



# Over the Garden Gate

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## President's Corner

**Remember lying on your back and imagining creatures formed by the clouds?**

Maybe looking up at the night sky, mesmerized by the stars? Or walking into a garden in bloom and feeling a wave of calm sweep over you?

Now there's science to support that feeling of calm, as well as the healing effect that viewing nature can give you.

We now have *healing gardens* near hospitals, and there is evidence that patients who look out a window and see trees, shrubs, green grass, or flowers take less pain medication, have fewer complications and are released sooner than those with a view of a wall.

([http://depts.washington.edu/open2100/pdf/2\\_OpenSpaceTypes/Open\\_Space\\_Types/healing\\_gardens.pdf](http://depts.washington.edu/open2100/pdf/2_OpenSpaceTypes/Open_Space_Types/healing_gardens.pdf))

In everyone's life there are sad or stressful times. I think as master gardeners we are in tune with nature and its calming effect on us. So, the next time you, a family member or neighbor encounters a difficult time, remember to seek out a soothing natural area for a bit of nature's remedy.

How do you do this in the winter when everything is brown? Fortunately, we live in a moderate climate and can still look to the outdoors for that healing inspiration. In a more hostile climate we would have

to turn our focus toward indoor plants.

At our last meeting, many of our Master Gardeners shared their favorite winter interest plants. Two of those intrigued me. The first is the camellia. In our climate, we can grow camellias that will bloom from fall to winter and spring and many are fragrant.



Camellia japonica 'Daikagura'  
<https://www.americancamellias.com/care-culture-resources/camellia-encyclopedia/camellias-beginning-with-d/daikagura>

### Varieties

Varieties are categorized according to color and hardiness. This list is by no means complete but represents many of the better varieties for Georgia.

RED	WHITE	PINK	VARIEGATED
Governor Mouton*	Leucantha* (M)	Marjorie	Donckelar*
R. L. Wheeler	September (M)	Magnificent	Adolphe Audusson
Gullo Nuccio*	Morn (E)	C.M.	Var.*
Professor Sergeant	White	Wilson (M)	Ville de Nantes* (M)
Matholiana Supreme	Dakagura* (E)	Kumasaka*	Chandeli
Victor Emanuel*	Joshua Youtz	Dr. Tinsley*	Elegans* (M)
Lindsay Neill (M)	Emmett Barnes (E)	Drama Girl	Berenice
Arejishi*	Alba Plena**	Boddy*	Lady Vansittart
Daikagura* (E)	Snowman	Magnoliaeflora*	Dakagura* (E)
Tomorrow**	White	High Hat* (E)	Hermie (M)
Rutledge Mimmix* (M)	Empress*	Rev. John G. Drayton* (L)	R. L. Wheeler Var.
Flame		Pink Champagne	Gullo Nuccio Var.*
Miss Charleston		Rose Dawn (M)	Tricolor*
Mrs. Charles Cobb		Lady Clare*	Pink Sheffield
Firebrand*		Pink Perfection	Supreme**
		Debutante	Lady Kay
		Mrs. D. W. Davis	Reg Ragland Var.
		Lady Vansittart	Kumasaka Var.
		Tiffany	

(L = late, M = mid-season, E = early)

\* Varieties that produce cold-hardy flower buds. These varieties grow well in North Georgia.

\*\* Camellias recommended only for South Georgia because of susceptibility to cold injury.

The second plant is the Paperbush (*Edgeworthia chrysanththa*). It has beautiful elongated leaves in the summer and loses

by Don Linker

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Newsletter contributors:

Don Linker; Rachel Schneider; Russ England; Rick Freeland

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### 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](mailto:rsfreeland@charter.net) for details.



<http://botgarden.uga.edu/explore/goldmedalplants.php>

# Only One - the Ginkgo

The Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*) trees we see lining the streets and landscapes in our towns, states, continents and indeed the world are an oddity of nature. Ginkgo is the only surviving species in the genus Ginkgoace. It has no known relatives in the botanical world, making it unique in the plant kingdom.

The Ice Age nearly wiped out the genus except in China, where this one species survived in the wild.

Ginkgo is often referred to as a living fossil because it co-existed with the dinosaurs. In fact, the fossil record traces it back a little over 200 million

years, essentially unchanged since then. Its distinctive fan-shaped leaf makes it easy to identify and remember.

We enjoy its brilliant yellow fall foliage, and many consider it the perfect tree.



It tolerates different soil types, soil compaction, urban pollution, and fluctuating amounts of rain. Plus, it is disease and

pest resistant. It was the only tree standing after the atomic bomb was detonated in Hiroshima.

Ginkgoes are used as specimen, shade and even bonsai trees all over the world. Only the female trees bear fruit. Male trees are preferred in landscapes as the fruit of the female emits a foul odor, is slippery and is messy to clean up. Male trees produce drooping catkins in the spring and females produce drooping flowers. All male cultivars are created through grafting. T

The foul smell of the fruit aids the tree's survival by repelling many birds and animals before the seed matures.

After the smell subsides the seed resembles pistachios so they attract nut eaters.

Ginkgoes were introduced to Europe in the late 1600's and 1700's and have been successfully planted on every continent except Antarctica but have not become invasive as so many introduced species have. In fact, by cultivating plants like the Ginkgoes that are rare in the wild, we help to insure their long-term survival.

Who knows this tree and other rare plants may be the source of the next medicinal breakthrough to cure or treat many of the ailments we have today.

## Designing With Ornamental Grasses

Ornamental grasses are low-maintenance beauties that provide all-season garden interest.

What's the best way to use them in your design? It depends on your objectives, but here are a few tips.

- Use ornamental grasses with perennials, bulbs and shrubs. Make sure that companion plants are culturally and aesthetically compatible. Achieve contrast by varying heights, colors, textures, and forms.
- Site a massed ornamental grass planting on a slope for erosion control.
- Layer the ornamental grasses in beds and borders, with tallest in back, shortest in front. In a long border, you can also vary the height and plant type.
- Plant in drifts, or mass for a soft-textured "cloud" effect. Delicate grasses sway and rustle with the slightest

breeze, creating sound and motion interest.

- Use as specimen plants or focal points against a background of evergreens, or against a wall.



- Remember that ornamental grasses (especially deciduous varieties) are constantly changing with the seasons, from delicate new green foliage in spring to the crisp tan, gold or scarlet leaves of winter. Seed heads and flowers will also contribute to varying looks throughout the year.
- Plant grasses in odd-numbered groups of 3 to 5 or more.
- For a naturalistic look, interplant grasses with their natural companion perennials.

- You can use ornamental grasses to influence mood. Repeating one variety can create a calming rhythm; loose drifts impart an informal feel.
- Grasses grow fast, but mature forms, especially in larger plants, will change drastically from winter to spring as the plants are cut back in anticipation of the new growing season.

Things to watch out for:

- Grasses are either warm season or cool season. Make sure you use the appropriate species for your situation.
- Some grasses grow in clumps, others are spreaders. Spreading types are sometimes invasive. Either limit these varieties to containers, or use barriers such as metal edging to keep them from migrating.

by Richard Freeland

- Adding a 1' mulched area in your planting bed, between the grass planting and the lawn, makes it easy to keep volunteer shoots under control and keep plants from merging.
- Don't cut back deciduous varieties too early in the cold season or you'll lose that winter interest

Ornamental grasses can add grace and beauty to your landscape for many years to come.

## What the Heck?

### Systemic Pesticides

Systemic pesticides are chemicals that are soluble in water and, when applied to the soil, or a plant's seeds or leaves, can be absorbed by the plant. The chemicals circulate through the plant's tissues, killing the insects that feed on them. Be selective in using neonicotinyl based systemics, as they are highly toxic to bees.

# Rid Your Garden of Invasive Plants

by Russ England

Sooner or later, most gardeners have to contend with invasive plants in one way or another. Fortunate gardeners may be able to just pull up the occasional stray seedling of English ivy, Chinese privet or wisteria that is growing from seed carried by birds from a neighboring property. For those less fortunate, a full scale battle may have to be waged against one or more invasive species.

For several years I have been attacking invasive plants at the [Atlanta Botanical Garden Gainesville](#) and the [Linwood Nature Center](#). I would like to share some details of the primary technique I have used which has enabled me to kill a wide variety of invasive plants, including Kudzu, Chinese privet, English ivy, Japanese wisteria,

multi-flora rose, Elaeagnus, Mahonia, Nandina, and several exotic holly species.

I have pulled some of these by hand, sprayed the foliage of others with an herbicide, and cut stems and sprayed the stumps on all of them. Since most gardeners will have to deal with a relatively small number of stems, I will devote this article to the latter technique.

I use a generic herbicide containing the highest available concentration (41%) of glyphosate, which is the active ingredient in the Roundup brand. The high concentration is important; you can buy it in a wide variety of concentrations, but to be successful with the method I use you need a greater concentration than is found in most glyphosate products. A product

called Ultra Kill Weed and Grass Killer can be purchased at Lowes or Home Depot for about \$17/quart. The label allows this product to be used full strength for spraying stumps, but it is effective on most species if diluted by half.

Regardless of the species, using whatever cutting tool is appropriate for the situation, cut the stem of the plant as close to the ground as you can. This is important for two reasons.

One, glyphosate needs to get to the roots to kill the plant, so the lower you cut the stem the shorter its path to the roots and the less likely the stem will resprout. Secondly, a stem cut at ground level will not be tripped over later. I use a spray bottle to apply the glyphosate because it's quick and easy, but it can be

applied with a brush. Regardless, apply the herbicide while the cut is fresh.

For those of us (including me) who don't like to use herbicides, be assured that glyphosate that overshoots the target stem will quickly bind with soil particles, so it doesn't get washed away in the rain and into waterways. It gets broken down within a few weeks by microbes in the soil so it does not linger in the environment.

Without an effective herbicide application most cut stems will send up new sprouts, leaving the plant to re-grow thicker than before. Therefore I believe that the use of a relatively benign product like glyphosate is the best method to kill many invasive plants.

## Inspiration for the Winter Bound Gardener

by Rick Freeland

Winter can be frustrating for avid gardeners. During months of cold, we hibernate in the den before a warm fire, and salivate over all the garden catalogs arriving daily. Favorite plants and fresh new varieties are just a mouse click or mail order away. Gardeners can get a tad antsy, waiting for spring.

While catalogs provide tried and true inspiration, there are other ways to beat the winter blues. Follow these 5 tips for a surefire way to keep your gardening embers glowing.

### Get Out in the Yard

Dust off the honey-do list and tackle that backlog of outside projects. Prepare a raised bed. Rake remaining leaves and replenish compost piles. Prune fruit trees and ornamentals as needed. Stay occupied with maintenance tasks, such as cleaning and sharpening your tools. In no time, the soil will warm and it will be planting time.

### Look at the Big Picture

Winter is the perfect opportunity to design a master garden

plan for your property. Walk your site, making note of what is working, and what needs work. Is a safe play space for children a priority? Does your family need an outdoor room for entertaining? How about a private garden nook for reading or relaxing? Is the seasonal interest succession of the plantings pleasing and adequate? Will a distinctive specimen tree or shrub work as an accent in a particular spot?

Want to redo a walkway, or add a garden shed and potting area? Plan it on paper, set a budget and a schedule, and dive right in.

### Attend a Garden Show

Drop by a nearby garden expo and browse displays presented by area green industry professionals. These exhibits showcase many creative ideas for planting, using hardscape, installing water features, and saving water. Expos are perfect venues to discover new plant varieties that could work in your own garden.

Good bets are [Atlanta's Southeastern Flower Show](#), which usually opens in early February; the

[New Jersey Flower and Garden Show](#), occurring in mid-February in Edison, N.J.; or, for ambitious gardeners, the [Royal Horticultural Society's Tropical Extravaganza](#), in Kew, Surrey, from early February to March.

### Join a Garden Club

The [National Garden Clubs, Inc.](#) covers the U.S., with over 6000 member chapters in all 50 states. Club members possess a wealth of gardening experience and are happy to share their knowledge with newcomers.

Garden clubs can be a source of information and inspiration on horticulture, design, installation or maintenance, and offer classes and events for all ages.

And don't overlook local clubs. Their members will be more familiar with what grows well in specific areas.

### Visit a Public Garden

Georgia's [Calloway Gardens](#) is a must see for inspiration, attracting not only garden enthusiasts but nature lovers, athletes and sportsmen as well as families

seeking adventure. The Cecil B. Day Butterfly Center alone is worth the visit, and the Sibley Horticultural Center and Mr. Carson's Vegetable Garden will leave you awash in ideas.

Overseas, [Goodnestone Park in Kent, England](#), is off the beaten path but holds a wealth of treasure: pristine woodlands, parterres, flowering terraces and walled gardens constructed in the 1700s, and renovated in the 1960s.

And don't forget the [Gardens of Versailles](#), in France, with their amazing fountains. On spring and autumn weekends, check out the Grande Eaux, when the fountains are put into operation and are displayed in all their glory, much to the delight of the public.

There's no need for you to hibernate in winter. Instead, get out, and seek inspiration - in the yard, at a gathering of like-minded souls, at an expo, or a fine public garden. There's plenty to keep a gardener busy until spring chases winter away and it's time to kick off another year of playing in the dirt.

# Wage War on Weeds Using Preemergence Herbicides by Rick Freeland

My father-in-law was a no-nonsense, old school farmer. He'd forgotten more about farming than I ever knew. Paw had little use for fools and pretenders, so I was careful about when and where, and under what circumstances, I opened my big mouth. It took me a little while to earn his respect, but earn it I did. The first time he asked for my opinion on a gardening matter it blew my mind.

Another thing he had no use for was weeds. He hated them with a passion, and was constantly waging open warfare on those hapless plants any time he encountered them. If anyone had told him that "weeds were just plants in the wrong place" he'd have graced them with that flat, uncompromising stare he'd used to intimate me when I first asked for his daughter's hand.

## Weed Warfare

Paw always had a plan for dealing with weeds, and his first line of defense was this: deal with the suckers before they germinate. His go-to weapons of mass weed destruction were the *preemergence herbicides*.



Preemergence herbicides are weed-control chemicals that you apply before seeds germinate. They're great at controlling annual grasses, and some

broadleaf weeds. You can get them in dry granular form, or as a liquid spray.

To be effective, these products must wind up in the top 1" of soil. To accomplish this, use a sprinkler or hose to water the preemergents in after application. Preemergence herbicides don't actually kill weed seeds, but act on young, germinating plants. They accomplish their mission by prohibiting cell division in the young weed's root system.



## Application

Make one application in fall to control winter annuals. Apply when nighttime temperatures range from 55 to 60 degrees for 4 consecutive days (Sept. 1 to 15 in our area).

Apply again in spring when temps reach 68 to 70 for 4 days in a row to control summer annuals (March 15 to 30 here). Apply again when fall rains start in order to control next year's crop of winter annuals.

Product effectiveness varies, and you may need to make a second application after 9 weeks or so.

Preemergents are not very selective, acting on a lot of plants other than weed species. This makes them unsuitable for use in lawns or gardens that will be seeded.

## Organic Options

If you're an organic or sustainable gardener, Iowa State University (ISU) has studied the use of corn gluten meal as a combination preemergence herbicide and fertilizer. The product they looked at was found to halt root formation in germinating plants.

When using the corn gluten meal, researchers found that in order to reliably kill weed seedlings, it's essential a short dry period be maintained after seeds have germinated. Therefore, corn gluten meal should not be used with seeded garden crops, but can be used with transplants or mature plants.

ISU studies suggest the product will retain its effectiveness for five to six weeks after application.

In addition to killing germinating weeds, the corn gluten meal provides bonus benefits by slowly releasing nitrogen into the soil as it decomposes, feeding existing plants.



## Chemical Preemergents

There are many preemergents on the market, controlling various types of weeds. Here I've listed the active ingredient, with a few brand names to ponder:

Dichlobenil (Casoron 4G; Lily Miller Casoron Granules)

Good to use with lawns, and 2" to 3" tall vegetable transplants that have their true

leaves. Lasts about 60 days. Controls grasses and broadleaf weeds. Also controls some perennial weeds.

Oryzalin (Surflan; Weed Impede; Oryzalin)

Can use with fruit and nut crops (non-bearing); vineyards; nurseries. Lasts from 20 to 128 days. Kills annual and broadleaf leaves, and suppresses other broadleaf weeds.

Trifluralin (Green Thumb Garden Weed Stopper; Miracle-Gro Garden Weed Preventer; Treflan TR-10)

With a 45 day effective period, this preemergent can be used with crops, nursery plants, ornamentals, and established flowers. Takes care of annual grasses and many broadleaves.

Whether you're growing garden veggies or striving for that showcase lawn, preemergence herbicides are prime weapons to use in the war on weeds. Follow label directions, use with discrimination, and, like my father-in-law, you, too, can take your landscape back from the weeds.

## Literacy Garden

The Literacy Garden for preschoolers at Gardens on Green will open this spring. To volunteer now or after the opening, please contact Kathy Lovett at (770)532-3136; williamllovett@bellsouth.net