

Gardening 101

You may recall that a couple of months ago in this column, I discussed an excellent horticulture program at the Rock Building in early March called “What’s Up With Your Soil” conducted by Extension horticulture specialists. This program attracted an audience of 17 persons who received useful information on preparing soils to grow plants. The audience response convinced us there is both a sizeable interested audience and legitimate need for horticultural programs and workshops in Bibb County.

As promised, we are taking advantage of the newfound momentum by offering another horticulture workshop, **Gardening 101 on Tuesday, May 13 from 6pm-9pm at the Rock Building in Centreville**, just north of the Courthouse square. The workshop will be held in the County Commission meeting room on the main floor. **Admission is free.**

If you have any kind of gardening questions, this will be the perfect opportunity to have two great Extension specialists answer them. On hand will be Taylor Hatchett, Bibb County’s new Regional Extension Agent for Home Grounds, Gardens and Home Pests and Gary Gray, Regional Extension Agent for Commercial Horticulture and Home Grounds, Gardens and Home Pests.

Taylor is the daughter of Bobby Boozer, well-known for his work with peach and other fruit trees at the Chilton Research Experiment Station. Taylor is well on her way to establishing her own outstanding reputation in Bibb County. Gary has worked for many years in our region, and he has an outstanding track record for providing prompt, courteous and accurate advice to many a Bibb County grower.

A wide range of horticultural topics will be covered at **Gardening 101** including, but not limited to, vegetable gardening, fruit gardening, lawns, shrubs and trees. If you missed “What’s Up With Your Soil” in March, the experts will also be willing to reprise some of their excellent advice on that topic.

Light refreshments (water, cookies, fruit) will be provided. If you plan to attend please contact the Bibb County Extension office at 205-926-3117 to reserve your spot, and so that arrangements can be made to provide the appropriate amount of refreshments. If you have questions about the content of the program, please contact Taylor Hatchett at 205-688-6499. Information about the program can also be found by visiting our Calendar of Events at www.aces.edu/Bibb

While enjoying gardening and the outdoors this season, be sure to avoid fire ants and encourage children to do the same. This advice is particularly important if you’re fishing or frequenting a recreational pond, according to Extension specialists, since fire ants are moving into these areas because of the bare soils by drought and the availability of water.

Pond owners should read fire ant control product labels carefully, since some insecticides can be extremely toxic to fish. Baits are the best-suited control products for use around ponds. Pond owners are advised to read the bait label for the correct buffer width between the product and the pond edge. “While baits take up to a few weeks to kill the colony, they are the best choice for use around ponds and other water sources,” said entomologist Dr. Lawrence Graham.

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