

Shades of Green

Athens-Clarke County Agriculture and
Natural Resources E-Newsletter

February 2024



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
EXTENSION

A Note from Athens-Clarke County

Agriculture & Natural Resources

Hello readers!

Happy 2024 and thank you for staying tuned to another year of gardening content from ACC Extension! Spring is just around the corner, and while the garden may still be asleep, we are going to continue passing along local events and resources. On our calendar page we have events from State Botanical Garden of Georgia, Lyndon House Art Center, Memorial Park, Sandy Creek Nature Center, and Georgia Museum of Art.

We hope you enjoy this month's issue of "Shades of Green".

Take care,

Athens-Clarke County Agriculture and Natural Resources

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Check out these new features at our office Demonstration Garden:



Bat Houses and Educational Signage



...Purple Martin Houses!



Feeding Birds in Winter

Charles Seabrook,

Science Writer, Atlanta Journal-Constitution



This is the time of year when many people ask questions about feeding birds, such as: how do I get started? what types of feeders should I use? where should I locate my feeders? what kinds of food do birds like most?

Perhaps the onset of cooler weather prompts more folks to start thinking about the little birds and how these creatures will survive the winter. Indeed, bird feeding was once considered primarily a winter activity. Although feeder food is most beneficial to birds during the cold months when natural food can be hard to find, you can start feeding during the fall.

Now is an excellent time to begin bird feeding. Once you start, continue stocking bird feeders throughout the fall and winter. To help you get started, here is some advice from various experts. The recommendations also might be helpful to those who have already set up backyard feeders but are having trouble attracting birds to them.



Feeder Types

Begin using only one or two feeders. Don't add others until birds begin regularly showing up in your yard. For a variety of birds, a single hopper feeder or platform feeder will attract everything from titmice to Carolina chickadees and blue jays to red-bellied woodpeckers. Tube feeders also are popular with many species, including titmice, chickadees, goldfinches, cardinals, nuthatches, pine siskins and pine warblers. Suet feeders will attract titmice, chickadees, nuthatches and woodpeckers.

The simplest feeder, though, is the ground. Just scatter some seeds on the ground for birds like mourning doves, dark-eyed juncos, kinglets, towhees, chipping sparrows and other ground feeders.



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Location

Place feeders at least 10 feet from cover, such as shrubs and trees. This way, birds can easily escape predators. This also helps to keep squirrels away from feeders. If a feeder must be located close to a shrub or tree, encircle the feeder's base with wire fencing. This helps reduce the chances that raptors, cats and other predators will capture the feeding birds. Also, offer feed at different levels. Some birds prefer to feed at elevated feeders.



Food

Black oil sunflower seeds and white millet seeds attract the greatest variety of birds. The seeds can be purchased separately, but many homeowners prefer a mixture containing large amounts of both seeds. If birds are slow to visit feeders, add pieces of white bread to the seed. White bread, in fact, may draw birds to feeders when no other foods will. For an excellent list of recommended



winter food for birds, visit the following website: "Feeding Birds".

Water

Providing clean water for birds in winter is just as important as offering food. In fact, sometimes birds suffer more from lack of water than food. Keep the water level in your birdbath no more than an inch and a half deep. A flat rock in the middle of it helps provide stable footing on what might otherwise be a smooth and slippery surface.



Other Helpful Hints

Keep feeders clean. Stock them with only enough food to last a couple of days to keep the food free from harmful bacteria and fungi. Periodically wash feeders in a solution of 2 ounces of household bleach to 1 gallon of water. Thoroughly dry the feeders before refilling them with seed.



Rules for Pruning

Mary Carol Sheffield,

UGA Extension Agent, Paulding County

Pruning in the correct manner and at the proper time can help to maintain the size and shape of your woody shrubs, improving their appearance and appealing to the artist in every gardener. Pruning also plays an important role in the health, productivity and well-being of woody plants. Three techniques that are important to understand if you are pruning your woody plants relate to tool sanitation, proper cutting technique, and pruning timing.

Tool Sanitation

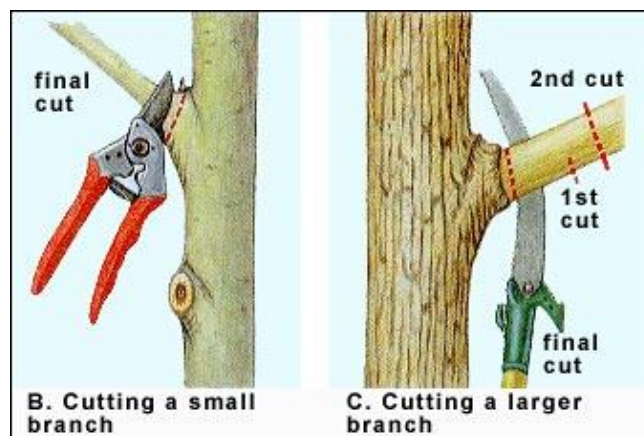
Always use clean pruning shears and be sure to sanitize the shears after each use. This is easily accomplished by either dipping them or wiping them down with 70% Isopropyl Alcohol. Some folks use a 10% bleach solution for this purpose, but it tends to have a corrosive effect on your tools over time.

Technique

There are two main types of cuts that you can make while pruning, one is called a “heading cut”, in which the tips of branches are removed. This type of pruning is used to create dense regrowth near the cut, as would be expected in a hedge. The other type of cut that is often used is a “thinning cut”, in which an entire branch is removed at its base on the

main stem or along a larger branch. Thinning helps to allow more light to enter the shrub and is the preferred method if the pruning goal is to maintain a natural form.

Take care when making cuts to look for the raised ridge of bark around the shoot that you are pruning and make your cut so that that ridge is left intact. Tissue in this ridge of bark will help promote sealing of the cut, so if you damage it, you may be inviting problems. It is also important to cut close enough to this ridge not to leave a



stub, which can also slow the sealing process. Use the three cut method to avoid damaging the bark around the cut. In the three cut method (Figure attached): 1. Cut a notch above where you plan to make your final pruning cut, 2. Cut the branch off above the notch to remove the weight of the branch-this will leave a stub, and 3. Make your final cut just above the branch bark ridge, leaving a clean opening that can begin to heal.

Rules for Pruning

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Timing

I'm often asked when is the best time to prune hollies, crape myrtles, gardenias, azaleas, boxwoods, or any other woody plant you can think of. It can be very confusing to know when to prune flowering plants or evergreen plants. The following are some basic rules that will help you determine when to prune your landscape plants.

Rule No. 1 – If the plant blooms in the spring such as azaleas, dogwoods, forsythia, or mophead hydrangea, then it should be pruned right after blooming. Spring flowering plants form their flower buds in the fall. If these plants are pruned in late winter then the flower buds will be removed and as a result there will be no spring flowers to enjoy.

Rule No. 2 – If the plant blooms in the summer, then prune in late winter (late February to early March) while the plant is still dormant.

Rule No. 3 – If plants are not grown for their flowers, the best time for pruning is during the dormant winter season (late February to early March) before new growth begins in the spring.

Rule No. 4 – Do not prune during the late summer and fall because new growth may occur and make the plants more susceptible to cold injury.

There are some exceptions to these rules. Remove anything that is dead or diseased any time of the year. Another exception would be to clean up the overall appearance of a spring bloomer that has not been pruned in a very long time. For example, if an azalea is ten feet tall and scraggly and doesn't flower well, then by all means prune it in the late winter to clean it up. The plant won't flower in the spring but it will at least have a healthy start in the spring and will bloom the following year.

Some trees may bleed (it's really sap) after pruning. Examples include willows, birches, maples, beeches and dogwoods. Bleeding may be unsightly but typically is not harmful. However, if you don't want the tree to bleed, then prune in late spring or early summer when there are leaves on the trees. Actively growing leaves tend to reduce the amount of bleeding from pruning cuts and allow the cuts to heal more quickly.

To obtain more information on the correct way to prune, you can download the following University of Georgia Extension publication Basic Principles of Pruning Woody Plants from <https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=B949>.

Local February Events

Orchid Madness

State Botanical Garden of Georgia

February 22

5:00—7:00 p.m.

2450 S. Milledge Avenue

<https://botgarden.uga.edu/event/orchid-madness-orchids-and-chocolates/>

Diamond Hill Farm Stand

Every Thursday, 4-6 pm

Vegetables and fresh flowers are available on hand and pre-ordered. Every Thursday, 4–6 p.m. at Authentic Brewing Company.

www.diamondhillfarmathens.com

UGA Extension offices around the state are working hard at developing quality online presentations on various topics.

Visit the UGA Extension [event calendar](#) to see events happening local to our county as well as virtual opportunities.

ACC Green Thumb Lecture Series Pruning

February 21st, 6:00—7:30 p.m.

ACC Extension Office
275 Cleveland Rd.

Valentine Craft Party

Wed. Feb. 14th 10:30—11:30 a.m.

Memorial Park Rec. Hall
293 Gran Ellen Drive
accgovga.myrec.com

State Botanical Garden of Georgia Native Plant Symposium

Feb. 15, 9:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

Garden Club of Georgia Terrace Room
2450 S. Milledge Avenue

Family Saturday Art Workshop

Lyndon House Art Center

Feb. 17th 12:00—2:00 p.m.

211 Hoyt Street

Forest Bathing—Hiking Sandy Creek Nature Center

February 17th,

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Family Day: Remembering Radcliffe Bailey

Georgia Museum of Art

10:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.


90 Carlton Street

Athens Farmers' Market

February 3,10,17,24th

8:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.

Bishop Park



Athens-Clarke County Extension Green Thumb Lectures 2024 Wednesdays 6 PM- 7:30 PM

ACC Extension (275 Cleveland RD, Bogart GA 30622)

FEBURARY

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Pruning

with Dr. Laura Ney, ANR Extension Agent

MARCH

13

**Native Host Plants for Butterflies
and Moths**

with Tanner Biggers, Atlanta
Botanical Garden

APRIL

17

Beginner's Beekeeping Seminar

with Athens-Clarke County Bee Team

MAY

22

Compost (with Activity)

With Suki Jansen, ACC Solid Waste Department

JUNE

19

Gardening (Demo Garden)

With Athens-Area Master Gardeners

JULY

24

Drip Irrigation

AUGUST

28

Fall Veggie Gardening

SEPTEMBER

18

Lawn Care

With Victoria Clendenning, ANR Extension
Educator

OCTOBER

16

Bats and Bat House Building

With ACC Extension and Carsen Dean, Oconee
County Extension

NOVEMBER

13

Fruit Gardening



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Athens-Clarke County



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

MONTHLY GREEN THUMB LECTURE SERIES

Athens-Clarke County Extension



FEBRUARY 2024: PRUNING

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A DISCUSSION ON PRUNING LEAD BY LAURA NEY, COUNTY ANR AGENT. LEARN WHEN TO PRUNE, WHAT TO PRUNE AND HOW TO PRUNE.

WHEN:

FEBRUARY 21ST, 2024 | 6 PM – 7:30 PM

WHERE:

ACC EXTENSION, 275 CLEVELAND RD,
BOGART GA 30622



TO REGISTER:

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. PLEASE REGISTER BY FEB 19TH AT:

www.accgov.com/gardening



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For questions:

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

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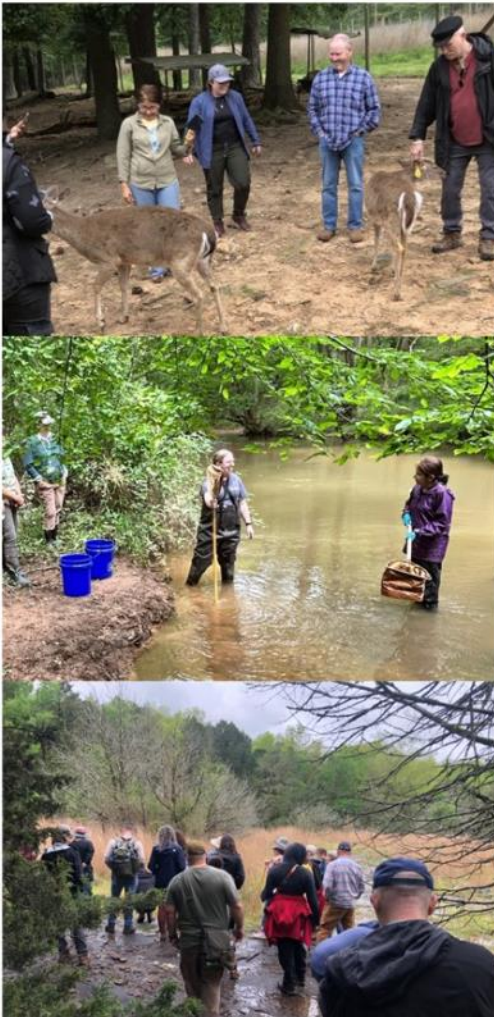


Become a Georgia Master Naturalist!

The Georgia Master Naturalist program is a series of weekly programs with specific environmental topics. This program is a hands-on environmental education course that explores habitats and ecosystems in Georgia and human impacts on those environments.

This program is a combination of lectures and outside hands-on learning through field studies and relevant resources.

After completing this fun and interactive program, Georgia Master Naturalists are encouraged to share their knowledge with their communities by volunteering in local schools or nature centers.



Course Topics May Include:

- ◇ Tree Health and Identification
- ◇ Ecology
- ◇ Environmental Awareness/Human Impact
- ◇ Native Plants
- ◇ Birding
- ◇ Wildlife Issues
- ◇ Entomology
- ◇ Herpetology
- ◇ Water Issues and Stream Monitoring
- ◇ Invasive Plants and Pests

2024 Athens-Area Master Naturalist Program

DATES:

Fridays from
April 5—May 31, 2024

TIME:

9:00 AM—4:00 PM

COST:

\$250, mail or bring cash or check to office, or pay over the phone at 706-613-3640

TO REGISTER:

Fill out registration form on website, email to vlc74120@uga.edu or include with payment.

[https://
extension.uga.edu/
county-offices/
clarke.html](https://extension.uga.edu/county-offices/clarke.html)



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Outreach

Warnell School of Forestry & Natural Resources

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**HELLO
ATHENS-CLARKE
COUNTY**

**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](#)

[Georgia Turf](#)

[Pest Management Handbook](#)

[Pesticide Applicator Info](#)

[Free Online Webinars](#)

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

[UGA Center for Urban Agriculture](#)

[Georgia Certified Plant Professional](#)

[Extension Publications](#)

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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vlc74120@uga.edu

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