

Columbia County Gardener March 2014



THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
**COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION**

College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
College of Family and Consumer Sciences

CONTENTS:

- Gardening Checklist
- Info on Soil Samples
- Links to Helpful Information
- Starting Seeds Early

Gardening and home landscape information from UGA Cooperative Extension in Columbia County. Providing research-based horticulture information to help CSRA gardeners. Created by Columbia County Master Gardeners.

March Checklist

Ornamentals:

- Complete pruning for shape
- Prune overgrown shrubbery
- Plant, fertilize and mulch shrubbery

Turf:

- Apply pre-emergence herbicides, if not applied in February. Do not use 'weed and feed'
- Delay fertilizing Bermuda, Zoysia and St. Augustine until soil temperature reaches 65° (about mid-April)
- Don't fertilize Centipede until May 1st.
- Top dress lawns, but, do not use pure sand

Flowers:

- Fertilize bulbs & remove dead flower heads
- Fertilize roses
- Prepare plan for spring and summer plantings of annuals
- Plant perennials and hardy annuals
- Prune butterfly bush to 1/3 original size to promote growth

Houseplants:

- Fertilize houseplants monthly
- Repot houseplants where needed

Vegetables:

- Prepare soil for vegetable garden
- Bed sweet potato plants for slips
- Cultivate weeds after emergence
- Plant sweet corn at end of month

Fruits & Nuts:

- Do not spray fruit trees with products containing insecticides during bloom
- Fertilize fruit trees
- Plant strawberries
- Spray apple and pear trees for fire blight with agricultural streptomycin when in bloom
- Prune fig trees in late March
- Fertilize pecan trees with fertilizer containing zinc

Pruning Guidance

http://www.caes.uga.edu/publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=6098

Georgia Turf

<http://www.commodities.caes.uga.edu/turfgrass/georgiaturf/index/index.html>

Flowers

http://www.caes.uga.edu/publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=6094

Growing Houseplants

http://www.caes.uga.edu/publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=7639

Vegetable Gardening

http://www.caes.uga.edu/publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=7817

Home Garden Strawberries

http://www.caes.uga.edu/Publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=6859
<http://extension.uga.edu/agriculture/ag-fruits-vegetables/strawberries/>

Fig Tree Care

http://www.caes.uga.edu/publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=6802

Pecan Tree Care

http://www.caes.uga.edu/publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=7773

Columbia County Extension Office

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<http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension/columbia/index.html>

Soil Tests

Cost - \$8 per sample for routine test. **Cash or check** accepted.

Pick up a soil sample bag or bring 2 cups of soil to the Extension Office.

Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm.

Office is closed for lunch from 12 pm - 1pm.

You can also drop samples off local garden / nursery centers:

- Green Thumb West Garden Center
- Brown's Feed & Seed
- Grovetown Farm & Garden
- Southern Landscaping
- Ewing Supply



How to take a successful soil sample:

http://www.caes.uga.edu/publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=7440

Turnaround time for test results is approximately ten working days. Results can be e-mailed or mailed. A routine soil test provides recommended amendments and fertilization.

More Details:

<http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension/columbia/anr/TestingServices.html>

Links to Publications

Vegetable Garden Calendar

http://www.caes.uga.edu/publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=6806

Organic Vegetable Gardening—Including recommended varieties

http://www.caes.uga.edu/publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=6141

Pesticides

<http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension/thomas/anr/Pesticides.html>

Muscadine Culture

http://www.caes.uga.edu/publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=6826

All About Blueberries

http://www.caes.uga.edu/publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=6793

Growing Herbs

http://www.caes.uga.edu/applications/gafaces/?public=viewStory&pk_id=4048

Crape Myrtle Culture

http://www.caes.uga.edu/publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=6861

Landscape Plants for Georgia

http://www.caes.uga.edu/publications/pubDetail.cfm?pk_id=5966

Jumpstart your spring garden by starting vegetable seeds indoors

By Mary Carol Sheffield
UGA Cooperative Extension

http://www.caes.uga.edu/applications/gafaces/?public=viewStory&pk_id=5010

Starting the process

The veteran gardener prefers to start seeds in peat pellets on planting trays with clear lids. Peat pellets are those small round discs that expand when watered. You can buy them at most big box stores or garden centers. Read the seed package to determine how deeply to plant the seeds in the pellets for optimal germination. Starting seeds from mid-February to mid-March gives seedlings six to eight weeks to grow before outdoor temperatures are safe for planting them in the vegetable garden. Warm soil, not just warm air temperature, is crucial for summer vegetable plant roots to begin growing. It may take longer for soil temperatures to warm up to between 60 and 65 degrees Fahrenheit, which is the optimal planting temperature.

Provide water, light and warmth

To start seeds indoors before the temperatures warm outside, you might try a lamp system. You can use one cool fluorescent lamp paired with one warm incandescent. This combination of light provides enough warmth and light to get the seedlings to germinate within a few days. To provide moisture, add water to the bottom of the pellet-filled trays. The water will be soaked up from the base and this will prevent early problems with root rot and disease. Seeds and seedlings need to be moist, but not wet. Seeds will germinate and produce their first cotyledons (new seed leaves) under the tray covers. Once the first true leaves appear, remove the tray covers.

Take them outside a little each day

Soon after the lid is removed, transplant the seedlings to 3- or 4-inch diameter pots. Larger pots give seedlings room for root expansion. When the plants have three or four true leaves on the stem, they are ready to move them outdoors during the day. The immature seedlings need to harden off gradually outside. They won't withstand cold temperatures or even intense sunlight at this point, so monitor the weather closely during this time. Be sure to bring them in at night to protect them from temperature extremes. Once spring temperatures are consistently above freezing, the new plants can be moved into the garden.