

Healthy Georgia Connections

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NEWS YOU CAN USE FROM **UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA** COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

EXTENSION FEATURE

Virtual team meetings: creating success in cyberspace

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Online work is the new normal for the foreseeable future. The impact of the global pandemic has displaced office workers, closed schools and shut down public-facing businesses in order to keep social distancing measures in place.

Research suggests that there are three behaviors that will boost your ability to facilitate your meeting within your team: fostering trust, encouraging open dialogue, and clarifying goals and guidelines.

An estimated 50 million American workers teleworked this spring while they tried to manage school-age children, a myriad of web conferences and virtual interactions with colleagues.

A recent survey confirms that email has officially become the main method of communication in the workplace and that more than 65% of employers plan to keep some form of remote operations plan for their workforce even after health officials lift social distancing guidelines.

Research tells us that virtual teams are hard to facilitate well and rated themselves lower than face-to-face teams



when measured on factors such as achieving goals, self-perception of success, expectations of participants and quality of communication.

While workers tend to be more productive when working from home, they also have a greater chance of feeling isolated. Leaders must intentionally communicate with teleworkers to build trust and understanding of their work to help them feel connected and that they are a part of the larger virtual community.

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AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES**Fall tasks to keep your lawn in top condition**

Timothy Daly, Agriculture and Natural Resources agent, Gwinnett County

To ensure that your lawn stays healthy and attractive as the hot weather gives way to autumn's cooler temperatures, it's important to tackle a few tasks.

Lawns consisting of warm-season grasses, such as Bermuda, zoysia, centipede and St. Augustine, will start to turn brown and go dormant in October and November. Avoid fertilizer applications containing high amounts of nitrogen, as doing so could delay dormancy and make the grass more susceptible to cold damage. It can also increase the risk of the lawn developing certain fungal diseases. Before applying fertilizer, have your soil tested through UGA Extension.

Continue to cut warm-season grasses as they slow in growth. As the grasses become dormant later in the fall, lower the blade one-half inch. This will give the grass a cleaner appearance for the winter.

Rainfall and supplemental watering should total 1 inch per week until the grass begins to turn brown. During the winter, rainfall will supply the necessary amounts of water the grass needs.

Sometimes warm-season grass is overseeded with ryegrass, which grows during the colder weather, keeping it green during the winter. You may observe this practice on athletic fields and golf courses. The major drawback is that the ryegrass can interfere with the greening-up process the following spring by competing for nutrients, water and light. Turfgrass managers scalp the grass close to the ground, which will allow for air and light to reach the grass blades as they start to grow while stunting the growth of the ryegrass.

Cool-season grasses thrive in cooler weather, and the heat of the summer stresses them.

If fescue lawns have thinned out in areas due to the summer temperatures, the cooler months of September to mid-October are the best times to overseed the lawn.



The seed application rate is 5 to 7 pounds per 1,000 square feet. Two to three weeks before seeding, apply Roundup according to the label directions to control unwanted weeds in the lawn in addition to any Bermuda grass that has crept into it. In bare spots, use a rake for scratching the soil to allow for good seed-to-soil contact.

Cut the lawn one-half inch lower to reduce the need for mowing. Apply water as required to keep the soil evenly moist while the seed is germinating. Wait two to three weeks after overseeding to mow to ensure the grass is strong enough to handle it.

September is also the time to apply a pre-emergent herbicide to control winter weeds such as annual bluegrass, henbit and chickweed. It kills the weeds as they are germinating unlike a postemergent herbicide, which controls existing weeds. The chemicals will not prevent all weeds but can reduce their population.

If you are overseeding your fescue lawn, do not apply pre-emergent herbicides, as the chemicals will inhibit seed germination. As with all pesticides, follow all label directions when using.

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES**Family mealtimes pay dividends in learning and development****Sarah T. Henes***Assistant professor, Extension nutrition specialist and EFNEP state coordinator, College of Family and Consumer Sciences*

Eating together as a family not only has a positive effect on your child's nutrition, but it also may improve their vocabulary, test scores and overall confidence. These are just a few of the many reasons that registered dietitians and pediatricians encourage making family meals a priority.

Eating a meal each day with your child gives you, as a caregiver, a chance to be a role model for eating more fruits and veggies and for overall healthy eating.

In today's busy world, and at a time when parents may be working from home and children may be attending school from home, it may be more difficult to keep a regular eating schedule.

It can be even more challenging for families who have hectic schedules to make time to cook or figure out when everyone can eat together, let alone think about what makes a healthy meal.

Eating on a budget may also be a worry for many families. It can often seem easier for each family member to eat on the go or on their own.



If any of this sounds like your family, it may be helpful to know that your community likely has several resources for helping you learn ways to save time and money while feeding your family nutritious meals.

One nutrition education program, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), is an eight-week nutrition series created especially for families with limited food resources.

This federally funded program is offered in 54 counties throughout Georgia and is delivered through the UGA Extension system. EFNEP teaches parents ways to make quick healthy recipes for their family. UGA's EFNEP nutrition educators also teach how to stretch your food dollars and create a plan for family meals.

Additional nutrition resources like the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#) and [Kids Eat Right](#) have great tips for ways to make [family mealtimes](#) an important part of each day.

For more information and to learn if UGA EFNEP is offered in your county, see our website at ugaefnep.org. For questions or additional information on UGA EFNEP, contact me at sarah.henes@uga.edu.



4-H YOUTH**Georgia 4-H launches virtual series for the fall***Cris deRevere, 4-H public relations coordinator, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences*

As students return to school in a variety of formats, Georgia 4-H will be continuing virtual programs with the “[Blast Off with Georgia 4-H](#)” series into the fall. This will be a continuation of “[Set Sail with Georgia 4-H](#),” a collection of online lessons offered around the state during the summer.

“Blast Off with Georgia 4-H” will provide youth with entertaining and educational lessons and adventures. The activities cover a variety of topics including agriculture, STEM, leadership and healthy living. These virtual programs are offered in a variety of formats, such as livestream sessions, video series and solo activities. The series is updated weekly with new offerings that are managed by local UGA Extension agents.

“Some of my favorite 4-H experiences as a kid include the incredible day trips and workshops offered by my local 4-H program,” said Jason Estep, UGA Extension 4-H specialist. “Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 crisis, our 4-H professionals have continued to create and offer innovative programs that are every bit as engaging and unforgettable as the ones I experienced as a kid — they’ve just been moved to a virtual format. We are proud to showcase and open some of these virtual programs to a statewide audience.”

This fall’s series is a space-themed collection of statewide activities for youth of all ages. Participants can select a track, or “mission,” based on grade level. The Cloverbud Perseverance Mission is designed for youth in kindergarten through third grade. These activities, or “expeditions,” are interactive and entertaining. The Cloverleaf InSight Mission, for youth in fourth through sixth grades, includes fun and hands-on expeditions. The Junior Odyssey Mission includes a variety of experiences for youth in grades seven and eight. Youth in grades nine through 12 will enjoy the Senior Voyager Mission, filled with exciting, practical and even tasty experiences.

“Georgia 4-H teaches youth to adapt to change and find opportunity in challenges,” Estep said. “While the pandemic has restricted our ability to interact in person with the youth we serve, virtual programming allows us to maintain the youth-adult partnerships that are vital to positive youth development. It’s also helping us reach some entirely new audiences.”

Registration is free and the programs are open to the public. To start your educational mission, visit georgia4h.org/blastoff.

Virtual Team Meetings, *continued from page 1*

Schedule meetings only with a purpose in mind. Use your online meeting time as an opportunity to discuss issues and leverage solutions. Build an agenda in advance and send it out to all participants so that everyone can prepare and come to the meeting with their ideas.

Having a standing meeting where employees go around and give an update of their work can give their manager an idea of what is happening with workflow, but without a stated purpose, it does not feel as productive to the team as meetings that create movement. Be clear on the outcome that the meeting should achieve and create an agenda that will get your team there.

When working in cyberspace, team leaders must be intentional about creating an environment in which their team can thrive. Key aspects of in-person group facilitation can get lost with participants if they are just duplicated virtually.

Research suggests that these three behaviors will boost your ability to facilitate your meeting within your team: fostering trust, encouraging open dialogue, and clarifying goals and guidelines.

Because employees are likely to spend some of their time teleworking until the pandemic lifts, leaders must consider how to effectively engage employees and lead their teams online. We believe leaders can create a virtual meeting environment where participants feel meaningfully engaged and team members still contribute at their highest level.

EXTENSION PUBLICATIONS

Time Management: 10 Strategies for Better Time Management
 Learn 10 strategies to better manage your time, including how to spend your time, set priorities, use planning tools, get organized, schedule, delegate, and avoid procrastinating, wasting time, and multitasking: uga.edu/5ba.

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AG PRODUCTS CONNECTION

In collaboration with Georgia Grown and other industry partners, UGA Extension is using its network of county offices to connect agricultural producers with consumers looking for fresh, Georgia-grown products. Visit uga.edu/508 for more.



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