

# Gardening With The Masters

Growing, Gardening and Gaining Knowledge  
October/November 2024

## Garden TRIVIA Time

Populations of the eastern wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo silvestris*) have grown significantly since a sharp decline in the early 1900s. The large bird is classified as “gallina-ceous.”

**Do you know what this term means?**

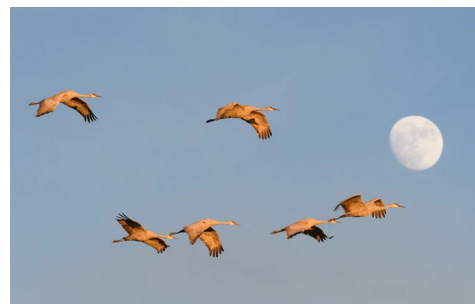
To find out, look in the October/November 2021 issue of the Cherokee County Master Gardener newsletter, *Gardening with the Masters*. Archived issues can be found on the CCMG website, <https://cherokeemastergardeners.com/>.

## IN THIS ISSUE

Editor’s Corner/Trivia .....	Page 1
Up In The Trees, on the Ground, What is That?.....	Page 2
Chipmunks: Cute but Pesky .....	Page 3
Native Bamboo: yes, there is such a thing! .....	Page 4
Have a Gardening Question? Just Ask Us! .....	Page 5
Continued Articles Up in the Trees/ Native Bamboo .....	Page 6
Continued Articles Gardening Questions/Did You Know?/Project Feeder Watch/Rainfall .....	Page 7
October Gardening Tips .....	Page 8
November Gardening Tips .....	Page 9
Recipes/Links .....	Page 10

## Editor’s Corner

By Marcia Winchester,  
Cherokee County Master Gardener



Adult sandhill cranes © Bruno Struck Audubon

One of my favorite fall events is observing the southern migration of the sandhill cranes (*Antigone canadensis*) to their winter homes in the southern United States and Mexico. The first time I saw a flock flying high in the sky, I made the common mistake of thinking they were Canada geese (*Branta canadensis*).

If you really observe and listen closer you can tell the difference. The sandhill crane’s call is a “karoo karoo,” while the call of the Canada goose is a harsher “ka honk” noise. While the geese maintain a sharp V formation, the cranes have a looser and constantly changing V. In my neighborhood, I may see a large group of them slowly circling in the sky as they prepare to land and spend the night at Allatoona Lake before they continue on their migration path.

The cranes often fly over a mile high, and you will hear their call before you see them. Once I hear the calls, I start scanning the sky until I see the flock. I love to watch them move about in their loose V formation. I’ve never seen a sandhill crane up close, but they are huge and impressive birds that are 4 feet tall with a 6-foot wingspan. When they land as a group in large open spaces it must be quite a sight.



Adult sandhill crane © Lorri Howski / Macaulay Library  
[All About Birds CornellLab](http://AllAboutBirds.CornellLab)

Of course, if you miss them this fall, they will fly back to the western Great Lakes area in mid-February to late March, so look and listen for them then. In the meantime, to learn more about these beautiful and fascinating birds, check out Karen Garland’s informative article in our August/September 2018 newsletter.

Marcia

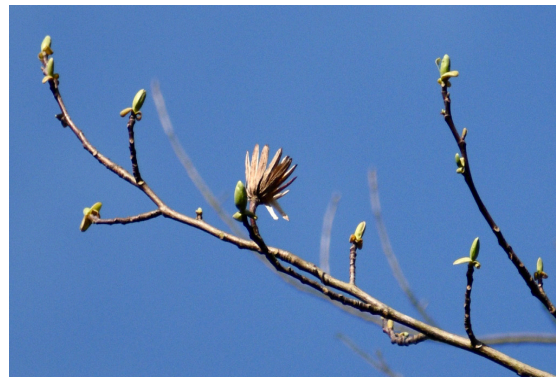
For more information and photos of sandhill cranes visit CornellLab All About Birds [HERE](#).

# Up in the trees... on the ground... what is that?

By Ashley Frasca, Cherokee County Master Gardener

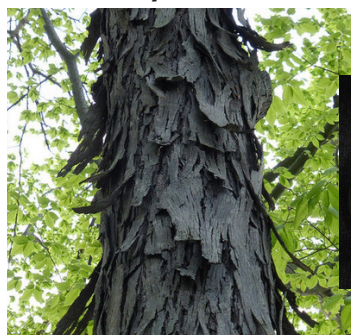
This time of year certainly calls for more time outdoors, looking forward to camping, cheering on a favorite football team, and watching the fall leaf color! While looking up at the colorful trees, don't forget to look down too. You'll see things that could have fallen on the ground or still be up in the trees. There are some cool reproductive structures that make folks wonder, "Where are these coming from?" I've done the homework and have identified the trees that these come from.

So, what are these? Test your knowledge!



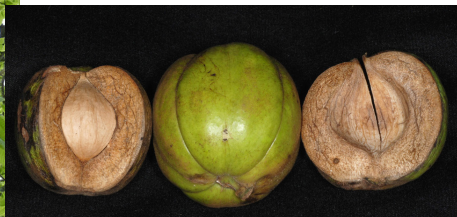
Tulip poplar leaf buds, seed, husk  
(Warren County, NC) © Cathy DeWitt [CC BY 4.0](#)

## A) Hickory nut from a hickory tree



Shaggy bark © Kevin Faccenda [CC BY 2.0](#)

There are eight hickory trees that are native to Georgia, including the shagbark hickory (*Carya ovata*), whose bark hangs in long strips, resembling an upright brush in a car wash.



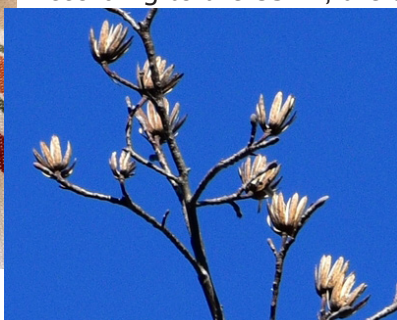
Nuts that remove easily from the outer husk are ripe and ready. Most often, they've already fallen from the tree. Shelling hickory nuts can be difficult because of the thick shell that remains once the husk has been removed.

Stages of fruit (Guilford County, NC)-Early Fall  
© Douglas Goldman, USDA [CC BY-NC 4.0](#)

## B) Dried seed pod from a tulip poplar tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)



Photo courtesy Ashley Frasca



According to the USDA, the tulip poplar actually is not a poplar, but a member of the magnolia family. It gets its name from the tulip-shaped, yellow flowers that bloom each spring. As kids, we called the winged seeds, helicopters!

Flower Husks - December 27 - Warren Co., NC  
© Cathy DeWitt [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0](#)

## C) Follicle from a magnolia tree



Red berries are housed in this, and they remind me of corn kernels. When the follicle dries up, it turns brown and falls from the tree in early fall. And southern magnolias (*Magnolia grandiflora*) aren't limited to just the South. According to the Arbor Day Foundation, "A historic specimen grows on the White House grounds. It was transplanted by President Andrew Jackson from his home in Nashville, Tennessee, in memory of his beloved wife Rachel."

(Far left) Fruit close-up mid summer, (Center) Seed pod, (Right) Seed pod with seeds  
Warren Co., NC © Cathy DeWitt [CC BY-4.0](#)

## D) Golden rain tree (*Koelreuteria paniculata*) seed pod

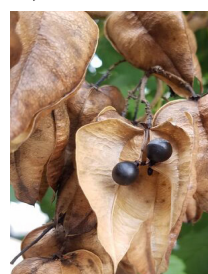


Photo Rebekah D. Wallace,  
University of Georgia,  
[Bugwood.org](#) Image #5611906

These non-native trees have lots of depth, with beautiful paper-like, pink seed pods in early fall. They resemble little lanterns. They are great shade trees. The only problem is these reseed easily and quickly and can become a nuisance! Golden rain tree is considered an invasive exotic plant in some areas.

# Chipmunks: Cute but Pesky

By Maribeth Price, Cherokee County Master Gardener

It was in early 2014 that my family relocated to the Woodstock, Georgia, area from the panhandle of Florida. I quickly learned there were significant differences in gardening in a predominately clay-based soil as opposed to sandy soil. I was also for the first time introduced to the eastern chipmunk (*Tamias striatus*).

I thoroughly enjoyed watching them dart about, and I found them so cute and interesting as they were a novelty to me. But as time went by, I quickly learned that they can be quite a garden pest and can make extensive tunnels under your lawn and gardens.



Eastern chipmunk Canva

Chipmunks are also prolific breeders, mating twice a year, from February to April and June to August. They have a 31-day gestation period with the females giving birth in their tunnel habitat to a litter of two to six pups. The pups are about the size of a bumblebee at birth but are ready to leave the nest at six weeks. Chipmunks do not hibernate, but they are much less active in winter and wake every few days to eat from the enormous stash they have created in their dens during the warm months.

**Chipmunks are omnivorous.** They will eat bird eggs, snails, and insects along with their steady diet of mushrooms, seeds, nuts, berries, vegetables, and garden bulbs. They will easily climb fruit trees to get at the fruit. They will dig up your freshly planted bulbs to have a snack.

**Chipmunks are preyed upon by hawks, owls, coyotes, and foxes.** Although chipmunks are a nuisance, please don't use toxic repellants or poisons. Getting rid of chipmunks with poison can have a toxic chain reaction to any bird or wild animal that may discover the poisoned chipmunk and collect it for their own food.

**Chipmunks hide in such places as woodpiles and stacked rocks.** They are sensitive and tend not to set up house-keeping in areas where there isn't quick cover. If your land is adjacent to woodlands, weed-eat under fence lines and provide a green space between the fence and food sources since they don't like to be out in the open. On the other hand, water features in your garden/lawn can attract them.

Listed below are some ways to control the damage chipmunks can do to your garden and to possibly discourage them from taking up residence in your yard.

- Protect seedlings in location-specific areas by covering them with hardware cloth or chicken wire. Anchor the wire protection down with rocks, stakes, or dirt. Seedling shoots should still be able to shoot up but will be protected from the tiny claws of chipmunks. I can't tell you how often I have tried to plant sunflowers only to have the seeds dug up or the tiny sprout heads bitten off.
- Ultrasonic devices can be found at hardware stores or online. They will emit vibrations and sounds that unsettle the chipmunks and will keep other rodents out also.
- Some natural deterrents may be found in your kitchen pantry. You can sprinkle hot cayenne, garlic, apple cider, coffee grounds, and peppermint. You will need to reapply after watering and rainstorms
- Bloodmeal is known to deter chipmunks.
- Warning: The use of mothballs as a scent deterrent is considered an unsafe practice and may even be illegal in some areas.
- Use gravel to fill up their holes. Select a grade no larger than ¼ inch in diameter. It makes the tunneling difficult for the chipmunk, and with determination on your part, it can cause them to leave for good.
- Cover strawberries, blueberries, and raspberries with netting.
- Plant chipmunk resistant bulbs. Daffodils (*Narcissus* spp.) and summer snowflake (*Leucojum* spp.) produce a bitter tasting compound called lycorine that repels animals. Alliums (*Allium* spp.) have a sharp smell that repels chipmunks, voles, and squirrels. Fritillaries (*Fritillaria* spp.) have a trace of scent that deters chipmunks.

Despite their cuteness, these little animals can quickly become an unwanted nuisance in the garden, and given their proclivity for rapid breeding they may overwhelm you and your efforts. Take advantage of the many methods of deterring them, and see if you can get the upper hand on these cute but pesky critters.

# Native Bamboo: yes, there is such a thing!

By Mary Tucker, Cherokee County Master Gardener

I used to assume that all bamboos were imported exotic plants and that most were aggressive garden thugs. I was pleasantly surprised to learn some years ago that the United States does in fact have a few native bamboos.

You may have seen one of our native bamboos (*Arundinaria gigantea* or other species) and not even recognized it, because from a distance it may appear simply as a tall, lanky grass. You are likely to spot it growing in patches along forest edges as you drive on country roads, and it also inhabits floodplains and the banks of rivers or streams.

## What Is a Bamboo?

But first, what exactly classifies as a bamboo? All bamboos are members of the grass family (Poaceae), though they have some woody characteristics. William Cullina, in his book *Native Ferns, Moss, and Grasses*, describes them: “Bamboos are giant grasses aspiring to be woody plants. They have evolved incredibly strong, resilient, perennial stems composed primarily of lignin and cellulose (the molecules that make wood strong), and they have a tensile or bending strength and flexibility that surpasses that of most trees.”

Bamboos are generally very fast-growing plants. This rapid growth and their inherent strength have made these plants useful for many purposes throughout history, such as timber, paper, musical instruments, writing tools, fabrics, weapons, fishing poles, and kitchen implements. The young shoots are edible and are found in the cuisines of many cultures.



Giant cane (*Arundinaria gigantea*) John Ruter, University of Georgia, [Bugwood.org](http://Bugwood.org)



Giant cane (*Arundinaria gigantea*) Rebekah D. Wallace, University of Georgia, [Bugwood.org](http://Bugwood.org)

Many bamboos only flower occasionally, and this is especially true of the Asian species. Instead of depending on seed for their propagation, they expand by underground rhizomes, which can be quite deep. From these rhizomes, culms (aboveground stems) pop up out of the ground, sometimes at a significant distance away from the original plant. Bamboos with this characteristic are classified as “running” bamboos, and this trait can make them very difficult to control.

On the other hand, some bamboos are considered “clumping,” and though they also expand via rhizomes, they are less rampant growers. The rhizomes are simply shorter and less aggressive in nature so that the clump expands less rapidly. The various species, whether considered running or clumping, may behave in different manners depending on whether they are growing in optimal conditions or not.

## Our Native Species

Most taxonomists now recognize four separate species of bamboo that are native to the United States. All are members of the genus *Arundinaria*: giant cane (*A. gigantea*), switch cane (*A. tecta*), hill cane (*A. appalachiana*), and Tallapoosa cane (*A. alabamensis*).



Switchcane (*Arundinaria tecta*)  
“Top-knot” of leaves © Will McFarland [CC0.1.0](http://CC0.1.0)

Plants in this genus are indigenous to the South but grow as far north as Maryland and southern Ohio and as far west as Texas. In general, they are most commonly found in the Deep South, though the various species prefer somewhat different habitats.

Here in northern Georgia, we are most likely to see *A. gigantea*, which is both the tallest and one of the more cold tolerant of the species. This bamboo typically grows 6 to 10 feet tall though it can reach 20 feet in optimal conditions. It is indigenous to a large portion of the eastern and southeastern United States.

When the United States was settled, large areas of giant cane (also often called river cane) were present, especially along rich flood plains. These large swaths, called canebrakes, were an important element of nature, both ecologically and culturally. They provided cover and food for fauna and served as a larval host plant for several species of butterfly. Native American tribes used the canes to make baskets, blowguns, flutes, and for construction purposes. The plants also served to stabilize the soil, prevent erosion, and filter sediments from agricultural runoff.

# Have a Gardening Question? Just Ask Us!

By Carolyn Puckett, Cherokee County Master Gardener

**ASK a Cherokee County  
Master Gardener**  
(Click Here)

Graphic created by Jennifer Ruscilli

The Cherokee County Master Gardeners have an “Ask a Cherokee County Master Gardener” team to answer any gardening questions you might have. If you go to our website, <https://cherokeemastergardeners.com/>, you will see a big red button that says “Ask a Cherokee County Master Gardener.” Just click on that button to send us an email. You will get a response from [info@cherokeemastergardeners.com](mailto:info@cherokeemastergardeners.com). (Add the email address to your contact list to make certain the response does not go to your spam folder.)

We use a pretty broad definition of “gardening questions.” For instance, we will try to help you with plant identification even if it is a plant you see during a stroll in the woods! We also include houseplants in our definition of gardening. Recommending ornamental plants to suit your garden’s sun or shade conditions or to support our native critters is right up our alley.

If you send us a question to identify a plant or insect, or to help you diagnose a plant or turf problem, we use your pictures to understand your inquiry. We thought it would be helpful to explain what features we are looking for in the pictures to help us with identification.

## For identifying a plant:



Use something—your finger, a ruler, a coin, etc.—to give an indication of the size of the flower or of the leaf in the picture.

### The flower:

If the plant is flowering, take at least two close pictures of the flower, one showing how many petals it has and another picture showing the sepals and receptacle (the bottom side of the flower). For a compound flower head (one composed of lots of little flowers), also take a picture of the entire inflorescence.



Photo Mary Tucker



Photo Mary Tucker

### The leaf:

Take two or three close pictures of an entire leaf, the first of the top of the leaf showing both the tip and where the leaf attaches to the stem. The picture should show the vein pattern.

Take another picture of the back of the leaf. If it is a compound leaf (a larger leaf composed of smaller leaflets, such as a hickory or locust tree leaf) make certain you get a picture of the entire leaf showing the number of the leaflets.

### The plant body:



Photo Marcia Winchester



Photo Marcia Winchester

For an annual or perennial, take a picture of the entire plant, showing clearly whether the leaves are opposite each other or alternating where they join the stem and whether there is a petiole--a short stem connecting the leaf to the twig.

If a tree, also take a fairly close picture of the bark, along with a picture of a limb showing whether the leaves are opposite or alternating.



Photo of insect on sunflower taken during the Georgia Pollinator Census, August, 2019 courtesy Jennifer Ruscilli

## To diagnose a problem:

### For an insect:

Take a close picture from above the insect. Take another picture with a side view of the insect. Make certain you capture any identifying colors or appendages. Tell us what plant the insect is on.

## Up in the trees... on the ground... what is that? ...continued from page 2

### E) Kousa dogwood berry



*Cornus kousa* fruits © Geneva Wirth [CC BY-NC 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/2.0/)



Photo Ashley Frasca

The flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) is native to Georgia, whereas Kousa dogwood (*Cornus kousa*) is not. Kousas are sometimes preferred because they are often more drought-tolerant than our native dogwood.



*Cornus florida* fruits

© Martin LaBar [CC BY-NC 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/2.0/)

Berries from a *Cornus florida* dogwood are more traditional red berries and are a good addition to the diets of native birds and mammals, while the berries from a *Cornus kousa* aren't as beneficial.

## Native Bamboo: yes, there is such a thing! ....continued from page 4



Hill cane (*Arundinaria appalachiana*) [Iowa State University](https://www.iastate.edu/)

When European settlement took place, large areas of cane were eliminated, primarily because the land was converted to farmland. Therefore, an important ecological feature and ecosystem was lost. In areas where canebrakes have been lost and riparian restoration is desired, efforts are underway to restore these plants, but it is not an easy task. Giant cane may bloom very sporadically, and after flowering, that culm may weaken and decline. Therefore, seeds are scarce, and propagation is best done through vegetative means, which can be a laborious process. However, there are many conservation organizations, including the USDA Forest Service, working on establishing the best methods to utilize in this effort. Due to the importance of giant cane to indigenous communities, many of the restoration projects are taking place on tribal lands or in national forests. Michelle Baumflek, a USDA Forest Service researcher, says, "Across the South, Indigenous people are leading the way in river cane restoration."

The other *Arundinaria* species are not as widespread as *A. gigantea*. *A. tecta* is a plant of the Coastal Plain and Piedmont and is tolerant of moist soils. As its name implies, *A. appalachiana* is only found in the Appalachian regions, including the states of Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, North Carolina, and South Carolina. *A. alabamensis* is recently discovered and rare, only known to reside in a few counties of eastern Alabama. All of these species tend to be shorter than giant cane, usually in the range of 3 to 5 feet.

All of these bamboos bear alternate, simple, lanceolate leaves on thin, upright stems. The leaf is typically in the range of 6 to 8 inches long and 1 to 2 inches wide, though leaf size varies with the species and maturity of the plant.

If you spot these plants along roadsides or as you hike in the woods, take note, and appreciate them for their role in our native ecosystems and for the part they have played in human culture over the years.

### For More Information

#### USDA Forest Service:

[https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/pubs\\_journals/2005/rmrs\\_2005\\_dattilo\\_a001.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/pubs_journals/2005/rmrs_2005_dattilo_a001.pdf)

<https://research.fs.usda.gov/srs/products/compasslive/working-tribes-sustain-cherished-plant-river-cane-restoration-throughout>

#### Mississippi State University:

<https://www.rivercane.msstate.edu/>



Tallapoosa cane (*Arundinaria alabamensis*) © Jimmy Triplett  
Jacksonville State University

#### In Defense of Plants:

<https://www.indefenseofplants.com/blog/2017/6/26/north-americas-native-bamboos>

#### Bambu Batu; Fred Hornaday:

<https://bambubatu.com/native-bamboo-of-north-america/>

#### Iowa State University 'Hill Cane'

<https://www.news.iastate.edu/news/2007/mar/bamboo.shtml>

#### Jacksonville State University 'New Species of Bamboo'

<https://www.jsu.edu/news/articles/2023/07/Biology-Professor-Discovers-New-Species-of-Bamboo.html>

#### Alabama Plant Atlas

<http://www.floraofalabama.org/Genus.aspx?id=2256>

#### North Carolina Plant Toolbox

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/>

# Have a Gardening Question? Just Ask Us! ...continued from page 5

## For disease or distorted leaves/stems:



Tomato plant photo  
Marcia Winchester

As well as a close picture of the problem leaves or stems, tell us the kind of plant that has the problem. Is the problem localized or on the entire plant? Has the problem happened all at once or gradually? Have any herbicides, insecticides, or synthetic fertilizers been used on or near the plant? Is the soil there overly dry or wet?

For trees with problems, also take a picture of where the trunk enters the ground as circling roots or planting the tree too deep could cause problems.

### Above all, make certain the picture is in focus.

We want to help you with your questions, so help us help you by sending us the kinds of pictures that will enable us to identify the plant or diagnose the problem.



By Mary Tucker, Master Gardener

There are more than 20 species of chipmunks in North America, but the eastern chipmunk (*Tamias striatus*) that we see in Georgia is the only species in the east. The western species are usually classified in the genus *Neotamias*, though some taxonomists may consider *Neotamias* to be a subgenus of *Tamias*.



Gray squirrel Canva

All chipmunks are in the squirrel family (Sciuridae). In addition to squirrels and chipmunks, this family of rodents includes prairie dogs and marmots. Marmots, which include the groundhogs we see in the Southeast, are the largest members of the family. The family name means “shade-tail” and comes from the bushy tail that many species (though not all) have. You have probably seen a gray squirrel hold its tail over its back in homage to this family name.



**Project FeederWatch** is a survey of birds, sponsored by the non-profit Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Participants in the program count birds and send their tallies to the FeederWatch database. Then scientists analyze that data to get a picture of winter bird abundance and distribution. This information can be used to detect and measure changes in winter ranges and how the abundance of species varies over time. The data also tracks winter irruptions of bird species and glean information on the kinds of food and environmental factors that attract birds. Scientists can also monitor how disease is spread among birds that visit feeders.

The FeederWatch survey takes place every year from November 1 to April 30. Your participation schedule is flexible, and you can count as much or as little as you wish.

There is a small fee of \$18 to participate, and this covers website and database maintenance, data analysis, participant support, printing and shipping of project materials, and dissemination of information learned from FeederWatch data. It's also a fun project for the whole family to help identify bird species.

Full information as well as registration instructions can be found at the Project FeederWatch website: <https://feederwatch.org/>


RAINFALL COMPARISONS						
	Cherokee County			State Wide		
	July 2024	Aug 2024	YTD 2024	July 2024	Aug 2024	YTD 2024
<b>Actual</b>	6.5	1.1	34.5	10.1	1.4	41.4
<b>Normal</b>	4.6	4.2	38.0	4.5	4.5	33.8
<b>Deviation</b>	1.9	-3.1	-3.5	5.6	-3.1	7.6



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 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

## Mississippi Roast

Submitted by Maurya Jones

### Ingredients:

Angus chuck roast (3 to 4 lbs.)  
1/2 jar pepperoncinis with juice  
1 packet of ranch dressing mix  
1 packet of au jus mix  
8 to 10 new potatoes, halved  
4 carrots, cut into chunks



Photo Maurya Jones

### Instructions:

1. Coat roast with the ranch dressing and au jus mixes and place in crock pot.
2. Add pepperoncinis and their juice.
3. Cook on high for one hour.
4. Add potatoes and carrots, and cook on low until roast falls apart and veggies are soft, about 3 hours.



Photo Maurya Jones

## Italian Spinach and Tortellini Soup

Submitted by Maurya Jones

### Ingredients:

2 tsp. of olive oil  
1 medium onion, chopped  
2 medium uncooked zucchini, sliced lengthwise and thinly sliced  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
1-1/4 tsp. Italian seasoning  
3/4 tsp. salt  
1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper  
1/8 tsp. red pepper flakes  
3 cans (14-1/2 oz. size) low sodium vegetable or chicken broth  
1 can of diced tomatoes, 14-1/2 oz. size  
1/2 cup of water  
9 oz. pkg. of store-bought refrigerated cheese tortellini  
4 cups of loosely packed or chopped fresh spinach  
1/4 cup of fresh basil, chopped  
3 Tbsp. pecorino cheese

### Instructions:

1. Heat oil in Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add onion, and cook, stirring occasionally, until onion begins to soften, about 3 minutes. Add zucchini and cook, stirring occasionally until zucchini is crisp-tender, about 3 minutes. Add garlic, Italian seasoning, salt, black pepper, and red pepper flakes; cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 30 seconds.
2. Stir in broth, tomatoes, and water. Cover and bring to boil. Stir in tortellini and cook as directed on package. Stir in spinach, and cook until wilted, about 1 minute.
3. Ladle soup evenly into 6 bowls and sprinkle with basil and pecorino.

Serving size: about 1-3/4 cups soup and 1/2 tbsp. cheese.



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Cherokee County

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

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