

UGA Extension Meriwether County ANR E-Newsletter

June 9, 2017

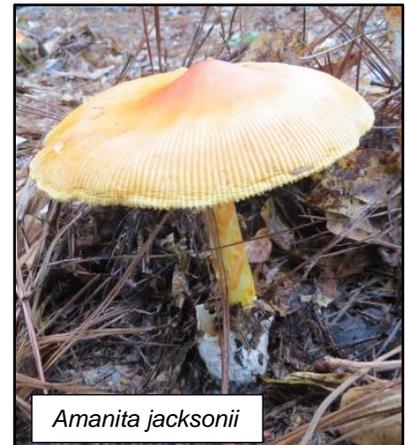
FUNGI

The Amazing World of Mushrooms

Outside of the mushrooms that you buy in the grocery store or get served up on a pizza or in a salad what do you know about them? Mushrooms often get a bad rap in the landscape but our world would be very different without them. Yes, some mushrooms are the fruiting bodies of pathogens that attack plants, such as *Armillaria*, but many more are the fruiting bodies of fungi that are beneficial to plants. Most of those “toadstools” that you see right now popping up under or near trees are mycorrhizal. Mycorrhizal fungi form a symbiotic (mutually beneficial) relationship with the roots of plants. The fungi can help plants by accessing and providing water and, perhaps more importantly, phosphorous and nitrogen. In return the plant supplies the fungi with carbohydrates created during photosynthesis. Ectomycorrhizal fungi have the most commonly seen mushrooms found above ground. The amanitas are a large group of mushrooms that are ectomycorrhizal and can commonly be found in the southeastern mixed-forest community dominated by oaks, hickories and pines. The *Amanita cokeri* was seen on the Pine Mountain Trail last weekend. The beautiful and colorful *Amanita jacksonii* was one of a group seen under pines at the home of Sherry Carruthers this week—thanks Sherry!



Amanita cokeri



Amanita jacksonii

Another critical service that mushrooms perform is the breakdown of leaves and woody tissue especially tough lignin. Imagine if all the trees in the world and their leaves did not decompose when they fell or died! Thanks partly to fungi we don't live in such a world. Although mushrooms do cool things for our environment my real love affair with mushrooms is based on the incredible range of colors and forms that they take. Due to the recent rain, my latest hike on the Pine Mountain Trail presented me with a specimen of one of my favorites. The coral fungi look just like their common name suggests and are both beautiful and beneficial decomposers.



Ramaria sp.

FABULOUS GARDENERS in MERIWETHER

Last year was a tough year for vegetable gardens. I know many of you quit gardening when the drought hit because you were afraid of running your wells dry. So far this year watering hasn't been a problem and I hope I get the chance to visit more gardeners. This week I had the pleasure of visiting with **Charlie and Don Johnson** near Manchester. They practice a very smart gardening technique called crop rotation. Every year plants are moved around based on taxonomic relationships or nutrient needs. For example, solenaceous plants such as tomatoes, peppers, eggplant and Irish potatoes should not be planted behind each other-move them to a new location in the garden every year. Corn needs lots of nitrogen so it is a good crop to plant behind the bean/pea crops that fix nitrogen in the soil. Charlie works at correctly identifying pests in the garden. She was able to point out squash bug eggs (see Pest of the Week below) on her squash leaves which she looks for regularly and removes.

Charlie and Don are so typical of most of the gardeners I've met over the years-they love to share the bounty of their garden with family, friends and neighbors. Charlie also practices the wonderful art of canning. She puts up all kinds of pickles, even sauerkraut and sweet jalapenos-and all of it delicious! I certainly left their place blessed with an arm full of food to enjoy for many days to come.



PEST OF THE WEEK

Squash Bug, *Anasa tristis*

I saw this pest in a number of gardens this week, not just the Johnson's. The image on the right shows a female in the process of laying eggs. Often the eggs will be on the underside of the leaf near veins, not just on the upper surface, so be sure to check there too when scouting. The simplest way to remove the eggs is to squash them (pun intended!). Adult squash bugs are difficult to manage with insecticides so time your applications when nymphs (immatures) are present. Nymphs will go through 5 stages of



development called instars before becoming winged adults. They will shed their exoskeleton and grow a new one. See the image on the right of a very early instar; later instars will be a pale gray color. Squash bugs can damage plants directly with their feeding but the worst damage is caused by vectoring the toxic bacterium *Serratia marcescens*. While feeding they inject the bacterium, which is in their saliva, into the plant tissue. This bacterium can cause whole plants to wilt, blacken and die especially when there is a high number of squash bugs. Do your best to not let this happen by scouting plants daily, squashing eggs and making insecticide applications before nymphs become adults. Another practice to manage squash bugs is placing boards near plants where adults and nymphs will congregate overnight. Destroy them by squashing them early in the morning before they disperse. Hubbard squash has been used successfully in some studies as a “trap” crop. The goal in using trap crops is to get the pest to go to those plants instead of the “real” crop. When on the trap crop they can be manually destroyed or sprayed with an insecticide. Any damage by the pest and use of insecticides will be limited to the trap crop. In most studies using Hubbard, squash bugs still got on the other squash varieties, especially yellow squash. So if you try this technique be sure to still scout your other squash plants.



Regarding the most commonly used insecticides in the home vegetable garden, sevin and pyrethroids, new labeling of many of these products does not allow their use while plants are flowering. That labeling includes **any** nearby flowering plants, even weeds. The labeling is meant to protect pollinators. So always be sure to read all pesticide labels carefully before buying or using and then follow the instructions!

GROWING EXCEPTIONAL TOMATOES

Learn About Saving Seeds, Heirloom Varieties, Tomato Culture, Diseases and Pests

Rena Abernathy, heirloom tomato aficionado, has been saving seeds for over twenty years and grows around 150 varieties of tomatoes. She will be talking about the best heirloom tomato varieties to grow and how to save seeds for next year's garden. Susan James, the ANR Agent for Meriwether County, will discuss best practices for growing healthy tomato plants and the most common diseases and pests of tomatoes. In SC she worked with both conventional and organic commercial producers of tomatoes.

Saturday June 24 9:30-1:30 AM
Thalia Farms and Apiary
3005 County Line Church Road
Warm Springs, GA 31830

**Tomato Bounty from
Rena's Garden**



Cost is \$5.00 for refreshments and handouts which will include seed saving directions, tomato culture, disease and pest fact sheets, favorite recipes (which we will sample). To register please call 706-672-4235.

BEEKEEPING

Introduction to Beekeeping

Jim Quick, Research Professional in the UGA Entomology Department and Master Beekeeper, will be giving an overview of the art and science of beekeeping on Tuesday, August 1 at 7:00 PM. I am hoping Jim's talk will be the first of many. The location is still to be determined but if you are interested please go ahead and let me know.



FORAGES

GrassMasters

Preparation for the classes has been finalized. They will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 on Thursday evenings (see dates and topics below) at the Troup County Agricultural Center at 21 Vulcan Materials Rd in LaGrange.

- August 31: Introduction to Forages
- September 7: Fertilization of Perennial Grasses
- September 21: Pest Management
- September 28: Hay Production
- October 5: Understanding Forage Quality
- October 19: Grazing Management and Planning

The program focuses on the forages proven best for northern Georgia and strategies for grazing, maintaining soil fertility and health, and managing pests. Staff members of the UGA Forage Team and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service have teamed up to teach the classes.

The cost for all seven classes is \$25, which covers the cost of an educational handbook and refreshments. Participants must pre-register by contacting the Harris County Extension office at 706-628-4824 before August 25.

FORESTRY

The **UGA Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources** Continuing Education Program is hosting a Forest Herbicide Workshop on July 18-19 in the Tift County Extension office at 1468 Carpenter Road South, Tifton GA.

Continuing Education Credits

- Continuing Forestry Education (CFE) Hours - Category 1 (applied for)
- Continuing Logger Education (CLE) Hours - Environment (applied for)
- Pesticide Applicator Certifications (applied for)

Topics to be covered:

- Forest herbicide safety and application
- Selection of forest herbicide adjuvants
- Use of herbicides for aquatic vegetation control
- Integration of herbicide use for site preparation, herbaceous weed control and woody release
- Control of invasive exotic plants in forest stands

The fee for this course is \$210, which includes lunch, refreshment breaks, and instructional materials. There is a \$25 discount for fees paid and postmarked by July 5, 2017. To register please visit: <http://conted.warnell.uga.edu>

CATTLE

Meriwether County Cattlemen’s Association

We will be serving barbecue brisket prepared by Master Grillers Brian McDaniel and Emmett Collins at the Peaches in the Pines Festival on June 10 and 11 and participating in the Barbecue Competition. A \$10.00 plate will have brisket, Pat’s potato salad and Brian’s peach baked beans. Samples will be given out for the competition. Please stop by to see us!

7th Annual Georgia Cattlemen’s Association Summer Conference

The 7th annual GCA Summer Conference will be held in beautiful Hiawassee, Georgia on July 28-29 at the Ridges Resort & Marina. Special speakers for the event will be Lieutenant Governor Casey Cagle who will talk about his time serving as Lieutenant Governor and his vision for Georgia and its largest industry, agriculture and Bo Ryles, Sr. Director of the National 4-H Council who will speak on being a leader in agriculture and how we can take our experiences and impact others in a positive way.

For more information, schedule of events and to register please visit:

<https://www.georgiacattlemen.org/summerconferenceregistration.aspx>

LOCAL MARKET

Local peaches, strawberries, onions and other vegetables are available

Fitzgerald Fruit Farms (Greenville and Woodbury area)

The retail shed at 3355 Imlac Road is open and strawberry ice cream is available as well as locally grown strawberries, peaches, peppers, squash, tomatoes, onions and more. <https://www.fitzgeraldfruitfarms.com/> or <https://www.facebook.com/thepeachshed/>

Strickland Brothers Farm (Durand and Pine Mountain area)

The strawberry and vegetable field is at the crossroad of Chipley Hwy and John Wallace Road. They are open Mon-Sat. Terry has locally grown green beans, strawberries, yellow squash, Yukon Gold and Red Pontiac potatoes and onions. You can contact Terry at 706-881-2414 or you can visit: <https://www.facebook.com/Stricklands-Garden-233167170487274/>

HAPPENING THIS WEEKEND!

Peaches in the Pines at Lake Meriwether

June 10, 2017 9:00 am-6:00 pm

June 11, 2017 10:00 am-5:00 pm

Celebrate the 3rd Annual Arts and Crafts Festival with an old-fashioned country flavor. Featuring local artists, live entertainment, food vendors, kids' activities, Georgia grown produce, homemade peach ice cream, barbecue competition, kid's activities, music, and much more. This year's Peaches in the Pines festival also coincides with the Disc Golf Tournament being held at Lake Meriwether.

The Meriwether County Cattlemen's Association will be taking part in the Barbecue Competition. Come by and try the barbecue brisket!

Meriwether Miles Bike Ride

The inaugural Meriwether Miles Bike Ride will take place on Saturday, June 10, 2017. Choose from one of three routes from easy to challenging, all going through the rolling hills and on the quiet back roads of Meriwether County. One route leads to the Red Oak Covered Bridge, the oldest and longest covered bridge in Georgia. Other routes lead past peach orchards and picturesque farms.

Distance; Choose from a 15, 26 or 62 mile ride (complete with rest stops spread throughout). Each of these treks will begin and end at Lake Meriwether, where the Peaches in the Pines Festival will be taking place.

Cost: \$25 on race day. Riders will be treated to energizing snacks, drinks and water along the ride. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to: "Honoring our Veterans."

For more information please contact Gail Coffee at 770-027-2847 or email:

meriwetherchamber@windstream.net
