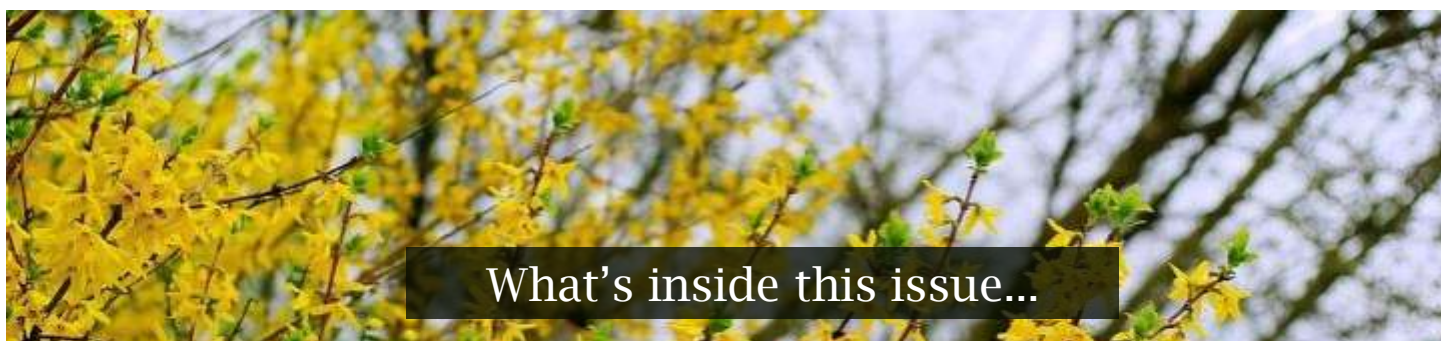




Shades of Green

Athens-Clarke County Agriculture and Natural Resources E-Newsletter

March 2021



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A note from Athens-Clarke County Agriculture & Natural Resources

Hello readers! Time seems to be flying by this year. We don't know about you all, but we are excited for the close arrival of spring. Our [2021 Virtual Green Thumb Lecture Series](#) continues this month with the timely topic of Vegetable Gardening. If you want to join us for this online lecture, make sure to check out the [flyer](#) later in this issue. As spring is approaching, so are plant sales and fun events. Take a look at the ["Stay in the Loop!"](#) page of this newsletter to see a selection of these events. We also have a new ["Master Gardener Project Highlight"](#) included in the newsletter this month written by our ANR Agent, Laura Ney. Make sure to take a look at some of the neat work our volunteers have been up to!

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

Take care,
Athens-Clarke County Agriculture and Natural Resources



Master Gardener Project Highlight

By Laura Ney

Athens-Clarke County Extension

Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent



“Master Gardeners Gone Batty”

Located in Dudley Park, right along the Athens Greenway, the “Bat Garden” is an excellent example of Master Gardener collaboration with local partners. This garden is something really special that can be experienced by everyone in the Athens community. With the support of Athens Leisure Services and the State Botanical Garden, a small band of Master Gardeners, has turned a bare spot, on top of a hill, into a native plant oasis enjoyed by pedestrian passers by, as well as pollinators and bats!

The purpose of this project, is to create a garden of native plants, to compliment the bat boxes, installed in that location, as a part of a previous conservation grant. Many of the plants in the garden were chosen specifically to support populations of night-flying insects, such as moths. This garden is focused on conservation. In addition to attracting bats, moths and other pollinators, a lot of care was put into the aesthetic of this space, so that it would be attractive to humans as well. With it's educational signage, rock walls, winding path and variety of colors and textures, this spot, on the Greenway, invites people to stop and consider the important role of our native plant, pollinator and bat species.

These beautiful public spaces don't just appear. Truck loads of stones, soil amendment and mulch, donated by Athens Leisure Services, had to be installed, mixed and spread over the area, to get it ready for planting. Over 45 native plants were donated by the State Botanical Garden of Georgia and also by MG volunteers. To fill up the rest of the garden, 65 more plants were purchased with funds, provided by the Athens Area Master Gardener Association. There are now over 100 native plants in this little garden. These plants had to be watered, by hand, to get them established and the space had to be periodically weeded and mulched, in order to keep it attractive and healthy while the plants fill in. So, thank you to our community partners and to the incredible Bat Garden team for all of your hard work. And if you've not seen it yet, make sure to stroll through Dudley Park this spring and summer, to see the Bat Garden burst into life!

Before:

After:



Late-winter Pruning Can Benefit Summer-blooming and Nonblooming Plants

By Mary Carol Sheffield



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 garden-er.

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 pruning timing, tool sanitation and proper cutting technique.

Timing

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

- If the plant blooms in the spring — like an azalea, dogwood, forsythia or mophead hydrangea — 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, the flower buds will be removed and there will be no spring flowers to enjoy.
- If the plant blooms in the summer, prune in late winter — late February to early March — while the plant is still dormant.
- 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.

- 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 is 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 10 feet tall and scraggly and doesn't flower well, then it can be pruned 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 sap after pruning. Some examples include willows, birches, maples, beeches and dogwoods. Bleeding may be unsightly, but it typically is not harmful. However, if you don't want the tree to bleed, 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.

Tool sanitation

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

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Versatile Daylilies

By Greg Sheppard

Several years ago I received one of those little folding multi-tools as a gift. Little did I realize how handy that little gadget would prove to be. It included a knife, pliers, screwdrivers, bottle opener, awl, and several other handy gizmos. That little multi-tool provides the perfect solution to a host of small jobs. In the landscape daylilies remind me of that little multi-tool. Daylilies can perform a multitude of functions. They are among the most versatile plants available and they require very little extra care.

Daylilies belong to the botanical group Hemerocallis. The name comes from the Greek words for day and beauty. The individual flowers of a daylily last for only one day but a sizable clump can produce flowers almost daily for an extended period.

If you have not paid attention to daylilies recently you may be surprised. The varieties that are available now are not your grandmother's typical orange daylilies. They are available now in a wide range of colors, shapes, and blossom sizes. The colors include white, pink, yellows, purples and many shades in between. Daylilies can be found now with blooms that reach 5-7 inches with deep ruffled edges and colorful centers. These new daylilies are more exciting than ever.

The hidden beauty of daylilies is that they perform well in a wide range of planting conditions. They do best in full sun but they will also produce well in morning sun with afternoon shade. They grow well in soil that ranges from light sand to heavy clay. For best results, plant them 18-24


inches apart. It is a good idea to mulch around them to conserve moisture and suppress weeds. An application of fertilizer in the spring and occasional watering in dry periods will keep them looking good. Over a period of time daylilies will form a large clump. These clumps should be divided every four or five years.

Like my little multi-tool daylilies have 1001 uses. They are perfect for planting at the base of retaining walls or garden fences. They can provide contrast and seasonal color to shrub borders. They can provide unity in a landscape by tying tall groupings of shrubbery together. They also can be used as low maintenance accent plants around other foundation plantings.

One of my favorite uses of daylilies is on slopes to control erosion. They also do well when used as ground covers in sunny beds. Daylilies can be planted around the base of decks to serve as a transition from the deck to the landscape. Of course, they work well as container plants when planted in large containers like barrel halves. They are also can help create a naturalizing effect when planted in sweeping beds.

Maybe it is time you revisit these wonderful versatile plants. There are a number of growers and hybridizers in Georgia. In some gardening circles daylilies are known as the perfect perennial but in my opinion they are the multi-tool for the landscape.

(Greg Sheppard is a previous Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent in Lumpkin County, Georgia)



Vegetable Variety

By Willie O. Chance III

Add some variety to this year's vegetable garden with these special vegetables. I've listed a few but there are many more possibilities.

Kale is a cool season green similar to collard. It is more popular in the northern states where collard is relatively unknown. It grows in a rosette, like collard, and comes in two forms, curly leaf and flat leaf. Of the curly leaf varieties, Scotch kale has a very frilly leaf while Siberian kale is less curled. Kale is grown, harvested and used like collard. In addition, the leaves of Scotch kale are quite ornamental and are used as a garnish, replacing parsley in that role.

Bean sprouts are an interesting crop that can be grown year round indoors. Many types of beans are eaten as sprouts, but most often mung is the preferred bean for sprouting. Bean sprouts are popular as a nutritious, low-calorie snack eaten by themselves or in salads or stir-fried.

Methods vary for sprouting beans, but the main requirements are a soaking period of six to eight hours followed by keeping the sprouts moist until full elongation. An easy way to grow sprouts is to place 1/2 cup of mung beans in a quart jar and to punch holes in the lid. Wash the beans thoroughly and let them soak overnight. Put the beans in the jar in a dark place for white sprouts or in a lighted place for green sprouts. By the fourth day, the sprouts should be one inch long and ready for use. Do not keep sprouts sub-

mersed in water the whole time they are growing, just keep them moist. They need both air and water to grow.

Always use beans bought for sprouting. Seed sold for sowing in the garden may have fungicides on them. Sprouts grown from fungicide treated beans can be poisonous. You can store sprouts in the refrigerator for several days before use.

Chayote, also known as vegetable pear and mirliton, is a member of the gourd family and grows as a perennial in frost-free areas. Frost will kill back the tops and in Georgia chayote is grown as an annual. The plant is a very fast-growing vine. Trellis it on a fence or arbor.

The seed of the chayote is the whole fruit. After danger of frost is past, plant the fruit without cutting it open. Plant the fruit with the large end down and the stem end very slightly covered. Plant one seed per hill on a 12' by 12' spacing.

In warmer climates, a heavy mulch over the roots in early fall may provide sufficient winter protection from cold weather and the plants will grow again next year. This mulch must be pulled back away from the roots before growth starts the next spring. Fertilize at planting, in midsummer and when fruits are small. More frequent fertilization is sometimes needed. Adding compost or rotted manures to the soil will help growth.

(Continued on page 7)

Late-winter Pruning Can Benefit Summer-blooming and Nonblooming Plants (continued...)



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 re-growth 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 allows more light to enter the shrub and is the preferred method if the pruning goal is to maintain a natural form.

When making cuts, 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 the cut to seal 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 also can slow the sealing process. Use the three-cut meth-

od to avoid damaging the bark around the cut. Steps of the three-cut method are:

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.
3. Make your final cut just above the branch bark ridge, leaving a clean opening that can begin to heal.

For more information on the correct way to prune, see the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Bulletin 949, "**Basic Principles of Pruning Woody Plants.**"

(Mary Carol Sheffield is the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension agricultural and natural resources agent in Paulding County.)



Vegetable Variety (continued...)



Chayote fruit will store for six to eight weeks in a cool spot (55o - 60o F). The fruit may store best wrapped in newspaper. Fruit may begin to shrivel in storage. You can cook young chayote fruit without peeling, but larger, more mature fruit will have a tough outer peel. Remove this before eating. Eat chayote fresh in salads, fry it, stuff and bake it, or stir-fry it for a new taste treat.

Spaghetti squash is an interesting vegetable. Cook the entire fruit and then split it open to reveal an interior flesh of loose shreds resembling spaghetti. The fruit can also be split first and then cooked. Remove the insides and eat them like spaghetti. The "noodles" taste like bland, like squash, so season them to taste.

It is grown like winter squash. Plant after danger of frost, three feet apart in rows 48" apart. Harvest fruits when the rind gets hard, about 70 to 80 days after seeding. The smooth-skinned fruits are typically about 8 to 10 inches long and 5 to 6 inches in diameter and weigh about two pounds. Fruits are produced on trailing vines. The fruit stem will be five-sided and grooved and not conspicuously flared where it attaches to the fruit.

Spaghetti squashes store best in a cool room (55oF) with low humidity. Fruit may store up to two or three months but chilling injury can occur if temperatures drop below 50oF.

Recent introductions have made spaghetti squash even more of a treat. There is now an orange spaghetti squash (Orangetti), and a bi-color spaghetti squash (Go-Getti). Go-Getti is an early, semi-bush hybrid with an orange and green exterior. When the green fades, the fruit is ripe. The "noodles" are cream-colored and mild in flavor. Orangetti fruits are slightly smaller than other varieties and higher in vitamins A and C than other spaghetti squash. It is a semi-bush type bearing fruit close to the crown. Tivoli is a bush spaghetti squash with medium-large, creamy-yellow oval fruit. Tivoli was an All American Selections winner for 1991.

Information for this article is from James Stephen's "Manual of Minor Vegetables."

(Willie O. Chance III is a previous Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent in Houston County, Georgia)

Athens-Clarke County Extension

Virtual Green Thumb Lectures

2021 Free Monthly Gardening Class Series



March: Vegetable Gardening

Please join us online for an informative presentation on topics including:

- General vegetable gardening guidelines for our area
- What vegetables do best in different types of weather and when to plant
- How to maintain, troubleshoot, and harvest your veggies

Gardeners of all experience levels are welcome.

WHEN:

Wednesday, March 10 · 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 March 9 by visiting

www.accgov.com/gardening

For questions:

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

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

Athens-Clarke County Leisure Services Trails and Open Space Programs

Visit [their website](#) for a full list of fun outdoor trails and activities

Athens-Area Master Gardener Association's 2021 Dazzling Daffodil Bulb Sale

Order now until April 30, 2021 for pickup in October. To see bulb descriptions and to access the ordering form, visit

tiny.cc/aamga2021bulbsale

Athens-Area Master Gardener Association's Annual Spring Plant Sale

When: April 24, 2021 from 8am-1pm
(Rain or shine)

Where: ACC Extension Office
275 Cleveland Road, Bogart, GA 30622

All plants are from AAMGA member's gardens and profits will be used for their projects such as Plant-A-Row for the Hungry and UGA horticulture scholarships. (Payments by only cash or check)

UGA Extension Apple Grafting Workshop

This class will offer great learning opportunities to understand how grafting works and the science behind it all. Nearly all the physical materials will be provided for you to put your new skills to work.

Multiple pickup locations have also been arranged for convenience. For dates, more details, and to register, please [visit the event website](#).

Garden Fair 2021 at Piccadilly Farm

Thursday, Friday or Saturday - March 4 through 6. This event will be by appointment only, please reserve time slot by visiting <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090944ADAD22A4F49-garden>.

For assistance or questions, send email to info@piccadillyfarm.com or call 706-765-4444.



The State Botanical Garden of Georgia is open for the public, but make sure to check out [their website](#) for updates and hours. Contact the State Botanical Garden of Georgia by emailing garden@uga.edu or calling 706-542-1244.

- [Discover education activities for home](#).
- Check out their [event calendar](#) for more offerings.



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.

Join Athens-Clarke County 4-H!



Students in 5th - 12th 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 today!



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

<https://tinyurl.com/acc4hvirtual>

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COUNTY**

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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



**SOMETHING IS
EATING OUR WHEAT..**



**AHA! I FOUND
THE CULPRIT**



**LOOKS LIKE WE'VE
GOT FALL ARMYWORMS**

Helpful resources online:

<u>Find My Local Extension Office</u>	<u>Bugwood— Pest Images</u>	<u>Landscape Alerts Online</u>
<u>Pest Management Handbook</u>	<u>Georgia Turf</u>	<u>Free Online Webinars</u>
<u>SE Ornamental Horticulture Production & IPM Blog</u>	<u>Pesticide Applicator Info</u>	<u>Georgia Certified Plant Professional</u>
	<u>UGA Center for Urban Agriculture</u>	<u>Extension Publications</u>

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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