

Houston County Extension Office
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Special Points of Interest:

Mark your calendars!

Gardening with the Masters

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 at Hafley Park (1527 Sunshine Ave. Perry, GA) 5:30-6PM unless otherwise noted.

Gardening with the Masters

May 13: Flower Arranging (\$25)

May 20: Dried Flowers/Pressed and Crafts (\$25)

Classes will be held at the City of Centerville Bldg. (300 E. Church St. Centerville, GA) at either 2-4PM or 6-7:30 PM

Contact the Extension Office for more information:

Email: crk18974@uga.edu
Call: 478-987-2028

The Garden Bench

March/April 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.

2024 Spring Plant Sale



Presented by

Master Gardeners of Central Georgia

UGA Cooperative Extension Macon-Bibb and Houston County

Offering a variety of plants, trees, and shrubs, locally grown by Master Gardeners, along with gardening advice and research-based information.

Online Orders April 1-15

MGCG.org/sale

In-Person sale & order pickup April 20

9:00—4:00

Macon State Farmers Market
2055 Eisenhower Parkway
Macon, GA 31206

Chickweed

Plant  Spotlight

Stellaria media



Chickweed seems to suddenly appear in garden beds and lawns about this time of year. It is a broadleaf annual winter weed that typically grows 3-8 inches tall and can form a dense mat up to 16 inches in diameter. It prefers moist soils but can be found in open sunny areas as well as shaded areas. Each plant can produce as many as 15,000 seeds that are viable for up to 10 years.

Cultural control can be achieved by hand pulling, but it is most effective before the plants begin to flower and produce seeds. Pulling mature plants may result in seed dispersal. A thick layer of mulch (2-3 inches) can suppress germination of the seeds.

The use of pre-emergence herbicides such as dithiopyr, prodiamine, or pendimethalin in the fall is effective in preventing spring growth. [UFL](#)

Dicamba, Trimec, Surge, and Speedzone are selective post-emergent herbicides that can be used to control chickweed. [MSSU](#)

Planting Dates for Your Winter/Spring Vegetable Garden

Planting Dates	Type of Vegetable
Mar 1-Apr 1	Cauliflower
Through mid-Mar	Asparagus, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrot, Collards, Kale, Onions, Spinach
Mar 15–May 1	Bush Beans
Mar 15–May 10	Pole Beans
Mar 15–Jun 1	Lima beans, Corn
Mar 20–May 1	Watermelon
Mar 20–June 20	Cantaloupe
Mar 25–May 1	Tomatoes
Through Apr 1	Beets, Mustard, Radish, Turnip
Apr 1–May 1	Butter peas
Apr 1–May 15	Cucumbers, Eggplant, Summer squash
Apr 1–Jun 1	Okra, Peppers
Apr 1–Jul 1	Winter squash
Apr 1–Aug 10	Southern peas
Apr 15–Jun 15	Sweet potatoes

Home Garden and Landscape Tips for Middle Georgia

Shrubs & Trees: **Late March** is the time for the first application of fertilizer to trees and shrubs. Do a soil test or apply one-half pound of 12-4-8, 16-4-8, 10-10-10, or 18-0-18 per 100 square feet. Broadcast the fertilizer over the planting area uniformly (prior to a rain if possible, or water after fertilizing). Fertilizing once is enough for most shrubs and trees, but additional applications can be made in May and July if you want the plants to get larger. Spring-blooming plants such as azaleas may be fertilized without affecting flowering.

Aphids, azalea lace bugs, many types of scale insects, white flies, and pine bark beetles become active in March and April. Look for them and treat as needed. Start black spot sprays on roses when new leaves appear. Prune oversized shrubs to 12-24 inches high before they bud out in February or March. Do not heavily prune boxwood and needled evergreens this way.

Prune spring flowering plants (azalea, spirea, camellia, forsythia, etc.) anytime after bloom through mid-July.

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](#)

Plant bare root roses now **through March**. Fertilize roses after the last frost, usually in **late March**.

Lawn Tips: **Research does not support the use of a weed and feed product.** Wait until soil temperature at a depth of 4" is consistently 65 °F to fertilize your warm-season southern lawn. (Visit www.georgiaweather.net to determine soil temperature.) Avoid all chemical applications during the stressful spring green-up period of warm season grasses. Wait until the lawn greens up to core aerate or dethatch and wait until late April or May to seed lawns.

Control lawn weeds now through late May, before they get large and the temperature gets too high to apply herbicides safely. Water dry lawns between midnight and 10 AM with 3/4 to 1 inch of water.

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

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.

Flowers: Prepare your beds for annual flowers. Do a soil test and till in lime and fertilizer as needed. Refer to CAES publication B954, [Flowering Annuals for Georgia Gardens | UGA Cooperative Extension](#)