

# '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
- Expanded Foods & Nutrition
- Radon Education

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### Hall County 4-H Pictorial: Youth in Action!

For more 4-H news and information, go to page 3.



[www.hallcounty.org/extension](http://www.hallcounty.org/extension)

[www.hallcounty4hclub.org](http://www.hallcounty4hclub.org)

## Celebrate Spring with Asparagus

I know spring is around the corner when I see “affordable” asparagus in the grocery store. Cultivated for its medicinal purposes more than 2,000 years ago by the Egyptians, asparagus is a classic springtime delicacy known for its characteristic flavor. It is also a healthy addition to your diet.

Asparagus is a powerhouse of nutrients. It is an excellent source of folic acid as well as a good source of vitamin C, potassium, B vitamins, copper, vitamin A, iron, phosphorus and zinc.

Choose asparagus with firm, crisp stalks and compact, brightly colored heads with no traces of rust. Avoid yellowish asparagus with soft stalks and heads that are beginning to flower, which are signs of age. Keep in mind that it can take 10 to 14 days to get asparagus to the produce department, so store-bought asparagus is typically tougher than freshly harvested asparagus.



Asparagus is an extremely perishable vegetable, so wrap it in a damp cloth and store in a perforated plastic bag in the refrigerator. You should use it within three days of purchase.

It's unnecessary to peel asparagus, but it should be washed well in cold water to get rid of sand and soil. Cut off the base of the stalks (you can tie asparagus in bundles to make them easier to remove) and steam until tender but still firm. Avoid cooking asparagus in cast-iron pots, as asparagus contains tannins that react on contact with iron and alter the color of the vegetable.

## Georgia Driver's Education--Joshua's Law

Did you know that there are NEW requirements for new teen drivers starting January 1, 2007? Called Joshua's Law, it states that if you are 16 years old, you must complete a driver education course approved by the Department of Driver Services in order to receive a Class D License. Those individuals who do not complete an approved driver education course must wait until age 17 to become licensed.

To find out more about this law, attend our next free two hour Teen and Parent Driver Education program (PRIDE) which will be held on March 26 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Gainesville State College. If you have a child that is between the ages of 14-16 please call my office for more info or to register.

Because without Driver's Education,



**IT'S NO CLASS D IN GEORGIA**



**"So Easy To Preserve"**

The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension offers an excellent resource for beginner or experienced food preservers in the nationally-known, popular book, *So Easy To Preserve*. This is the **2006** version that contains over 150 tested recipes along with step by step instructions and in-depth information with the latest and safest USDA recommendations. Chapters include Preserving Food, Canning, Pickled Products, Jellied Fruit Products, Freezing and Drying.

The books only costs \$18.00 and can be purchased from our Extension office or ordered online. I would advise everyone to go online as see all the wonderful resources Extension offers through the National Center of Home Food Preservation at [www.uga.edu/nchfp](http://www.uga.edu/nchfp).

## Hall County 4-H: Coming Events



### April 2007

#### **4-H Spring Chicken Festival**

The Hall County 4-H Club will sponsor its' annual "Spring Chicken Festival" on April 21<sup>st</sup> at the Chicopee Woods Agricultural Center. The festival begins at 10:00 a.m. and ends around 2:00p.m. There will be lots of FUN for the entire family. Some of the activities include farm animal petting and grooming, LIVE chicken exhibits, egg candling and breaking, baby chicks, pony rides and more. 5<sup>th</sup> graders can enter a chicken cooking contest. There will be a chicken nugget eating contest, a LEGO building contest, a "Mr. Chicken Legs" contest and a Pet Idol contest for students age 10 – 14 years old. Young ladies ages 5 through 14 years old can enter in the "Little Miss Chick" or the "Miss Chick" Beauty pageant. Call the 4-H office for complete festival details.

#### **4-H Volunteer Leader Recognition**

Volunteer Leaders are the heart of the 4-H Club! The Hall County 4-H Club volunteer leaders will be recognized at an annual 4-H picnic to be held April 24<sup>th</sup> at Longwood Park in Gainesville. There are over 70 active 4-H volunteer leaders in Hall County. Our many thanks to the countless hours they give to the youth involved in 4-H programs.

### May 2007

#### **MEGA Yard Sale**

Is it time for you to empty out your closets and clean out your garage? If so, please join the 4-H Club for it's annual MEGA Yard Sale. The sale will be held May 5<sup>th</sup> at the Hall County Farmers Market on Jesse Jewel Parkway. Spaces are available to rent and the event is attended by hundreds of shoppers. Call for details.

#### **S.A.F.E. Target Challenge Weekend**

Ready, aim, FIRE! The Hall County 4-H BB Rifle Team is ALL FIRED up about Target Challenge Weekend. Eighteen, Hall County 4-H youth, along with six certified coaches and parents will take air and complete at the annual 4-H State BB Rifle Challenge. The team practices weekly at the Chicopee Woods Agricultural Center and participates in a practice match in Jackson County, a qualifying match in Madison County and the state match at Rock Eagle.

### June 2007

#### **Montana and Georgia Exchange**

On June 4, the Hall County 4-H Club welcomes 4-H'ers from the Havre, Montana area. The Montana 4-H'ers will spend a week in Hall County. During their visit, the group will visit the Capitol, the Georgia Aquarium, Stone Mountain Park, they will go tubing in Helen, visit a Gold Mine in Dahlonega and tour the Gainesville/Hall County area. The visit from the Montana 4-H'ers completes an exchange that began last summer when 16, Hall County 4-H'ers traveled to Montana.

#### **Cloverleaf and Junior Summer Camp**

Hall County 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will spend an incredible week at 4-H summer camp during the month of June. One hundred and eighty four students will attend camp at Rock Eagle 4-H Center near Eatonton or camp at Burton 4-H Center/Marine Resources Camp on Tybee Island or Junior Camp held at Fortson 4-H Center on the southwest side of Atlanta.

## Questions About Cooking Ham or Preparing Easter Eggs?

How long can I keep a "country" cured ham? How long do I cook my spiral sliced ham? How long can ham be kept in the refrigerator or freezer? Are my Easter eggs safe to eat after the kids have hid them for an hour? How long can I cook my eggs and keep them in the refrigerator?

Who can you call locally with your food safety questions? Call the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension in Hall County. We can provide research based answers to your questions, as well as other resources. Just call us at 770-535-8290.



## Georgia Master Gardener Day—March 17th



Over the past 28 years, more than 3,500 people across the state have worked for the University of Georgia and never received a paycheck.

As graduates of the UGA College of Agriculture's Master Gardener Program, they all volunteered their time to assist county Extension Service agents.

People who sign up for the program get 40 hours of training from UGA Extension Service faculty. After at least 50 hours of service through their local Georgia Extension office, they're certified as Master Gardeners.

Master Gardener graduates are thoroughly trained by County Extension Agents, UGA Specialists, and other local horticultural experts. While participants gain knowledge they can use in their own landscapes and gardens, the real success of the program is the work and dedication of the volunteers.

They serve their communities through a variety of projects that promote their love of gardening and teach others to protect and preserve the environment. In 2006, Georgia's Master Gardeners answered more than 90,000 phone calls and visited more than 3,500 home gardens.

In 2006, over 2,600 Master Gardeners in Georgia volunteered more than 194,000 hours of their time. Hall County Master Gardeners contributed over 12,000 hours of volunteer service in 2006, valued at over \$215,000.

Hall County volunteers reach out to the community in a number of ways, including 'Ask a Master Gardener' plant clinics, the Lunch & Learn Gardening Series at the Hall County Library, landscaping for a Habitat for Humanity home, landscaping the Hall County Library, and other workshops and seminars.

In particular, the Hall County Master Gardeners recently completed an outstanding educational display garden at the Extension office. The Gold Medal Garden features plant selections from UGA's Georgia Gold Medal Plant Program. It's not only attractive, but interested gardeners can see how the plants perform in a real-world environment.

And, don't forget the Spring Garden Expo at the Chicopee Woods AG Center on Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup> and Saturday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Garden Expo is the biggest two-day plant sale in Georgia featuring over 40 landscape and garden vendors.

As evidenced by their many volunteer activities, Saturday, March 17<sup>th</sup> was declared Georgia Master Gardener Day by Governor Sonny Perdue.



Hall County Commissioners recognized our local volunteers declaring March 17 as Hall County Master Gardener Day at a recent commission meeting.



Landscaping at the Extension office, answering questions, and Garden EXPO!



## Radon Awareness Is Growing

More Georgians are hearing about the dangers of breathing radon-laced air and choosing to do something about it. Are you among them? National Radon Action Month in January brought radon information to Georgians through newspaper and newsletter articles, and radio and TV spots and shows.

In Hall County Ginger Bennett, area radon educator, visited 5<sup>th</sup> grade 4-Hers at Oakwood, Riverbend, Chicopee Woods, and Martin Elementary Schools and 4-H clubs at West Hall and Chestatee Middle Schools to distribute radon information fliers for students to take to their parents. She also encouraged the students to enter the upcoming radon poster contest.



Do you know that radon is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers? Do you know that your home has a 1 in 5 chance of having high radon, putting your family at risk for lung cancer? Choose to be pro-active now and test your home for radon.

You can get a complimentary easy-to-use radon test kit at the Hall County Extension Office today. Get one, test your home, and fix it if you and your family are breathing elevated levels of radon. The only way to know if your family is at risk is to test. Do it now!

If you've already tested your home and gotten high results, you should have a certified radon mitigator install an exhaust system that allows radon gas and other soil gasses to bypass your home before it comes in. You should know, too, that no matter what your test results might be, EPA says you need to re-test every 3-4 years, even if your home has been mitigated for radon. Radon infiltration varies from season to season, and year to year.

Encourage budding artists in your family to enter the Hall County Radon Poster Contest which is just getting under way. Any student from 9 to 14 can enter. For complete contest information, call Ginger Bennett at 770/535-8290.



*The AgriBusiness Committee of the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce  
and the Hall County Extension Service are proud to host the*

## 2007 AgriBusiness Recognition Breakfast

### Wednesday, April 25, 2007

7:30 a.m. Buffet Breakfast

Chicopee Woods Ag Center

Award Recognition will include Friend of Agribusiness... an individual who has consistently promoted agribusiness and agriculture in Hall County. Outstanding Agribusiness... a member of the agribusiness community who demonstrates significant presence and progress in this area. Farmer of the Year... a person who has made a significant contribution to agribusiness and community service. Ag Hall of Fame... this award will be given to two people each year (living or deceased) in recognition of sustained contributions to Hall County agriculture and agribusiness.

Reservations: Doris Beck at the Hall County Extension Service, 770-535-8293.



*UGA Cooperative Extension  
in Hall County*

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**DON'T FORGET THE  
GAINESVILLE GARDEN  
EXPO—APRIL 20-21  
CHICOPEE WOODS  
AG CENTER**

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