

The Garden Bench for May & June

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

Home Garden and Landscape Tips for Middle Georgia

Mulch Tips & Tricks



The Use of Mulch ...

- deters the growth of weeds.
- helps maintain soil moisture
- helps moderate soil temperature.
- Gives a uniform appearance to landscape beds with trees or shrubs.
- ◆ No volcano mulch piles! Piling mulch against the trunk can damage trees and shrubs.
- ◆ Leave a space of 2 inches between tree between the trunk and mulch .
- ◆ Mulch trees 3-4 inches deep out to tree drip line.
- ◆ Keep mulch 2–3 inches from building foundations.

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FRUIT AND NUT TREES

* **Continue using the 'Home Orchard' or 'Home Fruit Tree' sprays** on peaches and apples. These should contain Captan and Malathion. Read and follow all label directions.

* **Fertilize fruit trees.** Apples, pears, and figs may require more fertilizer after fruit set. See our website or contact your local Extension Office for recommendations.

* **Thin fruit if set is too heavy.** This helps to keep limbs from breaking and produce better quality fruit. Remove apples, peaches and pears until you have one fruit every six inches along the stem. Remove plums until you have one fruit every four to five inches.

* **Apply mulch around fruit trees** but do not place it right up against the tree trunk as this creates a path for insects and disease.

* **Let peaches and plums ripen on the tree** for best quality.

TREES AND SHRUBS

* Look for **lace bugs** under azalea leaves where they make brown, tarry spots. The tops of the leaves will be speckled or silvery. Spray twice with Sevin or Orthene about two weeks apart. You can use imidacloprid according to the label.

* You can **shear** small leafed hedges (dwarf yaupon, helleri holly, etc.) now through August. Shear plants as rarely as possible. Do not prune so heavily as to remove all new growth.

* **Fertilize roses** monthly if they are well watered. Continue black spot sprays on **roses**. Rake up and discard fallen leaves that have the disease. Try not to wet the leaves when you water.

* **Powdery Mildew** is a fungus that attacks leaves of dogwood, roses, euonymus, crape myrtle and other plants. It looks like a white powder on the leaves. Established trees and shrubs can withstand the disease but you may want to prevent its spread on young or flowering plants. Fungicides with the active ingredients triadimefon or myclobutanil are very good at controlling powdery mildew. You can also use tebuconazole or chlorothalonil. Follow all label directions. Always plant mildew resistant crape myrtle varieties.

LAWN CARE

* How often can we **fertilize lawns**? **Bermuda** - April, May, June, July and September. **St. Augustine & Zoysia** - May, July and September. **Centipede** lawns can be fertilized in May and August, but once a year is probably better. Use half rates of fertilizer on centipede. Fertilize lawns less often if they are not well watered or will not be mowed often.

* **Seed lawns, de-thatch** or vertical mow and **aerate** lawns now through June.

* **Control lawn weeds now through late May** before they get large and temperatures get too high to apply herbicides

* Service your mower and sharpen your blade to improve lawn quality. **Mow at the proper height** for your lawn type. Mow often enough so you do not remove more than 1/3 of the leaf at each mowing. Mowing centipede too high can kill it!

<i>Lawnglass</i>	<i>Mowing height (inches)</i>
Hybrid Bermuda	0.5 - 1.0
Zoysia	0.5 - 1.0
Centipede	1.0 - 1.5
Common Bermuda	1.0 - 2.0
St. Augustine	2.0 - 3.0

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FLOWERS

- * Use a controlled release **fertilizer** when you plant annuals or fertilize monthly with a regular fertilizer. Liquid fertilizers work quickly, but do not last very long. They must be re-applied often, usually every 7 to 14 days.
- * Continue to **deadhead flowers of annuals and perennials**. This will keep them from going to seed and may produce additional blooms.
- * If **iris** leaves appear thin and limp, check the roots for iris borers. These grub-like worms can destroy an iris bed.
- * If you love to garden but don't have a lot of time, **choose plants that are easy to maintain**. Annuals that do not need deadheading include begonia, impatiens, coleus, alyssum, ageratum, lobelia, vinca and salvia.
- * **For easier care of large plants**, sink a large can or plastic bottle with holes in the bottom into the ground near the plant. Fill can with water or weak fertilizer solutions to water or fertilize the plants.

VEGETABLES

- * Most **important steps** to take now are proper watering and weed control. Most gardens need an inch of water a week. Some vegetables need more.
- * Hand **weeding** is most effective in the garden. Once you get things weeded use newspaper covered with a thick layer of mulch to block new weeds. Mulch to control weeds and slow water loss.
- * **Root tomato suckers** to produce more plants.
- * **Plant sweet corn and beans** every two - three weeks through June for an extended harvest.
- * **Keep vegetables harvested**, well watered and fertilized to continue production. Fertilize every four weeks if needed.
- * **Bacterial wilt and fungal wilt** rapidly wilt tomato plants. There is no cure or prevention for bacterial wilt.
- * Plant varieties resistant to fungal wilt. Look for the letter F after the variety name - like Betterboy VFN. These varieties are resistant to the fungal wilt.
- * **Tomato spotted wilt virus** attacks the top of tomato plants. It stunts the plant and makes the foliage look wilted. The leaves may have dark discolorations. Fruit can have rings on it. Remove badly infected plants. Plant resistant varieties like Amelia, Stiletto and others.

July is a Busy Time in Georgia Lawns & Turf

June and July are excellent times to prevent white grubs in turf.

White grubs are creamy-white, C-shaped grubs found in the soil. Most white grubs have a one year life cycle in Georgia. Adult beetles lay eggs in late spring or early summer. The eggs hatch into grubs which feed and grow through the summer and fall and then spend the winter deep in the soil. They become active as the soil warms in the spring, and feed on turf roots for a few days to a few weeks, depending on the species. They then turn into pupae before emerging as adult beetles to continue the cycle.

Early July is a good time to treat for mole crickets. Mole crickets are tan-colored, cricket-like insects that feed on plant roots. They are about

one inch long, with short, stout forelegs, spade-like feet and large, dark eyes. Young are like adults but without wings and smaller and darker.

Check lawns now for chinch bugs! Chinch bugs have become more of a threat to lawns in the past few years. Dry weather may be making lawns more susceptible to chinch bugs. Inspect now for chinch bugs before these insects yellow and kill the lawn.

Typical chinch bug injury can begin as yellowing grass followed by spreading patches of straw-brown, dead grass. St. Augustine grass is the most seriously injured but zoysia, Bermuda, Bahia, and centipede grasses are also attacked. Chinch bug infestations and damage are often first noticed during hot dry periods in sunny areas of the lawn or at the edge of the lawn.

For more information:

www.georgiaturf.com

Pest Management Handbook (Follow all label recommendations when using any pesticide) - www.ent.uga.edu/pmh/

White Grub Pests on Turfgrass - www.pubs.caes.uga.edu/caespubs/Pubs/PDF/C940.pdf

Mole Crickets in Turf - www.pubs.caes.uga.edu/caespubs/Pubs/PDF/C918.pdf

Chinch Bug Information - <http://www.tinyurl.com/chinchbugs/>

Web Page Links

Houston County Cooperative Extension
<http://www.ugaextension.com/houston>

Master Gardeners of Central Georgia
<http://www.mgcg.org>

UGA Cooperative Extension
<http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension/>

Gardening & Landscape Information
UGA Center for Urban Agriculture
www.gaurbanag.org



The University of Georgia

**Call your local Extension
Office by dialing
(800) ASK-UGA1 from any
non-cell phone.**