



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
EXTENSION

Houston County Extension Office
2030 Kings Chapel Rd/ Perry, GA 31069
<http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension/houston/>
Phone: 478.987.2028
E-mail: Christine.kelly@uga.edu

Inside this issue:

- Special Points of Interest
- Plant Spotlight
- Planting Dates
- Garden & Landscape Tips for Middle Georgia

Special Points of Interest

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!

For further information, contact the Houston County Extension Office at 478-987-2028

→ Visit UGA Extension Public Events Calendar

<https://extension.uga.edu/calendar/all-public-events.html>

In addition to the many on-site courses offered by various extension offices, there are also many virtual courses available.



The Garden Bench

July/August 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.

Plant Spotlight : *Ipomoea batatas*

The sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*), native to Central and South America, grows well in Georgia's warm climate. It is grown for its nutritious edible root which is rich in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and anti-oxidants. Sweet potatoes also have a low glycemic index so their starches are metabolized at a slower rate than white potatoes. Many varieties of sweet potatoes can be grown in Georgia with skin color ranging from tan to orange or dark purple and flesh colors ranging from white to deep orange or purple.

Sweet potatoes are produced from plants called "slips," which grow from the roots of the previous season's crop. The slips are planted in slightly acidic soil (pH range 5.5-6.5) once the soil temperature is above 65°F. Space the slips about 3 feet apart to allow room for the vines to grow. Fertilizer application should be based on a soil test (available from your extension office). Irrigation is important for optimum sweet potato growth: 1 inch per week during early season growth and 1.5 inches per week once there is extensive vine growth. Be diligent in weeding while the plants are young as it is difficult to use cultivation around the plants once the vines begin to grow. The use of mulch and a pre-emergent herbicide will help keep weeds under control.

The vines will begin to die back as harvest time approaches. Harvest takes place 90-120 days after planting, depending on variety and planting conditions. To prevent sunscald, minimize sun exposure of harvested potatoes to less than 30 minutes. To avoid chilling injury, harvest before the soil temperature drops below 55°F; cool temperatures reduce their quality and storage life. Move the unwashed harvested potatoes to a shady location with temperatures of 80-85°F to cure for 7-10 days. Cured potatoes should be stored between 55-60°F and 85-90% relative humidity for up to 6 months.

Wireworm and root-knot nematodes seem to be the biggest problems for home gardeners. However, many insect and disease problems can be avoided by choosing disease resistant varieties and using sound cultural gardening practices. Crop rotation with a vegetable in another family can help with nematode and soil disease prevention.

For additional information, visit

HOME GARDEN SWEET POTATOES https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%201014_3.PDF
SWEET POTATO PRODUCTION & PEST MANAGEMENT IN GEORGIA https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%201489_3.PDF
SWEET POTATO PRODUCTION <https://extension.okstate.edu/fact-sheets/print-publications/hla/2022-sweet-potato-production-hla-6022.pdf>

Home Garden and Landscape Tips for Middle Georgia

Lawn Tips:

Good cultural practices can prevent many lawn problems. The most important practice for a healthy lawn is to keep it mowed at the right height. Don't remove more than 1/3 the grass blade height at a mowing. Keep mower blades sharp to avoid damaging the lawn by tearing the grass blades.

Many lawn problems are due to improper watering: wait to water until the grass begins to turn bluish-gray. Most established lawns need only about one inch of water per week. **The most efficient and effective time to water is after sunset and before sunrise.**

Bermuda, St. Augustine, Zoysia, and Centipede lawns can be fertilized in July. Do not fertilize Centipede lawns after Sept 1 or other lawns after Sept 15, and don't fertilize if the grass will not be watered properly or is water stressed.

Post emergent herbicides can be applied to small actively growing weeds at air temperatures between 60-90 F. Applications to grass stressed by high temperatures or drought increases the possibility of injury and usually results in poor weed control.

For more information on Georgia lawns, visit https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%201009_2.PDF

Flowers:

Don't forget to keep those container plants watered! Water when the top of the soil dries, and apply enough water to run out the bottom of the pot.

Fertilize and "dead-head" annuals and perennials. Pinch back mums to make them bushier and keep them blooming longer.

Start seeds of favorite biennials and other fall flowers in pots. Seedlings should be ready for transplanting in the fall.

Sunflowers are ready to harvest when the back of the head turns brown. Plant or transplant daylilies and irises beginning in late August.

Fruits & Nuts:

Apply a heavy mulch layer around strawberries to protect them from heat and drought. Fertilize strawberries in August.

Water fruit trees once a week, when the soil dries out.

Fertilize established figs if they are watered.

Apply mulch around fruit trees, but to avoid creating a path for insects and disease, do not place it right up against the trunk.

Prevent disease by promptly disposing of fallen fruit, leaves, and dead limbs.

Planting Dates	Type of Vegetable
Through July 10	Okra
Through July 15	Tomatoes (indeterminate, grape, cherry, determinate)
July 1-Aug 1	Beans (pole, lima), Butterpeas
July 5-Aug 10	Bush beans
July 10-July 30	Eggplant
July 15-Aug 15	Cauliflower, Cucumber
July 25-Aug 10	Peppers (bell, hot, hot-sweet)
Aug 1- Aug 25	Summer squash
Aug 1-Sept 1	Broccoli, Collards, Kale
Aug 1- Sept 20	Beets
Aug 1-Oct 1	Cabbage
Aug 10-Sept 15	Turnips
Aug 15-Sept 15	Mustard
Aug 20-Sept 15	Carrots

Vegetables & Herbs:

Before spraying insecticides on your edible plants, check the label for how long you must wait after spraying before harvesting. Each insecticide has a waiting period after application before you can harvest.

With regular watering, vegetables and herbs can thrive in hot, dry environments. Keeping vegetables picked, well watered and fertilized will encourage continued production. If needed, fertilize every four weeks. Water twice a week with 3/4 inch water. Mulch to control weeds and water loss.

Most vegetables are best harvested in early morning. This is especially important for leafy greens like lettuce and chard, for fresh herbs such as parsley and basil, for crisp fruiting vegetables such as peas, and for anything in the cabbage family, such as broccoli and radishes.

Examine your plants regularly for insects and disease.

Shrubs & Trees:

To encourage a second bloom on crape myrtles, fertilize, water, and remove faded flowers.

Do not prune or fertilize spring-flowering shrubs like azalea, camellia, and viburnum after mid-July if you want flowers next year!

Watch for damaging insects on shrubs like euonymus, azalea, camellia, pyracantha, holly, gardenia, and pittosporum. Azalea caterpillars, scale, spider mites, lacebugs and spittle bugs are common now. Spray roses for insects and diseases as needed. For additional information on the control of common pests of landscape plants, visit https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%201074_7.PDF

Apply a light application of fertilizer to newly planted ornamental trees and shrubs during July. See https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%201065_6.PDF