Time to Start a Fall Garden
By Beverly Adams
Agriculture and Natural Resources Program Assistant
UGA Extension Forsyth County

Just the other day I received an email from a Forsyth County resident about a cucumber plant that was in decline, and he wanted to know what to do to get it back to “normal.” My response to him was there was nothing to do; it’s the end of the season for that cucumber plant, so pull it up and start thinking about a fall garden.

As summer vegetables stop producing and the hours of daylight become fewer, it’s time to start planning and preparing our fall gardens. One advantage of gardening in the fall is cooler temperatures that make gardening more pleasant. Another advantage is that most fall vegetables are leafy green plants that don’t require pollinators to produce the part we eat. This means gardeners can use low hoop houses to protect the plants against pests, and to capture a few more growing days out of the fall season.

Living in north Georgia, we have a delicate balance between starting fall vegetables early enough to allow them to mature before a hard frost, and nursing them through the seedling stage while the summer days are still hot. In addition to excluding pests, the shade cloth covering of a low hoop house blocks out some of the heat from the sun, allowing us to plant cool season vegetables in late August. Later in the season, the shade cloth traps heat from the earth inside the hoop house and can raise the temperature around our crops by a few degrees. Some cool season vegetables can overwinter in the garden for an early spring harvest.

Because they take longer to mature, some fall vegetables are best purchased as transplants. These include broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, and cauliflower. Vegetables that can be planted as seeds are beets, bunching onions, carrots, collards, kale, lettuce, mustard, radishes, spinach, swish chard, and turnips.

Here are some cultivars of cool season vegetables that do well in Georgia:

**Broccoli** – Marathon, Packman, Patriot, Premium Crop, Bravo, Decathion
**Cabbage** – Blue Dynasty, Bravo, Early Round Dutch, Rio Verde, Green Jewel
Carrot – Chantenay, Scarlet Nantes, Sweetbites, Sweet Delight
Cauliflower – Absolute, Early Snowball, Graffiti (purple), White Magic, Symphony
Collard Greens – Blue Max, Georgia Southern, Hevi-Crop
Kale – Vates, Dwarf Siberian, Blue Armor, Blue Knight
Lettuce – Butterhead, Romaine, Buttercrunch
Mustard Greens – Florida Broadleaf, Southern Giant Curled, Red Giant, Savannah
Onion, Green – White Portugal
Onion, Dry Bulb – Burgundy, Excel, Grano, Red Creole, Savannah Sweet
Radish – Cherry Bell, Scarlet Globe, Champion
Spinach – Melody, Winter Bloomsdale

Early fall is also a good time to have your soil tested. A laboratory soil test takes the guesswork out of determining whether you need fertilizer or lime for your fall garden crops. Visit the Forsyth County Extension website at http://extension.uga.edu/county-offices/forsyth/agriculture-and-natural-resources/soil-and-water-testing.html for directions on taking soil samples, then bring your dry soil to the Extension office along with the $10 testing fee (cash or check).

If you’re new to food gardening, here are more tips for a successful fall harvest:
- Locate the garden in full sunlight – 6-8 hours per day;
- Prepare the soil before planting based in soil test recommendations;
- Plant on schedule using recommended varieties
- Control weeds, pest insects, and diseases;
- Water thoroughly at soil level when needed to supplement rainfall.

For more recommended cultivars and planting dates, refer to the UGA Vegetable Planting Chart Circular 963 http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/html/C963/C963VegeChart.pdf. As always, if you have any questions please to contact your Forsyth County Extension Office at 770-887-2418. We are here to help you succeed in your garden and landscape adventures. Happy Fall Gardening!

Perennials for Fall Planting
By Heather N. Kolich
Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent
UGA Extension Forsyth County

One of the first harbingers of fall, a flight of migrating geese, passed the Extension office last week. Fall is my favorite season. It’s the time for flannel shirts, pumpkin pie, and preparing your landscape for a beautiful and bountiful spring show. Although spring stimulates many gardeners to get outside and plant things, fall is actually the best season for planting some types of perennial plants, including trees, shrubs, and spring flowering bulbs.
Spring-flowering bulbs need a shot of cold
Planting hardy, spring-flowering bulbs in October and November gives them a chance to grow out their root systems before the cold weather of winter arrives. Most spring-flowering bulbs also need to experience a period of cold weather in order to produce blooms. Sometimes, our winters aren’t cold enough for long enough to please the likes of tulips and peonies.

The earliest of the spring-flowering bulbs is usually the crocus. These low-to-the-ground blooms are available in white, yellow, orange, and purple to blue cultivars that emerge in February or March. Another very early bloomer to try is Glory-of-the-Snow (*Chionodoxa luciliae*), available in white, pink, and purple-blue. Because these bulbs bloom so early, they can be planted right into warm-season turfgrasses to add little clusters of brightness to dormant lawns.

Deliciously scented daffodils are another favorite spring-flowering bulb. Numerous generations of selective breeding have produced daffodils with double blooms, interesting color combinations, and a wide range of mature heights. Early blooming cultivars flower with or shortly after crocus, and pair well with grape hyacinth. They can be planted under deciduous trees to provide color to early spring landscapes before the tree leaves fill in. Late blooming daffodil varieties will brighten the landscape through May, but may need to be planted outside the shade of trees so they’ll get enough sun exposure.

Fall planting reduces stresses on trees and shrubs
Because root systems are active even when shoot systems are dormant, fall planting allows trees and shrubs to become established in their new environment without having to cope with the typical summer stress factors of drought, heat, pests, and flower or fruit production. Dormant planting is also a disease control strategy. Leaves can be a source of fungal and bacterial diseases. Plants nearing dormancy have fewer leaves, so they’re less likely to transmit diseases to their new environment.

Extension Fall Plant Sale makes finding the best fruit plants easy
Unfortunately, retail nurseries don’t often offer choice fruit plants in the fall. But Forsyth County Extension does! Through our Extension Fall Plant Sale, you can order a wide variety of traditional and native fruit trees, shrubs, and vines that were selected specifically for the upper piedmont area. In addition to home orchard favorites like blueberries, apples, and figs, we’ve got new items like pomegranates and disease-resistant wine grapes, as well as native plants for food plots. For plant descriptions and order form, visit [http://extension.uga.edu/county-offices/forsyth.html](http://extension.uga.edu/county-offices/forsyth.html) or call 770-887-2418.
Let’s Look: Snakes
Several species of snakes hatch or are born in the late summer and early fall, and we’ve received numerous calls and emails requesting snake identification. Most Georgia snakes are non-venomous, beneficial, and protected by law. The exceptions for our area are copperheads, timber rattlers (also called canebrake rattlers), and pygmy rattlers. Rat snakes, garter snakes, ringneck, and crowned snakes are among the many beneficial species that eat rodents, termites, and other pests. Although most snakes are not aggressive, they may strike if startled or threatened. As we move about our landscapes doing fall cleaning and planting, we should make noise and use caution before reaching into areas that have been undisturbed for a while. Covered woodpiles and remote corners of storage sheds could be nesting places for snakes (and spiders).

Check out the Savannah River Ecology Lab for photos and more information about Georgia’s snakes.

Let’s Act: Start composting this fall
According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 20-30 percent of trash in our nation’s landfills is organic matter that could have been returned to the earth as compost. Thousands of tons of bagged lawn clippings, fall leaves, and food waste that could have been transformed into a nourishing soil amendment are, instead, filling up the limited space in our landfills.

Instead of bagging your leaves this fall, consider improving our community’s environmental wellness by composting yard waste and plant-based food scraps at home or school. The finished compost can be applied as a topdressing to lawns or incorporated into garden beds to improve soil condition and water infiltration. Compost also helps reduce soil loss due to erosion.

Fall fair contests – closer than ever!

School contests:
- Scarecrow Contest, K-5 classroom entries. Theme: Famous Georgians

Open to everyone contests:
- Baking and Canning Contests – Must feature Georgia Grown products

Visit our website for details, rules, and entry forms.
Learning with Extension – Events and Opportunities

**Extension Fall Plant Sale** – [order fruit plants](#) for your home orchard or wildlife food plot now through Oct. 15, then pick up your order at the Extension office Oct. 26 or 27.

**From Forest to Freezer: Wild Game Food Preservation** – Sept. 18, 6:30 p.m.
Family and Consumer Sciences agent Barbara Worley will teach you how to safely freeze and dry your wild game harvest. Sharon Forks Library. Register through the library.

**Play at the Park** – Saturday, Sept. 29, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
Come out Fowler Park on Saturday, September 29 for Play in the Park and visit our Extension booth for games, activities, and information about 4-H, gardening, and food.

**Extension Booth at the Cumming Country Fair and Festival** – Oct. 4-14
Stop by the Extension booth during your visit to the Cumming Country Fair and Festival to learn about our programs and projects, get your questions answered about gardening, landscape care, local ecosystems, nutrition and food safety, and 4-H youth opportunities. Free activities and demonstrations for youth and adults from 6-8 p.m. Oct. 5-13.

**Rite Bite Cooking for Diabetes** – Oct. 22, 30, November 3, 13
Join Family and Consumer Sciences agent Barbara Worley for the Rite Bite diabetes management cooking class at the Cumming branch library. Register through the library.

**Master Gardener Training 2019** – Second Saturday of each month
If becoming a Georgia Master Gardener is on your bucket list, but you haven’t been able to attend classes during the week, mark your calendar now for the 2019 Master Gardener training in Forsyth County. Learn how Forsyth County Extension Master Gardener Volunteers are Building Community through Gardening. Applications for the training will be available in October on the UGA Extension Forsyth County website.

**College Scholarships for Horticulture Students**
Forsyth County Extension Master Gardener Volunteers have created a scholarship for Forsyth County high school graduates who are pursuing a degree in horticulture. One scholarship in the amount of $1,250 will be awarded for the Spring 2019 semester to a qualified student attending, or accepted to attend, a two or four year Georgia college to pursue a degree in horticulture. Visit the Forsyth County Extension website for application information and form.

**Got Questions?**
Visit UGA Extension Forsyth County for answers, articles, upcoming events and classes, and lots more useful information.