

Tips for the Landscape and Garden

Tips adapted from Bob Westerfield, State Consumer Horticulturist for the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, and Walter Reeves, Retired Extension agent for DeKalb County and Saturday Morning Gardening Show Host on WSB Radio.



Be on the lookout for lace bugs on azaleas, cotoneaster, and other ornamentals and apply a treatment as needed. Remember that lace bugs have several generations and continued scouting is needed throughout the growing season.

Plant ground covers under shade trees that do not allow enough sunlight to sustain grass.

Some common ground covers suitable for sunny locations include Ajuga (*Ajuga reptans*), Moss Pink (*Phlox subulata*), and Creeping Juniper (*Juniperus horizontalis*).

Set out marigolds, petunias, ageratums, and fibrous begonias. All are good border plants.

Lengthening the time between watering combined with deep, heavy watering encourages root growth while reducing top growth in lawns. This increases the root-to-shoot ratio and produces plants that are more resistant to wilting when exposed to infrequent watering.

Letting a young lawn grow too tall and then cutting it back to the recommended height is detrimental. Such

extreme leaf removal stops the flow of food to the roots, weakens the plants, and opens the lawn to diseases. Never let it grow so tall that you must cut off more than one third of the grass blade. Recommended mowing heights for your lawn:

- Hybrid Bermuda .5-1 "
- Meyer Zoysia 1-2"
- Emerald Zoysia .75-1.5"
- Fescue 2-3"
- Centipede 1-1.5"
- St. Augustine 2-3"

If you plan to can tomatoes, plant determinate varieties so the fruit will ripen all at once. If you prefer your tomatoes fresh from the vine, plant indeterminate tomatoes so the ripening will be staggered.

When tomato seedlings have five to seven leaves, they are ready to transplant into the garden.

Drive stakes for future support at the same time you plant tomatoes. If you try to install stakes later, you may damage the plant roots. Tie the plants to the stakes with a soft material such as stockings or worn bed sheets that will not cut into the stems.

Stay out of the garden when foliage is wet. Walking through a wet garden spreads disease from one plant to another.

Mark the handle of your spade or hoe in inches for a handy measuring device for row width and planting distances. Paint or tape the measurements on the handle. A coat of varnish can make the marks last longer.

When you see ants crawling about on garden plants, look for aphids as well. Some ant species protect aphids, moving them from plant to plant and even taking them underground into the anthill for overnight safety. The ants do this to ensure a supply of

honeydew, a sugary water substance secreted by aphids, on which ants feed.

Birds have five basic needs: food, water, shelter from hot and cold weather, nesting sites, and protection from predators. Supply these and you will have many more birds around your home to entertain you and control insect pests.

Thin peaches 4 to 6 inches apart for large, high-quality fruit.

Lightly side dress perennials, including spring bulbs, with a 5-10-10 or 10-10-10 fertilizer or compost, being careful to avoid the center or crown of the plant.

Caladiums need generous amounts of water and fertilizer to encourage continuous production of new leaves during the summer. Apply a light, side dressing of 5-10-5 fertilizer every two weeks, and water thoroughly to encourage bright-colored foliage.

Protect developing strawberries from birds with a spun-bonded row cover or plastic netting. Apply a slug/snail bait approved for food crops that also deters sow bugs/pill bugs which also like strawberries.

The use of milky spore disease (*Bacillus popilliae*) for Japanese beetle control is most effective in neighborhoods where most residents use it. Otherwise, Japanese beetle larvae hatching in other yards will re-infest your property.

To grow annulus in pots on the patio, use a light-weight soil mixture. Keep the plants well-watered, as container-grown plants dry out fast. Choose a larger, deeper pot if possible, to reduce watering needs. Apply water soluble fertilizer according to package directions every two weeks.

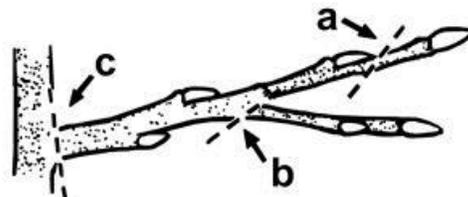
Lift, divide, and transplant crowded irises after they bloom. Before replanting, cut away and discard any mushy or soft rhizomes. Do not replant too deeply. Cover rootlets but you should still see the rhizome on the soil surface. No need to cut off leaves unless they are torn or ratty looking.

Watch for tiny 'toothpicks' on the trunks of Japanese maples, Kwansan cherry, or other small landscape trees. These indicate the presence of Asian ambrosia beetle which is spreading death-dealing fungus inside the tree's trunk.

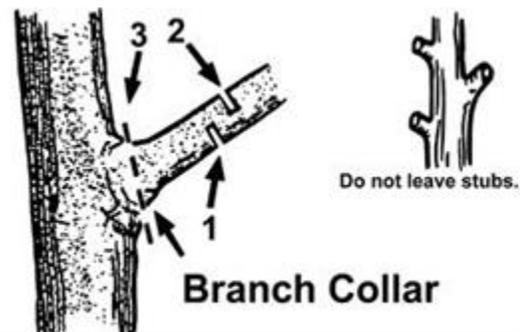
When planting in pots, avoid putting rocks in the bottom of the pot. This decreases drainage and aeration for the plant's roots. Instead, place a piece of broken pottery or one rock just big enough to cover over the drain hole to keep soil in the pot. This lets water drain slowly and gives roots more room to grow.

Remember the best time to water grass or other plantings is between 10:00 PM and 9:00 AM. This allows grasses to dry before nightfall the next day and prevents diseases. Other plants benefit as well. Soil has time to absorb moisture. Avoid getting leaves and flowers wet. Drip irrigation is great for vegetables and landscape plantings. If possible, use a timer to prevent over watering and wasting water. Most plants including grasses need about one inch of water a week. Measure using a tuna fish can to collect water. When there is an inch in the can turn off the water. If there has been an inch or more of rain, you do not need to water.

Prune leafless limbs on shade trees. All branches should be leafed out by now, so no leaves mean its dead. Prune with a shape hand pruner or saw. Look for the bark collar and make a clean cut just outside this area so the tree heals neatly. No need for wound dressing of any kind. If the branch is heavy – make three cuts. See below. This prevents the weight of the branch from ripping bark away from the tree.



Always cut back to a bud (a), a lateral branch (b) or main trunk (c) and avoid leaving a stub.



To remove heavy branches without damaging the tree, a three-cut sequence is recommended. Cut to the

branch collar (swollen area where the branch joins the main trunk) and avoid leaving a stub.

UGA Extension Gwinnett
750 South Perry Street, Suite 400
Lawrenceville GA 30046-4804
678.377.4010

extension.uga.edu/county-offices/gwinnett

