



THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
**COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION**

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# The Garden Bench

September/October 2013

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

## Special Point of Interest:

Come to the Georgia National Fair in Perry, October 3-13 and drop by the Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer booth in Heritage Hall! Gardening demonstrations daily!

## Inside this issue:

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## Planting Dates for Your Fall Vegetable Garden

Although it is still pretty hot here in Middle Georgia at the beginning of September, Autumn is not very far away. Although most of our summer vegetable crops have been eaten or preserved for later enjoyment, the cooler weather of Autumn doesn't necessarily mean that you have to put your garden to bed for the winter. In fact, many cool-season vegetables produce best flavor and quality when planted to mature during cool weather. Take advantage of the mild weather during these months to plant or transplant the following:

Through Sep 15: carrot, mustard, turnip

Through Sep 20: beet

Through Oct 15: radish, spinach

Oct 10-Nov 10: dry bulb onion

Through Dec 31: green onion



## Fall Garden Tasks & Tips

- Take the time to evaluate this year's garden results and consider changes and improvements for your gardens.
- Fall is the most desirable time to do soil tests because landscapes and gardens are usually dry and easily accessible. Vegetable gardens should be sampled every 1-2 years. Soil tests are available through your local County Extension office.
- If your soil test indicates a need for lime, fall is a good time to apply it. Lime reacts slowly in the soil. Till it into the soil when possible.
- Pull up dead or declining annuals and clean up overgrown areas.
- As you clean out the flower beds, mark the spots where late-starting perennials will come up next spring to avoid damaging them.
- Compost dead, disease-free plants and leaves or till them into the soil to increase organic content.
- Turn off and drain irrigation systems before freezing weather. First frost in Middle Georgia usually occurs in mid-November but can occur as early as October.
- Pests are usually fewer in fall and winter, but not always! Stay on the lookout for cabbageworms and aphids.
- Be sure your vegetables get enough water this time of year. Many crops will not mature correctly if stressed due to lack of water. Mulch to control weeds and slow water loss.

## Home & Garden Landscape Tips for Middle Georgia

**Flowers:** Save seeds from your summer annuals to plant in the spring (hybrids will not breed true).

September is the ideal month for planting as the heat of summer begins to subside. Plant flowers such as snapdragons, dianthus, pansies, and violas now to bring fall color to flower beds and container plantings. Chrysanthemums are a great source of color and texture in the fall garden and generally grow in any soil capable of producing a good crop of vegetables or turf.

Plant perennials now: fall-planted perennials out-perform perennials planted in the spring.

One of the most exciting activities in the fall is choosing and planting bulbs for color in the spring garden. Order early to get your first choices. When planting bulbs, if you aren't sure which end is the top, plant it on its side. The stem will always grow upright!

**Vegetables & Herbs:** Now is the time to plant your fall vegetable garden (See front page for planting dates).

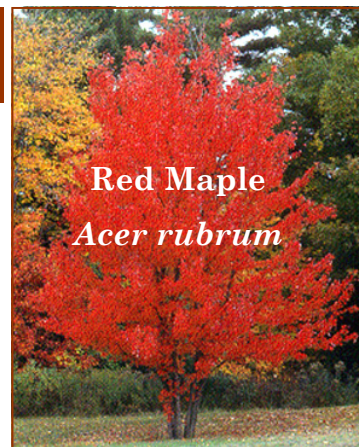
**Shrubs & Trees:** Shrubs and trees have a much greater chance of success when planted in the late fall and winter. Winter planting gives plants a chance to develop their root systems before the summer heat stress. The rule of thumb is 3/4 to 1 inch of water per week. If there has been no rainfall for one week, water shrubs, trees, and vines. This is especially important for new plantings, which should have water directed to the root ball.

**Lawn Tips:** Continue to mow until the grass goes dormant. Keep leaves and pine straw raked up off the lawn. In mid-October and again 45 days later, apply a pre-emergent herbicide labeled for your type of grass.



### Plant Spotlight

Native to Canada, to the middle of the Florida peninsula, and west to Minnesota, Oklahoma, and Texas, Red Maple is a deciduous tree with medium texture, medium growth rate and an oblong to oval form. The bark is smooth and light gray. Clusters of small, red flowers appear in February and are followed by winged fruit in March. Fall color is variable yellow to red. Use Red Maple as a shade tree in moist soils and full sun. It will adapt to hot, dry locations when irrigated and will reach a height of 40-50 feet with a spread of 24-35 feet.



Red Maple  
*Acer rubrum*

## Your Garden Bench

A garden bench doesn't have to be in the middle of a huge garden to provide a respite from the world. This bench, tucked into a patio corner, encourages you to step outside the door and enjoy the delights of nature. Hanging plants and pots surround the bench and provide a variety of textures and colors that can be easily changed with the seasons.

Send a picture of **your** favorite garden bench to [mg@uga.edu](mailto:mg@uga.edu) and have it featured in one of our bimonthly newsletters!



Newsletter compiled by Nancy Edger, Master Gardener Extension Volunteer