



Season 1 Episode 1—Welcome to *Southern Ground*

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Announcer

Welcome to the *Southern Ground* podcast provided by Alabama Extension through Auburn University. Gardening in the South indeed has its challenges and rewards, and sometimes maybe you just need a little help. Sit back and listen as Extension educators Shane Harris and Dr. Chip East discuss seasonal lawn and garden topics, address common questions, and provide the practical solutions and suggestions you want to know.

It's not just random advice or personal opinion, but research-based information from two experienced professionals. Now, let's dig in to our *Southern Ground*.

Shane Harris

Hello folks, and welcome to a brand-new podcast and new endeavor for us called *Southern Ground*. We're just two country boys from Alabama. I'm Shane Harris and joining me and partner with me on this podcast is longtime friend and horticulture colleague Dr. Chip East. Howdy, Chip.

Chip East

Howdy, Shane. And I'm glad to be here with you. Many years ago, I started working at a nursery and blueberry farm in 1989. And while I'm working on that farm...

Shane Harris

In our hometown of Clay County, Alabama.

Chip East

...in our hometown, someone called and had a question about a pest, and the owner of the nursery calls our local Extension agent, who's a good friend of ours now. And this Extension agent tells the person what's wrong and what to do, solves the problem. Just simple. Nothing to it. But to me, as a teenager, that was worth everything and I just fell in love with Extension watching this person work.

And as I'm working this nursery, as time goes on, people start asking me questions and things like that, and I decide, hey, I love-- I was going to be a landscaper and have a nursery--and I fell in love with Extension. And I says, I want to do that. And the bottom line with Extension is we've always been science-based information that we provide to people.

If we say something, it's not my opinion, that something I heard at the coffee shop somewhere, it's something that has been tried and researched. And this is, if we say it, this is the way it is for our area. Now you go to a different part of the country, it might not be true, but for where we research it at, it's true here.

Shane Harris

Time has gone by quickly. I have 25 years; you have 28 years. And we have seen a lot and done a lot. And we've educated a lot of people over the years. And so, this is also a new endeavor for me, first time doing a podcast. And so, this gives the opportunity to reach new audiences. Talk about the things that we have learned over the years from working with clients, homeowners, gardeners and farmers.

This podcast is going to be about, reaching you, helping you--answer questions, specifically in the gardening and farming and horticulture topics. Chip and I are going to jump in and talk about things that you have questions about. You have problems there in your yard or in your garden or "What's eating this? What's wrong with that?"

Shane Harris

This podcast is going to deal with different topics, throughout the year. Seasonal topics that you've got questions on. And we hope to, to dig in and, and find those answers for you. A lot of those people that call us, they want answers for just the everyday things going on in your lawn and garden or farm.

And so, this podcast is designed to try to reach you and help you out. That research-based information is a big deal because this is something, it's not just, is tried and proven, it's not just an opinion. It's something, not a home remedy, it's something that we can have documented that this is your best solution. The hard part a lot of time when we answer these kind of questions is there's not always an answer.

Shane Harris

Sometimes there's nothing you can do about certain things. But this, this podcast is something that we've been talking about doing the last few months. And because we want to try to have opportunities for people to find information. We've done video, we've done TV, we've done newspaper articles, we've done in-person events, we've done webinars, we've done zoom meetings. Now here's a new thing. New platform is to, to educate folks. And that's what we're here for.

Chip East

Trying to reach people wherever they are and how they like to get their information. We'll meet them where they're at.

Shane Harris

Yeah, people, you know, driving down the road and want to listen to a podcast. Maybe we can provide a seasonal topic that that you want to know more about. Maybe you have that question going on at a certain time of the year. Or if you're working around the house and want to tune in.

So, the opportunities are not there-- today's people, people are busy, may not know where to go get information, they can't attend classes in person. But maybe you can tune in throughout this podcast and for future episodes, as we dig into a topic that that, maybe something you, you're looking for answers for.

Chip East

Absolutely.

Shane Harris

So, as we think forward on our future podcast episodes, Chip and I've sort of made a list of topics, seasonal topics. These podcasts are going to come out when these topics are hot. You have this problem going in your yard. You have this issue in your garden, something you're getting prepared for. So, coming up we're going to be doing pruning, pruning basics.

We're going to talk about armadillos. We're going to talk about vegetable gardening in the spring, how to take how to have that green yard and the issues that go with lawns. The pest problems we have in the summertime, the fall plantings that we need to do, and other issues and disease and problems that you may have in the fall.

Shane Harris

And so, a lot of our newspaper articles, a lot of our blogs, a lot of videos are always been seasonal. And so we hope this podcast will also be that. And you can go back and get those answers. And so if you miss a podcast, you miss episode, you can go back and archive those based on topics, "I really need to know about carpenter bees" or "I need to know about propagation." You can go back and listen to those individual podcasts on that particular topic.

Chip East

And Shane, on the commercial side, it's, to me, it's about saving the farmer time or money. And if we can do that, they're going to be happy.

Shane Harris

And on the homeowner side, a lot of its reaction. They've got this bug eating their plant or they've got a tree that has dying. So, we also want to be a little proactive and not reactive. You may have weed issues. You've had, let's say lawn burweed, those stickers on your feet. You know, you have, rotting tomatoes.

A lot of the calls that we come in are reactive on a day-to-day basis. So, regardless if it's a farmer or a homeowner, hopefully we can get that information out there. They'll be archived and you can go back to them and read and hear them the following year. But take action now. And a lot of that you'll hear our solutions is do it now. Don't wait. You should even share with that with me recently. Don't wait on things. You got to do stuff now.

Chip East

Absolute. It's like any other business if-- you can't wait until you have a problem to come up with the solution when you need to be planning ahead. And that's what we'll do here on this podcast.

Shane Harris

So we look forward to you all tuning in to us as we address some of these topics. Some of these are the hot topics or common questions we've had over our over 20-something years. And so, these seasonal topics will be there for you to listen to and participate. And we also want you to email us if you have any kind of questions.

So, we're here to reach, reach you, but also we're here to hear from you. Our Extension offices across the state of Alabama. There's an Extension office in every county, all 67 counties. Go by and see your county agent, regardless of horticulture or food safety or health, nutrition or even 4-H. We're here to help you and provide answers and solutions.

Chip East

I talk to people on a daily basis. If, if you're not using your local Extension office, you're missing out on information. Now you may not be realizing that you're missing out on this information, but they'll be something they can help you with and not just something, several things most likely, they can help you with... from food preservation. Shane, it just goes deeper than, than just horticulture. But we can help with so many things. So, give us a call at your local Extension office. You have a question. Shane I'm excited to do this podcast with you, my friend.

Shane Harris

That wraps up our very first episode of *Southern Ground*. You and I are looking forward to digging deeper into more of those home and garden topics on future episodes. For help on questions you might have, be sure to contact your local county Extension office. No matter what state you live in, there is a land grant university and Extension office near you.

For more educational resources offered by Alabama Cooperative Extension, visit us online at www.aces.edu spelled out that's a- c- e- s.edu. Thanks for listening to *Southern Ground*.

Announcer

Southern Ground has been a production of Alabama Extension at Auburn University.