



GARDENING TIPS FOR DECEMBER



Revised 11/25/19

Annuals & Perennials

- Plant Lenten roses, dianthus, delphiniums, foxgloves, hostas, kniphofia (red-hot poker), and spring bulbs.
- Keep new plantings well watered, one inch per week.
- Protect emerged spring bulb foliage with a light covering of pine straw.
- Fertilize pansies and other winter annuals with a water-soluble fertilizer that has nitrate nitrogen. Remove faded pansy flowers. Additional information:
<http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=B1359>
- Mulch to retain moisture, control soil temperature and diseases. Keep mulch away from plant crowns to prevent rotting in wet weather.
- Top dress perennial beds with 1 to 2 inches of compost. Keep it away from crowns of plants.
- Remove faded blooms, dry stems and foliage of perennials that die back after first frost.
- Cut faded chrysanthemums and aster plants to 3 inches above ground.
- Clean up rose beds, and perennial beds.
- Dig remaining caladium bulbs, dahlia tubers, elephant ear corms, and ornamental sweet potato tubers for winter storage.
- Inspect stored bulbs. Discard any bulbs that appear diseased or deteriorating.
- Read: Winter Protection – Ornamental Plants
<http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=C872>
- Protecting Plants During Cold Weather:
<https://pender.ces.ncsu.edu/2014/01/protecting-garden-and-landscape-plants-during-cold-weather/>

Holiday Plants and Decorations

- Holiday plant care: Go to <http://www.walterreeves.com/houseplants/holiday-plants-care/>
- Live Christmas Trees : For selection, care and planting information
<http://www.walterreeves.com/?s=live+christmas+trees>
- Selection and Care of Live trees: <https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/420/420-641/420-641.html>
- Selectively prune hollies, magnolias, nandinas etc. for holiday decorations.
- Keep holiday plants in the coolest indoor spot possible; otherwise, flowers and leaves will drop prematurely.
- As potted poinsettias begin to form red bracts, give them lots of bright light, keep out of drafts and keep soil moist. No need to fertilize

Fruits

- Plant dormant apple, cherry, peach and pear trees.
- Keep new plantings well watered. One gallon of water per foot of height weekly.
- Mulch root ball area with 2-4 inches of pinestraw or bark. Do not place mulch against trunk.
- Weed control around fruit trees is crucial. Weeds act as hosts to over wintering insects.
- Remove grass and weeds from base of grape vines and fruit trees to help prevent mice and other rodents from damaging the plants.
- Dispose of diseased and mummified fruit from fruit trees and grape vines. Do not compost.
- Sanitation is very effective in controlling disease. See “Guidelines to Identification of Plant Diseases
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mg441>

Environment

- Non-native invasive plants are a problem in Georgia and the Southeast. It is not only kudzu, Chinese privet, and golden bamboo. Become aware of these exotic pest plants and what you can do to inhibit them. Go to
<http://www.gaepc.org> Click on plant list or
http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/fia/manual/Nonnative_Invasive_Plants_of_Southern_Forests.pdf
- Protect the environment, watersheds and sewer system by the proper disposal of grease, hazardous household products and pesticides. Go to
<https://www.cobbcounty.org/water/programs/grease-management>
<http://www.walterreeves.com/tools-and-chemicals/pesticides-disposing>

Trees and Shrubs

- Plant trees and shrubs. Remove synthetic burlap from ball and burlap plants. It does not decompose. Fertilize newly planted shrubs in the Spring.

- Transplant trees and shrubs. https://www.extension.iastate.edu/forestry/publications/PDF_files/F-359.pdf
- Plant winter-blooming shrubs like winter daphne or winter honeysuckle.
- Plant Carolina Jessamine, American Wisteria or Cross Vine, and tie to arbor.
- Remove blooms from shrub roses as they fade.
- Plant bare-root, balled and burlap or container grown roses from October thru February.
- Keep trees and shrubs well watered. Cold weather dries out plants. Observe current watering restrictions.
- Remove and replace mulch under roses to prevent overwintering diseases.
- Prune out dead or diseased material.
- Cut down and remove trees or shrubs attacked by Asian ambrosia or pine bark beetles.
- Refresh mulch, 3 inches deep, around trees and shrubs. Keep mulch away from trunks. If planting had a disease problem, remove old mulch to help prevent disease in future
- Fasten climbers to protect branches from winter winds.
- Pick bagworms from evergreen shrubs. Inspect trees and shrubs for scale. Spray with dormant oil now and in early Spring.
- Check for various pests and diseases. Prune or spray as required:
 - Azaleas: Southern red mite.
 - Boxwood: Armored scale.
 - Camellia: Tea scale, southern red mites.
 - Gardenia: Gall, scale.
 - Holly: Scale, southern red mite.
 - Juniper: Bagworms, needle blight.
 - Leyland cypress: Needle blight.
 - Pine: Pitch canker.
 - Roses: Mildew, black spot.
- Review plant diseases and problems <http://extension.uga.edu/county-offices/cobb/agriculture-and-natural-resources/gardeners-corner.html> `Select “Diagnosing Plant Diseases”
- Perform a tree survey. Form available at http://www.gfc.state.ga.us/community-forests/management/trees-storm-safety/HomeownersRole_000.pdf
- Read “Fall Perfect for Planting Trees” http://www.aces.edu/dept/extcomm/specialty/trees_fall01.html

The Georgia Forestry Commission on line service – “Ask the Arborist” Complete a form and a certified arborist will answer questions and evaluate conditions.

<http://www.gatrees.org/community-forests/ask-the-arborist/index.cfm>

Fire: Outdoor fires are permitted from October 1 thru April 30. For additional information and restrictions.

<https://www.cobbcounty.org/public-safety/fire/fire-marshal/outdoor-burning>

Emergency Guide

NEW

- What to do if a major incident affected our community. **Plan ahead. Be informed. Take action. The Citizen’s Action Guide provides information.** www.cobbcounty.org/ema

Turf

- Water turf as required.
- Mow fescue at proper height. Keep the blades sharpened.
- Do not fertilize Bermuda, centipede or Zoysia.
- Apply lime as required per soil test.
- Apply post-emergent herbicides as required.
- Rake leaves and use for compost. Matted leaves will damage or kill turf.
- For detailed information on turf care and diseases go to: www.georgiaturf.com
- Read “Sodding Dormant Grass”: <http://www.walterreeves.com/lawn-care/sod-installed-in-fall-or-winter/>
- Turf Fertility information: <http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C1058-2&title=Turfgrass%20Fertility:%20Understanding%20Fertilizer%20Labels,%20Macronutrients,%20and%20Micronutrients>

Vegetables

- Harvest vegetables and clean harvested rows immediately to prevent insect and disease buildup.
- Mulch to control weeds.
- Water vegetables, if required.
- Check for various beetles and bugs. Spray as required. Read the label for waiting time between spraying and harvest.
- Rototill soil to control soil insects.
- Sow a cover crop in beds that will not be planted.
- Spread manure, rotted sawdust and leaves over bed and plow under to improve soil tilth.
- Get soil tests. Now is the best time to add lime if it is required.
- Plant asparagus and green onions.
- In a cold frame, plant beets, cabbage and spinach.
- Start planning next year's garden. Rotate plantings of vegetables in the same family to control diseases.
- Order new seeds in December and January.
- Check viability of saved seeds by placing some in damp paper toweling and observing germination percentage. If it is low, get new seeds.

Water On March 8, 2018, The Director of Georgia Environmental Protection Division lifted the Drought Level 1 declaration. Outdoor irrigation is permitted 7 days a week before 10AM and after 4PM.

- Read "Using Gray Water in the Landscape" by Kim D. Coder, Extension Forester, UGA
<https://ugaurbanag.com/using-gray-water-in-your-landscape-and-garden/>
- Use a rain barrel. For instructions to build one:
 - <http://www.bhg.com/gardening/yard/tools/make-a-rain-barrel-save-water/>
- Save water and use it wisely. Don't water the lawn on windy days. Water plants, if required, applying one inch of water per week. **Observe current Georgia watering restrictions.**

Check with your local water system to determine if they have more restrictive regulations.

Other

- Sow wildflower seeds.
- Continue adding leaves and other materials to the compost pile. Do not add weeds with ripen seed heads. Seeds remain viable and will germinate next year when compost is used..
- Force hyacinths and paperwhite narcissus bulbs. <http://extension.missouri.edu/p/G6550>
- As potted poinsettias begin to form red bracts, give them lots of bright light, keep out of drafts and keep soil moist. No need to fertilize.
- Keep holiday plants in the coolest indoor spot possible; otherwise, flowers and leaves will drop prematurely.
- Inspect patio plants brought indoors for mealybugs and scale.
- Give birds water and food. Go to
<http://www.wbu.com/seasonally-savvy/winter/>
<https://web.extension.illinois.edu/ccdms/wildthings/111222.html>
- Clean and store gardening tools.
- Service your lawn mower and other equipment. Clean underside, drain gas, change oil and sharpen blades.
- Start planning for next year's gardening. Evaluate your microclimates:
<http://ugaurbanag.com/microclimate/>

Specific instructions available from the Extension Office: planting and care of annuals, perennials, trees, and shrubs; pest, disease and weed control; turf management, and pruning. Call us at 770 528-4070.

For a soil test, bring 2 cups of dry soil to the Extension Office. Cost is \$9.00 per sample, payable by cash, check or credit card.

Add list of UGA publications

<http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=B625>
<http://www.walterreeves.com/landscaping/uga-downloadable-plant-list-publications/>



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