

HENRY COUNTY EXTENSION AGRICULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES NEWSLETTER

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UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

EXTENSION

Henry County



GOLDENROD IS IN FULL BLOOM IN THE FALL WITH ITS YELLOW FEATHERY FLOWERS. PHOTOGRAPH BY BARBARA H. SMITH, CLEMSON EXTENSION

Message from the Agent

BY TIMOTHY DALY

After a very hot summer, cooler days are coming. In the third issue of the Henry County ANR newsletter, we have informative articles on why fall is the best time of the year to plant, getting your lawn ready for cold weather, questions and answers, timely tips, and upcoming Extension programs.

Our office proudly serves everyone, and all are welcome to visit or contact our office for assistance. We are located at 97 Lake Dow Road, McDonough, GA 30252 in Heritage Park. Our office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm. Please contact us if we can be of any assistance. Thank you for your interest and support of Extension programming.

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MANY SPECIES OF COLORFUL ASTERS ARE PRESENT IN THE FALL LANDSCAPE. PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN RUTER, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA, BUGWOOD.ORG.



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Fall is for Planting

BY TIMOTHY DALY

The summer heat has given way to cooler autumn temperatures, so our landscape plants are under less stress. Fall is the best time to install new trees, shrubs, and perennial plants. Although we will experience cold weather in the months to come and the above-ground parts will not grow much, the roots of the plants will continue to grow and expand, thus allowing them to become established. By next summer, they will be better able to tolerate the intense heat and dry conditions.

When choosing plant material for your home landscape, ensure it can tolerate our climate and site conditions. Does the plant prefer full sun, or does it need some shade? Azaleas thrive in shady sites but deteriorate in full shade and are more susceptible to lace bugs, damaging insect pests. Roses cannot tolerate shade and need to have sunlight to thrive. Take into account the soil's ability to drain. Some plants can tolerate wet sites such as river birches, red maples, and willows, while others will perish. White pines, ornamental cherries, spruces, and firs suffer from the summer heat and should not be planted. Others, such as pittosporums, oleanders, loquats, and Indian hawthorns, can be damaged by hard freezes and are more suited to the Southern part of the state.

Another important consideration is how large the plant will grow. Trees are often planted under power lines and must be severely pruned or removed. Other times, trees and large shrubs are planted in sites they outgrow, such as open spaces along sidewalks and streets. A good example is the Leyland cypress trees, which can grow up to 60 feet in height and 15 feet in width. These trees should be spaced at least 10 to 15 feet apart. Most people want an instant screen and plant them five or six feet apart. In time, the plants crowd each other, restricting airflow and shading them, thus increasing the likelihood of diseases and premature death.

Some plants, by their nature, are problematic. Bradford pears grow rapidly and have weak wood, making them more susceptible to branches and sections of the trees breaking off and falling. Red tip photinias, planted as screens and hedges, often have a fungal leaf spot disease that defoliates them, causing them to perish. Scale insects heavily infest certain euonymus shrubs. Avoid planting these since they will eventually have to be removed.

Make sure you purchase high-quality plant material. Avoid buying wilting plants, have insect or disease infestations, or have weeds growing in the containers. You should check the root ball. The roots should fill the rootball and be creamy white to light brown. If the roots are sparse and dark, the plant is unhealthy. Also, avoid plants whose roots have grown tightly around the rootball and are compacted.

When planting, dig the hole two to three times the size of the rootball and not deeper than its height. Do not use any soil amendments; place the removed soil in the hole with the rootball. If the roots are tightly grown on the outside of the rootball, use a knife and make three to four slits around it to break up the roots to encourage them to grow outward. Apply a two to four-inch layer of organic mulch such as pine straw, pine bark, cypress bark, or wood chips. Keep the plant watered to ensure the soil stays evenly moist.



THE AUTUMN MONTHS ARE THE BEST TIME OF THE YEAR TO PLANT TREES AND SHRUBS, SUCH AS ABELIAS. (PHOTOGRAPH ABOVE BY TIMOTHY DALY)

Preparing your lawn for the colder weather

BY TIMOTHY DALY

SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER ARE THE BEST MONTHS OF THE YEAR TO OVERSEED AND SOD FESCUE LAWNS. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TIMOTHY DALY).



The summer is ending, and soon, we will be experiencing the cooler autumn days. Several tasks need to be carried out during this period to keep our lawns in optimal condition. The goal is to prepare the grass for the winter with its hard freezes and possible frozen precipitation.

Lawns can be divided into two types: warm-season and cool-season grasses. Warm-season grasses thrive in the warm weather, but as the winter approaches, they turn brown and dormant until spring. Bermudagrass, centipede grass, zoysia grass, and St. Augustine grass are warm-season grasses. Cool-season grasses grow the most in the cooler fall and spring weather and slow down during the hot weather. Tall fescue is the most common cool-season grass in our area, although ryegrass is sometimes used as a temporary cover.

For warm-season grass, do not apply any fertilizer. You may hear advertisements promoting 'winterizer' fertilizer, but these have too much nitrogen. If used, they can delay the lawn going into winter dormancy and increase the chances of freeze damage and disease occurrence the following spring. Also, grass should not be fertilized when dormant, only during the summer when it grows actively.

Winter weeds, such as annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*), henbit, and chickweed, will germinate in September and early October. The best control method is to apply a pre-emergent herbicide to the lawn, keeping these weeds from emerging. In contrast, a post-emergent herbicide controls weeds that have already come up and are actively growing. Do not use a 'weed and feed' type since it has fertilizer, which can harm warm-season grasses, as discussed above. If you are over-seeding your lawn with tall fescue, then pre-emergent herbicides cannot be applied since they will inhibit the germination of the grass seed.

Since tall fescue grass is a cool season grass, these lawns have been under stress through the hot weather but are now beginning to recover. In some cases, the grass has died. The fall is the best time to apply a new seed. The old K-31 tall fescue grass is commonly used; however, new, improved grass varieties have been developed, such as 'Rebel,' 'Mojave,' 'Southeast,' 'Tenacity,' and others. Frequently, bags of seed are mixed with several cultivars. These have better color and texture and increased tolerance to heat and diseases. If the soil is compacted, consider using a hollow tine aerator to help break up the soil. However, aeration is unnecessary every year, although doing so will not cause any harm. Instead of aeration, a steel rake can break bare areas up to help improve seed-to-soil contact. The seeding rate should be five to seven pounds of seed per 1,000 square feet. Apply fertilizer according to soil tests. Cover exposed soil with wheat straw to keep it from washing away during rainstorms.

Sometimes, bermudagrass is over-seeded with rye grass for a green appearance during the winter. Zoysia grass, centipede grass, and St. Augustine grass should not have ryegrass seeded into them since these grasses grow slower than bermudagrass and could suffer harm. Even bermudagrass could suffer from seeding ryegrass for the winter. Because ryegrass begins to grow actively during the spring just as the bermudagrass starts to come out of dormancy and turn green, it can interfere with the bermudagrass green-up by competing for light, water, and nutrients. If your lawn has had ryegrass for the winter, it should be mowed to a height of one-half or an inch, which will help reduce the ryegrass's growth and improve the bermudagrass's ability to grow.

Taking some simple steps will improve the chances of your lawn surviving the winter months and thriving the following season.

Timothy Daly, UGA Extension Henry County

Questions and Answers

Q. My bermudagrass lawn has many weeds. Many will die off as the weather gets colder, but another crop appears in winter. How can I keep these weeds under control so they do not harm my lawn's appearance?

A. For the weeds that are currently a problem in your lawn, you need to apply a post-emergent herbicide, such as the Bayer Advanced, Ortho, or Spectracide products. They will control existing weeds. To reduce the winter annual weeds, such as annual bluegrass, chickweed, and henbit, apply a pre-emergent herbicide during September. These chemicals control the weeds as they germinate. Use again in March to prevent the summer weeds. Several brands are available for purchase. Many are granular and usually require an application of water. Please follow all label directions and safety precautions when using pesticides

Q. I have planted my fall vegetable garden with a variety of plants. Recently, some cabbage, broccoli, and collards have a small green caterpillar chewing on them. What can I apply that will control them and not be toxic?

A. You are observing cabbage worms, cabbage loopers, and caterpillar pests that trouble these vegetables. One of the best controls is using a material containing the bacteria Bt. It targets certain caterpillar pests but does not harm anything else if applied according to label directions. The insecticide is sold under the trade names Dipel and Thuricide. You can purchase them at local garden centers. These materials are quite helpful in controlling these pests.

Q. I see multiple yellow jackets going in and out of a hole in my backyard. From experience, they are quite aggressive and inflict painful stings. How can I control these insects without getting stung by them?

A. Yellow jackets tend to be problematic in the late summer and fall. Recently, I had an unpleasant encounter where I received multiple stings. These insects build their nests in the ground. Search the area to find the entrance hole to their nest, which you have already found, fortunately. Get some flying insect aerosol spray. Stand several feet from the nest and direct the spray stream to the hole. Apply it later in the day when they are less active. This method will kill the yellow jackets in the nest. Some will be returning to it, so be careful. Wait a few hours before entering the area to ensure they have gone.



CHICKWEED IS ONE OF MANY WINTER WEEDS. ITS PRESENCE CAN BE REDUCED BY THE APPLICATION OF A PRE-EMERGENT HERBICIDE ACCORDING TO LABEL DIRECTIONS. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TIMOTHY DALY).



CABBAGE LOOPERS AND CABBAGE WORMS TROUBLE SEVERAL FALL VEGETABLES. AN APPLICATION OF AN INSECTICIDAL BACTERIA, SUCH AS DIPEL, WILL ELIMINATE THEM (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALTON SPARKS, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA, BUGWOOD.ORG)



FORSYTHIA KAREN RUSS, CLEMSON UNIVERSITY.
FORSYTHIA SHRUB IS ONE THAT CAN BE PLANTED IN THE FALL.



CABBAGE IS A FALL VEGETABLE. BEST USE TRANSPLANTS TO GET A QUICKER HARVEST. (PICTURE BY TIMOTHY DALY, UGA EXTENSION).

Timely Tips

- Begin dividing perennials and replanting them.
- Apply a pre-emergent herbicide to your lawn, such as Scotts Halts or Hi-Yield Crabgrass Preventer to keep winter weeds from germinating.
- Start planting pansies so they provide colorful displays in the winter landscape.
- Plant cool-season vegetables such as collards, cabbage, carrots, and turnips.
- Bring in houseplants when the first freeze is forecasted. Most are not hardy to our low temperatures.
- Wait until November to plant spring flowering bulbs.
- Remove fallen leaves, branches, flowers, and fruits under trees and shrubs to reduce the incidence of pests next year.
- Harvest winter squash and pumpkins before the first freeze. Cut fruits with a short piece of the vine attached. Store in a cool, dry location.

UGA Extension Henry County Calendar of Events

- Extension Lunch and Learn— ‘Beekeeping: Inside The Hive.’ Mr. Tom Bonnell, President, Henry County Beekeepers association. October 10, 2023, 12:00pm to 1:00pm. At the UGA Extension Henry County Office at 97 Lake Dow Rd. McDonough, GA 30252. No registration or charge.
- Fall is for Planting. Timothy Daly, County Extension Agent, UGA Extension Henry County. October 9, 2023, 6:30pm to 7:30pm. Fairview Library, 28 Austin Road, Stockbridge, GA 30281.

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