The tradition of the Pilgrims’ first Thanksgiving comes from both myth and legend. Few people realize that the Pilgrims never celebrated Thanksgiving in 1621 or any year thereafter. President George Washington made it a one-time Thanksgiving holiday.

In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln finally made it a national holiday to be celebrated on the last Thursday in November (which could occasionally end up being the fifth Thursday and hence too close to Christmas for businesses). President Franklin D. Roosevelt changed Thanksgiving Day to the fourth Thursday of November in 1939 and Congress approved that day in 1941.

The Pilgrims’ first mythological Thanksgiving Day occurred in early October. The date of Thanksgiving, set by President Lincoln, seems to correlate with the anchoring of the Mayflower at Cape Cod, which supposedly occurred on November 21, 1620 according to the Gregorian calendar (It was November 11 to the Pilgrims who used the Julian calendar).

Edward Winslow’s letter dated December 12, 1621 gave the first account of the 1621 Thanksgiving. The complete letter was first published in 1622.

William Bradford in his History Of Plymouth Plantation wrote the second description about twenty years after the fact. Bradford’s History was rediscovered in 1854 after having been taken by British looters during the Revolutionary War. Its discovery prompted a greater American interest in the history of the Pilgrims. It is also in this account that the Thanksgiving turkey tradition is founded.

The primary sources above only list a few items that were on the Thanksgiving “menu”, namely five deer, a large number of turkeys and waterfowl, cod, and bass; plus the harvest, which consisted of wheat, corn, barley, and perhaps a few peas.
To that list can be added a few additional things that are known to have been native to the area and eaten by the Pilgrims; clams, mussels, lobsters, eels, ground nuts, acorns, walnuts, chestnuts, squash, and beans. Wild fruits and berries, such as strawberries, raspberries, grapes, and gooseberries, were probably also served. Pilgrim house-gardens may have included a number of English vegetables and herbs, perhaps things like onions, leeks, sorrel, yarrow, lettuce, carrots, radishes, currants, liverwort, watercress, and other herbs.

It is unlikely much in the way of supplies brought on the Mayflower survived, such as cheese, oil, butter, salt pork, sugar, spices, lemons, beer, or bacon. It appears the Pilgrims may have had some chickens with them, so they likely had access to a limited number of eggs. No mention of pigs is found in any account of the first year. Goats or cattle didn’t arrive until 1623.

The old “Popcorn Myth” would have us believe the Indians introduced the Pilgrims to popcorn at this Thanksgiving: but the Indian corn they grew was does not pop well. The Indians sometimes ground it and mixed it with strawberries for a cake-like desert. Potatoes and sweet potatoes had not yet been introduced to New England.

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A HANDY MOLE
By Christina Rossetti

A handy Mole who plied no shovel
To excavate his vaulted hovel,
While hard at work met in mid-furrow
An Earthworm boring out his burrow.
Our Mole had dined and must grow thinner
Before he gulped a second dinner.
And on no other terms cared he
To meet a worm of low degree.
The Mole turned on his blindest eye
Passing that base mechanic by;
The Worm entrenched in actual blindness
Ignored the kindness or unkindness;
Each wrought his own exclusive tunnel
To reach his own exclusive funnel.

A plough it’s flawless tack pursuing
Involved them in one common ruin.
Where now the mine and countermine,
The dined-on and the one to dine?
The impartial ploughshare of extinction
Annulled them all without distinction.

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A DREAM COME TRUE - MY OWN GREENHOUSE
By Sue Shaw, GCMG

A few years ago, I was on a cruise in the Western Caribbean with a wonderful group of friends to celebrate my 50th birthday! It was a MEMORABLE trip to say the least. We promised (like we always do) to get together afterwards and keep up our momentum. My friend, Mark, who was on the cruise, was already an over-committed builder at the time, but I convinced him to help me with my dream project...to have my own greenhouse!

Around that time, I was at a fellow Master Gardener’s house and saw some ideas for greenhouses in a magazine she had. In the environmental mind of being cost-effective and trying to recycle/reuse, I rediscovered some old windows with wooden frames that had been replaced on my home; this was the catalyst to start the project. They became the framework of my greenhouse dream. Then I searched flea markets and I found 2 very old doors to be used at each entrance. Another junkyard yielded the old sink and washboard I use for watering & cleaning up. All I needed now was a roof to complete the structure. Mark suggested that we do not use the windowpanes on the roof because they would break if a tree branch fell on them, so we used Plexiglas as the roofing material.

The greenhouse construction began in June and was completed in September of that year, just in time to begin overwintering the plants in my yard.

One big factor to consider is your sun exposure ...mine has a southern exposure & that is important in the winter months.

The greenhouse is kept warm in the winter with a small heater-fan that has an adjustable thermostat. I purchased it at Lowe’s for about $40.00 and it has done the job well for 5 years now. Many times in our Southern winters, I take all the plants outside in the daytime & let them just soak up the sun & move them back inside when it gets very cool again outdoors. That also gives me a chance to spray them for any insects, fertilize & water well.

The greenhouse is not big...its 15’ x 9’ with an additional adjoining room as a tool shed that’s about...
15’ x 3’. There are shelves on the side walls so I can put the plants on as well as extra pots and supplies underneath. I’ve also installed some plant hooks in the ceiling to hang ferns and the like.

I’ve put a portable CD player/radio in the greenhouse…to keep things lively and the music keeps the plants and me happy!!

The plants that you can grow, propagate, over-winter, and seed are only limited by your imagination (and space). Now be aware, your friends will ask you to over-winter their plants too, so be sure to save some space each year!! ☺

On the outside of the greenhouse, I had gutters installed on one side (opposite the Plexiglas roof side) and have 2 rain barrels situated below to collect the water. This helps to supply water for the vegetable garden all season.

Bottom line, the greenhouse has been a center for growth (for me and the plants), experimentation, and a musical interlude as well as a shelter for the plants in the winter months when nothing else is growing outside.

It is my dream comes true.
For those of us with arthritic joints, gardening can be a challenge; however, it can be made enjoyable. Gardening helps maintain joint flexibility and improves your quality of life. Here are some tips, techniques, and tools that can help keep an arthritic gardener active and happy in the garden.

Work only during the time of day you feel your best. If you are stiff in the cool of the morning, conduct garden tasks during the warmer afternoons. Before starting, warm up your muscles and flex your joints with some gentle stretching exercises. Ask your doctor or physical therapist to recommend some warm-up and stretching exercises. I usually start each day with about 20 minutes of Tai Chi since it puts very little stress on my joints and increases my flexibility.

Since I take arthritis medication, I usually protect my skin with sunscreen and wear a hat to make me less susceptible to sunburn. I always wear gloves not only to protect hands but also to cushion the joints in my hands, elbows, and shoulders.

"Less is more" is my best advice for gardening with arthritis. Pace yourself. I look forward to my hourly breaks. I frequently need "sit-down" breaks to take the load off my joints. I have a bench strategically located near a water feature that is soothing for the mind and old joints.

Switch the tasks and positions every 30 minutes or so. I like to sit a spell on one of my many outdoor benches or chairs that are scattered throughout my garden. Weed a little, water a little, plant a little, walk a little, and, if possible, chat or visit with your neighbor. The key is to garden more frequently in smaller blocks of time. And if it hurts, stop! That's your body telling you it has had enough.

Watch out for twisting motions that can stress muscles and joints. If you need to plant or weed at ground level, use a stool or kneeling bench. Good posture and careful movements make a big difference in how long and how comfortably you can garden.

Let your larger, stronger joints and muscles do the work. The back may seem strong, but do not lift by bending over stiff-legged and using the back. Always lift by bending at the knees. Use the palms of your hands instead of your fingers to lift and carry flats of plants. If possible, carry the flats on your forearms.

If at all possible, build an outside storage shed for tools and supplies. Locate it close to your garden to reduce the number of trips to get that tool. Weed after it rains so you can pull the nasty buggers out with less stress on the body. If at all possible, get yourself a garden buddy to share tasks that are difficult or stressful.

Use the right tool for the task and keep all tools clean and sharp. Try to find tool handles with wide grips. You can build up existing handles with foam pipe insulation that can be found in hardware stores. Use a wheelbarrow or cart to haul tools and supplies around.
the garden. Consider some of the new ergonomic tools designed to reduce stress. Long or extendable handles limit bending or stooping. The right tools can make gardening less stressful and more enjoyable.

Keep your water sources close so you don't need to lug hoses and watering cans around the yard. I have laid several soaker hose throughout my garden. They all emanate from a central location so hooking up the water hose to each is an easy task. I also cover the soaker hoses with mulch to conserve moisture and reduce the number of times I need to water the garden. You can also install a drip irrigation system.

Think outside the box to make gardening with arthritis less challenging. Look for low-maintenance plants to place in hard-to-reach areas of the garden. Raised container gardens reduce bending and are limited only by your imagination. Tomatoes, strawberries, herbs, perennials, grasses and long-blooming annuals do well in raised containers. The raised beds drain well; the soil warms up quicker, and usually results in earlier crops. It also allows the use of special soil mixtures and lets you work at a convenient height. The latter takes the stress off your joints. Walter Reeves constructed a raised container garden using a series of old bathtubs for his arthritic mother. If you can afford it, terraced banks also act as raised beds for gardening.

Vertical gardening is another option. Grow plants on or over fences, walls, trellises, or arbors. This makes for easy access to vegetables and flowers. It sure cuts down on the amount of bending that must be done.

By planning ahead and making some simple changes, you can still enjoy gardening. Don’t let arthritis make you miss out on the beauty and satisfaction of being outdoors in your garden.

(Ed. Note: After writing this article, the 2009 Fall Edition of The Georgia Scoop arrived at my home. UGA’s AgrAbility program and the Arthritis Foundation are offering workshops for arthritic gardeners in Athens on August 5, Tifton on November 5, and Macon on December 9. To register, visit www.farmagain.com/register or call 706-542-0304 (877-524-6264 toll free). The cost is $15.)

FALL GARDENING
By Mary Ryan, ACMG

By spring every year I usually have developed a long list of things to be done. My plans include visiting garden centers and nurseries to find those new plants I was reading about in the gardening magazines, or preparing a new bed, not to mention mulching, mowing, weeding, designing and planting a perennial or annual garden, and so many other things to do.

Then along comes summer. The deadheading of perennials begins, weeding never ceases, and the evening is spent watching the birds flying and listening to their many different songs. These are some of the highlights of summer gardening.

Then fall sets in. The temperature begins to cool; the sweaters and
sweatshirts come out of the cedar chest and closet; and the windows come open for that welcome cool evening breeze. But is gardening over for the year? Not on your life! There is plenty to do. Dividing blooming perennials, re-designing gardens and moving plants are all activities that can be accomplished before winter sets in.

Fall becomes a great time to see your garden's structure. As leaves turn colors and drop, a plant's bark and branching become dominant in the landscape. Not only should you be looking at tree and shrub branching structure, but also remnants of perennials and grasses.

*Echinacea, rudbeckia,* and native grasses all seem to come to life in the fall. Before and after the flower petals drop, the seeds of the Purple Coneflower and Black-eyed Susan are enjoyed by a wide variety of birds. These plants stay attractive to the birds all during the fall and winter months. Coming home at the end of a busy day, I see the finches feeding on the seeds of these flower heads. Any variety will attract attention, but here are some that are real winners.

*Rudbeckia maxima,* the great coneflower, grows to about 6 feet tall. The foliage is a gray-green color and quite large. Each leaf can get as long as 12 inches. The flowers have yellow petals with a dark center, typical colors of *rudbeckia.* But the petals droop, like an *Echinacea.* The center of the flower elongates as the flower seeds ripen and that is what the birds really enjoy! It blooms any time from July-August and sometimes it will send up a flower spike or two in late September.

There’s plenty of hybridizing work being done on *Echinaceas.* Most know of the *Echinacea purpurea* 'Magnus' and 'White Swan' but the Big Sky series is on the market now. You should try 'Sunset' in your garden. Its flowers open as a buttery-yellow color that then fades to a creamy color. The petals are only slightly droopy, unlike White Swan and Magnus, which are very droopy. It handles the wet spring and dry summer very well. Also try planting *E. purpurea* 'Sunset' which is part of the Big Sky Series. This coneflower boasts orange flower petals.

Another *Echinacea* that gives structure and life in the fall and winter garden is *E. tennesseensis* 'Rocky Top'. This coneflower has a large, dark brown seed center with purple petals that are flat, not drooping. The flower petals are somewhat narrow and not as long as *E. purpurea.* The leaves are narrow as well. It reaches about 2 feet and blooms from July through September.

A grouping of plants for fall and winter interest is the grasses. Many people are unaware of the many kinds of native grasses that are showy.

Indian grass and switchgrass are two native grasses that are underused in the landscape. Indian grass, *Sorghastrum nutans,* is a 3'-7' tall, very erect, bunch type grass. The seed heads are brown, flowering in July-September. It has a rusty color in the fall.

Switchgrass, *Panicum virgatum,* is a great native grass that provides not only cover for wildlife but also food. The showy seed heads have an “open” appearance, making them more interesting. There are many cultivars of this particular native species. 'Dallas Blues' has blue foliage, very showy. Another more common blue cultivar is 'Heavy Metal'.

Just because it's fall, don't give up on your garden. With a little forethought, a fall and winter garden can be designed to create interest and enjoyment!
FALL CONTAINER GARDENING
By Lisha Utt, ACMG

I love container gardening. It is by far the most creative and satisfying aspect of my gardening. But now, fall weather is here with its cooler temperatures and its welcome respite from the summer heat and humidity. I confess that I am not happy. My mind is already skipping ahead to winter when my pots are empty and stacked forlornly in the garage.

In an effort not to succumb to these pre-winter blues, I've decided to spend as much time as possible outdoors this fall and try to keep my containers looking good until the first frost. Here is my plan:

1. Continue to water the containers regularly. The temperatures may be cooler but the plants have been growing all summer and their roots have filled the pot so they can still dry out very quickly. Daily watering may even be required.

2. Continue to fertilize the containers. The growing season is long for annuals and they will greatly benefit from the nutrients. This is especially true if the plants have pale leaves and decreased blooms. A water-soluble fertilizer can be used every other watering until the first frost, but even if just fertilized one more time for the season, the plants will show a definite improvement.

3. Do some serious tidying of the containers. It's important not only to continue to deadhead the plants (i.e. remove all spent blooms) but brown leaves and ratty foliage should also be removed. In addition if the plants have grown so large that they are out of proportion to the others they are growing with, or even the container, give them a trim to get them back into shape.

4. Pick one container for a complete makeover, preferably one that is close to the house so it can be enjoyed both inside and out. By replacing your tender or tropical plants with those that can take temperatures past freezing, you'll ensure that at least one container will look good deep into fall, maybe even until Christmas! Plus buying a few new plants is always good therapy.

The selection of fall flowers seems to improve every year. There are of course, the old favorites, chrysanthemums, asters and pansies. However try some of these other annuals:

- Diascia (Twinspur), Zone 9
- Verbena, Zone 10
- Nemesia (Capejewel), Zone 10
- Bidens ferulifolia, Zone 9-10
- Lantana, Zones 9-15
- Osteospermum (sometimes called dimorphotheca), Zone 9.

Ornamental grasses such as Imperata ‘Red Baron’ (Zone 7-11), or Juncus effuses ‘Quartz Creek’ (Zone 4-11), as well as perennials with colorful foliage like Heuchera (Zone 4-8) can make a stunning addition to any fall container. You can even use perennial herbs such as Sage or Thyme.
with the added bonus of having them close by for cooking. Most of these plants can be found at your local garden centers. Plus keep them in mind for next spring so you can include them in your containers from the beginning.

The container I selected for a makeover included *Alteranthera ‘Partytime,’* *Exotic Impatiens ‘Fusion Heat,’* Tassel Fern (*Polystichum polyblepharum*) and variegated *Hedera.* In an effort to keep the pink/rose summer theme, I decided to replace the tropical Exotic Impatiens and Alteranthera with *Diascia ‘Flying Red,’* Pansies *‘Delta Rose Blotch,’* golden Sage and Heuchera *‘Marmalade.’* Now my container is ready for cooler temperatures.

So if you find yourself coming down with the “pre-winter blues”, do some fall container gardening. It’s the perfect prescription. I feel better already!

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**RECIPES FROM THE GWINNETT COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**

*By Shirley Cook, GCMG*

**DECACENT COOKIES**

*Jack Shulin, GCMG*

The following recipe is one from Jack Shulin. It’s so easy and is delicious. Jack brought these cookies to one of the Gwinnett County Master Gardener meeting and they vanished immediately.

**Ingredients:**
- 1 Box Devils Food Cake Mix
- 10 oz bag Peanut Butter Chips (or white choc chips or the swirl choc chips … I’ve even used milk choc chips)
- 1/2 C chopped Pecans (optional)
- 2 Eggs
- 1/2 C Vegetable Oil
- 1 T Water
- Powdered Sugar

**Directions:**
Mix all ingredients well. Roll 1-inch balls of dough in powdered sugar. Bake at 375 degrees for 8-10 min. Wait for about 2 minutes before removing from cookie sheet … FABULOUS!

**DOUBLE CHOCOLATE CHIP POUND CAKE**

*Shirley Cook, GCMG*

This cake is real moist and delicious…. Enjoy!!

**Ingredients:**
- 1 (18.25 oz) Box Yellow Cake Mix
- 1 (5.9 oz) Box Instant Chocolate Pudding
- ½ Cup Sugar
- ½ Cup Vegetable Oil
- 4 Large eggs
- 2/3 Cup Water
- 1 (8 oz) Container Sour Cream
- 1 (12 oz) Bag Mini Chocolate Morsels
- Garnish with Confectioners Sugar

**Directions:**
Grease and flour a 10-cup Bundt Cake Pan. In large bowl, combine cake mix, pudding and sugar. Add water, oil and eggs. Beat with electric mixer at medium speed until smooth. Stir in the sour cream and mini chocolate morsels. Pour batter into pan and bake 1 hour, or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool 10 min. Remove and garnish with Confectioners Sugar.
SEPTEMBER
Summer reluctantly gives way to fall but the busy gardener is making plans for fall gardening.

1. As the leaves dry following night temperatures of 50 degrees and below, lift the individual caladium clumps and place in a warm, dry, well-ventilated shed or garage with good light for 10 days to two weeks. It is best to remove as much of the soil as possible when lifting, as this will hasten the drying and curing process. Do not wash or wet the tubers. After the drying period, remove the dead leaves. Dust the tubers thoroughly with a fungicide for protection against insects and disease in storage. Store the treated bulbs in nylon stockings in a cool, dark, dry location protected from freezing temperatures.

2. Prepare beds now for planting pansies and violas. Both like a sunny well-drained soil. Obtain healthy plants and plant in October and November.

3. Spring bulbs begin their life in the fall. Bulb beds must be well drained and well prepared prior to planting to insure good results in the spring. Prepare spring bulb beds now. Work in ample amounts of humus and sharp sand, if needed, to insure a loose pliable soil. Select bulbs to be planted in October and November.

4. Continue to water plants as they go into fall. Many flowering trees and shrubs have developed flower buds for next year’s blooms, and if a lack of water exists, poor blooms may be the result. Water fruiting plants such as hollies, pyracantha, etc. to maintain a good berry crop. Remove dead wood from plants that have suffered from the drought and heat. Mulch around the root areas to conserve moisture and protect the plant during winter.

5. If you have not done so, September is a good time to dig and divide overcrowded bearded iris, daylilies, tiareo, perennial phlox and groundcover plants. An early fall planting will allow the plants to become well established prior to winter’s cold. Water frequently after transplanting to prevent drying. Moisten soils prior to planting to prevent the plants from drying out until they are established.

6. Begin to prepare some of your houseplants for over-wintering indoors. Repot overgrown plants and feed established pots with a complete liquid houseplant fertilizer to encourage that last flush of growth prior to bringing indoors.

7. Plant fall annuals. Consider planting some of the seeds in the ground during September: Blanket flower, Baby’s Breath, Larkspur, annual Phlox, Cornflower, wildflowers, etc. Be patient since you may not see the results of seeding until next spring.

8. Spray roses at regular intervals for blackspot and mildew control. Water often as fall blooms occur.

9. Propagate your geraniums. Cut 5 to 7 inch stems. Allow to “cure” or the ends to seal off by leaving exposed to open air for 2-3 days. Strip lower foliage and pot in good potting soil. Keep in the shade and do not over-water.

10. Do not prune or cut back spring flowering trees and shrubs since this removes potential spring blooms.

11. Start a compost pile to receive the leaves of fall.

12. Want to experiment with camellias? Camellia flower buds can be forced into blooming early following treatment with gibberellic acid in late summer or early fall. In many instances the treated flowers are larger than normal. A solution of gibberellic acid (gib) must be applied to individual flower buds to stimulate them into action. The time to apply gib differs but is usually in September or early October. Gib weekly intervals rather than in one session. This will ensure that you have flowers over a longer period of time. Most people like to leave about 80% untreated. Apply gib very sparingly to a young plant.
13. Almost every gardener will have a few packets of vegetable and flower seeds left from spring and summer planting or they may have collected seed from some of their favorite plants. Although old seed often has a lower germination rate as well as reduced vigor, many gardeners have difficulty throwing them away. Storing it under the proper conditions can greatly increase the storage life of most seeds. The seed should be air dry and placed in glass containers with airtight lids and kept in a refrigerator or cool area at a temperature range of 35-50 degrees F. When saving seed from plants in the garden remember that many of the new improved varieties are hybrid and there is often little chance that the offspring will resemble the parent.

14. Cleanup established garden beds and replenish mulch materials where needed. Remove faded annuals and cut back perennials that have finished flowering.

15. Be sure to stake mums that have gotten too tall so as to reduce wind and rain damage. Make new mum selections for the garden while in bloom. Keep the plants watered as blooms develop.

16. Plan for new plantings. Don’t forget to make an inventory of landscape needs in your landscape so you are ready to make selections as soon as new nursery stock is received in your favorite nursery or garden center. Select shade trees and shrubs for late fall and winter planting.

17. Watch for scale insects. Many of the eggs hatch at this time of year and the young crawlers are never more vulnerable than at this stage. Ultra-fine horticultural oil or insecticidal soap gives good organic control at this stage. Please read the label carefully. Spray to cover the underside of the leaves. Be sure to read the label and follow instructions. Scale often appears on gardenia, camellias, hollies, euonymus, azaleas, ligustrum, houseplants, etc.

18. Research has proven that fall feeding is very beneficial for ornamental plants. Root system as well as future flower buds continue to develop in winter. A 3-1-2 ratio will help over winter ornamental plants and have them off to a good growing start come spring. Feed azaleas lightly for the last time this year.

**OCTOBER**

The short, delightful days of autumn present new gardening season and the need to accomplish some of those delayed gardening chores.

1. Think spring in October and start planting spring bulbs. During October and November is spring bulb planting time (daffodils, narcissi, hyacinth, crocus, and Dutch iris). Choose healthy, sound bulbs from a reliable source. Prepare soils in a sunny, well-drained location.

2. The popular pansies may be planted in October and November for scattered winter blooms and a real display of color come spring. Do not bother with seed but buy healthy plants from your favorite nursery. Pansies go great with spring bulbs. Select varieties that have good heat tolerance and will flower longer in the spring.

3. Prepare the rest of your houseplants for over-wintering. The cool days of October are ideal for good houseplant growth and development. It is a good time to groom and to prepare the plants for bringing into protected areas for winter. Prune back leggy or overgrown houseplants to induce compaction of growth. Remove damaged foliage. Bring plants indoors prior to winter heat in the home to allow them to adapt to their new location.

4. The winter season from November through February is ideal for planting woody trees and shrubs. Planting in the winter allows the roots to become established before the heat of summer. Plan for those new additions now. Prepare planting beds and visit nurseries to make plant selections.

5. It’s not too late to dig and store your caladium tubers. See the recommendations given for September.

6. If you haven’t established a compost pile yet, now is the time to do so.

7. Order fruit catalogs and make your variety selections now for a winter (January-February) planting.

8. Root-prune wisteria that, even though large, has failed to flower. With a sharp spade, spade into the soil completely around the plant without disturbing the soil to cut the lateral roots.

9. It is time to remove the faded annuals and perennials, overgrown plants, etc.

10. Continue to divide and transplant your favorite perennials such as daylilies, liriope, ajuga, iris, etc.

11. Complete your wildflower seeding.
12. Mulch your plants. A 4-6 inch layer of mulch is an excellent insulation on semi-hardy plants and shallow-rooted plants such as azaleas.
13. Tag native plants while they are still in leaf and may easily be identified when transplanted in the winter. Root-prune in November (don’t lift the plant) to allow the plant to form new roots prior to transplanting in January and February.
14. Enjoy the wonderful colors of the season.

NOVEMBER
It's time to prepare for winter's cold by preparing the garden beds for winter planting. It's also the time to watch nature slip into dormancy and to dream of the awakening spring.

1. Continue to plant your spring flowering bulbs such as daffodils, Dutch hyacinth, and Dutch iris. Mass planting of bulbs gives a big color splash in the spring.
2. Enjoy the blooms of sasanqua and camellia japonica. Select new varieties for a winter planting while in flower. Take advantage of local camellia shows. Consider time of bloom and cold resistance when selecting camellias. They prefer semi-shaded location in organic, acid, well-drained soil. Check for camellia tea-scale on the underside of foliage on existing camellias. Control with a systemic insecticide.
3. Early winter is an ideal time to adjust overly acid soils by using agricultural lime. Lawn grasses and vegetable gardens prefer a neutral soil pH or slightly acidic. The only certain way to know the soil’s pH is to have a soil test done by the local Extension Office. Liming should not be necessary except every 3-4 years. If you know your soil is acidic, a rule of thumb is to apply about 40-70 pounds of lime per 1,000 square feet.
4. Prepare Christmas cactus for Christmas blooms by placing it in a cool location with night temperatures below 65 degrees, if possible. Do not allow the plant to have more than 10-12 hours of light per day, particularly if you are growing the cactus under artificial light. Keep the soil on the dry side.
5. Check your favorite nursery for a supply of colorful mums for the patio and garden. Plant mums in a sunny location in the garden. Cut off dead blooms and stems and prune back dead foliage after the first killing freeze.
6. If you haven’t done so, it’s time to clean the vegetable garden area of dead vegetation that may harbor insects and disease. Begin to prepare now for a very early spring garden. Late winter will be planting time for winter vegetables.
7. Mulch plantings to protect against winter cold. Pine needles and dried leaves make an excellent insulation against cold.
8. Keep wet leaves raked from lawn grasses that may block aeration and sunlight.
9. Begin the selection of fruit and pecan trees for winter planting.
10. Prepare feed and winter shelter for our feathered friends of the garden. Food, water, and shelter encourage birds to stay around the garden and may be supplied in attractive and effective ways. Place bird feeding stations in protected areas that are visible from indoor areas.
11. The dormant period, late November through February, is the ideal time to plant or transplant trees and shrubs. Before planting any tree or shrub, be aware of how the plant grows as to its potential size and growth habits.
12. Prepare your soil well in advance of planting. Every plant deserves a well drained, well prepared soil. January and February is the ideal time to plant roses.
13. To cover bare soil in your lawn, consider seeding the bare spots with annual ryegrass.
14. Yellowing leaves on fruiting hollies may be expected now. An application of a complete and balanced fertilizer will help support the berry crop and keep the foliage green.
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Street____________________________________________________________________________

City_________________________________________           Zip Code________________

Home Phone (____) _____________________   Alternate Phone (____) ______________

Email____________________________________________________________________________

Liability and Release Form

I (we) realize that when engaged in Master Gardener activities, that serious physical injury and personal property damage may accidentally occur. I (we) further realize that there is always the possibility of having an allergic reaction to or being poisoned by handling or ingesting plants and that adverse reactions may result in mild or fatal illness.

Knowing the risks, I (we) agree to assume the risks and agree to release, hold harmless, and to indemnify the Gwinnett County Master Gardeners Association, and any officer or member thereof, from any and all legal responsibility for injuries or accidents incurred by myself or my family during or as a result of any and all Gwinnett County Master Gardener activity, field trip, excursion, meeting or dining, sponsored by the association.

Member’s Name (please print clearly) __________________________________________________

Signature____________________________________________________Date:_________________

Additional Member’s Name (print clearly) ______________________________________________

Signature____________________________________________________Date: ______________

Release Form is required for participation in GCMG fieldtrips and activities. Please return completed, signed, and dated form with check payable to “Gwinnett County Master Gardeners”.

Address mail to: Gwinnett County Master Gardeners, Attn: Anne Heath, Treasurer, Gwinnett County Cooperative Extension, 750 South Perry Street, Lawrenceville, Georgia 30045.

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