

Gardening with the Masters

Growing, Gardening and Gaining Knowledge

April 2019/May 2019

WHAT'S HAPPENING

APRIL

April 3- Plant-A-Row Workday

April 4- Apple Grafting Class
Pre-Registration Req.

April 4- Demo Garden Workday

April 6 - SPRING SYMPOSIUM
YANMAR EVO CENTER
9 - 5

April 6 - GNPS Native Plant Sale
10 - 2

April 16 - CCMG Monthly Mtg

April 17- Plant-A-Row Workday

April 18- Demo Garden Workday

MAY

May 1 - Plant-A-Row Workday

May 2 - Demo Garden Workday

May 3- Plant Sale Set-Up

May 4- Plant Sale Sr. Center
10 - 1

May 4- Lecture, Raised Beds
and Container Gardening

May 11 - Cobb County MG
Garden Tour, 10 - 5

May 11 - Canton Farmer's Mkt

May 15 - Plant-A-Row Workday

May 16- Demo Garden Workday

May 21 - CCMG Monthly Mtg

May 29- Demo Garden Workday

Grafting Class Sign-Ups
cut off April 4th.

Editor's Corner

By Marcia Winchester,
Cherokee County Master Gardener



Many homeowners enjoy feeding the birds. It can be very helpful in learning to identify our feathered friends. I too enjoy bringing birds into my yard. I know that besides foraging at my feeders, the birds are also eating seeds and insects in my yard. Occasionally feeding birds can create problems. The worst situation is when rats are attracted to the food in your feeders and decide to set up residency near or in your home. I heard of this problem years ago from a fellow Master Gardener who got an infestation of rats under her porch that were feeding at her bird feeders.

Rats, like any wildlife, need a consistent food source, access to water, and a shelter to live in. In order to discourage these unwanted pests, you have to break the cycle and remove one of the three conditions. I found the simple solution was to not put out bird seed year round. I use feeders in the fall and winter, but when spring comes, I clean my feeders and put them up for the summer. I then pull out a hummingbird feeder and feed the hummers. I gradually add feeders in the summer after the young hummingbirds hatch and leave the nests. The hummingbirds that forage in our area are ruby-throated hummingbirds (*Archilochus colubris*), and they do not share feeders. Thus, when I add a new feeder, I place it where it can't be seen from my other feeders. I feed the hummingbirds until mid-October when they migrate south for the winter. Then I bring out my seed feeders for the other feathered friends. So far the only pests are the noisy crows that like to eat at dawn.

Marcia

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Rosemary

By Joan McFather, *Cherokee County Master Gardener*

I really don't like to cook. Well, back in the day it was fun to do specialty dinners with friends, but day-to-day? Not so much. The food gets eaten, and then you have to do it all over again—and again. So I will say it was with some reserve that I admired my daughter Kate's stand of rosemary, though I went so far as to clip and strip some leaves for whatever it was that she was cooking.

Photo *Rosmarinus officinalis* courtesy
<http://ugatrial.hort.uga.edu/>

Rosemary is actually quite easy to grow. Of Mediterranean origin, the perennial evergreen *Rosmarinus officinalis* thrives in warm humid environments when planted in well-drained sandy soil. It will want 6 to

8 hours of sunshine. Yes, I know—you probably will have to amend our Georgia clay, and be aware that rosemary typically can't take extremely cold temperatures either. Kate's has apparently not gotten that memo in North Carolina, where she ignores it from season to season, but some folks suggest planting the herb in pots that can be brought in during cold weather. Rosemary actually prefers to stay somewhat on the dry side, making terra cotta a suitable container.

Planted in the yard, this “mist of the sea” (as the name translates) may grow anywhere from 3 to 6 feet tall, producing tiny blue—or pink or white—flowers that are attractive to bees and last into the summer. The shrub has an aroma that some call “piney” or “camphor” that emanates from the leaves that resemble pine needles: green on the top with a white underside. While it is possible to grow rosemary from seed, germination is a slow process, and taking stem cuttings is much simpler. Once established, rosemary is fairly resistant to diseases and pests, though keep an eye out for powdery mildew and spittlebugs.

Popular varieties include ‘Arp’, ‘Gorizia’, or ‘Tuscan Blue’, each an upright, as opposed to ‘Blue Rain’ or ‘Huntington Carpet’, both trailing varieties. ‘Pine Rosemary’ is not used in cooking, but it makes a nice ornamental. The others will provide an infinite source of tender tips to harvest for cooking or drying for later use. Routine pruning encourages tight compact plants.

Typically rosemary is used sparingly as an accent for pork, lamb, fish, poultry, game, stuffings, soups, stews... oh well, just about anything you want, including beverages (a rosemary simple syrup can be added to tea, lemonade, or some pretty substantial cocktails). Using a stem as a shish kabob pierces the food being grilled, thus adding its flavor. Be careful with fresh rosemary—a little goes a long way. Separate the leaves from the stems as you prepare. Dried rosemary will be even stronger.

Rosemary has a long and varied history and is associated with fairies, witches, weddings, and burials. In use since at least 500 B.C., it was supposedly draped around the goddess Aphrodite as she arose from the sea. The Virgin Mary spread her cloak over the shrub, turning the flowers blue and giving the plant its common name, the “rose (of) Mary.” During Medieval times, it was believed that rosemary grew only in the gardens of the righteous. It is a symbol for friendship, loyalty, and remembrance, as evinced by Shakespeare's Ophelia, who chides an absent Hamlet: “There's rosemary, that's for remembrance. Pray you, love, remember.” To this day, rosemary is used at weddings as a symbol of love and at funerals to indicate that the loved one will not be forgotten.

Regardless of its historical uses and the lore surrounding it, rosemary is a superb herb for culinary use as evidenced by my “righteous” daughter's cooking efforts. A sprinkle of fresh rosemary on flat bread? Google “focaccia al rosmarino” or see the recipe in this newsletter. Now that's heaven!

Master Gardener Plant Sale Reminder, May 4, 2019

@ Canton Senior Center, 10am—1pm

1001 Univeter Road, Canton, Georgia 30115

Plants, Garden Art, Demo Garden Tours and Master Gardeners

will be on hand to answer any questions you may have.

English Ivy Nevermore!

By Carolyn Puckett, *Cherokee County Master Gardener*

After the loss of habitat, the encroachment of non-native invasive plants is the greatest threat to our native plants and critters. One of the really nasty plant invaders is English ivy (*Hedera helix*).



A thick mat of English ivy (*Hedera helix*) covers the ground and shaded out the original plantings. Joey Williamson, ©2014 HGIC, Clemson Extension

Not long ago most garden books would name two primary ground covers for shade: English ivy and periwinkle (*Vinca minor*). But just as we have learned that many old health remedies are not really medically sound, old garden advice can be out of date. Far from recommending English ivy for your landscape, we now know that planting ivy is a huge mistake. In fact, some states have banned its sale.

The Georgia Exotic Plant Pest Council has designated English ivy as a Category One invasive: “An exotic plant that is a serious problem in Georgia natural areas by extensively invading native plant communities and displacing native species.”

The problem is that English ivy is too aggressive. Its spread is infinite, and it is very difficult to restrain or even to kill. It covers not only the floor of forests, out-competing and smothering native plants, but also covers the canopy level in the treetops. Ivy’s evergreen foliage covers a tree’s own foliage, restricting photosynthesis and causing the tree gradually to go into decline. The added weight of the ivy foliage can cause the tree to blow over in a windstorm. In addition, the evergreen foliage catches snow or ice, which can cause the weakened tree to come down during a winter storm.

These falling trees can severely damage homes and other property. Insurance claims for such damage may be denied if the homeowner is found responsible for allowing the tree to topple by not removing the ivy.

Ivy can cause other damage to your property as well. An ivy-clad house may look nostalgic, but ivy can seriously damage a structure, even pulling it down. When climbing a surface, the ivy produces root-like structures that exude a glue-like substance. The ivy’s roots move into cracks and crevices, making it difficult to remove and likely to cause permanent damage. Ivy has even been known to climb in windows—such as in my grandfather’s house!

While English ivy crawling over the ground does not bloom or produce seed, once it starts growing vertically on a surface, it will develop blooms and seeds that the birds carry great distances, thus spreading the infestation to additional natural areas.

If you are unfortunate enough to already have English ivy on your property, we recommend that you get rid of it. Pull up what you can and cut the rest back as far as possible. Apply a systemic herbicide such as triclopyr to the remaining ground-dwelling stems and foliage. Cut vines growing up a tree a short distance from the ground, and then apply triclopyr to the rooted portion of the stem. Be careful not to spray your tree bark. The herbicide is most effective if you apply it to the stump of the cut stem immediately after cutting it. You will probably need to make several herbicide applications over time to kill the ivy.



Proper method of cutting and controlling English Ivy growing up trees. <https://hgic.clemson.edu>
Joey Williamson, ©2014 HGIC, Clemson Extension

There are many lovely and well-behaved alternatives to English ivy as a ground cover for shade and also as a climbing vine. Your ground cover need not be composed of all one plant. In fact, your landscape will be healthier and less inviting to insect pests and diseases if you plant groupings of three or more plants each of multiple species over the area.

Creeping phlox (*Phlox stolonifera*) is a spreading perennial that is native to the eastern U.S. It will form a dense cover under quite shady conditions. It is only about 6 inches high, with flowers extending up another 6 inches in the spring. Cultivars are available with ¾-inch flowers of blue, white, pink, lilac, or purple. You can check out the performance of woodland phlox cultivars at <https://mtcubacenter.org/trials/phlox-for-shade/>.



Hooray for Hugelkultur!

By Karen Garland, *Cherokee County Master Gardener*

Are you looking for a way to increase fertility and combat drought in your garden or put that growing mound of yard and garden debris to use? In search of solutions, I stumbled upon an intriguing technique that has been used in Germany for hundreds of years known as hugelkultur (HOO-gul-culture), which roughly means “mound beds.” However, if you are a gardener who enjoys a tidy garden, this may not be the project for you.

Hugelkultur fits under the umbrella of permaculture that includes gardens that are intended to be sustainable and self-sufficient.

Simply put, they are raised garden beds filled with decaying wood

that builds humus through decomposition. While this process takes place below the ground, the raised beds are prepared for cultivation, which allows for the plants to take advantage of the organic material, nutrients, and air pockets. As the years pass, the soil of the raised bed becomes incredibly rich and loaded with soil life. Additionally, the composting process will slightly warm your soil giving you a longer growing season for the first few years.

Another benefit is that hugelkultur can be part of a system for growing garden crops during a drought. Think about a rotting log in the forest—if you break off the decomposing top layer, you will likely find a moist environment full of life right under the surface. The logs and branches of a hugelkultur bed act like a sponge. After a rain, any nutrients in the top soil are washed deeper into the ground, to be stored and released during drier times. Actually, you may never need to water your bed again after the first year, except during long-term droughts. In fact, a 2-foot tall, aboveground hugelkultur can maintain a usable level of moisture for about three weeks after saturation.

When gathering the wood to build your garden, note that it can be chips, branches, whole logs, or old firewood. There are certain woods that are best in your mound. Apple, oak, alder, maple, poplar, and birch are good choices for gradual decay and a consistent source of long-term nutrients for your plants. Evergreens, such as fir or spruce, are best if allowed to age a few years before being used. Slowly rotting woods, such as cedar and black locust, or ones that exude natural growth-inhibiting chemicals, such as black walnut, should not be used.

During the first year of decomposition, the wood and fungi take a lot of nitrogen out of the surrounding environment. Therefore, the first spring, grow nitrogen-fixing crops, such as clover and beans, or low-nitrogen vegetables such as potatoes, cucumbers, carrots, peas, radishes, parsnips, turnips, and rutabagas. After the first year, any crop can be grown, as the wood will start to break down and give nitrogen back. In the end you will be left with a bed of rich soil, which can provide a constant supply of nutrients for 20 years or even longer if you use only hardwoods.

Through subsequent years, as the wood breaks down, the bed will create air pockets that bacteria and mycelium can invade, further hastening the decomposition. These pockets will eventually collapse, shrinking the size of the hugelkultur. This is normal settling and can be counteracted by adding a fresh layer of compost, as needed.

A well-constructed hugelkultur can look complicated, but this interesting bed is easy to build.

1. Make any shape that you want by digging a foot-deep trench and filling it with a base of logs and branches, or simply place them on the ground in a crisscross pattern. This allows for better water and air circulation.
2. Pack the logs and branches with about 12 inches of a nitrogen booster, such as compost, leaves, grass clippings, straw, cardboard, or manure, as they have a high nitrogen content that will provide “food” for the decomposers.
3. Top with garden soil and plant...and enjoy the fruits of your labor!



Photo courtesy Creative Commons.

Going Green in Cherokee County

The Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce is helping the county become more environmentally responsible through their "Going Green" initiative.

Their annual **Earth Day Recycling Event** is coming up on **Monday, April 22, 2019**. It will be held from 9:30 am until 2:00 pm at the upper parking lot of the Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce, 3605 Marietta Highway, Canton.



This is a chance for you to responsibly recycle such things as electronics, cans, cell phones, children's car seats, and gardening containers. The Cherokee County Master Gardeners will be assisting the recycling event by accepting plant containers and pots.



Document shredding will also be available. Most recycling is free, but there may be a moderate fee for some older televisions and monitors due to the extra work needed to ensure safe recycling of these items. More details, such as specific electronics that are included, can be found at the Going Green section of the Chamber's website: <https://cherokeechamber.com/programs-events/>.

At the website you'll also find several valuable resources, including a guide to "reducing, reusing, and recycling" that is tailored to Cherokee County. It provides locations of local recycling facilities as well as general tips.

The Going Green initiative also encourages businesses to reduce their impact on the environment through its Going Green Recognition Program. You'll find useful tips for saving energy and other resources on the Going Green Recognition Form on the Chamber website.

Congratulations Master Gardener Graduation Class of 2019 Welcome New Trainees



English Ivy Nevermore!... *Continued from page 3*

Foam flower (*Tiarella cordifolia*) is a semi-evergreen, low-growing, native woodland plant that has ivy-shaped leaves. In some cultivars, the leaves are highlighted with reddish veining. In addition, bottlebrush-shaped racemes of pinkish white flowers bloom in the spring. Foam flower is available in both clumping and spreading cultivars.



Photo *Tiarella cordifolia*,
courtesy <http://ugatrial.hort.uga.edu>

Coral bells (*Heuchera* spp.) is another low-growing native woodland plant with interesting leaves. There are many cultivars available with colored leaves of yellow, peach, red, purple, or bronze. Because of Georgia's heat and humidity, we recommend you purchase cultivars bred with the eastern native species *Heuchera villosa* or *Heuchera americana*. Coral bells' flowers stand high over the foliage. In many of the cultivars with colored foliage, the flowers are not especially showy. Other cultivars are bred for heavy displays of rose-colored flowers

Green-and-gold or golden star (*Chrysogonum virginianum*) is a spreading native plant of about 6 inches in height that displays gold daisy-like flowers in the spring. Sometimes the flowers reoccur sporadically. It grows well in the shade but will tolerate some sun if it gets enough water. It can be used on a bank to stop erosion.

Alleghany spurge (*Pachysandra procumbens*) is a native form of pachysandra that is not aggressive like the more commonly sold Japanese pachysandra (*P. terminalis*). Alleghany spurge's patterned, semi-evergreen foliage grows 6 inches tall. Clumps may spread to create a 3- to 4-foot patch. Fragrant white bottlebrush flowers appear each spring before the new leaves emerge.

Another native ground cover for shade is partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*). Partridgeberry is evergreen, with white flowers in the spring and red fruit in the fall. It is a bare 1 inch tall with trailing stems that root at the nodes to create dense mats. The cultivar 'Danny' is a particularly vigorous selection. Partridgeberry will tolerate light foot traffic.

There are also grass-like ground covers for shade. Try something other than the ubiquitous monkey grass (*Liriope spicata*) or mondo grass (*Ophiopogon japonicus*). Bristle-leaf or ivory sedge (*Carex eburnea*) is a native plant that grows 6 to 12 inches high and spreads slowly by rhizomes. It has wiry leaves growing in a spherical clump. While it prefers an evenly moist soil, it becomes drought tolerant once established.

Another grass-like plant, Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*), is indigenous to dry woodlands of eastern and central North America. It has soft arching blades growing about 6 inches tall. Spreading by rhizomes, it thrives in shade and tolerates drought.

With all the wonderful alternatives, there is no reason to succumb to the temptation to plant English ivy as a ground cover. You will be doing yourself and your neighbors a big favor if you go the less-traveled route to cover your shady areas in greenery.



Photo *Tiarella cordifolia*,
courtesy <http://ugatrial.hort.uga.edu>

For more information:

Georgia Exotic Plant Pest Council <https://www.gaepcc.org/alternatives/>

University of Georgia Extension on flowering perennials: <http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=B944&title=Flowering%20Perennials%20for%20Georgia%20Gardens>

Maryland Invasive Species Council on English Ivy http://mdinvasives.org/archive/archived_invaders/archived_invaders_2004_02.html

LAWN CARE-April and May

By Stephanie Howard, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Cool Season Grasses (Tall Fescue, Kentucky Bluegrass, Creeping Red Fescue, Chewing Fescue)	Warm Season Grasses (Bermuda, Centipede, Zoysia, St. Augustine)
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>For Established Lawns</i></p> <p>Continue using a pre-emergent through April. A spray post-emergent may be applied for pesky weeds.</p> <p>Aerate in April to encourage root growth and water infiltration.</p> <p>If needed, set your irrigation for 1 inch per week. Less frequent and deep watering encourages growth of a strong root system. Morning irrigation is optimal. Do not overwater, as April rains may contribute to turf needs. Consider using a rain gauge.</p> <p>Apply equal amounts of a fertilizer approved for cool season grasses during the months of September, November, February, and April.</p> <p>Inspect during April and May for fungal disease. These pathogens thrive in warm temperatures and moist conditions. Use an approved fungicide, if needed.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>For Established Lawns</i></p> <p>Continue using a pre-emergent through April. For persistent weeds, begin using post-emergent sprays in May after mowing at least twice.</p> <p>Aerate in May to encourage root growth and infiltration of water.</p> <p>Remember to adjust irrigation if April brings lots of showers. Too much water may allow fungal pathogens to thrive. Healthy turf needs about 1 inch of water per week. Morning irrigation is best.</p> <p>Apply fertilizer after the last frost once the lawn is 50% green. Most warm season grasses require 1 to 5 pounds of nitrogen per 1000 square feet. Take special care not to over-fertilize Centipede grass. *See Link below.</p> <p>Inspect often for signs of fungal problems. Check edges for discolored, wilted, or spotted blades or dead areas with defined edges. Use an approved fungicide if needed.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>For Newly Installed Lawns</i></p> <p>The <i>best</i> time to install a cool season turf is in the fall before the first frost. It may also be planted in the spring after soil temperatures reach above 55°F.</p> <p><i>Shade-tolerant grasses</i> for cool season turfs include Fine Fescue (Red) grasses and Kentucky Bluegrass in partial shade.</p> <p>Mow newly installed lawns at least twice before application of a pre-emergent.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>For Newly Installed Lawns</i></p> <p>The best time to install warm season turf is late spring or early summer.</p> <p><i>Shade-tolerant</i> options for warm season turfs include Zoysia grasses (El Toro, JaMur, Zeon, and Zorro) or St. Augustine grasses (Palmetto, Mercedes, and Raleigh).</p> <p>Mow newly installed lawns at least twice before application of a pre-emergent.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>For All Lawns</i></p> <p>Check for webworms, cutworms and armyworms. Mature white grubs may be found near the surface. Newly-hatched grubs may be treated with an approved insecticide in late July or early August.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>For All Lawns</i></p> <p>Check for webworms, cutworms, armyworms and chinch bugs. Indications of webworm or cutworm infestations are spiderlike webs on the lawn that are visible in the morning. Armyworms leave patches of cut grass blades throughout the lawn. Treat with an insecticide approved for your specific turf.</p>

Grass Type	Mowing Height(in)
Bermuda grass	1 - 1.5 to 2.0
Centipede grass	1 - 2
St. Augustine grass	2 - 3
Zoysia grass	1 - 2
Tall Fescue grass	2.5 or more
Kentucky Bluegrass	2.5 or more

* Review specific requirements for your established lawn at:
<http://caes2.caes.uga.edu/commodities/turfgrass/georgiaturf/index/index.html>.

April Gardening Tips

ORNAMENTALS

- If your spring bulbs have been shaded by new growth of a tree or shrub plantings, consider moving them to a sunny location or pruning back the plantings. Mark crowded clumps; and dig up and divide them after the tops have died back. Note where you want to add color for next spring. http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/B%20918_3.PDF
- Upon emergence of foliage, fertilize bulbs with a 10-10-10 fertilizer at a rate of 3 pounds per 100 square feet. Repeat the application after the bulbs have bloomed.
- If you plant an Easter lily outside, don't plant it near other lilies as it may carry a virus that can infect them.
- Prune spring-blooming shrubs, such as forsythia, quince and early spirea, after they have completed flowering.
- Do not fertilize azaleas and camellias until they have finished blooming. They should be pruned after blooming. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%20670_5.PDF
- Many gardeners plant annual and perennial flowers to attract hummingbirds; woody plants can also be added to the yard to provide nectar for our smallest native birds. Some trees to add are buckeye, horse chestnut, apple, crabapple, hawthorn, redbud, and tulip poplar. Shrubs include red and bottlebrush buckeye, rhododendrons, Georgia basil, azaleas, New Jersey tea, Salvia greggii, and rosemary. http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/C%20976_2.PDF
- Once new growth emerges on trees and shrubs, cut back to green wood any twigs affected by winterkill.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- When planting orange, yellow or chocolate peppers, be sure to plant extra since they stay on the plant longer to mature and produce fewer peppers
- To hinder early blight on tomatoes, mulch to keep the soil-borne diseases from being splashed on the plant during rains. Remove mulch and dispose of at end of season. http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/B%201271_5.PDF
- To have fresh raspberries, raise them in your own backyard. Fifteen or twenty plants, spaced 3' apart, in rows 6' apart, will produce a good supply of fruit. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%20766_3.PDF
- If fruit trees are lacking pollinators nearby, pick bouquets of blossoms from good pollinators and place them in buckets under blossoming trees. Make plans to plant pollinating varieties this fall or plant perennials or shrubs that bloom at the same time as your fruit trees.

- Thin young fruits of apples, pears and peaches within 25 days of the peak bloom, leaving 4-7" between fruit to insure larger, healthier fruit.
- Grapevines with excessive vegetative growth generally have less high-quality fruit. In early spring, prune out the canes with the fewest buds to allow light, moisture, and air circulation within the plant to improve the quality and quantity of the fruit. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%201505_2.PDF
- Erect trellises now for beans and cucumbers. Don't plant tomatoes, peppers, or other warm season plants until the soil temperature warms up. Usually in Cherokee County that will be April 15 or later. Plants that are planted earlier will just sit there and not grow, or they will be killed by a late frost.
- When weather is wet and cold, allow about twice the germination time listed on the seed packet. If there is no sign of growth after this time, dig around a little to check for sprouted seeds; if you find no signs of life the seed has probably rotted and you will need to replant.
- If your garden is small and you do not have adequate space for the long-vine varieties, plant a bush-type, squash and green beans.
- Root crops must be thinned, no matter how ruthless this practice seems. Thin carrots, beets, parsnips and onions so you can get three fingers between individual plants.
- When planning your vegetable garden, consider that leafy vegetables need at least six hours of sunlight to develop properly. Fruiting vegetables like squash, tomatoes, eggplant, beans, and peppers need 10 hrs of full sun.
- When transplanting seedlings in peat pots to your garden, be careful not to allow the rim of the peat pot to protrude above the soil level. If the rim is above the soil, it will act as a wick and draw moisture away from the transplant. To prevent this from happening, break away the uppermost rim of the pot before planting and make sure the pot is completely covered with soil.
- When tomato seedlings have 5 to 7 leaves, they are ready to transplant into the garden. To increase root growth and produce a sturdier plant place tomatoes in soil up to the bottom leaves.
- Drive stakes for future supports at the same time you plant tomatoes. If you try to install stakes later, you may damage the plant roots.



Photo staked tomatoes courtesy Mike Lloyd, Master Gardener Trainee.

May Gardening Tips

ORNAMENTALS

- Keep and eye out for aphids and other insects on roses. Spray if necessary. Begin spraying for blackspot at least twice a month. Removing and replacing mulch under roses will cut down greatly on black spot. http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/C%201001_2.PDF
- Red and silver maples, willows, poplars, and elms can clog septic lines with their roots. Don't plant near water/sewer lines.
- If you are building a home on a wooded lot, save young, vigorous trees. They will adapt to changes in their environment better than older trees. Trees that once grew in shade and are suddenly exposed to increased sunlight, wider temperature changes, and drying winds may not survive.
- Lightly sidedress perennials, including spring bulbs, with a 5-10-10 or 10-10-10 fertilizer, being careful to avoid the center or crown of the plant.
- Prune off sprouts from the base of crape myrtles.
- Check the leaves on Azaleas and Camellias for leaf galls. They are white to green growths and can be pruned out and disposed of. <http://blog.extension.uga.edu/bulloch/2015/04/what-is-this-strange-growth-on-azalea-leaves/>

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Protect developing strawberries from birds with spun bonded row covers. Netting can trap and kill beneficial snakes and birds. http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/C%20883_4.PDF
- Technically, berries are fruit that are soft throughout, such as blueberries. The raspberry is not a true berry, but a fruit that is made of many small sections each with a seed or pit. Fruits with fleshy material surrounding a hard seed are called drupes. Thus a raspberry is not a berry but is a cluster of small drupes or drupelets.
- Thin peaches 4-6" apart for large, high-quality fruit.
- If spraying fruit trees near a vegetable garden, cover vegetables with a sheet of plastic to protect them.
- Place a thick layer of newspaper under tomatoes to cut back on leaf diseases. Cover with mulch. This helps prevent fungus spores from splashing on leaves. Remove and dispose of at end of the season.
- To ensure pollination of sweet corn, plant several rows together in a block, rather than in one long row. Side-dress with 3 Tbsp of 10-10-10 per 10 feet of row when 12-18" high. http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/C%20905_3.PDF
- When thinning beans, watch for "snake heads," seedlings that have lost one or both of their cotyledons and produce poor, weak sprouts.




<https://www.vegedge.umn.edu> (seedhead)

Also, watch for "bald heads," seedlings that have the growth point damaged so severely that they cannot develop. Both types will be weak and delayed in growth and should be removed.

APRIL/MAY MISCELLANEOUS

- Mark the handle of your spade/hoe in inches for a handy measuring device for row width and planting distances. Paint or tape the measurements on the handle, and apply varnish to make the marks last longer.
- Trap earwigs and sowbugs with rolled up newspapers moistened with water. Insects will hide in the paper by day. Frequently gather and dispose of traps.
- When you see ants crawling on garden plants, look for aphids. Some ant species protect aphids, moving them from plant to plant and even taking them into the anthill for overnight safety. The ants do this to ensure a supply of honeydew, a sugary water substance secreted by aphids, on which ants feed. https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%201074_7.PDF
- A garden use for plastic milk jugs: seep irrigation. Punch holes in the sides of a jug about 2" apart. Bury the jug leaving the neck protruding from the soil. Fill jug with water (solutions of liquid fertilizer may be used to water and feed at the same time) and screw on the cap. The water will seep out, providing a slow, deep irrigation for plants.
- Trellis and stake downwind from the prevailing winds so plants lean against the supports when the wind blows.
- Don't be too anxious to move your houseplants outdoors. A slight chill can knock the leaves off tender plants.
- Replace bulbs on plant lights yearly. They gradually lose their strength causing plants to stretch and stop blooming.
- Moles are tunneling insect eaters and particularly attracted to grubs. When bulbs are missing or shrubs have root damage, look for voles or field mice to be the culprits. These rodents often use mole tunnels as their runs.

	RAINFALL COMPARISONS					
	Cherokee County			State Wide		
	Jan 19	Feb 19	YTD	Jan 19	Feb 19	YTD
Actual	6.4	10.1	16.5	5.8	2.7	8.5
Normal	5.9	5.0	10.9	4.1	4.5	8.6
Excess	0.5	5.1	5.6	1.7	-1.8	-0.1

Couscous Stuffed Chicken for 2

Here's a tasty entree from Marcia Winchester. Goes well with spinach or green beans.

Ingredients:

¼ c uncooked couscous
1/3 c chicken broth
4 Tbs plum tomato chopped
2 Tbs black olives chopped
2 Tbs olive oil
2 Tbs fresh oregano chopped (or 1 tsp dried)
2 Tbs fresh parsley (or 1 tsp dried)
1 lemon zested
2 tsp garlic minced
Salt to taste
2 thin chicken breasts

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 400. Bring broth to a boil in a small saucepan. Remove from heat and stir in couscous. Cover and let stand 4 minutes. Place couscous in small bowl. Cool 10 minutes then add next 8 ingredients and salt. Divide couscous mixture between 2 chicken breasts. Fold breasts over filling and secure with tooth picks. Place chicken in oven proof skillet and brown. Cover and place in oven and bake 20 minutes. Take lid off last 10 minutes. Serve with a side dish.

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

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CHEROKEE COUNTY

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Focaccia al Rosmarino (Rosemary Flat Bread)

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 1 hour

Total Time: 1 hour, 15 minutes

Ingredients:

1 batch pizza dough, either homemade or store-bought
2 to 3 springs of fresh rosemary
Coarse sea salt
Freshly ground pepper
Olive oil

Instructions:

Take your fully risen dough and spread it out with your hands in a well-greased shallow rectangular baking pan, making sure the dough covers the whole bottom, including the corners. Poke the dough all over with your fingers to make little depressions to catch the oil and flavorings.

Strip the rosemary leaves off their stems, chop them roughly, and sprinkle all over the top of the dough. Sprinkle the dough with the sea salt and lots of freshly ground pepper. Drizzle the top generously with olive oil.

Let the dough rest in a warm place for a while so it rises again. Depending on how "fluffy" you like your focaccia, it can rest as little as 30 minutes or as much as 1-1/2 hours.



Pop the dough into a moderately hot oven (350F), preferably with the convection function on, for about 30 minutes or so, or until the top is browned to your liking.

Cool on a rack and then eat!

Recipe courtesy of Joan McFather



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.