



Fall 2018  
Volume 21 Issue 3

# Over the Garden Gate

Published by the Hall County Master Gardeners

## President's Corner

by Patti Lewis

### Is It Fall Yet?!

The calendar says it is autumn but temps in the high 80s and the high humidity might make you think otherwise.

Nevertheless, there are end-of-the-year tasks to do. If you're like me, you have done a minimal amount of work for the last six or so weeks because of the heat and lack of rainfall. Here are a few reminders of fall gardening tasks:

As you know, fall is the *best time to plant*. The new additions will have all winter long to grow strong root systems and acclimate themselves to our climate. So, pick out those new bulbs, buy replacement plants if you need them, and fill your containers with a winter hardy display or fall color. Finish planting your fall vegetable garden or plant a cover crop if you don't do fall veggies. Plant those seeds that need to over-winter outside (stratify). Take a soil sample. Top dress perennials with compost. Transplant plants that are out of place. Mow warm season grasses until the first frost.

It's also time to *bring in those houseplants*. Start by repotting those plants that are pot bound. Change out soil to increase the nutrition

available to the plants. Debug your plants by soaking them in a bucket filled with water and a very mild soap. Rinse off the soap and clean the pot. Watering well will flush out the salts that accumulate from any fertilizer that has been applied. Put your plants somewhere that they will be protected but as happy as possible.

It's not all about work. Go on a *road trip* to see the fall leaves. Go to Gibbs Gardens for the spectacular show in the Japanese gardens.

Late fall is also time to start *winding down for the winter*. Clean and sharpen your tools, do maintenance and winterize your power tools. Gather up the dead plant material that may harbor bad insects and disease while leaving seed heads as food for birds, grasses for movement in your beds, and whatever branches and plant parts you can use as shelter for birds and small mammals. Mulch your tender and borderline plants. Gather your leaves, run over them with the lawnmower before you put it away and use the chopped leaves as mulch or compost them.

As we progress into winter, sit down and think

about what you want to do in and to your garden next spring. *Make a plan*. Hopefully, you took pictures for a record. It helps! Do you want to change a color scheme? Did you lose trees and need to convert to a full-sun bed somewhere? Has your tree canopy grown to the point that you now have a part-or full-shade bed? What plants didn't thrive where you had them? Which plants need to be thinned or reined-in? Plan your vegetable garden. How should you rotate your crops?

Before you know it, it will be spring. The Okame cherry trees will be blooming on Enota, Narcissus will be popping up all over the place and the cycle will begin again.

**HAPPY  
GARDENING!  
Patti**

**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.

## Inside This Issue:

President's Corner	1
Growing at Gardens on Green	2
Natural Halloween Décor - the Joro Spider	3
Ideal Light Conditions for Plants	4

### HCMG Officers

President: Patti Lewis  
Vice President: Kathy Lovett  
Secretary: Linda Sloyer  
Treasurer: Beverly Brinson  
President Elect: Mindy Wade  
Past President: Liz Dietz  
Members at Large: Mark Barton, Dee Scarpellino

Editor: Rick Freeland

Please submit your ideas, news, comments and questions to

[rsfreeland@charter.net](mailto:rsfreeland@charter.net)

Newsletter contributors:

Patti Lewis; Kathy Lovett; Marcia Tague; Rick Freeland

Over the Garden Gate is published quarterly by the Hall County Master Gardeners. Copyright 2018 by Hall County Master Gardeners. All rights reserved. Articles may not be reprinted without permission of the authors.

**G**ardens on Green has now been growing since 2007 when its idea was first planted. With much gratitude to each of you who's been a part of its growing (and growing gardeners), I share this up-date. Because of your commitment to gardening education through your investment of time, talents, money, knowledge, and just plain hard work, thousands of children and adults have experienced the joy of being there. Though located next to busy Green Street, the gardens at 711 Green Street give visitors a sense of being transported to a little oasis.

**“Growing with 2<sup>nd</sup> Graders”** on Tuesdays continues to be the program reaching the largest number of people. A big thank you to HCMG Rose Barton and retired teacher Kathy Head, who now coordinate these weekly field trips! Several of the following Tuesday volunteers have been doing this since the beginning: HCMG's Dr. Danny Askew, Tim Attaway, Mark Barton, Sylvia Bell, Karen Bird, Fifi Chapman, Russ England, Frances Floyd, Gail Stanton, RaeAnn Gerhardt, Angela Halstead, Vinie Beth Jackson, Linda Keck, Joe Kidd, Lee Lovett, Bonnie Martin, Dick Rightmyer, Martha Rightmyer, Linda Sloyer, Holly Sparrow, Cheryl Usher, and Gayle Whisnant and retired teachers Kathy Head, Sonia Rice, and Vicki Lester. **Come see what's happening one Tuesday morning with 45 to 80 students!**

Perhaps you'll want to rotate with the small groups of students as they move from composting to vegetable gardening to gardening with native plants. You can share their excitement as they plant,

watch the full cycle of a butterfly, or help make and drink a healthy smoothie.

**Another opportunity** for you with children is to host in the **Lovett Literacy Garden** on select Thursday mornings. Kindergarten teachers conduct all activities except for planting seeds with the children. Please consider coming **Thursday morning, October 18, at 9:00** to observe and learn the simple details of hosting these young gardeners. Such fun! Cheryl Usher, Rae Ann Gerhardt, Nancy Norton, Gail Stanton, Dinah Wallace, community volunteers, and I can share details with you. Though this garden has been open only since May 2017, hundreds of kindergarteners have enjoyed scheduled visits; and little people with parents or grandparents visit almost every day.



Additionally, the gardens provide a beautiful place for the community to enjoy. Recent birthday parties have been scheduled in the Lovett Literacy Garden, and a variety of events continue to be scheduled at Gardens on Green. During October alone the following are planned: Gainesville Friends of the Park annual picnic, celebration of REACH educational program, and a tour and activities with Patti Laine's Girl Scout troop. Also, Girl Scout Troop 10821 meets twice

monthly in the gardens. Visitors are seen there almost daily. Even without formal instruction from Master Gardeners, guests are reaping benefits of our gardening efforts.

Now I want to talk to you “straight from the heart.” As many of you know, Gardens on Green has been a commitment of the heart for me for over eleven years. Several of you have shared that commitment with me. You, too, believe in the value of learning parts of plants and plant life cycles, in the value of learning the interdependence of all life, in the value of learning healthy foods to eat, in the value of simply digging in the dirt because it's so basic to who we are. Many of you, too, believe in the dire importance of teaching children to connect with nature, to appreciate the common ground we share, and to have fun doing it.

**Because we have this shared belief, I'm asking—even begging—that more of you join us at Gardens on Green.** We have a solid core of volunteers, but we need more: some regulars and some occasional. As circumstances have changed in our lives through the years, some regular volunteers are no longer there. On a personal basis, Lee and I can't do what we did for years because he can barely walk and I can barely talk. Other HCMG's have developed health issues or have family members who need them because of health issues. Others have moved.

**Do you get the picture? We want you! We need you to join our great team at Gardens on Green!** We need you to volunteer either

regularly or occasionally on Tuesdays or Thursdays. We need you on work days. We need you to volunteer for some special events. Our beautiful garden of seven gardens, where most plants are well labeled, is an ideal teaching and learning garden. Some of the best have applauded its merits.

Through the years we have hosted more than one series of classes for adults. Let's do it again! Would you like to help organize those? Perhaps we can have some child/parent classes or child/grandparent classes. There are so many possibilities. At least one well-renowned presenter has volunteered to come at no cost. We have so many great resources among us, in the community, and in places far and near. Many single educational events could be such fun.

**Please consider being among those making a difference at Gardens on Green. “I am one and only one, but I can make a difference.”**

Contact Rose Barton, chairman of the Steering Committee, at [rpbarton1952@gmail.com](mailto:rpbarton1952@gmail.com) or me, chairman of the Lovett Literacy Garden, at [williamlovett@bellsouth.net](mailto:williamlovett@bellsouth.net). **We look forward to “growing together.”**

## What the Heck? Indumentum

A collective term for a surface covering of any kind of *trichomes*, e.g. hairs or scales.

Have you been snagged by a thick golden spider web when you walked around your yard lately? I certainly have! This web is the product of a new addition to the North American non-native spider population: the **Joro spider**, *Nephila clavata*. It was first discovered in local Georgia counties Barrow, Madison, and Jackson in March 2015. After being made aware of this new spider, entomologist E. Richard Hoebeke at the Georgia Museum of Natural History at UGA researched its DNA and appearance; he concluded that it was, indeed, the Joro spider, native to Japan and China. It is a member of the golden orb-web weavers, a group of large spiders that make huge multi-layered disorganized webs of strong, gold-colored silk.

A Joro spider can string its web up to 8 feet, from tree to tree to buildings, and across paths. The web is built high enough

off the ground so that if you don't see it first, the strong silk will stop you in your tracks when it "grabs" you in the face or hair!



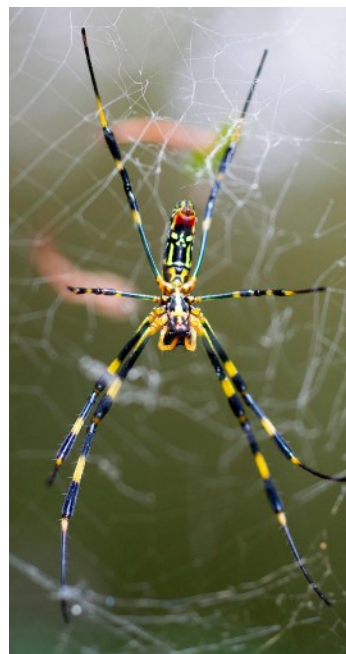
The coloration of this spider would make a lovely tapestry: a bright yellow body with red markings on its underside and blue-green stripes on its back. The black legs have yellow stripes.

The female Joro is larger than the male, up to 4" in width, including legs. She usually stays in the upper part of the web, and will scamper away if the web is disturbed.

If you get snared in this immense golden web, should you be worried about a possible bite by this spider? Yes, they could bite you, causing some localized pain, redness and mild blistering. These effects should be gone in 24 hours, however, unless you

are generally allergic to spider bites.

So far the scientists at UGA don't think that the Joro spider will be invasive or an ecological threat. But they plan to continue monitoring its activity to see if it replaces any of our large native spider population.



The Joro's amazing elevated webs are actually a benefit in that they capture some of our problem insects like the brown marmorated stink bug (which also came to us from China and Japan).

The local folks in Hoschton and Braselton in Jackson county blame the overwhelming presence of this nuisance spider on the

numerous distribution centers along nearby I-85. Sacks of eggs could have easily arrived along with shipments from Asia. Since September is the prime season for Joro spiders to appear, articles about them are in many area current newspapers.

Besides, what could be more decorative in October than multitudes of giant golden spider webs?!

**\*To report Joro spider sightings in other areas, please email [rhoebeke@uga.edu](mailto:rhoebeke@uga.edu)**



**F**all has finally arrived, and Southern gardeners are chomping at the bit to set out new plants. But don't let your eagerness make you jump the gun. Take a little time to figure out where your plant will thrive. In many cases, that starts with determining the best light conditions for your plant.

Many factors affect the health of landscape plants, but one of the most confusing is **light intensity** – the amount of sun or shade a plant needs for optimum vigor. How do you determine if a plant you're thinking of buying will like a certain light condition?

Nurseries attach tags to their plants that provide general information for healthy growth. You may need a plant suitable for your home's sunny south-facing entrance, and the plant tag says your plant loves full sun. Or you might want a plant for a shade garden you're planning to install under a mature water oak. The tag says your plant thrives in deep shade.

But what if you want to plant in partial shade? Or part sun? Just what do these terms mean, and how do they affect your decision to place your plant in a certain position?

An area blessed by full sun means it's exposed to **direct sunlight for at least 6 hours per day**. If a wall of your house faces south or west, and there are no trees casting shade

on the wall in the middle or late afternoon, you can think of this area as full sun. Western and southern exposures get more light, and heat up fast.

Light **filtered through leaves (or through a screen like a trellis)** is considered partial sun or partial shade. Plants here don't want or need direct sun. Early morning light (less harsh than that hot western exposure) can be included in the partial designation. Generally, more than 3 hours of sun and less than 6 can be classified as partial sun or partial shade.

Full shade means an area receives **less than 3 hours a day of direct sunlight**. This condition may occur in a woodland environment, on the north side of your house, or in the narrow side yard between two buildings. Many plants tolerate full shade, but not that many thrive there, so choose your plant wisely.

Full sun-loving plants may grow perfectly well in less light, but their flowering or foliage growth will suffer. A plant that thrives in less light might be a better choice. Conversely, if a shade lover gets too much sun, leaves and bark may burn.

Like gardens themselves, light conditions aren't static – they're constantly changing. Latitude makes a difference. A plant that needs partial shade in the hot south may do just fine

in full sun in Washington or Oregon.

And don't forget to factor in the time of year. Due to the angle of the sun, shadows are longer in winter than summer. When placing your plants, keep in mind that a full sun environment in the summer could turn into a partial or even full shade environment in winter. Familiarize yourself with the various patterns of sun and shade in your yard throughout the day, and factor in the change of seasons. That way, you'll be sure to match the right plant to its ideal light needs.

Another factor to consider is your **plant combinations**. If you plant sun-loving shrubs along with a new shade tree, in a few years your shrubs may be languishing as the tree grows both in height and spread, and casts its shade over them.

Whether you're choosing a plant for full sun or full shade, or conditions somewhere in between, learn the cultural needs of the plants you want to use before purchasing or planting them. Soil moisture plays an important role. Adequate moisture will increase a plant's tolerance for sun.

So take the time to learn the sometimes subtle differences in your yard's light intensity *before* you install your landscape. Your plants will thank you for it.