



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
EXTENSION

December 2023
<https://extension.uga.edu>

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University of Georgia Cooperative
Extension DeKalb County Office

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Holiday gift plant care

Flowering and foliage plants can make welcome gifts. How long they remain attractive may be directly related to the care and handling they are given. This publication describes ways to properly care for holiday and gift plants to ensure maximum longevity.

Proper watering is critical. Large plants in small containers dry out quickly. Also, the relative humidity indoors tends to be quite low during the heating and air-conditioning seasons. Under these conditions, check plants daily. Over-watering can be just as detrimental as under-watering. Potted plants generally should not be watered until the soil is nearly dry to the touch. Then apply enough water that some drains from the bottom of the pot. The excess should be discarded.

Holiday and gift plants are often delivered in waterproof containers or wrapped in foil. If possible, remove these pot coverings or punch holes in the bottom of the pot to promote good drainage. Place the pot in a saucer to protect furniture. Misting plants is not advised and may cause increased foliar disease.

Check this out to get information on common holiday and gift plants and tips on their care.





Hobby Greenhouses

A greenhouse gives a homeowner an opportunity to grow plants year-round in a controlled environment. While a greenhouse can be either a substantial or nominal investment, success as a hobby greenhouse grower will depend on the degree of environmental control that can be maintained in the structure. Environmental controls can be expensive, and as most other hobbies, home greenhouses require a financial commitment. However, there are options. Smaller, less expensive greenhouses are available. While they are not as sturdy as the more permanent structures, they will get the job done.



Click here for more information about types of and requirements of hobby greenhouses





Generating Income on 20 acres

A popular trend these days is for families to move from the city or a subdivision to a small tract of land in the country. Many people dream of owning a farm and undertaking an agricultural practice, perhaps like their ancestors did many years ago. The idea of producing your own food in a clean, controlled environment is very appealing to some people. While dreams may be big, careful research and planning should be done prior to jumping into any farm venture. Important considerations such as desire, capital, feasibility, labor, demographics, and marketing all need to be considered. If all of the items mentioned in the previous sentence can be checked off, then starting your mini farm may be a great experience.

Possible small farming ventures include small fruits and/or vegetables, ornamental plants, mushrooms, small livestock, honey production, and Christmas trees.

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



Garden Calendar

December

Why not get started early for next year?

- Spread manure, rotted sawdust, and leaves over the garden and plow them under; you'll be surprised at the difference this organic matter will make in the fertility, physical structure, and water-holding capacity of the soil.
- Take a soil sample to allow plenty of time to get the report back. Lime applied now will be of more benefit next year than if it is applied in the spring before planting. Always apply Dolomitic limestone in order to get both calcium and magnesium.
- Save those leaves for the compost heap.
- Take an inventory. Maybe you had too much of some vegetables and not enough of others or maybe there were some unnecessary "skips" in the supply. Perhaps some insect, disease, or nematode problem got the upper hand. Make a note about favorite varieties.

Start planning next year's garden now!

- You're wise to order flower and vegetable seeds in December or January while the supply is plentiful. Review the results of last year's garden and order the more successful varieties.
- You may have seeds left over from last year. Check their viability by placing some in damp paper towels and observing the germination percentage. If the percentage is low, order new ones.
- Before sending in your seed order, draw a map of the garden area and decide the direction and length of the rows, how much row spacing is needed for each vegetable, whether to plant on raised beds, and other details. That way, you won't order too many seeds. This same advice applies to the flower garden. Try new cultivars, add more color, change the color scheme, layer the colors by having taller and shorter plants—don't do it the same way year after year.

Look around for tools you do not have and hint for these for Christmas presents.

Holiday Spending Tips

ANGELICA B. DAVIS, FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES AGENT,
UGA EXTENSION BARTOW COUNTY

It's that time of year, where shopping is in the air and overspending can be a huge problem. Avoiding overspending can make holidays easier and allow you to enjoy the season and the months after.

According to the National Retail Federation (NRF), holiday sales in November and December have averaged about 19 percent of annual retail sales over the last five years. NRF also expects that online and other non-store sales, which are included in the total forecast, will increase between 11 percent and 15 percent to a total of between \$218.3 billion and \$226.2 billion. By comparison, that number was \$196.7 billion in 2020.



So, how can you avoid holiday debt? There are a few things to consider. First, plan for holiday spending. Some people plan at the beginning of the year and set money aside just for holiday spending. Be sure to know how much money you can reasonably afford to spend. Remember to budget for parties, greeting cards (and postage), charitable giving, clothes for holiday functions, and other things that make your holiday joyful. Write the plan down and stick to it.

Next, be creative and remember that it's the thought that counts. Homemade gifts like food, clothing or crafts that you pour your heart and talent into creating may be appreciated more than something purchased at a store. Happy memories are also a treasured gift. Going to a drive-in movie with the family or driving around to look at Christmas lights can be affordable and fun shared experiences.

Use sales flyers to find the best deals. Be sure to compare features, quality, and prices, as well as any extra charges for delivery, installation, and service. On big-ticket items and durable goods, the cost to use and maintain the item could make a more expensive model the better deal.

Expect to pay a fair and reasonable price for goods and services. Bargains that sound too good to be true usually are. Ask about return policies, and be sure to read labels, seals, tags, instruction booklets, and the fine print on extended warranties before you buy make the purchase.



Before going shopping, set a budget for each person on your gift. Label envelopes with each person's name and put the budgeted amount of cash each envelope. When you go to a store with a fixed and intended amount, it's more likely you'll stay within your budget. You'll also avoid interest fees accruing on an unpaid credit card balance.

Save some money for after season sales. Decorations, wrapping, and other items may be discounted by 50% or more. Buying at greatly reduced prices can save time and money for next year's holidays. Making thoughtful decisions about holiday spending will help reduce stress and increase your enjoyment of family and friends – during the season and in the months after.



IS THERE IN YOUR HOME?

Morning and Evening classes available

December 14, 2023 @ 12 pm
January 24, 2024 @ 6pm

Go online to
<https://bit.ly/DeKalbRadon>
to register.

Class is free, but registration required

For questions and more information, please call
DeKalb County Extension office at 404-298-4080 or
email Jamille Hawkins at jamille.hawkins@uga.edu

**RADON IS THE
SECOND LEADING
CAUSE OF LUNG
CANCER, BUT IT
CAN BE DETECTED
AND FIXED**

All class attendees
will receive a FREE
radon-in-air test kit.



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Journeyman Farmer Certificate Program — Developing the Next Generation of Sustainable Farmers in Georgia

Across the United States and in Georgia, the number of small- and medium-sized farms is declining and the average age of farmers is on the rise. Although we need new farmers, the barriers would-be farmers face when trying to grow new agricultural businesses from the ground up can be formidable. UGA Extension and partners have developed a new Journeyman Farmer Certificate Program to provide a comprehensive training program for beginning farmers.

DeKalb County Extension will be offering this program starting February 5, 2024. It will include four weeks of Small Farm Business Planning and seven weeks of Small Fruit and Vegetable Production. Sessions will be held on Mondays at 6pm.

If you would like more information about participating in the Journeyman Farmer Certificate Program, please click [HERE](#)

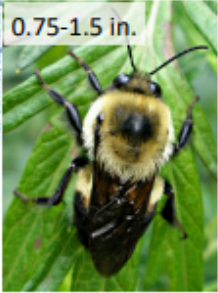


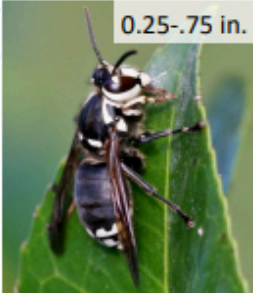




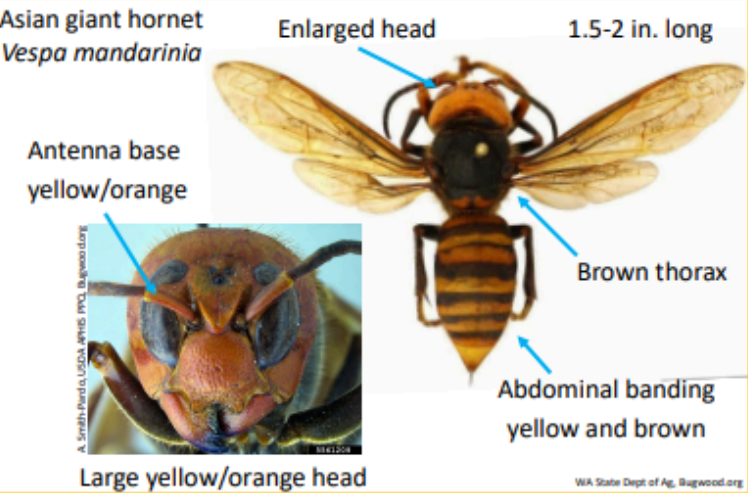
Those who fill out the interest form will receive the registration link first.



There have been no sightings of the Asian Giant Hornet, dubbed the “murder hornet”, confirmed by the USDA since 2021.

Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Asian Giant Hornet and its SE US Lookalikes

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
|  <p>0.75-1.5 in.</p> <p>Bumble Bees <i>Bombus spp.</i></p> <p>Wrong color thorax</p> |  <p>0.5 in.</p> <p>Honey Bee <i>Apis mellifera</i></p> <p>Wrong color thorax</p> |  <p>0.8-1 in.</p> <p>Black & Yellow Mud Dauber <i>Sceliphron caementarium</i></p> <p>Constricted abdomen</p> |  <p>0.25-0.75 in.</p> <p>Bald-faced Hornet <i>Dolichovespula maculata</i></p> <p>Abdomen not striped</p> |
|  <p>0.5-.7 in.</p> <p>Queen</p> <p>Southern Yellowjacket <i>Vespula squamosa</i></p> <p>Wrong color thorax</p> |  <p>0.6-2 in.</p> <p>Eastern Cicada Killer <i>Sphecius speciosus</i></p> <p>Abdomen not fully striped</p> |  <p>0.5-1 in.</p> <p>Paper Wasps <i>Polistes spp.</i></p> <p>Thorax not fully brown</p> | |
|  <p>1-1.4 in.</p> <p>European Hornet <i>Vespa crabro</i></p> <p>Thorax not fully brown</p> |  <p>Asian giant hornet <i>Vespa mandarinia</i></p> <p>Enlarged head</p> <p>1.5-2 in. long</p> <p>Antenna base yellow/orange</p> <p>Brown thorax</p> <p>Abdominal banding yellow and brown</p> <p>Large yellow/orange head</p> | | |

WA State Dept of Ag, Bugwood.org
May 2020



Tips on asking for advice from your Extension Service

Take pictures – clear pictures of the whole plant, the affected leaves (top and bottom), stems, fruit, and of any bugs or eggs you see

Have information ready – When was it planted? How long has the problem been present? Have you tried any kind of treatment already? Are other plants having the same issues?

Bring in a sample – We are happy to try and diagnose problems in our office (Free). However, for some problems, samples are sent to the UGA Plant Pathology Lab (\$14)

Samples should be in an enclosed bag or container and include leaves, stems, roots, flowers/fruit, and any insects that were found on it.

Email us at UGE1089@uga.edu

Call us at 404-298-4080

or

[Fill out the help request form](#)