



# Shades of Green

## From Gardeners to Gardeners

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## Amanda's Slice

Spring has sprung and it is time to start planning and planting! I'm excited that the Athens-Clarke County Extension office will be moving to a new location in a few months. It will be an amazing facility and we have big plans for the demonstration garden at the site.

What garden plans to you have in the works? If you need ideas or plants there are so many fun activities coming up in the next couple months. Make sure to check out the **"local events"** section of the newsletter

Speaking of planning, in April there will be another interest meeting for the Winterville Farmer's Market to keep on the radar for potential Farmer's Market plans and preparation. If you are interested in taking a survey about the possibility of a market and voicing how you would like to be involved, please fill out the survey by [clicking here](#).

Also, the Athens Area Master Gardener Association is hosting their annual bulb sale. If you are interested in purchasing some bulbs to benefit a great cause, [Click here](#) to view the Daffodil flyer and order form.

I hope you enjoy this months edition of "Shades of Green" and good luck with your spring planting!

# Native Azaleas are Very Different From Their Traditional Southern Cousins

By Sharon Dowdy

Georgians are accustomed to evergreen azaleas, but native azaleas are currently growing in popularity. Unlike evergreen azaleas, native azaleas lose their leaves in the fall, grow tall and airy rather than low and dense, and bloom in the spring and summer. University of Georgia plant breeder Carol Robacker has studied azaleas for the past 25 years. She and her research technicians, Allen Byous and Sherrod Baden, have learned a lot about one of **the South's most popular** flowers. A scientist with the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES), Robacker breeds new landscape plants that are genetically adapted to survive and thrive in the heat **and drought stress of Georgia's urban conditions.** Robacker works with CAES entomologist Kris Braman to breed native azalea plants that can tolerate azalea lace bugs, a major pest of azaleas. Evergreen azalea flowers come in a wide variety of forms, and the most common is single-petal. Native azaleas typically have tubular flowers with long stamens that extend beyond their petals. **"There are more than 17 species of native azaleas. We collected a number of these that grow in the Piedmont (region) and are now evaluating which ones are adapted to Georgia,"** said Robacker. The Research and Education Gar-



den on the UGA Griffin campus is filled with row after row of her research plots. In **Robacker's laboratory and greenhouse at UGA-Griffin,** Byous and Baden tend the plants and record any insects and diseases that affect them. To help Georgia gardeners successfully grow azaleas, they offer the following tips. **"First, when you buy an azalea,** turn the pot upside down. Gently remove the plant from the pot and examine the roots. If the roots are light brown and the pot is fairly full of healthy-looking roots, you're good. **If they are black, don't buy it,"** Byous said. When it comes to site selection, pick a spot that gets both sun and shade, Byous said. Azaleas need sunlight to develop flower buds and flowers, but most azalea varieties perform better in the shade, which protects them from extreme heat in summer. **"A 50-50 mix of sun and shade makes for a good compromise for most varieties,"** he said. **Look closely at the soil. Azaleas don't** like wet, boggy areas, and native azaleas especially like well-drained soil, Byous said. Azaleas also like an acidic soil with a pH in the 4.5 to 6.0 range. When you are ready to plant, dig a hole 4 inches larger than the pot. **"Break up the root ball, scar the inside of the hole so the roots can spread and place the plant 2 inches higher than soil level so it drains well,"** he said. (Continued on Page 3)

## Native Azaleas are Very Different From Their Traditional Southern Cousins (continued...)

Add pine bark or shredded leaves as mulch to insulate the plant and keep the weeds down. Water the new azalea plant heavily for the first two years and fertilize in the spring with a slow-release fertilizer similar to a 19-5-8 fertilizer blend. Native azaleas typically **aren't pruned, but if you choose to prune, do**



Pictured above is (1) a Native azalea and (2) an Evergreen azalea.

so after they bloom and before the new buds **set the following spring. "You don't have to prune them, but you may want to if they grow outside the area where you planted them," said Robacker. "But please don't try to create a meatball shape. Natives aren't meant to be shaped like that."** Over her 37-year career at UGA-Griffin, Baden has developed a dark green thumb. Her advice to azalea lovers is simple: **Don't move them once they are established. "If you want an azalea**

in another area of your yard, take cuttings **from your azaleas and root new plants,"** she said. To do this, select shoots that are about 6 inches long. Snap the branch to remove a cutting. Place the cutting in a plastic bag with a damp paper towel and label the bag. **"Keep the bag out of the sun. Put the bag of cuttings in the refrigerator overnight,"** she said. The next day, trim the cuttings from the bottom to create a 4- to 6-inch cutting. Remove all the leaves except the top pair, and trim these by about half to reduce plant stress. **"Wound about a half-inch of the lower stem of the cutting by scraping the surface with a sharp knife. Dip the cuttings in a rooting hormone of your choice, liquid or powder,"** Baden said. **"Stick cuttings in a mix of milled sphagnum moss and coarse perlite mixed 1-1." Place the cuttings in light shade under an automatic misting system to keep them moist for several weeks. "If you don't have an automatic system, create a humidity dome out of a plastic shoe box or corsage box. Gradually open the box over a few weeks to decrease the humidity and allow the cuttings to adapt to the drier air,"** she said. After several weeks, the cuttings should have roots. Allow the newly rooted cuttings to grow undisturbed their first season. Cuttings must overwinter in a protected, cold environment and go dormant. Newly rooted azalea cuttings should bloom two years after being established. For more in-depth information on selecting and growing azaleas, search UGA Extension publications at [extension.uga.edu/publications](http://extension.uga.edu/publications)

*(Reach Sharon Dowdy, a news editor with the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, by emailing [sharono@uga.edu](mailto:sharono@uga.edu))*

# Try Planting Herbs In Your Garden

By Bob Westerfield



**H**umans have used herbs since early times for medicinal purposes, for flavoring food and for fragrance. Their magical properties are entwined in the lore of many cultures and their flavor has added distinctive character to numerous regional dishes. Many modern medicines include plant parts from herbs in either a natural or synthesized state. And there is a growing field of research in pharmacognosy, as scientists look again at herbal remedies. Regardless of how you decide to use them, herbs can make an exciting addition to any landscape. They can be used formally in an herb garden or informally mixed into beds of annuals, perennials or shrubs. Herb flowers and foliage provide a beautiful palette of color and variation in texture and form. Herbs also lend themselves well to small containers such as **window boxes or whisky barrels. If you're going** to grow herbs, choose a location that receives at least six hours of direct sunlight each day. A soil pH range of 6 to 7.5 is fine for most herbs, although some, such as rosemary or lavender, prefer the pH slightly higher, in the 7.5 range. Herbs do well in average soil but prefer, as most plants do, **well-drained, loamy or sandy conditions. It's important** to test your soil prior to planting to determine the actual pH and then add the appropriate amount of dolomitic lime to adjust it. Most herbs are not heavy feeders, and

a moderate amount of fertilizer will provide all the nutrition they need. Some herbs, such as basil, chives and parsley, may require additional fertilizer since they are often heavily harvested. When preparing the herb bed, work generous amounts of compost or rotted manure into the native soil to a depth of 12 inches. It is a great idea to plant in raised beds, especially if drainage is a concern. Raised beds can be constructed of rocks, landscape timbers, railroad ties, old tires or other materials. Pine straw or bark mulch around your herb plants will help maintain even moisture around the root system. It also helps to discourage weeds and provides a layer of protection from extreme temperatures. Most herbs are fairly drought tolerant and require water only during drier periods. Herbs grown in containers and raised planters will require more irrigation than those grown directly in the ground. Herbs can be grown from seeds, cuttings or plant divisions. If you are new to gardening, you may want to skip the propagation step altogether and just buy container plants from a local nursery. Later, you may wish to start new plants from seeds or cuttings. Herbs grown for foliage may be harvested at any time, though the essential oils are most concentrated just prior to blooming. The seed heads of herbs grown for their seeds, such as fennel and dill, may be collected soon after seeds have reached

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## Try Planting Herbs In Your Garden (continued...)

maturity. Herbs are best collected in the late morning, rinsed quickly and air dried. Drying or freezing will preserve them. While there are many herbs that can be planted, University of Georgia Cooperative Extension offers the following list for beginning gardeners. These seven herbs do well in the Southern U.S. and are easy to grow. As you gain confidence as an herb gardener, other varieties can be added. Basil is an annual that prefers sun and moderate moisture. Clip the flowers to encourage bushiness and prolong the life of the plant. The leaves can be used in tomato sauce and pesto. Mint is a perennial that prefers sun or partial shade and semimoist soil. Plant in a container to keep it from spreading. Mint can be used in desserts, teas and as a garnish. Yarrow is a perennial that prefers sun and moderate moisture. It may need staking. A nonculinary herb, it can be used fresh or dried in arrangements. Scented geranium is a perenni-

al, nonculinary herb that prefers sun or partial shade and moderate moisture. It should be moved indoors for the winter and can be used in potpourri. Oregano is a perennial that prefers sun and moderate moisture. The leaves can be used in preparing meats and vegetables. Sage is a perennial that prefers sun and moderate moisture. Trim the plant to promote bushiness. The leaves can be used in preparing meat and in cheese and potpourri. Chives are a perennial that prefer sun or partial shade and moderate moisture. They can be used in preparing eggs, meats and vegetables. For more information about herb production, see UGA Extension Bulletin 1170, **"Herbs in Southern Gardens,"** at [extension.uga.edu/publications](http://extension.uga.edu/publications).

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# Chipmunks In the Landscape Can Be a Nuisance

By Michael Anthony Foster

Chipmunks may look cute, but when they wreak havoc in the landscape their charm quickly fades. A species of small rodent, chipmunks are quite common in Georgia. They are considered minor agricultural pests, but they can cause significant structural damage under patios, stairs and retention walls. Chipmunks are burrowers and their tunnels are usually 20 to 30 feet long and may be more complex in areas where cover is scarce. Chipmunks are usually ground-dwelling critters, but will climb trees and shrubs for food and to escape predators. These little critters consume flower bulbs, seeds, seedlings, grass seed, pet foods and birdseed from bird feeders. Chipmunks also will gnaw on wooden structures, eat garden vegetables, fruits and flowers; clog downspouts and chew on the bark and buds of ornamental plantings. Chipmunks are territorial and rarely become numerous enough to cause a significant amount of damage. However, when the resources are right, populations can reach 20 individuals or more in an urban landscape. When populations reach densities high enough to cause significant damage, homeowners have several options to lessen or even eliminate the damage they cause. While their natural habitat is in open wooded areas with ample food-producing trees and bushes, chipmunks will make their homes around the edges of forests and urban landscapes. In these areas, food and protection are offered by shrubbery, flowers and gardens, allowing chipmunks to thrive and eventually become pests. University of Georgia Cooperative Extension recommends

following the HERL model of control: habitat modification, exclusion, repellent and lethal control. The first option for mitigating chipmunk damage is habitat modification. In other words, make the landscape less attractive to these scurrying little creatures. This starts by removing any yard debris, wood piles or brush that could be used as denning sites. Often considered a nuisance in its own right, the invasive plant English ivy provides



Chipmunks enjoy habitats with continuous planting of trees, shrubs or ground cover.

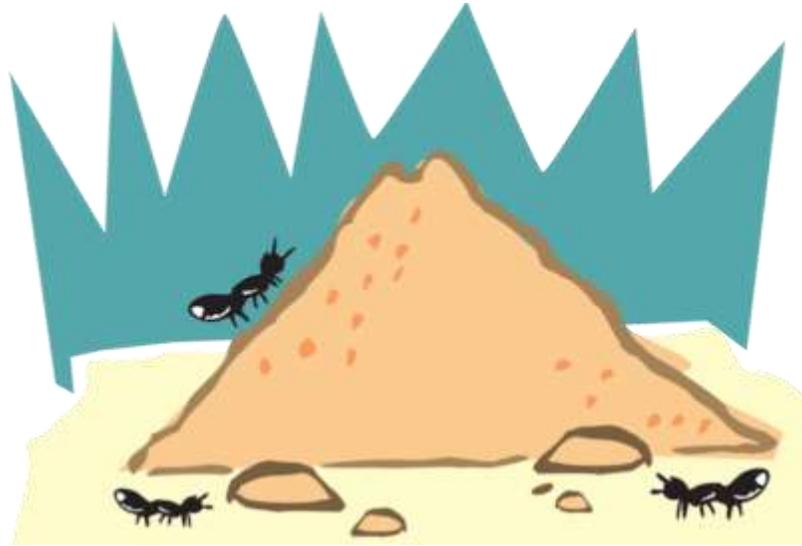
shelter for many rodents, including chipmunks. Treat these areas with foliar and stump-cut herbicide applications. This can **remove cover, thus removing the chipmunk's** habitat. A common mistake seen in landscaping is the continuous planting of trees, shrubs or ground cover. Like English ivy, this pattern provides chipmunks with a continuous, covered corridor. Plantings should be placed away from sidewalks, driveways and foundations to dissuade chipmunks from burrowing under those structures. Next is exclusion. Prevent chipmunks from entering buildings by caulking holes where gas lines, television and internet

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# Gardeners Should Use Care and Caution When Tackling Fire Ants

By Merritt Melancon

Whether you have a well-manicured lawn or a wild preserve, almost every landscape in Georgia shares one feature: fire ants. These stinging insects can ruin even the best backyard cookout or game of catch. But



homeowners need to take care not to let their rage against fire ants blind them to the dangers of some insecticides. Dan Suiter, professor of entomology at the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, researches fire ant control methods and wants people to start reading the labels on many of the products sold to **control ants. “Everyone believes that if they’re going to sell it at any of the various home-supply stores, that it’s safe — that there’s no way that it will be able to hurt the environment,”** Suiter said. **“That’s not true. You have to read the labels.”** When it comes to fire ant control, there are a few common types of chemicals that are used both in over-the-counter and professional pest control products. First, there are insecticides that contain bifenthrin, a pyrethroid insecticide that is nonselective and capable of killing any insect it comes in contact with. Suiter recommends homeowners avoid these products for outdoor use because of the risk that they could leech into nearby waterways or

kill pollinating insects. Many pyrethroid insecticides are formulated as heavy granulars that fall to the ground and sink into the thatch, where they dissolve, leaving behind the insecticide. Granular formulations protect foraging pollina-

tors because they do not come in contact with flowers. However, they are only safe if gardeners read the label associated with the product and use the product correctly. Granular formulations should never be allowed to remain on hard surfaces, as they may make their way to streams where the pyrethroids are highly toxic to fish and other aquatic life. To have the least ancillary impact from fire ant treatment, Suiter recommends using fire ant baits — sold under names like Amdro. The bait is made up of the active ingredient **dissolved in an oil that’s been applied to an inert carrier.** The ants remove the oil from the grit and bring it back to the mound where they share it with the other ants. Baits should never be watered in after application. Used correctly, ant bait products are the most effective and safest ways to control fire ants, Suiter said. Gardeners looking to treat for fire ants may want to purchase a hand spreader to sprinkle the bait around their landscape while walking in a grid pattern.

**“You may want to purchase a new spreader**  
(Continued on Page 8)



## Gardeners Should Use Care and Caution When Tackling Fire Ants (continued...)

for spreading ant bait because the lingering odor from any fertilizer or other lawn chemicals could keep the ants from eating the **bait,” Suiter said.** Ants are very sensitive to the odor of the bait, which turns rancid relatively quickly and becomes repellent to the ants. Gardeners should buy the smallest package of bait they can and use it all within one or two months, preferably all at once.

Also be sure to apply the bait during warm, dry afternoons to ensure that the ants will be out foraging. Rainfall will keep the bait from being effective, Suiter said.

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## Chipmunks In the Landscape Can Be a Nuisance (continued...)

cables, and air conditioning lines penetrate **the house. It’s important to seal off dryer** and exhaust vent lines, downspouts and rain gutters with one-quarter-inch hardwire mesh. This prevents chipmunks from building nests in these areas and stops potential damage from water backing up along foundation walls. Homeowners often want to use a spray to get rid of their chipmunk problem, however repellents are rarely the long-term answer. Homeowners frequently use moth balls — naphthalene — to repel a variety of nuisance wildlife, however using moth balls in this way goes against their labeled use and is illegal. Other home remedies that have been temporarily effective are hot sauce, rotten eggs and predator urine. Taste aversion repellents, like Bitrex or Thiram, can be applied to landscape plants to discourage chewing and eating. Other repellents labelled for use against deer and rabbits are also effective. It is important to remember that repellents are temporary control methods and must be changed up frequently so that chipmunks do not become habituated to one particular deterrent. The final action that can be taken is lethal control. Trapping in large, wooden rat traps can be quite effective.

These traps are usually baited with peanut butter or an oatmeal-peanut butter mix. Traps should be placed along runways or at burrow openings. Other forms of lethal control include poisons. Treatments registered for use against chipmunks can be found on **the Georgia Department of Agriculture’s pesticide product registry.** On the legal front, all nongame wildlife is protected in Georgia. It is illegal to kill any species unless specifically permitted by regulations such as hunting and fishing laws. Normally, homeowners can protect their property from mammals causing damage, but it is always a good idea to check first with your local Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division. Catching and releasing live animals into unfamiliar territory is not recommended. Live animals also should not be released on county, state or federal lands.

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# Athens-Clarke County Extension

## 2019 Free Gardening Class Series



### Vegetable Gardening

Please join us 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, April 3 • 6:00-7:30 pm

#### **WHERE:**

Athens-Clarke County Library  
Appleton Auditorium  
2025 Baxter Street  
Athens, GA 30606

#### **TO REGISTER:**

Registration is required. Please register by April 2 by visiting

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



#### **For questions:**

Contact Amanda Tedrow, Extension Agent at  
706-613-3640 or [atedrow@uga.edu](mailto:atedrow@uga.edu)

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# Local “Green” Events

to name a few...

UGA Plant Biology Graduate Student Association  
Herb Sale

Normal sale dates on April 6th, April 12th and April  
**13th on the lawn in front of UGA’s Miller Plant  
Science** from 9 AM—5 PM

For more info contact Rachel.Perez@uga.edu.

Seed Swap and Plant Giveaway at Statham Public  
Library

This is a free community event. Everyone is welcome.  
Bring seeds to swap if you have them. Bring baggies  
and labels. Saturday April 6, 2019 from 12- 2PM. at  
the Statham Public Library in Statham, GA.  
Phone: (770) 725-4785 for more information  
Address: 1928 Railroad St, Statham, GA 30666

**Cofer’s Home and Garden Showplace Spring Open  
House**

April 5-7 from 9 AM—5 PM

1145 Mitchell Bridge Rd. Athens, GA 30606

706-353-1519 <https://cofers.com/>

Spring Plant Sale — Institute of Plant Breeding, Ge-  
netics, and Genomics

April 5th and 12th from 9AM to 5PM

At DW Brooks Mall (next to Miller Plant Sciences) on  
**UGA’s campus**

For more information and details about the pre-sale  
[click here.](#)

Plantapalooza: Three Plant Sales in One

This event will be held at the State Botanical Garden  
of Georgia, the Trial Gardens and the UGA Horticul-  
ture Club on April 13 from 8AM to 2PM For more  
information and details on this exciting event  
[click here.](#)

Friends First Friday: It’s Spring Plant Sale Time! At  
the State Botanical Garden of Georgia

When: April 5 at 9 AM—10:30 AM

Join members of the SBG Horticulture staff as they  
preview the upcoming spring plant sale. Learn about  
the plants that will be available and pick up a few  
planting tips.

Make your reservation by noon, Friday, March 29 at  
[www.botgarden.uga.edu](http://www.botgarden.uga.edu) or 706-542-6138

For more information, [click here.](#)

The University of Georgia Insect Zoo third annual  
Ta-ran-tula 5k run

When and where: April 6th at 9 AM on the beautiful  
trails of The State Botanical Garden of Georgia.

After the race everyone has the opportunity to inter-  
**act with their favorite furry friends...tarantulas!**  
The proceeds from the Ta-ran-tula 5k will go towards  
supporting the UGA Insect Zoo.

[Register online here.](#)

Alice H. Richards Children's Garden Performance  
Series at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia

April 20 at 9:30 AM

Celebrate the opening year of the Alice H. Richards  
Children's Garden with family-friendly outdoor per-  
formances. Every third Saturday of the month enjoy a  
variety of engaging shows taking place on the Theater  
-in-the-Woods stage.

For more information, [click here.](#)

**Winterville Farmer’s Market Interest Meeting and  
Survey**

When: April 22 at 5:30 PM—7PM

Where: The Winterville Depot

If you are interested in being apart of the Winterville  
**Farmer’s Market please take the interest survey by**  
[clicking here.](#)

**Athens Area Master Gardener Association’s 2019  
Dazzling Daffodils and other Spring-flowering  
Beauties Sale**

The annual Dazzling Daffodil sale is now underway!  
We are pleased to offer a selection of top-quality daf-  
fodil and spring flowering bulbs that are well suited  
of our southern climate. Place your order now for de-  
livery in time for fall planting.

Orders must be received by April 30, 2019 for deliv-  
ery in October. Specific dates, times, and location for  
order pick-up will be announced to purchasers by  
email in late September.

[Click here](#) to view the Daffodil flyer and order form.



# Outdoor Water Use Schedule\*

Effective March 2017

## Allowed daily

Between 4:00 pm and 10:00 am

- Automated irrigation systems
- Hand watering (without a shut-off nozzle)
- Lawn sprinklers

## Prohibited at all times

- Failure to repair or bypass a leaking sprinkler head or emitter, valve, faucet, pipe or toilet
- Allowing potable water to flow into public rights of way such as alleys, **streets, gutters or onto other person's property**
- Operating an irrigation system during rain events exceeding 1/4 inch
- Washing vehicles. Driveways, parking lots or sidewalks without a shutoff valve or nozzle

## Allowed anytime

By anyone

- Commercial pressure washing
- Drip irrigation or soaker hose
- Food gardens
- Hand watering (with a shut-off nozzle)
- Hydroseeding
- Installation and maintenance of an irrigation system
- Irrigation of newly installed turf (for the first 30 days)
- Irrigation of public recreational turf area
- Irrigation of plants for sale
- Irrigation of sports fields
- Water from a private well
- Water from an alternative source
  - Grey water, rain water, condensate

\*This Outdoor Water Use Schedule is consistent with the Outdoor Water Use Rules set forth in the Georgia Water Stewardship Act that went into effect statewide on June 2, 2010 and the Drought Management Rules, Chapter 391-3-30 Level 1 and Non-Drought Response. Water wasting prohibitions per Athens-Clarke County Code of Ordinances ARTICLE 7. Sec. 5-3-123



Helpful resources online:

[Find My Local Extension Office](#)

[Georgia Turf](#)

[Free Online Webinars](#)

[Pest Management Handbook](#)

[Pesticide Applicator Info](#)

[Georgia Certified Plant Professional](#)

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

[UGA Center for Urban Agriculture](#)

[Extension Publications](#)

[Bugwood— Pest Images](#)

[Landscape Alerts Online](#)

[Ask an Expert](#)

Mission Statement

Visit us online:

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.



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