



FAMILY MATTERS

July 2011
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GREENE COUNTY EXTENSION'S NEWSLETTER

Extension Offers Regional Workshop on Insect Control in Gardens

Are there holes in your tomato leaves? Have the worms devoured your squash? Many of us immediately reach for insecticides to solve the problem. Unfortunately so do many commercial producers. There is high consumer demand for unblemished fresh vegetables in Alabama today. That demand has increased the use of insecticides on a routine basis and such practices cause high environmental risk and unwanted exposure to pesticides.

Is there a better, safer way to protect plants from damage by insects? Yes, there are many. On July 28, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System will sponsor a workshop at the Rural Heritage Center in Thomaston, Alabama, to look at the effectiveness of methods of insect control in the home garden which do not involve the use of insecticides. The Extension System has had a plot in the RHC demonstration garden testing the effectiveness of small net houses for pest management. The results of this demonstration will be discussed. Vegetable diseases, drip irrigation, and soil management will also be covered at this meeting.

The meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 28 from 9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Registration is from 8:30 to 9:00. Cost of the workshop is \$5.00 which includes a light lunch. To register, call the Greene County Extension Office at 372-3401 or the Marengo County Extension Office at 334 295-5959.

July Meetings Set for Landowners with Timber Damage After April Storms

The Alabama Forest Recovery Task Force will hold a series of meetings from July 18-28 to provide information and help for landowners who saw their timber damaged or destroyed in the storms of April 15 and 27. Meetings will include program sessions from state and federal agencies designed to help landowners work through the recovery and clean-up process. The agenda will cover salvage operations, fire and insect damage considerations, reforestation, government assistance and tax implications.



Upcoming Events

*~Greene County Farmers Market~
Be sure to stop by the Greene County Farmers Market and pick up some fresh vegetables grown locally. The Farmers market is open each Saturday from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m.*



Happenings This Month

THURSDAY, JULY 28, 6:30 to 9 p.m.
LIVINGSTON

Meeting Location: ALFA Environmental Hall,
University of West Alabama, Livingston,
Sumter County
Contact: Willie Lamplsey, County Coordinator
(Alabama Cooperative Extension System)
Phone: (205) 652-9501
email: lamplwh@aces.edu

For more information about all the sessions, contact
Sam Duvall at (334) 481-2129.
For more Extension news go to:
<http://www.aces.edu/news/> and click on Newline
or Grassroots.

Happenings Next Month

Haylage Production Meeting, Tuesday August 30
beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the Blackbelt Region
Research and Extension Center, Marion Junction,
AL-- For more information, contact Regional
Extension Agent Brenda Glover at 334-624-8710 or
334-321-8828.

Announcement

Leadership Greene—Do you want to become more
involved in the community? Do you want to be a part
of Greene County's future? Do you want to make
new friends and learn new things about our area? If
so, then you need to consider joining Leadership
Greene County. Classes are held once a month,
starting in October and ending in May. Topics
covered are: Education, Industrial Development,
County Government, State Government, Agriculture,
Human Services and Tourism. Contact Patti Fuller for
an application. **The class is free. Be sure to contact
Patti Fuller at the Greene County Extension Office at
205-372-3401 for more information.**

Cell Phone Usage

Teens and Cell Phone Usage How are teens using their high-tech phones?

Teens are using their cell phones in very creative ways. Instead of passing notes in class, they sometimes send text messages. In addition to text messaging, teens can also access the Internet and download pictures, videos, and music with their cell phones. It's an instant source of information, from finding out about the lat-est parties to contacting the closest drug dealer. They can also receive messages from anyone, friend or not, as long as the other person has the cell phone number. This can include spammers, scammers, identity thieves, online predators, and cyber bullies.

Teens can also be alerted to a text in very discrete ways, either by downloading a ring tone that is out of pitch range of most adults or by putting their phones on vibrate. Newer cell phones enable teens to capture the moment with photos, ring tones or short video clips—a fun and mostly harmless feature—except when inappropriate images are captured and shared for all to see. Some teens have even gone as far as creating a ring of contacts through text messaging to make and alert friends of where parties with alcohol and drugs are being held.

Dangers:

- * It's hard to monitor teens when you can't hear or understand what they're saying or who they're making plans with. Text messaging allows teens more discretion than you might be comfortable with, and more opportunity for them to leave you in the dark about their plans.
- * Too often, teens mix cell phone use and driving, a dangerous, deadly and often illegal combination.



Cell Phone Usage (cont'd)

Teens and Cell Phone Usage ~ How are teens using their high-tech phones? (cont'd)

* Troubling photos/videos taken with a cell phone by or of your teen can quickly and easily be posted to a Web site for any-one to see.

Advantages:

* Cell phones offer a convenient method for parents to stay connected and check in with their teens at any time of day.

* Text messaging is great for dropping quick, short notes, especially when there's a lot of surrounding noise.

What are the warning signs of cell phone misuse?


* As parent, you'll be able to tell if your teen is overusing his/her cell phone by the amount of time they are spending text messaging their friends. Do they run to answer the phone/text, then hide out to respond to it? Do you catch them talking or texting or texting late at night or at times when they said they would be doing something else? What can you do? Check your phone bill. Most companies can provide an itemized list of incoming and outgoing calls and text messages on your monthly statements. Make sure you recognize the numbers on your statement, and if you don't, ask your teen to identify them.

* For advice on how to open the conversation about general cell phone use and how much time your teen is spending on the phone or texting, visit TheAntiDrug.com's "Conversations for Parents: Can You Hear Me Now? Setting Limits on Cell Phone Use."

Submitted by: Sallie Lide-Hooker, REA, Family and Child Development

Gardening Corner

How To Care For Your Hydrangeas



When caring for your hydrangeas the first thing to know is exactly what kind of hydrangea you have. The types of leaves and flowers are characteristic of each species. Once you are certain of the type of hydrangea you have, then you can better determine where it would grow best, when and how much to fertilize, if the blooms are capable of changing colors, and when it would be best to prune for the best show of flowers for the following year.

Site Selection: Hydrangeas are relatively easy to grow in well-drained soils containing plenty of organic matter. Hydrangeas prefer warm, morning sun and cooler, afternoon shade. Avoid planting big leaf, oak leaf, and smooth hydrangeas in hot, dry, exposed sites.

Fertility: Big leaf hydrangeas respond to several light fertilizer applications during the growing season. A general purpose fertilizer, such as 12-4-8, 16-4-8, or 10-10-10, applied in March, May, and July is suggested at a rate of 1 pound per 100 square feet, and di-vided over three applications. Do not remove mulch when fertilizing, but water at the time of application to help dissolve fertilizer. Remember that the nutrient aluminum affects flower color on big leaf and serrated hydrangea. If you want blue flowers, use fertilizers low in phosphorus. The phosphorus level is indicated by the middle number (12-4-8) in fertilizer descriptions. Phosphorus ties up aluminum making it unavailable for root uptake and leads to pink flowers.

The Color: Only certain types of hydrangeas are capable of changing color, the big leaf and serrated hydrangeas. Bloom color and intensity depend on the specific cultivar, weather, plant health, and soil. Of these, soil pH is the strongest influence gardeners can adjust.

Gardening Corner (cont'd)

The Color (cont'd): Blue or pink blooms depend on soil pH. At low pH levels (acid soils), aluminum is readily available to the plant, and flowers become blue. At high pH ranges (more alkaline soils), aluminum is less available, and flowers are pink. To create pink flowers add lime to raise soil pH. To create blue flowers add sulfur to lower soil pH. A faster option for changing flower color is to use liquid drenches. Want to enhance your blue flowers or change pink ones to blue? Dissolve 1 tablespoon of alum (aluminum sulfate) in a gallon of water, and drench the soil around the plant in March, April, and May. Desire pink flowers? Try 1 tablespoon of hydrated lime in a gallon of water, and drench the soil around the plant in March, April, and May. Avoid splashing either of these solutions on leaves, bark, or your skin because they can burn.

Pruning: Some hydrangeas bloom on "old wood" while others bloom on "new wood." Bearing flowers on stems produced from last year's buds describes blooms on old wood. Flower buds forming on this year's growth appear on new wood. Prune shrubs that bloom on old wood shortly after current flowering to avoid removing developing buds. The next year's flower buds begin forming in August. If a shrub blooms on new wood, prune in late winter or in spring to stimulate new growth for additional blooms. For more information on Hydrangea species and cultivars for size and types of blooms, disease resistance, hardiness and size of plant please visit:

<http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-1276/>

Submitted by: Willie Datcher, REA, Gardening, Home Grounds, and Pest Management



Recipe Corner

My husband and I love to garden. Okay, the truth is he loves to garden and we both love to cook using the delicious vegetables he grows in our back yard. This year, I've been pleasantly surprised that our tomatoes have been so tasty, despite the drought conditions we have encountered.

Recently we have been using our excess tomatoes to make homemade salsa. We have tried several recipes, but this is our favorite. Hope you enjoy.

Salsa

8 to 9 lbs. tomatoes, peeled and chopped
¼ c. lemon juice
1½ tsp. cumin
1 c. green bell pepper, chopped
1/3 bunch fresh cilantro, chopped
½ c. cider vinegar
2 Tbs. garlic powder
1 Tbs. plus 1 tsp. salt
3 large onions (I use a sweet onion, like Vidalia)
1 c. hot pepper, chopped (I use jalapeño--but be sure to wear gloves when handling them)
¼ c. sugar

I use a food processor and chop the vegetables into very small pieces. After your vegetables have been chopped, put all of the ingredients into a large pot and simmer for about 1½ hours. Put into sterilized jars and process for 20 minutes in a waterbath canner. Remove from canner and make sure all jars sealed. Yields 6 to 8 pints

Family and Consumer Science Newsletter



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