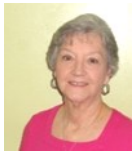
Third Quarter 2025

Autauga County Master Gardeners

Dirty Digs

September



ACMGA President Rose McCauley

Autauga County Master Gardener Association members can throw a great party, and the intern graduation celebration held at the Extension Office in Autaugaville on August 13th, was no exception.

Bionca Lindsey and Darlene Blumentritt were responsible for planning an event with beautiful decorations and great food.

The thirteen graduates who will be joining Autauga County, Central Alabama, and Capital City Master Gardeners Associations were honored.

All graduates received certificates of completion of internship.

ACMGA has an intern reimbursement award for the intern who accomplishes the most during their internship.

Harriet Hobbs was honored with this award and received reimbursement for the cost of her MG registration.

Inside this issue:

Special points of interest:

- *Fall Vegetables*
- *Leave the Leaves*
- *Prattvillage Garden*

AMGA Website
Alabamamg.org

Autauga MG Website
autaugamastergardeners.org

Extension Website
mg.aces.edu

ACMGA Event Calendar Online: https://mg.aces.edu/autauga/events-calendar/

Our current Intern class is completing their classwork sessions and will begin outdoor activities. Autauga has 9 interns in the 2026 membership class.

ACMGA will have a Fall Plant sale at the Extension Office on October 11th. Intake for plants will be on October 10th. We hope a sale in autumn will generate excitement and interest; after all, it's such a good time to plant!

We are planning to participate in the City of Prattville Christmas Parade on December 5th. Help will be needed in decorating the float.

Reminder—membership dues need to be paid by October 15th. After that date, a $10 late fee will need to be included.

Cooler temperatures are expected, so get outside. Now would be a good time to plant for pollinators!

Rose

Lunch and Learn
Vicki Williamson

Lunch and Learn-3rd Qt 2025

ACMGA hosts the monthly Lunch and Learn Programs, the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 12 noon. The location is Trinity Prattville Church, 610 Fairview Ave., Prattville, AL 36066.

Our 3rd quarter provided new topics and new people of interest in their specialty!

July brought Terese Goodson, from the Capital City Master Gardeners. She shared her knowledge of Daylilies and provided several door prizes. In August, David Lawrence, a commercial Horticulturist, ACES, provided information on growing Muscadines. September brought Janell Diggs, Advanced Master Gardener, provided techniques for growing Sprouts and Microgreens.

A special Thank you to everyone that assisted with program setup and break down. Jackie had previous commitments and I am recovering from rotator cuff surgery. Hope to see everyone soon!

Vicki

☐ ☐ ☐

ACMGA Membership Dues

Annual County membership dues for 2026 are $15. State dues are $10 (mandatory).

State dues entitle you to State Membership, receipt of the Pathways Newsletter, and eligibility to receive State awards, such as Reach for the Stars.

Send dues it to the Treasurer Elijah Pugh no later than OCT 15th 2025

A $10.00 late fee must be paid after that date.

Give to Treasurer Elijah Pugh or mail to:

ACMGA

c/o Elijah Pugh

139 1st Street

Prattville, AL 36067-3923

See page 5 for membership form.

The Culture of Camellias: The State Flower of Alabama

Kerry Smith, J. David Williams, Urban Diener, Ron Shumack, Raymond I. Self, Ken Tilt, Pat Cobb, Austin Hagan, J. Raymond Kessler, and Charles Mitchell

Original Article

https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/landscaping/the-culture-of-camellias-the-state-flower-of-alabama/

Rediscover the camellia as a cherished evergreen shrub both beautiful and rugged. Learn about the camellia's ideal growing environment, how to plant and care for it, and how to solve common pest problems. Illustrated instructions for propagation and varieties are provided for the beginning grower.

Origin and History

Today's gardeners find the camellia to be an easy-to-grow evergreen flowering shrub with many uses, incredible ruggedness, and great beauty. With the availability of more flower forms, hybrids, seedlings, and hardy species, along with improved cultural techniques and devices, the outdoor growing areas of the American camellia belt extend farther north each year. Even in the coldest regions, the camellia has become a fixture in the home greenhouse.

The name camellia (pronounced as either ca-mee-lia or ca-mell-ia) was given

'Nuccio's Gem' 'Pebble Hill Peppermint' 'Betty Sheffield Supreme' 'Professor Sargent'

to the genus by Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus, developer of the binomial system of nomenclature used to classify plants. The natural home of the camellia is an area encompassing Southeast Asia, China, Japan, and various islands and countries extending from Vietnam to Burma.

More than 200 species of camellias have been identified, with most of them distributed throughout southern China. The most economically important species of the genus is Camellia sinensis, the common tea plant. The most widely grown ornamental species is Camellia japonica. And another widely grown species is Camellia sasanqua. In addition, more than 20,000 varieties or cultivars of various species and hybrids have been described worldwide, grown largely by camellia hobbyists. The diversity of flower colors, shapes, and bloom sizes is remarkable. Seedlings of crosses with Camellia reticulata and other species have produced extensive variations in flower and leaf sizes and growth habits.

Read More—Full Details: https://www.aces.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/ANR-0202_TheCultureOfCamellias_110724aL.pdf

Autauga County Master Gardeners Association
2026 Membership Renewal Form

Annual County membership dues for 2026 are $15. State dues are $10 (mandatory). State dues entitle you to State Membership, receipt of the **Pathways Newsletter,** and eligibility to receive State awards, such as Reach for the Stars. Complete this form and return it to the Treasurer **no later than OCT 15th 2025**

A $10.00 late fee must be paid after that date.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

NAME _____ BIRTHDAY _____
month/day

_X___ Check here if your information in the 2024-2025 ACMGA Membership Directory is correct.
Only new members and corrected information should be entered in this section below:

ADDRESS _____
_____

PHONE _____ CELL _____

EMAIL _____
(Give email address if you wish to receive info via email)

COUNTY OF TRAINING _____ YEAR OF GRADUATION _____

SELECT TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP

		Local Dues	**State Dues**
__X__	Active Member Local & State (Includes graduating interns)	$15	$10 (mandatory)
_____	Active Member non Primary Membership	$15	Pay to Primary County
_____	Active Member w/ current State Lifetime	$15	$0
_____	Active member w/ new State Lifetime	$15	$150 (one-time fee)

_____ I am a dual member. County of primary membership _____
County of secondary membership _____

Make your check payable to ACMGA.

Mail to the address below or give to Treasurer/Elijah Pugh:

ACMGA c/o Elijah Pugh
139 1st Street
Prattville, AL 36067-3923

Check # _____ $_____
Cash _____
Receipt #_____

Basics of Fall Vegetable Gardening

Joseph Kemble

Original Article

https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/lawn-garden/basics-of-fall-vegetable-gardening/

Follow this planting guide for growing cooler-weather produce that thrives.

Many vegetables are well adapted to planting in the summer for fall harvest, which will extend the gardening season so you can continue to harvest fresh produce after earlier crops have finished producing. The fall harvest can be extended even further if you protect the plants from early frosts or plant them in cold frames or hotbeds.

Many cool-season vegetables, such as carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts, produce their best flavor and quality when they mature during cool weather. In Alabama, the spring temperatures often heat up quickly making vegetables such as lettuce and spinach bolt or develop a bitter flavor when they mature during hot summer weather.

Growing a productive fall vegetable garden requires thoughtful planning and good cultural practices. In Alabama, August and September are the main planting times for a fall garden. Depending on your specific location, you may need to adjust the planting dates. For a more accurate planting schedule, determine the average date of the first killing frost in the fall, and then count backward from the frost date, using the number of days to maturity to determine the best time to plant in your area.

Preparing the Site

Before preparing the soil for a fall garden, you must decide what to do with the remains of the spring garden. In most cases, the decision is not difficult because the warm-season vegetables are beginning to look ragged. Remove the previous crop residue and any weed growth, and then till or spade the soil to a depth of at least 6 to 8 inches.

If the spring crops were heavily fertilized, you may not need to make an initial preplant fertilization. If not, you can apply 1 to 2 pounds of a complete fertilizer such as 10-10-10 per 100 square feet of bed space. Be sure to thoroughly incorporate the fertilizer

Planting the Fall Garden

Direct seeding, which involves planting seeds rather than using transplants, for crops such as broccoli, cabbage, and collards is often used in the fall. However, the success of this planting method depends on having adequate moisture available to keep the young seedlings actively growing after germination. An overhead sprinkler can help provide seeds with sufficient moisture to germinate.

Alabama summers can be hot and dry, and soils may form a hard crust over the seeds. This crust can interfere with germination, particularly in heavy clay soil. Lettuce and spinach seeds will not germinate if the soil temperature exceeds 85 degrees F. Be sure to keep the soil moist until the young seedlings have emerged.

Watering/Fertilizing

Most vegetables require 1 inch of water per week. It is best to make a single watering that penetrates deeply rather than make frequent shallow applications. However, young seedlings and germinating seeds may need more frequent, light waterings. Do not allow seedlings to dry out. New transplants will also benefit from frequent light waterings until they develop new roots.

Many fall-maturing vegetables benefit from side dressing with nitrogen just as spring-maturing vegetables benefit. Most leafy vegetables benefit from an application of nitrogen 3 and 6 weeks after planting.

Insects and Diseases

It is not uncommon for insects and diseases to be more abundant in the fall, mostly as a result of a buildup in their populations during the spring and summer. You may be able to keep these pests at tolerable levels, if you follow a few strategies. Strive to keep fall vegetables healthy and actively growing because healthy plants are less susceptible to insects and diseases. Check the plants frequently for insect and disease damage. If significant damage is detected, use an approved pesticide. Certain vegetables, such as squash, corn, and cucumbers, are especially insect- and disease-prone during late summer and fall.

Frost Protection

You can extend the season of tender vegetables by protecting them through the first early frost. In Alabama, we often enjoy several weeks of good growing conditions after the first frost. Cover growing beds or rows with burlap or a floating row cover supported by stakes or wire to keep the material from directly touching the plants. Protect individual plants by covering them with milk jugs, paper caps, or water-holding walls.

Most semi hardy and hardy vegetables require little or no frost protection, but semi hardy vegetables should be harvested before a heavy freeze, and root crops such as carrots and radishes should be harvested or mulched heavily before a hard freeze. Mulched root crops can often be harvested well into the winter, and during mild winters, harvest may continue until spring.

Table 1. Fall Vegetable Planting Guide

Vegetables	Suggested Planting[1]	Specific Characteristics	Inches Between Plants	Planting Depth (inches)	Cold Tolerance	Days to Maturity
Beets	July 15 to August 15	Ruby Queen, Early Wonder, Red Ace, Pacemaker II	2	0.5 to 1.0	Semi-hardy	55 to 60
Broccoli	July 15 to August 15	DeCicco, Packman, Premium Crop, Green Duke, Emperor	18	0.5 to 1.0	Hardy	70 to 80
Brussels sprouts	July 1 to 15	Long Island Improved, Jade Cross Hybrid	20	0.5 to 1.0	Hardy	90 to 100
Cabbage (plants)	August 1 to 15	Round Dutch, Early Jersey Wakefield, Red Express, Red Rookie	12	0.5 to 1.0	Hardy	70 to 80
Cabbage, Chinese	August 1 to 15	Pak Choi, Mei Ching, Jade Pagoda, China Pride	12	0.5 to 1.0	Hardy	75 to 85

Vegetables	Suggested Planting[1]	Specific Characteristics	Inches Between Plants	Planting Depth (inches)	Cold Tolerance	Days to Maturity
Carrots	July 1 to 15	Danvers Half Long, Spartan Bonus, Little Finger, Thumbelina, Scarlet Nantes	2	0.25 to 0.5	Hardy	85 to 95
Cauliflower	August 1 to 15	Early Snowball "A", Violet Queen, Snowcrown	18	0.5 to 1.0	Semi-hardy	55 to 65
Collards	July 15 to August 15	Vates, Morris' Improved Heading, Carolina, Blue Max	18	0.5 to 1.0	Hardy	60 to 100
Cucumbers	August 1 to 15	Poinsett 76, Sweet Slice, County Fair '83, Salad Bush, Fanfare	10	1.0 to 1.5	Tender	40 to 50
Kale	August 15 to September 1	Green Curled Scotch, Early Siberian, Vates, Dwarf Blue Curled Scotch, Blue Knight	6	0.5 to 1.0	Hardy	40 to 50
Kohlrabi	August 1 to September 1	White Vienna, Grand Duke Hybrid	4	0.5 to 1.0	Hardy	50 to 60
Lettuce (leaf)	August 1 to September 1	Grand Rapids, Salad Bowl, Buttercrunch, Red Sails, Romulus	6	0.25 to 0.5	Semi-hardy	40 to 50
Onions (seeds)	September 1 to 30	Texas 1015, Granex 33, Candy	4	0.5 to 1.0	Hardy	130 to 150
Onions (sets or plants)	September 1 to 15	Ebenezer, Early Grano	4	--	Hardy	60 to 80
Radishes	August 15 to September 15	Early Scarlet Globe, Cherry Belle, Snowbells, White Icicle	1	0.5 to 1.0	Hardy	25 to 30
Radish, Diakon	August 15 to September 15	April Cross, H. N. Cross	4	0.5 to 1.0	Hardy	60 to 75
Rutabagas	July 1 to August 1	American Purple Top, Laurentian	4	0.5 to 1.0	Semi-hardy	70 to 80
Spinach	August 1 to 15	Hybrid #7, Dark Green Bloomsdale, Tyee Hybrid	6	0.5 to 1.0	Hardy	50 to 60
Turnips	August 1 to 31	Purple Top White Globe, Just Right, Tokyo Cross Hybrid, White Egg, All Top	2	0.5 to 1.0	Hardy	55 to 60

J.M. Kemble, Extension Vegetable Specialist, Professor, Horticulture, Auburn University

PDF: https://www.aces.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/ANR-1422-Basics-of-Fall-Vegetable-Gardening_070319La.pdf

Autauga County
Master Gardeners Association

Lunch & Learn 2025

3rd WEDNESDAY of EVERY Month

12:00-1:00 P.M.

Trinity Prattville Church, 610 Fairview Ave., Prattville 36066

ALABAMA MASTER GARDENERS
ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM

AUTAUGA COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

extension
ALABAMA A&M & AUBURN UNIVERSITIES

BRING A SACK LUNCH **FREE PROGRAM** **DRINKS PROVIDED**

15 January	**Seed Starting for Your Summer Veg**	Mallory Kelley, Horticulturist, ACES
19 February	**Garden Tools & Maintenance**	Mike Forster, Capital City Master Gardener
19 March	**Hydrangeas in the Southern Garden**	David Doggett, Advanced Master Gardener
16 April	**African Violets**	Susan O'Conner, Advanced Master Gardener
21 May	**Planting for Butterflies**	Jane Mobley, Advanced Master Gardener
18 June	**Landscaping with Herbs**	Debbie Boutelier, Advanced Master Gardener
16 July	**Daylilies for Your Garden**	Terese Goodson, Capital City Master Gardener
20 August	**Muscadine Season is Here!**	David Lawrence, Commercial Horticulturist, ACES
17 September	**Techniques for Growing Sprouts & Microgreens**	Janell Diggs, Advanced Master Gardener
15 October	**Zone Maps: New, Old & Untrue?**	Hayes Jackson, Horticulturist, ACES
19 November	**Holiday Decorating with Nature**	Jane McCarthy, Horticulturist & Master Gardener
17 December	**Plants off the Beaten Path**	Robin Snyder, Central Alabama Master Gardener

ALL ARE WELCOME! For more information, contact the Autauga County Extension Office (334) 361-7273.

Pumpkin Pie

1 cup sugar

½ teaspoon salt

1 ½ teaspoons cinnamon

½ teaspoon nutmeg spice

½ teaspoon ginger spice

½ teaspoon allspice spice

1 - 15 ounce can cooked or canned pumpkin

2 eggs

1 – 12 ounce can low fat evaporated milk

1 unbaked pie shell

Directions:

Mix sugar, salt and spices and add to pumpkin. Stir until blended. Beat eggs slightly and add milk. Add this to the pumpkin mixture and stir until well blended. Pour into unbaked pastry shell and bake at 425F for 15 minutes. Then lower temperature to 350F and continue baking about 45-50 minutes or until custard is done when a knife inserted half way between the center and the edge of the pie comes out clean. Refrigerate if not served at once.

Serves 8

Nutrient Analysis, per serving: 104 calories, 22g. carbohydrate, 3g. protein, 1g. fat, 200mg. sodium

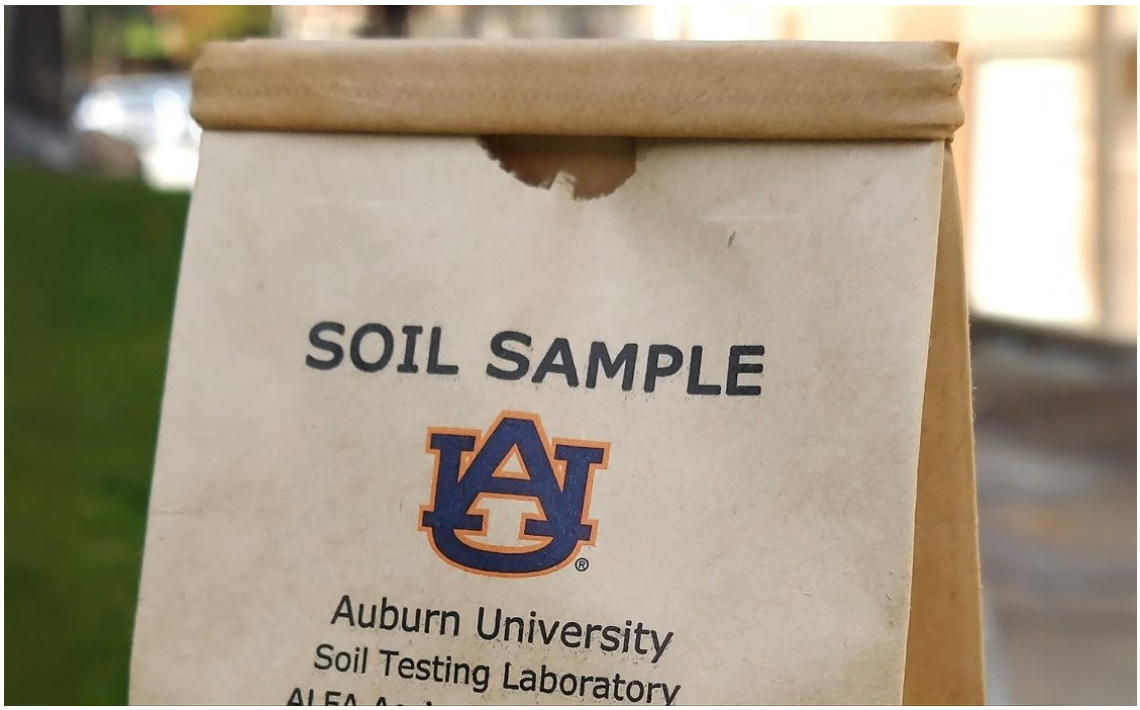
https://extension.uga.edu/content/dam/extension-county-offices/henry-county/facs/Pumpkin%20Pie%20Recipe.pdf

How Much Fertilizer Do I Apply?

Chip East

Original Article

https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/crop-production/how-much-fertilizer-do-i-apply/



Whether you are a commercial grower or home gardener, no one should pay for or apply fertilizer that is not needed. The following information provides an overview of soil testing procedures and demonstrates how test results translate into practical fertilizer applications.

Soil Testing

Before applying fertilizer, it is important to first perform a soil test to find out how much and what type of fertilizer is needed, if any at all. Soil samples can be sent to the Auburn University Soil, Forage, and Water Testing Laboratory for testing at a cost of $10 per sample. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System publication, Home Soil Testing, describes how to collect and send a soil sample for testing:

https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/counties-statewide/home-soil-testing-taking-a-sample

There is also a video of this procedure on the Alabama Extension YouTube Channel:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWHAdI-9Pfk&list=PLkNoAmOtt___AqOC5Xx_u-hjr9oK4zh8B&index=4

From this simple procedure, you will get recommendations of what nutrients—such as nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, and magnesium—your soil needs, as well as and possible lime requirements and what time of year to apply the fertilizer. When your soil test results come back, it will detail what type and how many pounds of different nutrients to apply on a per-acre basis. It also provides these recommendations per 1,000 square feet for those with plots that are less than 1 acre. For clarity, the following information provides fertilizer information on a per-acre basis. One acre is 43,560 square feet if you would like to calculate how many acres you are planting.

There is also fertilizer calculators on the Soil, Forage, and Water Testing Laboratory's website that are easy to use once you have the soil test results. Find those calculators at aaes.auburn.edu/soil-forage-water-testing-lab/.

Calculating Fertilizer Applications

You may have noticed that there are numbers written on fertilizer bags, such 8-8-8, 10-10-10, 13-13-13, and 17-17-17. However, what do these numbers mean? These numbers represent the percentages of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium that are in that specific bag. A 50-pound bag of 13-13-13 fertilizer does not have 50 pounds of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. Instead, that bag has 6.5 pounds of each nutrient (50 x 0.13 = 6.5).

Example 1

If your soil test results recommended 80 pounds of nitrogen, 80 pounds of phosphorus, and 80 pounds of potassium per acre, what fertilizer materials should be applied? Since nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus are all needed, a complete

fertilizer—such as 8-8-8, 10-10-10, 13-13-13, or 17-17-17—will work, but different amounts of each are needed.

Simply divide the pounds of fertilizer needed, in this case 80 pounds, by the percentage of the nutrient in the bag. If 8-8-8 is used, dividing 80 pounds by 8 percent (0.08) will give the answer of 1,000 pounds. That means 1,000 pounds of 8-8-8 is required to fertilize 1 acre with 80 pounds of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. If 13-13-13 is used, dividing 80 pounds by 13 percent (0.13) will give the answer of 615 pounds. That means 615 pounds of 13-13-13 are required to fertilize 1 acre with 80 pounds of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. If you were to calculate this with 10-10-10 and 17-17-17, you would calculate them the same way. It would take 800 pounds of 10-10-10 or 471 pounds of 17-17-17 to obtain the desired 80 pounds of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium per acre (80/0.10 = 800 and 80/0.17 = 471).

These calculations will tell you not only how much to apply but will also help you decide on the most economical fertilizer. If you need 1,000 pounds of 8-8-8 or 615 pounds of 13-13-13 per acre, simply check prices to see what these fertilizers will cost per pound and calculate how much is needed for your plot. This is not always true, but usually the fertilizers that have the highest amount of nutrients cost more per bag, but you need less bags per acre. Therefore, the highest cost per bag may end up the most economical.

Example 2

What if your soil test results recommend 120 pounds of nitrogen but no phosphorus or potassium. It is common to have a soil test with this type of recommendation. This means you have proper amounts of phosphorus and potassium in your soils and do not need any more of these elements for proper plant growth. Applying fertilizers such as 8-8-8 or 13-13-13 would be applying unneeded nutrients. Applying more than needed will not cause the plants to grow any better and will cost you more money. Fertilizer materials with nutrient contents such as 34-0-0 are common o find and just what this example needs.

Divide the pounds of fertilizer per acre needed, in this case 120 pounds, by the percentage of nutrient being used. If 34-0-0 is used, dividing 120 pounds by 34 percent (0.34) will give the answer of 353 pounds. This field would need 353 pounds of 34-0-0 per acre to obtain the recommended 120 pounds of nitrogen. If only nitrogen was needed, it is much more economical to use a nitrogen-only fertilizer, such as 34-0-0, instead of a complete fertilizer. In this example, if someone used a complete fertilizer, such as 13-13-13, to supply the 120 pounds of actual nitrogen per acre, then 923 pounds of fertilizer would have been applied per acre. This would have been much more costly for the applicator and would have applied more elements than needed.

Call several suppliers and find out what fertilizer materials are selling for in your area and compare prices per acre not prices per bag. Since more bags of one product may be needed than another, the cheapest price per bag may not be the most economical.

Additional Articles

Garden Fertilizer

https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/lawn-garden/garden-fertilizer/

Fertilize with Care – Smart Yards Recipe Series

https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/landscaping/fertilize-with-care-smart-yards-recipe-series/

Fertilizing the Organic Garden

https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/vegetables-lawn-garden/fertilizing-the-organic-garden/

Essential Plant Nutrients

https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/farming/essential-plant-elements/

Upcoming Birthdays

OCTOBER

James Hussey 10/03

Chuk Shirley 10/11

Dawn Whitehead 10/14

Linda McCullough 10/20

Pam Hattemer 10/21

Randy Henderson 10/25

Karen Bell 10/30

DECEMBER

Linda Blackwell 12/01

Soyna Moore 12/03

Jackie Raines 12/03

Sheila Pearson 12/07

Paula Seamon 12/12

Jonna Turberville 12/16

Debra Atwell 12/20

Catherine Brooks 12/22

Cheri Cook 12/25

Mallory Kelley 12/30

NOVEMBER

Glenda Armstrong 11/01

Valera Brown 11/08

Dale Huff 11/10

Katherine Chapman 11/10

Darrue Sharpe 11/10

Deborah Boutelier 11/14

Terri MacLaren 11/15

Jane McCarthy 11/17

Sondra Henley 11/19

June Booth 11/21

Shannon Mayes 11/27

Please let us know if we missed your birthday ☹

Embrace Fall with Flavor

A Guide to Fall Spices for Flavor and Health

Kylie Williams and Carol Connell

Original Article

https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/health/embrace-fall-with-flavor-a-guide-to-fall-spices-for-flavor-and-health/

As fall approaches, many people start to crave warm, comforting flavors. Fall spices, like cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves, evoke the season's coziness and offer a healthy way to enhance meals without extra sugar or sodium. These spices add depth to both sweet and savory dishes, making them perfect for seasonal cooking.

Health Benefits of Fall Spices

Incorporating fall spices into your diet enriches flavor and offers health benefits, such as antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects, all while embracing autumn's tastes in everyday meals and drinks. Cinnamon, ginger, and cloves are a few of the great alternatives to use when cooking and baking. Using these spices instead of added sugars or sodium enhances flavor without the health risks of excess sugar and salt, making your meals both tasty and beneficial.

Cinnamon

Cinnamon is a beloved fall spice that is known for its warm, sweet flavor with a touch of spice. This versatile spice adds a comforting and aromatic element to sweet and savory dishes. Its distinct taste is perfect for enhancing a range of recipes. You can enjoy it in the morning on top of oatmeal and yogurt or sprinkled in your coffee and tea. Let it shine in a classic autumn recipe, such as the Apple Cinnamon Bars recipe from the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) MyPlate website (https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/apple-cinnamon-bars). You can also add it to more savory dishes, such as stews, roasts, and curries. Whatever way you use it, cinnamon can bring a subtle warmth that compliments other ingredients.

Ginger

Ginger is a vibrant fall spice with a peppery, slightly sweet flavor and a distinct kick. It adds a zesty warmth to both sweet and savory dishes, making it perfect for autumn cooking. Start your morning by blending ginger into smoothies or stirring it into oatmeal for a spicy twist. In baking, ginger shines in recipes like gingerbread cookies and spice cakes, adding warmth and aroma. For savory dishes, ginger enhances stir-fries, soups, and curries, bringing a lively kick. Whether in sweet or savory dishes, ginger adds a refreshing, warming depth to your fall recipes.

Nutmeg

Nutmeg is a fragrant fall spice with a sweet, nutty flavor and a hint of warmth. It is a versatile spice, adding rich depth to a wide range of sweet and savory dishes. You can incorporate nutmeg by sprinkling it on seasonal dishes, such as apple or sweet potato casseroles. In baked goods, nutmeg pairs beautifully with pumpkin pie and muffins. It also enhances savory dishes like soups, stews, and roasted vegetables, such as the USDA's Spiced Baked Squash:

https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/spiced-baked-squash

Cloves

Cloves are a bold fall spice with a strong, sweet, and slightly bitter flavor. Add whole cloves to hot cider or coffee for a cozy drink, or use them in baking, such as pumpkin pie or gingerbread. Cloves also enhance roasted meats, stews, and marinades with their rich, aromatic flavor, making them a versatile addition to autumn meals.

Allspice

Allspice offers a rich, complex flavor with hints of cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg, making it ideal for fall dishes. Add it to baked apples and oats for a warm start to your day, or use it in baking, like in pecan cookies and apple crumbles. In savory dishes, allspice enhances stews, curries, and meat rubs with a full-bodied taste. Allspice adds a distinctive warmth to your fall meals, whether sweet or savory.

Cardamom

Cardamom is an aromatic spice with a sweet, floral flavor and a hint of peppery warmth. Start your day by adding cardamom to chai tea, or use it in baking with muffins, cinnamon rolls, or spiced cakes. For savory dishes, it enhances curries, rice, and stews with its subtle, exotic touch. Whether in sweet treats or hearty meals, cardamom brings a unique flavor to fall cooking.

Leave the Leaves: Benefiting Insects & Wildlife

Katherine Terry-Warner

Original Article

https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/forestry-wildlife/leave-the-leaves-benefiting-insects-wildlife/

You may have seen the slogan, leave the leaves, on your social media feed, encouraging people to skip the annual fall raking and backyard cleanup. However, what does that mean and why would you want an untidy yard over the winter? While many people think their yard should look tidy and organized, a messy yard during fall and winter is much more beneficial to pollinators and backyard wildlife. It is widely known that pollinators are vital for gardens and flower beds. Insects are also an important food source for the birds that people love to feed and watch throughout the year. Whether your yard is small and urban or a rural farmstead, you can leave the leaves this fall to encourage the overwintering of beneficial insects and pollinator species, while also benefiting a host of wildlife species.

Benefits

According to the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, leaves provide insulation and shelter for a variety of insects. Many native bee species nest in the ground, plant stems, or pieces of wood. Many moths and butterflies overwinter in leaves and soil in the form of eggs, cocoons, or caterpillars, some of which will forage on leaf litter. Others, such as the mourning cloak butterfly (*Nymphalis antiopa*), overwinter as adults in brush piles. Fireflies— which are experiencing population decline across the country—spend 1 to 2 years in their larvae form, the immature, worm-like stage of their life cycle. They feed on snails and worms found in leaf litter and soil. If you rake and bag your leaves in the fall, you may be removing these insects from your yard.

Many bird species—such as the eastern towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) and ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapilla*)—forage in leaf litter. Amphibians and reptiles—such as salamanders and eastern box turtles (*Terrapene Carolina*) will hibernate under leaf litter. Some solitary ground-roosting bat species, such as the eastern red bat (Lasiurus borealis), may also temporarily use leaf litter to keep warm in the winter, but it is unlikely to encounter these bats outside of forested settings.

In addition to supporting pollinator and wildlife habitat, leaving a layer of leaves in your yard or mulching with leaves around trees, shrubs, and other plants can regulate soil temperature, maintain soil moisture, and provide nutrients for plants and soil microbes. The National Wildlife Federation suggests raking leaves from your sidewalks, driveways, and turfgrass and placing them in your garden beds and under native trees in 3-to-4-inch-deep layers while maintaining a few inches of space between the tree trunk and the mulch layer. You can also make piles of leaves and brush around your yard to provide additional habitat. These will decompose into compost over the winter, effectively keeping yard waste out of local landfills.

Cranberry Pecan Pie

1 cup all-purpose flour

1 cup white sugar

¼ teaspoon salt

1 cup fresh cranberries

½ cup chopped pecans

½ cup butter, melted

2 eggs, beaten

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

½ teaspoon cinnamon

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease one 9 inch pie pan.

Combine the flour, sugar, salt, and cinnamon. Stir in the cranberries and the pecans, and toss to coat. Strip in the butter, beaten eggs, and vanilla extract. Spread the batter into the prepared pan.

Bake at 350 degrees F for 40 minutes, or until a wooden pick inserted near the center comes out clean. Serve warm with whipped cream or ice cream.

Nutrient Analysis, per serving: 325 calories, 39.6 g. carbohydrate, 3.8 g. protein, 17.6 g. fat, 1.7 g. dietary fiber, 171 mg. sodium, 71 mg. cholesterol

https://extension.uga.edu/content/dam/extension-county-offices/henry-county/facs/Cranberry%20Pecan%20Pie%20Recipe.pdf

Prattville Garden

Jane McCarthy, Chair

Prattville Garden has survived summer and its heat, and there are treasures if you know where to look. We have done the usual fall garden jobs…weeding, watering, trimming, deadheading, potting up plants for the plant sale, etc. New master gardener interns are being instructed on flower garden practices and garden tours continue to be given to visitors.

American Beautyberry *Callicarpa americana*

Common Chicory *Chicorium intybus*

Oxblood Lily or Schoolhouse Lily *Rhodophiala bifida*

Goji Berry *Lycium barbarum*

Japanese Anise *Illicium anisatum*

Argrimony *Agrimonia eupatoria*

Dahlia *Dahlia* sp.

First 7 photos by Jane McCarthy

Giant Swallowtail larvae on Rue *Ruta graveolens*

This photo by Dian Owens

Editors Corner

John Carrick

Fall is a wonderful time of year. The weather is beautiful and the leaves on trees begin to turn, creating a beautiful tapestry of colors. Football season has started. Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas are just around the corner.

As leaves begin to fall, various animals take up residence in the leaves. If you are out in the woods, please be careful of snakes, especially when walking through the leaves.

I thought this was a good article on how to handle snake encounters:

https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/forestry-wildlife/snakes-in-the-fall-how-to-handle-a-snake-encounter

I hope everyone had a great and successful summer season.

Wiki Commons

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:An_Autumn_Leaf_and_a_Burst_of_Afternoon_Sun.jpg

Please notify the web site team of any suggestions or issues at :

web@autaugamastergardeners.org

Finally, if you have any articles, pictures, etc., to be included in the Dirty Digs newsletter, please email them to: **dd@autaugamastergardeners.com**

Newsletter feedback and suggestions are always welcome.

May God continue to Bless each and every one of you.

Johnny

Autauga County Master Gardeners Association

Autauga County Extension Office

2226 AL-14 W, Suite E
Autaugaville, AL 36003

Phone: 334-361-7273

Autauga County Master Gardener Volunteers are…

Motivated – to share their knowledge and expertise.

Accessible – to other Master Gardeners, horticulture and Extension professionals, and the public.

Service-oriented – to enhance their communities and the environment.

Trained – by Cooperative Extension in current horticultural practices.

Excited – about meeting other people who enjoy gardening.

Research ambassadors – who provide cutting-edge horticultural information to consumers.

Next Issue December 31st

Please submit articles, no later than December 15

Prattvillage Garden
139 1st Street, Prattville, AL 36067

Images courtesy of WikiMedia Commons
https://commons.wikimedia.org/

You can reserve the garden for an event—contact Party in the District

Honor Bricks:
https://donationbricks.com/acmga

AMGA Event Page:
https://mg.aces.edu/autauga/events-calendar