

Master Gardener Extension Volunteers of Union and Towns Counties

NEWSLETTER

Published Quarterly

Summer 2022

Volume 9, Issue 3

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tba

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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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Asiatic Lily blooming in the garden of Cindy Knickerbocker

A big welcome to our newly graduated Master Gardener Extension Volunteers!

Summer is hot weather, weeds, poison ivy and mosquitoes, but also a time to enjoy the blooms on the flowers you planted last spring—zinnias and marigolds and petunias—and the harvest of the vegetables you planted in your garden. As you go about your chores of maintaining your garden, don't forget that a garden is a place where you can be refreshed, restored and inspired.

Master Gardener Extension Volunteers have been busy with a very successful Plant Sale in late May and are continuing work in the Gold Medal Garden and at the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center. Check out Master Gardener Extension Volunteers in action on page 14 at the Young Harris Library cleanup. See page 16 to learn about creating a rain garden and don't miss the article *A Garden is for All Seasons* on page 15.

Our featured Master Gardener Extension Volunteer for this quarter is Cindy Knickerbocker, please see page 3, and be sure to see pictures of her delightful garden areas on pages 4-6.

Happy gardening,

Jo Anne

***** Summer arrives on June 21, 2022 at 11:32 p.m..*****



Elaine Bliss' *Zenobia pulverulenta* is in bloom - a real beauty!

Meet Cindy Knickerbocker

Cindy Knickerbocker is our featured Master Gardener Extension Volunteer for this quarter's edition of our newsletter. She moved to Union County in 2007 and completed her Master Gardener Extension Volunteer training in 2016 and was certified on April 20, 2017.

Cindy was born in Macon, Georgia and grew up in Devon, Pennsylvania. She majored in Art at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia.

Before moving to the mountains, Cindy worked for Southwest Airlines for over 25 years.

Her hobbies and passions include sewing, working with different art genres as well as collecting art, gardening and cooking.

Currently, Cindy is getting ready (as soon as the soil warms up enough) to plant a variety of sunflowers, from those that grow only 2 feet tall to those that grow over 10 feet tall. Maybe she will share pictures for a future newsletter?

Community work consists of volunteering as a Master Gardener Extension Volunteer in Union and Towns counties. She chaired the *Ask a Master Gardener* project at the Union County Farmers Market for five years.

Cindy's favorite plants to grow are herbs, evergreens (mostly eaten by the deer), some vegetables, especially different varieties of tomatoes and peppers, and perennials and annuals. In her vegetable garden this season she is trying for the first time a golden orange bell pepper. Her favorite gardening activity is pruning and trimming and she doesn't really like weeding.

One day Cindy would like to visit Japan and she likes the northwestern part of the United States and would like to do more traveling there.

Favorite foods include Asian stir-fry type foods and Indian curry-type foods.

Something that many of her friends do not know about her is that she knows how to sail and has sailed extensively. She has sailed in the Grenadine Islands in the southeastern part of the Lesser Antilles of the West Indies near St. Vincent and has also sailed south of Cape Cod from Martha's Vineyard to Nantucket.

Cindy is a very interesting person and I enjoyed getting to know her better and hope you will too.

Jo Anne Allen

Master Gardener Extension Volunteer

Echinacea (Coneflower) growing in
one of Cindy's gardens



The next three pages contain pictures of Cindy's garden.



Above - Digitalis - Foxglove



Above - Hemerocallis - Daylily

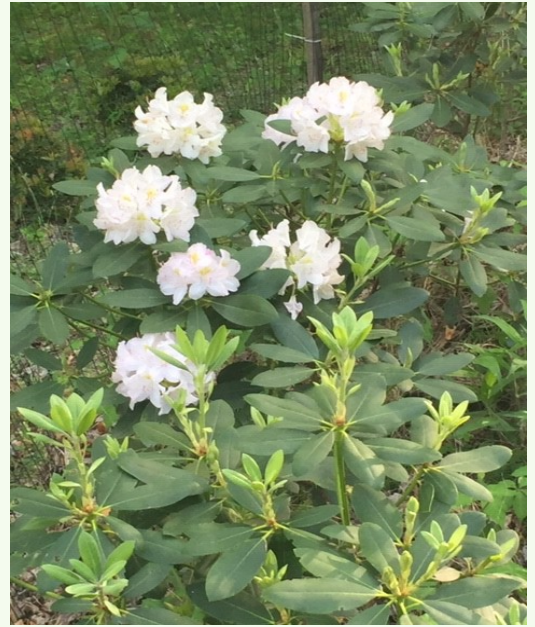


Above - Kniphofia uvaria - Red Hot Poker or Torch-Lily



Left - Lysimachia nummularia - Creeping Jenny growing around a tub of flowers - Petunia, Calibrachoa, Lily

Cindy's Garden Pictures Continued



Above - Rhododendron - 'Alba' is the variety on the right



Echinacea - Coneflower



Helleborus orientalis - Lenten Rose

Cindy's Garden Pictures Continued

Crazy in Color! Liliium - Lily - Asiatic Hybrids



June Garden Chores

Trees and Shrubs - Cuttings of deciduous shrubs may be rooted in late June; root 6-inch clippings in damp sand, keeping it moist and roots may form by September.

One of the best things you can do for your trees and shrubs is to eliminate nutrient and water competition by removing the grass and weeds growing at the base of your plant and add about two inches of mulch.

Remove small sprouts from the base and from the trunk of tree-form crape myrtles.

Prune azaleas (if needed) after they have finished blooming and make sure they have about 2 inches of mulch.

Prune climbing roses after blooming finishes, cutting away weak, old or woody canes.

Prune hydrangeas (if needed) when most of the flowers have faded.

Vegetables - Don't kill the big green caterpillars that get on your parsley or fennel. They will soon become beautiful swallowtail butterflies.

If you like the taste of homegrown tomatoes but do not have garden space, patio type tomatoes can be grown on a sunny porch (6 hours minimum sun) in a pot 24-inch or larger.

Fertilize tomato plants regularly, inspect them for signs of leaf diseases and spray with a fungicide if necessary. Always follow label directions.

Harvest vegetables regularly to prolong production and enjoy your vegetables at the peak of their freshness. One ripe vegetable on your okra or squash plant halts blooming on the entire plant. Use a knife when harvesting so you will not damage your plant.

Watch for Japanese beetles in your garden. Hand-pick them or spray with an insect killer, always following label directions. Systemic products are also on the market, but they may kill beneficial insects as well as the Japanese beetles.

Plant corn in several short rows, side by side, instead of a long single row because wind currents pollinate it, not insects.

Plant herbs in sunny patio pots near your kitchen and you can start harvesting leaves in a few weeks. Your plants will grow best if you harvest regularly.

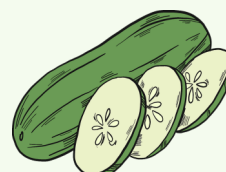
Container grown vegetables and flowers can dry out quickly on a patio in full sun. Daily watering may be necessary.

Be careful if you must work in your garden when the soil is too wet. When planting, the wet soil will clump together and possibly leave air pockets that will dry out your plant's roots. Water in new plantings well.

Mulch your vegetable garden with pine straw or wheat straw. You can use three sheets of newspaper to cover the ground around your plants, then cover the paper with straw.

Water cucumbers regularly so they won't have a bitter taste.

Check garden crops daily for disease and insect problems.



Harvest onions, garlic and Irish potatoes when two thirds of the plant tops have died down.

Pull weeds from vegetable gardens and flowerbeds weekly.

Flowerbeds - An easy formula for creating a beautiful container garden is to use a single tall plant with a trailer that spills over the edge, along with some plants to fill in the gaps.

Divide iris after they bloom.

Use soaker hoses to irrigate annuals, perennials, shrubs and vegetables.

Remove faded flowers from summer annuals to prevent a lull in blooming.

Some quick growing annuals you can grow in your garden are cleome, cosmos, marigold and zinnia.

Look for seedlings under your Lenten roses and transplant them to other shady spots in your garden or share them with a friend.

Check dahlias for spider mites and spray with an insecticide if necessary, always following label directions. Clip the faded flowers to encourage blooms through the summer.

Stake tall growing flowers like dahlias, lilies and hollyhocks.

Cut back chrysanthemums so they won't be too leggy later in the summer and fall when they bloom.

Continue planting annuals for summer color and to fill in bare spots in your flower garden.

Summer blooming bulbs can still be planted.

Fertilize flowerbeds.

Houseplants - Houseplants that have been moved outdoors may require more water during summer months.

Divide overgrown Boston ferns.

Miscellaneous - During hot weather, raise the height of your mower to help your lawn withstand hot, dry weather.

Install a birdbath and enjoy the show.



July Garden Chores

Trees and Shrubs - Water trees to keep them alive during the dry summer months. Water the ground at the base of the trunk and out as far as the limb canopy reaches.

Trees and shrubs may need to be lightly trimmed in the summer months to maintain a desired shape but save all major pruning jobs for the late winter.

Avoid wetting the foliage of roses when watering them as this encourages leaf disease.

For better health of your creeping juniper, prune out old, dead foliage underneath the plants.

Vegetables - If you have not planted your tomatoes, corn, beans and okra, do so by mid July to allow time for them to mature before cool weather.

Water early in the day or late in the evening for best results. Much of the water will evaporate if you water in the middle of the day. For more efficient watering, water at the root zone with soaker hoses.

Cut back by half herbs like basil and oregano to promote leaves and to prevent them from producing seed.

Look for and remove hornworms (big green caterpillars camouflaged among the stems) on your tomato and pepper plants.

Mulch your garden to retain moisture, lower the temperature, reduce the number of weeds and prevent the soil surface from compacting.

Japanese beetles are hard to control. Hand pick if you can but you may need an insecticide. Always follow label directions.

Remove vegetable plants from your garden once they have finished bearing to prevent disease/insect buildup.

Plant pumpkin seeds now for pumpkins in October.



Remove tomato suckers (a shoot growing between the main stem and a branch) and root them for new plants. Select 5 – 6" long suckers and root in water and then plant in your garden.

Pick squash, cucumbers and okra regularly to keep the plants producing.

A big rotten spot on the end of a ripe tomato means it has blossom end rot. Purchase a product from your garden center that specifically treats this and apply lime to your garden soil in the fall to decrease susceptibility next growing season.

Extreme heat can cause tomatoes and peppers to stop setting fruit. This is a temporary condition and they will continue to set fruit once temperatures drop.

Dig Irish potatoes and harvest garlic when the leaves turn yellow and shrivel up.

Remove water-robbing weeds from your garden. One weed that goes to seed this year makes many weeds next year.

Flowerbeds - If your annuals and perennials need to be rejuvenated, cut one-third of the existing growth,

water and fertilize. In about ten days, your annuals will bloom again with a fuller, healthier appearance and in September, your perennials will be more compact and less likely to topple over or split in high winds.

It is not too late to sow seeds of quick growing annuals such as marigolds and zinnias.

Cut back dahlias to half their height after they bloom for fall flowers.

Divide crowded bearded iris clumps making sure each root has a healthy fan of leaves.

In addition to summer annuals, coleus and caladium, two plants with beautiful foliage color, can be planted for long-lasting summer color.

Cut back tall overgrown chrysanthemums in early July for compact growth. Then allow the plant to grow for fall blooms.

Cut purple coneflower and black-eyed Susan for a nice bouquet. This will help the plants continue to bloom for a longer period and give you much pleasure.

Hanging baskets continually exposed to sun, wind and high temperatures may need to be watered every day.

Stake tall plants.

Remove faded flowers from annuals and perennials to encourage more blooms.

Houseplants - Remove standing water from flowerpot saucers and watering cans where mosquitoes can breed.

Treat mealy bugs on coleus and African violets with a cotton swab saturated with rubbing alcohol.

Miscellaneous - Fireflies are fun to watch and are beneficial. The larvae eat mites, snails, slugs and other soft-bodied insects.

To help keep your compost pile from drying out, make the top of your pile concave so rainfall is directed to the center.

Make sure your mower blades are sharp. A ragged cut causes grass to use more water.

Keep shovel blades sharp with a file or grinder. A sharp blade makes digging hard soil easier.



August Garden Chores

Trees and Shrubs - Prune overgrown blueberries after harvest. Shorten tall central stems to encourage more horizontal branches.

Rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias prefer acidic soils. Discarded coffee grounds and tea leaves added to the soil around these plants can provide a natural means of maintaining soil acidity.

If trees and shrubs need pruning, only lightly prune them early this month so new growth will have time to mature before cold weather arrives.

Remove crape myrtle seedpods as soon as they form to encourage late summer bloom.

Fertilize roses with 10-10-10 fertilizer, 1 tablespoon per foot of height.

Cut faded blooms from your roses so your plant's energy will be directed to producing new flowers instead of seeds.

Vegetables - Summer heat may cause some of the blooms on your vegetable plants to drop. The plants will hold the blooms again once the weather is cooler. To reduce some of the effects of the heat, apply a three-inch layer of mulch around the plants and water regularly.

Cucumbers and squash can still be planted. It is too late for corn, lima beans, okra, pole beans, and tomatoes this season because they will not have enough time to mature before cold weather.

Plant garlic in August for harvest early next summer.

Test your soil now and you will have time to improve it, if necessary, before next spring's planting season. Your County Extension Agent has soil testing instructions.

Plan your fall vegetable garden now: collards, kale, mustard, spinach, beets, onions, turnips, broccoli, and radishes. Plant mid-to-late August.

Water plants several hours before applying insecticides so the insecticide will not burn them. When applying insecticides, always follow label directions.

To prevent insect and disease problems in your vegetable garden, remove plants when they have finished bearing.

Harvest squash, okra, and cucumbers regularly so your plants will continue producing. Use a sharp knife with a narrow blade to avoid damaging the plant.

Remove weeds before they make seeds.

Begin propagating outdoor herb plantings for an indoor winter herb garden.



Flowerbeds - Cut back annuals, such as begonias, petunias, impatiens, and geraniums when they get "leggy". Water them well and lightly fertilize. This will encourage compact growth and more blooms in about three weeks.

If your clematis vine has turned completely brown, do not dig it up. Prune out dead stems and leave it alone and it may sprout new growth next spring.

If your older peony plants had diminished flowers this past spring, dig, separate, and replant them.

Brighten up your hanging baskets by clipping out dead leaves and flowers and fertilizing with a slow-release fertilizer. Water regularly and replace any plants that have died with new plants.

Begin planting fall blooming bulbs.

Remove faded bedding plants from your garden and re-seed with marigolds, cosmos and zinnias to provide color during the fall months.

Fertilize chrysanthemums and fall blooming asters regularly until the buds show color.

Divide and transplant daylilies, Shasta daisies and iris.

Collect Hosta and blackberry lily seeds to save for planting next spring.

Patio plants and window boxes dry out quickly. Check their watering needs daily.

Root 4" cutting of coleus in water. After roots have formed, plant them in a pot and enjoy them indoors for the winter.

Gather wildflowers for drying.

Fertilize annual bedding plants that are in bloom; follow label directions.

Miscellaneous - Place a garden bench in a corner of your garden so you can sit and enjoy the summer evening sounds.

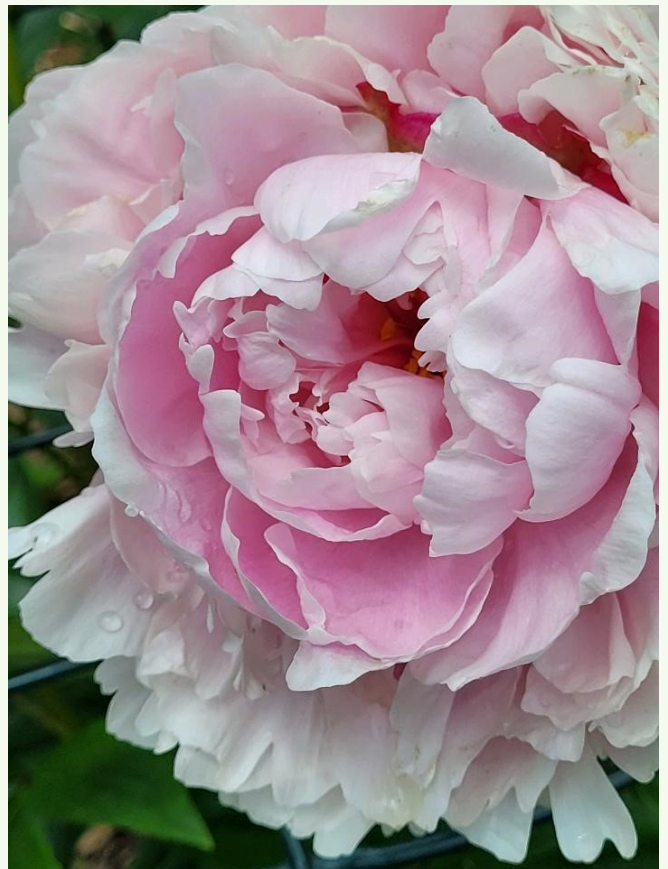
Be on the lookout for poison ivy along the ground and climbing up trees. To control it, spray with a non-selective weed killer, always following label directions.



What's Blooming Now
(or what has just finished blooming or being beautiful)
All from the Gardens of Tom and Jo Anne Allen



Left - *Chionanthus virginicus* - Fringe Tree



Above - *Paeonia* - Peony 'Sarah Bernhardt'



Left - *Nandina domestica leucocarpa*
'Alba' (The white berries are just beginning to form).

Master Gardener Extension Volunteers in action: Young Harris Library cleanup work, March 8, 2022.



A Garden is for All Seasons

Part of being a good gardener, a good steward of the earth, is knowing what to do and when to do it.

In the winter time, analyze your garden, look at its form and shape. The structure of your garden is more visible when the leaves are off the trees and shrubs. Review your past gardening year, look at your successes and failures and make your next years plans and goals accordingly.

Put your garden plan/design on paper for future reference. Winter is also a good time to prune many trees and shrubs. Thinning out branches is a better way to prune instead of shearing. Do not prune early bloomers like forsythia and quince until after they bloom or you will not get blooms in the spring.

Make sure everything is adequately mulched/put to bed for the winter. Don't overlook your hardscape. When weather permits, install edgings around flowerbeds and construct retaining walls, terraces and walkways.

Spring time in the garden is busy but fun. Trees and shrubs can be fertilized and vegetable and flower seeds can be started indoors. As the temperatures warm up, vegetable and flower transplants can be planted in the garden, diligent weed control can begin lasting throughout the growing season and lawn mowers can be made ready for weekly mowings.

Summer time means dealing with heat and sometimes drought. Make sure everything is mulched to control the temperature, weeds and moisture. Three to 5 inches of mulch is a good rule of thumb. When rainfall is insufficient, additional water is needed for gardens. Drip irrigation is a good method for delivering water to plants where it is needed, not on the top part of the plants where too much moisture may cause fungus and disease.

Garden crops and flowerbeds also need to be checked regularly for disease and insect problems and dealt with as soon as problems are detected. Harvest vegetables regularly to keep your plants producing.

Autumn is the best time to plant trees and shrubs and perennials. The ground temperatures are still warm enough for good root establishment before cold weather arrives. Gardening lore says to plant trees, shrubs and perennials in months which have the letter 'r' in their names; September, October, November, December, January, February, March and April.

Rake fallen leaves and continue harvesting and weeding. Fallen leaves can be shredded and used as an excellent soil amendment. A fall vegetable garden can be planted. Mustard, spinach, turnips, beets, carrots, kale, radishes, broccoli, lettuce, onions, collards and cabbage are all good choices. And if you do not already have a compost pile, start one. Before the weather turns too cold, prepare your garden soil so you will be ready for planting next spring.

Jo Anne Allen

Master Gardener Extension Volunteer

Create A Rain Garden

If you have a natural depression in your landscape near a downspout of your house, you may want to create a rain garden.

Rain gardens are landscaped areas designed to collect and utilize rainwater. They allow more water from rain to soak into the ground, reducing peak storm flows, helping to prevent stream bank erosion and reducing the risk of local flooding. Approximately 30% more rainwater soaks into the ground in a rain garden than in an equivalent area of lawn. Rain gardens can also provide valuable habitat for many birds and butterflies, adding to their beauty.

As rainwater is collected in the rain garden, it filters through soils and plants and soaks into the ground. The plants, mulch and soil combine natural physical, biological and chemical processes to remove pollutants from runoff.

They are best located in a low area of your yard where runoff tends to flow and a minimum of 10 feet from the foundation of your house or other buildings and not above the septic system.

If you decide to create a rain garden, first identify your location. Lay out the boundary using a garden hose, with the longest length perpendicular to the slope of the land. Create a low berm (a small earthen dam no more than 12 inches high) on the downhill side of the rain garden to hold back the rainwater. Minor grading may be necessary to make the bottom of the rain garden as level as possible. A shallow swale (dug out area) or corrugated drainpipe (either buried or above ground) will channel the runoff from the downspout or paved area to the rain garden.

The soil in your rain garden should be loose and sandy, allowing rainwater to quickly soak into the ground. A general rule of thumb is to have soil that soaks in one inch of water per hour. Grass or groundcover should be established along the upper edge of the garden to slow down runoff water as it enters the garden and on the berm side to stabilize it as a border.

Next, choose your plants, a mix of ornamental grasses, shrubs and self-seeding perennials. Mulch the garden after planting, a three inch layer of shredded hardwood mulch is a good choice because it is less likely to float away. Remove weeds on a regular basis and add mulch as needed. Create an 'overflow' path for excess water for periods of excessive rainfalls and be sure to stabilize it with grass or groundcover.

Creating a rain garden can be a good thing, both for your landscape and our environment.

Some plant suggestions:

Trees

Red maple, *Acer rubrum*
Willow oak, *Quercus phellos*
River birch, *Betula nigra*
Sweetbay magnolia, *Magnolia virginiana*

Shrubs

Virginia sweetspire, *Itea virginica*
Winterberry, *Ilex verticillata*
Buttonbush, *Cephalanthus occidentalis*
American beautyberry, *Callicarpa americana*

Perennials, grasses, groundcovers

Joe-Pye weed, *Eupatorium fistulosum*
Switchgrass, *Panicum virgatum*
Asters, *Aster* Spp.

Source: Gardening News and Tips From Pike Family Nurseries

Jo Anne Allen

Master Gardener Extension Volunteer

The Legend of the Pussy Willow

Pussy Willow (*Salix discolor*) is a deciduous shrub or small tree that likes full sun and lots of water. It is a fast-growing, short lived, weak-wooded plant with shallow roots. In spring, they leaf out early and hold their leaves until late in the autumn. They are grown mainly for their catkins (pussy willows), colored twigs, as screen plants or for erosion control near banks and streams.



The legend goes like this...

Long ago, a mother cat was weeping on a river bank because her tiny kitten had fallen into the water while chasing butterflies. The willow, growing at the river's edge, longed to help so she swept branches into the water to rescue the kitten. The kitten grasped the branches and was brought safely to shore. Thus the legend goes, that willow branches sprout tiny, fur-like buds where the kitten once clung.



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

Bee Ready!

Plant To Attract Pollinators!

I stood in my garden early yesterday morning wandering where the sun had gone. Then it dawned on me.

What do you get if you cross a four-leaf clover with poison ivy? A rash of good luck.

Source: sungardening.co.uk

Weeds I Love To Hate

Salvia lyrata

Lyreleaf Sage, Cancer Weed

Lyreleaf sage is an upright, hairy, native perennial growing up to 1 – 2 feet tall with a rosette of leaves at the base. The ajuga-like leaves are deeply 3-lobed, with a few simple leaves higher up on the stem. Large basal leaves are purple-tinged in the winter. This species is in the mint family, hence the typical square stem and 2-lipped blossom of the mints. Its pale blue to violet, tubular flowers are arranged in whorls around the stem. Each blossom is about 1 inch long. The 2-lobed lower lip is much longer than the upper, which has 3 lobes, the middle one forming a sort of hood. The sepals are purplish-brown. The exposed lower lip of this and other salvias provides an excellent landing platform for bees. When a bee lands, the two stamens are tipped and the insect is doused with pollen.

Lyreleaf sage can be found growing along the roadsides in ditches and in pastures. Actually, it looks quite lovely when it blooms in mass in the spring. It is an invasive lawn/pasture weed that tolerates mowing and competition from grasses. To control it, apply herbicide, following label directions or pull/dig it out until it is gone. Snip any blooms before they go to seed to eliminate future germinations.



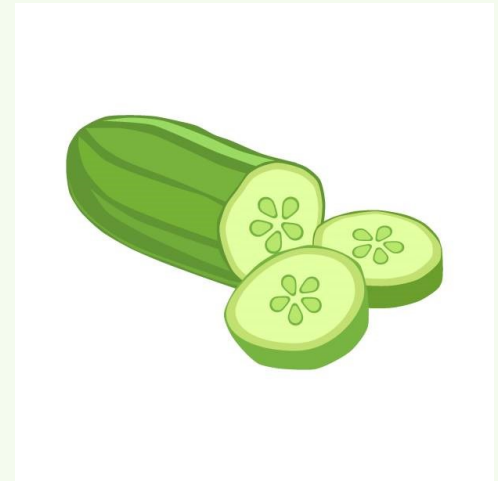
“The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain.”

Dolly Parton

Easy Cucumber Salad

(Source: foodandwine.com)

3 medium cucumbers, thinly sliced
¼ red onion, thinly sliced
1/3 C Greek yogurt
Juice of one lemon
1 T chopped dill
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper



In a large bowl, combine cucumbers and onion. In a medium bowl, combine yogurt, lemon juice and dill and whisk until smooth. Season with salt and pepper. Pour dressing over cucumbers and onions and toss to coat. Garnish with more dill before serving.

Book Corner

Title: The Magical World of Moss Gardening
Author: Annie Martin

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

In this inspiring guide, Annie Martin - Mossin' Annie to her fans - covers the essentials for creating an extraordinary moss garden. She profiles some of the best mosses to grow, offers expert tips on planting and care and has a whole chapter devoted to design to help you create fascinating combinations and establish your own moss garden. Chapters include: Introduction, Green Grandeur, Bryophyte Basics, Mosses for Gardeners, From Concept to Garden Plan, Planting and Propagation and Your Thriving Moss Garden.