

Gardening with the Masters

For the Cherokee County Master Gardeners

Volume XXIV, Issue 6 Oct/Nov 2017

WHAT'S HAPPENING

OCTOBER

Oct 5 Demo Garden Workday, 10am-3pm

Oct 6-7 GMGA annual conference Buford, GA

Oct 7 Making a cement leaf class Sr. Center, 10am

Oct 17 Monthly Meeting

Oct 19 Demo Garden Workday 10am-3pm

NOVEMBER

Nov 2 Demo Garden Workday 10am-3pm

Nov 16 Demo Garden Workday 10am-3pm

Nov 21 Monthly Meeting



EDITOR'S CORNER

By Marcia Winchester, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Most people don't think of trees as pollinator plants. However, trees benefit pollinators by providing food for them in various forms: nectar, pollen, and leaves for the larval stage of caterpillars. In turn, most trees need pollinators to form fruits, seeds, and nuts so that the trees can reproduce; though there are some exceptions, such as oaks (*Quercus* spp.), which are pollinated by wind rather than by bees or birds. Other creatures also benefit from these relationships between trees and pollinators since both wildlife and humans feed on the fruits, seeds, and nuts that are produced.

In early spring, when so many trees are blooming, they are mostly pollinated by bees. A lot of orchards rent honeybee hives to maximize pollination and increase their fruit yield. Many native bees are ground dwellers, only emerging for a few weeks a year to pollinate a specific tree.

It's easy to observe the web of life and interdependency of plants, pollinators, and other creatures when we look at some specific examples. Bees pollinate the blooms of the flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) that then form berries to feed birds in the fall. Red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*) blooms in April just as the hummingbirds are returning. The red tubular flowers provide nectar for the hummingbirds, which pollinate the blooms as they feed. The plant then forms seeds that feed wildlife in the fall and winter. Tulip trees (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) attract many different bees and butterflies to their beautiful yellow and orange tulip-shaped flowers. The seeds are eaten by cardinals, finches, and squirrels. The leaves are the host for tiger and spicebush swallowtail butterfly larvae. What a great tree! I hope you now look at trees, pollinators, and the cycle of nature differently.

Marcia



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THERE'S ANOTHER SLITHERING REPTILE? YES!

By Karen Garland, Cherokee County Master Gardener



Eastern Glass Lizard (*Ophisaurus ventralis*) <http://srelherp.uga.edu/jd/jdweb/Herps/species/uslizards/Ophven.htm>

What has scales, no legs, and flicks out its tongue? If you immediately responded snake, you are only partially correct. There is actually a second right answer that includes blinking eyelids, inflexible jaw, and visible ear holes, which snakes do not have. If you guessed glass lizard you win the golden buzzer!

Moreover, additional physical differences include glass lizards lacking a broad, single row of belly scales, which are found on nearly all snakes, and body length. Snakes have long bodies with short tails, whereas glass lizards have short bodies with long tails. In fact, growing between 18 to 43 inches, the long tail of a glass lizard makes up almost two-thirds of its entire body length, while the body proportion of a snake is the exact opposite.

Found on every continent, except Antarctica, there are 15 known species of nonvenomous glass lizards, belonging to the scientific genus *Ophisaurus*, from the Greek word meaning "snake-lizard." Four species can be found in Georgia, including the eastern glass lizard (*Ophisaurus ventralis*), slender glass lizard (*Ophisaurus attenuatus*), the very rare mimic glass lizard (*Ophisaurus mimicus*), and the island glass lizard (*Ophisaurus compressus*).

Its common name comes from its ability when being pursued to break off its tail into several pieces like glass. After being severed, the appendage wriggles about, distracting predators, allowing the lizard to easily escape. As with most lizards, the severed tail can regenerate, taking nine months or longer to do so, and it may be shorter and paler in comparison. An old wives' tale describes how the shattered tail may later rejoin into a single animal, but of course this is a myth!

If you come across a glass lizard, you should recognize that the coloration and patterning can vary considerably. When young, glass lizards are yellow-greenish or khaki-colored and usually sport a broad, dark stripe lengthwise down each side of the body. Older male lizards may be heavily speckled. Additionally, if you pick one up, you will notice that it often feels different than a snake. This is because the skin is protected by a layer of bony platelets called osteoderms, giving the lizard an armored texture.

Furthermore, do not be alarmed if you are working in your garden in late spring or early summer and you encounter four to 14 leathery eggs beneath the mulch or under a log, board, or other covered object. The female deposits her eggs, brooding them until they hatch approximately 60 days later. This behavior is highly unusual for a lizard species. She does this by curling her tail around them and raising her body temperature through muscle contractions. However, if she is approached by a predator, she will usually flee, abandoning the nest.

Lastly, as a backyard wildlife gardener or observer, keep your eyes and ears open, as most glass lizards can be found actively foraging by day, as they burrow their way through the leaf litter searching for a wide variety of insects, spiders, and other invertebrates as well as small reptiles and young rodents. You may also be lucky enough to encounter one after a heavy rain, which often drives them to the surface due to flooded burrows. Therefore, take the time to look down when you walk, as you never know what surprises may be around to blink at you.

References:

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AMUR HONEYSUCKLE: A TOUGH AND TERRIBLE THREAT

By Mary Tucker, Cherokee County Master Gardener



Lonicera maackii flowers and foliage: photo by Bill Johnson. Published online in *Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas*

We all want easy-to-grow plants, but beware what you wish for!

Amur honeysuckle or bush honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*) is a non-native shrub in the Caprifoliaceae family that you might be attracted to when you first hear about it. It's vigorous, fast growing, tolerant of various conditions, and offers lovely red berries in the fall. However, these same characteristics make it a menace—and one you don't want in your garden. And if you do find it on your property, eradicate it immediately!

How it got here

According to the National Park Service's publication *Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas*, Amur honeysuckle was imported from Asia into New York State in 1898. It was planted as an ornamental shrub and to provide wildlife cover and to control soil erosion. Unfortunately, it was not a well-behaved shrub and began to invade natural areas, largely due to the prolific berries that it produces. It is now one of the most common invasive bush honeysuckles in the mid-Atlantic region and is found in most states in the eastern United States, growing in USDA Hardiness Zones 2 to 8.

Its adaptability makes it especially troublesome, for it grows well in sun to deep shade and in wet to dry conditions. It also tolerates various soil

pHs, soil compaction, and restricted root zones. This makes it a problem in a wide range of habitats, such as forests, floodplains, fields, pastures, and roadsides. Where it has gotten a foothold, it prevents native plants from thriving, partly because it leafs out earlier than many native plants, shading them out.

How to recognize it

Since Amur honeysuckle is such a problem, it's important to learn to recognize it so it can be destroyed promptly if it makes its way onto your property. The deciduous foliage is ovate in shape and tapers to a long, sharp point. The leaves are about 2 to 3 inches in length and are arranged opposite each other on the stems. The leaves are a darker green above and lighter on the underside. The foliage (which does not offer good fall color) often persists on the shrub into the autumn months before dropping. At maturity, the shrub may grow 15 to 20 feet tall with a similar spread and usually has an upright, vase-shaped, arching form with multiple trunks. It looks a bit unkempt and weedy to my eye.

The twigs are slender and smooth, with a hollow, tan or white pith on the mature stems. The bark develops long, deep ridges as it matures, another distinguishing characteristic.

The flowers are similar in form and color to those of the invasive Japanese honeysuckle vine (*Lonicera japonica*) that we all know (and rightfully hate!). The fragrant blooms, borne in spring, are tubular with two lips and are white to cream colored, fading to yellow with age. The resulting fruits are bright red and are produced in abundance in late summer, and they may persist into winter. The berries are quite attractive to birds and small mammals, which eat them and consequently spread the seed to new locations. Amur honeysuckle shrubs can bear fruit when they are as young as three to five years, making the problem even worse. The shrub also spreads through vegetative sprouting and can form dense thickets.

How to eradicate it

Once you know how to recognize this menace, how do you get rid of it? Fortunately, young plants are relatively easy to pull by hand since they have a fairly shallow root system. Larger specimens can be pulled with an uprooting tool, or they can be cut repeatedly to weaken the plant. Systemic herbicides can be applied to foliage, bark, or cut stems and trunks.

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...continued **GLASS LIZARD**

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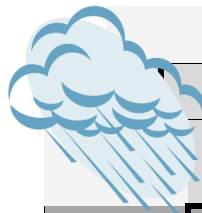
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Cool Season Grasses

(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 grass blades 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.



RAINFALL COMPARISONS

	Cherokee County			State Wide		
	Jul 17	Aug 17	YTD	Jul 17	Aug 17	YTD
Actual	5.4	4.9	43.4	4.3	5.2	40.2
Normal	4.5	4.1	38.1	4.9	3.8	33.5
Excess	.09	.08	5.3	-0.6	1.4	6.7

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.



By Rachel Prakash,
Cherokee County Master Gardener

LAWN TIPS



Fall Annuals and Friends

By Hope Sorrells, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Fall is a great time of year to plant in the South. The soil is still warm to promote root growth. Days remain sunny, but cooler temperatures give us summer-weary gardeners a boost of energy to work outside.

Annuals give us an opportunity for a varied garden scene each year. An annual plant completes its lifecycle in the period of one year, going from seed to seed in a single growing season. Removing dead flowers before seeds develop promotes more flowering and potentially more seeds.

Further definition of annuals can be made: cool-season and warm-season. Zinnias (*Zinnia* spp.) for example demand warm nights. Pansies, of the genus *Viola*, quickly fade as temperatures soar, qualifying them as a cool-season plant if not technically an annual.

Speaking of pansies, we grow them as annuals here because they do not survive our blistering summer heat. This is one dependable plant we can put into the ground now and not worry about the coming cold weather. A cold snap may leave them looking bedraggled, but their tendency is to quickly recover. Their small-sized cousins, Johnny jump-ups (*Viola tricolor*), tend to tolerate heat better and have more flowers per plant than pansies. Both need regular watering, well-drained soil, and application of fertilizer to thrive. Mulching assists with moisture retention and will help regulate soil temperature through really cold days. Again, remove spent flowers to promote more blooms.



Pansies with heuchera, chard and Swiss chard. Photo by Marcia Winchester

A few years ago my neighbor's mother was visiting from upper New York State. It was late fall. She was admiring my pansies when suddenly she asked, "Is the pansy the state flower of Georgia? I see them EVERYWHERE!" Her inquiry prompted me to consider a possibility that we gardeners might overuse these cheerful, dependable cool-weather plants. Perhaps our pansies could use some friends. What other companions can we incorporate into our fall landscape?

As a novice gardener years ago, I tended to choose plants for their blossoms. Now I realize flowers are not always needed. Many plants are interesting for their texture, color, and size variation. These plants can make a powerful impact in our landscapes.

Let's look at ornamental cabbage and kale (*Brassica oleracea*). These plants are closely related to cultivars of edible cabbage and kale. Actually the ornamental varieties can be eaten but are not nearly as tasty as their close relatives. A

good use for them is to garnish serving plates. Ornamental varieties were hybridized for their colors. These beauties are available in purple, rose, pink, cream, and white. The entire plant looks like a flower. Red mustard (*Brassica juncea*) is a colorful and edible kale option growing 2 to 3 feet tall with pretty purple leaves.

For maximum design impact, larger plantings of these colorful cool-weather plants will make more of a statement than smaller plantings. They need full sun, well-drained soil, regular watering, and fertilizer. Select large plants with short stems, and avoid root-bound plants. These choices may help growth of bushy plants. Depending on weather conditions, cabbage and kale may survive our winters.

Another fall friend of the flowerbed or container is parsley. This is an easy-to-grow kitchen herb but also a highly ornamental plant. Curly-leaf varieties have lush, lacy, dark green leaves. Can you picture this with yellow pansies? Italian flat-leaf varieties, though not quite as ornamental, are

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Going Nuts for Acorns!

By Karen Garland, Cherokee County Master Gardener

The autumn attack of oak trees will soon begin as acorns plummet with a thud upon rooftops, cars...and our heads. With winter soon approaching, animals will begin hoarding this valuable food resource. Employing one of two strategies, animals will either begin constructing a central food cache, orarder, that they vigorously defend or creating many different food caches, usually with a single food item by scatter hoarding.

According to the University of Georgia's School of Forestry, over 20 species of oak trees (*Quercus* spp.) are native to Georgia. With the genus further subdivided into red and white oak categories, white oaks generally produce leaves with rounded lobes and include species such as live (*Q. virginiana*), post (*Q. stellata*), and overcup (*Q. lyrata*). Red oaks, which include water, (*Q. nigra*), black (*Q. velutina*), and turkey (*Q. laevis*), generally have leaves with pointed lobes. Besides the shapes of their leaves what other differences do they exhibit? Their acorns!



Red oak acorns. Photo by Ellen Honeycutt

A single oak tree can produce thousands of acorns in one season. From these large seeds, mighty trees can grow. White oak acorns tend to be long and narrow, rather than fat and round like red oak acorns. They also have a crown or cap that covers about one-quarter of the body. In contrast, red oak acorn caps are nearly flat on top. Furthermore, being relatively high in carbohydrates, they are a significantly concentrated source of energy. Yet, acorns are not the same in terms of nutritional content or tastiness. Acorns produced by different species of oak trees are in fact quite diverse.

White oak acorns are generally more palatable to animals, such as deer, opossums, raccoons, foxes, and turkeys than red oak acorns because they contain fewer tannins, which are bitter-tasting chemicals that function to protect the acorn from insects and animals. Although acorns from the red oaks tend to be higher in fat, protein, calories, and fiber than do acorns from white oaks, the astringent quality (what causes you to pucker when you eat unripe fruit) of the red makes them less tasty.

However, many species will eat both types, especially during the end of winter into early spring, when the white oak varieties are gone. In fact, squirrels have been found to eat 85 percent of white oak acorns shortly after discovery and scatter hoard 60 percent of the acorns of red oaks (University of Richmond, 1998). White oak acorns usually germinate in the fall shortly after falling from the tree, and they quickly lose their nutritional value if stored for an extended period in the ground. Therefore, more than half of its stored energy goes to the seedling and not the squirrel.

Another observation researchers have witnessed is what a squirrel does when it first picks up an acorn...it rolls and shakes it. Scientists did not realize this was happening until they watched slow-motion video of squirrel behavior. Why are they shaking the acorn?

Squirrels are assessing the seed quality, as many acorns can be filled with weevils and other insects. If insects are present the squirrel will eat the acorn and weevils right away. If it is free of insects, it may choose to hoard it for later. Additionally, squirrels have been known to pry off the caps of red oak acorns, biting through the shells to get the nutritious inner nut meat and then discarding them half eaten with the embryo (baby plant) still intact, which is where the highest level of tannin is located. Because the embryos are not destroyed, the damaged red oak acorns can still germinate.

But what happens if a squirrel forgets where it has hidden an acorn? Eventually, it might sprout a new tree. Not only is a squirrel's taste for acorns essential for its own nutrition and survival, but it is also essential for the regeneration of oak forests. If you think the squirrel needs the oak tree more than the oak tree needs the squirrel, let us just say that they both need each other.

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...continued **HONEYSUCKLE**

Native alternatives

Now that you know about this noxious shrub, there's not much to recommend it! It's not a very attractive plant in form or function. The main attraction is the red berries. And if you want red berries, there are several native hollies that should suit you (and the birds) well, such as the deciduous possumhaw (*Ilex decidua*) and winterberry (*I. verticillata*) and the evergreen yaupon holly (*I. vomitoria*). Other excellent native choices with red berries include red chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*) and parsley hawthorn (*Crataegus marshallii*).

For more information:

The National Park Service publication *Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas* can be found online as a downloadable PDF at <https://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/pubs/midatlantic/midatlanticprint.htm>

The Invasive Plant Atlas of the United States has many excellent pictures of all aspects of the plant. See this link to go directly to the page for *Lonicera maackii*: <https://www.invasiveplantatlas.org/subject.html?sub=3040>. Or you can go to the home page for the Invasive Plant Atlas and search for the plant: www.invasiveplantatlas.org.

...continued **FALL ANNUALS**

preferred by cooks for their stronger, sweeter flavor. Why not plant both? In fact it is better to plant extra parsley for the black swallowtail butterfly caterpillar that is drawn to it. They may munch off all the leaves but they do not kill the plant. Parsley usually survives the winter. It is a biennial and goes to seed the second season.

Some of us need visual prompts to stimulate our imagination. I made a "field trip" to a local nursery to find other companions for fall flowers.

Swiss chard (*Beta vulgaris*) made a big statement to me as I approached the ornamental cabbage/kale table. Used in a container it was quite the "thriller." Another container had multiple varieties of colorful leaf lettuce as the "filler." Who would have imagined?

Moving on to the coral bells (*Heuchera* spp.) display I was overwhelmed with the possibilities of more friends for the fall garden. Their interesting foliage is now available in colorful shades of purple, rose, bright green, dark green, and silver. Heuchera is an easy-to-grow, evergreen, shade-tolerant plant. As a bonus, its blooms attract hummingbirds. It definitely combines well with other plants.

'Jack Frost' Siberian bugloss (*Brunnera macrophylla*) lured me in with its delicate heart-shaped, silver, fuzzy foliage. The worker told me deer tend to leave it alone. This bugloss cultivar is a semi-evergreen perennial. It likes part shade and moisture. Often used as a ground cover, it can be an accent or companion plant. I almost forgot to mention that it blooms in spring with forget-me-not type blue flowers. It may not like our hot summers.

Sweet flag (*Acorus* spp.) can be planted for a different texture and color. *Acorus calamus* 'Variegatus' is variegated with cream stripes. The 'Ogon' cultivar is yellow. Then there is *Acorus gramineus* 'Oborozuki', with yellow and white stripes. These grassy leaved plants need a lot of water. They make a lovely statement as their leaves sway next to contrasting friends. My fern border appreciates their companionship.

If you need more inspiration for fall companion plants, I encourage you to go to your neighborhood nursery or plant sale. Those pansies have many compatible friends available if we but introduce them. No, the pansy is not the state flower of Georgia. Cherokee rose (*Rosa laevigata*) has that designation.

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, bachelor buttons 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, foothergilla, hydrangea, blueberries, *Itea* and *Amsonia*.



Acer leucoderme, photo by Marcia Winchester

- 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. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%20993_4.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.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Do not apply quick-acting fertilizers while tilling the soil 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 November 1.
- 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. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%201318_4.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 Pat Bowen
At woodsgal@hotmail.com

Chicken and Rice with Artichokes (serves 4-6)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 8-10 chicken tenders | 1 cup chicken broth |
| 8 oz canned or frozen artichoke hearts | Pepper to taste |
| 1 cup converted rice | 1 cup shredded cheddar or chopped Velveeta |
| 1 can cream of chicken soup | |

Layer rice, chicken and artichokes in a crock pot. Blend soup and broth and pour over mixture. Sprinkle with pepper. Cook on low 4-6 hours. Top with cheese 30 minutes before done.

Spaghetti Bundt Pie (serves 4-6)

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 pound spaghetti | 6 oz shredded mozzarella cheese |
| 1 tsp salt | 6 oz shredded sharp cheddar cheese |
| 3 eggs, beaten well | 1 tsp pepper |
| 1½ cups whole milk | 1 jar pasta sauce |
| ¾ cup grated parmesan cheese | |

Butter or spray a 10-inch Bundt pan. Cook spaghetti in salted water until al dente, then drain.

Mix the pasta with remaining ingredients, except pasta sauce. Pour into Bundt pan and bake at 425 degrees for 35-40 minutes until cheese is melted and bubbling.

Let pan cool on rack for 10-15 minutes, then carefully invert the pie onto a bed of sauce on a platter and slice into servings.

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 To stimulate the love for and increase the knowledge of gardening and to voluntarily and enthusiastically share this knowledge with others