

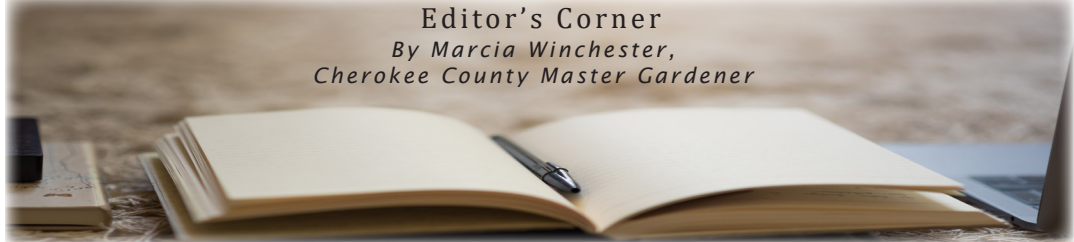
Gardening With The Masters

Growing, Gardening and Gaining Knowledge

June/July 2023



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



Garden TRIVIA Time

Your squash plant is thriving one day and dead the next! Do you know what the likely problem is?

Do you know what it is?

To find out, look in the June/July 2017 issue of the Cherokee County Master Gardener newsletter, *Gardening with the Masters*. Archived issues can be found on the CCMG website, <https://cherokeemastergardeners.com>.

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Southern blue monkshood (*Aconitum uncinatum*) ©Elaine Haug

Plants never cease to amaze me. A few years ago while hiking in Alaska I came across a native monkshood, *Aconitum delphinifolium*. What makes it so interesting is that another native monkshood, *Aconitum uncinatum*, grows in Cherokee County, Georgia. Despite the vast geographic range between these plants, they are similar in many respects, being in the same genus. However, the different species have adapted to very different growing conditions.

On that same hike I encountered stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*), which I knew not to touch because we'd just had an article in our Cherokee County Master Gardener newsletter on *Urtica chamaedryoides* and its nasty bristles. Again, these are similar plants growing in vastly different locales and adapted to different environments.

While some plant genera are so versatile and diverse, others are not. The franklinia tree (*Franklinia alatamaha*) was found only in a small area on the Altamaha River in 1765, which after being found has never been found again. Thank goodness John and William Bartram took cuttings from it. All franklinia trees have been propagated from those cuttings. Other plants like the pink ladyslipper (*Cypripedium acaule*) are picky about the soil they will grow in, plus their delicate, brittle roots tend to break when disturbed.

The more you learn about a plant, the more success you will have growing it. It is very important to read plant labels, talk to knowledgeable sales people, and if you can, observe an established plant. All of these can aid in having success with a new plant.

Marcia



Larkspurleaf monkshood (*Aconitum delphinifolium*) ©Mark W. Skinner, 1990

*Both plant photos, courtesy [USDA Plants database](https://www.usda.gov/plants)

What Is That?

By Ashley Frasca, Cherokee County Master Gardener Intern

“Sawdust hairs,” “worm-like dust fringes,” “toothpicks” – all phrases homeowners have used to describe ambrosia beetle damage visible over the last few months. Gardeners are clever describing the protrusions they’ve seen along the trunks of crape myrtles, figs, maples, and even cherry trees. This is something to fear. These are signs of ambrosia beetle (*Xylosandrus crassiusculus*) attacks. Though this is a telltale sign, other symptoms might be the wilting of emerging spring foliage, leakage of sap, and stained bark.

Ambrosia beetle adults can overwinter in wood or in leaf litter. Once they emerge in late winter and early spring, ambrosia beetles are attracted to trees that are weakened, stressed, or those that sport a thinner bark. This is how they target their host in order to reproduce. They bore inches deep into a tree’s trunk to lay their eggs. What’s left behind are the frass tubes seen protruding from trunks and

limbs. If a cross section of damaged wood is taken, their elaborate galleries can be seen. Unfortunately, it is their galleries that kill a tree over time.



Ambrosia beetle damage on a fig tree, courtesy ncsu.edu.

much of Georgia experienced in the days around Christmas, plus at least two more late freezes in March, caused stress to many trees and ornamentals in the landscape. Those plants then send out stress chemicals that these opportunistic insects take advantage of.

Arborists can consult with homeowners, but once ambrosia beetle damage is observed, there are very limited options to save the tree. Some arborists may recommend the application of a barrier spray around the trunk, but this needs to be repeated and does not guarantee zero infestations. The spray employed would be a pyrethroid insecticide, and traps are generally set in the middle of winter to detect where activity is likely to occur.

During a consultation, arborists could also assess other trees, identifying what could potentially make them vulnerable as well. In addition to freeze damage, another environmental stressor is drought. Also, trees planted too deeply have roots that are unable to “breathe,” and this causes decline. Finally, trees where the bark and trunk have been wounded become susceptible to the introduction of fungus, moisture retention, and also to ambrosia beetles.

What can be done? Heavily infested wood needs to be cut, removed, and destroyed. Burning it would be the easiest option for eliminating this pest. In a best-case scenario, the cut to a tree can be made below the last visible signs of holes bored, and perhaps the tree can grow back from this heavy, rejuvenative-type pruning. With crape myrtles, suckers will emerge once the tree has been cut, and one or two strong sprouts can be chosen to become the new trunk.

Proper tree planting, care, and best management practices when maintaining ornamental trees are all key to a tree’s survival. The stronger the tree, the more easily it can ward off disease and attacks by insects. Responsibility lies with the property owner to first ensure the right tree was chosen for the given environment. Considerations of hardiness, light, and access to moisture should all factor in. “Right tree, right place” is an iteration of a phrase commonly used by horticulturalists, and it couldn’t be more true.

Soil type needs to be considered, and upon installation, a properly sized hole must be dug, and mulch added around, but not right up to, the tree’s trunk. Mulch is most resourceful for keeping out weeds and maintaining moisture when put down 2 to 3 inches thick. Watering, feeding, and pruning are all perpetual tasks in maintaining the health of a tree.



Ambrosia beetle (*Xylosandrus crassiusculus*)
J.R. Baker & S.B. Bambara, North Carolina
State University, [Bugwood.org](https://bugwood.org)

By the time ambrosia beetle damage is spotted, a homeowner is about two months behind when the adult first began its reproductive cycle. Male beetles are without wings and will stay in the galleries the rest of their lifecycle. However, a new generation of females will leave affected trees around late spring, and the destructive process begins all over again.



Ambrosia beetle larvae and pupae gallery
Lacy L. Hyche, Auburn University, [Bugwood.org](https://bugwood.org)



Don't Beat the Heat – Go With It!

By Ashley Frasca, Cherokee County Master Gardener Intern

The scorching summer heat, along with the allure of bright, colorful plants, has me energized to traipse about the yard even more! When rain is scarce, I need to be inspired to visit my vegetable garden with the hose every third day. And it can be a chore to water those pots on the deck with the watering can at least every other day. Thankfully the colorful and heat-loving plants of summer are sure to lure me into my garden to enjoy their beauty and tend to them.

In addition to the scents and colors of the veggie garden, I've incorporated new plants into my landscape to soak up every minute of summer color Mother Nature has to offer! Whether considering annuals or perennials, proper soil prep is so important.

Most summer-blooming plants thrive in bright, sunny spots where the soil is well-draining. Prior to planting, break up that Georgia red clay when it's dry. Working with it when it's saturated keeps it compact, and roots won't push through very well. A slow-release fertilizer in measured amounts can be added to each hole before plants are settled in. And mulch is much appreciated to help the plants retain moisture, to keep weeds out, and to regulate the soil temperature in beds and even pots. And of course, if you haven't had your soil tested recently, your plants will appreciate your taking the time to do that. The results of the soil test will give you specific recommendations on how to improve growing conditions in your flower beds.



Photo caladiums courtesy Mary Tucker



Coleus courtesy Mary Tucker

Coleus (*Coleus x hybridus*) and caladiums (*Caladium hortulanum*) are wonderful tropical plants that sport showy, colorful foliage. Both do best in partial shade, though there are varieties of coleus that can tolerate full sun. Keep up with pinching off flowering stalks so that the plant grows denser and produces more colorful foliage throughout the summer.

For areas with full sun, tall canna lilies (*Canna x generalis*) and elephant ears (*Colocasia esculenta*) make a nice, tropical border. I have found that canna lilies bloom better when they're exposed to full sun rather than partial. In USDA Hardiness Zone 7b, I have been able to overwinter both elephant ear bulbs and canna rhizomes in the ground. An important step is providing mulch as an insulator, whether it's a deep pile of leaves or pine straw. But if they are potted, it may be best to shelter the pot through the winter. Bring potted plants into a garage, basement, or carport. If that's not possible, place them up against a structure for protection, and cover the soil with mulch or leaf debris for insulation.



Colocasia courtesy Mary Tucker



Angelonia (*Angelonia angustifolia*) courtesy Tatters [ncsu.edu](https://www.ncsu.edu)

For bedding flowers, my new obsession is angelonia (*Angelonia angustifolia*). I was introduced to it and its many colors during a visit to the home of Dan Cathy of Chick-fil-a. They were masterfully planted in straight, mounded rows across the front of his home – mounded to ensure the soil drains properly. I've installed angelonia alternated with pentas (*Pentas lanceolata*) in a long container on my deck. It is said that container plants are more visually appealing when planted in odd numbers. Both angelonia and pentas thrive in full sun, with at least six to eight hours a day. Keep them watered when dry. For the angelonia, remove dead and dying flower stalks to encourage more blooms.

Another annual plant that compliments that "cottage garden" look is SunPatiens® (*Impatiens x hybrida*).



Pentas (*Pentas lanceolata*)
Kathleen Moore [ncsu.edu](https://www.ncsu.edu)

Impatiens x hybrida SunPatiens®
Jim Robbins [ncsu.edu](https://www.ncsu.edu)



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Parsley

By Maribeth Price, Cherokee County Master Gardener Intern

Parsley, (*Petroselinum crispum*), a flavorful and aromatic culinary herb of the Apiaceae family, has been cultivated for thousands of years to add flavor to meals. It is relatively high in Vitamins A and C and iron. Parsley is one of the most familiar of all herbs and is used in sauces, salads, and especially soups as lessens the need for salt. It is native to Mediterranean Europe but has found its way all around the world, being a staple of French and Cajun cuisine.

Parsley has an erect growth habit and has branched, hollow stems. The leaves are compound and are either flat or curly. Flat-leafed parsley is considered the more strongly flavored, whereas curly parsley is frequently used as a garnish. Parsley can be used for culinary purposes either fresh or dried.



Photo *Petroselinum crispum*
wplynn [ncsu.edu](https://www.ncsu.edu)

GROWING PARSLEY

Parsley is a biennial plant. It leafs out in its first year, overwinters, then flowers in year two, sending up a stalk that produces compound umbels of green/yellow flowers that yield seed-like fruits. It is more frequently planted as an annual.



Parsley seedlings © Gaston /Adobe Stock

Parsley can be direct seeded but can take a long time to germinate outdoors. Sow seedlings outdoors three to four weeks before the last spring frost. For the best germination, soil temperature should be about 70 degrees, although parsley seeds will germinate in temperatures as low as 50 degrees. The parsley seedlings are small and weak and can emerge with difficulty from crusty soils. Soaking parsley seeds overnight before sowing will increase the chance of germination. Parsley should be sown in well prepared soil 1 inch apart in rows 1 foot apart.

If germinating parsley indoors, sow 6 to 8 weeks before the last frost date in peat pots, covering the seeds with ¼ inch of planting medium. Cover with plastic, and place under lights at 70 degrees. Maintain light height at about 2 inches above the seedlings and keep the soil moist. Parsley's taproot is

delicate, so you will have to take extra care when transplanting.

Parsley grows best in well-drained soil that is rich in organic matter with a pH range of 6.0 to 7.0. Parsley can be planted in full sun or part shade and has a 60- to 80-day maturity rate. Considering the intense summers in Georgia, a part shade location may be advantageous when the maturity rate coincides with the heat of summer.

Keep parsley sufficiently watered, and lightly mulch around the plants to conserve moisture. Thin seedlings to a spacing of 5 to 6 inches. Fertilize once or twice during the growing season using a 5-10-5 fertilizer at a rate of 3 ounces per 10 feet of row. When the leaf stems have a minimum of three segments, it is ready to harvest. Cut the outer leaves to harvest, leaving the interior portion of the plant to further produce. Parsley is generally easy to care for, and you will keep the plant productive by harvesting the branches to promote new growth; remove any flower stalks if they emerge.

PARSLEY PESTS

Parsley can be affected by several insects and diseases as noted below.



Black swallowtail butterfly – This butterfly is admired for its beauty, but you may consider it a pest when its caterpillar eats your parsley. So be sure to plant enough parsley for both you and the butterflies to enjoy. You can handpick caterpillars off plants you plan to eat and move them to parsley plants you have set aside for the butterflies.

Photo black swallowtail (*Papilio polyxenes*)
© Ansel Oommen, [Bugwood.org](https://www.bugwood.org)



Black swallowtail caterpillar
© Ansel Oommen, [Bugwood.org](https://www.bugwood.org)

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The Purple Martin

By Mary Tucker, Cherokee County Master Gardener

When driving through the countryside, I often see what I know are purple martin houses. I can identify the birdhouses by the fact that they are in essence “condominiums,” clusters of individual dwellings, not stand-alone boxes. This allows for a colony of birds to nest at one location.

The houses are often made of wood, but I also see them constructed as a group of hollow, hanging gourds with a hole drilled in the side of each gourd. They are always placed high above the ground and are out in the open, often near pond. Obviously the folks who went to such trouble to make these structures and mount them so high are keen to attract these birds.

Despite my recognizing these martin houses, I know little about the birds that live in them since they don't nest in my own yard. So who are these purple martins, and why are property owners so eager to have them in their yards? For my main source of information, I leaned on the Cornell Lab of Ornithology website All About Birds: www.allaboutbirds.org. This is always my “go-to” resource for anything bird related.



Purple martins colony house
© Tammy Conklin | Macauley Library

IN THE SWALLOW FAMILY

The purple martin goes by the scientific name of *Progne subis* and it's in the swallow family (Hirundinidae). Like other swallows, purple martins are insect eaters, and they primarily catch their food while the birds are on the wing. They feed high in the air, as much as 500 feet off the ground according to **All About Birds**. They may also feed closer to the ground, and they will ingest bits of gravel to help digest the hard exoskeletons of the insects that they eat. Their diet may include such insects as flies, beetles, moths, wasps, bees, dragonflies, mayflies, grasshoppers, and crickets. They like to forage over open areas such as fields, parks, meadows, and ponds.

The fact that they are such insectivores is what leads people to want them on their property, especially as insect control for gardens. Early settlers are credited with beginning the custom of constructing martin houses, and Native Americans used hollow gourds to entice the birds to nest.

APPEARANCE

Purple martins have a typical swallow appearance with long, tapered wings; however, they are larger than other species of swallow with a length of 7 to 8 inches and a wingspan of about 16 inches. Adult males can be recognized by their iridescent, dark bluish purple body and brownish black wings. The females and immature males have less vivid color and a light chest and belly with tones of white to gray.



Male purple martin © Ryan Sanderson | Macauley Library



Male and female purple martins © Alex Eberts | Macauley Library

NESTING

In the East, we see the “condos” that are built for purple martins, and these are their main residences in that part of the United States. However, I learned that in the West, the birds often build in holes in trees or cacti or in crevices in a cliff or building.

The nest is constructed of a combination of mud and plant material, such as grass and twigs. The female lays a clutch of three to six white eggs and usually has one or two broods each year. The eggs are incubated for 15 to 18 days, and the babies fledge about 27 to 36 days after hatching.



Female desert purple martin looking out of a nesting hole courtesy Richard Fray, Aziba.org

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Don't Beat the Heat – Go With It!continued from page 3



Lamb's ear (*Stachys byzantina*) Cathy DeWitt
ncsu.edu



Butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) Cathy DeWitt
ncsu.edu



Portulaca (*Portulaca oleracea*) Mokie
ncsu.edu



Hydrangea (*Hydrangea paniculata*) 'Chantilly Lace'
Jim Robbins ncsu.edu

Lamb's ear (*Stachys byzantina*) and Butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) are lovely perennials to incorporate into these plantings.

A fun plant that brought me so much joy last year was portulaca (*Portulaca oleracea*). In nurseries, it may also be labeled "purslane" or "moss rose." This semi-succulent flowering plant spreads, so its peach, pink, yellow, and white flowers are best displayed in a wide-mouth pot. It's entertaining to observe the buds all opening in late morning and expiring by evening.

For larger heat-loving plants, consider salvia (*Salvia farinacea*) and butterfly bush (*Buddleia davidii*), both great pollinator plants! Another lovely option is lantana (*Lantana camara*), which comes in different sizes and colors. Some sport all yellow flowers, and the common, cold-hardy variety 'Miss Huff' blooms in shades of yellow, orange, and pink. A more compact variety of lantana that blooms yellow is 'New Gold'. It can even be placed in hanging baskets! Also consider panicle hydrangeas (*Hydrangea paniculata*), which are such more sun tolerant than the mophead type, and they should start flowering pretty soon, gracing your garden with their luscious blooms.



By Mary Tucker, Master Gardener

The genus *Salvia* is a vast one with close to 1000 species. Salvias are in the sage family (Lamiaceae) and include members that are annuals, biennials, herbaceous perennials, or small shrubs. Several species are used as cooking herbs. The largest number of species are native to the Americas; others hail from the Mediterranean or Asia.



Native scarlet sage (*Salvia coccinea*) Mary Tucker



Salvia 'Black and Blue' (*Salvia guaranitica*) Peganum
ncsu.edu



Texas native 'Lipstick' (*Salvia greggii*) Cathy Dewitt
ncsu.edu



The Purple Martincontinued from page 5

MIGRATION

Purple martins are not permanent residents of North America. Rather, they only breed here and spend the winter in South America. An eastern group of purple martins breeds from Florida into southern Canada. A western group breeds from the deserts of the U.S. and Mexico to areas of the Pacific Northwest. Both groups migrate to various countries of South America to spend the winter in large roosts, with the largest populations overwintering in Brazil.

CONSERVATION CONCERNS

Though these birds are fairly common, their numbers have been declining over the past few decades, and it's estimated that the breeding population has declined by 25 percent since the mid 1960s. The nest boxes that people construct for them helps, but introduced species such as starlings and house sparrows may take residence in the birdhouses or destroy existing purple martin nests.

Purple martins are also vulnerable to cold weather, largely because insects are scarce at such times. In addition, since purple martins are so dependent on insects for food, pesticide use that decreases insect populations will have a deleterious effect on the birds.

Purple martins also face troubles in their overwintering sites in South America. An article in the fall 2022 issue of Audubon magazine notes that there is much that we don't know about their life during the winter months. For instance, their exact migratory route is vague, and we don't fully understand the habitats that they need to encounter as they make their migration. The birds congregate in large roosts and may rely on certain sites to overwinter. If those sites are imperiled by development or degradation, it could put yet more pressure on these already declining populations.

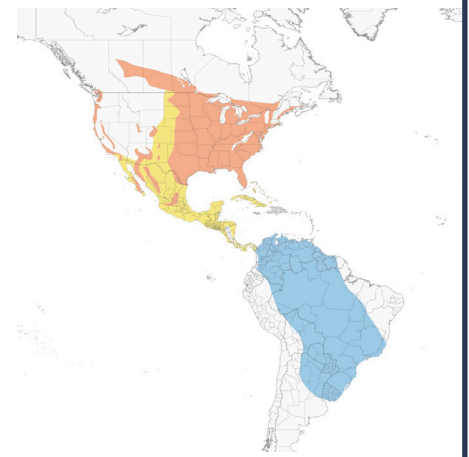
If you have a suitable habitat on your property, consider erecting a martin house. They can be purchased, or instructions for making your own can be found on the internet.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Cornell Lab of Ornithology's All About Birds: www.allaboutbirds.org

Purple Martin Conservation Association: www.purplemartin.org

UGA Circular C977 on purple martins: <https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C977>



Migration map of purple martins, yellow (migration), orange (breeding) and blue (non-breeding) courtesy Cornell

Parsleycontinued from page 4



Aphids – These small, soft-bodied insects feed by sucking nutrient-rich liquids out of plants. They can be controlled by diligent care. Neem oil, insecticidal soaps, and horticultural oils are effective against aphids, but these substances need to come in contact with the aphids in order to work. Be sure to follow the package instructions.

Photo aphids John C. French Sr., Retired,
Universities: Auburn, GA, Clemson and
U of MO, Bugwood.org

Stem Rot – This disease is caused by soil-borne bacteria and fungi and frequently occurs due to overwatering. The disease initially attacks where the roots join the stem at the soil line. If you catch the disease early, treat with a garden fungicide containing sulphur. If disease progresses, remove and discard any infected plants and the soil of the root ball and discard in the trash. Avoid replanting parsley in that location for a while.

Leaf Spot – Symptoms are small brown leaf spots, sometimes with characteristic tan centers. The pathogen's spores are dispersed by water, so do not work around plants when wet. Treat with copper fungicide when symptoms first appear.

Photo of leafspot on parsley Bruce Watt,
University of Maine, Bugwood.org



JUNE GARDENING TIPS

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Strawberries picked early in the day keep best. Do not wash or stem berries until ready to use. Store berries in covered containers in the refrigerator.
- Set young melons and cantaloupes atop tin cans or flat rocks – they'll ripen faster, be sweeter and have less insect damage than those left on the ground.
- Yellow crook-neck squash tastes best when 4-7 inches long. Pick when pale yellow (rather than golden) and before skin hardens. **For info, click [HERE](#).**
- Remove cucumbers by turning fruits parallel to the vine and giving a quick snap. This prevents vine damage and results in a clean break. **For info, click [HERE](#).**
- Stop cutting asparagus in mid to late June when spears become thin. After the last cutting is made, fertilize by broadcasting a 10-10-10 formula at the rate of 2 lbs per 100 sq. ft. Allow the tops to grow during the summer to store food in the roots for the crop next spring.
- Corn needs water at two crucial times: when the tassels at the top are beginning to show and when the silk is beginning to show on the ear. If weather is dry at these times, you will need to water the corn. **For info on growing corn, click [HERE](#).**
- If weed plants are mature, weed your garden early in the morning when moisture is present to prevent the seed heads from shattering and dropping weed seeds in the garden. Hold as much of the seed heads in your hand and do not shake off extra soil as it may scatter weed seeds.

JUNE MISCELLANEOUS

- To protect bees that pollinate many of our crop plants, spray pesticides in the evening after bees have returned to their homes.
- The best time to harvest most herbs is just before flowering when the leaves contain the maximum essential oils. Cut herbs early on a sunny day. Herbs are best if watered the day before to wash off the foliage. **For info, click [HERE](#).**



Photo taken at the Sr. Center Demo garden, courtesy John Ruscilli, during the 2019 pollinator census count.



Like a mountain path, the narrow squiggles are characteristic trails left by a group of insects known as leaf miners. Special-Lisa Ames, University of Georgia

ORNAMENTALS

- Use pliers to pull up tree seedlings after a rain when soil is moist. Grip the stem at the soil line; twist and pull straight up. Watering deeply the day before pulling weeds will make the job easier.
- Climbing roses don't really climb – they have long canes that require support. You will need to loosely tie the canes to trellises with broad strips of material or foam covered wire. Do not use wire as it can damage the cane. **For rose culture info, click [HERE](#).**
- Miniature roses can be propagated from stem cuttings. Take cuttings with 4 leaves and insert them into pots filled with moist potting soil. Rooting hormone is optional. Place whole pot in a perforated plastic bag and place in a shady spot. Water as needed. By autumn, cuttings should be rooted.
- Control black spot and powdery mildew on rose foliage.
- Fertilize your roses at monthly intervals with either granular or liquid fertilizer. Inspect plants frequently for pests such as spider mites, aphids and Japanese beetles.
- Leaf miner larvae tunnel inside leaves, leaving whitish trails as they move about. Holly, boxwood, columbine, and locust are particularly susceptible to damage.
- Disinfection of pruners between cuts is recommended when removing diseased tissue from plants. UGA recommends a one to ten solution of bleach and water, but it can be cumbersome to carry a bucket of this mix about in the garden. The solution is corrosive and must be rinsed from tools after use. Rubbing alcohol in a spray bottle also works. When spraying tools, spray over a trash can so you don't kill or injure grass or plants.
- Now is the time to prune evergreen azaleas and rhododendrons before they set next year's flower buds. **For pruning info, click [HERE](#).**
- Divide and transplant German iris now so they will have a long growing season and a better chance of blooming next year. Cut off and discard the older part of the rhizome that does not have white fleshy roots. Cut the leaves back to six inches so they don't blow over. **For bulb info, click [HERE](#).**



JULY GARDENING TIPS

ORNAMENTALS

- If your hosta and azalea stems have a white powder covering them, it is probably the waxy coating of planthopper insects. They don't do much damage, but can spread diseases. Spray with garden insecticide if unsightly.
- Lamb's ear tends to have their lower leaves die after a heavy rain. This forms ugly mats that will rot stems and roots. Pull away the yellow leaves to keep up airflow.
- Fertilize crape myrtles, butterfly bushes, and hydrangeas with 1 Tablespoon of 10-10-10 per foot of height. **For crape myrtle culture, click [HERE](#).**



Adult flatid planthopper and nymphs on an eastern ninebark shrub. Photo courtesy Debbie Roos, NC State University, [Growing small farms info](#)

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Pick squash regularly to keep up production. If the vines wilt, check the base of the stem for "sawdust". This means the plant has squash borers in the stem. Remove infected plants (thus removing the borers) and plant new seeds. It is good to change your planting location to hopefully prevent the new plants from being attacked.



[Photo squash vine borer](#)

- Before you spray an insecticide on your vegetables, check the label. Each insecticide has a waiting period after application before you can harvest.
- Although tomatoes are self-pollinating, they need movement to transfer pollen. If it is hot and calm for several days, gently shake plants to assure pollen transfer and fruit set. Hot temperatures can interfere with blossom set. **For staking tomatoes, click [HERE](#).**
- Most fertilizer recommendations are for 100 square feet, so keep your garden's square footage a simple fraction of that. For example, a 4 X 12 foot garden is very close to 50 square feet and would require one half the fertilizer required by a garden of 100 square feet.
- Okra pods get tough if allowed to grow too large. Pick regularly. **For home grown okra, click [HERE](#).**
- Mulch strawberries heavily to protect them from heat and drought.
- The time of day vegetables are harvested can make a difference in the taste and texture. For sweetness, pick peas and corn late in the day; that's when they contain the most sugar, especially if the day was cool and sunny.
- Cucumbers are crisper and tastier if you harvest them early in the morning.
- Start a fall crop of Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower and kale indoors. Outdoors, sow pumpkin, beans, squash, cucumbers, and crowder peas. Plant carrots mid-month. **For info, click [HERE](#).**
- Sunflowers are ready to harvest when the back of the head turns brown.

- Keep an eye out for the tomato hornworm. They can do enormous damage overnight. When you see damage, check under leaves and stems to find them. Hand pick to dispose of them. **For hornworm info, click [HERE](#).**

- Don't plant all your beans at once. If you stagger the plantings every two weeks you will have fresh beans longer. Soak bean seeds overnight before planting for faster germination. **For info on home garden green beans, click [HERE](#).**



Tomato hornworm courtesy UGA

JULY MISCELLANEOUS

- If you keep your houseplants indoors all summer, keep them out of the draft of the air conditioner. Plants react to an air conditioner's cool air in various ways. Some drop their leaves, others don't bloom well and some fail to bloom at all.

RAINFALL COMPARISONS

	Cherokee County			State Wide		
	Mar 2023	Apr 2023	YTD 2023	Mar 2023	Apr 2023	YTD 2023
Actual	4.7	6.1	23.6	4.9	4.1	19.7
Normal	5.6	4.8	21.3	4.6	6.7	20.1
Deviation	-0.9	1.3	2.3	0.3	-2.6	-0.4



June/July Recipes

Zucchini Bread

Submitted by Maurya Jones

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1/2 cup all purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. ground ginger
- 1 medium zucchini, shredded
- 1/2 cup nuts, chopped
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup oil

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Sift flour, salt, baking soda, baking powder, and ginger together into a bowl.
2. Mix eggs, sugar, and oil; add dry ingredients. Scrape sides of bowl.
3. Add zucchini and nuts; mix well.
4. Pour batter into a well greased 8- or 9-inch loaf pan.
5. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour.



*All recipe photos courtesy Maurya Jones

Squash Casserole

Submitted by Maurya Jones

Makes 8 servings.
Prep: 20 minutes.
Cooking time
30 to 40 minutes.



INGREDIENTS:

- 4 medium yellow squash, cut in 1/4 inch slices
- 2 medium zucchini squash, cut in 1/4 inch slices
- 1-1/2 cup water
- 1-1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 stick butter, melted
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 2 tbsp. granulated sugar
- 3/4 tsp. salt, or to taste
- 1 Tbsp. liquid chicken base
- White pepper to taste
- 1-1/2 cup panko bread crumbs or regular seasoned bread crumbs
- 1-1/2 cup grated cheddar cheese
- 3/4 cup or 10 slices of American cheese (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Grease a 9x13x2-inch baking dish. Set aside.
2. In a large pot over medium heat, add squash, zucchini, and water. Cook 20 minutes or until tender. Drain.
3. Meanwhile, sauté onion in melted butter in medium skillet until tender.
4. In a large mixing bowl, combine squash and sautéed onion. Beat eggs to blend and pour into vegetables. Add sugar, salt, chicken base, white pepper, crumbs, and cheddar cheese. Mix well.
5. Pour into prepared baking dish. Top with American cheese (optional).
6. Bake 15 to 20 minutes or until top is lightly browned.



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