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The Garden Bench

May/June 2022

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

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Plant Spotlight : *Coriandrum sativum*

Native to Egypt, this plant is one of the oldest herbs still cultivated. Dating back over 7000 years, the use of this plant has been documented in texts from India, Egypt, Ancient Rome, and China. Ancient Egyptians believed the dried seeds could be used in the afterlife as a food for the departed. The green, leafy part, known as **cilantro**, is commonly used in Mexican inspired foods and in Asian style stir-fried vegetables and in Vietnamese foods. The dried seedpod, known as **coriander** is usually used as a spice in baking and desserts. Cilantro has a unique scent and flavor that causes it usually to be either loved or hated.

This herb grows 2-3 feet tall and prefers moderately rich, well-drained soil and full to partial sun. Ideal conditions include consistent moisture and even temperatures throughout its growing season. It does best in cool weather, but in my experience it will persist in partially shady areas through June. Its tiny white flowers are attractive to many pollinators. The dried seedpods can be collected and ground for use in cooking. Cilantro will self-sow, and new plants will germinate as the weather cools.

The UGA Extension publication [Herbs in Southern Gardens \(uga.edu\)](http://uga.edu) is a valuable resource for growing herbs in Georgia.

Special Points of Interest

Mark your calendars!

Perry Farmers Market

Every Saturday 9am-1pm In the parking lot of the old courthouse on Main Street

Be sure to visit the Ask-A-Master Gardener Booth on the second Saturday of each month!

Bee Keeping Institute

May 18-21

Young Harris College

contact information: ugabeelab@gmail.com

706.769.1736 or 706.542.2816

Seed Starting & Propagation

May 24/4:30-5:30 pm

Hafley Park/ 1527 Sunshine Ave, Perry

Cost: \$10.00

covers all materials used in the class
Deadline for registration is May 19. For more information, contact the Houston County Extension Office at 478-987-2028.

Planting Dates for your Vegetable Garden

Through May 10	Pole beans
Through May 15	Cucumbers, Eggplant, Summer Squash
Through June 1	Lima beans, Pole lima beans, Corn, Okra, Peppers
Through June 15	Sweet potatoes
Through June 20	Cantaloupe
Through July 1	Winter squash
May 15—July 1	Pumpkin
June 15-July 10	Okra
June 15-July 15	Tomatoes
Through Aug 10	Southern peas

Home Garden and Landscape Tips for Middle Georgia

Vegetables & Herbs: The most important steps to take now are proper watering and weed control. Use mulch to both control weeds and slow water loss. Two to four sheets of newspaper covered with a thick layer of mulch works well to prevent new weeds. Most gardens need an inch of water a week, but some vegetables will need more. Keep vegetables harvested, well-watered, and fertilized to continue production. Fertilize every four weeks if needed. Additional information on vegetable gardening in Georgia may be found at:

https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%20963_7.PDF

Choose tomato varieties that are resistant to fungal wilt—these will have the letter F after the variety name, such as Betterboy, VFN. For more information on growing tomatoes in the home garden, visit https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%201271_6.PDF

Blossom-end rot is a common problem with tomatoes and peppers, especially when there is drought stress followed by excessive soil moisture. These conditions disrupt the uptake and movement of calcium, resulting in cell wall membrane collapse and the appearance of dark, sunken pits at the blossom end of the fruit. To prevent blossom-end rot, maintain soil pH between 6.0-6.5, supply adequate levels of calcium, avoid extreme moisture fluctuations, and avoid over-fertilizing plants. For additional information, see UGA Extension publication “Blossom-End Rot and Calcium Nutrition of Pepper and Tomato (C938)” at https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%20938_3.PDF

The following are seven well-known annual (a) or perennial (p) herbs, readily available in the South as various cultivars, that will give the beginning gardener experience with easy-to-grow culinary, decorative, and fragrant herbs: Basil, Chives, Mint, Oregano, Sage, Scented Geraniums, and Yarrow. For more information on growing these and other herbs in the southern garden, visit:

<http://extension.uga.edu/content/dam/extension-county-offices/columbia-county/anr/HerbsinSouthernGardens.pdf>

Lawn Tips: Lawns need approximately one inch of water per week. If nature doesn't provide this, irrigate when the grass shows signs of moisture stress, such as rolling leaves, gray color, or wilting. Fertilize only after your lawn is fully green. Use half rates of fertilizer on centipede. Fertilize lawns less often if they are not well watered or will not be mowed often.

Seed, dethatch or vertical mow, and aerate lawns if needed through June. The UGA publication, Ten Steps to a Healthier Home Lawn provides additional information on how to care for your Georgia lawn: https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%201009_2.PDF

Control lawn weeds through late May before they get large and temperatures get too high to apply herbicides. For information on the identification and control of turfgrass diseases in Georgia lawns, visit

https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%201233_8.PDF

Shrubs & Trees: Replenish the mulch around your shrubs and trees.

Look for lace bugs under azalea leaves where they make brown, tarry spots. The tops of the leaves will be speckled or silvery. If only a few lace bugs and little or no damage is observed, wash lace bugs off infested plants with a strong stream of water from a garden hose. Repeated applications of insecticidal soaps or horticultural oils are also effective in controlling lace bug populations. Chemical control is often necessary for heavy infestations. Choose insecticides labeled for use against lace bugs by referring to the current edition of the [Georgia Pest Management Handbook](#).

You can shear small leafed hedges now through August. Shear plants as rarely as possible. Do not prune so heavily as to remove all new growth. Prune spring flowering shrubs (azalea, camellia, spirea, forsythia, etc.) anytime after bloom through mid-July. For more information on when and how to prune woody plants, see UGA Extension publication “Basic Principles of Pruning Woody Plants” at https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/PDF/B%20948_5.PDF

Fertilize roses monthly if they are well watered.

Continue black spot sprays on roses. Rake up and discard fallen leaves that have the disease. Try not to wet the leaves when you water.

Prevent the spread of powdery mildew on crape myrtle, dogwood, euonymus, roses, and other plants by using fungicides with the active ingredients *myclobutanil* or *triforine*. You can also use sulfur or *chlorothalonil*. Follow all label directions. The best defense is planting mildew resistant varieties.

Flowers: Fertilize monthly with regular fertilizer or apply a controlled release fertilizer once every three months. Liquid fertilizers work quickly but do not last very long and must be reapplied often, usually every 7-14 days.

To prolong bloom, continue to deadhead flowers of both perennials and annuals. Annuals that do not need deadheading include ageratum, alyssum, begonia, coleus, impatiens, lobelia, salvia and vinca.

For more information on growing flowering annuals in Georgia, visit https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%20954_5.PDF

Information on growing flowering perennials in Georgia is available at https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%20944_6.PDF