Winterizing Trees
By Karol Kelly, ANR Agent

Winter is a difficult time for trees. They must stand in the face of drying and cold winds. Food reserves must be carefully conserved for the coming needs of spring. Water continues to be lost from the tree. Any creature needing a meal chews and nibbles on the resting buds and twigs. Circumstances generated by the winter season can challenge the health of a tree.

Little things can make a big difference for your trees to survive and thrive over a long winter. Consider these recommendations from Dr. Kim Coder, professor at UGA’s Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources:

- Remove or correct structural faults and deadwood that are clearly visible. Try to make small pruning cuts that minimize the exposure of the central heartwood core on branches.
- Properly prune branches that will touch the ground when loaded with ice and snow. Foliage and branches that are in contact with soil can invite undesirable pests and problems. (See http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension/whitfield/anr/documents/PruneShadeTrees.pdf for more information)
- Remove damaged and declining twigs, branches, and bark. Do not leave food and shelter for pests during the winter.
- Remove any new sprouts that have grown at the tree base, or along stems and branches.
- Spread a thin layer of composted organic mulch to blanket the soil under the tree. Cover an area at least as large as the branch spread.

Continued on page 2
Dear Friends,

It is with the heaviest heart that I write this to inform you that my last day with Bibb County 4-H was on November 22nd. This decision has not been an easy one to make. In fact, it has been the hardest decision of my professional career. For over a year I have driven an hour one way to work each day. I have never complained about this, but with my recent engagement and family needing me closer to home, I hope you all can understand. My whole heart and soul is and has been invested in Bibb County 4-H and it made the commute to work each day easier, but the time has come for me to evaluate and focus on my personal life.

My hope is that I’ve left Bibb County 4-H in a place where it can continue to shine. My hope is that love, joy, and compassion continue to be the points of focus in Bibb County 4-H. I hope you’ve learned that 4-H is more rewarding with a little bit of hard work and whole lot of fun. I hope you continue to push yourselves even in my absence. I hope you continue to love one another and care for one another. And I hope you will be kind and patient during this transition.

Life is so short and I am thankful that our paths crossed in this life. I cannot wait to see what Bibb County 4-H continues to accomplish in the future. I expect to hear about your victories both in and out of 4-H and I hope you all continue to be one of the biggest parts of my life. You all mean so very much to me and I hope you know that.

This is not goodbye, but a see you real soon. Stay sweet, Bibb County and keep doing BIG, BIG things. Go, Bibb Go!

Kari Mateling
Bibb County 4-H Agent

Winterizing Trees, continued from page 1

Properly wrap new trees that have not developed a corky bark and could be easily damaged. Mechanical injury from the environment, including chewing and rubbing by animals, must be prevented.

Since our area experiences moderate winters where soils are cool but not frozen, watering may be necessary when there has been little precipitation.

Tree roots need well-aerated soils for proper water and air penetration. Plan another area for driving over and parking vehicles. Saturated and dense soil can suffocate roots.

Trees are investments, so for the sake of your tree’s quality of life and your own, take a few minutes to winterize your tree. Wonderful springs come from well-tended winters.
As cooler temperatures prevail and we begin a dizzying array of activities for the holiday season, we must remember to take care of ourselves. After all, it’s the best gift you can give to your loved ones.

Macon-Bibb County Cooperative Extension offers the following tips to begin your self-care regimen:

* **Choose Healthy** - I am looking forward to a few of my Mother-in-Law’s comfort dishes. They will be my reward for choosing healthier options in the weeks and months leading up to the feast.

* **Keep moving** - The stress will be at an all-time high this season. Combat stress by engaging in physical activity for the recommended 30 minutes 3-5 times per week at a moderate rate (talking but not singing).

* **Have a drink** - You may imbibe in a few adult beverages but continue to drink your water. There are numerous benefits to drinking plenty of water. Least of all, it helps the body to process important nutrients and macronutrients.

* **#PortionWatch** - Hopefully, a part of this season will be dedicated to football, binge watching our favorites, and SNACKS! Unfortunately, since we are preoccupied watching TV we eat more than we should. Don’t eat out of the family size bag of snacks. Pour smaller portions into smaller snack plates or bowls. Finally, make trips to get snacks. This will force you to move.

* **Unplug** - Cell phones, tablets, and computers have become second nature for us. Unplugging at least an hour or two prior to going to bed can aid you in falling asleep faster and having a deeper sleep. Your body will thank you.

* **Enjoy the moment** – It may be tempting to plan everything down to the second; however, our loved ones do not care if the plates and forks do not match or if the garland is slightly crooked. Often times we put additional stress on ourselves when our loved ones only want our love and attention. Be in the Moment!

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**Skillet Mac & Cheese**

Adding vegetables to foods kids usually like, such as macaroni and cheese, is a good way to help them learn to like vegetables.

Using dry mustard instead of salt in this recipe adds flavor without adding salt.

When buying yogurt, be sure to get nonfat or low-fat yogurt. Regular yogurt has over 10 times more fat than nonfat yogurt.

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- ½ cups water
- ¼ cup minced onion
- 2 tablespoons minced green bell pepper
- 1 cup chopped broccoli florets
- ½ cup nonfat plain yogurt
- ½ cup low-fat sour cream
- 2 cups shredded 2% cheddar cheese
- 2 cups uncooked macaroni

**STOVETOP:**

1. In medium nonstick skillet, heat oil on medium heat.
2. Add dry mustard and blend.
3. Add onion and green bell pepper; Cook until tender.
4. Add 1½ cups water. Cover and bring to a boil.
5. Add uncooked macaroni.
6. Reduce heat to medium, cover and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes or until macaroni is tender. Stir occasionally.
7. Add broccoli.
8. Stir yogurt and sour cream into skillet with cooked macaroni and broccoli, mixing well.
9. Cover, reduce heat to low, and simmer for 5 minutes.
10. Remove lid, top macaroni mixture with shredded cheese.
11. Remove lid and allow cheese to melt for 5 minutes.

**MICROWAVE:**

1. Add oil, dry mustard, onion, and green bell pepper to a medium, microwave safe bowl. Mix well. Microwave 2 minutes. Vegetables should be tender.
2. Add uncooked macaroni and water. Microwave 4 minutes and then stir. Microwave again for 4 minutes. Noodles should be tender.
3. Add broccoli and stir. Cook 2 minutes.
4. Add yogurt and sour cream and 1 cup cheese to cooked macaroni and broccoli, mixing well. Microwave 2 minutes.
5. Stir and then top macaroni mixture with remaining cheese. Microwave 2 minutes, until cheese melts.
The Branches of Our Extension Office

As a new year approaches, the current one ending, We share the message our tree is sending. There’s a treasure right here within our community Serving all with a wide range of great opportunity!

Bibb County Extension represented here Offers far more than decorative holiday cheer! Its roots deeply seated in research and knowledge, Its branches inform like a free local college!

Lots of info and offerings—but please don’t get nervous! The ornaments here help explain every service. In the heart of Georgia, the University Is just one of the features you’ll see on this tree.

4-H clovers sparkle like each girl and boy Developing life skills and bonding with joy. EFNEP and FACS keep the learning alive While nourishing families and helping them thrive.

ANR Master Gardeners help out in each county So homeowners’ gardens thrive richly with bounty. Please consider these resources delectable fruits You will reap through Extension’s branches and roots!

By Becca Gay

Bibb County Master Gardener Extension Volunteers Allison Griffin, Carol Woodbery, Becca Gay, Dawn Nash, and Jill & Wes Peavy designed this tree for the “Festival of Trees” to give museum patrons a visual picture of what Extension does.

FESTIVAL TREES