

# The Garden Bench November / December 2008

Gardening and home landscape news & information from the UGA Cooperative Extension in Houston County. Our newsletter provides research based horticulture information to assist middle Georgia gardeners. Each edition is researched, compiled and printed as a free service.

## Gardening in Middle Georgia

As your garden goes dormant for the winter, take a good look around. Ask yourself if the addition of color and texture would enhance your home and landscape.

This is a great time to plant shrubs, trees and perennials! Shrubs take at least six months to become established while trees take a year or more.

Camellias provide colorful blooms as cold weather arrives. Encore azaleas will give you good plant structure and color at least twice a year. Crape myrtles, red-twig

dogwood, birch and other plants have beautiful bark that looks good even in the winter. Consider adding maples, ginkgo, or other fall color trees to your landscape for striking autumn color.

Take full advantage of these sunny, cool days to enhance your garden. Simple structures like seating, arbors or arches, and short stacked walls can enhance the enjoyment of your garden. Many garden designs benefit from added lighting. Lights can be used to enhance a planting or mark a path.

Give your garden beds a thorough cleanup and refresh the mulch to give everything a clean appearance.

As you clean out the flower beds, mark the spots where late starting perennials will come up next spring to avoid damaging them.

Get those new garden beds prepared by tilling and adding soil amendments as required. **Don't forget to get a soil test!**

Organic soil amendments such as compost and ground (Continued on page 2.)

Call your local Extension Agent at (800) ASK-UGA1 or locate your local Extension Office at <http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension/statewide.cfm>

## Winter Lawn Tips

- \* Lawns need little now. Water only if the weather is very dry. When required, apply 1/2 inch of water.
- \* Keep leaves raked up and composted.
- \* You can sod lawns in the dormant season. **If you sod a lawn, be sure the sod is alive and has been kept moist. Do not seed lawns now.** Neither fescue nor bluegrass is suitable for Central Georgia.
- \* Reduce early spring weeds by applying a herbicide in late December.

Website: <http://www.ugaextension.com/houston>

Newsletter compiled by:  
Diane Stephens, Master Gardener  
Willie Chance, Extension Agent  
Office: 801 Main St.  
Perry, GA 31069  
Telephone: 478.987.2028  
E-mail: [mg@uga.edu](mailto:mg@uga.edu)

## New Georgia Native Field Guide

Take a hike through the mountains, with pictures.

It is impossible to describe the beauty of a Nodding Trillium to someone who has never seen one.

A new field guide from the University of Georgia provides a pictorial hike through the Georgia Mountains and includes detailed descriptions of native plants like Foam Flower, Showy Orchids, Pink Lady's Slipper and Nodding Trillium.



Native Plants of North Georgia: A Pocket Guide for Plant Enthusiasts was developed by UGA Cooperative Extension. The guide was created by Mickey Cummings, Union County Extension Coordinator.

The pocket-size publication, which sells for \$7, includes 66 plants native to North Georgia. Each

## April Sorrow

plant listing is accompanied by a photograph and a brief plant description including the common name, scientific name, leaf and flower descriptions, habitat and historical plant uses.

To order a copy of the guide, send a request and \$7 check to the Office of Communications, 117 Hoke Smith Annex, Athens, GA 30602-4356 or call Karen Kelley at 706-542-2657 with credit card orders.

*April Sorrow is a news editor with the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. This article republished from the UGA College of AG & Env web*

## Gardening in Middle Georgia (continued from page 1)

pine bark are useful to improve sandy or clay soils. Do not add them to individual planting holes. Rather, dig large beds and add them uniformly to the entire bed.

Have fun and add color to your winter garden with mixed plantings of snapdragons, pansies, violas and herbs such as parsley.

Now is the time to plant flowering bulbs for spring color!

Protect container plants. Bring tender plants indoors to avoid damage from frost. Water container plantings when the soil dries out to a depth of about ½ inch or so. Add water until it runs out the drainage holes. You can use one application of a slow release fertilizer to feed annuals and cool season perennials in containers all winter long. Select a slow release fertilizer that will release nutrients in the cooler weather. Water soluble fertilizers will also work but need to be added regularly. Read the label for directions.

Enhance your vegetable garden by removing plants that have stopped producing or any dead plant material from the garden. Harvest any remaining summer vegetables before a killing frost. They could hide pests that can attack next year's garden.

Harvest annual herbs. Avoid heavy pruning of perennial woody herbs such as rosemary and lavender. Severe pruning late in the season can weaken the plant and make it less winter hardy.

Remove, clean and store tomato cages or fencing. Make a note on what vegetables did the best and which ones did not. As you plan next year's vegetable garden refer to our vegetable gardening guide at <http://pubs.caes.uga.edu/caespubs/pubcd/B577.htm> or contact your local Extension Agent.

Additional online garden and landscape information can be found at:  
<http://apps.caes.uga.edu/urbanag/>

## Tips for the Holidays



Extend the life of your Christmas trees, poinsettias, and Amaryllis plants by placing them in a cool, draft free location in your home. Be sure to water as needed.

An easy way to add holiday cheer to your home or garden is with the use of container planting. Small trees, shrubs, or Rosemary plants can be used in containers. Simply add ornaments, bows and lights to complete your design. Be sure to use low wattage outdoor lights.

Containers or baskets of pine cones with ribbon, ornaments, and lights guide holiday guests to your front door.

The **2009 Central Georgia Master Gardener volunteer training** is scheduled for January 28 through April 8. For more information, contact your local Extension Office. Deadline to register for this class is December 1.

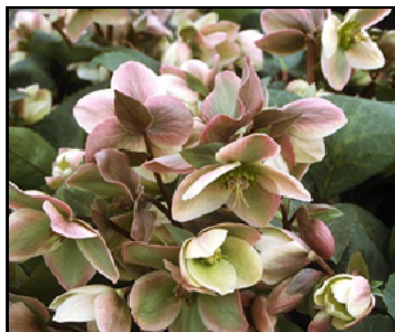


## The University of Georgia

The University of Georgia and Fort Valley State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the counties of the state cooperating. The Cooperative Extension offers educational programs, assistance and materials to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability. An equal opportunity/affirmative action organization committed to a diverse work force.

## Winter Deep Shade Color:

Bodie Pennisi, PhD



Helleborus 'Ivory Prince'  
Image from White Flower Farm,  
[www.whiteflowerfarm.com](http://www.whiteflowerfarm.com)

Many of our home gardeners have asked for recommendations for adding Winter color to deep shade gardens.

For annual plantings try  
Lamium, Lobelia, or Alyssum.

Here are some recommendations for bulbs and perennials;

Lenten Rose: Helleborus  
Heuchera (Foam Flower)  
Lamium maculatum (Dead Nettle)  
Primula denticulata (Drumstick Primrose) may need more light.  
Pulmonaria (Lungwort)  
Cyclamen  
Polygonatum variegatum (Variegated Solomon Seals)  
Virginia martensica (Blue Bells)  
Native Columbine  
Lily of the Valley  
Galanthus (Snowdrops)  
Amsonia (Blue Star)

Bodie Pennisi, PhD, is an Associate Professor, Dept. of Horticulture, UGA