

Houston County Extension Office
801 Main Street, Perry, GA
<http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension/houston/>
Phone: 478.987.2028/ E-mail: uge2153a@uga.edu

The Garden Bench

May/June 2019

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 : Herbs

Any plant from which the leaves, seeds, fruits, flowers, buds, bark, or roots are used for flavoring, food, medicine or perfume is considered an herb. Herbs may be annuals or perennials, and even the gardener with little experience can have success growing herbs. As with other plants, proper site location, thorough soil preparation, good cultivation practices, adequate watering, and good drainage are the keys to success. Herbs are generally resistant to garden pests and diseases, and a simple spray of plain or soapy water is often enough to wash away many pests. Because the leaves of herbs are used throughout the season, chemical sprays and dusts generally should not be used. Instead, use organic materials such as BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), insecticidal soaps, or herb/spice decoctions. The UGA Extension publication HERBS IN SOUTHERN GARDENS is a valuable resource for growing herbs in Georgia.

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

Special Points of Interest

Mark your calendars!

→ Gardening with the Masters

Classes tailored for the home gardener & led by Master Gardener Extension Volunteers

Propagation

Air-layering, Cuttings, Seeds, Division

May 25/9AM-Noon/\$45-includes lunch

The class will be held in the Multipurpose Room of the Houston County Extension Office, 801 Main Street, Perry

Cost covers all materials used in the class. Participants will take home newly propagated plants. Deadline for registration is one week before the class. 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_6.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_5.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 fragrance 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_7.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. The [Georgia Pest Management Handbook](#) advises using *acephate*, *imidaclopid*, or *dinotefuran* to control lace bugs. Follow directions on the label for best control.

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, fuchsia, 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 (B949)” at <http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=B949>

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_3.PDF

Information on growing flowering perennials in Georgia is available at https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%20944_4.PDF