



# The Gardening Gazette

The Gardening Gazette is a free quarterly newsletter from the Clayton County Master Gardeners. We provide information on Master Gardener projects and tips to local homeowners.

[www.claytoncountymastergardeners.org](http://www.claytoncountymastergardeners.org)

(A 501(c)(3) organization)

## Fall 2009

### SEASONAL CALENDAR

#### OCTOBER – The month for digging, dividing and transplanting

- Dig/divide/transplant perennials.
- Mulch all beds for winter.
- Plant parsley, radishes and onions.
- Plant new shrubs and trees now thru February.
- Bermuda/Zoysia/Centipede: Apply pre-emergent early in the month.
- Clean and prepare vegetable gardens.

#### NOVEMBER – The month for planting

- Plant shrubs, trees, vines and groundcovers.
- Plant spring bulbs when the soil is cool, around Thanksgiving.
- Now is a good time to take a soil sample to the County Extension Office.
- Apply lime to vegetable beds, if necessary.
- Transplant material as it goes dormant.

#### DECEMBER – The month for relaxing

- Plant Sweet Peas.
- Last chance to plant bulbs.
- Continue to plant new shrubs and trees.
- Buy new seeds and make plans to install in spring.
- Observe the yard/garden. It is often easier to see areas that need improvement when many plants are dormant.



Twice a year, in the Spring and Summer, the Clayton County Master Gardeners volunteer their services and judge yards for the City of Morrow.

### LAWNS

Don't put that lawn mower away yet. The most important practice for a healthy lawn is to keep it mowed at the right height. Don't remove more than 1/3 of the grass blade height at mowing. As we move into fall, the growth of your lawn slows down. As long as your lawn grows, it should be mowed. Keep leaves raked off the lawn to prevent damage by matted, rain-soaked leaves.

### FALL PLANTING AND CLEAN UP

As temperatures begin to cool and fall/winter begins, start planting or transplanting trees and shrubs. Trees planted in the late fall have time to develop a root system during the winter before they have to face our hot, dry summers.

Plant shrubs at least one half their mature diameter plus one foot away from the house. A plant that will be six feet wide at maturity should be planted four feet away from the house.

When planting, till large beds to plant into. Merely digging holes for each plant will limit their growth. Improve very sandy or clay soils by adding organic matter like ground pine bark or compost. Evenly incorporate these into the entire planting bed. DO NOT add organic matter if you are only digging individual planting holes.

Mulch around shrubs and trees to a depth of two to four inches. DO NOT pile mulch up against trunks of trees and shrubs. Water deeply and immediately after planting. Keep the soil moist but not overly wet. Newly planted trees will require special watering for a year while shrubs need this for six months. When watering new plants, direct water to the root ball. Sometimes the soil can be moist but the root ball can dry out, killing roots.

## FLOWERS

Plant pansies from October 15<sup>th</sup> to November 15<sup>th</sup> in order to provide color and interest to the winter garden. Try these selections: snapdragons, dianthus, parsley and ornamental cabbage. Chrysanthemums add color and texture. September and October are good times to move, divide and plant irises, liriopse and daylilies. Renew mulch in flower beds for a fresh look. Mulch should be two to four inches deep.

## DIG AND DIVIDE

Dig them up, chop into pieces, and replant. By dividing your perennials, you'll not only get more (free) plants, but — harsh as the process sounds — your perennials will actually appreciate it. In fact, most perennials grow best when divided every three to five years. You'll know your perennials are ready for dividing when flower size diminishes and the center of the plant becomes brown and dead. If possible, choose a cool, cloudy — or even misty — day for dividing plants. For most plants, it's critical that the roots don't dry out so have a hose or bucket of warm water nearby. After planting, firm the soil around roots to eliminate air pockets and water the plants thoroughly. Once soil has frozen in fall, mulch the plants with organic mulch, such as bark chips or straw, to prevent alternate freeze-thaw cycles that can heave plants out of the ground.

## VEGETABLES/HERBS

Plant cool season vegetables. Beets, carrots and turnips should have been seeded by September 15<sup>th</sup>. Seed mustard and lettuce by October 1<sup>st</sup> and radish and spinach by October 15<sup>th</sup>. Transplant cabbage and collards through early October. Wait until November to plant onion sets or plants. Plant elephant garlic in October. Other cool season vegetables are kohlrabi, Swiss chard, leeks, brussels sprouts, Chinese cabbage, parsley and cilantro.

Begin preparing next year's summer vegetable garden by cleaning up dead plant material, tilling the soil and taking a soil test. The County Extension Office can help you with the test. To add organic matter, plant a "green manure" crop to till into the soil early next spring. You could seed ryegrass or an annual clover as a green manure crop.

## HOUSEPLANTS

Most houseplants are tropical in nature and our homes do not mimic the tropical growing environment, i.e. insufficient light, high temperatures and improper watering are the usual causes of plant failure. Here is a partial list of some tough plants for the home: House Ivy (Philodendron); Peace Lily (Spathiphyllum); Corn Plant (Dracaena); Dumb Cane (Dieffenbachia); Snake Plant (Sansevieria); Weeping Fig (Ficus benjamina).

## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Noontime Knowledge, "Bulbs are a Bright Idea", October 22nd, 12:15 PM – 1:00 PM.
- "The Plant Lover's Garden", Master Gardener Symposium @ Eula Ponds Perry Learning Center, 137 Spring Street, Jonesboro, GA 30236; Four great speakers, door prizes and a raffle; Saturday, November 1st; 9:00 AM-4:00 PM; \$30.00.

Call the Extension Office @770-473-5434 for more Symposium information and to register for the free class on October 22nd. Please join us!