

Master Gardener Extension Volunteers of Union and Towns Counties

NEWSLETTER

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President

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Meetings: Unless announced otherwise, Master Gardener Extension Volunteers of Union and Towns Counties meet on the second Thursday of every month in the Haralson Memorial Civic Center in Blairsville, 4:00 p.m. socializing, 4:30 p.m. meeting. We do not meet if inclement weather closes Union County or Towns County schools.

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Crocus blooming in the garden of Tom and Jo Anne Allen

Editor's Words

It is almost spring! It officially arrives at 5:37 a.m. on March 20, 2022. I can tell by the daffodils in bloom, not by how the weather feels—short sleeves one day and rainy cold the next. But then isn't that how spring goes?

Kris Kringle Market was a huge success and Master Gardener Extension Volunteers are now gearing up for a busy spring! Workdays are scheduled for the Hiawassee Library, the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center, the Young Harris Library and the Gold Medal Garden.

Our featured Master Gardener Extension Volunteer for this quarter is Annette Hopgood, please see pages 3-4. Tommy Westbrook shared many pictures of his garden, please see pages 11-12 and Gayle Kusuk shared some interesting facts about gourds along with some beautiful pictures of some of her art work and some from friends on Facebook on pages 14-15. 2023 Pollinators have been announced—see page 13 and celebrate Earth Day on April 22nd—see page 16. I love asparagus and grow it every year in our garden, please see page 17 for a very good asparagus recipe.

Happy gardening,

Jo Anne

***** Spring arrives on March 20, 2022 at 5:37a.m..*****

“A weed is a plant that is not only in the wrong place but intends to stay.”

Sara Stein

“Spring in the garden should be an occasion for celebration, a time to welcome old friends back from their long winters nap.”

Unknown

“Your first job is to prepare the soil. The best tool for this is your neighbor's motorized garden tiller. If your neighbor does not own a garden tiller, suggest that he buy one.”

Dave Barry

Meet Annette Bomar Hopgood

Our featured Master Gardener Extension Volunteer for this quarter is Annette Bomar Hopgood. She completed her Master Gardener Extension Volunteer training in 2009 and was certified in 2010.

Annette grew up in Douglasville, Georgia. She has a B.S. and an M.Ed., both in education from the University of Georgia.

Annette is married to Wesley, whose work was a commercial/industrial electrical contractor in Atlanta. They have lived in Union County since 2009 but Wesley lived here in the early 1970s and knows a lot of people in the area.

Before moving to Blairsville, Annette worked at and retired from the State Department of Education with 34 years of service. 28 of these 34 years were as State Director for Child Nutrition – school lunch, breakfast, snacks, Child and Adult care food program, summer food service program, commodity foods, emergency food assistance and nutrition education. She was responsible for administering federal and state requirements and provided training and technical assistance. She had a staff of 40 or so and was able to travel the U.S., visiting and speaking in other states. She was active nationally in their professional association in public policy, assisting Congressional staff in writing federal statutes. She also was privileged to testify numerous times before authorizing committees in both the U.S. House and Senate.

Now retired, Annette does consult on child nutrition on a limited basis under her LLC Child Nutrition Perspectives and she is a licensed Dietitian in Georgia. Past and current community works include Daughters of the American Revolution, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Union County GOP, Harmony Grove Baptist Church and Towns and Union County Master Gardener Extension Volunteers.

When she retired from the Georgia Department of Education in 2006, she committed to enjoying many of the activities she had not had time for while working. She says she has not mastered anything but has enjoyed genealogy, writing family history, water colors jewelry making and a variety of crafts. One craft that I believe that she has mastered is making and painting leaf casts. I have seen some of her leaf casts and they are beautiful. She and Wesley both enjoy traveling, especially in the United States. They plan to visit the Florida Keys and Niagara Falls on their next trips.

Currently, Annette is trying to get native ferns and Lenten roses (*Helleborus orientalis*) as well as other natives to spread throughout her wooded gardens. She is very fond of spring ephemerals and is researching to determine what she can accommodate in the increased light areas in her woody back garden since they have had several large trees removed.

Favorite plants include natives and bulbs. She has presented to the Master Gardener Extension Volunteers programs on perennials, shade gardening and viburnums. She loves viburnums and says that you should “Check them out!”

In her travels, the most beautiful scenery that Annette has experienced was in the Canadian Rockies. She and Wesley visited five national parks in Canada in 2019 and she stated that it was spectacular.

Annette’s favorite foods are those that come from a dairy, which she has just been told to limit, and something that many of her friends don’t know about her is that she is a dietitian and to quote Annette, “‘cause I don’t eat like one!!!!”

Be sure to check out the following page, pictures of fabulous flowers from Annette’s garden.

I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know Annette better and hope you will too.

Jo Anne Allen

Master Gardener Extension Volunteer



Pictures on this page are from Annette's garden.



Erythronium Americanum—Trout Lily or Yellow Trout Lily or Yellow Dogtooth Violet



Chelidonium majus—Celandine Poppy



Lycoris squamigera—Resurrection or Naked Lady (Pink)



Helleborus orientalis—Lenten Rose

March Garden Chores

Trees and Shrubs - Complete all major pruning by mid-March. Maple trees bleed sap when pruned now, it's better to wait until late April.

Do not prune spring flowering shrubs like forsythia and quince until after they have bloomed or you will not get any blooms this year.

Only prune crape myrtles if needed, removing any suckers, cross branches and dead branches.

Prune roses back to about half their present size before buds break and began fertilizing as buds break.

Fertilize trees and shrubs following label instructions in March and follow with an application in early May and early June.

Cut back your butterfly bush to half the size you want it to become this summer.

Plant bare-root roses in soil that contains organic matter that has been thoroughly tilled.



Pull mulch at least six inches away from tree trunks to prevent soggy conditions and possible disease or insect damage.

Plant broadleaf evergreens and prune evergreen shrubs back to a manageable size before new growth starts.

Purchase azaleas when they are in bloom so you will be sure of the color you are buying.

Vegetables - Start planting cool season vegetables in late March – carrots, radishes, lettuce, collards, English peas, spinach, and beets. Warm season vegetables like tomatoes, peppers, corn and okra should be planted after the soil temperature warms up and the danger of frost has passed.

Start vegetable and summer annual seeds indoors. Your seedlings will be ready to transplant into your garden after the soil temperature warms up in six to eight weeks.

Planting the same vegetables in the same spot in your garden year after year can lead to an accumulation of insects and or diseases in your soil. To avoid this problem, rotate your crops.

Flowerbeds - Divide overgrown hostas, daylilies and other perennials and ground covers as needed when you see the leaves unfurling above ground.

Dig up the new flowerbeds you plan to plant this spring when the soil is not soggy and mix in plenty of organic matter.

Rejuvenate the pansies you planted last fall by fertilizing them with a water- soluble fertilizer as the temperature warms up.

English ivy can be very invasive. Good ground-cover substitutes include ajuga, mondo grass and creeping raspberry.

Avoid mixing freshly cut daffodils with other flowers in arrangements because they produce a chemical that injures blooms. Place daffodils in another container for a day after cutting, then rinse the stems before arranging.

Spring bulbs should be fertilized as flowers fade. Remove foliage only after it begins to fade.

Fertilize spring bulbs with a 10-10-10 fertilizer (one pound of fertilizer per 100 square feet of flowerbed).

To help control weeds in your garden, apply a two to three-inch layer of mulch.

Sprinkle crushed eggshells around plants susceptible to slugs and snails, especially hostas.

Be on the lookout for summer bulbs at your favorite garden center. For better selection, buy them when they become available but do not plant them until late April or early May.

Plant clematis and other vines and put out hummingbird feeders.

Soil Test - Have your garden soil tested. Your County Extension Agent has soil test bags and instructions.

If your soil test indicates that you need to add lime, it needs to be added two to three months prior to planting your garden.

Houseplants - Repot root bound houseplants before moving them outdoors in warm weather and begin fertilizing them at half the recommended strength.

If you want flowers on your cactus, plant it in a small pot. Most cactuses bloom sooner if rootbound.

Miscellaneous - Set your lawnmower blade on its highest setting and cut back liriopé before new growth begins, being careful not to damage the crown of the plant.

Sharpen or replace lawn mower blades if you have not already done so.

Lift stepping stones that have sunk below grass level, spread sand in the low area and replace the stepping stone.

Clean leaves and other debris from ponds and water features.

April Garden Chores

Trees and Shrubs – You may kill pollinating bees if you spray your fruit trees with pesticides while they are blooming. Wait until most of the blooms have dropped before spraying.

When planting a new tree, keep weeds and grasses out of a 3 foot by 3-foot area around the tree to reduce competition for nutrients and moisture. Cover the ground around the tree with mulch.

Don't be too quick to remove perennials and shrubs that have been damaged by cold. Cut back the dead branches above ground but leave the roots in place until June to see if new shoots appear.

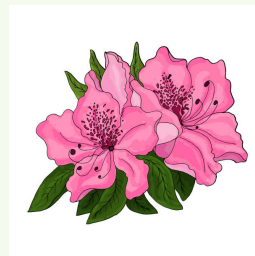
Fertilize fruit trees just before or during bloom period, always following label directions.

Fertilize azaleas after blooming is complete.

Prune spring-flowering trees and shrubs AFTER they bloom.

Protect hydrangeas and roses if a late frost threatens.

Twist off faded flowers of rhododendron after they bloom to double the number of flowers next year.



Buy azaleas when in bloom so you can select colors compatible with your existing landscape.

As you see new growth on your roses, begin fertilizing (following label directions) every four to six weeks.

Container grown trees can be planted now.

Remove the thin sprouts (suckers) that grow from the base of Dogwood, Cherry and Crabapple trees and Crape Myrtles.

Regularly water bare-root roses and trees planted this spring.

Vegetables - Plant tomato seedlings in your garden as the weather warms up, after the danger of frost has passed. To reduce the likelihood of blossom end rot on your tomatoes, work one-half handful of dolomitic lime into the soil around each plant, mulch and provide a uniform amount of moisture during the growing season.

Leaf lettuce can be grown in containers or in your vegetable garden from spring until summer. Choose a site with four to six hours of direct sunlight and expect to harvest in about 45 days.

Do not work in your garden when the foliage is wet to avoid spreading diseases from one plant to another.

Don't rush to plant corn. Wait until the soil has warmed up, or the seeds may rot.

Set out herb transplants after the danger of frost has passed.

Flowerbeds - Eliminate weeds before they set seed and you will also be reducing future weed problems.

Fertilize emerging perennials with bone meal, following label directions.

Fertilize daylilies in April, June and September.

Fertilize summer bulbs now. Always follow label directions.



After spring-flowering bulbs are finished blooming, feed them a 5-10-15 or similar ratio fertilizer following label directions.

Remove faded flowers from daffodils and hyacinths but let the foliage remain and die back naturally.

Divide and transplant perennials and ground covers this month. Water them well until they are established if rain is sparse.

As the soil temperature warms up, begin planting summer flowering bulbs – dahlias, gladiolus, caladiums, cannas.

Mid to late April is a good time to plant annuals and perennials. Fertilize with a starter fertilizer that contains lots of phosphorus (the middle fertilizer number).

Dig in 2 cubic feet of soil conditioner for every 10 square feet of bed area when preparing new flower beds.

Replace the pansies in container planters with summer annuals.

For a different look on a sunny fence, trellis or mailbox, plant hyacinth bean – a fast growing ornamental bean (annual). Pink flowers give way to shiny, purple pods that are as attractive as the flowers. Wait until after the danger of frost to plant.

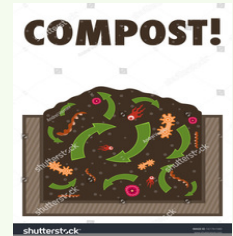
Pull up invasive plants such as Chinese privet, honeysuckle and English ivy.

Houseplants - Repot root bound houseplants before moving them outdoors in warm weather and begin fertilizing them at half the recommended strength. Protect them from direct sun.

Compost - If you do not have a compost pile, start one.

Miscellaneous - Fertilize cool and warm season grasses.

Sod or sprig new lawn areas to fill in bare spots in existing lawns.



May Garden Chores

Trees and Shrubs - Do not pile mulch against the trunks of trees. This can encourage possible insect and water problems. Mulch should be approximately 6 to 8 inches away on all sides.

Lichens growing on your tree trunk may be an indication that your tree is stressed from soil compaction, poor drainage or insufficient fertilizer.

Water roses with a soaker hose to keep water off the foliage and possibly prevent blackspot.

Fertilize azaleas, rhododendrons, and roses now, following label directions.

Mulch newly planted blueberry plants to insulate shallow roots from heat and drought.

Prune climbing roses after they finish flowering.

Prune off sprouts from the base of crape myrtles that are being trained to an upright tree form.

Wait until after your azaleas have bloomed to prune them (if pruning is needed). This is also an ideal time to fertilize them.

Remove faded blooms from rhododendrons to increase the buds that make the blooms for next year.

Remove low-hanging and dead limbs from shade trees.

It is still not too late to set out roses.

Vegetables - Plant rosemary, basil, thyme and other herbs to enhance summer meals. Herbs are a good choice for a flower-box for your patio. Most herbs grow best in full sun, but mint, cilantro, parsley and thyme tolerate moderate shade.

Tomatoes can be grown in containers on a sunny deck or patio. Bush-type tomatoes do better in containers; plant in a large pot at least 24 inches across filled with a good quality planting soil. Fertilize and water tomatoes regularly.

Plant peppers by the first part of June for summer harvest.

Strong sun and wind are hard on new transplants. Set them out in the late afternoon so the plants have overnight to acclimate.

Fertilize your vegetable garden every four to six weeks during the summer, always following label directions.

Flowerbeds - Seeds of annual flowers like zinnias, cosmos, salvia, marigolds, and nasturtiums can be seeded directly into prepared flowerbeds.

Replace pansies with summer annuals and plant ornamental grasses now.

As your spring flowering bulbs die back, plant bulb beds with annuals for summer color, being careful not to disturb your bulbs.

Remove invasive plants like Chinese privet, poison ivy and English ivy from your landscape.

Do not remove daffodil foliage after they have bloomed until it turns yellow. The leaves absorb sunshine for energy and nutrition for the bulbs so they can bloom again next year.

Look for Lenten rose seedlings underneath your mature plants and transplant them to other shady spots in your garden.

Pinch out terminal growth (the tip) of annuals to make bushy plants and encourage growth.

Use rubber soaker hoses among shrubs and flowers in beds and mulch with pine straw to put the water where the plants need it and to conserve water this summer.

Fertilize flowerbeds with a slow-release fertilizer.

Move or replant irises if they did not bloom very well last season.



Variegated hosta may turn green when grown in lots of sun. It's best to grow hosta where it does not get hot afternoon sun.

Plant annual vines like moon flower vine and purple hyacinth bean to disguise ugly walls and enliven fences and plant sunflowers for a sunny summer flower arrangement.

Weed flowerbeds and borders regularly.

Caladiums need generous amounts of water and fertilizer to continually produce new leaves during the summer.

Houseplants - Rejuvenate houseplants by lightly pruning them and moving them outdoors to a partly sunny/partly shady area for the summer. Start fertilizing at half the recommended strength.

Miscellaneous - Look for fire ant mounds and treat with appropriate insecticides, always following label directions.

What's Blooming Now
(or what has just finished blooming or being beautiful)



Pretty girls in the snow—Helleborus orientalis, Lenten Rose submitted by Elaine Bliss

Hippeastrum—Amaryllis submitted by Jo Anne Allen, source of plant—Elaine Bliss



What's Blooming Now
continued

These three pictures are of Edgewartha, all from the garden of Henry and Tommy Westbrook



What's Blooming Now
continued



Tipularia discolor—Tommy Westbrook



Tipularia discolor—Tommy Westbrook



Helleborus orientalis—Lenten Rose—Tommy Westbrook

2023 Pollinators of the Year Named

The State Botanical Garden of Georgia's Pollinator of the Year Program has named the 2023 pollinator plants:

Blue Wild Indigo (*Baptisia australis*) for spring

Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*) for summer

Aromatic Aster (*Symphyotrichum oblongifolium*) for fall

Coastal Plain Joe Pye Weed (*Eutrochium dubium*) as the Georgia native

2022 Pollinators that should be available at nurseries now that were named last year:

Carolina Lupine (*Thermopsis villosa*) for spring

Mountain Mints (*Pycnanthemum* species) for summer

Blue Mist (*Conoclinium coelestinum*) for fall

Coral Honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*) as the Georgia native

Source: Farmers And Consumers Market Bulletin dated Wednesday, February 9, 2022

The 2022 Great Georgia Pollinator Census is August 19th and 20th!

Bee Ready!

Plant To Attract Pollinators!

Gourds... Did You Know?

I recently had an opportunity to work with gourds for the TUMGA Kris Kringle Market. I enjoyed it so much I thought I would share some of the things I learned about gourds.

Did you know the gourd plant has been described as one of nature's greatest gifts to mankind? Of all the known plants, the gourd is the only one experts believe spanned the entire globe in prehistoric times.

Did you know the earliest gourd specimens are seeds and fragments that were unearthed in Peru, dating from 10,000 B.C. Specimens and even an intact gourd was found in Gainesville, Florida dating from 11,000 B.C.?

Did you know gourds played an important role in the changes that took place as humans became tool users? They existed long before baskets and pottery. Every part of the plant was used, most primitive cultures found medicinal uses for the gourd root, leaf, stem, flower, and fruit.

Did you know the most common use for gourds was as containers? They were used to store wet or dry foods. They were used to haul and store water. They were used in food preparation and turned into cooking utensils. Dipper gourds became ladles.

Did you know rubbing oils and body dyes, medicine, seeds, bait, and gunpowder were stored and carried in specially constructed gourd canteens?

Did you know gourds were also made into instruments like horns, whistles, flutes and so much more? Most of these instruments, while ancient in origin, are still being used today in many forms throughout the world.

Did you know that any painting media you apply to canvas or paper can be used on a gourd including colored pencils, watercolors, acrylic craft paints, even gel pens & permanent markers?

Did you know you can also use many of the same items you might use on wood, like paint, stains & varnishes, wood burning or even wood carving on a gourd?

Did you know you can make bird houses, soap dishes, flowerpots, ornaments, bowls, whatever you can imagine from a gourd?

I personally hope to make a thunder gourd soon. The 1st and 2nd picture below are a couple of gourds I made as a beginner and the other two are photos from the more professional 'gourders' from my Facebook Group, For the Love of Gourds. They do such beautiful work.



Submitted by Gayle Kusk

Master Gardener Extension Volunteer



Frost on the Nandina

Nandina domestica leucocarpa—This nandina has creamy white berries, growing in the garden of Tom and Jo Anne Allen

April 22, 2022 – Earth Day

Every year on April 22, Earth Day marks the anniversary of the birth of the environmental movement in 1970. Started by U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson from the state of Wisconsin, it gave environmental issues national attention. Now, it is an annual event to demonstrate support for protecting our environment. Here are some environmentally smart ideas for you to use in your landscape:



1. Plant natives and wildflowers.
2. Plant for the pollinators. Create a garden that includes plants that flower at different times of the year to provide pollen and nectar sources for pollinators throughout the growing season.
3. Mow your lawn less often so the roots of the grass will grow deeper and your lawn thicker and healthier which may decrease pests and disease.
4. Water your garden early, when the air is cool so not as much moisture is lost to evaporation and water near the base of plants.
5. If you have a mulching mower, mulch fall leaves with your mower and leave the small bits where they lie so you can avoid raking and blowing the leaves.
6. Start a compost pile if you do not have one. Enrich your soil with the nutrients from materials that have been broken down in the composting process. Dry leaves, grass clippings, vegetable and fruit scraps, eggshells, coffee grounds and tea bags are some of the things that can be composted.

Jo Anne Allen

Master Gardener Extension Volunteer

“Spring is the season of hope, and autumn is that of memory.”

Marguerite Gardiner

Weeds I Love To Hate

Cardamine hirsuta

Hairy Bittercress

Hairy bittercress is a spring or winter invasive broadleaf annual weed that grows from a rosette of dark green, dissected leaves. The leaves are rounded to wedge-shaped. The small flowers have four petals and are white and grow in dense clusters at the end of the stems. The fruit is a very thin, flattened capsule that houses the seed. When ripened, the capsule flings out seed several feet to scatter them.

Hairy bittercress is found from Maine into Florida and west to Nebraska, Texas and Washington. It is also found in Hawaii, Canada, Europe, Asia, North Africa and Australia.



Hairy bittercress is best controlled by removing it by hand or hoe in fall or early spring before it sets seed. It is not a good idea to add it to your compost pile due to the seeds that may develop. It has a shallow root system so removing it by hand is not difficult. If the seeds have already set, the plant flings out seeds when it is disturbed so be mindful of your eyes. (Seeds can get flung into your eyes – I know from personal experience).



To control hairy bittercress using herbicides, it is best to use a pre-emergence herbicide in late August to early September to target the plants at germination. If plants have already emerged, apply a post-emergence herbicide to actively growing plants before seedpods form. When using herbicides, always read and follow label instructions.

Jo Anne Allen

Master Gardener Extension Volunteer

Spring Lettuce Salad with Roasted Asparagus

Serves: 6

From: RecipeGirl.com

1 pound asparagus

1/3 C + 1 T olive oil

1/2 t grated lemon zest

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 1/2 T lemon juice

1 T Dijon mustard

10 ounces mixed greens

Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, shaved into curls with veggie peeler

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F.

On a rimmed baking sheet, toss asparagus with 1 T of the oil and the lemon zest and season with salt and pepper.

Roast the asparagus for about 8 minutes, until tender.

In a small bowl, whisk the lemon juice with the mustard and the remaining 1/3 C olive oil. Season with salt and pepper.

In a large bowl, toss the lettuces with all but 2T of the dressing. Arrange salad on plates and top with roasted asparagus and cheese curls. Drizzle the remaining dressing over the asparagus and serve.



Book Corner

Title: On the Wild Side—Experiments in New Naturalism

Author: Keith Wiley

From the library of Jo Anne Allen and she gives this book 5 green thumbs out of 5.

Keith Wiley has been captivated by wild flowers and natural landscapes for a very long time and has traveled extensively from his rural England home to some of the world's deserts, coastlines, mountains and woodlands. In his book he emphasizes natural landscapes and wildflowers, how they occur in the wild and how this effect may be translated into our garden settings. Chapters include: Bulb Meadows and Woodland Floor, Deserts and Semi-Arid Landscapes, Mountain, Coast and Clifftop, Impressionism With Perennials, Meadow Mixes, Prairie, Scrub and Grasslands, Inspiration From the Wild Woods, Shaping Plants for Effect, Shape and Structure, Between Rocks and Hard Places, and Going With the Flow.