

'News You Can Use' From the Extension Office

UGA Cooperative Extension in Hall County



Hall County Cooperative Extension provides information and assistance in the areas of:

- Agriculture and the Environment
- 4-H and Youth Development
- Family & Consumer Sciences
- Radon Education

Inside this issue:

County Commissioners Learn Radon Risks	1
Hall 4-H News & Events	2
4-H'ers Attend Elected Officials Luncheon	3
Friday Farmers' Market on the Square	3
EFNEP Programming News	3
Breast Cancer: A Family Affair	4
Free Teen Driver Program	4
Home Fire Safety	4
Natural Gas Bill Information Class	4
News from the Hall County Master Gardeners	5
Trees provide more than Fall Color	5
Master Gardener Fall Expo News	6

County Commissioners Learn Radon Risks

At their July 20 work session, Hall County Commissioners learned of the danger of breathing radioactive radon gas. An estimated 822 Georgians die each year from radon-related lung cancer.

Area Radon Educator Ginger Bennett presented a short overview of the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Radon Education Program (UGAREP), including compelling data on radon tests conducted in the county.

Commissioners Bobby Banks, Ashley Bell, Steve Gailey, Chairman Tom Oliver, and Billy Powell heard a presentation on the dangers of radon, a radioactive gas found in nearly all soils. Each Commissioner also received a test kit to ensure their homes are not at risk.



There is no safe exposure level of radon gas. EPA and the U.S. Surgeon General have stated that homes with a radon level at or above the Action Level of 4 pCi/L* should be mitigated immediately and that radon levels between 2 pCi/L and 3.9 pCi/L should also be addressed. (*picocuries per liter of air)

Radon comes from the natural decay of uranium that is found in nearly all soils. It typically moves up through the ground to the air above and into your home through cracks and other holes in the foundation. Any home may have a radon problem

Hall County test data reveals 28% of homes are "Action Level" homes and 27% are between 2 pCi/L and 3.9 pCi/L. This indicates that 55% of Hall County homes could be at risk.

Ms. Bennett presented a zip code map of Hall County noting the average radon level and the highest reported radon level for each zip code within Hall County. High levels have been found in all zip codes, but codes with higher average radon levels include 30519, 30566, 30548, 30504, and 30542. The highest level to date was found in 30504: 45.9 pCi/L. The complete data report spanning 20 years was provided by the test kit supplier for UGAREP.

More and more, home buyers and renters are asking about radon levels before they buy or rent a home. Test your home now and save your results. If you find high radon levels, you are strongly encouraged to repair your home before you decide to sell.

The Hall County Extension office offers radon test kits to area homeowners. Hall County citizens who are concerned their home may be at risk should contact Ms. Bennett at 770.535.8290 or bennettg@uga.edu.



Hall County 4-H News & Events



Back to School "4-H Style"

The Hall County 4-H Club will kick-off the new school year with a full calendar of educational programming and fun events.

Hall County 5th graders will meet the 4-H leaders in their classrooms once a month for one hour beginning in August. The curriculum includes science enrichment programs along with Agricultural Awareness and Public Speaking.

Junior & Senior 4-H'ers will have the opportunity to attend 4-H state sponsored leadership events in November and December. Junior Conference will be held at Rock Eagle November 7 & 8 and Senior Fall Forum December 5 & 6. Both Events offer programs and classes in leadership and citizenship as well as community service projects.

4-H Community Clubs

The Hall County 4-H Club is excited to have the following community/project clubs for young people to join:

- Archery – Ages 9-19 yrs.
- Dog Dazzler Club – Grades 5-8
- BB Rifle Team – Graders 5-8
- .22 Rimfire Team- Grades 9-12
- Scrapbooking Club – Ages 9-19 yrs.
- Exchange Club – Grades 8 - 10
- Horse Club – Ages 9-19 yrs.
- BEE Healthy Club – Grades 6-8
(C.W. Davis Middle School only)

4-H Annual MEGA Yard Sale

Got stuff?

The 4-H Club will hold their annual fall yard sale at the Hall County Farmers Market on November 14th.



If you are interested in renting a space, please call the Hall County 4-H office at 770/535-8291.

Mule Camp Market Festival – October 9 & 10

Bring your appetite to Mule Camp for THE Best GRILLED CHICKEN of the year!!



The 4-H Club cooks & sells chicken as our major fundraiser for the year. Please make sure to stop by on Friday or Saturday for a delicious Chicken lunch or din-



Our thanks to Mar-Jac Poultry and AgGeorgia Farm Credit for their sponsorship of Hall County 4-H. A special thanks for seven years of grilling the finest chicken goes to Billy Skaggs, Hall County Extension Coordinator.

4-H'ers attend Elected Officials Luncheon

The annual Hall County Extension Elected Officials Luncheon was held July 21st. It was attended by Lucas Hernandez, Kia Shields, Courtney Woodard, Kaitlyn Head and John Washington.

The 4-H'ers had the opportunity to discuss 4-H and current events with Senator Lee Hawkins (pictured) and several County Commissioners including Chairman, Tom Oliver. The group did a great job representing the Hall County 4-H Club. Mrs. Paula Dobbs also attended and discussed 4-H from a parent's point of view.



Friday Farmers' Market on the Square



Due to the many requests for locally-grown produce, the Hall County Farmers' Market expanded to offer a downtown market on Friday afternoons in addition to being open Tuesday and Saturday mornings at the current location off Jesse Jewell Parkway.

The Friday market is open from 4-7 PM every Friday in the parking lot running parallel to Spring Street between the downtown area and the Georgia Mountains Center. About a dozen vendors have been on hand each week selling a variety of fresh produce — all locally grown — and homemade items such as breads, granola, soap and honey.

For more information on the market, visit www.hallfarmersmarket.org.

EFNEP Provides Fun Food Experiences - for Free!

It's a busy time of year, and parents are trying to fit a number of things into their schedules.

Our free program, "Food Talk: Featuring Meals in Minutes," shows parents how to make healthy meals and snacks part of their family's daily routine. The program, part of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), is available nationwide.

Locally, more than 300 youth and adults have completed the lesson series. Our summer graduates include youngsters from the Greater A Manger Community Outreach Center summer camp, Smart Starts Day School and The Academy.

We're also continuing our work with the Georgia Mountain Food Bank, which is based in Flowery Branch. We recently participated in a health fair at Mt. Zion Baptist Church in South Hall and a back-to-school event in Gainesville, sponsored by Amerigroup.

Food Talk or cooking school sessions are available for churches, day care centers, youth groups, families, and non-profit agencies and organizations.

We offer fun, educational activities. Plus, there is no charge for the program. Creamy Pineapple Pudding, Breakfast Burritos and Famous Fried Rice are part of our delicious recipe collection. **We provide the recipe ingredients and supplies.**

Are you looking for a community outreach program?

Do you know parents who are looking for ways to save money and time?



We are in the process of scheduling fall sessions, so please give us a call. Contact: Sandra Stringer, (770) 535-8290 or stringer@uga.edu.

Participants receive an official University of Georgia certificate upon completion of the series.

Attendance prizes also are awarded throughout the sessions. Adult program graduates will receive a Food Talk cookbook, too.

Breast Cancer: A Family Affair

Hall County Extension along with other sponsoring agencies of **Breast Cancer: A Family Affair** will be presenting a spoken opera entitled "The Way Home", featuring radio host Martha Zoller and breast cancer survivors. This will be the first performance in Georgia and will be performed twice in Walters Auditorium at the Northeast Georgia Medical Center.



Mark your calendar for Tuesday, October 20 at either 11:30-1:00 pm (\$15 lunch) or 7:00-8:30 pm (\$10 coffee and desserts). You will also have the opportunity to view an exhibit and silent auction of one-of-a-kind original works of art bras which are unique, entertaining, humorous, and beautiful. You can choose to memorialize those lost to the disease, and to honor survivors. For more information on tickets contact Debbie Wilburn at dwilburn@uga.edu.

Does Your Child Know the Sound of a Smoke Alarm?

Children younger than age 7 are more vulnerable to smoke and flames in a fire, **less likely to wake up if a smoke alarm sounds while they're sleeping** and have a hard time escaping a burning home by themselves.

Remember to make and practice a fire escape plan with your entire family. Find at least two ways out of every room and have a plan to help young children escape your home.

Preschool-aged children (3 years and older) can begin to learn what to do in case of a fire. Teach your little ones that the sound of a smoke alarm means **go outside immediately, meet at a designated place and don't hide from firefighters**.

Source: Safe Kids USA

My children sleep very deeply. Will they wake up to the smoke alarm?

Test your alarms at night **to see if your child will wake up** and respond to the alarm. If your child doesn't wake up to the alarm, try a talking alarm that says "Fire! Fire!"



Free Teen Driver Program (14-16 years of age & Parent)



The next **free** teen **P.R.I.D.E. (Parents Reducing Injuries and Driver Error)** program will be held on Monday, September 21 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Gainesville State College.

Rather than a technical hands-on driver training course, this program addresses driver attitude, knowledge and behavior of both the parent and new teen driver.

Register today! Email Debbie Wilburn at dwilburn@uga.edu with your contact info. If you do not have email call the Extension office at 770-535-8290. Class size will be limited. Call ASAP!

Free Educational Class for Natural Gas Customers

Educated natural gas consumers save the most money and use their resources wisely. If you have questions about your natural gas bill or how to determine the best rate plan for your household, **bring your bill** to a **free** review sponsored by the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension.

This program does not include Atmos Energy or propane customers.

The drop in program will be held on Monday, September 21 between 10:00 - 3:00 p.m. at the Extension office at 734 East Crescent Drive (behind the Farmer's Market). Most one-on-one consultations take less than 20 minutes.

Designed specifically for natural gas customers who live in the Atlanta Gas Light Service Area, this seminar will provide in-depth information on how to choose the best rate comparing therms (measurement of gas usage) and service charges between different gas companies. The educator will also discuss heating assistance programs that are available to qualified customers, including programs targeting those age 60 and older.



The Extension office is gearing up for the application process for the upcoming Master Gardener classes that begin in January 2010. We will hold classes at the Extension office every Tuesday and Thursday through March. Currently, we have over 65 interested applicants. We will be sending applications out in mid September and the selections process will begin in November, with a maximum of 30 students that can attend.

Interesting speakers will highlight each class. Walter Reeves, Georgia's popular garden enthusiast, will host our first class on "Soil and Plant Nutrition". We are looking forward to a great 2010 Master Gardening class.

~ Wanda Cannon
Hall County Master Gardener Coordinator



For more information, visit
www.hcmgs.com

Trees Can Provide More than Just Fall Color

For many gardeners, fall color is one of the key factors considered when adding a tree to their landscape. While it is an important characteristic, fall color often only lasts a few weeks, after which one is left to look at bare stems until the following spring.

When making your tree selections, consider how the tree will look during the winter months. Winter interest includes a variety of factors, including fall color persistence, branching pattern, exfoliating bark, and winter fruit. If adding a deciduous tree to your landscape this fall, here are a few choices that provide nice winter interest.



Japanese Stewartia (*Stewartia pseudocamellia*) is an excellent, small to medium-sized, deciduous garden tree growing to 30 to 35 feet tall and up to 25 feet wide. It's an all-season performer, exhibiting a distinctive branching pattern in winter, camellia-like flowers in summer, and bright yellow and red foliage in autumn.

Paperbark Maple (*Acer griseum*) is a unique slow-growing tree with olive to grayish green foliage with extremely good orange-red-brown fall color. Its great attraction is the brown bark which peels back to reveal a golden-brown underskin. Paperbark Maple grows to a height of 20 to 30 feet, but be patient as this tree does not have the growth rate of other maples.

If you're looking for a nice alternative to the dogwood, **Chinese Fringetree (*Chionanthus retusus*)** is a good choice. Growing to 15 to 25 feet tall, its pure white, strap-like flowers are borne in profusion on new growth, often in such large numbers that they mask the foliage. Chinese Fringetree also blooms about a month later than dogwood. Another outstanding feature of Chinese Fringetree is its grayish-brown bark that exfoliates into paper-like curls as the plant ages.



Lacebark Elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*) is a tough, durable shade tree reaching 40 to 50 feet tall with dark green leaves in season and yellow to reddish-purple fall color. This outstanding specimen tree features mottled bark with gray, green, orange and brown coloration. Easily transplanted and tolerant of poor soils, Lacebark Elm is an excellent addition to any landscape.

If you are looking for a graceful, early-blooming small tree, check out the **Downy Serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*)**. A deciduous native flowering tree reaching 15' to 25' high and about half as wide, the Serviceberry is a great addition to any landscape. Preferring well-drained acidic soil and part shade, Serviceberry typically blooms just before dogwood with two to four inch pale pink to white flower clusters. Easily trained to a multi-trunk specimen, this tree also features purplish-blue fruit in early summer.





UGA Cooperative Extension
in Hall County

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www.hallcounty.org/extension

**Annual Hall County
FARM-CITY BREAKFAST
Thursday, November 19**

7:30 AM

**East Hall Community Center
RSVP to 770.535.8293**

- Billy Skaggs, County Extension Coordinator , ANR Agent
bskaggs@uga.edu or bskaggs@hallcounty.org
- Debbie Wilburn, County Extension Agent, FACS
dwilburn@uga.edu
- Judy Tilford, County Extension Agent, 4-H/Youth
jtilford@uga.edu
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- Wanda Cannon, Horticulture Program Assistant
wcannon@hallcounty.org
- Sandra Stringer, EFNEP Program Assistant
stringer@uga.edu
- Becky Rogers, Extension Secretary brogers@uga.edu



**6th ANNUAL
FALL GARDEN EXPO**

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY
OCTOBER 2 & 3**

**CHICOPEE WOODS
AG CENTER**

Over 30 Exciting Vendors
Gardening Demos
Children's Booth
Free Mulch & Compost

Brought to you by the Hall County
Master Gardeners &
Hall County Cooperative Extension

