



# Shades of Green

Athens-Clarke County Agriculture and Natural Resources E-Newsletter



May 2022

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# A note from Athens-Clarke County Agriculture & Natural Resources

Hello readers! Spring is already flying by. We have some fun events and opportunities we are looking forward to sharing with you all this month. One that we find especially exciting is

**International Compost Awareness Week (May 1-7, 2022).** Make sure to check out the [“Stay in the Loop!”](#) page of this newsletter to find out how to get involved with the various events going on in Athens during this week .

Our **Green Thumb Lecture** will be May 11th & will feature a presentation by Suki Janssen—the ACC Solid Waste Department Director. Details and the link to register will be in the flyer later in this issue.

**Have a great month of May!**

We hope you enjoy this month’s issue of “Shades of Green”.

Take care,

Athens-Clarke County Agriculture and Natural Resources





# Leyland Cypress Trees often Planted Incorrectly

## For CAES Newswire

Often planted to create borders or buffers, Leyland cypress trees can grow 4 feet taller in just a year. Planting too close together or too close to structures can present major problems as the trees mature.

Leyland cypress are one of the most commonly planted landscape trees, but poor site selection and disease pressure may soon send them the way of red tips and Bradford pears.

Popular as a hedge and in new development, **the trees must be planted at least 10 to 15 feet apart**, as the trees' rapid growth will require thinning out the trees after a few years to prevent them from growing into one another and reducing the air circulation needed in the canopy to prevent disease.

### **Inexpensive, fast-growing and tall**

“Leyland cypress trees are one of the most commonly planted trees in the landscape,” said **Tim Daly**, a **University of Georgia Cooperative Extension** agent in Gwinnett County. “They are popular because of their fast growth and their ability to provide a screen against traffic areas or neighbors.”

Leyland cypress (*X Cupressocyparis leylandii*) is a hybrid species that resulted from a cross be-

tween the Nootka false cypress (*Chamaecyparis nootkantensis*) and the Monterey cypress, (*Cupressocyparis macrocarpa*). It was discovered on a British estate in the late 1800s, Daly said. Poor site selection can create problems with Leyland cypress trees. “They grow into large trees, and in some parts of the world they can reach 100 feet tall and nearly 50 feet wide,” Daly said. “Think of the damage a tree that size could do to your house, fence or driveway only a few feet away.”

### **Four feet taller each year**

It may be hard to imagine a small Leyland cypress growing into a 100-foot tall tree, but with proper care, it can and will happen, he said. Leyland cypresses grow about 4 feet per year in height and 2 to 3 feet in width.

They require full, all-day sun. “Shade will reduce their vigor, causing them to thin out and become more susceptible to diseases,” Daly said. “They also need plenty of air circulation inside the canopy to dry out the branches and leaves.”

Planting too close to a fence, building or each other will prevent the in-

**(Continued on page 4)**

# Leyland Cypress Trees often Planted Incorrectly continued

-teriors of the trees from drying out, he said, and could lead to fungal diseases.

## Well-drained soil a must

Disease pressure, improper planting and overuse may send Leyland cypress the way of plants like the red tip photinia and Bradford pears, according to Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent Tim Daly.

The tree is best suited for fertile, well-drained soils. “The amount of soil water is one of the most critical factors in the growth of Leyland cypress,” Daly said. “Excess water will increase root-rotting fungal diseases, and too little water leads to stress and ultimately stem and leaf diseases.”

To monitor the soil moisture, use a shovel to open a 4-inch-deep gap in the soil near the base of the trees. Feel the soil and test it for moisture. If it feels dry, water. If it feels wet, avoid watering.

**Diseases** can take their toll on Leyland cypress trees. “Using chemical control is not feasible because application is ineffective and will not have effect on control,” he said. “Severely infected trees may have to be removed.”

## Waning popularity

Disease pressure, improper planting and overuse may send Leyland cypress the way of plants like the red tip photinia and Bradford pears, he said.

Red tip photinias are small trees that were used extensively in the 1980s as a hedge. Most of the plants succumbed to Entomosporium fungal leaf spot disease.

Bradford pears, although not afflicted with any serious diseases, have quick-growing soft wood and crotches at an angle. This causes the branches to split off easily.

## Alternatives to Leyland cypress

Several substitutes for Leyland cypress are available. Here are Daly’s recommendations:

- Hollies like 'Nellie R. Stevens' and 'Emily Bruner' varieties. These are best for borders in full sun.
- Arbovitae (*Thuja occidentalis*), particularly the 'Green Giant' cultivar, which was selected as a 2007 Georgia Gold Medal Plant.
- Wax myrtles (*Myrica cerifera*) grow rapidly in full sun.
- Tea olive (*Osmanthus fragrantissima*) or luster-leaf holly (*Ilex latifolia*) are good choices for shaded hedgerows.

“In general, these plants don’t suffer from the problems afflicting Leyland cypress as much,” Daly said. “But they still need to be given proper cultural conditions such as applying the correct amount of water.”

For more lawn care and landscaping resources from UGA Extension, visit [extension.uga.edu/topic-areas/lawn-garden-landscapes](http://extension.uga.edu/topic-areas/lawn-garden-landscapes).

Expert/Source Tim Daly

# Compost Enriches Soil, but doesn't Replace Fertilizer

By **Paul Pugliese** for CAES News



You would need about 70 pounds of compost to add the same amount of nutrients as 10 pounds of 10-10-10 fertilizer (containing 10% each nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium).

The value of compost to a garden is probably not what most people think.

Compost is not a substitute for fertilizer if you're trying to grow crops that have a high nutrient demand. The real value of adding composted amendments to your garden is to loosen the soil and minimize compaction, improve the drainage and aeration of clay soils, and increase the nutrient-holding capacity of your soil.

The organic matter found in compost also literally provides food for beneficial microorganisms and earthworms to thrive in your soil.

Many home gardeners assume that they can apply liberal amounts of compost to their garden and not worry about adding anything else. Unfortunately, the nutrient value of compost is very low when you consider the average compost contains about 1.5% nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. Even cow manure is only about 0.5% nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. These are essential macronutrients that plants must have to grow and produce fruits and vegetables.

## Cost comparison

To put this into perspective, you would need about 70 pounds of compost to add the same amount of nutrients as 10 pounds of 10-10-10 fertilizer (containing 10% each nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium). Or you would need about 200 pounds of cow manure for the same

amount of nutrients. These recommended rates would be enough to cover about 1,000 square feet of garden space as a "starter fertilizer." A single 40-pound bag of 10-10-10 fertilizer costs about \$20. The equivalent is about 280 pounds of compost or 800 pounds of cow manure to provide the same nutrients. A 40-pound bag of compost costs about \$5, so seven bags (280 pounds) will cost you \$35. A 25-pound bag of cow manure costs about \$3. Multiplied by 32 bags (800 pounds) that comes out to \$96. For a small garden, this difference in price may not matter. But when you consider a larger garden, the price difference and the amount of bulk compost or manure you would have to transport becomes less practical.

## Nitrogen release

Certain soil bacteria are responsible for chemical reactions that convert nutrients into forms that plants can use. Note that the nitrogen release from compost and manure is not immediately available and can take a few months to be converted by bacteria in the soil.

This is also true of cover crops such as clover that are planted as "green manures" during the off-season. Because of the amount of time that this nutrient conversion requires, it is necessary to supplement your vegetable garden with additional nitrogen during the growing season.

Most vegetables will need two or three applications of nitrogen to maximize yield. Since nitrogen only lasts a few weeks and quickly leaches or volatilizes, you should apply nitrogen fertilizers about [\(Continued on page 6\)](#)

# Compost Enriches Soil, but doesn't Replace Fertilizer continued

a month apart during the growing season. With synthetic fertilizers, it's easy to broadcast or side-dress the fertilizer, adding it around the stem of the plants, every few weeks. Compost and manure are less practical to apply after a crop is established.

**If you prefer using natural fertilizer, options include blood meal (12% nitrogen) and fish emulsion (5% nitrogen).**

## Soil amendment recommendations

We don't recommend using "free" sources of cow manure from a local farm. Cow or horse manure taken right off the farm has not been properly composted, which increases the chances of viable weed seeds and foodborne pathogens such as *E. coli* and fecal coliform bacteria. Most backyard gardeners are not going to be able to properly compost manure at high enough temperatures to kill unwanted weeds or pathogens — commercial composts are heated and pasteurized at temperatures between 110 and 160 degrees Fahrenheit.

Another potential problem is the carryover of herbicide residues that are sprayed in pastures and hayfields for weed control. These products can remain active in manure for several months

and could easily kill vegetables in your garden. You're better off buying commercially bagged manure or bulk compost from a local farm supply store to avoid these issues.

You can add about 3 to 4 inches of compost material over a garden and thoroughly mix and till to a depth of eight to 12 inches. Since compost and organic matter quickly break down in our climate, these soil amendments are usually added once a year to vegetable gardens and annual flower beds.

Be sure to do a **soil test** to check your pH and nutrient levels every few years and adjust as needed.

For more information, refer to **University of Georgia Cooperative Extension** Circular 816, "**Composting and Mulching**," online at [extension.uga.edu/publications](http://extension.uga.edu/publications).

**Paul Pugliese is the Agriculture and Natural Resources agent for the University of Georgia Extension office in Bartow County**



# When to Prune Landscape Plants — and how to Do it Right

By Ashley Brantley for CAES News



Do you have a yard full of woody ornamentals? Are you unsure of when or how to prune them?

With diverse growth habits and varying pruning requirements, it can be overwhelming to try to figure out when and how to prune each variety. Not pruning correctly, or at the wrong time, can lead to plants to become irregular in shape, more vulnerable to cold damage or pests, or less likely to flower at their full potential. By understanding the importance of timing, using correct pruning cuts and working with proper tools, you can prune woody ornamentals with confidence.

## When to prune

With flowering ornamentals setting buds at various time of the year, it can be confusing to know the best time to prune.

Try remembering the May rule: if the plant blooms before May, prune after flowering; if the plant blooms after May, prune just before spring growth occurs (February–early March).

A lot of our flowering ornamentals, such as forsythia and azaleas, set their flower buds in the fall. Pruning these woody plants in the winter

would remove these buds and severely limit the flowers available come spring.

Summer flowering ornamentals, such as abelia and chaste tree, set flower buds on new spring growth and will not be affected by winter pruning.

As with everything, there are some exceptions to this rule. Oakleaf hydrangea, which sets its flower buds the season prior, as well as late-flowering azaleas, which bloom in May, June or July, should be pruned after they flower.

Woody plants grown more for their foliage, not flowers, can be pruned anytime during the winter, spring or summer months.

## Pruning cuts

When pruning, it is important to remember that wherever the plant is cut regrowth will be stimulated, generally happening within 6 to 8 inches of the cut.

The harsher the pruning, the more regrowth you will have. There are two basic types of pruning cuts: heading and thinning. Each cut generates a different response within the plant and should

# When to Prune Landscape Plants — and how to Do it Right

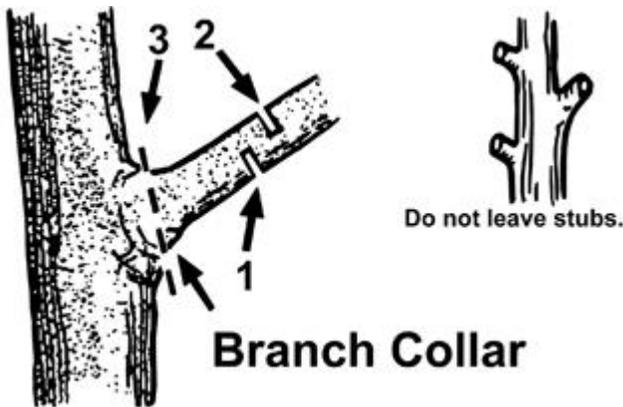
## continued

therefore be used for specific occasions in the landscape.

A heading cut is the most invigorating, as it encourages regrowth near the cut. As a result, the plant will become more compact in shape and will lose its natural form.

Conversely, thinning cuts remove an entire limb or branch back to another branch, bud or the trunk. This cut is the least invigorating, as new growth will occur on the untouched limbs and/or branches. This cut allows the plant to stay in a more natural shape and leads to a fuller looking plant.

## How to prune



If branches are larger than 2 inches in diameter, make sure to use the three-cut sequence to avoid damaging the plant — the first cut should be about 1 foot out from the trunk and one-quarter to one-half of the way through the underside of the branch, the second cut should be a few inches away from the first cut one-quarter to one-half of the way through the upper side of the branch, and the third cut should remove the branch just outside the branch collar.

For most pruning tasks, you can use hand pruners, loppers/lopping shears, pruning saws, pole pruners or hedge shears.

Hand pruners come in two basic types, scissor action or anvil, and are used to cut small branches up to one-half inch in diameter. If the branch is larger than one-half inch but smaller than 2 inches in diameter, use loppers with longer handles and larger blades. A pruning saw, much like a woodworking saw, should be used on branches larger than 2 inches in diameter. When branches are out of reach from the ground, consider using a pole pruner. If you want a nice clipped looked, the best tool for the job will be hedge shears.

Pruning is an essential management task if you want strong, healthy plants and an attractive landscape. To be successful in your pruning endeavors, make sure that you understand appropriate pruning times (remember the May rule), use the correct pruning cuts for the task at hand (heading vs. thinning cuts), and work with the right tools for the job.

To learn more about proper pruning techniques, see [University of Georgia Cooperative Extension](#) Bulletin 961, "[Pruning Ornamental Plants in the Landscape](#)," or Bulletin 949, "[Basic Principles of Pruning Woody Plants](#)."

*Athens-Clarke County Extension*

# *Virtual Green Thumb Lectures*

*2022 Free Monthly Gardening Class Series*



## **May: Composting**

Please join us online for an informative presentation by Suki Janssen, the Director of the ACC Solid Waste Department on topics including:

- Basic concepts and importance of efficient composting
- Materials for composting
- Recommended structures and methods

Gardeners of all experience levels are welcome.

### **WHEN:**

Wednesday, May 11th · 6:00-7:30 pm

### **WHERE:**

ONLINE via Zoom.com

Specific link to join Zoom meeting will be sent to the email you register with.

### **TO REGISTER:**

Registration is required. Please register by May 10 by visiting

[www.accgov.com/gardening](http://www.accgov.com/gardening)



### **For questions:**

Contact Laura Ney, Extension Agent at  
706-613-3640 & lney@uga.edu

Or contact ANR Educator Cari, at cmisseri@uga.edu  
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equal opportunity and affirmative action.*



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ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY  
**SOLID WASTE DEPARTMENT**



For more information:  
[accgov.com/compost](http://accgov.com/compost)  
or [accgov.com/charm](http://accgov.com/charm)

## International Compost Awareness Week May 1 - 7, 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	ACC Commercial Compost Facility Tours	Storytime @ ACC Library Garden Gnome @ State Bot Garden	Green Thumb Lecture Virtual	Sweet Pea Club @ State Bot Garden Compost Teen Activity @ ACC Library		Compost Bin Sale @ Markets Garden Gnome @ State Bot Garden



### ALL WEEK:

#### Get Caught Composting

Post your best photos getting caught in the act of composting or using: #compost #icompost #ICAW #cooltheclimate #caughtcompostinginGeorgia

#### Half Price Compost Sale

Athens-Clarke Landfill 5700 Lexington Rd  
\$10/cubic yard - Limit of 5 yards per customer

#### Food Scraps Drop-off Program

Residents can bring food scraps & other compostable material for free composting.

### Food Scraps Drop-off Locations

**ACC Compost & Landfill**  
5700 Lexington Rd  
Monday-Saturday  
8 am-3 pm

**Athens Farmers Market**  
Saturday  
8 am- noon

**CHaRM**  
1005 College Ave  
carts available 24/7

**Solid Waste Admin Office**  
725 Hancock Industrial Way  
carts available 24/7

### OTHER EVENTS:

#### ACC Commercial Composting Facility Tour

Monday, May 2nd- Register for times at [accgov.com/icaw](http://accgov.com/icaw)  
5700 Lexington Rd, Winterville, GA 30683

#### Compost Storytime: ACC Library

Tuesday May 3rd 10:30 am  
2025 Baxter St, Athens, GA 30606

#### Garden Gnome Compost Program: State Botanical Gardens

Tuesday May 3rd 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm AND Saturday May 7th from 9:30 am to 11:30 am  
2450 S Milledge Ave, Athens, GA 30605

#### Green Thumb Lecture: Composting Basics with Suki Janssen, ACC Solid Waste

Wednesday May 4th from 6:00-7:30 p.m.  
Virtual - Register at [accgov.com/gardening](http://accgov.com/gardening)

#### Sweet Pea Club: State Botanical Gardens

Thursday May 5th from 9 am to 10:30 am  
Register at <https://botgarden.uga.edu/event/sweet-pea-club/all/> \*Be sure to register for 5/3/2022  
2450 S Milledge Ave, Athens, GA 30605

#### Edible Compost Teen Activity: ACC Library

Thursday May 5th 4 pm  
2025 Baxter St, Athens, GA 30606

#### Compost Bin Sale: West Broad Farmers' Market & Marigold Market

Saturday, May 7  
West Broad Market: 1573 West Broad Street Athens, GA, 30606, 9 AM to 1 PM  
Marigold Market: 115 Parkview Rd., Winterville, GA 30683, 10 AM to 2 PM  
Proceeds benefit Keep Athens-Clarke County Beautiful

Visit [accgov.com/icaw](http://accgov.com/icaw) for a full list of events



State Botanical Garden of Georgia  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



# Stay in the loop! (local or online activities and events)

## International Compost Awareness Week events in Athens, Georgia May 2-8, 2022

Celebrate by joining events going on throughout the week including tours, videos, stories for soils, and a compost sale! For more details visit the

[ICAW Athens Website](#)

## UGarden Herbs Plant Sale

Saturday May 7th from 9 am to 1pm

2510 S. Milledge Ave.

## UGA Plant Breeding, Genetics, & Genomics Graduate Student Association

Plant Sale is May 7th from 9 am to 6 pm

111 Riverbend Rd

## May Friends First Friday

### What's slithering in our gardens?

May 13, 9:00 am - 10:30 am

Join us as **Berkeley Boone**, education supervisor at Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center and former children's program manager at the State Botanical Garden shows us the different variety of snakes that can be in our gardens.

He will teach us what is friendly, what is not and how to avoid contact. One of Boone's main goals will be to help us realize we don't have to like snakes, but there is no need to be afraid of them!

**The registration deadline is noon on May 6.**

## The State Botanical Garden of Georgia

Alice H. Richards Children's Garden

Performance Series is

May 21st, from 9:30am –12:30 pm

Join them at **The Theatre in the Woods** at the Alice H Richards Children's Garden

## MAY 13, 10 am - Noon Sandy Creek & North Oconee River

To complete our water series, students will investigate Sandy Creek and the North Oconee River. Weather permitting, students will do a creek walk and seine for fish. Closed toed shoes must be worn in the creek—no flip flops, bare feet or open toed sandals.

Ages: 5-7 years, 8-12 years, 13-17 years (March only) **May 13 Time: 10:00 am-Noon** Fee: \$4 per student/ACC resident per class; \$6 per student/Non-resident per class.

This is a drop off program.

## Sandy Creek Nature Center Snake Day May 21st

Come to the nature center and see reptiles and amphibians.

Enjoy games, activities and crafts, meet live snakes, learn about fun facts, and get outside.

Come help us celebrate Snake Day in person this year!

UGA Plant Breeding, Genetics, and Genomics  
Graduate Student Association

# PLANT SALE

May 7 - 9am-6pm  
111 Riverbend Rd

Over 25 varieties  
of vegetables and herbs



Preorders and more  
information:



<https://tinyurl.com/2p87xtuh>

\$3 per plant  
\$5 for specialty peppers  
and tomatoes  
\$8 for Carolina Reapers

# Local Farmers Markets



The **Athens Farmers Market** is taking place on Saturdays from 8am-12pm at Bishop Park. Make sure to visit [their website](#) for updates and details.

Find them on Facebook:

[@AthensFarmersMarket](#)

Follow them on Instagram:

[@athensfarmersmarket](#)



## West Broad Farmers Market

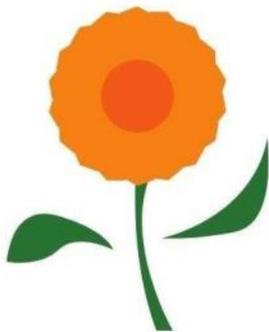
Online ordering with pick-up and delivery options are available on Saturdays.

Visit [their website](#) to find out how to order online.

Find them on Facebook:

[@WestBroadMarketGarden](#)

## MARIGOLD



## MARKET

The Winterville Farmer's Market is taking place Saturdays from 10 am—2 pm at Pittard Park.

Visit [their website](#) to order online.

Find out more on Facebook:

[@marigoldmarketwinterville](#)

Instagram: [@marigoldmarketwinterville](#)

# Join Athens-Clarke County 4-H!



Students in 5<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grades in Athens-Clarke County can sign up for 4-H now. The mission of Georgia 4-H is to assist youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills, and forming attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive and contributing members of society. 4-H meetings will look different this year and are online. There is no charge to be a member or participate in a competition.

To start your 4-H Adventure e-mail the ACC 4-H Agent, Elizabeth Conway, at [ebarber@uga.edu](mailto:ebarber@uga.edu) today!



Virtual 4-H Programs can be viewed on the ACC 4-H website:

<https://tinyurl.com/acc4hvirtual>

The University of Georgia is committed to the principals of equal opportunity and affirmative action.





Concerned about the state of your garden?

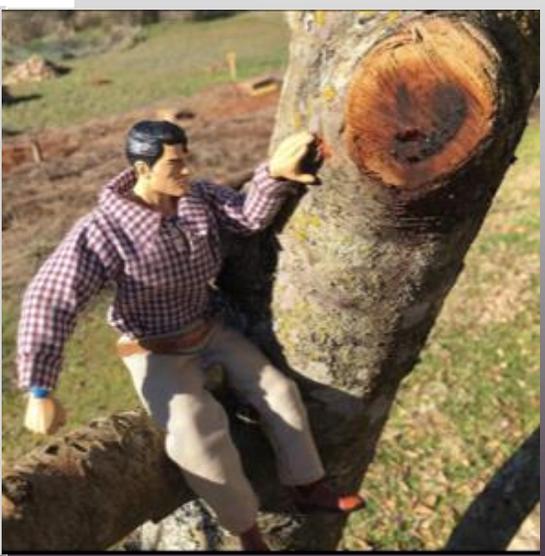
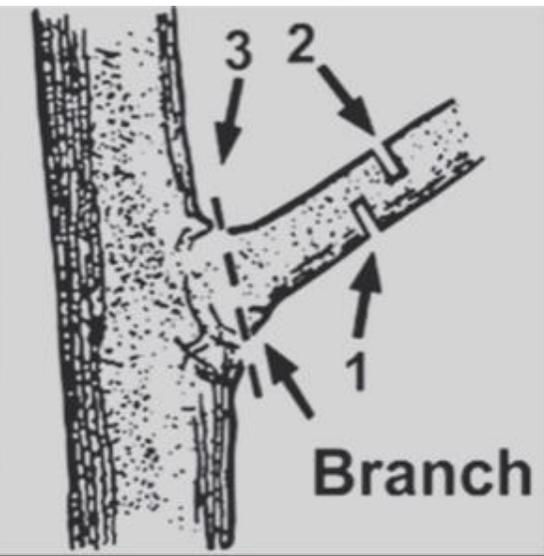
Are weeds taking over your landscape?

No need to fear, Clarke is here!

Follow @gardenwithclarke on Instagram  and learn how to battle pests, identify weeds, build your soil and so much more as you garden alongside Clarke, Athens-Clarke County's super gardener!



**gardenwithclarke**  
UGA Extension Athens-Clarke County





## Helpful resources online:

[Find My Local Extension Office](#)

[Bugwood— Pest Images](#)

[Landscape Alerts Online](#)

[Pest Management Handbook](#)

[Georgia Turf](#)

[Free Online Webinars](#)

[Pesticide Applicator Info](#)

[Georgia Certified Plant Professional](#)

[SE Ornamental Horticulture Production & IPM Blog](#)

[UGA Center for Urban Agriculture](#)

[Extension Publications](#)

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## Athens-Clarke County Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources

### Mission Statement

The UGA Athens-Clarke County Extension's mission is to respond to the people's needs and interest in Agriculture, the Environment, Families, and 4-H/youth in Athens-Clarke County with unbiased, research-based education and information.

Visit us online:



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