

Gardening With The Masters

Growing, Gardening and Gaining Knowledge
October/November 2023

Garden TRIVIA Time

The monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) is known for its annual fall migration. However, there are other species of butterfly that also migrate to avoid the cold of winter.

Do you know what they are?

To find out, look in the October/November 2020 issue of the Cherokee County Master Gardener newsletter, *Gardening with the Masters*. Archived issues can be found on the CCMG website, <https://cherokeemaster-gardeners.com/>.

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Editor's Corner

By Marcia Winchester,
Cherokee County Master Gardener



Pansies courtesy Ashley Frasca, Master Gardener Intern

October is pansy-planting time. If you remember, pansies struggled last year. Generally, the best time to plant pansies is mid-October. This gives the roots plenty of time to become established before the cold sets in. Last October was hot and dry, so not conducive to planting. Therefore, most people waited until the end of October to plant fall annuals. Normally this time frame would still allow enough time for the plants to get established before cold weather; however, during the week of Christmas, the entire state had a cold snap plus high winds.

The cold snap last year was very early in the winter, and pansies and other plants weren't prepared. The ground froze, damaging the shallow roots of pansies and other annuals. In addition, the tops of annuals were damaged by the bitter wind.

Despite last year's problems, don't be discouraged to plant pansies and other cool-weather annuals this fall. The key to success with pansies is to buy compact, healthy plants. To ensure that they are pest-free, I like to shake the container and watch for tiny white flies to come out from under the leaves. Also avoid leggy plants or root bound containers.

Since our winters are wet, good drainage is important. Mix in soil conditioner or small woodchips to aid drainage. Large, tall containers with good drainage raise plants above where rabbits can nibble. Deer love pansies too, so you can cover the plants with hooped netting or plant them in large, well-drained containers on your deck to enjoy. There are also numerous sprays you can purchase to deter deer from eating your plants.

Fertilize your pansies with a basic 10-10-10 fertilizer when you plant. Read our December/January tips for cold weather fertilizing. Every winter is different, but these tips will help you have success. Plant your cool-weather annuals this mid-October, and look forward to enjoying them all winter.

Marcia

Digging into Green Manures

By Karen Garland, Cherokee County Master Gardener

If you want the most nutrition possible from your garden produce, it's best to ensure that it is grown in healthy soil. Planting green manure as part of your yearly rotation is a rewarding way to increase garden fertility and, as a bonus, break disease cycles in your soil. By green manure, I do not mean the waste from livestock. "Green manure" refers to plant material grown as a cover crop, specifically for digging it into the soil to add organic nutrients or improve the soil's texture.

"Green manure" and "cover crop" are often used interchangeably, although technically, a cover crop does not become green manure until it is incorporated into the soil. Think of it as a sacrificial crop used to improve your soil. As a starting point, summer or winter is the best time to plant a green manure crop for digging in the following autumn or spring.



Green manure courtesy UGA



Cover crops courtesy UGA

Green manure usually falls into two categories—legumes and other crops, usually grain-types. Grains like winter rye, wheat, and oats essentially work as cover crops to keep your soil from eroding and as basic weed suppression. Also, they add organic matter to the soil when they break down. The legumes provide a nitrogen boost. These include fava beans, peas, alfalfa, vetch, and crimson clover. Additionally, mustard is often grown as a green manure due to its protective properties against nematodes and verticillium wilt.

Remember, though, that if you are growing legumes for green manure, they need an entire season to fix nitrogen properly. After harvesting peas or beans, rather than pulling the plants from the ground, chop up the leaves, stems, and roots, and dig them into the soil with a shovel or tiller. You'll miss much of the available nitrogen if you cut off or pull the plants from the garden in the fall.

Many gardeners enjoy some green manure benefits simply by altering their winterizing routine. Instead of cutting off or pulling out existing plant material as the weather turns cold, leave it in place over the winter, then chop and churn the dead material into the garden soil the following spring before planting begins. Roots from annual vegetables and plants left in the ground over the winter will help loosen and condition the soil, and leaves and stems dug back into the garden will add nitrogen and improve soil texture. On the other hand, when planted early in the spring, these cover crop grasses grow to maturity and are churned into the soil before the warm-season vegetables or flowers are planted.

If the look of an unkempt garden through the winter bothers you, consider that birds and other creatures may well be feeding on the seeds from flower heads. And the dead leaves and stems can provide critical habitat for pollinating insects.

Benefits of Green Manures:

- ◆ Restrict weed growth
- ◆ Help break up heavy clay soil
- ◆ Stop erosion
- ◆ Increase organic matter and nutrients
- ◆ Increase activity of earthworms and beneficial microorganisms
- ◆ Provide habitat and food for beneficial insects and late-season pollinators



Ways to Upcycle Plentiful Pumpkins

By Ashley Frasca, Cherokee County Master Gardener Intern

Falling for fall! The smells, the colors, the food, and the cooler weather make autumn so inviting. And when it's all over, I find that I'm reluctant to get rid of perfectly good pumpkins that were used for decoration. Here are some cheap and easy ways to upcycle those autumn gourds.

Toss old pumpkins in the compost pile. A pleasant surprise comes when the seeds sprout into small plants, which can be transplanted into the garden! Pumpkins are best grown in Georgia beginning mid-summer.

Dispose of rotting pumpkins in wooded areas. Woodland creatures will enjoy munching on them. *Birds&Blooms* (<https://www.birdsandblooms.com/>) encourages remembering the birds too. They say blue jays especially will eat the raw pumpkin seeds. They're a special treat for backyard chickens too.

If the form of the pumpkin is still sturdy, cut the top half off to where it resembles the shape of a bowl, and fill with bird seed.



Pumpkin bird feeder courtesy Georgia Audubon



Floral pumpkin courtesy Julie Garity

Or how about a DIY planter? Start by cutting a hole in the top, and then scoop out the innards. Plant desired flowers in a plastic pot, or just leave them in the containers they come in from the nursery. Keep pots to a size that will fit snugly inside the pumpkin. Prevent the pumpkin from molding with a bleach or peppermint oil and water solution. Mix a tablespoon of either the bleach or peppermint oil in a quart of water. Then lightly spray the interior and any cut surfaces, let dry. Finally, place your potted plants inside of the pumpkin.

Trailing flowers like calibrachoa (*Calibrachoa* spp.), phlox (*Phlox subulata*), or trailing verbenas (*Verbena* spp.) could spill over the sides beautifully, while the bright colors of upright pansies (*Viola × wittrockiana*), cyclamen (*Cyclamen persicum*) or Gerbera daisies (*Gerbera × hybrida*) steal the show.

Keep those seeds that were scooped out. They're edible and very tasty when roasted! Clean the pumpkin seeds in water, removing all of the stringy material.

Here is an easy roasting recipe from Cookie and Kate (<https://cookieandkate.com/>).

Ingredients:

- 1½ cups fresh pumpkin seeds
- 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil or melted butter
- Optional sweetener: 2 teaspoons maple syrup or honey
- ¼ teaspoon fine salt, to taste
- Optional flavorings: Freshly ground black pepper, to taste, or 1 teaspoon pumpkin spice blend or ground cinnamon or curry powder

Directions:

Stir seeds in with the above ingredients and place them in a single layer on a baking sheet. Bake 15 minutes at 425 degrees, stirring every 5 minutes.

October is Bat Month

By Carolyn Puckett, Cherokee County Master Gardener

There are some critters that just give people the creeps. Snakes and spiders seem to be high on that list. Many people would include bats, but not me. I like to sit out on my back patio at dusk and watch the erratic flight of my local bats as they make short work of those pesky mosquitoes—they can eat up to 1,200 mosquitoes in an hour, often consuming their body weight in insects each night.

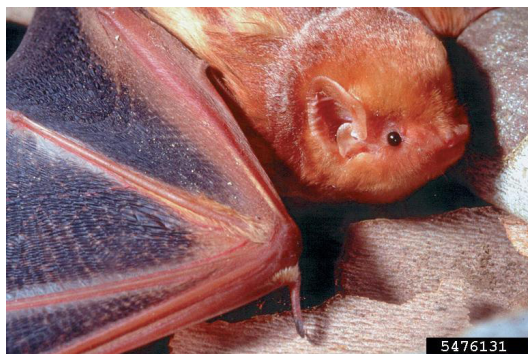
Bats have gotten a bad rap. People think they all have rabies, but the incidence of rabies in bats is no higher than any other species of wild mammal. Then there is the fictitious vampire Dracula morphing into a bat to cause us dread. Yes, there are actually three species of bats that drink blood, but not from humans, and none of them live in United States.



Big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*) portrait, Atlanta, Georgia, USA © Ivan Kuzmin

Bats are beneficial animals. Bats help farmers by eating insect pests, estimated to help save at least \$3 billion a year! Fruit-eating and nectar-feeding bats in the tropics pollinate over 500 plant species; without bats, say goodbye to avocados, bananas, and mangoes. Also, we would not have plants such as agave or the saguaro cactus. Bats also help spread seeds for nuts, figs and cacao, the main ingredient in chocolate. And as gardeners, we can even appreciate bat droppings, known as guano, which is one of the richest fertilizers.

Bats can be found everywhere on earth other than polar regions, extreme deserts, and a few islands. Worldwide there are over 1,300 species of bats. The United States has 44 bat species, 30 of which are on the Endangered Species List, and Georgia is home to 16 species (see <https://georgiawildlife.com/GeorgiaBats>). The world's largest bat is the South Pacific's flying fox, which has a wingspan of up to 6 feet. The world's smallest bat is the bumblebee bat of Thailand, which is smaller than a thumbnail and weighs less than a penny. The longest-living bat is 41 years old, although most bats live less than 20 years in the wild.



Eastern red bat © USDA Forest Service - Southern Research Station, USDA Forest Service, SRS, Bugwood.org

All bats are in the classification order Chiroptera, which is Greek for “hand-wing.” A bat’s wing has four long fingers and a thumb, each connected to the next by a thin layer of skin. This flexible membrane and movable joints allow bats to change direction quickly. Bats are the only mammal capable of true flight. Some bats can reach speeds of over 100 miles per hour, making it the fastest mammal on earth.

Most bats are nocturnal, spending the daylight hours in roosts. They may roost singly, in pairs, or in groups, depending upon the species. Bats seek secluded, dark places to roost. As well as roosting in caves, tree hollows, and old buildings, some will roost in cracks and crevices, even under loose tree bark. While most bats are opportunists that can roost and forage in agricultural and suburban landscapes (a bat once lived behind a shutter on the front of my house), a few species require specific habitats. These populations are more vulnerable to habitat alterations and are of conservation concern.

Seasons often determine where bats choose their homes. Most species that roost in trees, such as hoary bats, migrate south for winter when insects become scarce. Our non-migratory bats are true hibernators and spend winters in caves and mines, eating nothing, surviving on the stored fat in their bodies. Their body temperature drops close to the above-freezing air temperature. Good roosts are hard to find, so many live in giant colonies with millions of other bats, and several species may hibernate together.

No matter where they roost, bats roost hanging upside down by their feet. Scientists are not certain why they hang upside down, but there is some speculation that it is because they have to fall into flight.

After roosting all day, bats need to rehydrate each evening. Bats drink water while flying low over the surface of a pond, most preferring an open water surface at least 10 feet long and 2.5 feet wide.



Fennel and Dill – Can You Tell the Difference?

By Maribeth Price, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Did you know that Oprah couldn't tell the difference, at least at first glance? She posted on her Instagram a photo of fennel in her garden and asked what she should do with all this dill. She was quickly corrected by a more astute gardener, but if the grand lady of advice can get it wrong, maybe it's time for an article on the difference between the two!

At a glance, fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) and dill (*Anethum graveolens*) may appear to be the same by looking at their leaves. They both sport feathery deep green, divided leaves with many linear segments.



Dill (*Anethum graveolens*) foliage Magnus Brath
[CC BY 2.0](#)

Fennel has a bulb-like bottom stem whereas dill does not. Although they are both in the Apiaceae (carrot or parsley family) family, fennel is a perennial herb whereas dill is an annual or biennial.



Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) Quinn Dombrowski [CC-BY-SA 2.0](#)

Fennel is native to southern Europe but has been naturalized in northern Europe, Australia, and North America. Fennel is fruit bearing with what are commonly called seeds. Fennel sends up four or five stalks which contain white pith. These plants bloom in large, flat umbels with yellow flowers in late summer, which ripen to gray-brown seeds.

All the aerial portions of fennel are edible, including the flowers. Fennel seeds can be found baked into bread and combined with Italian sausage. The seeds compliment cucumber, asparagus, and tomato. Essential oil from the seeds is added to perfumes, cosmetics, and soap.



Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) seeds
Cynthia Cheny [CC BY-NC 2.0](#)

Fennel should be sown directly in the ground at a soil temperature of 50 to 75 degrees at ¼ inch depth. Fennel prefers full sun and loamy soil, rich in organic matter with a pH of 6.5 to 8. Soil should be well drained and moist to prevent bolting and splitting of stalks. The seeds usually germinate in seven to 10 days. It matures in 60 to 90 days depending on the variety planted. As a larval plant for the swallowtail butterfly, fennel can be grown in butterfly gardens, with the swallowtail caterpillars feeding on the leaves without overtaking the plant. Fennel needs adequate water, or it is prone to not develop its bulb and will go to bolt.

Dill, native to Mediterranean countries and southeastern Europe, is now cultivated in Europe, North America, and India and is used as a culinary and medicinal herb. It is also fruit bearing with what are commonly called seeds. The genus name for dill, *Anethum*, comes from the Greek meaning to calm or soothe, while the species name, *graveolens*, means strong smelling. The earliest known evidence of dill as a medicinal herb was recorded 5,000 years ago in Egypt where it was referred to as a "soothing medicine." It is known to calm troubled stomachs.

The entire dill plant is aromatic and is used for flavoring fish, soups, salads, and especially pickles. Dill is very popular in Europe and Scandinavia as the warm, slightly sharp flavor reminiscent of caraway goes well with their many fish recipes. It is also a widely used and familiar plant in Greek culture.



Dill seeds Michael Hiemstra [CC BY 2.0](#)

Dill grows best in temperate climates with full sun in slightly acidic, well-drained soil. The recommended pH range of the soil is 5.2 to 8.2, with an average 6.5. Plant dill seeds early in the spring ¼ inches deep a few weeks before the last hard frost date. Seedlings germinate in about 10 to 14 days.

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October is Bat Month....continued from page 4

Most female bats mate in late summer, storing the sperm until spring when fertilization occurs. Baby bats are called pups. Most bats have only one pup per year, although the eastern red bat commonly has twins. Born in the summer, the pups are born blind, naked, and helpless. Like most mammals, bat mothers feed their pups breastmilk. The pups mature quickly, and most young are self-sufficient and nearly full-sized by six weeks old.

Like cats, bats clean themselves, spending a lot of time grooming. Some, like the colonial bat, even groom each other. Besides maintaining their sleek fur, cleaning helps control parasites.

You many have heard the phrase “blind as a bat,” but actually bats’ tiny, beady eyes see very well. Bats’ ears are large and especially well-developed for echolocation, enabling bats to find food even in total darkness. As a bat flies, it utters 10 to 20 high-pitched squeaks per second, which echo off nearby objects. Their ability to echolocate and their split-second reflexes make them highly successful predators of insects and easy navigators of small spaces.

Bats have few natural predators; owls, hawks, and snakes will eat bats. But the North American Bat Conservation Alliance estimates that over 52 percent of bats are at risk of dying in the next 15 years. The biggest threat is “white-nose syndrome.” This deadly and fast-spreading disease is named for a white fungus on the muzzle and wings of bats that awakens them from hibernation, resulting in their starvation. The disease has been detected in 37 states; it was first documented in Georgia in 2013. The disease has decimated a number of species of bats, killing millions of bats in North America. It has killed over 90 percent of northern long-eared, little brown, and tri-colored bat populations in fewer than 10 years.

White-nose syndrome is spread by contagion on cavers’ shoes. If you are a spelunker, please follow the decontamination protocols at [White-Nose Syndrome Protocol](#).

Climate change is also causing problems for bats. Experts believe that as many as 82 percent of North American bat species will be impacted by climate change in the next 15 years, especially by severe drought and temperature extremes. The other threats to bats include habitat loss, mortality from wind turbines, and pesticides and water quality problems that impact aquatic-based food supplies.

So, what can we do to help bats? There are several things:

- ◆ Avoid disturbing bats by staying out of caves and mines where bats are hibernating.
- ◆ Promote natural habitat around your home, leaving dead and dying trees in areas where they do not create a hazard.
- ◆ Create a garden with fragrant, light-colored flowers that bloom through the evening (bats love the moths that these flowers attract). Trees that do not close their flowers at night are host plants to many kinds of insects, and they create roosting options for solitary tree bats.
- ◆ Avoid using harmful herbicides and pesticides.
- ◆ Keep your kitties inside, as cats will eat bats as well as birds.
- ◆ Turn off your outdoor lights, as light pollution can disrupt bats.
- ◆ If you have room for a pond or trough, provide water for bats.

You can also help by being a bat ambassador, dispelling bat myths and helping people learn how they can help bats. You do not need to wait for Bat Appreciation Month in October to spread the word!

For more information:

Bat Conservation International: <https://www.batcon.org/>

U.S. Department of the Interior: <https://www.doi.gov/blog/13-facts-about-bats>



Tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*) with visible symptoms of white-nose syndrome, courtesy Pete Pattavina/USFWS



Fennel and Dill – Can You Tell the Difference? ...continued from page 5



Dill flower head ((brian)) [CC BY 2.0](#)

Dill has a long taproot and is a poor candidate for transplanting. Dill needs to have adequate water to prevent it from bolting, but over-watering and too much shade will cause it to flop over. Dill responds well to furrow irrigation, which helps to eliminate stresses caused by mildew on the seed heads.

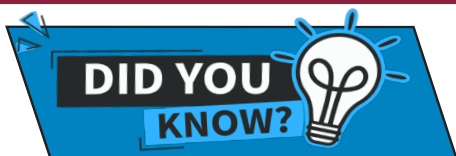
Depending on the variety, dill can grow anywhere from 1 foot (dwarf varieties) up to 4 feet. The stems have white to off-white, vertical striations

running their length. Unlike fennel, which resembles dill in appearance, the stems of dill are hollow. Dill is considered a cool weather crop and grows best in temperatures ranging from the 40s to the 70s. The optimum time to harvest dill is early morning when the plant has a higher moisture content. Freshly cut dill can be stored in the refrigerator safely for two to three days.

Dill seed is harvested at the end of the plant's life cycle. The flowers are spent, the stems are drying out, and the seeds are turning a golden-brown color. Cut the stem off at the base then invert the cutting into a paper bag. Hang the bag to dry for two weeks. After two weeks take the bag down and reach in to gently crush the seed head to separate the seeds from the head. Store dill seeds in an airtight container in a dark place.



Fennel flower Jon Sullivan [CC BY-NC 2.0](#)



By Mary Tucker, Master Gardener

Did you know that pumpkins (*Cucurbita* spp.) are native to the Americas and have been cultivated for thousands of years?

They are in the gourd family (*Cucurbitaceae*) and are a type of winter squash. Many cultivars are available, and if you want to grow pumpkins, choose a cultivar suited for its intended use, whether decorative or culinary. Also consider how much space you have in your garden since some pumpkin vines grow quite large.



Assorted pumpkins Barbara H. Smith ©2015 HGIC, Clemson Extension

Thanksgiving Is For The Birds!

By Jennifer Ruscelli, Master Gardener

While you're preparing your Thanksgiving feast, those leftover fat trimmings can become useful. They can't be disposed of down the sink, not to mention wasteful and can clog, so here's an idea.



Downy Woodpecker. Photo: evilrobotsmash/Flickr (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Try melting them down like bacon grease over moderate-low heat until liquid, strain twice until clear, and create your own much desired suet that birds just love!

To make this even more delicious, mix in some of your leftovers, like cranberries, oats, nuts, flour, raisins, raisins, cracked corn, chopped apple, berries, pecans, and safflower seeds. You get the idea. Proportions will be something like 1 Cup fat, 1 Cup flour, 1 Cup add-ins, so Mix IT UP!

Pour your mixes into molds, (even egg cartons), add twine (natural) for hanging, and let them harden at room temp. Once hardened, freeze for two hours and then serve!

Birds love rendered animal fat such as suet and if you don't have enough to cook down, you can purchase some from a local bird food supply store or butcher shop.

Don't forget to mix in some of your delicious leftover fixings, add twine, freeze (may be optional) and serve! Be sure and hang in a nearby tree to enjoy watching the birds feast during the holidays.

The birds will be so thankful!


RAINFALL COMPARISONS						
	Cherokee County			State Wide		
	July 2023	Aug 2023	YTD 2023	July 2023	Aug 2023	YTD 2023
Actual	4.1	7.0	41.9	3.2	4.7	37.4
Normal	4.7	3.9	38.3	4.5	4.5	36.8
Deviation	-0.6	3.1	4.6	-1.3	0.2	0.6



Photo sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*) courtesy Marcia Winchester

OCTOBER GARDENING TIPS

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. **For growing tomatoes, click [HERE](#).**
- 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. **For more info on summer and winter squash, click [HERE](#).**
- 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 spunbonded 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.

OCTOBER 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. **For a guide to composting and mulching, click [HERE](#).**
- 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. **For kudzu control, click [HERE](#). For poison ivy control, click [HERE](#).**

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. **For more info click [HERE](#).**
- 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, fothergilla, hydrangea, blueberries, itea and amsonia. **For more info on growing dogwoods, click [HERE](#).**
- 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. **For more info on flowering bulbs, click [HERE](#).**

NOVEMBER GARDENING 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) on the surface. **For growing azaleas, click [HERE](#).**
- 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.



Photo *Narcissus x medioluteus* "Twin Sisters", courtesy Barbara H. Smith, ©2018 HGIC, Clemson Extension

- 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 that 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. **For scale management, click [HERE](#).**
- 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" deep 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. **For more info on growing peonies, click [HERE](#).**

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.



Photo open wooden cold frame with lettuce Adobe Stock 262041130

- Plant lettuce and hardy vegetables, such as beets, cabbage, and spinach, in cold frames for winter or early spring crops. **For more cold frame info, click [HERE](#).**
- 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 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. **For pesticide safety, click [HERE](#).**

NOVEMBER 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. **For more info on common pest control, click [HERE](#).**
- During the cooler temperatures and shorter days of winter, the growth of most houseplants slows. Unless plants are grown under an 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. **For more info on houseplants, click [HERE](#).**
- 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. **For more info, click [HERE](#).**

October/November Recipes

Cheese Fondue

Submitted by Maurya Jones

When fall is around the corner, a fabulous fondue is the perfect dish to bring guests together.

Ingredients:

- 1 garlic clove, halved
- 1 pound Gruyère cheese, grated
- 1/2 pound Swiss cheese, grated
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Freshly grated nutmeg

Instructions:

1. Gather your ingredients.
2. Rub the inside of a cheese fondue pot or medium enameled cast-iron casserole with the garlic clove; discard the garlic.
3. Combine the grated Gruyère and Swiss cheese with the wine, cornstarch, and lemon juice in the fondue pot; cook over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until the cheeses begin to melt, about 5 minutes.
4. Reduce heat to low. Add a generous pinch each of pepper and nutmeg; cook, stirring gently, until creamy and smooth, about 3 minutes. Don't overcook the fondue, or it will get stringy. Serve at once.
5. Serve with 3 to 4 apples cut into chunks, crusty French bread cubes, and broccoli/cauliflower florets.



Photo courtesy Kimber Jones

Raspberry Bars

Submitted by Mageeda Doe

Ingredients:

- 1¼ cup sifted flour
- ½ cup white sugar
- ½ cup butter
- 1/3 cup raspberry jam
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- Pinch salt
- 1/8 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup chopped walnuts

Instructions:

1. For the base of the bars, mix together the flour and sugar, and then cut in the butter. Spread into a 9-inch square greased baking dish. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes, just until edges become tinged with brown. Remove from oven.
2. Spread the raspberry jam over the base of the bars.
3. Blend the remainder of the ingredients together well and spread over the jam.
4. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes until top is set.
5. Cool and cut into squares



Photo GroupRecipes



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<https://extension.uga.edu/county-offices/cherokee.html>

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