



Fall 2019
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Over the Garden Gate

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President's Corner

Mindy Wade

Inside This Issue:

While I have no research data to support my comments, I am sure many of you will agree with me that this seems to be one of the hottest - and longest - summers we've had in a long time. Fall Expo 2019 was a difficult one due to the extreme heat and the dry weather. Not only our vendors were melting - all of us were feeling the heat.

And yet, the real story is that our members turned out in full force! What a group to be a part of and I am proud to be a member. Wednesday we had members setting up the arena - in the heat! Thursday we had even more members assisting our vendors (and a hearty bunch they were) with their load in - in the heat!. Friday and Saturday we were all there volunteering, shopping, attending booths and doing whatever was necessary to make this, once again, a fabulous Expo - in the heat!. A special shout-out to Shantha McDonald, Linda Sloyer and Sandra Perry for tri-chairing this year's Expo and also to all members who volunteered.

So what is next? In my last article/address I asked everyone to think about how we could increase our education to the public and to our members. You all have risen to the occasion! We have several upcoming opportunities. On October 26, we will be having an **Educational Symposium** at East Hall Community Center. This event is open to members of the community as well as our Hall County Master Gardeners. Details can be found on our website hallmastergardeners.com.

We have just wrapped up 3 speaking opportunities at the Murrayville Library. Ron Brechter shared the mysteries of **Vegetable Gardening**. Dee Scarpellino taught attendees about **Solitary Bees**. Rose and Mark Barton excited everyone with the **Life Cycle of the Monarch**.

Our newest member of the class of 2018, Lynn Poole, presented a two part session entitled **Fall into Gardening** at the Cherokee Bluffs Park. This successful class was repeated at Lanier Nursery and Gardens and we are fortunate to have reached a large number of our community members.

And we are in the process of scheduling three classes for the public to be held in the evenings on the 10th, 17th and 24th of October. Please check back with our website for more information.

I am sure there will be more opportunities for education to be scheduled in the future. Please keep checking back to see what the future holds.

Mindy Wade

Write for Us!

Like to write? Have something to say? Your fellow master gardeners want to hear from you!
Email Rick at rsfreeland@charter.net for details.

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Contributors:

Mindy Wade; Hugo Kollmer; Karin Hicks; Vince Evans; Rick Freeland

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Fall has always been my favorite season of the year. Temperatures are moderating, wildlife are actively preparing for the lean months ahead, the acrid odor of burning leaves is in the air, and there is a miraculous assortment of fall colors displayed for our enjoyment by a wide assortment of flora. Not among the least of colorful plants, are *chrysanthemum*, or just “mums”, conspicuously displayed in pots, planters and flower beds and floral arrangements.



First used as an herb, this member of the Compositae family was reportedly discovered in China in the fourteenth century. More than thirty known wild species and countless cultivars in myriad shades of color are currently found in virtually all temperate regions of the globe. Mums are so appreciated that they are second only to the rose in worldwide popularity.

In some Asian countries, Chrysanthemum leaves are brewed into a tea. In addition, pulverized flowers of the Pyrethrum *Chrysanthemum* [or *Tanacet*

um] *cinerariaefolium*) are used in the production of the natural insecticide Pyrethrum and the active ingredients, called *pyrethrins*, are used in the manufacture of synthetic insecticides.

Once consisting of several genera, a 1999 ruling by the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature changed the defining genus to *Chrysanthemum indicum*, which we commonly use in our urban landscapes, while the florists’ chrysan-

themum’s genus reverted to *Chrysanthemum*.

Chrysanthemum have been classified into 13 shapes by the National Chrysanthemum Society of the United States. They include: Anemone, Decorative, Irregular Incurve, Intermediate Incurve, Regular Incurve, Pompom, Quilled, Single and Semi Double.

Growing Chrysanthemums is not difficult. Begin by selecting a variety suited to our region. Do not assume that plants sold in national chain store garden centers meet this

criteria. While many are purchased and planted in the fall, spring is the best time for planting. Taking time to first understand how to plant chrysanthemums rewards you with full, beautiful plants loaded with blooms.

Able to survive in many soils, Chrysanthemums do best in well drained, organically enriched soil, with consistent moisture. Plant them where they will receive at least six hours of sunlight daily throughout the growing season. In our southern climate, try to give them a bit of shade from the hot afternoon sun. Protect them in the winter with a light layer of mulch. Fertilize sparingly with a balanced fertilizer until flower buds have formed. Pinch them back in early and midsummer to prevent “legginess” and the premature formation of flower buds.

Chrysanthemums can be propagated from seed, springtime division, and from cuttings also taken in the spring. Cuttings should be obtained from the top four inches of a mature stem, stripped of all but two of the topmost leaves, dipped in rooting hormone and inserted in a container filled with pre-moistened Perlite. Place the container away from direct sunlight, and add a clear or tightly fitting translucent cover.

While relatively pest and disease free, Chrysan-

themums, especially when under stress or in otherwise poor health, become susceptible to attack. Problematic diseases are: leaf spot, wilt, powdery mildew, bacterial blight and a few viruses. Insects which commonly prey on these plants include: Chrysanthemum aphids, spider mites and Chrysanthemum leaf miner.



What the Heck?

Zerophyte

A plant generally living in a dry habitat, typically showing xeromorphic or succulent adaptation; a plant able to tolerate long periods of drought.

Be on the lookout for skeletonized elm trees, as it could be the work of the **elm leaf beetle**. Elm leaf beetle is a leaf-chewing pest of elm, which leaves a shot-hole pattern, causing the leaves to turn brown and drop prematurely.

It has been active in the mid northern part of the state and the Georgia Forestry Commission is collecting occurrence data for Georgia counties. Currently, it has been documented in our surrounding counties of Barrow, Madison and Clarke. Sightings can be reported with GFC Forest Health Specialists (see end of article).



The elm leaf beetle.

Photo by Joseph Berger, Bugwood.org

Elm leaf beetle (ELB) was introduced from Europe in 1838 and is the most serious elm defoliator across the country. Damage doesn't usually harm the tree but can make it more susceptible to disease and other pests. All species of elm are vulnerable although ELB seem to prefer English, American and Chinese Elms.

LIFECYCLE

Adult beetles are yellow to olive green with a black stripe on each side and 4 black spots near the head. They are approximately 1/4 inch long. Adults overwinter in protected locations. They will seek out woodpiles, loose mulch, or piled leaves; openings in building walls or under the bark of trees to shelter during the cold months.

When leaves begin to leaf out in spring, adults emerge and females lay masses of yellow/orange eggs on the underside of elm leaves. Tiny black larvae hatch and chew small pits near where eggs had been laid. They continue to feed on the underside of the

leaf, avoiding larger leaf veins while they develop through 3 instar stages. This usually takes 3 to 4 weeks.



Elm leaf beetle larvae on the underside of a damaged elm leaf.

Photo by Pest and Diseases Image Library, Bugwood.org

Once larvae are full grown they crawl down the trunk of the tree to seek shelter to transform to the pupa stage. Most will pupate at the base of the tree.

Within 2 weeks, new adults emerge. They fly back to the leaves, mate and produce a second generation. Adult beetles produced at the end of this second generation will feed for a brief while on leaves but do not lay eggs.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

You can do nothing. Healthy elm trees can tolerate some defoliation, especially if it occurs near the end of the growing season or the tree was not affected the previous year. Adult beetles can fly from untreated trees, so controls may only be effective if all elm trees in area are treated.



Elm leaf beetle larvae.

Photo by J. R. Baker, NC State University, Bugwood.org

1) Practice good cultural techniques. Keep trees healthy and free of nutritional, drought or injury stress.

2) Eliminate over-wintering sights. Close areas where beetles can enter buildings. If you find ELB in your home vacuum them or spray with pyrethrin based insecticide.

3) Encourage natural enemies such as predaceous stink bugs or parasitic wasps that attack larvae and pupae stage of ELB.

4) Spray trees with organic insecticide, Insecticidal soap and horticultural oils such as Neem or pyrethrin. Spray in spring when elm leaves are at three-quarter leaf out and again 3 weeks later.

5) Use conventional insecticides. These are best used in areas where outbreaks regularly occur or when large numbers of beetles are observed laying eggs.



6) Use soil drenches or soil injections of systemic insecticides that move to kill insects on foliage. Imidacloprid is commonly available sold under Bayer Advanced Tree & Shrub, Bonide Annual Tree & Shrub Control, Ortho Bug B Gon Year Long Tree & Shrub Insect Control. This method typically takes 2-4 weeks. For effective usage, soil should be kept moist.

7) Insecticides can be applied to leaves. This is best done in May after most eggs are laid by overwintering females, but before larvae start to feed on leaves. Neem-derived products and biological insecticides (spinosad) should be timed appropriately for maximum impact.

8) Trunk banding helps control late season feeding injury. Bands should be one foot wide and placed on the trunk of the tree just below

where the lowest major branch joins that trunk. Any insecticide for use on elm or shade trees can be used for trunk banding. Pyrethroid insecticides such as bifenthrin or permethrin are effective.



Forest Health Specialists

Chris Barnes – (912) 601 7093, cbarnes@GFC.STATE.GA.US

Lynne Womack – (912) 515-5180, lboyd@GFC.STATE.GA.US

Chip Bates - (912) 536 7544, cbates@GFC.STATE.GA.US

No-Rain Blues

Vince Evans

Vacationing last week. Planted two plum trees and a few native plants before I left. Upon checking in with folks in Gainesville, I understand we have had no rain.

That brings me to an important point. Anyone can plant a tree or bush, or even grass. But it takes planning and work to see these plants to maturity. Even though I watered before I left, these plants may not make it. Planning is the number one thing in gardening. Due diligence may be the second. Like most things in life, timing is everything.

That reminds me. Time to go out and water.



Tree Topping a No-No

Rick Freeland

As Master Gardeners, we get a lot of questions about technique. One question that we've all probably heard is "Should I top my trees?" Topping is a definite no-no, and here is the info you need to appropriately answer this question.

Is Topping Ever Justified? Nope. Topping will decrease a tree's health over time. And in the short term, you're left with an ugly, weakened tree.

Isn't Topping an Accepted Maintenance Practice? Maybe by fly-by-night landscape companies. Topping creates a tree that constantly requires maintenance, and creates a potential hazard.

Should I Worry if My Landscape Guy Tops My Trees? Yep. Topping creates weakened branches that may fall and cause property damage or injure someone. A topped tree is a ticking time bomb and may become a dangerous liability, one you, as the property owner, is responsible for.

Then Why Do Landscape Professionals Follow a Topping Philosophy? Actually, legit professionals and certified arborists don't recommend, condone or practice topping. They realize trees are a resource, know what a tree contributes to a landscape, and practice responsible pruning techniques accordingly.

Right Plant, Right Place

Sometimes, your mature trees may have grown too tall for their space. There are acceptable pruning practices that could be used to manage a tree's height and spread. If these remedial practices aren't enough, the problem trees should be taken down and a plant more suitable to site conditions planted in its place.

When planting trees, always think in terms of their ultimate horizontal and vertical size, whether they're weak wooded or drop fruits, nuts or limbs, and their ultimate maintenance requirements. That way, you can just say "no" to future topping.