



FLOWER POWER

The Avondale Estates Garden Club

Member of the National Garden Clubs, Inc.

Deep South Garden Clubs and the Garden Club of Georgia

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THE NATIVE NUDGE
Fothergilla gardenia
Dwarf Fothergilla



Slow growing and deciduous, this shrub likes our kind of soil though it will need to be lightened at planting with some soil amendment. Grows to 2-3' tall with the same spread and produces white bottlebrush-like flowers April to early May before it leafs out. It prefers full sun to part shade.

It is named for Dr. John Fothergill (1712-1780) an English physician and botanist who experimented growing plants from around the world in this London garden



Happy Holidays!

You are Cordially Invited to a Holiday Luncheon

On December 6th at 11:00

At the LakeHouse

Hosted by the Executive Board of

Avondale Estates Garden Club

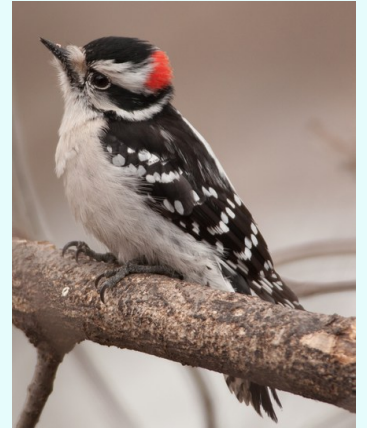
AEGC MISSION STATEMENT

The Avondale Estates Garden Club offers education and service opportunities to inspire the appreciation of various horticulture arts and to promote the awareness of environmental responsibility.

The Twelve Birds of Christmas

As the holidays arrive, our gardens and feeders become stages for winter's feathered performers. Inspired by the classic carol, here are twelve birds you might spot in your garden during the season:

1. Northern Cardinal – A brilliant red flash against winter greenery.
2. Carolina Chickadee – Cheerful calls and acrobatic feeder antics.
3. Eastern Bluebird – A symbol of happiness, often lingering through mild winters.
4. American Goldfinch – Their muted winter plumage still brings joy.
5. Tufted Titmouse – Curious and bold, often traveling with chickadees.
6. Downy Woodpecker – Tiny drummers tapping on trees and feeders.
7. Red-bellied Woodpecker – A splash of red and a loud call.
8. White-throated Sparrow – Their sweet whistle is a winter soundtrack.
9. Dark-eyed Junco – “Snowbirds” that arrive just in time for the holidays.
10. Blue Jay – Bold, noisy, and striking in icy light.
11. Mourning Dove – Gentle cooing adds peace to the season.
12. Brown Thrasher – Georgia's state bird, often rustling in leaf litter.



Overcup Oak – The Best Landscape Tree You’ve Never Heard Of

In creek beds across the Deep South, is a highly unusual oak species, Overcup Oak (*Quercus lyrata*). Unlike nearly any other Oak, Overcups occur deep in alluvial swamps and spend most of their lives with their feet wet. Though the species hides out along water’s edge in secluded swamps, it has nevertheless been discovered by the horticultural industry and is becoming one of the favorite species of landscape designers and nurserymen around the South. The reasons for Overcup’s rise are numerous.

First, much of the deep South, especially in the Coastal Plain, is dominated by poorly drained flatwoods soils cut through by river systems and dotted with cypress and blackgum ponds. These conditions call for landscape plants that can handle hot, humid air, excess rainfall, and even periodic inundation (standing water). It stands to reason our best tree options for these areas, Sycamore, Bald Cypress, Red Maple, and others, occur naturally in swamps that mimic these conditions. Overcup Oak is one of these hardy species. Overcup goes above and beyond being able to handle a squishy lawn, it is often found inundated for weeks at a time by more than 20’ of water during the spring floods our



river systems experience. The species has even developed an interesting adaptation to allow populations to thrive in flooded seasons. Their acorns, preferred food of many waterfowl, are almost totally covered by a buoyant acorn cap, allowing seeds to float downstream until they hit dry land, thus ensuring the species survives and spreads. While it **will not** survive perpetual inundation like Cypress and Blackgum, if you have a periodically damp area in your lawn where other species struggle, Overcup will shine.

Overcup Oak is also an exceedingly attractive tree. In youth, the species is extremely uniform, with a straight, stout trunk and rounded “lollipop” canopy. This regular habit is maintained into adulthood, where it becomes a stately tree with a distinctly upturned branching habit, lending itself well to mowers and other traffic underneath without having to worry about hitting low-hanging branches. The large, lustrous green leaves are lyre-shaped if you use your imagination (hence the name, *Quercus lyrata*) and turn a not-unattractive yellowish brown in fall. Overcups especially shines in the winter, however, when the whitish gray, shaggy bark takes center stage. Overcup bark is very reminiscent of White Oak or Shagbark Hickory and is exceedingly pretty relative to other landscape trees that can be successfully grown here.

Finally, Overcup Oak is among the easiest to grow landscape trees. We have already discussed its ability to tolerate wet soils and our blazing heat and humidity, but Overcups can also tolerate periodic drought, partial shade, and nearly any soil pH. They are long-lived trees and have no known serious pest or disease problems. They transplant easily from standard nursery containers or dug from a field (if it’s a larger specimen), making establishment in the landscape an easy task. In the establishment phase, defined as the first year or two after transplanting, young, transplanted Overcups require only a weekly rain or irrigation event of around 1” (wetter areas may not require any supplemental irrigation) and bi-annual applications of a general purpose fertilizer, 10-10-10 or similar. After that, they are generally on their own without any help!

Mulch Now Before the Real Winter Sets In

Though it's been said that mulch is merely entertainment, we believe it acts as a blanket for your plants. As December deepens, now is the time to protect your garden beds before the coldest weeks arrive.

Why mulch now?

- It insulates soil, keeping roots stable against temperature swings.
- It conserves moisture during dry winter winds.
- It prevents soil erosion and compaction from rain.

The best materials for winter mulch:

- Shredded leaves (free and abundant this season).
- Pine straw or needles (lightweight and easy to spread).
- Bark chips or compost for long-term coverage.

To Apply mulch, spread 2–4 inches around perennials, shrubs, and young trees.

Keeping it a few inches away from trunks and stems to prevent rot. Refresh thin spots after heavy rain or wind.

On a nice winter day when you want so badly to be in the garden, go out and fluff up the mulch!



AEGC Calendar



December 6 ... Holiday Luncheon at LakeHouse

January 7 AEGC Board Meeting 10:00 a.m.

16 AEGC Membership Meeting 10:00 a.m.

22 DeKalb Federation Meeting 10:30 at Callanwolde