



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
EXTENSION

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#### Inside this issue:

Special Points of Interest  
Growing Plants from Seeds  
Planting Dates: Winter/Spring Vegetable Garden  
Home Garden & Landscape Tips for Middle Georgia

#### Special Points of Interest:

##### Mark your calendars!

→ **GREEN UP 2024-A** Landscaper's Update

March 1: More information available soon!

→ *Gardening with the Masters*

Jan 18: **Seed Exchange**—5-7PM/  
**FREE**/ Extension Office

March 5: **Weed Control for Summer Weeds** (\$10)

March 12: **Starting Seeds for your Spring Vegetable Garden** (\$12)

March 19: **Planting Bulbs for Summer Flowers** (\$12)

March 26: **Planning a 3 Season Butterfly Garden** (\$12)

Classes will be held 5:30-6:30 PM every Tuesday in March at Hafley Park (1527 Sunshine Ave. Perry, GA). Registration fee covers all materials.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Email: [morgan.grizzle@uga.edu](mailto:morgan.grizzle@uga.edu)

Call: 478-987-2028

→ *Spring Plant Sale*

Coming Soon! Farmer's Market, Macon

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# THE GARDEN BENCH

## January/February 2024

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

**January 18: Seed Exchange** Come join us on January 18 at the Houston County Extension Office for our FREE seed exchange. Seed drop off and demonstration at 5PM, followed by seed exchange at 5:30PM. Seeds no older than 2020 need to be in labeled packets containing a pinch of small seeds or 10-15 large seeds. Seeds can be harvested from your garden, from leftover purchased packets, or even from a prior seed exchange. If you don't have seeds to exchange, come anyway—we will have plenty of seeds and great information to share!

### Growing Plants from Seeds

Gardeners can grow most annuals, biennials, and many herbaceous perennials from seed. Growing plants from seed is easy to do and is one of the cheapest ways to fill your garden with plants. Not only is growing plants from seed much cheaper than buying seedlings, but it also allows the gardener more choice of variety and color than is available in nurseries. To raise quality plants, start with good quality seed and choose varieties that are adapted to your area.

A variety of factors affect germination. The first step in germination is absorption of water, so a continuous supply of moisture in the growing medium is important to germination. However, the oxygen requirements of seeds increase during germination; therefore, the growing medium should be well aerated and should not be water-saturated. Some plants require light to germinate while others germinate best in the dark or have no specific light requirements. Planting directions will indicate whether seeds should be buried or sowed on the surface (or with a very light layer of soil or planting medium). Most plants will germinate over a wide range of temperatures. Generally, a range of 65°-75° is best for most plants (though tomato seeds prefer about 80°).

Many plants can be started indoors and moved outdoors as the weather warms up. Check your particular seed variety to know whether it can be successfully transplanted and when you should sow the seeds. Some seedlings may require hardening off (exposing to cool temperatures) before planting outside. The average last frost date for Warner Robins is Mar 20, though frost may occur up to two weeks after this date.

Refer to CAES publication B1432 [Starting Plants from Seed for the Home Gardener](#) for additional information.

## Planting Dates for Your Winter/Spring Vegetable Garden

Planting Dates	Type of Vegetable
Jan 1 - Mar 15	Green onion, Dry bulb onions
Jan 15 - Feb 15	English peas, Edible pod peas
Jan 15 - Mar 1	Lettuce, Irish potatoes
Jan 15 - Mar 15	Asparagus, Cabbage, Spinach
Jan 15 - Mar 20	Carrot
Jan 15 - Apr 1	Mustard, Radish, Turnip
Feb 1 - Mar 10	Kale
Feb 1 - Mar 15	Collards
Feb 15 - April 1	Beets

## Home Garden and Landscape Tips for Middle Georgia

Prepare your garden for spring planting. Mix compost into the soil to improve fertility, physical structure, and water-holding capacity of the soil. Do a soil test and add lime and fertilizer as needed.

**Flowers:** When spring-blooming bulbs get 2-3 inches tall, fertilize them with 10-10-10 at the rate of 1 pound per 100 sq ft. Keep the soil moist, but not overly wet.

Continue deadheading and fertilizing pansies monthly with granular fertilizer or bi-weekly with liquid fertilizer. Prepare flowerbeds for warm season annual flowers.

**Vegetables & Herbs:** Now is the time to plant many cool season vegetables. Raised beds provide better drainage and earlier soil warm-up for winter and early spring plantings. Choose planting times according to the chart above. Plan your spring and summer garden now. Be sure to pick an easily accessible area that has 8-10 hours of sunlight and a good water supply.

**Shrubs & Trees:** Examine trees for structural problems. Remove limbs that rub against each other as well as broken or dead limbs. Look for limbs forming a "V," cavities in trunks and limbs, or mushrooms growing on the tree.

Late February is the time to prune to encourage spring growth. Refer to CAES publication B949 [Basic Principles of Pruning Woody Plants](#) for information on how and when to prune different plants.

Crape myrtles flower on new growth and can be pruned any time during late winter or early spring though pruning is not essential for flowering. The type and amount of pruning that should be done each year depends entirely on desired shape and size. Refer to the CAES publication C944 [Crape Myrtle Culture](#) for additional information.

Muscadines should be pruned in February or early March. Since muscadine fruit are borne on new shoots arising from last year's growth, you should prune back the canes that grew the previous year, leaving about 3 inches of growth to form spurs. Refer to the CAES publication C949 [Home Garden Muscadines](#) for additional information.

Plant bare root roses now through March. Prune non-climbing roses in February. Knock-out roses need only be pruned if their branches are unsightly or growing across a path. Fertilize roses after the last frost, usually in late March.

**Lawn Tips:** Do not lime lawns unless recommended by a soil sample. Too much lime can raise the pH too high and damage lawns.

Wait until lawns green up to core aerate, dethatch or fertilize

Weeds in lawns now are usually leftover winter weeds. Weed control is difficult once weeds get large. You can spray broadleaf lawns with Weed-B-Gon, 33-Plus, or equivalent. Expect poor control when using herbicides on large or blooming weeds. To control wild onion and garlic in your lawn, use two sprays of chemicals containing imazaquin four weeks apart.

Prevent summer weeds by applying a pre-emergence weed killer in late February and again 45 days later. Do not use during lawn green-up or if you plan to seed your lawn within 45-60 days. Atrazine may be used on all lawns except Bermuda. Pendamethalin, benefin, and oryzalin can be used on all warm season grasses. Refer to the CAES publication B978 [Weed Control in Home Lawns](#) or read the pesticide label for more information.