



## Corn Planting Time

By: Peyton Sapp, County Extension Coordinator, Burke Co.

Farmers are busy preparing & planting the corn crop. Spring is here and it's time for corn planting. The "sweet corn patch" can be the source of pride if you start it out right and the weather cooperates during the growing season. It's that important start that I want to encourage.

Don't forget to be sure the soil temperature is consistently above 60 degrees F. Typically, if you wait until two weeks after the last killing frost, you are ok. You may also want to type [georgiaweathernet](http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension/burke/) into your search box and visit the UGA College of Ag. automated weather network. There is a weather station at the Experiment Station near Midville. The 4 inch soil temperature yesterday was 64 degrees F. Corn planted in cool wet soils will result in weak stands and stunted growth.

It is always best to soil sample and apply the level of fertilizer recommended. It will take about a week to get the results back if you decide to send your sample to the UGA Soil Lab. If a soil test is not done, a general guideline is to apply 6 pounds of 10-10-10 per 100 linear row feet before planting. Sidedress two to three times during the growing season with ammonium nitrate (34-0-0) at a rate of 1 pound per 100 feet of row. More frequent sidedressing may be required on sandy soils or when excessive rain occurs. Sidedressing involves digging a shallow trench on one side of the row, near the plant, and applying fertilizer. It is then covered with soil.

It is impossible to know for sure whether your soil pH is ok without a sample. The optimum pH range is from 6.0 -6.5. I have seen problems with soils that are on either side of that range.

Plant seed approximately 1 inch deep in rows 3 feet apart with 8 to 12 inches between each seed in the row. Corn is wind pollinated, so plant four or more short rows of sweet corn side-by-side instead of one long row. This will aid in good pollination and ear development.

Corn requires a minimum of 1 inch of water per week for normal development. The most critical periods for water are during pollination and during final ear filling. Your watering should sufficiently moisten the soil to a depth of 6 inches. Irrigate in the early morning or early evening to allow foliage to dry before dark. Soaker hoses placed along-side of rows are an excellent way to irrigate corn and conserve water.

There is obviously a lot more to growing corn. Just like out in the corn fields, the start you give those plants is critical to season long success. If you'd like more information on growing and caring for sweet corn or other related topics, contact the Burke County Extension Office at (706)554-2119.