

Gardening With The Masters

Growing, Gardening and Gaining Knowledge

June/July 2024



Garden TRIVIA Time

One of our most troublesome lawn weeds grows from small tubers and is considered an edible delicacy by some.

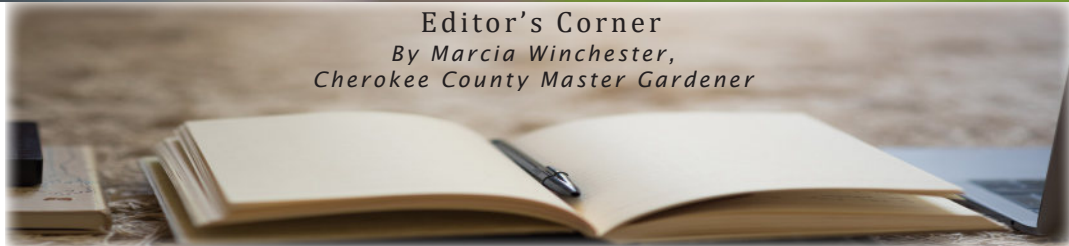
Do you know what it is?

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>.

IN THIS ISSUE

Editor's Corner/Trivia	Page 1
Summer Songs of Cicadas	Page 2
Creating a Backyard Habitat	Page 3
Herbs: Most Versatile Plant in the Garden	Page 4
Common Tomato Diseases	Page 5
Continued Articles	Page 6
Continued Articles	Page 7
June Gardening Tips	Page 8
July Gardening Tips/Rainfall	Page 9
Recipes/Links	Page 10

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



Laura Mixson (second from left) pictured with seniors during senior education classes. Laura helped the seniors learn about succulents and how to create their own succulent gardens. Photo courtesy Jennifer Ruscilli

Benefits of volunteering as a Master Gardener include the friendships you develop and the variety of gardeners that you meet. Each Master Gardener has gardening topics they are especially interested in. As they learn more on a topic and gain experience and expertise, they then share their new knowledge with both other Master Gardeners and the public.

This year in particular I've realized how important it is to share your knowledge. Three of my Master Gardener friends passed away recently. Each one had different interests in gardening and plants, and each enjoyed sharing their knowledge.

Merrily taught classes on pruning and became an expert on daylilies, even learning to hybridize them. Mary Ann helped teach classes to both the public and to the seniors at the Senior Center, and she delighted in answering questions from her neighbors. Laura loved everything about gardening, and she loved taking classes to learn even more. She especially loved to teach classes on pretty much any gardening topic.

Throughout my 25+ years of Master Gardening, I've worked with a lot of Master Gardeners. Some are still active, some no longer participate, and some have sadly passed. All have happily and generously shared their knowledge, benefiting countless other gardeners. If you don't share your knowledge it will be lost.

Marcia

History to Be Made with the Summer Songs of Cicadas

By Ashley Frasca, Cherokee County Master Gardener

I recall back in 2021, Brood X, the largest brood of 17-year cicadas, made headlines in the Ohio River Valley area. Periodical cicadas appear every 13 or 17 years, and this is our year for Brood XIX—a 13-year group. The reason this year is notable though is because our neighbors to the north are also due. Brood XIII, a 17-year cicada group, plagues them at almost the same time we're experiencing Brood XIX. According to the cicada-mapping website Cicada Safari (<https://cicadasafari.org/>), the last time both broods emerged simultaneously was 221 years ago. Pretty notable! Emergence here in Georgia began around late April.

Though our state sees cicadas each and every year, these broods receive more attention because of the intrigue of their long lifecycle. Nymphs spend either 13 or 17 years underground and survive by feeding on plant and tree roots. Gardeners may start to notice small, pinky-finger-sized holes in the ground as nymphs emerge. Dr. Gene Kritsky, Professor Emeritus of Biology at Mount St. Joseph University in Cincinnati, says these holes will appear under trees and not in open areas.



Adult cicada emerging from its exoskeleton after crawling up out of the soil and onto a tree.
Photo Joseph O'Brien, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org.

He further explains that nymphs then crawl up a vertical surface to shed their skins (see photo at left), and they'll continue to mature in the tops of the trees, but they don't start vocalizations for about five days.

Some gardeners are fearful of their emergence this summer. The Home & Garden Information Center at Clemson University assures us that the feeding by the nymphs generally doesn't seem to be detrimental to tree health. My advice: plant as you normally would this season. However, spring planted saplings could be susceptible to injury by cicadas during oviposition, the period where the female lays eggs in stems and branches.

Dr. Kritsky warns that in the areas with the highest surge of cicadas, the females could potentially lay eggs in every branch of a young tree, which would kill the tree.

Entomologists ask that you not use pesticides to deter cicadas. They are not harmful to humans and aren't even around for that long. Nature has a way of keeping them in check, by way of the cicada killer wasp and a parasitic fungus.

Cicada killer wasps will be happy as a bunny in a salad bar, given the huge menu out there this summer! The holes in which they bury the cicadas they kill are dug in looser soil, and we won't see these holes until perhaps July. A fascinating aspect of this adversarial relationship between cicadas and cicada killer wasps is how the wasps become a bit overwhelmed during these population booms. Dr. Kritsky says, "Coming out in such large numbers is part of the cicadas' strategy for survival. They literally satiate their predators, to where the predators can't eat anymore."

Cicada killer wasps enjoy feeding cicadas to their young, but what do cicadas taste like to us? I had to ask Dr. Kritsky, manager of the Cicada Safari website. His response- "I haven't eaten one in 30 years, but it's a very 'green' flavor." He likens the taste to the liquid from canned asparagus. That's pretty relatable!

While the sounds, the swarms, and the thought of the taste of cicadas may be alarming to some, don't buy into the hype that this phenomenon is something to get stressed about. Sit back and enjoy the show this summer!

Resources:

Cicada Safari: <https://cicadasafari.org/>

Clemson University Home & Garden Information Center: <https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/cicadas/>

Cicada Mania: <https://www.cicadamania.com/>



Adult periodical cicada on a sassafras leaf.
Note the black body and red eyes.
Photo by Jon Yuschock, Bugwood.org.



Photo cicada emergence holes Mary Tucker

Creating a Backyard Wildlife Habitat

By Mary Schuster, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Since you're a gardener, the opportunity to create a backyard wildlife habitat very likely already exists on your property. Best of all, it is so easy to achieve whether you have a large backyard or simply a small deck or patio. Take a minute and think about your space. All you need to provide for a healthy habitat are four main elements, which are food, water, cover, and places to raise young. Let's look at these in detail.



Food

Native plants are ideal food sources for much wildlife. These can be supplemented with bird feeders. By getting familiar with the birds or other wildlife that visit (or that you want to attract), you will know what their preferences are for food, be it seeds, suet, nectars, insects, or fruit and berries.

Water

For many species, a simple bird bath is sufficient for drinking and bathing. If your yard is larger, several water sources can be placed or may already exist, such as a fountain, pond, or a natural stream.

Cover

This aspect of habitat is necessary for shelter from weather and for places to hide from predators or to hunt for prey. Some examples may include niches under eaves of your home, trees (even dead ones), structures such as a garden shed that may provide nooks and crannies, and piles of twigs and branches you may have created during a yard clean-up.

Places to raise young

Wildlife need places to reproduce and to protect and nourish their young. You may notice that birds will utilize many of the areas used for cover to build and maintain their nests.



Establishing your habitat will have added benefits to the overall environment. Selecting native pollinator plants such as American beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*) and milkweed (*Asclepias* spp.), for example, will attract the birds, bees, and butterflies that are so vital in keeping not only your yard but the planet in a sustainable status that benefits us all. And using gardening practices such as rain barrels, removing of invasive plants, and eliminating pesticides will enhance the potency of your wildlife habitat.

Once you feel good about the wonderful space you have created, you can show it off to your neighbors with a sign awarded to you by such agencies as Birds Georgia (formerly the Georgia Audubon Society), the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), and/or Monarchs Across Georgia (a committee of the Environmental Education Alliance). Approval by any of these agencies means your habitat is now certified and so very official! Birds Georgia will send folks to your yard to inspect your space and then provide you with your certification. To be certified by the National Wildlife Federation, go to their website and complete a simple application, and they will mail you a sign to display. Monarchs Across Georgia has a Pollinator Habitat Certification program, which you can apply for online. Links to all three of these organizations are listed below.

Once your landscape is certified by one or several of these organizations, your official sign will get noticed by your neighbors, and when you tell them how easy it is to establish a wildlife habitat, they may follow suit. In our neighborhood in Cherokee County, we formed a small committee to encourage neighbors to become certified by the NWF. To date, we've been successful in getting over 200 yards certified as backyard wildlife habitats. Good news travels fast!

Resources:

National Wildlife Federation: www.nwf.org

Birds Georgia (formerly Georgia Audubon Society): www.birdsgeorgia.org

Monarchs Across Georgia: <https://www.eealliance.org/monarchs-across-ga.html>

Herbs: The Most Versatile Plants in the Garden

By Diane Walton, Cherokee County Master Gardener

When you think of planting a garden, most people think of flowers or vegetables, which are somewhat one-dimensional plants. An herb is a multi-dimensional plant—meaning it offers the gardener more diversity in its uses than just a food source or a pretty display.

There are a multitude of different herbs to grow, so decide which herbs would fit your needs. How are you going to use your herbs? What herbs do you use now in cooking? What birds or insects are attracted to the herb? Is the herb an annual or a perennial plant? Does the herb have a special need? Is the herb invasive? Read! Read! Read! Research the herb, and you will have more success after planting.



Herb collection CANVA



Herbs and labels CANVA

Plan and design your garden by combining herbs with flowers. Be aware that some herbs have a fragrance, and their scent may compete with the flowers you have planted. Herbs are often used as border plants along a walkway. It is also popular to grow herbs in raised beds, which make harvesting and tending easy.

Many herbs are not the prettiest plants in the garden, and you may even mistake one for a weed. To avoid this mistake, please label all your herbs whether you purchase an herb plant or grow one from seeds. In addition to labels, I print a small picture of each herb that I plant, and I keep it handy to identify the herb when it starts growing. Labeling is particularly important for the perennial herbs which return each spring. Leave the label throughout the winter months.

Without a label, you could plant something on top of the herb not realizing it will be growing soon in the spring. Also, some herbs considered annual plants have returned the following spring especially if we had a mild winter.



Eastern tiger swallowtail caterpillar on fennel
CANVA

Herbs can draw beneficial insects to the garden. Yes, there are good bugs! Some herbs that will bring good bugs to your garden are oregano, fennel, dill, cilantro, sage, thyme, and mint (container only!) NOTE: Never plant mint in the ground as it will be with you for life! The root system grows underground and can sprout up several feet from the original plant. It is very invasive. My mint grows in a container all by itself and is very happy.

Many herbs are wonderful for attracting beloved wildlife to the garden. Do you especially love butterflies and bees? Try planting these herbs to attract them: bee balm, sage, dill, parsley, fennel, basil, borage, catnip, lemon balm, mint, savory, thyme, and chamomile. We all love hummingbirds, and they are attracted to bee balm, pineapple sage, and nasturtium.

Pests are a big problem in the home and garden. Herbs can act as a

deterrent to many of those pests that invade your space—whether it be indoors or out. Some of the herbs listed below can help you in this area:

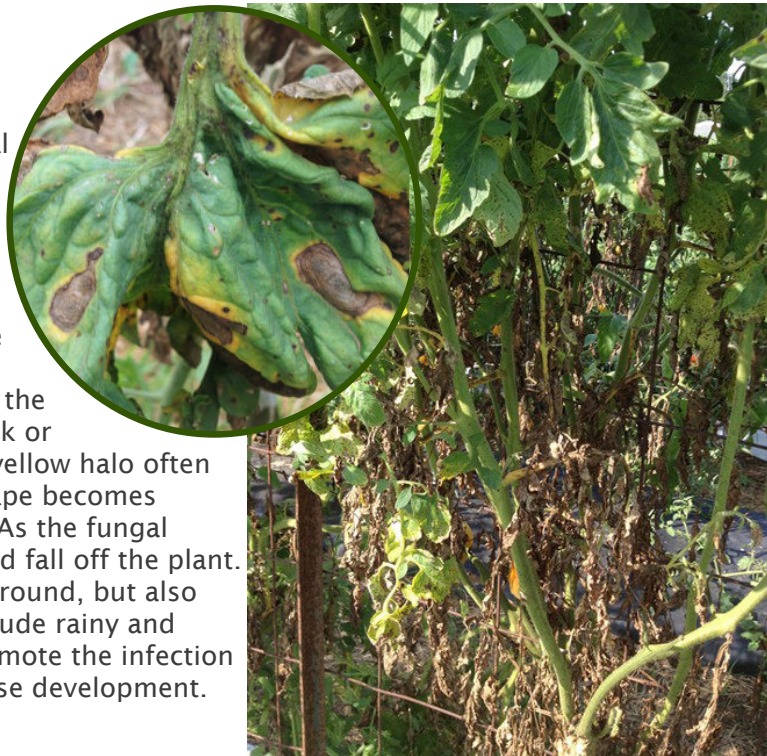
- Basil can keep flies away. Put leaves in a muslin bag by the door or on a porch to help keep flies and mosquitoes away. Dust basil powder on tomato plants to discourage horn worms. Spray a tea mixture to keep beetles away. NOTE: To make a tea from herbs, pour 2 cups boiling water over 2 cups of leaves. Cover for 3 to 4 hours, strain, and add 4 cups of water. Put in a spray bottle and spray plants.
- Garlic can discourage deer. Sprinkle dried powdered garlic on plants and around the perimeter of your garden. Combine with other teas as a spray.
- Rub a handful of lemon balm on a picnic table to discourage bugs. Make a powder from dried leaves, and sprinkle freely on veggies to confuse would-be pests in the garden.

Common Tomato Diseases

By S. Annie Keith, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Growing tomatoes in Georgia can be rewarding, yet challenging due to our hot, humid summers and potential for several tomato diseases and problems. Tomato diseases are divided into foliar and fruit diseases and soil-borne diseases.

Early blight, (see photos on the right) which is caused by *Alternaria solani*, is the most common tomato disease in Georgia according to UGA Extension. Early blight may occur on all parts of the plant except the roots; however, the leaves are the most damaged. First symptoms (small black or brown spots) appear on older leaves near the ground. A yellow halo often surrounds the spots. As the spots become larger, the shape becomes irregular, and concentric circles occur within the wound. As the fungal damage progresses, diseased lower leaves turn brown and fall off the plant. *Alternaria solani* survives on infected debris left on the ground, but also may be carried on seed. Optimal infection conditions include rainy and warm weather, and temperatures between 74 to 84°F promote the infection with this fungus. Both rain and heavy dew promote disease development.



Tomato spotted wilt virus (TSWV)

is a foliar and fruit disease that is spread by thrips. Symptoms start with brown and black discolorations on the youngest leaves progressing to stunting

and wilting at the top of the plant. The fruit on older infected plants develop yellow discolorations which turn to brown and dark irregular spots. TSWV survives in weeds and plants and is hard to prevent.



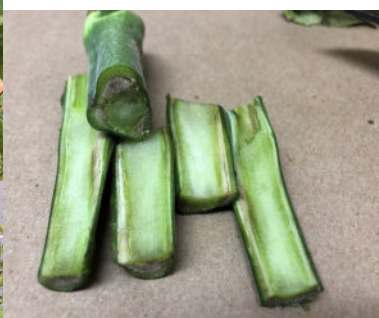
Late blight is a foliar and fruit disease that is caused by the water mold *Phytophthora infestans*.

Late blight on foliage and fruit © Inga Meadows [NC Extension](#)

The fungus affects the stems, leaves, and fruit of tomatoes, causing irregular water-soaked lesions that may have a lighter ring around them. During wet weather, white fungal spores may cover the undersides of the leaves. Tomato fruit damage appears as dark and greasy, eventually becoming rough and sunken.



Fusarium wilt is a soil-borne tomato disease caused by the fungus *Fusarium oxysporum f. sp. lycopersici*. Symptoms start after a plant begins producing fruit. The fungus clogs the water-conducting tissues of the plant. The leaves turn yellow and wilt, and the inside of the plant turns brown and dies. Control this disease by planting fusarium-resistant varieties and not planting tomatoes in the infected area for four years.



Foliar symptoms and brown vascular streaks © Inga Meadows [NC Extension](#)

Continued on page 7

Herbs: The Most Versatile Plants in the Garden...continued from page 4

- A sprig of lavender in the bird bath may keep mosquito larvae from hatching. It also repels moths, ticks, and flies. Try lavender in your dresser drawers to discourage clothes moths.
- Scatter dried leaves of mint in kitchen cupboards to repel mice. Also put some dried leaves around cabbage and arugula to repel flea beetles in your garden
- Lemon grass contains citronella. Make a tea and spray as a natural mosquito repellent.
- Dried flowers of chamomile will discourage flies.
- Grind cayenne peppers to a fine powder and sprinkle around doors and windows to repel ants. A fresh coat of the powder on veggies in the morning with dew will discourage rabbits. A whole dry pepper in containers of beans and grains in the pantry will keep weevils and other bugs out.
- Bay Leaves scattered in a pantry or cabinets will keep food pests out.



Photo herb gardens CANVA

Any herb you grow can usually replace the dried herb you have in your kitchen for cooking. Simply substitute three parts of a fresh herb to one part of a dry herb in your recipe unless it specifically calls for a "fresh" herb. Keep in mind that the flavor components in some herbs, such as basil, parsley, dill, chives, and tarragon, are enhanced in the fresh variety, and that flavor is changed or lost when the herb is used as a dry herb in cooking.



Herbs in clay pots CANVA

Clay pots are the best containers for herbs. Herbs in pots and in hanging baskets require more frequent watering. Make sure there is a drainage hole in the bottom of the container so water does not collect and create root rot.

Here are some suggestions for a container of herbs:

- Oregano, parsley, and chives; 12- to 14-inch container
- Rosemary, chives, thyme, and oregano; 14- to 16-inch container
- Parsley, garlic chives, sweet marjoram, lemon thyme, and sage; 16-inch or greater container

Harvest your herbs often. Herbs love to be pruned, and I generally do this once a week. Gather the herbs in the morning after the dew is dry. Pick only small portions of new growth. Keep the herbs separated so they do not pick up flavors from another herb, and clean your cutting tool before you move to a new herb. If you are not going to use the herb immediately, you can place it in a clean jar with water and keep it in the refrigerator. This should last for approximately 10 to 14 days.

If you have never planted herbs before, now is the time to start. Once you start using your herbs in cooking and other areas for pests, etc., you will be hooked just as I am. Enjoy your herbs and happy gardening!

Diane will be teaching a class on "Herbs, and How to Use Them", Saturday, July 27, at 10am. The class will be taught at the Senior Center, located at 1001 Univeter Rd, Canton, Ga. Visit the master gardener website to register online: <https://cherokeemastergardeners.com>.

Herbs are probably some of the easiest plants to grow. They require six hours of direct sun each day, water (with good drainage), and pruning regularly. If watering is needed, water in the evening at the ground level only so the leaves don't get wet. If you have a hillside, herbs should grow very well there because of good drainage.

Herbs can be planted in the ground, in containers, and also in hanging baskets. You can make a beautiful container by planting two or three herbs along with some annual flowers for color.



Herbs in hanging basket CANVA



Southern blight is a fungal soil-borne tomato disease caused by the *Sclerotium rolfsii* (*Agroathelia rolfsii*). The symptoms of southern blight appear like fusarium

wilt. Leaves rapidly turn yellow then brown, and the plant dies in several days. Unlike fusarium wilt, a white, cottony fungal growth develops on the stem near the soil line when conditions are moist. In addition, there is rapid browning and death of the tomato plant stem at the soil line. Southern blight can live in the soil for many years.



Root-knot nematode is a soil-borne parasitic plant roundworm (*Meloidogyne* spp.) found in most soils. Root-knot nematode larvae enter through the plant's roots,

where they feed, resulting in a visible swelling or gall. As the nematodes continue feeding, more galls occur. Eventually, the root system of the plant is unable to take up water and nutrients, causing deformed roots and a lack of secondary roots. Eventually, the above ground portion of the plant declines.



Southern bacterial wilt is a soil-borne tomato disease caused by the bacteria *Ralstonia solanacearum*. Symptoms include a rapid and permanent wilting of leaves, even with adequate moisture in the

soil. The plant dies so quickly that the leaves do not have time to turn yellow. If you cut into the stem, the interior of the stem will be brown. In severe infections, the interior of the stem may be hollow. There are no cures for southern bacterial wilt.



Blossom-end rot is a serious problem on tomato fruit. Symptoms include a dry, sunken, leathery spot at the blossom end of the fruit. Blossom-end rot is not actually a disease but is included because it is frequently seen in

home gardens. Blossom-end rot is caused by a low concentration of calcium in the blossom end of the fruit. This can occur when there is drought stress, followed by excessive soil moisture. Blossom-end rot can be managed by maintaining a soil pH of 6.2 to 6.8 and supplying an adequate amount of calcium to the soil by adding dolomitic limestone or gypsum to the soil when planting. Also, avoid drought stress and moisture fluctuations by mulching and consistent watering

Methods of tomato disease management consist of prevention. There are numerous tactics the gardener can use: planting resistant varieties; choosing a sunny site with plenty of air flow; mulching tomatoes to prevent soil from splashing on the plant; avoiding overhead watering by using drip irrigation; rotating crops by not planting similar crop families, such as potatoes, peppers, and eggplant, in the same spot within three years; and removing and discarding plants at the end of the growing season.

For additional information, please see the following UGA Cooperative Extension Service publications:

Bulletin 1285 Common Tomato Diseases in Georgia <https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=B1285>

Bulletin 1271 Georgia Homegrown Tomatoes <https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=B1271>

*All photo provided by UGA unless noted otherwise

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.



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

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](#).**



UGA2169035

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

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 2024	Apr 2024	YTD 2024	Mar 2024	Apr 2024	YTD 2024
Actual	5.8	3.0	21.1	7.5	4.3	24.7
Normal	5.4	4.4	20.8	4.5	3.7	17.1
Deviation	0.4	-1.4	0.3	3.0	0.6	7.6



June/July Recipes

Vidalia Onion Casserole

Submitted by Maurya Jones

INGREDIENTS:

6 to 7 large Vidalia onions
1 stick margarine
Ritz crackers (1 cup crushed)
Parmesan cheese

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Peel and slice onions into thin rings. Sauté in margarine until done.
2. Pour half of onions into a 1½ quart casserole.
3. Cover with half the Parmesan cheese and then half the crushed Ritz crackers.
4. Repeat layers.
5. Bake uncovered in 325 degree oven until golden brown.

ZUCCHINI (OR SQUASH)-CORN SAUTÉ

Submitted by Maurya Jones

Yields 6-8 servings.

INGREDIENTS:

1 medium onion, coarsely chopped
1 Tbsp. corn oil
1 or 2 cups thinly sliced zucchini
½ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper
1 cup fresh corn (frozen or canned corn may be substituted)
Pinch of basil

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Sauté onion in corn oil in heavy skillet or Dutch oven until transparent.
2. Add zucchini, corn, and seasonings.
3. Cover tightly and lower the heat to a simmer.
4. Cook for five minutes, stirring once, and serve while crisp and tender.



All vegetable photos courtesy CANVA



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
EXTENSION
Cherokee County

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

1130 Bluffs Pkwy, Suite G49
Canton, GA 30114
770-721-7803



<https://cherokeemastergardeners.com>
<https://www.facebook.com/cherokeemastergardeners>