



Gardening With The Masters

Growing, Gardening and Gaining Knowledge
August/September 2023

Garden TRIVIA Time

There are many vegetables that can be grown as fall crops. It is best to direct sow some of them, rather than using transplants.

Do you know what some of these crops are?

To find out, look in the August/September 2019 issue of the Cherokee County Master Gardener newsletter, *Gardening with the Masters*. Archived issues can be found on the CCMG website, <https://cherokeemaster-gardeners.com/>.

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



Spring peeper (*Pseudacris crucifer*) srelherp.uga.edu

One of my favorite signs of spring isn't a plant blooming. It's the first time I hear the spring peepers' (*Pseudacris crucifer*) high-pitched whistling or peeping chorus coming from natural wet areas. It's hard to believe the loud constant sound comes from little tree frogs only 1 inch long.

Spring peepers are tan, grey, or brown with a distinctive "X" in their upper back. Their coloration helps them blend in with tree bark and leaf litter. When I hear their mating calls, I know spring is here. Most people think frogs live in standing water, but we actually have 16 tree frog species that live in Georgia.

Besides spring peepers the two most common tree frogs are the green tree frog (*Dryophytes cinereus*) and Cope's gray tree frog (*Hyla chrysoscelis*). Cope's gray tree frogs can cause skin irritation so don't handle them. At less than 2 inches in length, their small size and coloration help protect them from predators in trees during the day. Tree frogs are beneficial creatures, eating a diet of insects. In turn, they also provide food for many beneficial predators. In the summer I have small green tree frogs climb up my windows at night after a rain looking for insects that are drawn to the light from the house. I don't know where they hide on the deck during the day but they love the habitat I've provided with many potted plants and small trees on the deck.

I will also occasionally find a Cope's gray tree frog hanging out in a moist saucer under a potted plant. Each summer one of the species of tree frogs lays eggs in my rainwater collection tote, and I stop using the water and watch the tadpoles grow.

Last winter a friend raised both Cope's gray and green tree frogs in her greenhouse. She has so much fun discovering them in her plants eating insects. Nature has so many gifts for us to observe. We just have to take the time to watch.

*For more info about the green tree frog (*Dryophytes cinereus*), and Cope's gray tree frog (*Hyla chrysoscelis*), see page 5.

Marcia

Preparing in the Fall for the Spring

By Maribeth Price, Cherokee County Master Gardener Intern

Here we are in hot August in Georgia, and it's hard to imagine that soon fall and cool weather will be upon us, but it's just around the corner. Now is the perfect time to prepare for gardening in the spring. As a Master Gardener intern just out of the academic portion of the Master Gardener course in Cherokee County, I am working alongside established Master Gardeners and Cherokee County's Extension agent, Josh Fuder, to complete the field work to finish the course.



Ornamental flower bed extension.uga.edu

An individual who takes the Master Gardener course is obviously a person with a love for gardening. In my case, I had gardened for years but sometimes ahead of having all the gardening knowledge for the best success. I learned a lot in the class about what I had done wrong. My most grievous error was a lack of preparation. Following are a few tips to have better success next spring with your gardening efforts.

First, consider what area you have to work with. Will it be a flower bed or vegetable garden or a combination? How is the drainage? How much sun does this area get throughout the day? What is the state of the soil in that area? The success of your garden lies with having the proper amount of sunlight for the plants in that space, proper watering and drainage, and good soil.



[Soil test bag](#)

Fall is an important time to do a soil test. A soil test will give you the facts regarding the soil you will be planting in, and you will learn what amendments to add to optimize the growth of the plants you intend to install in the area. See the link at the bottom of this article for more information. Be sure to follow the recommendations you will be given with your Soil Test Report.

As you consider what you want to plant for next year, have you sketched out how you plan to lay it out? Before I had better knowledge of gardening, I planted a nectarine tree in my backyard where I could see it flower each spring, and now four years on, it blocks the afternoon sun where I plant tomatoes. Because as we know the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, I must prune its height to allow the sun to reach the gardening bed on the east side of that tree in the afternoon. I also discovered that the idea of having nectarines in your backyard is much stronger than the reality that

you will harvest any that the squirrels don't eat or how difficult it is to keep insects from boring into the fruit. For these reasons, I have reduced my expectations to the enjoyment of the tree out my window during the changes to it each season. A bit more research, planning, and sketching would have benefited my garden arrangement greatly.

So sketch what you want for next spring, and with your sketch, list the plants you want to put in the space. Then research each for their characteristics, spacing needs, light requirements, and preferred pH. For example, blueberries thrive in acidic soil and sunlight, whereas many vegetables and herbs need a more alkaline soil with their sunlight. If you are going for a more cottage garden look, how will you arrange them considering bloom time, bloom and foliage color, height, and if they are perennial or annual? Will what you plant as a perennial delight you each spring as the plants emerge, or will you be disappointed with a bare area each winter? Prepare, sketch, research, and get your fall soil test for your best garden yet.

The Extension websites for the University of Georgia and North Carolina State University are excellent for researching the plants you would most like to see healthy and thriving in your garden next season as well as learning about landscape design. In addition, there is a link on the Cherokee County Extension website to learn more about soil testing and linked below.

USEFUL LINKS:

- [Click HERE for UGA landscape design resources](#)
- [Click HERE for UGA information on ornamental plants](#)
- [Click HERE for UGA information on growing fruits and vegetables](#)
- North Carolina Extension Office Tool Kit: <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/>
- [For Soil Testing information, click HERE](#)



The Ubiquitous Euphorbias

By Mary Tucker, Cherokee County Master Gardener

The plants in the *Euphorbia* genus are some of the most abundant on earth, and there are reportedly over 2000 species that inhabit a wide variety of conditions. Euphorbias are very widespread, being native to every continent except Antarctica, though they are most often found in temperate or tropical areas. They may be tall or short, upright or creeping, showy or insignificant in appearance. Some euphorbias are annuals or may be used as houseplants; others are biennials or perennials. Some are excellent garden specimens, whereas others can be troublesome weeds.

These plants are members of the Euphorbiaceae (or spurge) family, and often the common names of the species will include the word spurge. Despite the wide variety of plants in this genus, one characteristic that the plants have in common is that they exude a sticky, white sap when cut. This sap is toxic to a degree, and in some species can be quite caustic, causing skin irritation. Therefore, those with sensitive skin should wear gloves when working with euphorbias. If you grow euphorbias as houseplants, take care to keep pets and children from ingesting the foliage since it can cause gastric upset. A plus, however, is that the sticky sap is reported to discourage deer and rabbits from browsing these plants.

In my research, I learned that this characteristic sap is responsible for both the botanical name and the common name. The genus name comes from a Greek physician, Euphorbius, who in 1st century AD used the sap for medicinal purposes. Likewise, the common name of spurge comes from the Old French word *espurgier*, which means “to purge.” This is because the sap of some *Euphorbias* was used as a laxative or purgative.

One fascinating aspect of these plants is that the flowers are quite insignificant in appearance, having neither petals nor sepals. The best way to envision this is to look at the popular holiday plant, poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*). What looks like a colorful red petal is actually a bract, or specialized leaf. The true flowers are in the cluster of small, greenish nubs in the center of the arrangement of bracts. Many of the euphorbias don't have the showy bracts of the poinsettia, and the tiny flowers may be hardly noticeable. Others have clusters of greenish yellow bracts that put on an attractive show when in bloom in the garden.

With the large number of plants in this genus, you will find that growing conditions will vary among the species. However, many grow best in full to part sun and prefer a well-drained soil. In fact, some are considered succulent and prefer growing conditions similar to that of cacti.

Below are some of the more common species that you may encounter in nurseries or botanical gardens – or in the wild.



Tree form euphorbia,
Photo © Hans Hillewaert CC BY-SA 3.0 license



Poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*)

No doubt the poinsettia is the most well known of the Euphorbias since it is such a popular Christmas holiday plant. It is native to central Mexico into South America, where it can grow quite large, even to the size of shrubs or small trees. We think of poinsettias having red bracts, but through hybridizing (often with the related *E. cornastra*, which bears white bracts) these decorative plants come in a wide range of colors. In our USDA Hardiness Zone they are normally only grown seasonally as potted plants.

Poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*) Photo © Norman Salazar Arguedas CC BY-SA 4.0 license



Wild poinsettia (*Euphorbia heterophylla*)

You may correctly guess that this native annual is a relative of the holiday poinsettia by looking at the small but colorful red swatches at the bases of the bracts. However, it is quite diminutive and subdued by comparison. It is native to parts of North and South America and is most usually found in disturbed areas and along roadsides. It propagates easily by seed and can become weedy in gardens or croplands. The plant usually has a lanky appearance and grows to about 1 or 3 feet tall.

Wild poinsettia (*Euphorbia heterophylla*),
Photo courtesy Mary Tucker

Continued on page 6

Pollinators: The Power Behind Much of Life

By Mary Schuster, Cherokee County Master Gardener

This is such an important subject, and having said so, I hope just stating this will draw you in enough to read this short, albeit loaded, little piece.

If you like to eat, enjoy clean air, and desire a healthy economy, then you will want to know about pollinators so you can appreciate all that they do. So, let's talk about what they are, what they do, their decreasing numbers, and how to create wonderful spaces for them to thrive and grow in numbers.

A pollinator is anything that helps carry pollen from the male part of the flower (stamen) to female part of the same or another flower (stigma). While some plants are self pollinating, others may be fertilized by pollen carried by the wind or water. This article will stress the importance of pollen carried by insects and animals such as bees, wasps, moths, butterflies, birds, flies, and small animals such as bats. These creatures all have a very important task in life—they pollinate plants.

So, what is this mechanism of pollination? It is the process pollinators accomplish by way of fluttering, buzzing, or creeping from plant to plant and dining on protein-rich and high-energy nectar. As they move from plant to plant they transport and deposit pollen. The pollen fertilizes plants and allows those plants to go on to reproduce.



Bumble bee with pollen bags on strawflower courtesy Jennifer Ruscilli



Monarch courtesy John Ruscilli

Successful pollination accounts for one of every three bites of food we eat. In addition to satisfying our hunger, pollinators support healthy ecosystems that clean the air, stabilize soils, protect from severe weather, and support other wildlife. For humans, insects play a crucial role in food production, pollinating two thirds of the world's crops. Of great concern is the fact that pollinator populations have been declining, and that's bad news for ecosystems. Without pollinators, many of the foods, beverages, fibers, spices, and medicines we use on a daily basis would not be possible. Bees are the most numerous, effective, and important pollinators. Approximately 4000 species of native bees—some even endangered—provide a critically important ecological service, but their numbers are in serious decline. Why is this happening? Some reasons for the decline include pesticide poisoning, habitat loss, and disease.

How can we turn the tide of further harm to the environment and restore it to health? The best way to start is right in our backyards by creating wildlife habitat that will support pollinators and other creatures. And the process is surprisingly simple, whether your garden is a half-acre lot or just a small

patio. Here's what you need to do (much of which you may have in your yard already):

- Provide food sources, concentrating on native plants and flowers. Consider including these Pollinator Plants of the Year recommended by UGA's State Botanical Garden: blue wild indigo (*Baptisia australis*), wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*), aromatic aster (*Symphyotrichum oblongifolium*), and Coastal Plain Joe Pye weed (*Eutrochium dubium*).
- Provide water sources, which can be in the form of a birdbath, shallow pans of water, ornamental ponds, or streams.
- Provide places for cover like wooded areas, log piles, and evergreens.
- Provide places to raise young, such as nesting boxes, dead trees, burrows, and dense shrubs.
- Employ sustainable gardening practices, such as decreasing chemical pesticides and fertilizers, reducing or eliminating lawn area, collecting rain water, and providing mulch and ground cover.

When you see your yard is all set up, you may contact the Atlanta Audubon Society and/or the National Wildlife Federation to have your yard officially certified as a backyard wildlife sanctuary. You will have become a true steward of the planet!



Female bluebird with nesting material courtesy John Ruscilli



NWF certified wildlife habitat signage courtesy Mary Schuster



Friend or Foe in the Garden: Shrews

By Karen Garland, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Shrews...what are they? Gardeners rarely see or talk about them, so what role do they play in the health of our landscapes? Although the nearly 385 species look like they are related to rodents, they are not. They are more closely related to moles but do not constantly live underground. Although some species are climbing or aquatic, most live solitary lives in abandoned burrows, spending much of their lives hidden under leaf litter, tree trunks, roots, and shrubs.

Shrews are nocturnal, which may also help explain why they are rarely seen. Furthermore, they are wary of humans, as they briskly scurry about using echolocation to navigate their territory since they have poor eyesight. With a long, pointed snout, and spike-like teeth, they rely on their sense of touch with their whiskers as their primary hunting tool.



Northern short-tailed shrew © Sturgis McKeever, Georgia Southern University, Bugwood.org

Their omnivorous diet consists of seeds, nuts, caterpillars, slugs, snails, beetles, grubs, grasshoppers, millipedes, centipedes, and other arthropods. Because they need a lot of energy, many plant enemies fall into their diets, making them heroes of the food chain, as they have huge appetites, eating three times their body weight in a single day. Most are slightly venomous, which is rare in mammals. They have a bite that paralyzes small prey but is typically not serious to most humans who may be bitten.

Like hummingbirds, shrews have an incredibly high metabolism and do not live very long. In fact, they are often curled up asleep to conserve energy when they are not hunting or eating. Most live only about one or two years, having two to four litters of two to ten babies per year to help offset the loss of their short-lived lives.

Yet what do they mean for your garden? The presence or absence of shrews can be directly related to the diversity and quality of your yard and garden's soil life. These small mammals are a special reminder of the vast web of life our land supports. Shrews don't often damage plants and do little or no burrowing in garden beds. They live under leaf litter and grass and might travel along existing mole and vole tunnels. For these reasons, shrews are beneficial in a garden and should not be eliminated unless they become a nuisance. With an estimated world population of 100 billion, they are closer to your garden than you realize.

As previously shared, there are minimal reasons to want to eliminate them from your garden, as they are generally beneficial predators. To help maintain a healthy population of shrews, keep your cat indoors and let your garden grow wilder. Mow the lawn higher, leave plant material to decompose on the spot, leave low-hanging branches alone, and don't use poisonous pesticides (insecticidal soap and neem oil are acceptable). I'm hoping that, by this point, you've learned that shrews are a valuable component of our natural world and should be permitted to continue their essential role in a healthy food web.

Seven species of shrews occur in Georgia. Some are difficult to distinguish from others. For more information on three most common, here are some additional resources about their range, descriptions and behavior: [northern short-tailed shrew \(*Blarina brevicauda*\)](#), [southern short-tailed shrew \(*Blarina carolinensis*\)](#), and [least shrew \(*Cryptotis parva*\)](#).

Editorial..... continued from page 1



Green tree frog (*Dryophytes cinereus*)
© Gerald Holmes, bugwood.org



Green tree frogs (*Dryophytes cinereus*)
courtesy Debbie Meadows



Cope's gray tree frog (*Hyla chrysoscelis*),
srelherp.uga.edu

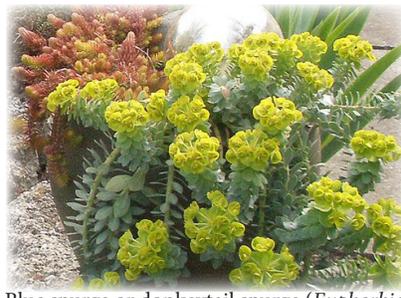
The Ubiquitous Euphorbiasfrom page 3



Snow on the mountain (*Euphorbia marginata*), Photo © H. Zell CC BY-SA 3.0 license

This member of the genus is a warm-weather annual and is native to much of the United States, with a higher concentration in the plains and prairies of the central parts of the country. It is grown as an ornamental annual and is tolerant of dry conditions. It grows 1 to 3 feet in height. The upper leaves develop showy white margins, and during bloom, the inconspicuous flowers are surrounded by white bracts. Propagation is from seed.

Snow on the mountain (*Euphorbia marginata*)



Blue spurge or donkeytail spurge (*Euphorbia myrsinites*), Photo © Klasse im Garten CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 license

Blue spurge or donkeytail spurge (*Euphorbia myrsinites*)

This is an evergreen perennial member of the *Euphorbia* genus. It has long, trailing stems that bear bluish gray leaves that spiral around the stem. The tiny blooms are surrounded by greenish yellow bracts. It may reach several feet in height and width. As with most euphor-

bias, it requires good drainage and prefers full sun. It may self seed in the garden and can be a pest in some regions.



Baby's breath euphorbia 'Diamond Frost' (*Euphorbia hypericifolia*), Photo © Gary Wade, UGA

of baby's breath. Small gray-green foliage contrasts nicely with the white bracts. The plants grow 6 to 12 inches tall and mound to a width of 1 to 2 feet. It is appropriate for garden beds, containers, or hanging baskets.

Baby's breath euphorbia (*Euphorbia hypericifolia*)

The 'Diamond Frost' cultivar of this species was honored in 2010 as the Georgia Gold Medal winner in the annual category. It blooms from spring until frost and produces tiny yet bountiful clouds of white bracts, hence the descriptive name



Crown of thorns (*Euphorbia milii*)

In our region, this genus is most popular as a houseplant, where it will reach heights of 1 to 3 feet tall. In its native Madagascar, it grows as a small perennial shrub. The plant has a loose form and bears spiny stems, hence its common name, crown of thorns. Bright green leaves are borne along the stems, with a concentration of foliage at the tops. The tiny inconsequential flowers are surrounded by showy red bracts.

Crown of thorns (*Euphorbia milii*), Photo © Mokkie CC BY-SA 3.0 license



Mediterranean spurge (*Euphorbia characias*), Photo © Kurt Stuber CC BY-SA 3.0 license

An herbaceous perennial, Mediterranean spurge is useful in beds and borders in USDA Hardiness Zones 6 to 8. It is native to parts of southern Europe. It has an upright nature and reaches 3 to 4 feet in height. In bloom, the plant is topped with yellow-green bracts that contrast nicely with the bluish green foliage.

Mediterranean spurge (*Euphorbia characias*)

It grows well in full sun to part shade and dry to medium soil; it will not tolerate damp soil and may be stressed in humid conditions. There are numerous named cultivars available.



Madagascar jewel (*Euphorbia leuconeura*), Photo courtesy Mary Tucker

Madagascar jewel (*Euphorbia leuconeura*)

Madagascar jewel is grown as a houseplant in our gardening zone or can be used in outdoor beds as a summer annual. Tiny cream-colored flowers produce seeds that sprout readily. When young, the small plants have attractive white veining on the leaves, but this disappears as the plant

ages. As it matures, it may develop side branches that grow off the main trunk, and it can get 3 to 4 feet tall. This houseplant is often available at Cherokee County Master Gardener plant sales.

GREAT SOUTHEAST



Pollinator Census

Come join the Cherokee Master Gardeners and participate in a citizen science project created by the University of Georgia. Everyone can help count pollinator insects during this fun event.

Date? August 18-19, 2023

Event Time? 10:00am until 12:00noon

Where? Multiple counting locations

Not sure how to count?

Then come join the

****POLLINATOR CLASS!****

SATURDAY, AUGUST 19TH, 10:00AM

Registration is required for the class!

Click [HERE](#), to register!

Friday & Saturday, August 18th & 19th

Cherokee County Senior Center
1001 Univeter Road, Canton

Saturday, August 19th

Veteran's Park

Backyard Agriculture Education Station

7345 Cumming Hwy, Canton

AND

Ball Ground Botanical Gardens

215 Valley Street, Ball Ground

Bring the Kids! and Enjoy this STEM Activity!



By Mary Tucker, Master Gardener



Monarda didyma,
Flowers Swamprose CC BY-ND 2.0

One of the Pollinator Plants of the Year chosen by UGA's State Botanical Garden is wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*). Did you know that all plants in the genus *Monarda* are native to North America?

The most commonly grown perennials in this genus are *Monarda fistulosa* and *M. didyma* (commonly known as bee-balm). A great deal of breeding has taken place between these two species, and there are dozens of named cultivars.



Monarda fistulosa, Form July 2021
with hummingbird clearingwing moth
Hope Duckworth CC BY 4.0

Cherokee County Master Gardeners Fall Plant/Bulb One Day Sale

Saturday, September 16, 2023
9:00am until noon

Cherokee County Senior Services
1001 Univeter Road,
Canton, Georgia 30115

Choose from nice varieties of plants, shrubs, trees, specialty plants, garden accessories, and garden art, plus expert advice.

All plants are accustomed to our growing climate.

Cash or Credit Card accepted



Pink garden phlox (*Phlox paniculata*), courtesy
John Ruscilli



White garden phlox
(*Phlox paniculata*),
courtesy John Ruscilli





Photo powdery mildew for more info [CLICK HERE](#).

AUGUST GARDENING TIPS

- Heavy rains at harvest can dilute the sugars in melons. Watermelons can reconcentrate sugar if left on the vine for a few dry days, but cantaloupes can't.
- Harvest cantaloupes when the melons pull easily from the stem; honeydews when the blossom end is slightly soft or springy; watermelons when there is a hollow sound when thumped and skin loses its shine. Also, run your hand around the middle of the watermelon. When fully ripe, most varieties develop low, longitudinal ridges, rather like flexed calf muscles.
- Start seeds of cool-weather vegetables like broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, collards and lettuce in order to transplant to the garden in early September. [For garden planning click HERE](#).
- White fly may be a serious problem this month on tomatoes, peppers, eggplants and squash. There are no effective preventive measures, so it's important to control the population before they increase to damaging levels. Hang sticky yellow strips among your plants to trap these pests.

- Plant bush beans now for your fall crop. Watch out for insects, such as Mexican bean beetle.
- If going on vacation this month, be sure to harvest all your vegetables and then arrange for someone to pick fast maturing crops, such as squash and okra; otherwise, they will become overmature and stop producing.

- Spider mites leave webs on the underside of leaves, and eggs are laid in these webs. Spider mites thrive in hot, dry weather. For mild infestations, hose the foliage to wash off the mites. For severe problems, spray with an approved chemical according to the label. [For INFESTATIONS click HERE](#). The best remedy for spider mites on plants is a good, heavy rainfall. [Click HERE for info](#).



For info about Mexican beetles in your garden, [CLICK HERE](#).

ORNAMENTALS

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

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

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

AUGUST MISCELLANEOUS

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

	RAINFALL COMPARISONS					
	Cherokee County			State Wide		
	May 2023	June 2023	YTD 2023	May 2023	June 2023	YTD 2023
Actual	1.8	5.4	30.8	3.3	6.5	29.5
Normal	4.3	4.1	29.7	3.2	4.5	27.8
Deviation	-2.5	1.3	1.1	0.1	2.0	1.7

SEPTEMBER GARDENING TIPS

ORNAMENTALS

- Fall is a great time to plant and divide perennials and shrubs for next year's garden. Plants planted in the fall do not endure the summer heat during establishment and will form sufficient root systems before winter dormancy. [To plant shrubs click HERE.](#) [For dividing perennials click HERE.](#)
- If you are not sure which end of the bulb is the top, plant it on its side. The stem will always grow upright.



Photo courtesy Marcia Winchester, from left to right: *Lycoris radiata*/spider lily, *Hyacinth*, *Narcissus*/daffodil, crocus, *Muscari armeniacum*/grape hyacinth.

- Plant peonies now, but make sure the crowns are buried only 1½ -2" below ground level. Deeper planting keeps the plants from blooming. Look for varieties that perform well in the South.
- Divide, cut back and fertilize daylilies now to promote root growth for next year's flowers.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- During the fall, be sure to water vegetables adequately; crops such as corn, pepper, squash and tomato won't mature correctly if stressed due to lack of water. Snap bean, tomato and pepper flowers may fail to develop fruit when daytime temperatures rise above 90°F.
- Harvesting guidelines: Pears should be picked at the hard ripe stage and allowed to finish ripening off the tree in a paper bag. The base color of yellow pears should change from green to yellow as the fruit approaches maturity. [For Pear info click HERE.](#)
- Cucumber beetles, squash bugs, Colorado potato beetles and European corn borers pass the winter in debris left in the garden. Remove dead plant material and compost it or till it under. This limits your pest population next year to the insects that migrate into the garden. [For more info about cucurbit insect pests, CLICK HERE.](#)
- To harvest sunflower seeds, wait until the seeds are fully grown and firm, then cut the head, leaving one foot of stem. Hang in a dry, airy spot to finish ripening. Do not store sunflowers on top of each other or they may rot. [To grow sunflowers click HERE.](#)
- Winter-type pumpkins and squash, such as acorn, butternut, and spaghetti keep for several months in a cool, medium-dry basement, garage or tool shed. Allow the fruit to ripen fully on the vine, and cure in the sun to form a hard rind. Harvest before frost, and leave a piece of stem on each when they are cut from the vine. If the floor is damp, elevate them to reduce the possibility of rot. The best storage temperature is about 60°F.



Daylily division courtesy Clemson University, [CLICK HERE.](#)

- Keep basil, parsley, garlic, mint and sage producing by pinching off the flowers. Herbs can be used fresh, frozen, or dried. When the dew dries, cut a few stems, tie a strong cord around this little bouquet, and hang in a cool, dry place until fully dry. Place in a jar for use during the winter. [Click HERE for herb gardening.](#)
- Don't prune or fertilize fruits now; it may disturb bud formation.
- Do not store apples or pears with vegetables such as potatoes and squash. Fruits give off ethylene gas that speeds up the ripening process of vegetables and may cause them to develop "off" flavors.
- Beets, carrots, collards, mustard greens, onions, parsley, radishes, spinach and turnips seeds can be planted in the garden all month.
- Near the end of the growing season, pick off all tomato blossoms that won't have time to bear fruit so that plant nutrients go into existing tomatoes.
- Hot peppers will keep best if stored after they are dry. Pull the plants and hang them up, or pick the peppers and thread on a string. Store in a cool, dry place. Wash your hands after handling them.

SEPTEMBER MISCELLANEOUS

- Autumn is a good time for improving garden soil. Add manure, compost and leaves to increase the organic matter. Before adding lime, have soil tested to determine if your soil is acidic. [For soil testing and amenities click HERE.](#)
- Do not spray pesticides when it is windy or temperatures are over 85°F; and always follow directions carefully.
- Washing clothes worn while applying pesticides is important. Use heavy-duty detergent & hot water ASAP.
- Some pesticides are sold as dusts. Dusts cannot be applied as precisely as sprays and may drift to non-targeted areas.

August/September Recipes

By Maurya Jones

Tomato Pie

Ingredients:

- 4 medium or large tomatoes, peeled and sliced
- 8 to 10 basil leaves, chopped
- 1/3 cup chopped green onions
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup each grated mozzarella and cheddar cheese
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 9 inch pre-baked deep dish pie shell

Directions

1. Layer half of the tomato slices, basil, and green onion in pie shell.
2. Add salt and pepper to taste.
3. In a bowl, mix mayonnaise with the two cheeses.
4. Layer remaining tomatoes in pie shell, and top with remaining green onions, basil, and the mayonnaise-cheese mixture.
5. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes

Mixed Berry Crumble

Ingredients:

- 1 pint fresh blueberries
- 2 (6-ounce) containers fresh raspberries
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 2/3 cup packed light brown sugar
- 6 tablespoons butter, melted

Directions

1. Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Mix together raspberries and blueberries in medium bowl.
3. Whisk together flour and brown sugar in another medium bowl.
4. Remove 3 tablespoons of flour mixture; sprinkle this over berries, and gently toss until evenly coated. Transfer berry mixture to 8-inch square baking pan.
5. To make topping, stir melted butter into remaining flour mixture until combined well. Crumble bits of topping all over berry mixture.
6. Bake until berries begin to soften and bubble, 35 to 40 minutes.
7. Serve warm or at room temperature. Top each serving with a scoop of vanilla ice cream if desired.



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Shrimp and Tomato Pasta

As summer time dwindles down, we cherish the last of seasonal produce. This recipe, which I clipped many years ago from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution newspaper, combines the harvest's final tomatoes with fresh basil, olives, and shrimp.

Ingredients:

- 5 tablespoons of garlic olive oil*
- 1 pound large shrimp
- 6 to 8 ripe plum tomatoes (if large, 6 will be enough)**
- 1/4 cup sliced black olives (preferably Kalamata)
- 1/4 cup slivered fresh basil, plus extra for garnish

Directions

1. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, add 2 tablespoons olive oil.
2. Add the shrimp and sauté until almost cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes.
3. Add the tomatoes, remaining 3 tablespoons oil, olives, and basil.
4. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
5. Cook until heated through.
6. Garnish with additional fresh basil.

To complete the meal:

Prepare pasta and add olive oil and Parmesan cheese to flavor. Serve with a green salad on the side.

*If you can't find garlic oil, sauté 2 to 3 garlic cloves in olive oil before adding the shrimp.

**Because the tomatoes are among the stars of this recipe, make sure they are perfectly ripe and at the height of their flavor!



shrimp, basil, tomatoes, and cheese
Adobe Stock | [#140608053](#)



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