



# Gardening With The Masters

Growing, Gardening and Gaining Knowledge

August/September 2025



**Come join us and participate in the Great Southeast Pollinator Census, a citizen science project created by UGA. The Cherokee County Master Gardeners are hosting multiple locations for counting and a pollinator class to help you prepare for the count.**

**Date:** Saturday, August 23, 2025

**Time:** 10:00am - 12:00noon

#### **Counting Locations:**

**Cherokee County Senior Center**

1001 Univeter Road, Canton

**Veteran's Park, Backyard Agriculture Education Station**

7345 Cumming Hwy, Canton

**Ball Ground Botanical Garden**

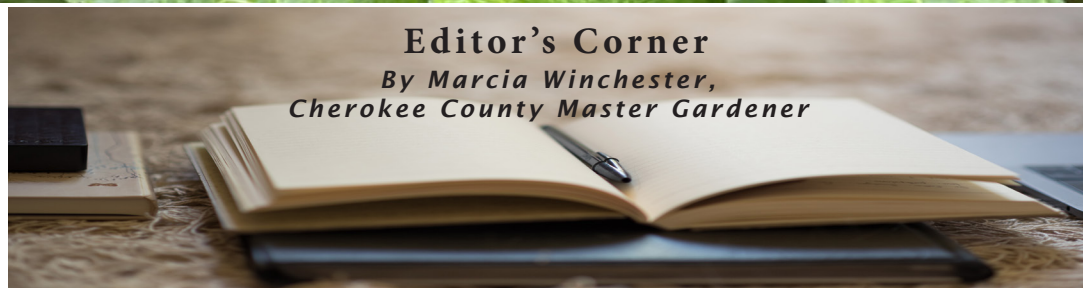
215 Valley Street, Ball Ground

#### **Pollinator Class:**

Saturday, August 23, 2025 10:00am

Cherokee County Senior Center

Scan the QR Code below to be directed to the Cherokee County Master Gardener website for more information. And visit the pollinator census website at <https://gsepc.org/>



## Editor's Corner

*By Marcia Winchester,  
Cherokee County Master Gardener*

Mosquitoes! No one likes mosquitoes. It amazes me how much a tiny insect can cause so much havoc. Mosquitoes can carry some serious diseases that can cause illness and in some cases death. A bite by a non-dangerous mosquito can cause an itchy reaction that can last for days. Add to that multiple bites, and you can be a bumpy, itchy mess.

It makes you wonder if are there any benefits from mosquitoes. Surprisingly there are. Mosquitoes are pollinators! They pollinate native plants from bog orchids to native goldenrods. An even more important benefit is the number of bird species that eat mosquitoes, from the tiny hummingbird to bluebirds and swallows, just to name a few. Bats can eat hundreds of them in less than an hour. Frogs and tadpoles eat both the larvae and the adult mosquitoes, as do dragonflies.

All of this said, there is no need to raise mosquitoes! In fact, UGA urges homeowners to remove breeding locations. Our Extension Agent, Josh Fuder, wrote an informative article in our June/July 2017 newsletter issue. It's on our website under past issues.

Last, and actually most important, are the companies that come to your home and spray to kill mosquitoes. This spray is indiscriminate and will kill any flying insect it touches, and while this includes mosquitoes, it also includes pollinators like bees and butterflies. If you are raising vegetables or trying to attract pollinators into your yard, spraying for mosquitoes is counterproductive. Take time to rid your yard of standing water including your pet's water dish. Provide a habitat for wildlife that eat mosquitoes, and enjoy your garden and pollinators.

One final note: going forward we will not always feature a letter from the editor. Instead we will highlight either an upcoming event or committee. This will help keep you informed on the many exciting activities and projects that the Cherokee County Master Gardeners are undertaking. We hope you enjoy the change.

*Marcia*

## IN THIS ISSUE

Editor's Corner/GSEPC.....Page 1	Sensory Gardens continued ..... Page 6
From Bats to Wasps ..... Page 2	Did You Know/Plant Sale/ ..... Page 7
Begonia grandis ..... Page 3	August Gardening Tips ..... Page 8
Sensory Gardens for Kids ..... Page 4	September Gardening Tips ..... Page 9
Bodacious Broccoli ..... Page 5	Recipes/Links ..... Page 10

# From Bats to Wasps: The Hidden Heroes of Our Ecosystem

By Jodi Morgan, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Every ecosystem on earth depends on pollinators to ensure that life on earth continues. Pollinators keep plants and humans alive. Their contributions include roles in ecosystems, agriculture, and biodiversity.

There are eight main pollinators: bats, bees, beetles, birds, butterflies, flies, moths, and wasps. These pollinators have two main characteristics which enable them to pollinate plants. Can you guess what these characteristics are? The first is wings for flying. The second is fur or feathers for the pollen to stick to. You may be thinking butterflies and moths aren't furry! But if you look at their wings under a microscope, they are made up of furry scales so small they can't be seen with the naked eye. Under a microscope you can see the teeny-tiny scales and the furriness of those scales where the pollen sticks.



Bat pollinating bananas University of Maryland

Other pollinators work in ways you may not realize. Bats not only help control the mosquito population, but they also pollinate bananas. Without bats, we would not have bananas. Flies are crucial for the pollination of onions, and beetles pollinate magnolia blooms. Beetles are the oldest surviving species of pollinators and have been around since the dinosaurs. In fact, there are over 300,000 species of beetles worldwide!

Fruits, vegetables, seeds, nuts, and flower agriculture are dependent on pollinators: 75% of flowering plants rely on pollination, and 35% of the world's crops are a direct result of pollinators' work.



Longhorn beetle on a magnolia bloom, University of Maryland

Worldwide, crop production depends on pollinators, and crops with natural pollination are higher quality. The global economic impact of pollinators is estimated to be roughly \$235 billion in agricultural output. Farmers rely on pollinators so much for improved harvests and profits that many industrial-size farms in the Midwest rent tractor trailers of bees for their crops. For many years, almond farmers have consistently rented bees to ensure successful almond production.

While current environmental challenges threaten food production, pollinator-supported crops tend to be more resilient. Therefore, farms practicing pollinator-friendly operations become more sustainable and adaptable for the future.

Beyond their agricultural value, pollinators are critical in maintaining plant populations and supporting diverse ecosystems around the globe. They aid in the reproduction of wildflowers and plants, in turn providing habitat and food for other species.

Pollinators are a crucial part of the web of life. Because of the great importance of pollinators, it is vital to study them, gather data about them, and educate the public about their conservation and significance. To this end, the University of Georgia initiated the Great Southeast Pollinator Census. This annual citizen science project will be held on August 22 and 23 this year and is open to residents of Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, and Alabama.

On Saturday, August 23, the Cherokee County Master Gardeners will be hosting pollinator counting events from 10:00 am to noon. This is a free UGA Extension initiative that is open to the public. We hope you will join us at one of our three locations:

- Demonstration Garden at the Cherokee County Senior Center at 1001 Univeter Road, Canton
- Backyard Agriculture Education Station at Veteran's Park at 7345 Cumming Hwy, Canton
- Ball Ground Botanical Gardens at 215 Valley Street, Ball Ground

"Photos courtesy of University of Maryland Agronomy News blog on pollination"

<https://blog.umd.edu/agronomynews/?s=pollination>





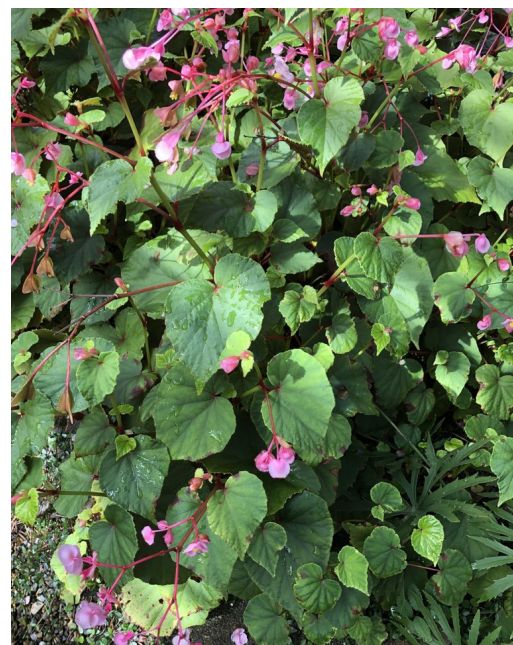
# Begonia grandis: A Tireless Bloomer

By Mary Schuster, Cherokee County Master Gardener

When planning your garden display for the upcoming summer and fall, do you ever wish for a flowering plant that just keeps on blooming? Like the Eveready battery? Then, you might consider *Begonia grandis*, also known as the hardy begonia. It is known by this name because it can flourish in shady areas and keep blooming well into the fall.

It found its way to Georgia from southern China and Japan. It is an herbaceous perennial that forms a bushy mound of foliage that can grow to an overall height of anywhere from 18 inches to 3 feet and just about as wide, maybe as much as 2 feet. This gives the hardy begonia great curb appeal because the plant is easily visible from a distance.

Its real beauty lies in the pretty flowers that appear as delicate pink or white blooms that are showy, fragrant, and as mentioned earlier, have a long blooming season. Although the flowers themselves are about an inch in diameter, the plant puts out many flowers, giving it an extremely lush overall appearance. The leaf of the plant is colorful as well; the upper side is green, and the underside displays deep red veins, giving it a pink look.



*Begonia grandis*, Cathy Dewitt [NCSU.edu](https://www.ncsu.edu)



*Begonia grandis* leaf underside  
Kathy Sill, [NCSU.edu](https://www.ncsu.edu)

You will be pleased to know that the Cherokee County Master Gardeners will have plenty of these begonias for sale at our upcoming plant sale on September 6. And even though this event occurs in early fall, there can be almost three more months of blooming for these tough little plants. I've noticed over the years that hardy begonias seem to be in full swing to just about the time of Thanksgiving. To extend the bloom period, deadhead expired flowers.

Some real positives about the hardy begonia are that it is non-invasive, attracts pollinators, and can be utilized in many ways. For instance, it can thrive and bloom in shady areas, function as a border along walkways, and/or be a nice addition to smaller spaces in containers providing vibrant color to porches or patios. To add to the show, they mix well with other plants such as ferns and hostas.

However, there are some toxic properties of the plant to be aware of, especially for cats, dogs, or horses. Grazing animals, like horses, may develop kidney failure if the plant is ingested, and dogs and cats may be sickened by digging down to the underground roots and ingesting the calcium oxalates that lie therein. Although the poison severity is very low with humans, it can cause some contact dermatitis, so it's best to wear gloves, as you usually do, when working in the garden.

Caring for hardy begonias is fairly effortless. There are a few simple rules to follow with them:

- ❖ **Light:** They like dappled sunlight or deep to partial shade and will burn if in too much direct sun.
- ❖ **Soil Texture:** They do well when grown in clay, high organic matter, or sand.
- ❖ **Soil pH:** Ideally this should be slightly acidic, that is <6.0 to neutral (6.0 to 8.0).
- ❖ **Soil Drainage:** They prefer moist soil with good drainage. They can tolerate occasional wet conditions (like after a big downpour), but keep an eye on conditions as they are given to root rot.
- ❖ **Winter:** They are hardy in Cherokee County, but mulching is recommended for winter protection.
- ❖ **Propagation:** These begonias often propagate naturally through self-seeding. Dividing the rhizomes in early spring is another effective method. In addition, stem or leaf cuttings can be used for propagation.

Just a little trivia to cap off this article. While researching this topic, it became apparent that there is some folklore associated with begonias (in general). For instance, they were once linked with warnings and caution, but cultural symbolism has evolved so that they now represent peace and harmony, a journey from skepticism to serenity. I also learned that begonias may be commonly given as a gift when paying back a favor.

For more information:

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/begonia-grandis/>

# Sensory Gardens for Kids

By Barb Schirmer, Cherokee County Master Gardener

Why have a garden? Why go through the work, sweat, tears, and mud? What's the point, if not to enjoy your garden. Yes, the act of gardening can be very relaxing. It is excellent exercise, as you beautify a little corner of the world. However, you also have to take time to enjoy it. There's nothing better than strolling through or sitting amid your plant paradise after a hard day and sharing it with family and friends. Plus, the garden is a wonderful place for children to be creative and have fun. Encouraging a child's interest in gardening at a young age is a great way to equip them with valuable life skills.

Building a **sensory garden for kids** is a fun way for young people to explore the great outdoors and promote sensory development through play. These gardens are intentionally designed to stimulate all five senses—sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste—creating an engaging, inclusive, and calming environment for children of all ages and abilities.



Photo courtesy Josh Fuder, UGA

## Why Sensory Gardens Matter for Kids

- ❖ **Encourage exploration:** Children naturally learn by interacting with their world. A sensory garden offers a rich and safe space for exploration and discovery. Running and interacting with the different parts of the garden can get kids out of the house and moving. And by digging in the dirt, planting, watering, and learning about what plants need to grow, they will stimulate their curiosity and gain a deeper understanding of the cycle of life.
- ❖ **Support development:** Gardens offer a calming environment. Being in nature can reduce stress and anxiety levels by providing a peaceful setting. The scents of flowers and the sounds of water features can create a soothing atmosphere for children, where they can play, relax, and connect with nature.
- ❖ **Provide for inclusivity:** Sensory gardens can be designed to be accessible for children with autism, ADHD, visual impairments, or mobility challenges. Having accessible features, like raised beds for children in wheelchairs, ensures that all kids can benefit. Using different pathways, such as wood chips or gravel, adds an element of balance and stability for those with mobility issues.
- ❖ **Create connection with nature:** Encouraging children to spend time in nature enhances their well-being and fosters a great connection to the environment around them.



Photo sunflower, Barb Schirmer

## Key Elements for Creating a Sensory Garden

### Sight

When we look at a beautiful garden, contrasting elements of color, form, movement, light, and shadow add to our sensory experience. A garden needs a balance between energizing colors and restful, soft colors to avoid overstimulation. Red, orange, and yellow are warm colors that promote activity. Cool colors such as blue, purple, and white encourage tranquility. Accessories such as gazing balls, mirrors, and sculptures enhance the visual effect. You should plant flowers of varying colors and blooming times, foliage of different shapes and sizes, and plants that butterflies love. Some suggestions: bleeding heart (*Dicentra* spp.) with flowers that look like downward-facing hearts, gayfeather (*Liatris* spp.) with its soft, vertical flower spikes that bloom from the top down, butterfly bush (*Buddleja* spp.) to attract butterflies, Swiss chard (*Beta vulgaris*) with vibrant, near fluorescent midribs through the center of the leaves, and tall sunflowers (*Helianthus* spp.) with large, showy blooms that draw butterflies and bees, then later attract birds for the seeds.

### Sound

Some sounds in a sensory garden occur naturally, such as the wind blowing through leaves. Enhance the variety of sounds by incorporating elements such as dripping or trickling water and wind chimes. Adding bird feeders and a birdbath encourages our feathered friends to stop by with their sweet songs. Leaves on the ground make a fantastic rustling sound for your child to crunch under their feet. Plant balloon flowers (*Platycodon grandiflorus*) that will make a popping sound when the buds are squeezed, as well as ornamental grasses like switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*) that make a pleasant noise when the wind causes their tall, leafy stems to rub together. You can even create a musical instrument corner in your garden where kids can explore different sounds and rhythms in a fun and interactive way. You can include items like chimes, drums, and xylophones. Arrange them to varying heights so children of all ages can play.





# Bodacious Broccoli

*By Nancy McCarthy, Cherokee County Master Gardener*

Even though your current vegetable garden may look like your worst hair day by the end of August, and your spring garden ardor has fizzled, don't give up! There is good news on the way. ... It's almost time for cool season gardening!

Cool season gardening has the advantages of less heat, fewer pests, but most of all less maintenance. Once established, growth happens much slower in the cooler seasons (even the weeds). This is the result not only of the cooler temperatures, but also the angle of the sun as the days grow shorter. Imagine, a sweat-free 60 to 70 degree endeavor.

Some of the best cool season crops are in the Brassica family. These include well-known veggies like cabbage, collards, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, and my favorite: the diva of the Brassicas, broccoli. Many health benefits have been attributed to this green goodness of vegetables, even a label as "the crown jewel of nutrition," but it's the delicious taste of these crisp green heads that earned my vote.

If you are considering starting broccoli from seed, you will need to have your transplants ready by mid-September. Oh, oh! Have you missed that window?? That task is easy to overlook in the heat of August when your attention is outdoors. If that ship has already sailed for you, or if you have no desire to start from seed, don't dismay. Garden centers and big box stores have healthy plants for sale until late fall. However, I suggest you purchase them when you find them since they may go quickly.

There are two types of broccoli: heading and sprouting. The heading broccoli produces larger heads and fewer sprouts after the head is removed. The sprouting type concentrates more on the sprouts and is sometimes called Italian broccoli.

Broccoli is adaptable to a wide range of soils here in Georgia, but it flourishes in organic-rich soils with a pH between 6.0 and 6.8. Like all Brassicas, broccoli is a nitrogen HOG and a heavy feeder, so it will need more than an organic slow-release fertilizer at planting. Use a 10-10-10 fertilizer at planting and continue side dressing every three weeks.

Broccoli doesn't like being crowded, so make sure your plants are at least 15 inches apart. Like all vegetables, they will need 6 to 8 hours of sun each day. Broccoli needs much water so keep those roots damp.

While the majority of garden pests must have gone back to school, there are always a few "drop-outs" that also love broccoli and need to be controlled. Cabbageworms are the most common and occasionally aphids. Both can be controlled with good cultural practices.

So, your broccoli is thriving and a frost is forecasted. No worries! Broccoli can handle it and can tolerate even a quick freeze if you put a towel over these sturdy plants. Just make sure to remove it in the morning.

The days to harvest range from 70 to 100 days depending on weather conditions. Don't forget to subtract for transplants or add for later starts. Last year I harvested broccoli for both Thanksgiving and Christmas.

When is broccoli ready to harvest? When the buds in the head are tight and dark green and the head is approximately 3 to 6 inches across. Cut the heads off approximately 5 inches down at an angle to allow water to drain off since the stem is often hollow. Side shoots will continue to grow as a bonus as long as you keep cutting them, so SNIP away or they will GO away.

Don't forget that there are TWO cool seasons to garden in Georgia. Early spring is also a great time to grow broccoli before the summer heat makes it bolt. Why not try them both? Popular varieties for Georgia include Packman, Waltham, and Di Ciccio among others. All are delicious and ready to power your day.



Photo Nancy McCarthy holding brassica vegetables, courtesy UGA.

# Sensory Gardens for Kids.....Continued from page 4

## Smell

When planning the garden, consider both subtle and strong scents that a child can explore both directly (by sticking their nose in the flower) and indirectly, for example, by stepping on an aromatic ground cover such as creeping thyme (*Thymus serpyllum*). Nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus*) has a delicate aroma, while the peony (*Paeonia lactiflora*) has a heady perfume. Some plants, like sweetshrub (*Calycanthus floridus*), release their scent when the leaves or petals are crushed. Don't overwhelm by placing fragrant blooms too close together; space them at intervals around the garden.



Photo Canva

Include the resinous scent of pine needles and the new scents of fresh mulches and grass clippings. Many herbs have wonderful aromas, such as rosemary (*Salvia rosmarinus*, syn. *Rosmarinus officinalis*), lemon verbena (*Aloysia citriodora*), lavender (*Lavandula* spp.), and chocolate mint (*Mentha × piperita* f. *citrata* 'Chocolate'). Include perennials like viburnum (*Viburnum* spp.), lilac (*Syringa* spp.), witch hazel (*Hamamelis* spp.), catmint (*Nepeta* spp.), and creeping phlox (*Phlox subulata* or *P. stolonifera*). Plant hyacinth (*Hyacinthus orientalis*) bulbs in the fall for their sweet, pungent scent in spring.

## Touch

When considering touch, think texture. Include soft flowers, fuzzy leaves, rough bark, prickly seed pods, and springy moss. Add smooth stones to your garden to invite touch. The first plant that comes to mind for tactile stimuli is lamb's ear (*Stachys byzantina*) with its fuzzy, furry leaves. Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) is another good example for its stiff flowers and soft foliage. Feather reed grass (*Calamagrostis × acutiflora*), coneflower (*Echinacea* spp.), borage (*Borago officinalis*), Irish moss (*Sagina subulata*), and cockscomb (*Celosia* spp.) are all appealing to the touch.

## Taste

Allow your child to experience the flavors of the garden by growing edible flowers. Take care to differentiate them from non-edible ones by placing them in a designated area together. Here are some suggestions and their flavors. Violets, Johnny-jump-ups, and pansies (all *Viola* spp.) have a sweet, wintergreen flavor. Bee balm (*Monarda* spp.) flowers have a citrus, minty flavor. Try the crisp, cucumber flavor of borage. Lavender flowers have a wonderful scent and a perfumed taste. In addition to flowers, consider growing fruit like strawberries (*Fragaria × ananassa*) and blueberries (*Vaccinium corymbosum*). Grow vegetables and herbs to give youth an early introduction to fresh, healthy food. Above all, ensure plants are non-toxic and pesticide-free.

## Involve the Kids!

The most crucial aspect of developing a garden for kids is to get them involved. Let children help with choosing plants, making signs, watering and caring for the plants, and harvesting herbs and vegetables. This builds ownership, teaches responsibility, and makes the garden even more meaningful. Interacting with a sensory garden also encourages social skills. Kids working together on garden tasks learn to cooperate and share, fostering teamwork and friendship.

Regardless of how you choose to incorporate the elements of a sensory garden into your home environment, whether small or large, it is sure to bring much enjoyment over the years and to be treasured by the next generation of gardeners in your family.

## Tips for Building a Sensory Garden

- ♦ **Start small:** Even a few containers or raised beds can make a big impact.
- ♦ **Make it interactive:** Include areas where children can dig, build, pick, and create.
- ♦ **Think safety:** Use non-toxic plants, soft-edged materials, and accessible paths.
- ♦ **Create zones:** Divide the garden into sensory "rooms" or zones by sense or activity.
- ♦ **Add seating and shade:** Make the garden a place for quiet moments as well as play.
- ♦ **Create child-sized places** such as a beanpole teepee or a vine-covered tunnel.



DIY teepee, unknown credit,





By Mary Tucker, Master Gardener

According to the American Begonia Society (<https://www.begonias.org/>), begonias (*Begonia* spp.) are one of the largest genera of flowering plants, with over 2000 identified species. In addition, begonias are widely bred by enthusiasts, resulting in over 10,000 hybrids. Members of the Begonia species are native to the tropics and subtropics, including Africa, Asia, and Central and South America.

Begonias are in the Begoniaceae family of plants. The genus name honors Michel Bégon (1638–1710), a naturalist, plant collector, and French colonial official. Given the huge number of species, it's no surprise that within the genus there are a number of types, growth habits, and sizes. Below are the begonia types you will most likely encounter in the nursery trade:

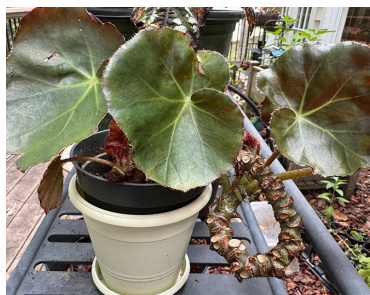
The **hardy** begonia, *Begonia grandis*, featured elsewhere in this newsletter, and above, is just one of the many cold-tolerant species that can be grown in the USDA Hardiness Zone for Cherokee County, Georgia.

If you are interested in learning more about begonias, growing them and propagation, consider joining the national organization called the **American Begonia Society** <https://www.begonias.org/>, or visit the **Greater Atlanta Begonia Society** on Facebook to find out about everything begonia, including meetings and activities.



Flowers and leaves BotBln, [ncsu.edu](https://ncsu.edu), CC-BY-SA 2.0

**Tuberous** begonias are beloved for their large and showy blossoms, and they are most often grown in hanging baskets for summer display.



*B. erythrophylla* 'Beef Steak' courtesy Jennifer Ruscilli

**Rhizomatous** begonias grow from a stem or rhizome that creeps along the soil surface. They are primarily grown for their attractive foliage. Flowers are borne on stems that rise above the leaves.



'Emperor Red' Flower Form Jim Robbins, [ncsu.edu](https://ncsu.edu), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

The **wax** begonia (also called semperflorens or ever-blooming) is frequently used as a warm-season bedding plant and sports numerous flowers all season long.



Spotted cane begonia courtesy Mariana DiVita

The group of **cane-like** begonias, also called angel wing begonias, are popular houseplants, grown for their attractive foliage, which is often spotted or textured.



Rex begonia courtesy Mariana DiVita

**Rex** begonias, a subgroup of rhizomatous begonias, are prized for the bold and colorful foliage that the many hybrids sport. They are grown as houseplants, often in terrariums due to a high humidity requirement.

## Cherokee County Master Gardeners Fall Plant and Bulb One Day Sale

Saturday, September 6, 2025  
9:00am until noon

Cherokee County Senior Services  
1001 Univeter Road,  
Canton, Georgia 30115

Choose from nice varieties of plants, shrubs, trees, specialty plants, tools, seed, and bulbs, garden art.

Expert garden advice.

Guided garden tours available upon request.

Cash or Credit Card accepted



KENPEI, [ncsu.edu](https://ncsu.edu), CC BY-SA 3.0



King Alfred daffodil UGA





Photo powdery mildew for more info [CLICK HERE](#).

## ORNAMENTALS

- Take root cuttings of woody shrubs and evergreens (such as azaleas, holly, and hydrangeas) to propagate. [Click HERE for growing info](#).
- Powdery mildew diseases attack a great many ornamentals, most often in late summer when the days are warm and nights are cool. Some mildews, particularly those on roses, apples, and cherries, also are increased by high humidity. Prevention by proper cultural techniques is the first defense. Grow resistant varieties; space and prune plants to improve air flow and reduce shading; water early in the day and at the base rather than on leaves; and reduce nitrogen applications to avoid excessive, late-season growth. [Click HERE for mildew factsheet](#).
- Water shrubs deeply once a week during August. Many plants including camellias and rhododendrons, are forming buds for next season's bloom at this time. Do not prune or you will be removing the flower buds. Immature berries of hollies may drop if the plants are water stressed. During hot, dry August days, avoid deep cultivation in your flower beds. Loosening the soil under these conditions reduces water uptake by increasing loss of soil water and damaging surface roots. Plants often look much worse after cultivation than before.
- Water roses with at least 1" of water per week. Remove spent blooms (deadheading) to encourage quicker rebloom. Prune 1/4" above an outward facing five-leaflet eye. Watch for spider mites on the underside of the upper leaves. A blast of water from underneath will discourage them. Continue fertilizing once a month for both August and September. [Click HERE for rose growing](#).

## FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Strawberries, blueberries, and bramble fruits are forming buds for next year's crop; keep them watered for better production.
- Fertilize strawberries in August. On plants set out this spring, apply 4-6 oz. of ammonium nitrate (33% actual nitrogen) or 12-18 oz. of 10-10-10 per feet of row. Spread the fertilizer uniformly in a band 14" wide over the row when foliage (not the ground) is dry. Brush fertilizer off leaves to avoid leaf burn. For plants in the second year of growth, increase application rate to 6-8 oz. ammonium nitrate or 18-24 oz. of 10-10-10 per 25 feet of row. [For growing strawberries click HERE](#).

## AUGUST GARDENING TIPS

- Heavy rains at harvest can dilute the sugars in melons. Watermelons can reconcentrate sugar if left on the vine for a few dry days, but cantaloupes can't.
- Harvest cantaloupes when the melons pull easily from the stem; honeydews when the blossom end is slightly soft or springy; watermelons when there is a hollow sound when thumped and skin loses its shine. Also, run your hand around the middle of the watermelon. When fully ripe, most varieties develop low, longitudinal ridges, rather like flexed calf muscles.
- Start seeds of cool-weather vegetables like broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, collards and lettuce in order to transplant to the garden in early September. [For garden planning click HERE](#).
- White fly may be a serious problem this month on tomatoes, peppers, eggplants and squash. There are no effective preventive measures, so it's important to control the population before they increase to damaging levels. Hang sticky yellow strips among your plants to trap these pests.
- Plant bush beans now for your fall crop. Watch out for insects, such as Mexican bean beetle.
- If going on vacation this month, be sure to harvest all your vegetables and then arrange for someone to pick fast maturing crops, such as squash and okra; otherwise, they will become overmature and stop producing.
- Spider mites leave webs on the underside of leaves, and eggs are laid in these webs. Spider mites thrive in hot, dry weather. For mild infestations, hose the foliage to wash off the mites. For severe problems, spray with an approved chemical according to the label. [For INFESTATIONS click HERE](#). The best remedy for spider mites on plants is a good, heavy rainfall. [Click HERE for info](#).



Mexican bean beetle, Clemson University-USDA Coop Ext Slide Series, [Bugwood.org](http://Bugwood.org)

## AUGUST MISCELLANEOUS

- Water your plants several hours before applying pesticides, especially during dry weather. Drought-stressed plants have less water in their plant tissues. The chemicals that enter the leaves will be more concentrated and may burn the leaves.
- The last two weeks of August is the time to spray kudzu with a non-selective weed killer or mow all visible foliage, since it is at its weakest at this time.





# SEPTEMBER GARDENING TIPS

## ORNAMENTALS

- Fall is a great time to plant and divide perennials and shrubs for next year's garden. Plants planted in the fall do not endure the summer heat during establishment and will form sufficient root systems before winter dormancy. [To plant shrubs click HERE.](#) [For dividing perennials click HERE.](#)
- Plant peonies now, but make sure the crowns are buried only 1½ -2" below ground level. Deeper planting keeps the plants from blooming. Look for varieties that perform well in the South.
- Divide, cut back and fertilize daylilies now to promote root growth for next year's flowers.



Daylily division courtesy Clemson University. [CLICK HERE.](#)

## FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- During the fall, be sure to water vegetables adequately; crops such as corn, pepper, squash and tomato won't mature correctly if stressed due to lack of water. Snap bean, tomato and pepper flowers may fail to develop fruit when daytime temperatures rise above 90°F.
- Harvesting guidelines: Pears should be picked at the hard ripe stage and allowed to finish ripening off the tree in a paper bag. The base color of yellow pears should change from green to yellow as the fruit approaches maturity. [For Pear info click HERE.](#)
- Cucumber beetles, squash bugs, Colorado potato beetles and European corn borers pass the winter in debris left in the garden. Remove dead plant material and compost it or till it under. This limits your pest population next year to the insects that migrate into the garden. [For more info about cucurbit insect pests, CLICK HERE.](#)
- To harvest sunflower seeds, wait until the seeds are fully grown and firm, then cut the head, leaving one foot of stem. Hang in a dry, airy spot to finish ripening. Do not store sunflowers on top of each other or they may rot. [To grow sunflowers click HERE.](#)



Drying herbs Canva

- Winter-type pumpkins and squash, such as acorn, butternut, and spaghetti keep for several months in a cool, medium-dry basement, garage or tool shed. Allow the fruit to ripen fully on the vine, and cure in the sun to form a hard rind. Harvest before frost, and leave a piece of stem on each when they are cut from the vine. If the floor is damp, elevate them to reduce the possibility of rot. The best storage temperature is about 60°F.
- Keep basil, parsley, garlic, mint and sage producing by pinching off the flowers. Herbs can be used fresh, frozen, or dried. When the dew dries, cut a few stems, tie a strong cord around this little bouquet, and hang in a cool, dry place until fully dry. Place in a jar for use during the winter. [Click HERE for herb gardening.](#)
- Don't prune or fertilize fruits now; it may disturb bud formation.
- Do not store apples or pears with vegetables such as potatoes and squash. Fruits give off ethylene gas that speeds up the ripening process of vegetables and may cause them to develop "off" flavors.
- Beets, carrots, collards, mustard greens, onions, parsley, radishes, spinach and turnips seeds can be planted in the garden all month.
- Near the end of the growing season, pick off all tomato blossoms that won't have time to bear fruit so that plant nutrients go into existing tomatoes.
- Hot peppers will keep best if stored after they are dry. Pull the plants and hang them up, or pick the peppers and thread on a string. Store in a cool, dry place. Wash your hands after handling them.

## SEPTEMBER MISCELLANEOUS

- Autumn is a good time for improving garden soil. Add manure, compost and leaves to increase the organic matter. Before adding lime, have soil tested to determine if your soil is acidic. [For soil testing and amenities click HERE.](#)
- Do not spray pesticides when it is windy or temperatures are over 85°F; and always follow directions carefully.
- Washing clothes worn while applying pesticides is important. Use heavy-duty detergent & hot water ASAP.
- Some pesticides are sold as dusts. Dusts cannot be applied as precisely as sprays and may drift to non-targeted areas.

# August/September Recipes

By Maurya Jones

## A Summer Recipe Duo

*This combination of recipes makes a delicious and easy summer meal. You can use any fresh vegetables for the roast vegetable recipe. Simplifying the cook's job, the two dishes can be baked at the same time.*

### Roasted Summer Vegetables

#### Ingredients:

- 1 yellow squash, sliced thin
- 1 zucchini, sliced thin
- 1 red bell pepper, cored, seeded, and cut into strips
- 1 green bell pepper, seeded, cored and cut into strips
- 1 yellow or purple onion, sliced thin
- 1/8 cup extra virgin olive oil
- Salt, pepper, and spices to your taste

#### Instructions

1. Place vegetables in a 1-quart zip-lock bag; pour olive oil and seasonings in the bag, zip the bag closed, and shake a few times to evenly coat the vegetables.
2. Bake in pre-heated 350-degree oven for 15 to 20 minutes.



Roasted summer vegetables  
courtesy Maurya Jones



Salmon courtesy Maurya Jones

## E-Z Salmon

#### Ingredients:

- Four 6-ounce pieces of salmon, washed and patted dry
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- Honey

#### Instructions

1. Place salmon in baking dish lined with foil.
2. Drizzle honey on the fish; then drizzle lemon over it.
3. Bake in pre-heated 350-degree oven for 15 to 20 minutes



Salmon with vegetables courtesy  
Maurya Jones

Newsletter Editor: Marcia Winchester, Layout: Jennifer Ruscilli, and Proofreader: Mary Tucker



**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>



"An Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, Veteran, Disability Institution"