



LAWNS

If crabgrass and goose grass has been a problem in the past, now is the time to apply Crabgrass Preventer or Surflan to your lawn.

Poa annua (annual bluegrass) can build up a resistant to atrazine or simazine if used year after year. Try spraying this weed with Image; it contains the active ingredient imazaquin.

Do not fertilize your lawn at this time with a complete fertilizer. This also includes any weed and feed formulations. Wait until green-up and soil temperature is at 65°F for at least 4 consecutive days.



ORNAMENTALS



Now is the time of year to prune back Knock-Out roses. Take it down no more than 1/3 of the height for select thinning. If it has become too big for its original space, cut it back to about 18 inches; this is considered a severe or rejuvenated pruning and should be done 4 to 6 weeks before spring.

Scout camellias for tea scales. Apply insecticides so that they cover the bottom surface of the leaves. The use of oil sprays is effective against crawlers and adult scales. Make sure to use the type of oil spray that is used in the cooler weather of spring. Read and follow all label directions to select the correct oil spray.



FRUITS/VEGGIES



Make second plantings of such quickly-maturing crops as turnips, mustard, radishes and "spring onions."

Early planted crops may need a nitrogen side-dressing, particularly if the soil is cool. Place the fertilizer several inches to the side of the plants and water it in. A little fertilizer throughout the growing period is better than too much at one time.

Before settling them in the garden, harden-off transplants - place them in their containers outdoors in a sheltered place a few days ahead of planting them.

Get rows ready for "warm-season" vegetables to be planted during the last week of March or first week or two of April as weather permits.

FLOWERS

You can fertilize spring flowering bulbs with 10-10-10 once leaves emerge. Remove bulb foliage only after it dies naturally.

Take your lawn mower and cut back the foliage of Liriope to the height of 2 to 3 inches. Do not mow too close because you can run the risk of scalping the crown of the plant.



Divide Hostas, Liriope and Daylilies before the new growth starts in the spring.

Azaleas

By James Morgan, Dougherty County Ag Agent and Extension Coordinator



Azaleas, one of the more common plants in the southern landscape, need some care particular the month of July. The azalea puts on a spectacular flowering show in the spring and summer. However, a maintenance plan needs to be devised in order to continue that flower show for the next year.

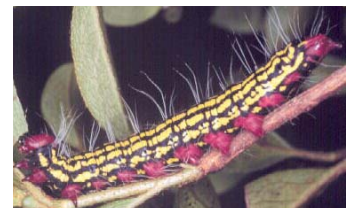
Not pruning azaleas at this time is the most important thing that you can do for them. However, in the coming weeks azaleas should be given an application of fertilizer and scouting should continue for insects and caterpillars.

Technically, azaleas are one of those plants that should be pruned just after flowering. A general thumb of rule is that if it blooms before May, then it should be pruned immediately after flowering. It is true that azaleas set flowers from buds in early July. This is why it is important you do not prune your azaleas after early July or you risk the reduction of next year's flower production. A good rule of thumb is to not prune azaleas after July 4th.

July is also the last time of the year that you need to apply fertilizer to your azaleas. This was the topic of another recent question about azaleas. Fertilization application should be made in three split, light, applications, rather than one application a year. Make your first application in March, followed by one in May, and finishing with your last application in July. An all-purpose fertilizer such as 8-8-8 or 10-10-10 will yield satisfactory results. Also a 2:1:1 ratio such as 12-6-6 provides excellent results when a portion of the nitrogen is in slow release form. So if you have not made that final application of fertilizer, please do so now.

Scouting during late spring and summer is a good way to detect pests that feed on foliage, like the azalea caterpillar, or pests residing under the leaf, like aphids and azalea lace bugs.

At this time I am asked about a recommendation for this large caterpillar that is defoliating the leaves of azaleas within a matter of days. This culprit is described as a black and yellow "worm" with a red head. These caterpillars are noticeable this time of year measuring about 1½ to 2 ½ inches. They have reddish brown legs, head and "neck" area. The body is black with rows of white or pale yellow stripes. They feed on the foliage from late summer through early fall. However, there is only one generation a year. The pupae overwinter in the soil. The azalea caterpillar feed together when they are young, but disperse as they mature. They have been known to defoliate an entire branch or plant during the summer. They can be hand-picked from the plant if only a few are present. If the numbers are larger, *Bacillus thuringiensis* should be applied only if the caterpillar is less than ½" in length. Repeated application may be necessary 10 – 14 days later. It is very important that these caterpillars are controlled because azaleas are not the only host plants. Other hosts include witch-hazel, sumac, apple, crabapple, red oak and andromeda.



Take some time in the coming days and give your azaleas the attention that they deserve so that you can enjoy the flowering show next spring.

For more information on selecting and growing azalea, please feel free to contact me at (229) 436-7216 or morganjl@uag.edu. Our azalea publication can be found at <http://pubs.caes.uga.edu/caespub/PDF/B670pdf>

Winter is a Great Time to Prune Overgrown Trees and Shrubs

By STEPHEN GARTON (UGA Cooperative Extension)



January and February are ideal months for pruning overgrown trees and shrubs. However, avoid pruning shrubs and trees that flower in the spring like dogwoods, azaleas and native hydrangeas.

These should be pruned after flowering -- in late spring or early summer. Fruit trees should be pruned before new growth starts in the spring.

The benefits of pruning include keeping plants attractive; maintaining safe and healthy conditions by removing branches that cross or rub against each other; removing obstructions to foot traffic or interference with safe operation of lawn mowers or other maintenance equipment; clearing blocked views of traffic at entrances to driveways; and removing limbs that are weak or infested with pests or diseases.

Thoughtful pruning produces desirable, well-formed compact plants that fit into the appropriate scale of the landscape. However, pruning a vigorous healthy plant will stimulate vigorous, new, growth from buds that were lying dormant on the lower parts of branches or limbs. These new buds may produce three or more, new shoots from a single branch within 6 to 8 inches of the cut.

It may be necessary to reduce the number of branches that you allow to grow in order to prevent the development of branches that may shade each other and be weakly attached to the parent plant.

Removal is very simple and can be done by rubbing the new developing buds with your fingers just as new growth begins. In vigorous plants such as crepe myrtles, buds may need to be removed over a period of several weeks to effectively control the development of too many shoots from a single pruning cut.

Sharp, clean, pruning tools should be used to minimize damage and to make precise cuts that will seal and heal quickly. This will reduce the chances of microbes invading the wounds and causing decay. No other treatments are necessary to stimulate rapid closure of wounds. Do not paint the pruned surfaces of branches or limbs with any type of sealant or wound treatment.

A good quality pruning saw should be used to cut limbs that are greater than one-half to three-fourths of inch in diameter. Lopping shears and hand shears can be used to remove smaller diameter shoots.

Tools should be cleaned periodically to remove traces of sap and occasionally honed to maintain a very sharp cutting edge. Pruning with blunt or dirty tools will retard the wound healing processes at the cut surfaces.

Before making any cuts on a tree or shrub it is essential to have a clear idea of why you are pruning and what changes you wish to see in the form of the plant. Consider what your needs are and prune to meet those needs. Pruning because your neighbor has started to trim trees and shrubs is rarely a good reason.

For more information on pruning ornamentals, shrubs and trees, see the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension publication website at www.caes.uga.edu/Publications .

Fighting TSWV -

Resistant varieties saved Georgia tomatoes from viral destruction

By Clint Thompson (University of Georgia, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences)

Once a major threat to the tomato industry, the thrips-vectorated tomato spotted wilt virus (TSWV) has been unable to penetrate the vegetable's latest line of defense; resistant cultivars.

Scientists from the University of Georgia, University of Florida and Clemson, North Carolina State universities have collaborated over the last two decades in an effort to try to alleviate what had become a deadly problem. The results have proven to be beneficial and profitable for tomato growers.



"If we didn't come up with a solution, it would have killed the tomato industry in Georgia," said David Riley, a professor of entomology with the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences in Tifton.

Riley is the team leader of the RAMP (Risk Avoidance and Mitigation Program) Project, which compiled data showing that an estimated \$9 million was lost in tomato and pepper from 1996 to 2006. The spotted wilt virus had a disastrous effect on the vegetable industry.

"It was bad. If you go back 10 years ago, there were fields that had complete yield loss," Riley said. "Once you get so much damage in a field, at some point, it becomes uneconomical to go in and harvest it. With a tomato crop, nearly half of your production cost is tied up in that harvest cost. Once your production goes down too low from disease, they'll just cut it loose and not even go in there. So, not only do the growers lose their tomato crop, temporary workers lose jobs."

Ten years ago, the tomato crop in Georgia would have been wiped out if resistant varieties weren't available, he said. Today, Georgia's vegetable industry, including the state's tomato and bell pepper fields, is worth \$781 million and accounts for about 10,200 jobs across the state, according to the most recent Georgia Farm Gate Value Report.


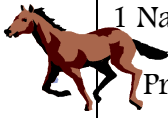



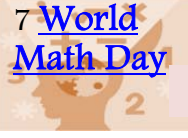

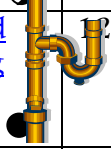



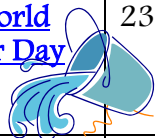





TSWV dates back almost 40 years when it was discovered in peanuts in Texas. It was later found in Louisiana and Alabama. In the 1990s, the virus was detected as a major problem in such Georgia crops as peanuts, vegetables and tobacco.

Eventually, resistant cultivars (tomato varieties that possess the resistant gene) stopped almost all losses from the disease. Based on a 2008-2009 survey conducted by Riley and his team, 75 percent of farmers in Georgia, Florida, South Carolina and North Carolina were using an improved method of growing tomatoes, which included resistant cultivars.

Seventy-one percent of those responding were satisfied with their crop's production. According to the USDA TSWV RAMP Project website (www.tswvramp.org) resistant cultivars prevent plants from wilting, which greatly increases the crop's yields. These cultivars also reduce irregular ripening of fruit.

Controlling the TSWV is a step in the right direction for tomato growers, but it didn't totally solve the problem of thrips, the small insects that can transmit the virus.

"There's still a little bit of a problem left with thrips themselves because western flower thrips can come in late season and feed directly on the fruit," Riley said. "Even if it's a resistant cultivar, you can still have some virus symptoms show up on the fruit. For the most part, the problem of major yield loss in tomato has been solved in Georgia." Riley added that the best way to control late-season western flower thrips is achieved with products like spinetoram.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
MARCH					1 National Horse Protection Day	2 Dr. Seuss' Birthday 	
3 	4 March Forth & Do Something Day Last Quarter 	5 National Peanut Month		6	7 World Math Day 	8 Berries & Cherries Month	
10 Daylight Savings Time Begins 	11 World Plumbing Day  New Moon 		13	14 National Potato Chip Day	15 The Ides of March	16	
17 Bell Peppers & Broccoli Month	18	19 First Quarter 	20 National Agriculture Day 	21	22 World Water Day 	23	
24 Palm Sunday 	25 Passover	26	27 Full Moon 	28 Weed Appreciation Day 	29 Good Friday	30 National Doctor's Day	
31 Easter 	1 April 	2	3 National Week of the Ocean 3/31-4/6				6

It is hard to believe that the world's most famous snack food began as a joke. Potato Chips were first made in 1853 while Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt was on vacation in New York. At one restaurant, he kept sending his fried potatoes back to the kitchen because he said they were "too thick". The chef, George Crum, decided that he would cut them into paper-thin slices, boil them in oil, fry them, and salt them as a joke to the Commodore. It backfired. They became an instant success and the restaurant was well known for them.

WORDSEARCH

ANNUAL FLOWERS FOR GEORGIA GARDENERS

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- ALYSSUM
- ASTER
- BASIL
- CALENDULA
- CANDYTUFT
- CELOSIA
- COLEUS
- COSMOS
- DUSTY MILLER
- GERANIUM
- IMPATIENS
- LARKSPUR
- MARIGOLD
- MOONFLOWER
- PANSY
- PHLOX
- SNAPDRAGON
- SUNFLOWER
- SWEETPEA
- TITHONIA
- VERBENA
- ZINNIA