

'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

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Farmers' Market Opens May 5th

Imagine a picnic table filled with platters of food made with fresh produce grown in Georgia. It would be an endless smorgasbord of delicious delicacies fit for a king. At that table, folks would agree, Georgians know how to roll out the red carpet with good wholesome food and fine southern hospitality.

A wide variety of fruits and vegetables are grown right here in Northeast Georgia, including: apples, beans, bell peppers, blueberries, peppers, cucumbers, eggplant, grapes, greens, melons, okra, onions, peaches, peas, pecans, pumpkins, snapbeans, strawberries, sweet corn, sweet potatoes, and tomatoes.

While some of these products are sold via wholesale and retail outlets, the Hall County Farmers Market provides local residents a direct line to locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables. The days of operation for the Farmers Market are Tuesday mornings from 6:30 a.m. until sellout and Saturday mornings from 7:00 a.m. until sellout beginning Tuesday, May 5th. The Market is on the corner of East Crescent Drive and Jesse Jewel Parkway, near I-985 at Exit 24.



Also, we're always looking for new farmers and vendors. If you have a large garden and would like to make a few extra bucks, you are invited to join as a market member and sell your produce. You'll be greeted by lots of great customers looking for fresh, home-grown items.

"In Our Own Back Yards"

The Hall County Master Gardeners invite you to **Garden Walk 2009, Saturday, June 13**. Tour the private gardens of five Master Gardeners as well as one of our community projects, Gardens on Green, a garden jointly sponsored by the Master Gardeners and the Hall County School System. Tour the gardens 9 am—4 pm rain or shine. Tickets are \$10 (\$15 day of the tour) and are available at the Extension Office. Visit our website: www.hcmgs.com or call 770-535-8293 for additional information.



"Gardening simply does not allow one to be mentally old, because too many hopes and dreams are yet to be realized". Come dream with us today!



Hall County 4-H News & Events

5th Grade 4-H Educational Programs

Throughout the school year, the 4-H Club staff has visited **86 classrooms** monthly and has provided in-school science enrichment and public speaking programs to over **1,700 5th grade students** in Hall County school system. The 4-H enrichment programs are: Parts of a Cell, What's So Great About Apples, How to Do a 4-H Demonstration, Microorganisms, A Look at the Poultry Business, Electricity, Cross Breeding for Diversity, & Inherited Traits.

4-H BB Rifle Team

The 4-H BB Rifle Team has had a very busy 2009. In January the group hosted a safety program for children who received target sports equipment for Christmas and sponsored a 1st and 2nd Timers Practice Tournament. In February, the annual Cops & Kids Shootout was held with the BB Team members out shooting our local law enforcement officers for the third straight year. The team competes in a practice match in March, a state qualifying match in April and those that qualify will compete in the State 4-H Target Sports Weekend help in early May.

4-H Adult Volunteers Honored

At a picnic in April, the 4-H Club will honor all the 4-H Adult volunteer leaders who help to make the 4-H program GREAT! The group meets annually for good food, great company and a sharing of ideas.

MEGA Yard Sale

The 4-H Exchange Club will hold their annual **Spring MEGA Yard Sale on Saturday, May 2nd at the Farmers Market**. Rent a space to sell your items or come and shop. Spaces are available to rent. Please let us know if you would like to join us for the sale! Call the 4-H office at 770.535.8291.

Horse Show

Hall County 4-H Horse Club members will compete in the State 4-H Horse Show held in Perry the week of June 8th through the 13th. Riders will compete in both Western and English disciplines trying to win a space in the Southern Regional 4-H Horse Championships in Little Rock, Arkansas.



4-H Exchangers toured the world famous **SPAM** museum in Austin, Minnesota during their 2008 visit.

Minnesota Exchange

4-H'ers from Minnesota will visit Hall County on June 9th through the 16th to complete a 4-H Exchange that began last year with the Hall County 4-H'ers visiting the St. James, Minnesota area. The Exchange Club has worked all year to earn the money to tour the Minnesota 4-H'ers around our area. The group will spend a day in Atlanta, a day in Gainesville and a day in the mountains area. The 4-H'ers will tour historical sites and learn about our local businesses.

State 4-H Council

State 4-H Council is the annual meeting of Georgia 4-H'ers. High School 4-H'ers from all over the state will participate in workshops, community service activities, leadership events and have FUN with their 4-H friends.

Managing Credit Wisely Program



TIP: Rather than requesting copies all at once, spread them out across the year to more closely monitor them for accuracy.

Hall County Extension in partnership with the Hall County Library System will be offering a free “Managing Credit Wisely” program on Tuesday, April 21 at the Gainesville Branch on 127 Main Street. The class will be held from 1-2:30 PM. Topics to be covered include managing credit, understanding your credit report and credit score. To sign up for the free program please call 770-535-8290 by April 20.

Free Credit Report

Federal law entitles you to one free credit report from each credit reporting agency. Go to www.annualcreditreport.com or call 1-877-322-8228. By state law, Georgia residents can get a second copy from each agency. Contact the individual credit reporting agencies.



EFNEP Programming News

What’s on the menu? “Food Talk: Featuring Meals in Minutes,” the new Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) free cooking school, offers healthy meal solutions for parents throughout Hall County. Your taste buds will get a treat during each session.

Tadmore Elementary and Smart Starts Day School parents are sampling tasty recipes such as “Turkey and Curly Noodles,” “Creamy Pineapple Pudding” and “Harvest Muffins.” Ninth District Opportunity E.E. Butler Head Start/Pre-K teachers are continuing their sessions as well. They’re learning more about fun and creative snacks for children.

EFNEP, conducted through Cooperative Extension nationwide, is a free program available to schools, clubs, churches and non-profit organizations. We offer tips on fitness, stretching your food dollars, and feeding infants and children.

Adults can look forward to sessions packed with energetic, educational activities. We provide the ingredients and supplies. Special attendance prizes are awarded throughout the sessions. Plus, participants receive a certificate and a special cookbook at their last session.

Upcoming EFNEP sessions are planned at Gainesville Exploratory Academy, North House and Lanier Career Academy. We’re also offering nutrition education to expectant mothers through Amerigroup baby showers and health fairs in Gainesville.

We’re very excited about working with the Georgia Mountain Food Bank. Learn more about the food bank at <http://www.gamountainfoodbank.org>.

EFNEP Summer sessions are available for day care centers and youth groups. Individual, family and neighborhood sessions are available, too.

Don’t miss your chance to discover quick, healthy meals and more. Contact: Sandra Stringer, (770) 535-8293 or stringer@uga.edu.



EFNEP Graduates receive a certificate and a special cookbook at their last session.



Flowery Branch High School students enjoy a healthy treat during a recent EFNEP program.

Poison Helpline & FAQ'S



If you need medical advice, medical information, or have questions about a poisoning or a suspected poisoning, please call 1-800-222-1222 at any time and a Specialist in Poison Information will be happy to help you.

Q: What should I do with the mercury from a broken thermometer so no one gets poisoned?

A: If mercury is spilled and not cleaned up, it vaporizes. These fumes are poisonous if breathed. Any spilled mercury should be cleaned up immediately to prevent vaporization. Call the GPC for advice on cleaning up spilled mercury.

Q: Can mouthwash be dangerous?

A: Yes! All mouthwash contains alcohol in varying amounts. To a young child, even a small amount of alcohol can be deadly. It is possible for a child to drink a large amount of mouthwash because it tastes good. Keep all mouthwash and other hygiene products out of the sight and reach of children in a LOCKED cabinet.

Q: What does a rabid animal look like?

A: Rabid animals may act tame. They may also display strange or unusual behavior. They may act aggressive, avoid food and water, foam at the mouth, or have trouble moving. Stay away from any unknown animals, especially wildlife. Report any unusual acting animal to your county Animal Control.

Test Your Home for Radon Today!

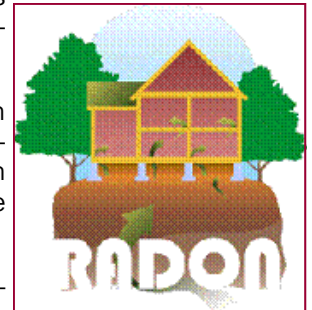
Radon has been in the media a lot in the past few months. It all started with an article in the New York Times last July reporting that granite countertops emit high levels of radon. It wasn't long until other news outlets across the nation picked up the story. Nearly all of the reports contained more misinformation than accurate facts.

Granite is a naturally occurring igneous rock, meaning that it was formed by the cooling of molten rock. It is quarried and processed to produce commercial products such as countertops. It is possible for any granite sample to contain varying concentrations of uranium that can produce radon gas, a source of alpha and beta particles and gamma rays. These alpha particles are what cause damage to the lungs that can lead to lung cancer.

As yet there is no consensus of opinion on how to accurately measure radon emission from granite. EPA does not believe sufficient data exist to conclude that the granite commonly used in countertops significantly increases indoor radon levels.

EPA believes the **principal source of radon in homes is soil gas** that is drawn indoors through a natural suction process. To reduce radon risk you should first test the air in your home to determine the radon level. Homeowners may come by the Hall County Extension Office and pick up a complimentary, short-term radon test kit to test their homes.

It is prudent to limit your family's exposure to radon whenever possible. EPA recommends that indoor air have a radon level as far below 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) of air as possible. If your test results are high your home can be fixed to lower the level of soil gases entering your home. Contact Ginger Bennett, Radon Educator, for more information at 770-535-8290 or bennettg@uga.edu.



Free Food Preservation Class June 17

Hall County Extension will be offering a free preservation class on up-to-date resources for canning, freezing, drying, jelly making and pickling on **Wednesday, June 17** from 9 - 11:00 a.m. at the Extension office. This two hour class will provide you with basic resources as well as information on food preservation brochures, books, websites, online courses and DVD's. Everyone attending will receive a packet of information.

So whether you are a beginner or experience food preserver come join us. Please call by June 16 to register at 770-535-8290.



The 2009 Master Garden Class wraps up March 26 with 23 enthusiastic students. The Hall County Master Gardeners and Hall County Extension welcome them into the greatest Master Gardening group in Georgia!

The Spring Lunch & Learn series begins April 1 at the Spout Springs Library and April 8 at the Gainesville Main Library. Topics include Tomato Gardening, Healthy Houseplants, Sustainable Gardening & Container Gardening. All classes are taught by Hall County Master Gardeners. Please visit www.hallcounty.org/extension for a printable brochure. The Lunch & Learn series is sponsored by the Hall County Library System and Hall County Extension.

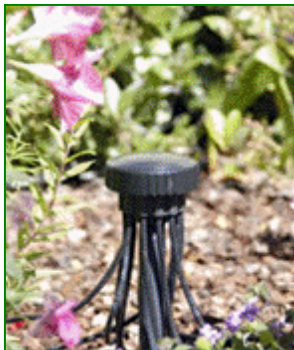
Be sure to catch the greatest 2 day plant sale in the state—the Spring Garden Expo is April 10 & 11 at the Chicopee Woods Ag Center: www.hallcounty.org/parks.



For more information, visit www.hcmgs.com

Use of Drip Irrigation and Soaker Hoses Now Allowed

Under a March 3, 2009 order issued by the Director of the Environmental Protection Division (EPD), outdoor watering using drip irrigation and soaker hoses will be allowed in the 55 county area currently under drought response Level IV outdoor watering restrictions. Hall is still a drought Level IV county.



Drip irrigation is a highly efficient irrigation system that slowly waters the soil directly around the base of individual plants through small flexible pipes and emitters. This minimizes evaporative losses, pooling, runoff and wetting of plant foliage. Drip irrigation may be part of a larger automated irrigation system or may operate as a standalone system connected to a typical outdoor faucet.

According to the Alliance for Water Efficiency, drip irrigation is arguably the most efficient method of watering. While the efficiency of traditional sprayhead or sprinkler irrigation system is typically only about 50 percent, the efficiency of a well-designed and operated drip irrigation system can reach nearly 100 percent!

Soaker hoses are a less expensive alternative to drip irrigation that are also much more efficient than traditional sprayhead or sprinkler irrigation systems. Soaker hoses are connected to a typical outdoor faucet and also deliver water slowly and directly to the soil around the base of individual plants.

The Saving Water Partnership reports that, when used correctly, soaker hoses can help maintain your landscape without wasting water. Remember these tips when considering where and when to use a soaker hose:

- **Find the right site** – soaker hoses are best in garden beds.
- **Start at the faucet** – always connect a backflow preventer & timer to the faucet.
- **Too long is wrong** – don't use more than 100 feet of soaker hose.
- **Keep it level** – for uniform water delivery, place soaker on level ground
- **Use correct spacing** – don't put lines too close together or too close to the plant.
- **Slow the flow** – turn on faucet so hose seeps, but does not spray.



Drip Irrigation and Soaker Hoses Resources

Best Management Practices for Landscape Irrigation - <http://pubs.caes.uga.edu/caespubs/pubcd/B1329/B1329.htm>

Introduction to Drip Irrigation - http://www.allianceforwaterefficiency.org/Drip_and_Micro-Spray_Irrigation_Introduction.aspx

Benefits and Tips on Soaker Hoses – <http://www.savingwater.org/docs/successwithsoakerhoses.pdf>

Instructions on Installing Drip and Soaker Irrigation Systems:

<http://www.savingwater.org/docs/Dripfactsheet.pdf>

<http://www.irrigationtutorials.com/dripguide.htm>



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**SPRING GARDEN EXPO
APRIL 10 & 11
CHICOPEE AG CENTER**

**GREATEST TWO DAY
PLANT SALE IN
GEORGIA!**

- Billy Skaggs, County Extension Coordinator , ANR Agent
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