

August Topics for Farmers Markets

Thank you for volunteering to help with the Farmers Markets this month. Please remember to wear your Master Gardener shirt and badge. I recommend that you familiarize yourself with all the brochures from the ACES and that you watch the videos listed below so that you will be well versed on the topics for the day.

The August Topics for Farmers' Markets are as follows:

1. Fall Planting

a) Basics of Fall Vegetable Gardening ANR-1422 (Attached to email as a pdf)
<https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/lawn-garden/basics-of-fall-vegetable-gardening/>

Read tips on soil preparation, watering, fertilizer, and planting guide.

b) What to plant in the fall (and why)
<https://alabamaliving.coop/articles/what-to-plant-in-the-fall-and-why/>

“Look for varieties with a harvest maturity of 100 days or less,” Enfield, a horticulturist with Bonnie Plants, says, or find out the dates to maturity of things you want to grow and count back from your area’s first expected frost date to determine if there’s enough time to grow them successfully.

Cutting that date close? Frost blankets or other protective covers can be used during severe cold spells to extend the life of many fall crops well into the late fall or early winter. Planting in containers that can be moved to protected areas during extremely cold weather is another option.

Regardless of what you’re planting, follow proper planting practices. Remove spent or dead plants, which may harbor disease and insect pests, and test your soil before adding fertilizers. Enfield recommends turning garden soil and amending it with compost or other organic matter, too. “Whether you’re planting perennials, trees, vegetables or anything, your plants will be a lot happier for it,” she said.

Display:

* Signs – Fall Vegetable Planting Guide, Page 3 of ANR-1422 with list of vegetables and suggested planting times with QR code to this brochure.

2. How to Care for your Tools

Three tools with labels are provided: Hedge Shears, Loppers (short handles, may need to explain that many have long handles), and hand clippers. A stand up sign with the following information is included:

Care for your tools

- * Wash away dirt and grime with water and dish detergent.
- *Scrub away built-up residue from blades.
- *Store out of the elements.
- *Wipe down wooden handles with linseed oil yearly.
- *Sharpen along the original bevel when dull.

This is an excellent video from ISU Extension in Dubuque on sharpening garden tools:
<https://youtu.be/Gx0v2qdgVil>

3. How to build and use a cold frame

Definition of a cold frame:

A cold frame is simply **a box frame with a clear lid (also known as a 'light') on top**. The frame is normally constructed from wood but other materials such as blocks or bricks are also common. The clear lid lets in the sunlight, trapping warm air inside while protecting plants from inclement weather.

The purpose of a cold frame is to extend the growing season in the fall or to jump start the garden in the spring.

Information on construction and use of cold frames:

<https://www.almanac.com/how-build-cold-frame>

Check out this video from Benedict Vanheems, editor of the website GrowVeg.com

<https://youtu.be/m2PJP5OJO0E>

How to build a cold frame with tubing – Redfern Food Forest

<https://youtu.be/G-o75OPQuSs>

Display: Carolyn Plott has built a cold frame for us to use as an example.

The following information will be included each month for ongoing discussion and sharing of information.

4. Soil Sample kit distribution and explaining the importance of testing. There are two soil kits – one from Alabama Extension and one from a privately owned company called Powered by Soil Kit. The Soil Kit gives exact product recommendations (from their sponsors). Both use the Auburn University lab. As Master Gardeners, we do NOT make product recommendations.

5. Grow More Give More growing cards for Tomatoes, Okra, Green Beans, and Squash are available for distribution. Bushel baskets and Share Your Harvest cards will be on hand for donations. Small stand-up sign for display with Share Your Harvest card is available as well.

6. Helpline cards and Smart Yard brochures available for distribution.

7. Start a Garden brochures to distribute: Raised Bed Gardening ANR-1345, Container Gardening ANR-1139, Five Gallon Bucket Supply List ANR-2663, Raised Bed Supply List ANR-2664, and Garden Box Supply List ANR-2665. Only place 2-4 brochures on the table at a time to prevent “grabby” hands. Share the Grow More Give More resources on the ACES website via the QR code on the small sign. An additional QR sign is available for the lengthier The Alabama Vegetable Gardener ANR-0479.

8. Brochures on tomatoes: Tomato Insect Pests & Scouting Methods ANR-2206 and Pruning Fresh-Market Tomatoes ANR-1060. Recommended that you also read Blossom End Rot ANR-1059 (not in tubs).