

# A Bit of Dirt

Fall 2021

A Newsletter of the  
Gwinnett County Master Gardeners Association  
*Promoting Gardening Through Education & Volunteering*



Native Azaleas by Lisa Klein

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## **From the Editor's Desk.**

Well, fall is finally here with it's beautiful blue skies, that little "nip" in the morning air and, of course, fall gardening. This time of year presents so many opportunities to get out in the garden when the temperature is more moderate. You can practice some of your propagation techniques like layering your rosemary bush (for the plant sale next spring). Pot up some bulbs for the holiday season or plant some shrubs now to give them all fall and winter to establish a good root system.

My favorite activity though is working in our Harvest Gwinnett Vines Community Gardens. There are a total of 9 Gwinnett County community gardens around the county where you can rent one or more raised beds for your own gardening and also help with the share beds where the produce is donated to a local food coop. It's still not too late to put in your own fall garden transplants (think broccoli, kale, collards, cabbage, lettuce, radishes, bok choy) that will thrive until December or longer.

We're trying to increase the potential for production in several different ways. (See "SE Gwinnett Food Coop" in this issue for more ideas.) First is succession planting where a crop is removed and replaced with another crop as soon as it is done. Our second planting of cucumbers, zucchini and summer squash is going gang busters as are all the brassica transplants. We put in a fall garden that will keep producing until December or later instead of "putting the garden to bed" now. We're making use of the chain-link fence around the community garden as a trellis for blackberries and as a site for perennial asparagus and blueberries (scheduled to go in next spring). We're growing up instead of out. Tomatoes, cucumbers, pole beans and sugar snap peas are grown on bamboo poles or trellises to conserve space and make picking easier (you know, our backs aren't getting any younger). We're establishing a pollinator and herb garden along the fence too to draw in the pollinators.

All that said, we still have our challenges. Not all the raised beds have been rented since this is the first year for many of the community gardens and people may not be aware of them yet. If you're interested, you can get a discount on the rest of this garden year, October through March, for \$20 instead of the regular \$35 annual rental fee for April through March. ([application](#)) Most of our gardeners are "newbies"

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too so that gives our two Master Gardeners (**Becky Wolary and me**) a chance to share some of our gardening knowledge. The community gardens and share gardens are organic so that presents a challenge controlling garden pests and diseases (hand squishing is the "go to" control). I'm learning a lot about pest recognition and alternative methods of control. Come out to the Vines Community Gardens, 3500 Oak Grove Rd. in Loganville on Sat. Oct. 23, 9 am for an tour of the gardens and a little talk on "Fall Gardening."

It's very satisfying to see these lush beds develop into what may be a year-round garden that produces hundreds and hundreds of pounds of produce for the Southeast Coop.



Harvest Gwinnett Vines Community Gardens

Happy Fall!

**Shirley Bohm**, MGEV

Editor, *Bit of Dirt*

## **Message from the President**

It has been an amazing summer with many events returning like the American Hydrangea Society Garden Tour, our own plant sale, and gardens reopening as folks get vaccinated. GCMGA returned to live meetings in August. Bethesda Senior Center is welcoming us back on our usual third Monday of the month. According to Gwinnett County rules, we cannot do our usual potluck dinner. We'll have our social time together starting at 6:30 PM then our meeting will begin at 7:00 PM. We'll ask anyone not vaccinated or that is fragile to please wear a mask.

**Ann Langley** and her committee are working hard on our Facebook page and **Krystal Lowell** is working on our new Instagram account. **Ann** and **Krystal** are thinking of interactive activities and contests for both platforms – more information to come. Ann is also looking for a replacement chair as her business is growing and she'd like to step back to being on the committee not leading it. Please contact Lynda or Ann if you can help take on this fun task.

Gardening is continuing to expand its grip on many new people. Please share any articles or posts you see on our Gwinnett Master Gardener Facebook page on your own pages. We want to increase our FB traffic to share more scientifically sound gardening information with more people. You can post on the FB page as well and share pictures and links to scientific articles you find useful. Be sure to include a comment as to why you found the article interesting or tell folks the story behind the picture. If you are traveling this fall visiting gardens, parks, or other natural areas feel free to share pictures with your GCMGA family.

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I'm still enjoying the concurrent sessions from the International Master Gardener virtual conference. SO much knowledge out there. Went to our state GMGA conference in Augusta. I hope many of you had an opportunity to see it.

The 2021 Great Georgia Pollinator Census in August was amazing. The data is starting to come in and is fascinating. Check out the results at: <https://ggapc.org/>.

My front yard veggie garden did fairly well, and the peppers are still producing. The best thing is that we're on our third brood of monarch larvae. The plants are looking pretty rough, but the caterpillars do not seem to care. Am trying to get fall seeds in the ground and I have a new load of plants from the Hall County MG Expo to plant. Great native plant nurseries were represented there.

I'm also in the middle of Gwinnett Extensions Master Naturalist class with 5 other GCMGA members! We're learning so much not the least of which is how amazing the park system is in Gwinnett. If demand is sufficient, **Tim Daly** will be offering again next year. I highly recommend it!

I hope everyone is having a chance to get together with friends and family. I can't wait for our October meeting and hearing from **Jackie Daniell** about the South Gwinnett Coop Garden!!!

Happy Fall to ALL!!!

Cheers,

**Lynda Pollock, MGEV**, President GCMGA

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## [Carole Teja's Hypertufa Workshop.](#)

We had 16 Master Gardeners gather to learn the fine art of Hypertufa from **Carole Teja** on September 22. The informative demonstration was held in the second-floor conference room of the Extension Office building.



Hypertufa is intended as a manufactured substitute for natural tufa. Tufa is a slowly precipitated limestone rock and being very porous, it is favorable for plant growth. Hypertufa is made from Peat Moss, Pearlite and Portland cement and is popular for making garden ornaments, pots and landforms. Because it is relatively light, compared with terracotta or traditional concrete, Hypertufa can withstand harsh winters (down to -22 °F).

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**Carole** demonstrated how to make forms from re-inforced cardboard boxes, bowls and the large plant leaf of an Elephant Ear. Once the Hypertufa material is formed, it must cure 4-5 days without moving. Then, **Carole** recommends aging 3-4 months to leach out the lime from the cement before plants the Hypertufa trough, leaf or other structure.

**Tim Mullen** graciously offered his backyard and garage for the hands-on portion of the workshop which was held on October 13, the rain date.

We all had fun getting our hands in Hypertufa!!

Workshops of this nature are open to all members and friends of GCMGA who are current on their membership and dues. Registration is required. Workshops fall under Education and the current Chair is **Jessica Miller**.

If you have an idea for an Educational Workshop, please contact Jessica at [jessicamiller007@comcast.net](mailto:jessicamiller007@comcast.net) and let her know your idea. We are always looking for fun ways to learn!

Submitted by **Jessica Miller**, Publicity Committee Chair

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## **Hospitality Committee Report.**

Our Master Gardener Appreciation Picnic was held on September 20<sup>th</sup>. As usual, it was an excellent time with good food, great fellowship, beautiful decorations and fun for all even though the weather wasn't wonderful. Thanks to all who braved the weather. Putting together an event like this takes a lot of work by many people. Thanks to **Liz Tarver** for putting together the beautiful flower arrangements; to **Suzi Chaapel, Jean Patterson, Maggie Howze, Deborah Duello** for getting everything ready (covering the tables, organizing the food and cleaning up); to **Margaret Molyson** for the fun bingo game, and to **Karen McGinty** and **Lynda Pollock** for picking up the food. We couldn't have done it without all this help.

The Hospitality Committee is always looking for new people to join the committee. If you want some more hours, come be a member of our team. Responsibilities of the committee are to arrive at meetings around

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5 PM, set up tables, put out paper goods, make flower arrangements and other decoration for special events, help put out food and drinks and clean up.

Submitted by **Alice Verner**, Hospitality Committee Chair

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## **Birdhouses! Birdhouses! Birdhouses!**



It was a fun morning! Several gathered at the Mary Kistner Center to build bluebird houses. **Carol Hassell**, on behalf of Georgia Piedmont Trust, had applied to the 2021 GCMGA grant program and been awarded monies to build these. **Carol, Karen McGinty, Becky Wolary** and GPLT folks – **Rebecca Spitler** and **Terry Dempsey** joined **Carol** to build these houses. **Terry** was the work working whiz and these houses went together quickly and 38 houses were put together. Two will stay at the Kistner Center and the others will be distributed upon request from members to our school gardens and Gwinnett County Parks. Contact Martha Whitman for details.

Submitted by **Becky Wolary**, MGEV

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## **Next GCMGA Meeting on Monday, Oct. 18th.**

The next meeting of the Gwinnett County Master Gardeners Association will be held on Monday, October 18, 2021 at Bethesda Senior Center with **Jacquelyn Wilson Daniell** presenting "Vegetable Gardening at the S.E. Gwinnett Co-op Garden."

**Jackie** has had a life-long love of gardening which she credits to her family and especially time spent with her maternal grandparents on their farm in Greensboro, GA. She grew up in Atlanta, completed her undergraduate degree in Business Administration-Finance and received her MBA, both from Georgia State University. After a 40+ years in banking, she ditched the suit, pearls and briefcase for jeans, tee-shirt, and garden tools. **Jackie** began volunteering at the S.E. Gwinnett Co-op Garden and completed the MGEV program in the class of 2017. She

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currently is the project leader for two MGEV projects: the S.E. Gwinnett Co-op Garden and the SUMC Dirt Buddies.

**Description of Program:** To provide an example of how one MGEV vegetable garden is managed and operates during the year. Vegetable gardening is not just about planting and harvesting. The program will outline the process of planning, soil, plants and seed quality, research and resources used, timing, preparation of beds and planting, importance of maintenance and sanitation, plant problems and Co-op solutions to Integrated Pest Management (IPM), harvesting, and crop change-over. Discussion will include production and expense tracking, pollinator beds and future projects.

GCMGA meets on the third Monday at The Bethesda Senior Center, 225 Bethesda Church Road, Lawrenceville, GA 30044.

You are welcome to join us for social time at 6:30, otherwise, come for the program at 7 p.m.

Please check our web site for updates and cancellation info [www.gwinnettmastergardeners.com](http://www.gwinnettmastergardeners.com).

**Jessica Miller**, GCMGA Publicity Chair

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## Fall Color - What to Plant.

Now is a good time to look around at what is colorful in our natural surroundings and to get ideas for what to plant this fall in our yards and in the garden spaces we tend as master gardeners.



Sourwood

Starting from the top, trees are foremost in everyone's mind when it comes to fall color. One of the most impressive trees we see especially as we take drives to North Georgia is the Sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*). Its leaves are hard to miss with their dark red hue this time of year. They are also one of the first of our deciduous trees to turn color in the fall. Another colorful tree we may notice is Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*). Its leaves turn shades of yellow

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to orange to red before falling. Hickories can be counted on for their yellow leaf color throughout fall and into winter. Scarlet Oak (*Quercus coccinea*) is probably our most colorful oak species with its deep red leaves, but other oak species can also be counted on to display a range of fall leaf color. Finally, let's not leave out maples. Chalk Bark Maple (*Acer leucoderme*) is what is native to my back yard in Gwinnett County. But we are also in the native range here for Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*).



Sassafras

Moving on to shrubs, one with unexpected fall leaf color is the Blueberry (*Vaccinium* sp.). It can provide a bit of red foliage in the understory when its leaves start to turn. It also tends to be one of the last to finally lose its colorful leaves in winter. Sumacs (*Rhus copallina* and *R. glabra*), Winged Sumac and Smooth Sumac, may not be well behaved enough for the typical suburban yard, but if you have a place where you don't mind its running habit, it too can be a colorful understory plant. My favorite plant for understory color is the Maple Leaf Viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolia*). When I first saw it on a plant rescue with the Georgia Native Plant Society in Grayson, I was taken by its peachy orange fall foliage. It grows in colonies, so if you know someone who has it, they may be able to share a start with you. And let's not forget how the leaves of Oakleaf Hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) change colors each fall.

Vines too add to the color we are able to enjoy in fall. Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) if allowed to climb trees or even if allowed to sprawl will turn a deep shade of red as it senesces. Muscadines (*Vitis rotundifolia*) with their yellow leaves will be easy to spot growing in trees along the highway as you drive down the highway in and around Atlanta after Summer has ended.

Moving on from leaf color now to flower color, we can enjoy a range of colors at ground level. Most obvious is Goldenrod (*Solidago* sp.) There are many species of Goldenrod from the rambunctious Canada Goldenrod (*S. canadensis*) to the more manageable Gray's Goldenrod (*S. nemoralis*) and Showy or Slender Goldenrod (*S. erecta*). Then too there is the popular Rough Goldenrod (*S. rugosa*). Asters also come into their own with the change of seasons. One of the most reliable for our area is New York Aster (*Symphyotrichum novi-belgii*) with its bright purple blooms. A less common species, but one certainly worthy of planting here in our state is the Georgia Aster (*Symphyotrichum georgianum*). Going back to yellow flowering plants in our area, the Stone Mountain Daisy (*Helianthus porteri*) that the Yellow Daisy Festival is

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named for is quite easy to grow in a sunny preferably rocky spot. It hates competition, so plan to keep its area well weeded. It will reseed freely and come back each year if it likes where it is.

As the days grow shorter and cooler, remember that fall is the best time to plant. So, go out and add some plants with fall color to your yard and to the public gardens and natural spaces that you tend!

Submitted by **Jane Trentin**, MGEV

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## Planting Bulbs in Containers.

Planting tulips, daffodils and other bulbs in containers mimics inground planting. Growing bulbs in a pot is eye-catching, portable and protected. First though, here is some “bulb lingo.”

- Tunic – a thin, dry covering on a bulb that helps keep them from drying out.
- DN – stands for double-nosed and tells you how many bulbs are attached together.
- DNII – stands for two flowering-sized bulbs attached together
- Basal plate – the flattened end of a bulb where the roots emerge and the end that goes down when planted.

Choose heavy, firm, disease-free bulbs with tunic in place. You may not be able to plant bulbs as soon as they are available in the store. If bulbs are planted when soil temperatures are above 60<sup>o</sup>, they may start sending growing tips up through the soil too soon. An exception is grape hyacinth which does sprout leaves naturally as soon as it is planted.



grape hyacinths

The rule of thumb is to plant a bulb at a depth equal to three times the bulb's height whether in the ground or in a pot. Check the bulb's planting instructions. Plant a little more shallowly in heavy soil and in light, sandy soil, go deeper. Plant bulbs in the container so they are almost touching. Water the bulbs in, then cover with potting soil. For added protection against “critters” who eat your bulbs, add a round of wire mesh with a little more soil on top. Follow with mulch to help maintain an even soil temperature. Place the pots in an unheated garage to protect them from a freeze and thaw cycle which could damage the bulbs. You won't need to water until spring. Check on your pots in early spring and water lightly when shoots begin

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peeking above the surface. Then bring them out into the sun. Water as you would any container plant. You can transplant them into your garden after the blooms have faded or compost the bulbs and start anew next fall.



Forcing bulbs in a container

It is easy to force bulbs to bloom indoors by growing them in a dish. This can be done with crocus, amaryllis, hyacinth, narcissus, scilla and tulips. Select the largest bulbs available that are firm and not withered, diseased or rotted. Choose a bulb pot (shallow clay pot with drain holes). The best time to pot up bulbs is October or November. Forcing bulbs involves planting the bulbs just below the soil surface (potting mix is fine) with their tips peeking out. The exception would be hyacinths and paperwhites which can easily be grown in water alone. Plant bulbs so that they almost touch and water lightly. Place the pot in the dark at about 40° (in a refrigerator, root cellar or unheated garage) for 8-12 weeks. Don't let them freeze and don't let them dry out. After 8-12 weeks, a good root system should have developed. The shoots should be emerging from the bulbs. Put the pot in a cool, bright room and they will bloom in about a month. High temperatures and poor light will cause stretching and weak stems.

Don't forget that you can also force spring blooming shrubs such as plum, redbud, serviceberry, forsythia or cherry as well. Once you see buds forming on the shrub, flowers should open about two weeks after cutting.

Submitted by **Shirley Bohm, MGEV**

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## **[Southeast Growers - Gwinnett Food Co-op.](#)**

For folks who like extreme sports, you might try your hand at intensive gardening. You may not be risking life and limb, but timing is everything, and like extreme sports, it is part art, part science and lots of prayers. According to **Jackie Daniell**, Master Gardener Extension Volunteer (MGEV) and project leader for the Co-op Garden which produces fruits and vegetables for the Southeastern Gwinnett Cooperative Ministry in Grayson, when you are faced with raised beds and limited space to grow food crops you should be judicious in how you plan, schedule, and allot space in your garden. This is particularly important when you are trying to feed as many

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people as possible with the resources at hand. In addition to space saving with plants growing closer together, if you know what plants get along together and enhance or antagonize one another's growth you can increase your food production with intercropping and side crops using companion planting.

This goes beyond just the basic rotation of crops and consideration for plant families. For example, everyone's favorite garden veggie is tomatoes, but if you time it right you can start a side crop of bulb onions before the tomatoes are planted, the onions will mature and can be harvested about the time the tomato plants are medium height/size, then start carrots as the new side crop all while waiting for your tomato crop to come in. If you have a square foot of space left, intercrop basil between several of the tomato plants. It will love the tomatoes, and the tomatoes will love it right back. Another great combination is okra with a side crop of bush beans, or radishes as a side crop to pole beans and cucumbers with beets and radishes on the side. You get the idea. Don't forget to add a few pollinator plants interspersed or at the end of the beds.

Since we live in the south you can at least get a second crop in before first frost if you start the first crop early enough but remember to rotate your crops. For instance, Irish potatoes were planted at the end of February and harvested at the end of May through the middle of June. The bed was then planted in July with okra which will produce until frost. The bed will then be planted with spinach, beets and carrots which are cool weather crops, and some can overwinter.

Although their space is limited, so far this year the 6-9 regular volunteers have harvested 1,144 pounds of fresh produce and probably more as of this publication date. Their regular workday is every Wednesday, but from June to October, Mondays and Fridays are also days when their help is needed. Currently there are a total of nine volunteers and includes: **Patsy Evans, Rob Cashbough, Ron Mertz** along with the Master Gardener Extension Volunteers (MGEV): **Ileen Meggison, Diane Krish, Peggy Moss, Janet Leutzinger, Gaye Bruce** and, of course **Jackie Daniell**, Project Leader. They are all watched over by a very laid-back golden retriever named **Master Dawson** also known as "**Garden Dog**" who loves to taste test all the vegetables except the eggplant. Volunteers who were present the day of the photo were **Ron Mertz, Ileen Meggison, Diane Krish, and Jackie Daniell**, and top dog in charge – **Master Dawson**.

The crop list is extensive: tomatoes, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, pole & bush beans, bell peppers, jalapeno peppers, banana peppers, green & bulb onions, cucumbers, asparagus, okra, summer squash, eggplant, radishes, carrots, beets, broccoli, cauliflower, kohlrabi, lettuce, spinach, kale, turnips, mustard greens, cabbage, collards, basil, and blackberries. This requires a lot of work from a core of volunteers.

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For more information on the SE Gwinnett Cooperative Ministry which is a food bank and financial aid non-profit see their website at [segwinnetcoop.org](http://segwinnetcoop.org)

Written by **Margaret Molyson** and **Jackie Daniell** (taken from the GCMGA Facebook page)

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## ***Bit of Sunshine***

It's fall y'all! Time to incorporate some of that luscious fall produce into your dinner menus. Try these recipes and let me know what you think. If you have some good recipes for winter vegetables, send them in to share with everyone.

### **Smashed Sweet Potatoes and Apples.**

Ingredients:

- 3 lbs. peeled, cubed, sweet potatoes
- 1 ½ lbs. peeled, cubed, tart apples
- 1 ½ c. unsweetened apple juice
- 1 bottle (12 oz.) light beer or additional apple juice
- 1 c. brown sugar
- 1 c. sour cream
- 2 T. butter
- Minced chives

Directions: Place potatoes and apples in a slow-cooker. Add apple juice and beer. Cook, covered, on low for 5-6 hrs. or until potatoes are tender. Drain and return them to the slowcooker. Add brown sugar, sour cream and butter. Mash potato mixture to reach desired consistency. Top with minced chives.

### **Acorn Squash with Cranberry Stuffing.**

Ingredients:

- 2 medium acorn squash
  - ¼ c. chopped celery
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2 T. chopped onion  
2 T. butter  
1 Granny Smith apple, peeled and chopped  
½ t. salt  
½ t. lemon juice  
1/8 t. pepper  
1 c. fresh or frozen cranberries  
½ c. brown sugar  
1 T. water

Directions: Cut squash in half and discard seeds. Cut a thin slice from the bottom of squash halves so they sit flat. Place squash, hollow side down in an ungreased baking dish. Add ½ inch water. Cover and bake at 375<sup>o</sup> for 45 minutes. Meanwhile in a small skillet, saute celery and onion in butter until tender. Add the apple, salt, lemon juice and pepper. Cook over medium-low heat until apple is tender, stirring occasionally. Stir in the cranberries, sugar and water. Cook and stir until berries pop and liquid is syrupy. Turn squash halves over. Fill with cranberry mixture. Cover and bake 10-15 minutes longer until squash is tender.

## Did You Know?

- Why do some cactuses like Christmas Cactus have pink leaves? These pink leaves are likely due to stress such as a nutrient deficiency. Though Christmas Cactus likes to be pot-bound and needs minimal amounts of fertilizer, there is a point where fertilizing after flowering can be useful. Consider repotting to a slightly larger pot as well.
  - Did your tuberous begonias put on a beautiful show this year? Save them by digging the tubers after a light frost. Allow them to dry for several days and then gently remove any excess soil and dried foliage. Pack the tubers in peat moss and store in a cool 50 degree location for the winter.
  - Your compost pile will break down faster if you heat it up. Hot compost also kills weed seeds and many disease pathogens as well. Here are some easy ways to heat up your compost pile. After giving it a good watering, cover it with a plastic tarp. Add a layer of small branches (2" or less) to the middle of the pile to help provide oxygen. Cut up large pieces of vegetation before adding to the pile. Small stuff breaks down more rapidly. Large piles hold more heat so make the pile at least 3 ft. tall, wide and deep.
  - Getting Christmas Cactus to bloom is easy if you follow these easy steps.
    - At 50-55<sup>o</sup> night temperatures, flower buds will form regardless of the day length for plants kept outside. Leave them outside during the fall and bring them in late October or November.
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- For inside plants, at 60-65° night temperatures, supply 13 uninterrupted hours of darkness each night such as an unused room or box inverted over the plant. Don't forget to move it back to indirect light the other 11 hours.
- Flower buds seldom form at night temperatures above 70°. After flower buds are well developed they will flower at normal house temperatures.
- Did you know that a single tree absorbs the CO<sub>2</sub> from 4 cars each year? That same tree will also supply enough oxygen for a family of four. Are you ready to plant a tree this fall, the best time to plant trees and shrubs?
- Do you know why pansies and other winter blooming annuals can survive freezing and come back to life, apparently without harm? The plant lowers the amount of water in its cells so there are few if any ice crystals form inside the cell where freezing damages cell walls.

## Helpful Hints.

- Epsom salts, sulfur, potash and other soil amendments often come in paper bags or cardboard boxes that aren't the best containers for storage. It's easy for moisture to ruin the contents. Use your empty plastic detergent jugs to keep these products fresh and dry. Rinse them thoroughly and let them dry upside down for several weeks to make sure there is no residual moisture. Use a permanent marker to write the name of the product and directions for use on the outside of the container. That means it will take twice as much wood ash by weight as lime to cause the same pH change in the soil. But it is free if you use fireplace or firepit ashes. Just don't use ashes from burned charcoal briquets, painted or treated lumber. There is some nutritional value in wood ash but think of it more as a liming material than a fertilizer. Run a soil test every few years to make sure your pH is not out of line.
  - Get your garden started for next year, either now or after your fall garden. Spread manure and leaves over the garden and till them under. This organic matter will make a big difference in the fertility, physical structure and water-holding capacity of the soil.
  - Old potting mix makes great filler in the bottom of large containers. Just add 4-6 inches of new potting mix on top of the old. But if your container had lots of weeds or the plant had disease problems, it's best to dump the mix and start fresh.
  - An easy technique to propagate certain plants is by layering. This fall, bend one or two young, healthy stems of woody shrubs to the ground. Wound the underside of the stem by cutting and removing a strip of the outer layer of bark. Bury the wounded part of the stem, cover it with soil and weight it down with a brick or stone. The stem will develop roots at the wound within 4-6 months. Then all you have to do is cut the rooted portion of the stem from the mother plant and transplant it. This works especially well with forsythia, azaleas, winter jasmine, fig, spirea and roses.
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## Keep Us Laughing!

- What kind of tree can you carry in your hand? A palm.
- The only way to ensure rain is to give your garden a good soaking.
- Loam wasn't built in a day.
- You are the kind of friend who would overlook my broken fence to admire my garden.
- What do you get if you divide the circumference of a pumpkin by its diameter? Pumpkin pi.
- In every gardener, there is a child who believes in the seed fairy.
- What you need to be a gardener is a cast-iron back with a hinge in it.
- If life deals you lemons, make lemonade. If it deals you tomatoes make Bloody Marys.

## Test your gardening knowledge.

Here are some definitions. Fill in the blank with the term that is being defined. The correct answers are at the bottom.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is the process of starting seed potatoes sprouting about 4-6 weeks before planting them.
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ is a pigment that lets a plant know when it's time for a seed to germinate, when to set flower buds and when to drop its leaves.
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ is a raised garden bed that is built from the bottom up using logs, sticks, branches, wood chips, and manure then topped off with compost or topsoil.
  4. \_\_\_\_\_ is the artificial cultivation of worms who convert kitchen waste and other garbage into usable compost (castings) for the garden.
  5. \_\_\_\_\_ are microscopic fungi that attach to plant roots and help the plant gather, absorb and break down nutrients.
  6. \_\_\_\_\_ occurs when plants release compounds that repel or inhibit growth of other plant life.
  7. \_\_\_\_\_ is a proliferation of bright red shoots, commonly on roses, resulting from a viral disease called rose rosette disease.
  8. \_\_\_\_\_ is a vining plant, also called passion flower, with exotic purple flowers and oval green fruit that is the host plant to the gulf fritillary butterfly.
  9. \_\_\_\_\_ is the intentional weakening of the seed coating by nicking, breaking, softening or other means to speed up germination.
  10. \_\_\_\_\_ is a type of charcoal made by heating biomass without air using a process called pyrolysis which creates a very stable, porous, carbon-rich soil amendment.
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**ANSWERS:**

1. Chitting,
2. Phytochrome,
3. Hugelculture,
4. Vermiculture,
5. Mycorrhizae,
6. Allelopathy,
7. Witch's broom,
8. Maypop,
9. Scarification,
10. Biochar.

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**Deadlines for Future Articles in**  
**A Bit of Dirt**

- Fall 2021 Issue - September 30th**
- Winter 2022 Issue - December 31st**
- Spring 2022 Issue - March 31st**
- Summer 2022 Issue - June 30th**

**Upcoming Meetings & More**

*GCMGA normally meets on the third Monday of each month at Bethesda Senior Center, 225 Bethesda Church Road, Lawrenceville, GA 30044. Once we resume, the event is free and open to the public. Everyone is welcome to bring a covered dish to share for a potluck dinner at 6:30, or just arrive in time for the program which begins promptly at 7 p.m.*

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**Our mailing address is:** c/o S. Bohm, 2735 Meadow Gate Way, Loganville, GA 30052

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