



Houston County Extension Office
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Special Points of Interest:

Plant Sales

2021 brings us a virtual plant sale Sept 1-20. Visit www.mgcg.org to browse and purchase plants. Be sure to select SHOP from the drop-down menu. Pickup is 9AM-5PM at Building D at the State Farmers Market in Macon.

Gardening with the Masters

Sept 16: Winterizing your Lawn
6-7:30 PM / \$10 per person

Sept 30: Edible Landscaping:
Lesser Known Fruit
6-7:30 PM / \$10 per person

All classes held at Hafley Park,
1527 Sunshine Ave, Perry, GA

Georgia National Fair

Oct 7-17

Bring your gardening questions to Master Gardeners at the UGA Extension Booth located in the Georgia Grown Building.



The Garden Bench

September/October 2021

Gardening and home landscape information from UGA Cooperative Extension in Houston County. Our newsletter provides research-based horticulture information to help Middle Georgia gardeners.



Planting Dates for Your Fall Vegetable Garden

Through Sep 15: carrot, mustard, turnip

Through Sep 20: beet

Through Oct 15: radish, spinach

Oct 10-Nov 10: dry bulb onion

Through Dec 31: green onion

Many cool-season vegetables produce best flavor and quality when planted to mature during cool weather. Take advantage of the mild weather during these months to plant these cool season vegetables!

Fall Garden Tasks & Tips

- Take the time to evaluate this year's garden and consider changes and improvements.
- Fall is the most desirable time to do soil tests because landscapes and gardens are usually dry and easily accessible. Vegetable gardens should be sampled every 1-2 years. Soil tests are available at your Houston County Extension office. If your soil test indicates a need for lime, fall is a good time to apply it. Lime reacts slowly in the soil. Till it into the soil when possible.
- Pull up dead or declining annuals and clean up overgrown areas.
- As you clean out the flower beds, mark the spots where late-starting perennials will come up next spring to avoid damaging them.
- Compost dead, disease-free plants and leaves or till them into the soil to increase organic content.
- Turn off and drain irrigation systems before freezing weather. First frost in Middle Georgia usually occurs in mid-November but can occur as early as October.
- Pests are usually fewer in fall and winter, but not always! Stay on the lookout for cabbageworms and aphids.
- Be sure your vegetables get enough water this time of year. Many crops will not mature correctly if stressed due to lack of water. Mulch to control weeds and slow water loss.
- Renew mulch in planting beds to a depth of 2-4 inches.

Virtually everyone living in the South has heard of muscadines and/or scuppernongs, but what are they? Muscadines are one of the two types of native grapes that grow in the United States. They are exceptionally well-adapted to the hot, humid conditions in our area and are tolerant of insect and disease pests, making them a good choice for the home garden. The berries can be eaten fresh or processed into juice, wine, jelly, jam, pie, etc. and the hulls and seeds can be used as fertilizer and feedstock.



Plant **Spotlight**

Muscadine Grapes
Vitis rotundifolia



There are many varieties of muscadines, but most have thick, fleshy skins and contain seeds. There are two main color types: black/purple and bronze. “Scuppernong” properly refers to a specific bronze variety, but it is often used to refer to any bronze muscadine.

Muscadines should be planted in a sunny, well-drained location. They prefer acidic soil with a pH level between 6.0 and 6.5; if the soil pH is too low, the soil can be amended with dolomitic lime. Fertilize mature muscadines with 10-10-10 in March and May. Grapes have a relatively high requirement for magnesium that can be met by adding Epsom salts.

Muscadines are typically planted using a trellis system. Additional information on constructing a trellis and planting and growing the vines can be found at: https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%20949_8.PDF

Home & Garden Landscape Tips for Middle Georgia

Flowers: Save seeds from your summer annuals to plant in the spring (hybrids will not breed true).

September is the ideal month for planting as the heat of summer begins to subside. Plant flowers such as snapdragons, dianthus, pansies, and violas now to bring fall color to flower beds and container plantings. Chrysanthemums are a great source of color and texture in the fall garden and generally grow in any soil capable of producing a good crop of vegetables or turf.

September and early October are good times to move, divide, and plant irises, liriopse, and daylilies. Dig caladium tubers before the first frost.

Plant perennials now: fall-planted perennials outperform perennials planted in the spring.

Fall is the time for choosing and planting bulbs for color in the spring garden. When planting bulbs, if you aren't sure which end is the top, plant it on its side. The stem will always grow upright!

Vegetables & Herbs: Now is the time to plant your cool season vegetable garden (See front page for planting dates).

If your summer garden has quit producing and you are not planting a cool-season garden, pull up and compost your old plants. Remove all old leaves and debris and work in a layer of compost, then cover with a thick layer of mulch to keep weeds at bay.

Before those herbs bolt and go to seed this month, think about harvesting in bulk and storing them for use later. Many herbs can be dried by hanging upside down in a dark spot. Others can be preserved by removing the leaves from the stems and freezing them in oil or water ice cubes. These are great for use in soups and stews as well as spaghetti sauce and broths.

Shrubs & Trees: Shrubs and trees have a much greater chance of success when planted in the late fall and winter. Winter planting gives plants a chance to develop their root systems before the summer heat stress. The rule of thumb is 3/4 to 1 inch of water per week. If there has been no rainfall for one week, water shrubs, trees, and vines. This is especially important for new plantings, which should have water directed to the root ball.

Do not prune shrubs after September 1 or you run the risk of having that first frost burn all the new tender growth that you've made the plant produce. New fruit or nut plants should not be pruned until January or February. Keep those pruners away from crepe myrtles this time of year, too. Wait until late February if you have to prune them.

Control weeds around shrubs and trees to reduce overwintering insects, and promptly dispose of all fallen fruit, leaves, and dead limbs to help prevent disease. Apply mulch to minimize weeds and retain moisture, but do not place it right up against the tree.

Lawn Tips: Continue to mow until the grass goes dormant. Don't remove more than 1/3 the grass blade height at a mowing. Keep leaves and pine straw raked up off the lawn.

Recommended dates for selected winter annual broadleaf weed control are approximately September 15 to October 1 for middle Georgia. Apply a pre-emergent herbicide labeled for your type of grass. http://commodities.caes.uga.edu/turfgrass/georgiaturf/CultPrac/1310_Calendar.htm

Remember, your grass needs at least 1" of water a week year round. Use your rain gauge to determine how much water you must apply.