



Alabama Cooperative Extension System
St. Clair County Office

Extension Newsletter

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Dear Friends of Extension,

The first week of October is National 4-H week. This issue showcases the St. Clair County 4-H program and all the many activities that our 4-H'ers participated in during the summer. Being a former St. Clair County 4-H'er myself, I know the impact 4-H can have on a young person's life and I am thrilled to see so many of our youth participate. However, 4-H isn't just a summer-time activity! 4-H Agent Assistant, Chris Thomas, has been busy preparing a lot of great programs that she will conduct with her 4-H in-school clubs throughout the school year.

If you would like to help support the St. Clair County 4-H program, be sure to stop by the Tractor Supply Company in Moody and donate to their Paper Clover Campaign. (*for more information see pages 2 and 12*)

Happy Fall!

Jill Ann Clark

St. Clair County Youth Celebrate National 4-H Week

October 2-8 is National 4-H Week, and St. Clair County is celebrating the 4-H youth who have made an impact on the community, and are stepping up to the challenges of a complex and changing world.

Recent findings from Tufts University's *4-H Study of Positive Youth Development* indicate that young people in 4-H are three times more likely to contribute to their communities than youth not participating in 4-H. Notably, the Tufts research discovered that the structured learning, encouragement and adult mentoring that 4-H'ers receive play a vital role in helping them actively contribute to their communities. In St. Clair County, more than 1,200 4-H members and 100+ volunteers are involved in 4-H.

4-H youth are a living, breathing, culture-changing revolution for doing the right thing, breaking through obstacles and pushing our country forward by making a measurable difference right where they live. Learn how you can *Join the Revolution of Responsibility* at 4-H.org/revolution, or contact Chris Thomas, 4-H agent assistant, at the St. Clair County Extension office at (205) 338-9416 or [email mc10018@auburn.edu](mailto:mc10018@auburn.edu).



4-H Environmental Building Named

The Alabama 4-H Club Foundation, Inc. named its environmental science education building at the Alabama 4-H Center near Columbiana after longtime Alabama Cooperative Extension System Director W. Gaines Smith.

“I could never have dreamed of this occasion when I started my 4-H experience in 1952 as a 4-H member at Hicks Memorial School,” said the Autauga County native. “It’s a long way from there.”

“I am overwhelmed, humbled and very proud of this honor,” Smith told those attending the program and reception.

Smith’s Extension leadership has spanned 45 years, holding leadership positions at the county, district, regional and state levels. He has led ACES through times of tight budgets, organizational downsizing and the redesign of the programming process. He currently serves on the National 4-H Council Board of Trustees.

“Without Gaines Smith and his unshakeable belief in the needs of our youth and this center, this building could not and would not have been built,” said Jack Odle, immediate past

chairman of the Alabama 4-H Club Foundation’s board of directors, who is editor and publisher of *Progressive Farmer*. “He never wavered in his support.”

“Gaines was our rock that kept us held firmly together as we moved forward with this project,” Odle added. “He was our beacon of light that showed us the way through some dark and winding and treacherous paths. And he was our lineman that cleared a lot of red tape of the bureaucracy that invades a project of this size and scope.”

Thomas Elliott, the chief financial officer of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, said Smith has supported Extension programs by allocating Extension funds, personnel, equipment and supplies – and even his own money.

“He also dug into his personal pocket many times and found ways to support the 4-H program,” Elliott said.

Erin O’Mary, president of the Alabama 4-H State Council, spoke on behalf of the more than 78,000 Alabama 4-Hers, thanking Smith for his unwavering support of Alabama 4-H.



“Eight years ago when I began to fill out my first 4-H application, I had no idea 4-H would lead me to experience, achieve and belong to so much,” said the Brilliant, Alabama, teenager. “After three trips to Citizenship Alabama Focus, one trip to Citizenship Washington Focus, one trip to National 4-H Conference and an upcoming trip to National 4-H Congress, you could say that 4-H is not only a hobby but a life.”

“4-H has given me the opportunity to become a photographer, woodworker, speech giver and leader,” O’Mary said. “Some of the most joyous events in my life have happened on this very stage, and I can only imagine what the W. Gaines Smith Environmental Science

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AL 4-H Youth Get Support from Tractor Supply Co.

Tractor Supply Company (TSC) stores and Alabama 4-H are joining forces with a national campaign to support the nation’s largest youth development organization. The TSC Paper Clover Campaign is an in-store fundraiser and will benefit local and state 4-H programming in each of the communities where a TSC store is located.

The fall 2011 *4-H Paper Clover Campaign* will take place Wednesday, Sept. 21, through Sunday, Oct. 2, ending at the start of National 4-H Week. Shoppers at the Moody Tractor Supply Company store will

have the opportunity to support 4-H in St. Clair County by purchasing paper clovers for just \$1 at checkout. All funds raised will be donated to 4-H, and will support 4-H youth development program activities in St. Clair County.

“Alabama 4-H is appreciative for the local support Tractor Supply Company is providing through this campaign across Alabama,” says Lamar Nichols, assistant director for 4-H and Youth Development with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. “Alabama 4-H youth will benefit from the generosity of

Tractor Supply customers and the money donated will have a direct impact on youth in that community.”

“The 4-H Tractor Supply Paper Clover fundraiser continues to be an incredibly impactful local event, hosted on a national platform,” said Donald T. Floyd Jr., president and CEO of National 4-H Council. “We are honored to have a tremendous partnership that helps facilitate the support of 4-H clubs and programs in

continued on page 4 →



Six Successful Years for 4-H Clover Classroom



In July, young people, ages 9-14, participated in a variety of activities that combined learning with fun. This year, St. Clair County's 6th annual 4-H Clover Classroom offered choices in food preparation, hobbies and sports for each of the two hundred 4-H'ers that attended.

There was lots of cooking starting with the Beginner class that taught the basics of food safety, measuring, and cooking. The participants put that knowledge to use by preparing, serving and sharing a complete meal. Other cooking class favorites included eating Dirt Dessert in Fun with Healthy Snacks and making molded candies in Candy 101. One of the most popular cooking classes was Frosting Fun where 4-H'ers learned about frosting and fondant while actually decorating their own cakes. New this year was the Cooking Around the World workshop where meals from China, France, Italy and Mexico were prepared and sampled by all.

Those who enjoy art learned to paint like Van Gogh in Kids on Canvas, created needlework projects in Cross Stitching and showed their creativity while preserving memories in Scrapbooking. Participants in the outdoor activities learned to cast and catch fish in Sportfishing and how to hit the bulls-eye in Archery. Our last activity was the Auburn Road Trip that included a campus tour, visits with state 4-H and Extension staff, and pictures with Aubie, Auburn University's lovable mascot!

Once again, the 4-H Clover Classroom program has been a great success. Comments written by the participants are filled with the words "like," "love," "fun," and "I learned how to." Many are making plans to attend next year. If your child is interested in participating next year, please check our website next spring for more details or call and request that your name be added to our *Extension Newsletter* mailing list, which will include information about the Classroom as it becomes available. Join the fun!

4-H Clover Classroom is made possible by contributions from the community and the volunteers who work with our young people. We would like to give a HUGE thanks to this year's sponsor, the St. Clair County Commission, for their generous support. Thanks also to Moody High School, St. Clair County High School, and Ashville Middle School for the use of their wonderful facilities and to the eighty five adult and youth volunteers who shared their time and knowledge.

Source: Chris Thomas, 4-H Agent Assistant

St. Clair County 4-H'ers Compete at State Level



On July 30, two senior St. Clair County 4-H'ers attended the state competition held at the 4-H Center in Columbiana. Now we'd like to brag about their accomplishments!

Kameron Crenshaw, daughter of Robin and Ronnie Crenshaw of Pell City, placed first in the Freestyle Showcase. The Freestyle Showcase allows the participant to choose which 4-H activity they most enjoyed and show what they learned and achieved. Kameron's exhibit, titled "Meet A Need," was on clothing closets—how they work, how to start your own, and how many people helped their neighbors recently after the April 27, 2011 storm. She also included how she was able to help others through both the clothes closet at her church and working with Extreme Ministries, a disaster relief ministry clothes closet. Great job, Kameron!

Rebecca Parker, daughter of Jan and Tim Parker of Odenville, placed second in the Persuasive Public Speaking category. Persuasive Public Speaking is all about trying to change your audience's attitudes and ways of thinking. Rebecca's speech was titled "Volunteering: A Way to Help Others." Her speech persuaded the audience to volunteer by explaining who can be a volunteer, what organizations they can help, where volunteering can take them, when to volunteer, why they should volunteer, and how they should volunteer. Rebecca makes a difference by volunteering—most recently she shared her time and knowledge in St. Clair County's 4-H Clover Classroom Cooking Camps. Earlier this year she was elected to serve as secretary on the 2011-2012 Alabama 4-H State Council. This is Rebecca's second year to

represent her region in supporting the vision and mission of Alabama 4-H. Great job, Rebecca!

We are very proud of both the accomplishments and service of these St. Clair County 4-H'ers. If your child is interested in competing next year, check out the competitive events and requirements at <http://www.aces.edu/fourh/programs/contest.php>. For more information about the St. Clair County 4-H Program, please contact Chris Thomas, 4-H Agent Assistant or Lee Ann Clark, County Extension Coordinator at (205) 338-9416.

Source: Chris Thomas, 4-H Agent Assistant

TSC 4-H Paper Clover Campaign (continued from page 2)

the communities of more than 1,000 Tractor Supply Company and Del's Feed and Farm Supply stores."

Now entering its second year, the TSC 4-H Paper Clover Campaign has provided nearly \$500,000 to local 4-H programs across the country. The effort has provided direct support for local camps, after-school programs and other activities, and has granted scholarships to these events that youth can explore their interests in everything from animal science to robotics.

Alabama has TSC stores in Andalusia, Anniston, Arab, Athens, Bay Minette, Boaz, Chelsea, Cullman, Demopolis, Dothan, Eufaula, Ft. Payne, Gadsden, Greenville, Hamilton, Huntsville, Jasper, Millbrook, Montevallo, Montgomery, Moody, Moulton, Muscle Shoals, Northport, Opelika, Summerdale/Robertsdale, Talladega and Troy.

About Tractor Supply Company

Tractor Supply Company operates more than 900 stores in 44 states. The Company's stores are focused on supplying the lifestyle needs of recreational farmers and ranchers. The Company also serves the maintenance needs of those who enjoy the rural lifestyle, as well as tradesmen and small businesses. Stores are located in towns outlying major metropolitan markets and in rural communities. The Company offers the following comprehensive selection of merchandise: (1) equine, pet and animal products, including items necessary for their health, care, growth and containment; (2) maintenance products for agricultural and rural use; (3) hardware and tool products; (4) seasonal products, including lawn and garden power equipment; (5) truck and towing products; and (6) work/recreational clothing and footwear for the entire family.

Contact: Kyle Jones, National 4-H Council, 301-951-2889, kjones@fourhcouncil.edu; Janet McCoy with Alabama 4-H, 334/844-7690; mccoyjl@aces.edu; or 4-H Agent Assistant, Chris Thomas at 205-338-9416.

Alabama State 4-H Championship Horse Show 2011



Tricia Selzer



Maggie Barlow



Anna Claire Benes



Maggie Barlow

Several members of the St. Clair County 4-H Horse Club won numerous awards at the 39th annual Alabama State 4-H Horse Show. The show was held July 11th—15th at the Garrett Coliseum Complex in Montgomery.

Those who entered various classes at the show include: Anna Crow, Taylor Stanley, Tricia Selzer, Emma Smith, Tori Stanley, Tessa Watkins, Anna Claire Benes, Maggie Barlow, Hannah Stewart, Kristen Manolio and Joanna Rowlen. In addition to individual awards, the senior horse judging team placed 2nd and the junior horse judging team placed third.

For more information on how you can become a member of the 4-H horse club, contact Laura Elliott at 205-655-3782.



Joanna Rowlen

Source: Nancy Graves, Regional Extension Agent, 4-H



Environmental Center Named (continued from page 2)

Education Building will bring to others in its future. “

“Thank you, Dr. Smith, for giving every 4-Her in the state of Alabama the same opportunity and experiences as myself.”

The \$5.5 million environmental science education building is the first gold-certified Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) environmental education building in the eastern United States. Since its doors opened in 2007, the building has been used by more than 18,000 youth for a variety of educational programs. The facility has set a new standard in teaching Alabama’s children to be environmentally responsible and energy efficient.

Campfire Cooking with a Dutch Oven

When cooking outdoors, cast iron Dutch ovens are a versatile tool. With a little practice and a little patience, you can make delicious meals on the campfire.

A heavy, cast iron pan with legs, a handle and a lipped lid is a great tool for cooking on an open fire. The lip on the lid holds the top coals and the legs hold the bottom of the pan above the coals below.

Cast iron pans must be seasoned to prevent sticking as much as possible and to lengthen the pan's life. Old, rusty pans can be scrubbed with steel wool, then thoroughly washed with soap and water to remove any steel shavings. Wash new pans.

Seasoning Cast Iron

Rub a layer of shortening or vegetable oil all over the cooking area of the dry pan with a paper towel. Place the pan in a warm oven at 250°F. or over warm coals for 2 hours. Cool the pan and repeat the oiling, heating and cooling process two more times.

Each time the pan is used, wash, rinse and dry thoroughly. When dry, oil it lightly and heat in the oven or over coals again.

Heating the Dutch Oven

Using charcoal to heat the Dutch oven makes it easier to regulate the heat. Add a pile of charcoal to the center of the campfire to be started by the flames. When lit, remove the charcoal from the fire and arrange for cooking near the edge of the fire pit, away from the campfire flames.

Cooking Methods

Altering the source of heat allows the Dutch oven to be used several ways.

Roasting—The heat from the coals comes evenly from the top and bottom. Place equal numbers of coals on top and under the pan to create high temperatures and short cooking times. This seals in juices.

Frying and Boiling—All the heat comes from underneath the pan. The temperature should be high and kept even during cooking. A Dutch oven lid can be flipped upside down and used as a skillet or griddle.

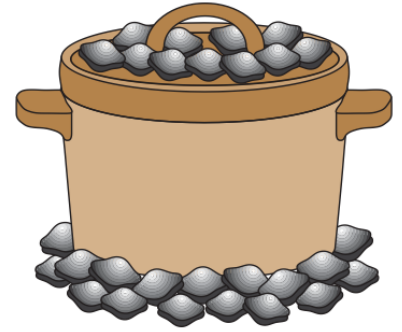
Baking—Place two-thirds of the coals on the lid and one-third under the bottom of the pan in this method.

Simmering and Stewing—Place one-third of the coals under the pan and two-thirds on the top of the lid. Regulate the heat by moving hot coals underneath the pan.

The cooking process should not be rushed. Allow adequate time for the oven to heat up before adding food, and keep the coals manipulated to maintain the temperature.

The general rule of thumb for 350°F. is to take the size of the oven in inches, double it, and use that number of total briquettes, spread around the pan as indicated by the cooking method.

Factors such as ambient air temperature, humidity, altitude and



wind all influence how much heat is generated by burning coals. These will make a difference in how many coals are needed.

Heat placement around the Dutch oven is crucial to cooking results. Briquettes placed under the oven should be arranged in a circle no less than 1/2 inch from the outside edge of the oven. Briquettes on the lid should be in a grid pattern across the top.

Do go easy with the heat. If the oven is not hot enough, more coals can be added. Once food is burned, it is burned! Adding one coal to the top and bottom will raise the temperature of the Dutch oven approximately 25 degrees. Removing one set of coals will lower the temperature by 25 degrees.

These are general guidelines for using cast iron Dutch ovens on the campfire. Experiment with techniques and recipes. You will have a great time and your family and friends will enjoy sampling your efforts.

Sources:

Cooperative Extension Service,
University of Alaska, Fairbanks

Lodge Cast Iron, www.lodgemfg.com

Honey Bees & Our Food Supply

When the average person thinks about honey bees, one thought generally comes to mind—they sting!

Honey bees are often not appreciated for their valuable contribution to agriculture. Without honey bees, we would not have the quantity or quality of many agricultural crops including almonds, citrus fruits, apples, cherries, melons and more. In fact, the USDA estimates that one-third of our food supply is directly or indirectly benefited by honey bee pollination. Of course, the honey bee's sweetest contribution to our lives is honey.

Tips for Cooking with Honey

- For best results, use recipes developed for using honey.

- When you substitute honey for granulated sugar in recipes:

⇒Substitute honey for up to one-half the sugar. With experimentation, honey can be substituted for all the sugar in some recipes.

⇒In baked goods, reduce the amount of liquid in the recipe by 1/4 cup for each cup of honey used; add 1/2 teaspoon baking soda for each cup of honey used; and reduce oven temperature by 25°F to prevent over-browning.

⇒For easy removal, spray measuring cup with non-stick cooking spray before adding honey.

⇒Twelve ounces (weight) of honey equals one cup standard measure.

⇒Honey has a higher sweetening



power than sugar.

Tips for Storing Honey

- Store honey at room temperature. Refrigeration speeds up crystallization.
- If honey has crystallized, remove lid and place jar in warm water until crystals dissolve. Or, microwave 1 cup of honey in microwave-safe container at HIGH (100%) 2 to 3 minutes or until crystals dissolve; stir every 30 seconds. Do not boil or scorch.

Source: The National Honey Board



Honey Pumpkin Pie

3 eggs	2 Tablespoons flour
1 pastry for single 9-inch crust	1 teaspoon cinnamon
3/4 cup honey	1/2 teaspoon ginger
1 can (15 oz.) canned pumpkin	1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1 cup evaporated milk	1/2 teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 425°F. In a medium bowl, beat eggs. Brush one teaspoon beaten egg on inside of pie crust. Place crust on a cookie sheet and bake for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, add the rest of the ingredients to remaining beaten eggs and whisk to combine. Remove pie crust from oven and carefully pour honey pumpkin mixture into hot crust; bake 5 minutes more at 425°F. Reduce heat to 350°F. and bake 30 to 40 minutes more, until filling is set. Cool completely and serve with Honey Whipped Cream. **Tip:** For Honey Walnut Pumpkin Pie, just before serving, combine 1/3 cup honey, 1/3 cup chopped walnuts, and 1/4 teaspoon vanilla. Carefully spread over pie, cut & serve.

Honey Whipped Cream

- 1 cup whipping cream
- 2 Tablespoons honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Beat whipping cream until mixture thickens; gradually add honey and beat until soft peaks form. Fold in vanilla. Yield: 2 cups.

Source (picture and recipe): The National Honey Board

The Gardening Corner

By: Wendy Ulrich, Lab Technician

C. Beaty Hanna Horticulture & Environmental Center



Select your favorite pansies from a rainbow of colors and shapes

Question: We are so excited to have bought our new home and are looking forward to working in the yard. We would like to put in pansies for fall color this year; what should we look for when buying them and what maintenance will they require?

Answer: Congratulations on your new home! Pansies will be a wonderful addition to your landscape for fall, winter, and early spring color. Pansies are the perfect fall color annual; not only are they beautiful, they're capable of surviving single digit temperatures, freezing solid and then bouncing back when the weather warms back up. Here in Alabama pansies will last from fall through winter and still be absolutely beautiful when you pull them out in spring to plant your summer annuals.

Today's pansy, *Viola x wittrockiana*, is thought to have evolved from *Viola tricolor*, Johnny Jump-up, a common native of central Europe. After years of breeding we have access to a rainbow of colors ranging from white to gold, purple, red, rose, maroon, orange, violet and everything imaginable in between. There are also other choices to make such as solid colored (called 'clear' faced), blotched (having darker, contrasting center, often referred to as 'faced' pansies), two toned, ruffled petals, crinkled petals, and every blend and combination you can think of in bright colors, pastels or antique shades.

Here in Birmingham we are zone 7b and the ideal time to plant pansies here is from October 1 – 15, so now is the perfect time to decide what color scheme and type of pansy you would like to have in your landscape. The suggested planting time might seem late but it is for an important reason. Pansies require soil temperatures between 45° F and 65° F for ideal growth. If you wait until the soil is much cooler than

that the pansies will appear stunted, and develop stunted, pale green leaves and flower poorly. When soil temperatures fall below 45° F the roots will literally shut down and stop taking up nutrients. When planted too early and the weather and soil temperature is too warm, the pansies will stretch and become yellowed; they will also flower poorly and be less tolerant to frost damage, insects and disease.

When preparing a new bed or revitalizing an existing bed, adding organic materials can improve the soil. A 25 percent by volume quantity of organic amendment is recommended for best results; this equals 3 inches of material incorporated into the top 12 inches of soil. For best results take a soil test sample. Pansies prefer the pH range of 5.4 to 5.8; above 5.8 can cause boron and iron deficiencies, so avoid liming beds for pansies unless the soil test result recommends the addition.

The best way to have beautiful, healthy pansies is to start with a quality plant and the correct soil type and to follow correct planting dates. When purchasing pansies make sure they are free from insects and disease. The plant should be compact (not leggy) and have dark green leaves. Tip the plant out of its pot to insure it is not root bound in the container, and that it also has healthy white fibrous roots along the external portion of the root ball.

Planting requirements are similar to other seasonal color annuals. Pansies must have well drained soils, and they cannot tolerate wet feet. Planting in an elevated bed not only assures good drainage but also gives better visibility of the display.

Spacing is also important for healthy growth; if pansies are planted too close they will become

continued on page 10 →

Fall Army Worms Are On the March

The second wave of fall armyworms appeared in Alabama pastures in mid-August. The chronic pest has been discovered in fields across the state. In moderate fall armyworm years, it is typical for reports of fall armyworm damage to come in about this time of year.

Dry, hot conditions create a favorable environment for fall armyworms. During the dry summers of 1999, 2000, 2006, 2010 and now in 2011, bermudagrass, bahiagrass and summer grass forage fields were damaged in early July. Subsequent generations during such outbreak years will occur until the first frost.

These fall armyworms have been found in St. Clair county along with numerous other counties across the state.

Fall armyworms feed for about 14 days. The last four days of feeding are the most damaging. This would be when they are an inch or bigger. If you find tiny armyworms, you have some breathing room before you need to spray. Remember, finding them in the sweep net is the first step. You will want to ground truth the finding by seeing how many caterpillars you have per square foot. If you find more than 2 or 3 per square foot, the armyworms should be controlled.



Check forage grasses for fall armyworms, particularly in the vicinity of where the pest has been reported beginning with the most valuable hayfields.

The best time to look for fall armyworms is morning or evening, because fall armyworms tend to hide during the day.

Visit the ACES webpage at www.aces.edu to find a map link to see who has a sweep net. Cross-hatched counties are counties where cattlemen have sweep nets. Most county Extension offices also have nets.

For more information about fall armyworms:

- 1) Find current chemicals registered for fall armyworms by visiting the ACES website at www.aces.edu and clicking publications at the top. Search for **ANR-0500-A**

“IPM Pastures and Forage Crops,” and **ANR-019, “Management of Fall Armyworms in Pastures and Hayfields.”**

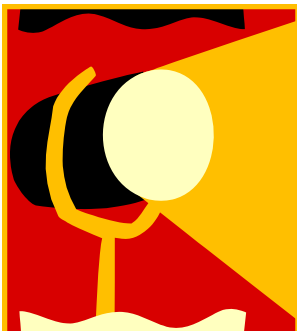
- 2) Learn how to use a sweep net by visiting <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Qwg3TP9INo>. If you want to buy a sweep net, many forestry and science supply places sell them, and there are several different kinds. I recommend starting with the cheapest net first. Then if the producer likes using it, he might invest in a fancier one when that one wears out. Also, there are many places on the internet that sell nets. What to look for is a sweep net with a 15” diameter hoop. I recommend a muslin net bag. They wear out faster than a sailcloth net bag but they also dry out faster if they get wet. The aerial/polyester net bags are not strong enough.
- 3) Contact regional Extension agent, Henry Dorough, Animal Science and Forages at the St. Clair County Extension office, 205-338-9416.

Source: Kathy Flanders, Extension Entomologist

“You aren’t wealthy until you have something money can’t buy.”

~Garth Brooks

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work in agriculture and home economics, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and other related acts, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) offers educational programs, materials, and equal opportunity employment to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, or disability.



Agent Spotlight

Danielle Carroll

Administrator II, Outreach Programs

Home Grounds, Gardens & Home Pests



Danielle demonstrates the do's & don't's of pruning at a Landscape Plants and Fruits Workshop

Danielle Carroll joined the Alabama Cooperative Extension System's (ACES) St. Clair County office in July. She has worked for the ACES for almost 8 years. Before coming to Extension, she worked as a Research Associate for Auburn University. St. Clair County is now her home office, but her job assignment requires her to stay on the road a lot working throughout the state. Danielle fields national home vegetable gardening questions through the eXtension webpage. She also works on gardening publications for ACES as well as giving gardening demonstrations for county programs.

Danielle is a native of Cropwell and graduated from Pell City High School. She attended Auburn University where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Archaeology and a Master of Science degree in Horticulture. She and her husband, Stephen Alexander, have a daughter,

Emma, and a son, Ryan, who are both 10 years old. While away from her job she enjoys gardening, of course, lots of camping and Auburn football.

Gardening Corner (continued from page 8)

crowded and more susceptible to spider mites and disease. Spacing of 8 to 10 inches between plants will allow better air circulation and will avoid these problems.

Water is one of the most critical steps to a successful planting procedure. Immediately after planting, water thoroughly to eliminate air pockets around plant roots; then water as needed while the plants are becoming established.

Fertilization depends on the vigor and performance of the plants. Follow label directions for recommended application rates of a standard 15-2-20 high nitrate pansy formula fertilizer.

Pansies are relatively free from nutritional disorders when grown at the proper pH. Excess soil moisture can decrease oxygen content of the soil and root growth. Keeping pansies on the dry side will help to harden them off before the cold weather sets in. Heat may also be a problem if they are planted too early in the season causing them to stretch and become leggy; some of the hybrids have been developed to tolerate heat better than others such as the Majestic Giants, Regal, Crown, and Imperial series.



On the whole pansies are a relatively easy plant to grow and they add so much fun color to our fall and winter. If you would like more information on pansies we have some wonderful publications on growing, maintaining and diagnosing problems. For more information or to request publications, please call Wendy Ulrich at the St. Clair County Extension office at (205) 338-9416 or visit our website www.aces.edu and search for these publications:

- Pansy Production - <http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-0596/ANR-0596.pdf>
- Disease of Pansies and Their Control - <http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-1214/ANR-1214.pdf>

It's Time for the Great Pumpkin!

Pumpkins are the vegetable of the month in October, there's no doubt about it. Who could imagine Halloween and the month of October without them? Pumpkins are in the cucurbit family and are first cousins to gourds, melons and squash.

We utilize many more pumpkins in Alabama than we grow here. We would be considered a "pumpkin deficit" state like others in the South. Pumpkins just grow better in cooler summer climates like New York and Illinois. Our recent summers have also been on the dry side, present summer excluded, which isn't good for pumpkin production. They need a good bit of water to grow to proper size. Certain varieties of pumpkins can be produced here and yield quite well, but irrigation is required to insure success.

Occasionally someone will come into the office with a pumpkin that is mature in July or August. Pumpkins that mature at that time of year are good for pumpkin pie, and that's about it. In order to have pumpkins ripe, or mature in October, you must wait until about the first of July to plant the Jack-O-Lantern types. Giant pumpkins must be planted in early June if they are to reach maximum weights and be mature in October. Some smaller pumpkins may be planted as late as July 20th and still mature by October. You just have to decide what type of pumpkin you want to grow, and then plan accordingly.

There are lots of varieties to choose from, and I can assist you with picking out those that do well in our area and assist you in locating seed for next



year's crop. Pumpkins are a lot of fun to grow, but not the easiest crop to bring to harvest. So, this year as you're picking out your pumpkin for Halloween or fall decorating, remember that next year you could be growing your own Jack-O-Lantern or pumpkin pie pumpkins.

Source: Dan Porch, Blount County Extension Coordinator

Upcoming Extension Programs



Coupons 101 Workshop

Want to learn how to better organize and put those coupons to good use?

You can save as much as 50% off your grocery bill.

When: Thursday, September 22nd

Where: Pell City Civic Center

Time: 6—8 p.m.

Cost: \$5.00

2011 St. Clair County Health Fair

Don't Clown Around With Your Health

When: Friday, October 28th

Where: Pell City Civic Center

Time: 9 a.m.—3 p.m.

**Free
Admission**

**Free
Admission**





HELP SUPPORT YOUR
LOCAL 4-H CLUBS

BY ADDING



AT CHECKOUT

*100% of the proceeds from the sale of paper clovers
will be split among state and county 4-H programs and National 4-H Council.*

**HURRY IN TO YOUR LOCAL STORE
SEPTEMBER 21ST - OCTOBER 2ND, 2011**



**LEARN MORE ABOUT THE
TRACTOR SUPPLY/4-H PARTNERSHIP**



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