

Gardening with the Masters

For the Cherokee County Master Gardeners

Volume XXIII, Issue 6 Oct/Nov 2016

WHAT'S HAPPENING

OCTOBER

Oct 1 State Master Gardener Convention

Oct 5 Plant-a-Row workday

Oct 6 Demo Garden Workday, 10am-3pm

Oct 8 Cherokee Cty Electronics Recycling Day, 9:00am-1:00pm, <http://www.cherokeega.com/Recycling-Center/documents/Flyer%20-%20Cherokee%20E-%20Cycle%202016.pdf>

Oct 18 Monthly Meeting

Oct 19 Plant-a-Row workday

Oct 20 Demo Garden Workday 10am-3pm

Oct 22 Tree & Blueberry Planting @Hickory Flat Library, 10am

NOVEMBER

Nov 3 Demo Garden Workday 10am-3pm

Nov 15 Monthly Meeting

Nov 17 Demo Garden Workday 10am-3pm

Nov 17 Senior Expo, 10:00am-2:00pm, Northside-Cherokee Conference Center

Nov 19 Plant-a-Row workday



EDITOR'S CORNER

By Marcia Winchester, Cherokee Master Gardener

The Demo Garden at the Canton Senior Center is constantly changing. During each season, different plants and different gardens catch my eye. In the spring, all of the gardens are beautiful. Summer brought tons of butterflies to the annual zinnias in both the Cutting Garden and around the flag pole in the front area. One workday I counted 15 butterflies on the Cutting Garden's zinnias. Guess what annual I'm adding to my garden next year! September brought on the huge pink flowers of the hibiscus, followed in October by the beautiful blooms on the Confederate rose hibiscus in the Heirloom Garden. People are always impressed when both hibiscus bloom. We moved the espaliered apple this winter, and this summer we had two apples. In the Herb Garden, our four different types of basil loved the hot summer.

The newly planted Native Bog Garden will fill in nicely next spring. Our Urban Garden will be installed this fall, and if you have never seen climbing spinach, check out the fence there, which will be covered in it. With all of this going on in the gardens, the most dramatic occurrence was the removal of the Leyland cypress screen between the gardens and the animal shelter. We're looking forward to new plantings in the space. We're considering blueberries for the seniors, something for shade, and maybe something to screen . . . Next year will be a new adventure in the gardens.



Marcia

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PEONIES

By Joan McFather, Cherokee County Master Gardener



On a recent trip, my family and I lived on a houseboat in Amsterdam. The owners had greeted us with a vase of peonies, some blooming, other buds about to. During our 10-day vacation, I watched with delight as the peonies continued to produce flower after flower—still going strong when we made our departure! It gave me new appreciation for the ones I have growing and an idea for this column.

While it's true that peonies typically bloom in the latter part of May, fall is when you want to be planting them. There are actually two types: the herbaceous, which grow to 2 to 3 feet and die back in the winter; and tree peonies, which grow woody branches that do not die back, but simply drop their leaves since they are deciduous. They grow a bit larger—4 to 6 feet. Once upon a time peonies were planted in rows or set into islands surrounded by lawn, but I prefer mine (herbaceous) mixed into a hillside landscape. I have always heard that peonies do not like to be moved, so those I agonized over—trying to decide what would be the perfect spots, especially since they last seemingly forever, perhaps “outliving the gardeners who planted them.” Hmm. (I have also read that, since planting situations can change, it's better to move than lose—which makes sense.)

But let's get them planted first. Walter Reeves, our resident gardening expert, believes there are three essentials to consider: “loose, well-draining soil; protection from afternoon sun in summer; and chilly winters.” The need for a cold dormant season has been offered as to why we shouldn't plant herbaceous peonies in the South. Apparently mine didn't get the memo—they're just fine. Expert Don Hollingsworth, writing in “Peonies in the Deep South Revisited,” states that it isn't the cold they need so much as enough dormancy. The posting recommends cutting the branches down by November if the plants haven't gone dormant on their own. That reported, I will cheerfully admit that I just let mine do their own thing.

But back to planting: you do want to do that correctly or you won't get the blooms that make it all worthwhile. Choose a spot in full sun, but with some afternoon shade. You can amend the soil by incorporating some well-rotted manure, compost, or bone meal. Now as leaves begin to turn in the fall, dig a hole 12 to 18 inches deep and 12 inches wide. Replace part of the dirt in the hole's center, forming a cone, and spread the bare roots over it. Be sure that the eyes on the tubers are pointing up and are about 1/2 inch below the soil as you cover the roots or your plants won't bloom. You should add mulch as protection from ground heaving as winter approaches. You'll want divisions of three to five eyes per hole; fewer eyes mean a longer wait for blooms. Water deeply every 10 days to two weeks. Once established, peonies are quite drought resistant. Do be aware that peonies often don't bloom their first year.

Wait to fertilize until spring. After the blooms fade and you remove seedpods to insure more blooms next year, use a low nitrogen complete fertilizer, maybe 5-10-5, about a handful sprinkled around the base of each plant. Just do it once a year, if that often.

Now, which ones to plant? Oh my! Through the years breeders have developed a spectacular array of flower forms, colors, and bloom times. Choosing early, middle, and late, you can have blooms for up to two months. Plants vary in height and flower forms: single, semi-double, double, bomb, and Japanese. Considerable opinion has been written about varieties found to do well in the South. Two often mentioned are 'Festiva Maxima' (early blooming, large white double flow-



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CAMELIA SASANQUA

By Hope Sorrells, Cherokee County Master Gardener



The number one reason to plant the *Camellia sasanqua* (commonly called sasanqua) is that these shrubs brighten our landscape as daylight fades in fall and our bright summer blooms have gone away.

Sasanquas are native to eastern and southern Asia but do well in US Department of Agriculture Hardiness Zones 7 through 9. Camellias have been cultivated in the United States since the 1700s. The sasanquas bloom in the fall, September to December. Their sister *Camellia japonica* then takes over blooming through spring.

The basics: *Camellia sasanqua* is an evergreen shrub growing 5 to 12 feet tall, somewhat smaller than *Camellia japonica*. Its foliage and flowers are also smaller, and its leaves are a darker green than the japonicas. Flower colors are in pink, rose, red, or white. Petals can be single or double. Some varieties have a soft sweet fragrance, and some cultivars may have a scent of tea. In fact sasanquas are a close relative of the tea plant, *Camellia sinensis*.

Sasanquas prefer growing in semi shade, dappled light under tall trees, or in morning sun with afternoon shade. The preferred planting time is fall or spring. Fall planting gives the shrub time to establish a root system without the stress of our hot summers. Sasanquas thrive in rich, well-drained, acidic soil, conditions similar to those preferred by azaleas. A pH of 5.5 to 6.5 is preferred. Soil testing is always a good idea prior to planting. Organic soil amendment is advised. Amend as much of the area around the hole as possible. This will allow wicking of water from the planting hole. Otherwise water will accumulate in the planting hole leading to rotting roots and sure death for the plant.

Camellias have shallow roots, so take care not to plant too deeply. The top of the root ball should be level with the top of the hole. Attention to watering is required the first year, with weekly watering during the growing season. Watering deeply encourages deeper root growth.

Mulch 2 to 3 inches in depth will help maintain steady soil moisture and temperature. Always keep mulch away from the trunk of the plant, and replace mulch annually. Bag and destroy fallen flowers and leaves. Taking these measures will help in disease control.

Do not fertilize at the time of planting or during the first year. Plants thrive better if roots are allowed to establish naturally. After the first year, fertilize in spring after flowering and in summer and fall, using an organic fertilizer for acid-loving plants. Rake mulch away from plant before fertilizer application. Water thoroughly afterwards, and rake mulch back in place.

Camellia sasanquas have a graceful and slow growth habit, and pruning is not often necessary. If pruning is required, wait until after blooming to avoid interfering with next year's buds. A light shaping may be all that is required.

Once established, *Camellia sasanqua* is a low-maintenance and long-lived shrub, and it tends to be more disease resistant, drought tolerant, sun tolerant, and hardier than *Camellia japonica*. To extend the bloom time beauty of colorful camellias in the garden, consider also planting the japonica varieties.

There are literally hundreds of varieties of *Camellia sasanqua* for your garden, and there are far too many to list. 'Yuletide' is popular. It has bright red single flowers with yellow stamens, and it blooms in December, as its name implies. Many named varieties can be found listed at the American Camellia Society website. Their headquarters is near Fort Valley, Georgia, at Masee Lane Gardens.

If you want an undemanding flowering ornamental that will cheer you in the fall with colorful blooms, plant *Camellia sasanqua*. You won't be disappointed.

START SAVING SEEDS NOW!

Start saving your extra seeds now. Be sure to label the package with name and color. Drop them off at the Demo Garden box or give to Marcia Winchester. We will have a meeting this winter to separate, package, and write up information labels for the different seeds. Those who attend will get free seeds and lots of information on how to succeed with them. The ones we package will be sold at the spring and fall plant sales.

Direct any questions to Marcia Winchester... (770) 592-4022

Cool Season Grasses

(Tall Fescue, Kentucky Bluegrass, Creeping Red/Chewing Fescue)

- Keep turf at a length of 2-3". Be careful not to mow more than 1/3 of the total length of the grass at one time.
- Now is the time to fill in bare spots with seed or sod and if you're starting a lawn from scratch, make sure to keep the new lawn moist until the seeds are a few inches long or you see new growth from the sod.
- If it is a new lawn, make sure to water 1" per week if no additional rainfall is received.
- Now is a good time to test the soil pH and amend according to recommendations.
- Control weeds that are present by either pulling manually or treating with a post-emergent.



By Rachel Prakash,
Cherokee County Master Gardener



RAINFALL COMPARISONS

	Cherokee County			State Wide		
	Jul 16	Aug 16	YTD	Jul 16	Aug 16	YTD
Actual	3.6	3.1	27.9	2.2	4.9	26.1
Normal	4.8	4.0	38.5	4.9	3.8	32.6
Excess	-1.2	-0.9	-10.6	-2.7	1.1	-6.5

Warm Season Grasses

(Bermuda, Centipede, Zoysia, St. Augustine)

- Test the soil in your lawn and add amendments now so the soil pH is optimum come growing season.
- Spot treat with a post-emergent weed killer for dandelions, violets and other broadleaf weeds present in cool weather before they set seed. As an alternative to spraying, these weeds can be pulled with attention to making sure the root is completely removed.
- Prevent fallen leaves from matting on the surface of the lawn to keep the sod from being smothered

LAWN TIPS



A Winter Garden

By Pat Bowen, Cherokee County Master Gardener



What could be nicer than a low maintenance garden, one that looks beautiful from the window even as you sit by your fireplace on the coldest days? No weeds to pull, no mosquitoes to swat, just a little attention now and then once it's in place. You might even enjoy going outdoors on a brisk winter day to primp it up or just let it warm your heart.

A winter garden can be beautiful with just the primary colors of the season: dark greens, shades of grey and brown, and don't forget red holly berries and the blue green needles of white pine. Put out a bird feeder you can see from a favorite window and you'll be rewarded with even more color and activity. Your winter garden can contain perennials that bloom in cold weather when most other plants are dormant. It can be as simple as leaving dried autumn joy sedum and native hydrangea in the garden until your spring clean up. They can form carefree natural flower arrangements on the ground that you can compost in spring. Or your winter garden can be as elaborate as being built on a full site plan with professional landscaping. That's another story.

There are things you can do before winter, and during winter, to bring your plan together. Let's start with before winter: plan and plant. You'll want to pick a site you can either see from a window in your house or that you can visit when the mood strikes. It might be a sheltered site near the house if you're thinking of planting cold weather perennials. For a site that is unprotected and subject to cold and wind you can focus on stone outcroppings, plants from other seasons that have dried and provide visual interest, trees and shrubs with peeling bark or colorful berries.



Cold weather perennials that do well in Cherokee County include Lenten Rose (Hellebores) that blooms in mid-winter and spreads slowly by reseeding, Daphne odora or fragrant or winter Daphne (Thymelaeaceae) also flowers in midwinter and should be planted where you can capture its sweet scent. Hens and Chicks (sempervivum tectorum) is green in summer and often turns rusty red in winter. Low growing junipers stay green all season and camellia (Theaceae) flowers appear in the "dead" of winter in lush blooms in many shades of red, pink and white. Christmas fern is one variety that holds its fronds all year.

Don't forget bulbs! We've all seen crocus coming up through the snow, and other choices are snowdrops, daffodils and Spanish bluebells (also known as wood hyacinth, and as scilla). This is just a short list of your choices.

You might have an interesting natural sight that can be modified or beautified for visual interest in winter. I have a large pile of rocks in my yard left over from the site excavation for my house. I was going to have the rocks hauled away until a friend suggested I make a rock garden out of it. Now it's covered in sedum, climbing hydrangea and native hydrangea that are lovely even when dried in winter. The rocks have interesting textures, too. They hold the heat of the day and bulbs I planted between them bloom a little earlier than in the rest of the yard. All it took was some imagination and some cool weather effort.

During the winter: it's time to take a good look around to assess what can be added, removed or moved around in the garden space either now or next spring. You might want to install some statuary or a bird bath and even some nighttime illumination for those early sunsets and longer evenings. Learn to appreciate bark textures like those of oak leaf hydrangea and white birch, the shapes of bare trees like dogwood or Japanese maple, the different greens and blues of winter evergreens. Many smaller plants retain their attractive seed heads after they've dried and they provide food for wildlife as well as winter beauty.

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What is it? Northern Watersnake or Water Moccasin

By Sue Allen, Cherokee County Master Gardener



Northern Watersnake



Cottonmouth/Water Moccasin

I have had several people question me regarding Water Moccasins residing on the premises of Woodmont. More than likely what you are seeing is the Northern Watersnake.

Did you know there are three species of watersnakes in Cherokee County? Some of these snakes are mistaken for the venomous Cottonmouth (known as the Water Moccasin), and this misidentification could be detrimental to these non-venomous snakes. There is the Red-bellied Watersnake that is dark brown, light brown, or gray with a bright orange to yellowish underside. The juveniles, on the other hand, are light brown to pinkish with dark blotches on the back, alternating with blotches along the sides, resembling banded snakes, such as the Water Moccasin. The Northern Watersnake is brown, tan, or grayish in color with a blotchy back and sides. This snake is often confused with the Water Moccasin, but the difference is the Water Moccasin has bands, unlike the Northern Watersnake, which has blotches. The last watersnake you may see in Cherokee County is the Brown Watersnake. This snake is a heavy-bodied snake with light to dark brown square blotches. One line of the square blotches runs down the center of the dorsum, and the other two lines run in alternating rows along the sides of the body. **In Georgia, all non-venomous snakes are protected; this means it is illegal to kill them. On the other hand, a venomous snake you can kill. I would personally rather go the other way and avoid having an encounter with a snake.**

I know you all have the coloration down now, but let's look at the shape of the head and the eyes. Most venomous snakes have a triangular shaped head, but did you know that the watersnake flares out its round shaped head making it look triangular so you think it is a Water Moccasin? That is one intelligent snake. Now the eyes of watersnakes have round-shaped pupils, whereas the pupils of the Water Moccasin are like those of a cat, a vertical slit. I know you all want to take the time to check out those "cat eyes."

How do watersnakes swim versus the Water Moccasin? A watersnake swims with its body submerged in the water, whereas the Water Moccasin swims with its head above the water and the body gliding on top of the surface of the water. Most of the time, these snakes will flee as long as you do not provoke them.

One of the defense mechanisms of the Water Moccasin is to cock its head at a 45-degree angle, and if it feels threatened, it will open its mouth revealing the whitish inner lining. This is called gaping. It will also vibrate its tail if it feels threatened. On the other hand, the Northern Watersnake does none of these behaviors. However, the inner lining of its mouth is a whitish color as well.

When does the Water Moccasin bite? According to research provided by Georgia Wildlife, the Water Moccasin rarely bites humans. Their venom is very precious to them, and they would rather bluff, making you think they are going to strike rather than following through and biting you. You see they need all of their venom for their prey. Food comes first.

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...continued **SNAKES**



Water Moccasin gaping to deter a predator



Water Moccasins do not reside in the white area

Please visit the following websites:

http://georgiawildlife.com/sites/default/files/uploads/wildlife/nongame/pdf/Publications_and_Reports/WaterMoccasinBrochure_Web.pdf

<http://srelherp.uga.edu/index.htm>

Also, if you think you are viewing a Water Moccasin, take a picture of it and email the picture to John Jensen, herpetologist, at john.jensen@dnr.ga.gov . John works for Georgia Wildlife.

...continued **PEONIES**

ers with crimson markings) and ‘Sarah Bernhardt’ (late blooming double with dark rose-pink petals). Both are fragrant—unfortunately mine are too far away on the hill for daily sniffing. Reeves suggests that in general you should go for early-blooming varieties so as to avoid some of the heat. He lists ‘Festiva Maxima’ (white), ‘Bowl of Beauty’ (Japanese with rose pink petals), ‘Red Charm’ (a wonderful true red, but expensive), ‘Kansas’ (rosy red double, very reliable), ‘Shirley Temple’ (blush daughter of ‘Festiva Maxima’), ‘Paula Fay’ (bright pink semi-double), and ‘Mons. Jules Elie’ (light pink). In 2008, Auburn University did extensive peony trialing. For a fantastic list of the peonies—with pictures—go online to AU Peony Project. Bet you can’t choose just one!

...continued **WINTER GARDEN**

Don’t pull them up at the end of their growing season; they’re part of the overall picture.

For more ideas simply google “winter garden” and you’ll have lots of help. I’m keeping a file of winter ideas that I can work on all year: adjustments to spring and summer garden plans that will add to winter interest, and winter observations I can act on any time of year. It doesn’t add to my workload, just to more year round satisfaction with my garden.

OCTOBER TIPS

ORNAMENTALS

- October is the best month to plant fall annual beds. It is cooler for the transplants and gives their roots time to become established before winter cold hits. Try mixing dwarf snapdragons with pansies for color and parsley, kale, mustard and Swiss chard for background color. Make sure your beds have good drainage. http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/AP%20105_2.PDF
- Plant love in a mist, poppy, cornflower and larkspur seed now for early spring annuals.
- If climbing roses are in an exposed location, tie them up firmly with broad strips of rags or padded foam tape so the wind will not whip them against the trellis and bruise the bark.
- Don't prune roses this late as new growth would become subject to winter injury. The rose garden should be raked and cleaned, removing all fallen leaves and mulch to prevent black spot and other diseases next year. Replace mulch after the ground has frozen. Continue spraying for fungus.
- Clean up around perennial flowers, such as peonies. If left on the ground, leaves and stems can harbor diseases and provide convenient places for pests to spend the winter.
- Cut down stems and foliage of herbaceous perennials when the leaves begin to brown. Leave 3 inches of stem to ID the plant's location.
- October and November are generally considered the best months to plant trees and shrubs. Garden centers and nurseries usually stock a good selection of woody plants now. Select some accent plants for your landscape that will provide autumn colors. Trees that turn red include chokeberry, dogwood, red maple, red or scarlet oak and sourwood. Shrubs with spectacular fall foliage include viburnum, fothergilla, hydrangea, blueberries, *Itea* and *Amsonia*.
- Plant trees at least 6 feet away from sidewalks, concrete pools and driveways so growing roots do not crack the concrete. Trees that get quite large need to be placed even further away from concrete.
- Small imperfections, such as nicks and loose skin, should not affect the quality of most bulbs. Store bulbs in a cool area (below 65° F). Do not plant before Nov. 1. http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/B%20918_3.PDF

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Tomatoes need an average daily temperature of 65°F or more for ripening. If daytime temperatures consistently are below this, pick fruits that have begun to change color and bring them inside to ripen. Use recipes that require green tomatoes or place a ripe apple in a closed container with green tomatoes to encourage the tomatoes to turn red. Ripe apples give off ethylene gas which causes tomatoes to ripen.
- Cure pumpkins, butternut, and Hubbard squash at temperatures between 70 - 80° F for two to three weeks immediately after harvest. After curing, store them in a dry place at 55- 60° F. If stored at 50° F or below, pumpkins and squash are subject to damage by chilling. At

temperatures above 60° F, they gradually lose moisture and become stringy. http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/C%20993_3.PDF

- A final weeding of your strawberries, blueberries, or raspberries will help keep weed problems down to a minimum. Strawberries covered in the fall with a spun-bonded polyester material and uncovered in the spring just before bloom produced up to 60% more fruit than plants given the conventional straw or hay mulch cover.
- Make a note of any particularly unsatisfactory or productive varieties or crops. Such information can be very useful during garden-planning time in the spring.
- Clean up home orchard and small-fruit plantings. Sanitation is essential for good maintenance. Dried fruits or mummies carry disease organisms through the winter that will attack next year's crop.
- If there is a threat of frost at night, harvest your cucumber, eggplant, melon, okra, pepper and summer squash so the fruits are not damaged by the frost.
- Hot peppers store well dry. Pull plants and hang them up, or pick the peppers and thread on a string. Store in a cool, dry place.
- Do not apply quick-acting fertilizers while tilling the soil

MISCELLANEOUS

in the fall; nitrogen will leach away before spring. Materials that release nutrients slowly into the soil, such as rock phosphate or lime, can be worked into the soil in the fall.

- When removing disease-infected plant parts/debris, do not place refuse on the compost pile. The disease pathogens will live in the compost pile and can be transmitted with the application of compost to other garden beds, unless compost temperatures reach above 180° F and decomposition is complete. http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/C%20816_4.PDF
- Kudzu, poison ivy and other weedy vines are more susceptible to chemical control this time of year. Be sure to follow the directions, and protect other plants from drift of the spray. http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/C%20867-10_4.PDF



NOVEMBER TIPS

ORNAMENTALS

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

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Remove grass and weeds from trunks of fruit trees and grapes to prevent damage by mice and rodents. Leave a bare circle (one foot wide) around tree trunks when spreading mulch to keep mice from feeding on the bark. A collar or fence of poultry wire or a commercial tree guard approximately 18 inches high will deter rodents and rabbits.
- Plant lettuce and hardy vegetables, such as beets, cabbage, and spinach, in cold frames for winter or early spring crops.
- If you use aged manure as a soil conditioner, apply it now and till it under; it can be a source of weed seed.
- Rough plow or spade garden plots containing heavy, clay soil. Add organic matter and lime if indicated by a soil test. Leave the soil rough. Winter's thawing and freezing will break up the clods and kill some of the insects and slugs overwintering in the soil. A rough soil surface also catches more moisture and reduces erosion.

- When time or weather conditions prohibit plowing or cover cropping, you may let your garden lie under a mulch of compost, non-diseased plant wastes, or leaves all winter to be plowed/tilled under in the spring. If using heavy organic matter, chop fine enough so it can break down over the winter.
- Store pesticides in a frost-free location away from food and out of the reach of children. If a pesticide is in a paper container, put the whole package in a plastic container and seal it. Be sure that all bottles and cans are tightly sealed and well labeled. http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/C%20998_2.PDF

MISCELLANEOUS

- Keep an eye out for spider mites on your houseplants; they thrive in dry air. At the first sign of any insect infestation, isolate your plant. Several thorough washings with plain water may bring them under control. If not, apply an appropriate insecticide and follow the instructions on the label.
- During the cooler temperatures and shorter days of winter, the growth of most houseplants slows. Unless plants are grown under and artificial light source that is left on 16 hours per day, new growth will be minimal until spring. Reduce fertilization and water until late April or May when new growth resumes. http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/B%201318_3.PDF
- African violets do well when potted in small pots. A good general rule is to use a pot one-third the diameter of the plant. To humidify African violets, surround the pot with moist peat contained in a second pot. http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/C%20660_2.PDF
- If you plan to lay newspapers as mulch in the spring, glue them end to end this winter and store them as rolls. The paper mulch unrolls easily and won't be lifted by wind before anchoring.



Recipes

Send recipes to Maura Watson
At mlw229@gmail.com

Cranberry Upside-down Cake (serves 9)

1 stick, unsalted butter (divided) 1 large egg
1 1/2 cup fresh cranberries 1/2 cup flour
1/3 cup chopped pecans
1/3 cup + 1/2 cup sugar

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Coat a 9 in. square baking dish with 2 Tbsp. butter. Spread cranberries, pecans & 1/3 cup sugar evenly over bottom of dish.

Melt remaining 6 Tbsp. butter in microwave. Combine 1/2 cup sugar with egg; beat with electric mixer 1 min. till mixture is thick & "pale in color." Beat in flour & butter until smooth. Pour batter over cranberries.

Bake 35—40 mins. or until toothpick in center comes out clean. Let stand 10 min. to cool. Release sides of cake from pan with knife; invert onto serving plate.

Asparagus Gruyere Tart (serves 6-8)

2 sheets frozen puff pastry (thawed) 1 1/2 lb. medium asparagus (trimmed)
7 oz (3 cups) Gruyere cheese (freshly grated) Salt & pepper
1 T extra virgin olive oil Balsamic glaze *
1 to 2 T honey Dijon mustard with balsamic vinegar

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Prep a parchment lined baking sheet & place the 2 puff pastry sheets on the baking sheet, overlapping them just 1 inch in order to connect them. Use a sharp knife & "score" the pastry dough 1 in. from the edges all around to mark a rectangle. Use a fork to pierce the dough all around the center (NOT the edges). Bake the pastry dough until golden (about 15 mins)

Remove the pastry shell from the oven; let sit for 2 mins. Spread the Dijon mustard with balsamic vinegar onto pastry; sprinkle on the Gruyere cheese.

Trim the bottoms of the asparagus spears to fit crosswise inside the tart shell. Arrange them in a single layer over the Gruyere cheese (alternating ends & tips). Brush with olive oil & season with salt & pepper. Bake until spears are tender (about 20—25 mins.) Remove & drizzle with Balsamic glaze

Balsamic Glaze:

8 oz. Balsamic vinegar 1/4 cup sugar
Place sugar & vinegar in saucepan; stir to mix well. Cook over medium heat until mixture starts to boil. Reduce heat & cook until glaze is thick & syrupy. (about 20—30 mins.)

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Woodstock, GA 30188



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An equal opportunity/affirmative action organization committed to a diverse work force.

Mission Statement of the Georgia Master Gardener Association:
To stimulate the love for and increase the knowledge of gardening and to voluntarily and enthusiastically share this knowledge with others