



Gwinnett Extension News

WINTER 2011

Websites and Information

Friends:
Winter has come so fast this year. The first frost was early and with all the perennials and shrubs resting for the season we can focus on the coming Spring of 2011. Now is the time to order new catalogs for seeds and look at your landscape to how it can be improved.

Try to include your family this winter in some good "family time." Get a good jigsaw puzzle going on the table, read together, take walks, or invent your own family time. Take your children on a hike at one of the wonderful parks here in our county and get out and enjoy the winter.Spring will be just around the corner! Stop by our office, you are always welcome.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Brannen

Robert L. Brannen,
Extension Coordinator
Gwinnett County Extension

"Winter is a time for plants to rest till the next season."



The days of "brochures on paper" are slowly being replaced by the wonderful technology of computers. The number of people who are looking for information on lawn care, home landscaping, growing vegetables, canning and freezing produce, or other topics have increased since we have become more computer literate.

Although computers can be a useful resource, sometimes the content of various websites are not consistent. How do you determine what is accurate and what is not?

When visiting websites, consider where the source of information comes from. Anyone can provide information on the internet. Often, the person writing the information may not have the necessary expertise on the subject matter nor do they have access to researched data. There are a lot of "official" sounding groups on the web. Find out who posted the information, what their credentials are, and if they are truly reputable. An internet search tool does not always bring up the most current information on the particular topic of interest. Some of the publications on the internet are outdated.

Sometimes the information on websites is from companies trying to promote their products and services. For example, certain fertilizer companies have recommendations for lawn care that are based on using their products. However, this may be in contradiction with other sources of information. Any studies they show on the effectiveness of the fertilizer usually show their brands are better than others, although in reality this may not be true. Avoid any "too good to be true statements" such as "the use of our insecticide products will totally eliminate all insect pests in your lawn for a year or more." No insecticide can do that.

Where can you go to find up-to-date, unbiased information on the internet? Extension and university web sites are usually accurate sources of information. Cooperative Extension publications provide up-to-date, reliable research-based information. The information is from specialists who have expertise and experience in the subject they are writing about. They have access to unbiased data from years of research. The publications they produce are peer reviewed for accuracy and content, thus improving their quality.

You can access The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension through www.caes.uga.edu/extension. Here you will find publications on many topics from lawn care to 4-H youth activities, to family and consumer sciences. Also, you will find contact information for your local Extension office. If you have any specific questions or need more information, perhaps still in "paper form", concerning the subjects of interest to you, call the Extension office and talk with an agent.



Newsletter design by:
Sharon Cassidy

Excellent Plant Selections Available at The Extension Plant Sale

Even though the weather has been bitterly cold recently, the spring planting season is not too far away. Now is the time to begin planning your garden for spring. Consider purchasing some of the excellent plants available at affordable prices at the 2011 Annual Gwinnett County Extension Plant Sale for your home garden. The plant sale will begin in January and run through the end of February. Order forms are available on our website or can be sent to you in the mail.

Blueberries are a relatively pest free plant and require minimal care. They prefer acidic soil with plenty of organic matter. You need to have at least two different varieties for cross-pollination. They need to be blooming at the same time for them to set fruit. A few seasons after planting, blueberries have the potential to produce up to two gallons of berries per bush. The varieties available are early bloomers ('Climax,' 'Alapaha,' and 'Premier'), mid-season bloomers ('Austin,' 'Brightwell,' and 'Powderblue'), and late spring bloomers ('Delite,' and 'Tiftblue').

Blackberries are easy to grow and are relatively pest-free. They are self-pollinating, meaning only one variety is required for the plant to set fruit. Three varieties of blackberries, which are all thornless, are available this year: "Arapaho," and 'Ouachita,' which ripen in mid June, and 'Navajo,' which ripens in mid-July.

Two varieties of raspberry bushes are available: 'Nova' and 'Heritage.' They are ever-bearing varieties meaning that they produce fruit continually throughout the summer and into the fall. Both varieties are self-fruitful and have medium to large flavorful fruit that are excellent for cooking and for making jams. The brambles have very few spines on them.

Apple trees are relatively easy for the homeowner to take care of once established. The varieties of 'Red Delicious' and 'Gala' are for sale. Both have large, red apples that ripen in August and are excellent for many recipes.

Viburnums are hardy shrubs for the landscape. They have outstanding foliage with fragrant white to creamy pink flowers. They are easy to grow and favor full sun to part shade. Three varieties of viburnums are for sale: 'Spring Bouquet,' which has blue to black fruit and an upright growth and 'Shasta,' which blooms continuously throughout the spring with the leaves taking on a purple to red color when planted in a sunny location. The variety 'Snowflake' has clusters of white flowers on both sides of the stems, creating a double row of blooms on each side.

Deciduous azaleas have showy springtime blooms and are hardy plants once established. Three new selections are available: 'My Mary,' which can grow to a height of 5 feet and has flowers in varying shades of yellow; 'Camellia's Blush,' which has pink flowers; and the white blooming 'Summer Lilac.'

Two new varieties of Japanese camellias, which bloom in the winter and early spring months, are for sale: 'White by the Gate,' which has white blossoms and 'Professor Sargent,' which has masses of velvety-red blossoms. Also for sale are two varieties of fall blooming sasanqua camellias: the red blooming 'Yuletide' and the pink 'Cleopatra.'

Gardenias fill the air with their fragrance in June. They make excellent foundation hedges. The variety 'Frostproof,' available at the sale will not lose its flower buds after a late season frost unlike most other gardenia varieties.

Two types of evergreen ferns are available. The autumn fern has green foliage during summer. It then changes to a coppery color in the fall. The tassel fern has attractive, green fronds. Both are great additions to the landscape and are low maintenance.

Heucheras, also known as coral bells, are herbaceous perennials. They prefer shady locations and have an excellent tolerance to heat and humidity. The variety 'Caramel,' which has apricot colored foliage and pink flowers, is for sale.

If you are interested in purchasing some of these excellent plants, go online to the Extension website at www.ugaextension.com/gwinnett to download the brochure and order form or call the Gwinnett County Extension office for a form to be mailed to you. We accept checks (made out to Gwinnett Cooperative Fund), or cash for our prepaid orders. (No credit cards). The deadline for ordering is Monday, February 28th. The order pick up day will be Thursday, March 10 from 10:00 AM to 6:30 PM at The Gwinnett County Fairgrounds, 2405 Sugarloaf Parkway, Lawrenceville, Ga. Your receipt will be at the check-in office.

Also, on Monday evening, February 28th from 6:30 to 8:30 PM, there will be a free class on "The Growing and Care of Blueberries and Blackberries." It will be held at The Gwinnett Government Annex Building, Second floor, 750 South Perry St, Lawrenceville, GA 30046. To register for the class, contact Timothy Daly. If you have any questions regarding the plant sale, please contact us.



Written by: Timothy Daly, Extension Agent.

WHAT DO I WANT TO PLANT NEXT SPRING?

Ah, the long days of winter and the pressing of your nose against the glass just hoping it will warm up enough to go outside and walk around. Ever feel that winter will never go away?

How about snuggling with your favorite blanket, a cup of good hot chocolate and the 2011 seed catalogs. You can find such a variety of new seeds and look up plants that you have always wanted to try in your garden. Try the internet to research your plants you want to experiment with and read about these plants and seeds to make sure that your zone is suited for the "experiment plantings." Seed catalogs begin to come out the first of

January each year. Some of the favorites that are "tried and true" are Burpees, The Seed Exchange, and Parks. These (usually) offer free catalogs that you can order by mail, via email, or by phone.

Be daring this year, set aside a place in your garden for something new. You might just surprise yourself!



Exercise and Cold Weather: Stay Motivated, Fit and Safe

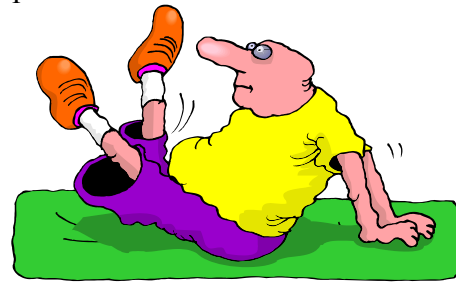
Sometimes during the winter months, we become less active and overlook the need to go out and take a brisk walk, and to exercise even in cold weather. Perhaps looking in the mirror would give us a good idea that we need to get in shape and prepare for the spring months ahead.

Focus on how you'll benefit if you keep up your routine throughout the cold weather months. Exercise can help shake those winter blues. It improves your mood, increases your energy level and helps you sleep better.

Exercise indoors: walk at the mall, join a health club, make a splash at an indoor pool or invest in home Exercise equipment.

Exercise outdoors - Dress right and play it safe. Here are some tips for outdoor exercise to follow:

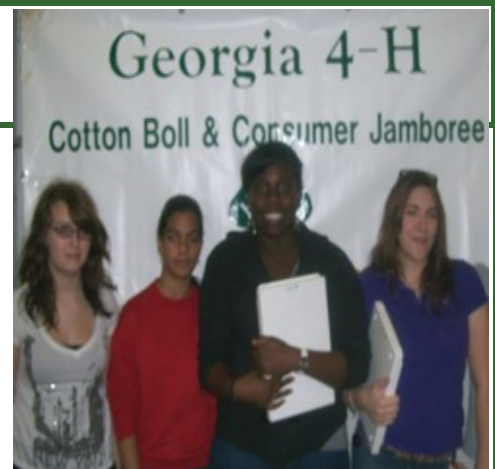
- ✓ Get your doctor's OK
- ✓ Dress in layers
- ✓ Remember sunscreen
- ✓ Make sure you are visible
- ✓ Drink plenty of fluids
- ✓ Pay attention to the wind chill
- ✓ Watch out for frostbite
- ✓ Beware of slippery surfaces



When it's cold outdoors, there's no need to give up and hit the couch. With a little planning and creativity, you can step up to the challenges of winter exercise.

Article written by Paige Waehner, at www.exercise.about.com and revised by Ines Beltran, County Agent, Gwinnett County.

GWINNETT 4-H SENIOR COTTON BOLL JUDGING TEAM



Gwinnett County 4-H Senior Cotton Boll and Consumer Judging Team placed second at the district consumer competition, Thursday, November 4. The contest, held in Gainesville, Ga. teaches youth to understand the importance of cotton as an agricultural commodity as well as promoting cotton in their communities. 4-H members learn how to make knowledgeable, rational decisions when purchasing goods and service; the process of selecting, using, maintaining and disposing of goods and services in ways that maximize our resources; how to obtain clothing, goods and services to meet needs and reflect lifestyles, personal values and goals; how to act as a responsible consumer-citizen with an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of the consumer, business and government; and also to communicate reasons for choices they have made. Team members are: Victoria Kotkiewicz, Shaquilla Lewis, Hayley Rogers, and Artee Sharma. The team was coached by 4-H volunteers Karol Gaines and Amy Baker. This team will compete at the State Cotton Boll and Consumer Judging Competition December 11, 2010.

We wish our 4-H team the best of luck.



GWINNETT COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OFFICE

Gwinnett Cooperative Extension Service has served Gwinnett County Citizens since 1919. We offer programs in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, Agriculture/Horticulture/Natural Resources and 4-H and Youth.

We are proud to be a part of Gwinnett County to assist with landscaping, soil testing, natural resources, promoting youth programs, teaching educational classes, and assisting consumers with unbiased, researched, informative information from The University of Georgia.

Listed below are staff members at our office. Please phone us if we can assist you.
Visit our website at www.ugaextension.com/gwinnett

Robert Brannen - **Extension Director**
Kitty Shepard - Office Manager
Sharon Cassidy - Receptionist

4-H and Youth Programs

Pam Schingoethe - 4-H Agent
Janice Rogers - 5th Grade Programs
Barbara Larson - 6th Grade Programs

Ag/ Horticulture/ Natural Resource Department

Timothy Daly - County Extension Agent
Kathy Parent - Ag Program Assistant
Marlene Gillman - Secretary

Family & Consumer Science Department

Ines Beltran - County Agent/Radon Specialist
Tricia Smith - Secretary

EFNEP Program

Alma Rhoden - Program Assistant

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