



# Over the Garden Gate

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## President's Corner

by Liz Dietz

### Fall Pleasures

After the heat of the summer, fall is just around the corner. The cooler days and nights are a welcome relief.

Now is the time to renew the garden with cool weather crops. Just check out the Hall County Master Gardener web site under the month listing to see what to plant for each month.

Summer has about run its course, and my summer crops are looking pretty tired. Fall is also the time of year to plan ahead for Spring color by buying and planting bulbs. My favorite is Daffodils, but I am considering adding Anemones and Crocus this year for some variety.

UGA Bulletin 918 lists bulbs that do well in Georgia including information on how to naturalize prior to planting.<sup>1</sup>

One of our favorite things to do in the fall is to take a drive to the mountains to view the changing colors. Add a visit to Jaemor Farms with the grandson for a hayride or a

cup of hot apple cider.

And who can forget their pies! I can never decide between fresh apple or fresh pumpkin.



This is the beginning of a busy time of the year for Master Gardeners. We just completed the 2017 Fall Expo. The weather cooperated, and we had an all around great time.

The UGA office has posted the letter accepting applications for the Class of 2018. A copy of the letter is available from the

web site under the button *About HCMG*, though there's a question as to whether Hall County will field a class this year.

Our Youth Gardening programs are gearing up for the season in the various systems. We always need volunteers to help with the youth gardening programs. Watch for opportunities in announcements from Robin.

"If a child is to keep his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in" Rachel Carlson

Give a child the gift of gardening.

<http://www.extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=B918#Commonly>

### 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.

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Looking for a reliable substitute for the Bradford Pear? You need look no farther than another Callery Pear hybrid—Cleveland Pear.

Cleveland Pear (*Pyrus calleryana* 'Cleveland Select'), was introduced to the market as a substitute for the fast-growing but weak wooded Bradford Pear, which is subject to limb breakage in high winds and icy weather. Cleveland Pear is an even faster growing tree, adding 4' to 6' a year of new growth in zones 4 through 8.

Cleveland Pear is everything the vaunted Bradford Pear isn't. It's a beautiful, rapid growing flowering ornamental with an almost perfect oval form. An abundance of snow-white flowers appear in March (April in colder zones), and cover the tree like a cloud. In fall, its vivid green, pear-shaped leaves turn a bright scarlet for a fantastic fall color display. Cleveland Pear will

grow up to 30' or more, with a 25' spread. It's drought resistant, pest resistant, and loves either full or partial sun—and it's not finicky about soil conditions, either.

Best of all, Cleveland Pear is not "weather challenged" like its cousin. Its branching pattern is much stronger, resulting in a tree not nearly as likely to fall apart under wind or ice assault as the Bradford Pear.

## How to Use Cleveland Pear in the Landscape

Cleveland Pear makes a wonderful specimen tree in the front yard when used as a stand-alone accent. They are perfectly scaled for a small or medium yard or garden, and make great shade trees.

When planted in masses of 3 to 5 plants, under-planted with shrubs, perennials or groundcovers, it makes a fine, informal grouping.

The tree's dense, almost architectural form lends itself well to a more formal design. Multiple, matching Cleveland Pears planted on both sides of a drive or lining a property line can look striking.



Some people don't like the fragrance of Cleveland Pear's flowers. If this is the case, site the tree downwind of activity areas like patios or outdoor kitchens, and avoid using the tree as an accent where the scent might be objectionable.

## Cleveland Pear Maintenance

This is one tree that is truly low-maintenance. It

needs little pruning, and, if left alone, will develop a fine, symmetrical, oval shaped crown with evenly-spaced limbs.

Make sure the tree has one central leader, though. More than one may compromise the form and weaken the tree.

Cleveland Pear is mostly pest resistant, but gardeners should keep an eye out for fire blight, entomosporium leaf spot, powdery mildew, or crown gall. These diseases can be prevented with proper planting and watering techniques. If they do take hold, use fungicides and bactericides to help control them.

The Cleveland Pear's perfect form, fast growth habit, hardy limb strength, wonderful spring flower display, and vibrant fall color make it a great choice for a small ornamental tree for the home landscape. It's the perfect natural successor to Bradford Pear.

## To all of my Hall County Master Gardener Friends

**I cannot begin to express my gratitude towards all of you that sent me notes, cards, food, and gifts through such a difficult time in my life.**

**I feel so blessed to have gotten to know most of you sometimes over the course of my season at the Extension office and I am still blessed to see some of you here at the garden.**

**I truly call many of you my dear friends and I am so thankful to have gotten to know all of you.**

**I will never be able to communicate how much it meant to me to have all of your support and love. It really did carry me through.**

**Warm regards and well wishes to all of you,**

**Wanda Cannon**



Moving to Hall County with my wife 18 years ago, I was excited about the prospect of gardening in a warmer climate, hospitable to a wider range of plants than I had been accustomed to. Wanting to be better prepared, I took the Master Gardener class in 2000. While the class proved extremely beneficial, it also made me aware there was much more I needed and wanted to learn. At the top of my list was coping with invasive species, insects and foliar diseases. Turns out I didn't delve deeply enough into diseases.

Two years ago, I lost a pair of beautiful Annabelle hydrangeas. Their foliage suddenly wilted and they died. Mystified, I began some research, coming to the conclusion that they had succumbed to root rot.

I replaced one of the hydrangeas and it too soon died. In the spring of 2016, several water sprouts on our mature fig tree suddenly wilted while other parts of the tree appeared healthy. Within weeks however, the entire tree was defoliated and its bark was falling off.

Anxious for a diagnosis, I consulted Walter Reeves, sending him several pictures, including those of the sapwood and roots. Walter soon informed me he was bewildered. Although it didn't exhibit the usual symptoms, I am convinced the fig tree also was a root rot victim.

Last spring, I noticed the foliage and flower buds on our Rose of Sharon were failing to develop. Shortly

thereafter they withered. New growth appeared but it too failed to develop.

Not long after, a pair of red stem dogwoods perished after exhibiting similar symptoms. Examining their roots, I found them to be in a state of decay.

Last month, I set about digging up the Rose of Sharon and found its base was completely decayed. All were apparently infected with root rot.



Fungal root rot diseases commonly affect a wide range of woody plants. Those which we should be concerned about in our home landscape include Phytophthora Root Rot, Pythium Root Rot, Black Root Rot and Armillaria Root Rot. These diseases have similar characteristics, making them difficult to distinguish from each other except by a person with a

trained eye or by testing conducted in a laboratory. Some common symptoms of these diseases are:

- Sudden discoloration, wilting, shriveling and shedding of all foliage.
- Stunted foliage and new stem growth.
- Foliage with nutrient deficiency-like appearance.
- Discolored roots and reduced root systems, bark lesions and outer bark which is easily separated from sapwood.
- Mushrooms and mycelia on or around the base of the plant.

Air, contaminated water, insects and contaminated tools are vectors by which root rot diseases are usually spread. Heavy clay soils, such as are found locally, and excessive moisture, contributed to by our currently greater than normal rain fall, provide optimal conditions under which these diseases proliferate.

Plants prone to disease should only be placed where the soil is not susceptible to becoming water logged. Promoting soil permeability by incorporating amendments such as small bark chips or inorganic materials like Permatill, paver base aggregate, and expanded shale are measures which can further reduce the risk infection.

Controlling root rot is extremely difficult. Once

infection sets in it almost always proves fatal. Treatment with a hydrogen peroxide or fungicide may be successful if the disease is detected very early. However, the disease has almost always progressed too far by the time symptoms appear. Recently, I purchased **Root Shield**, a product advertised to neutralize the disease-causing pathogens. It must, however, be applied to the soil as a prophylactic prior to planting. I have used it and hope for favorable results.

Solar radiation soil sterilization also can be employed to prevent root rot prior to planting. This method utilizes solar generated heat to sterilize the soil, killing both pathogens and weed seeds. The process involves covering soil in the planting area with a layer of UV resistant clear polyethylene film during the heat of summer. Edges of the polyethylene must be kept tightly to the soil surface in order to prevent it from being dislodged by wind and to contain heat. This polyethylene cover should remain in place for a period of four to six weeks.

## What the Heck?

### Prothallus

A small, flat, delicate structure produced by a germinating spore and bearing sex organs. It is the gametophyte of ferns and some other plants.

## 'Round and 'Round the Mulberry... Weed?

by Marcia Tague

Have you seen this plant? Well, let me introduce you to my nemesis, **mulberry weed** (aka hairy crabweed.) It might be lurking under your pretty shrubs or growing in the middle of a cluster of perennials. To me, it readily disguises itself as Lantana except that it's just a little lighter green and the leaves of Lantana are opposite, not alternate as are the leaves of this plant.



Mulberry weed actually got its name from its close resemblance to mulberry tree seedlings when those seedlings are only about 4 inches tall. But mulberries have smooth white stems while this weed has prominent hairs on the leaves and stems.

Mulberry weed (*Fatoua villosa*) was first scientifically described in Japan in the late 1700s. Today it is widespread in southern Asia including large parts of southern China, the Philippines, and Australia. Like so many of our non-native plants, it probably hitchhiked a ride to the US on some imported

product or nursery stock. First identified in Louisiana in 1962, it was seen in gardens all across the southern states by mid-1990's.

Mulberry weed prefers a moist shaded area in the garden which is often provided by the landscape plants it grows among. It grows stiffly upright with a taproot. The flowers are tight, green-tan, pea-sized clusters without petals that appear in the leaf axils.

Although a plant can grow to 18-24" tall, these flower clusters can appear when a seedling is 2" tall with only 3 leaves. This means that even a tiny mulberry weed can produce a copious amount of seed. According to some references, the seed is released in an explosive manner and can be expelled up to 4 ft. away! No doubt, that is why this prolific pest shows up growing in the middle of other plantings, making it hard to spot until it gets 5-6" tall and full of seeds. So, when weeding, if one plant gets missed, it will repay the gardener with a



really unfortunate amount of new plants.

Obviously, ridding a garden of this pest isn't easy. Hand-weeding is best but that taproot must be pulled out or it will grow back with a vengeance. Also, DO NOT throw the discarded plants in a weed pile or your compost bin! Compost does not get hot enough to kill the seeds. Throw them in the trash container to be hauled far away! A 2" layer of mulch on your flower beds is said to give some control since the seeds need light for germination.

The recommended pre-emergent herbicides are Surflan and Gallery applied in late March. Preen is not effective. Post-emergent

herbicides, if one gets desperate enough to use them, will work of course, but they are difficult to apply since mulberry weed often grows in such close proximity to desirable plants that you are likely to kill some ornamentals also.

If you see even one mulberry weed plant in your landscape, pull it out immediately and trash it or you will be going 'round and 'round the mulberry weed for a long, long time.

Sources:

<https://www.uaex.edu/yard-garden/resource-library/plant-week/mulberryweed.aspx>

[www.invasive.org/weedcd/pdfs/mulberry.pdf](http://www.invasive.org/weedcd/pdfs/mulberry.pdf)

