

# Georgia goes bananas

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Researchers examine bananas for landscape potential in experimental plots.  
Photo by Richard H. Wallace

Bananas, known most often as a healthy, convenient food, are also popular ornamental plants in the southern United States. Banana plants are highly prized by many as one of the most beautiful ornamentals used for creating a subtropical ambiance in gardens and pool environments.

A research study published in the American Society for Horticultural Science journal *HortTechnology* detailed a study of 33 commercial banana cultivars grown near Savannah, Georgia. The study was designed to determine suitability for ornamental and nursery production and to observe the bananas' fruit production.

Gerard Krewer, Esendugue Greg Fonash, Mark Rieger, David Linvill, and Ben Mullinax of the University of Georgia, and Richard Wallace of

Armstrong Atlantic University, undertook the multi-year research project with the objective of finding recommendations for income-producing ornamental banana cultivars for use by gardeners and nurseries in southern Georgia.

Many of the cultivars flowered and began producing fruit in late summer during the second year of the study. Of particular note were two cultivars named 'Manzano' and '1780', which produced more than six high-quality suckers for nursery propagation, resulting in a potential income of more than \$60 per plant.

The outcomes of the study can be helpful for home gardeners, landscape professionals, and nursery owners who want to expand the use of banana plants in the region. Krewer explained; "This research identified a number of outstanding cultivars of large, medium and small size adapted to the USDA middle 8b region. "

More info: The complete study is available on the ASHS HortTechnology electronic journal web site:  
[horttech.ashspublications.org/ ... nt/abstract/18/3/529](https://horttech.ashspublications.org/...nt/abstract/18/3/529)

Source: American Society for Horticultural Science

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