



WINTER 2017

GWINNETT EXTENSION NEWS

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Happy New Year!

Winter flowering colors the landscape

During winter, homeowners miss the beautiful spring and summer flowers. With the exception of evergreen plants, the winter landscape appears quite bare and lifeless. But even in the dead of winter, there are several flowering plants that can add color and life to the landscape. The most obvious plants are pansies, snapdragons, and ornamental kale, annuals that produce a colorful display when planted around our homes and businesses. However, there are other winter flowering plants that can beautify the landscape.

Winter honeysuckle is a deciduous shrub with creamy-white flowers that have a lemon scented fragrance. It can grow to six feet tall, makes a good hedge, and can easily be planted in masses. After flowering, red berries form during the spring and early summer which are attractive to wildlife. This species of honeysuckle should not be confused with the highly invasive Japanese honeysuckle vine which can easily take over the landscape if not properly controlled.

Witch-hazel consists of several species, but in general most have yellow to red fragrant flowers that bloom from January to March. This deciduous shrub has an upright growth, is loosely branched, and should be pruned after flowering to keep its form. Its brilliant yellow to orange fall foliage brightens the landscape and is quite attractive when growing next to a wooded area.

Lenten rose is an attractive herbaceous winter blooming perennial. The flowers come in a variety of colors, and eventually turn green before falling off in early spring. One of the plant's most attractive features is its dark green leathery foliage. It prefers shady locations, and once established requires only minimal care. Lenten roses should be planted in moist, well drained soil full of organic matter, and fertilized every spring. Once they become established, they are long lasting perennials and reseed easily producing abundant seedlings. The plant is a slow grower, does not transplant well, but will recover slowly when moved.

In spite of growing in the dead of winter, these flowering plants can add beauty to your yard.



Winter honeysuckle is a deciduous shrub with creamy-white flowers that have a lemon scented fragrance. (Photograph from the University of Connecticut Plant Database).



Witchhazel (Photograph by Chris Evans, University of Illinois).

Written by Timothy Daly, Gwinnett County Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent

Reducing the risk of freeze damage to plants

Homeowners are concerned about the impact a hard freeze this winter may have on their garden plants. The potential for a plant to suffer from freezing temperatures in the home landscape depends on several factors.

First, are the trees, shrubs and other plants in your landscape adaptable to the cold temperatures of our metro-Atlanta winters? Second, have your plants been properly located and planted in the yard? Some shrubs, like azaleas and camellias, can suffer from severe injury when planted in sites with open exposures and full sun. Always place these plants where they will receive adequate protection from winter sun and the wind.

Cold injury can occur on fruit, stems, leaves, trunk and roots. After a hard freeze, examine the plant material for damage. However, it is sometimes difficult to determine cold damage a day or even a week after a severe freeze. The damage may go unnoticed until the plant fails to come out of dormancy in the spring.

A bronze coloration of the foliage, particularly on certain azaleas and boxwoods, may be observed just a few days after a hard freeze. On privet, ligustrums, and camellia the foliage often turns purple. The discoloration is simply the plant's response to a sudden chill but is still perfectly healthy.

Some plants, such as azaleas, camellias, and hydrangeas, suffer from bark splitting caused by hard freezes. Injury from split bark appears later in the year as dead twigs

and branches. The damage is most observable on the lower stems closer to the soil surface.

An easy way to determine if the plant material is dead or alive is to scratch the bark with your fingernail. If the stem tissue is green or white where you scratch, then that wood is still alive. If, however, the stem tissue is brown or brittle, then that branch is dead. The deadwood should be removed in the early spring after freezing weather has passed.



These burford hollies have suffered some late season freeze damage, but they will survive. (Photograph by Timothy Daly, Gwinnett County Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent)

To lessen or prevent cold damage, follow these tips:

- Maintain a two to three-inch layer of mulch around plants at all times. It helps to insulate root systems and protect the soil from rapid temperature fluctuations.
- Provide adequate water to newly-planted shrubs and trees to keep them hydrated and prevent the plants from drying due to cold air and frozen soil.

Written by Timothy Daly, Gwinnett County Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent

Making a change for the better

Ines Beltran, Gwinnett County Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Agent

Most of us will find at least one reason that motivates us to make a change in our behavior. How important that reason is to us usually determines whether the behavior change becomes permanent. Motivators may include the desire to feel better, cut medical costs, or simply maintain good health in order to be around for grandchildren in the future.

Sometimes it is easier to focus on the positive rather than the negative, by substituting a healthier behavior for a less healthy behavior. For example, eating fruit more often for dessert rather than giving up dessert entirely. Here are some additional ideas to enhance your success in making any behavior change:

1. Be specific about how you will achieve a desired behavior. If you want to exercise more, make a specific action plan, such as for a specific length of time and frequency (10 minutes around the block, three times this week). Plan exactly how you will accomplish this new behavior by scheduling a time on your calendar for when you will do it. Set an alarm on your cell phone to ensure it will get done.

Making a change for the better

2. Write down your plan and put it where you will see it every day, such as on the bathroom mirror or on the refrigerator.
3. Tell friends and family about your plan so you will get their support or invite them to adopt the new habit with you.
4. Keep track of your progress by writing down on your calendar when you practiced the new behavior. At the end of the week you will see that you did accomplish what you intended to do. This will motivate you even more to keep at it.
5. Give yourself some type of a reward when you achieve your goal. A reward does not have to be expensive. It can be a new paperback book, a movie rental, or a new plant for your yard. Anything that you value and enjoy. You may consider small rewards all along as you achieve baby steps toward your larger goal.

An open invitation to 4th and 5th grade youth

All 4th and 5th graders!

Join us for a week of 4-H camp at Rock Eagle 4-H Center in Eatonton, Georgia (just 90 minutes from Gwinnett County). The week will focus on a Native American theme, consisting of three tribes: Cherokee, Shawnee, and Muskogee. We will explore the famous Rock Mound, slide down the water slide, and make lots of new friends.

Each maiden and brave stays busy throughout the week with a major interest class, which may include archery, entomology, forestry, herpetology, canoeing, or lake ecology. There are stories of Indian lore, nature hikes, and native crafts. At night there are variety shows, campfires, and an Indian pageant where campers will experience the thrill of an Indian legend.

When: Monday - Friday, June 26 - 30, 2017

Cost: \$350 includes lodging, food, transportation, insurance and a Gwinnett 4-H camp t-shirt. Payment plans are available for applications received by April 3, 2017.

For camp details and an application form, please visit

www.gwinnettextension.com

or call 678.377.4010.



For an order form, please visit,

www.gwinnettextension.com

or call 678.377.4010.



The Gwinnett Extension office is offering varieties of blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, figs, pomegranates, Goji berries, Native Azaleas, and other landscape plants for their annual sale. Pecan trees and the big Titan blueberry have also been added to the list.

We will be accepting pre-paid orders now through March 7.
There is always room for one more plant!

Winter 2017 classes and events

Controlling pests in and around the home • January 26

7:00pm to 8:00pm. Gwinnett County Extension Agent Timothy Daly will discuss ways to control termites and other pests and how pest control companies can best serve you. Norcross Human Services Center, 5030 Georgia Belle Court, Norcross. No charge but must register by January 24; contact Timothy Daly at 678.377.4010 or timothy.daly@gwinnettcountry.com.

Growing Up and Understanding It • Two dates in February

6:30pm to 8:00pm. February 6th for Boys ages 10-13; February 9th for Girls ages 9-13. An educational program designed for youth and their parents or guardians to learn about the physical and emotional changes during adolescence, the facts and misconceptions about puberty, and healthy self-care tips. Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center Auditorium, 75 Langley Drive, Lawrenceville. Reserve your seat at www.gwinnettextension.com or by calling 678.377.4010.

Organic gardening • February 7

7:00pm to 8:00pm. Gwinnett County Extension Agent Timothy Daly will cover the basic principles of organic gardening and separate the myths from the facts. Class will be held at the Norcross Human Services Center, 5030 Georgia Belle Court, Norcross. Class is free but must register by February 5. To register, call Timothy Daly at timothy.daly@gwinnettcountry.com or 678.377.4010.

An early start for a bountiful garden • February 21

7:00pm to 8:00pm. Gwinnett County Master Gardener Jane Burke will discuss how to start vegetable and flower plants from seed. Learn about different pots, soils, seeds, and seed companies and how to use them to get your garden off to a fine start. Class will be held at the Norcross Human Services Center, 5030 Georgia Belle Court, Norcross. Class is free but must register by February 17. Contact Timothy Daly at timothy.daly@gwinnettcountry.com or 678.377.4010.

Cooperative Extension Service

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|------------|--------------------|
| Mary Black | Extension Director |
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| Marilyn Farnsworth | Administrative Supervisor |
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| To Be Determined | Administrative Support |
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| Sharon Cassidy | Administrative Support |
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Ag/ Horticulture/ Natural Resources

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| Timothy Daly | County Agent (Ag/Hort) |
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| Kathy Parent | Program Assistant (Ag) |
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EFNEP Program

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| Alma Rhoden | Program Assistant |
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4-H and Youth Development

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| Pam Bloch | County Agent (4-H) |
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| Kaitlyn Turner | 5 th Grade Programs |
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| Barbara Larson | 6 th Grade Programs |
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Family and Consumer Sciences

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| Ines Beltran | County Agent (FACS) |
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| Kim Fritz | Program Assistant |
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Gwinnett Cooperative Extension has served Gwinnett County residents since 1919. We offer programs in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, Agriculture/Horticulture/ Natural Resources, 4-H and Youth.

We are proud to be a part of Gwinnett County to assist with landscaping, soil testing, natural resources, promoting youth programs, teaching educational classes, and assisting consumers with unbiased, researched information from the University of Georgia.

The University of Georgia and Ft. Valley State College, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and counties of the state cooperating.

The Cooperative Extension offers educational programs, assistance and materials to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability. An Equal opportunity/affirmative action organization committed to a diverse work force.



GWINNETT COUNTY

gwinnettcountry

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