



## The South Fulton SOIL (Soil Organic In Line)

A publication of the South Fulton Master Gardener Extension Volunteers of Fulton County



### Color Them Awesome!!

Driving through the Carolinas and Coastal Georgia left me awe-struck with the bold beauty of nature. The brilliant shades of red, gold, yellow, orange and bronze leaves against evergreens divinely touched my soul. What creative force or energy is behind this fall show of color, I thought.

Why leaves change color at this time of year is related to several factors. According to the USDA Forest Service, longer and cooler nights and biochemical activity in the leaf start the process of producing the range of colors. This color palette responsible for the fall colors include the pigments, **chlorophyll**, **carotenoids** and **anthocyanins**.

**Chlorophyll** is what gives leaves the basic green and is needed for photosynthesis, the chemical process that plants and trees use to make sugar for food with the help of sunlight. In temperate zones, trees store the sugar during the dormant winter season.

**Carotenoids** gives yellow, orange and brown colors to fruit and vegetables and plants, which include carrots, corn, bananas, daffodils, buttercups and rutabagas.

**Anthocyanins** are the reds, blues and purple found in red apples, strawberries, plums, blueberries, purple

## WHO WE ARE

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### Officers

**President:** Shirley Shivers

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**Secretary:** Margrett Prentiss

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We are the South Fulton Master Gardener Extension Volunteers. We are trained and certified in horticulture and related areas by the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service. All of us volunteer our services under the direction of the Fulton County Agent, help others through horticultural projects and activities that benefit the South Fulton County community.

### Our Mission

*"To stimulate the interest in, and increase the knowledge of gardening, and to voluntarily, enthusiastically, and responsibly share this knowledge with others."*



concord grapes. These pigments are water soluble and found in the watery substance in the leaf cells.

As the nights become longer, chlorophyll production decreases and eventually ceases. Once that happens, the carotenoids and anthocyanins come out of hiding to reveal their colors.

Weather also affects fall color. The intensity and amount of color is determined by the weather conditions before and after chlorophyll production. The content of moisture in the soil also impacts autumn.

In the next issue, these factors will be further explored. In the meantime, if you were not able to visit New England, there is still a lot of brilliant color right here at home.

Submitted by Melvia Sykes, SFMGEV