 hours, until edges are crisp.

### **Waffles**

Using your leftover stuffing, spread it on a waffle maker. You can spread it to the edges since it will not run as waffle batter does. Cook until slightly crispy. (Waffle makers will differ on size and time.)

Serve as a light lunch with leftover gravy.

## Sausage and Spinach Loaf

From Pat Bowen

Like a large stromboli, this treat can serve up to 16 as an appetizer, or 4 to 6 as a lunch with a salad.

### Ingredients:

1 can of Pillsbury refrigerated pizza dough  
1 lb bulk Italian sausage (hot or sweet)  
1 10-oz package frozen spinach, thawed and squeezed dry  
2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese  
1 beaten egg  
3 tbsp grated parmesan  
1 tbsp oregano  
1 tsp garlic powder  
Pizza sauce for dipping (optional)



### Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350. Brown crumbled sausage and drain. Cool slightly. Roll out the pizza dough on a lightly greased baking sheet. Spread sausage lengthwise on the dough rectangle, leaving empty space about one third of the way from one of the long ends.

Top with spinach and sprinkle on the mozzarella cheese. Roll up jelly-roll style, pinching the seams and tucking the ends under, with the seam side down. Tuck the ends under, and form a crescent shape. Brush with egg. Combine last three ingredients and sprinkle on the loaf. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until brown. Slice and serve warm.

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

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**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**  
**EXTENSION**  
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The University of Georgia and Ft. Valley State College, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and counties of the state cooperating.

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