Home Maintenance

By Keishon Thomas, FACS Agent

Just like your personal health, your home’s health will decline without regular care and maintenance. Maintaining your HVAC system will help to extend the life of the system as well as avoid costly emergency repairs. With a few simple steps you can keep your HVAC system in tip top shape. Use the following tips as a guideline for your fall home maintenance evaluation.

◊ Replace air filters (this may need to be done more frequently depending on your HVAC system).

◊ Check for drafts and leaks. Check the caulking and window-stripping on your windows and doors and replace anything that is broken or cracked.

◊ Hire a professional to tune-up the heating and cooling system.

◊ Cover or remove any window air-conditioning units; seal openings.

◊ Inspect all of the heating vents and registers for any obstructions and vacuum out all of the summer dust.

◊ Check the fireplace damper and clean the chimney (you may opt to hire a professional to do this).
Each year, the Georgia Master Gardener Association, a nonprofit group comprised of Master Gardener Extension Volunteers from across the state, hosts a statewide conference. This year’s conference is scheduled for Saturday, October 19 here in Central Georgia at the Museum of Aviation Century of Flight Building in Warner Robins. For the first time, it will be open to the public.

The speaker line-up features some of the best forestry and horticulture speakers that the Southeast has to offer. University of Georgia’s Dr. Michael Dirr and Dr. Kim Coder will lead the event followed by Mary Lynne Beckley, Executive Director Georgia Tree Council, The Nichols Brothers, owners of Mr. Maple Nursery, and Mark Maher of Southern Living, who will share new plant introductions.

Besides the phenomenal speaker line-up, there will be a silent auction, garden market, and door prizes. On Friday, you can join Bibb County Master Gardeners for a tour of the Native Plant Garden at the Museum of Arts and Sciences and drop by a meet-and-greet that evening. Other free garden tours will take place on the Sunday following the conference. For information on the conference and to register, visit: https://www.georgiamastergardeners.org

**Ask the Agent**

**Question:** Here is a picture of elm leaves with bug infestation. The bugs eat the leaves in lace-like patterns then the leaves fall from the tree. This is the second summer this has happened. Last summer all the leaves fell off tree, then tree sprouted new leaves before frost. Now it is happening again.

**Answer:** Those appear to be elm leaf beetles. A recent post from the Georgia Forestry Commission noted that these are particularly problematic this year. I don’t think they will cause your trees to die – but, if this is your second year with the problem, I understand why you might be looking for a control option. Next spring/early summer, try something like Bayer Advanced Tree and Shrub Insect Control or a similar product containing imidacloprid. This is a systemic insecticide, meaning it can be applied to the ground around the roots and it will move throughout the tree.

**Master Gardener Volunteers**

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Training classes will be held on Thursdays from February 6-April 30.

Contact us for more information or to receive an application this fall:
478-751-6338 or kensley@uga.edu
State 4-H Congress  
*By Kari Mateling, 4-H Agent*

After a year of hard work and dedication, close to 150 Georgia 4-H youths were named state winners at the Georgia 4-H State Congress held July 23-26, at the Crowne Plaza Atlanta Perimeter at Ravinia in Atlanta.

Georgia 4-H members earn an invitation to compete at State Congress through hard work and dedication. At the beginning of the year, students select an area of study, give an oral presentation before judges at their respective District Project Achievement (DPA), and participate in service and leadership events in their communities throughout the year.

The regional first place winners compete at State Congress in a variety of categories including history, horses, performing arts, and public speaking. Each student gives a 12-minute presentation before expert judges. The judges then interview students about their portfolios, which detail their research, leadership, and service projects.

Arch Smith, state leader for the Georgia 4-H program, calls State 4-H Congress "the annual capstone event" of the program’s year.

"'Learn by Doing' is a slogan of 4-H, and Georgia 4-H members who have been involved in the Project Achievement process competed for the honor of being named state winner last week," he said. "We recognized nearly 150 state winners at the annual banquet in 4-H educational programs, from agriculture to performing arts, to food preparation and healthy living. We are proud of these young people who have reached the highest level of attainment of over 238,000 4-H participants during the program year that ended in July."

Bibb County 4-H was represented by seven high school students at State Congress. Larry Howard achieved Master 4-H status in the Food for Fitness category after four years of hard work!
UPCOMING DATES

September 2—Bibb Extension closed for Labor Day
September 5—October 31 (Thursdays) Georgia Master Naturalist Program
September 18—Free Fall Garden Program, Washington Library Call 478-744-0800 to register
September 21—Master Gardener Fall Plant Sale
September 30—Registration deadline for ServSafe® Training Scheduled for October 15-16
October 5—Mobile Rabies Clinic
September 9—4-H Back-to-School Bash for grades 4-8
September 16—4-H High School Back-to-School Bash
October 1-31—4-H Pecan Sale
October 4-13—Georgia National Fair
October 16—Free Garden Program, “Growing Bulbs.” Call Washington Library 478-744-0800 to register
October 19—Garden Conference
November 1-30—Apply for Master Gardener training classes
November 22-23—Bibb Extension closed for Thanksgiving

Crunchy Apple Salad

[Makes 3 servings. 1 cup each]

INGREDIENTS:
1 cup pineapple juice
2 cups diced apples*
1/4 cup chopped pecans
1/4 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt

*about 2 medium Red Delicious or similar apples

DIRECTIONS:
1. Pour pineapple juice into medium bowl.
2. Place diced apples in pineapple juice. Toss to coat.
3. Remove apples from pineapple juice with slotted spoon and place in medium bowl.
4. Add chopped pecans and raisins to apples.
5. Add vanilla yogurt to apple mixture. Stir well to break up clumps of raisins.

This salad is really delicious! It’s sweet and crunchy and makes a great side dish or snack.

Because the natural, good bacteria in the yogurt break down some of the lactose in milk, many people who have lactose intolerance can eat yogurt. It is a great source of calcium!

Pineapple juice is sweet, and the apples taste good dipped in the juice. But did you know it also keeps the apples from turning brown? Orange juice also works.

ServSafe® Manager Certification

October 15th & 16th 2019; $140 Registration Fee by September 30th

Macon-Bibb Cooperative Extension provides the nationally recognized and accredited ServSafe® training for food service managers from the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF). Upon successful completion of the ServSafe® examination, the ServSafe® Food Protection Manager certificate will be issued by the NRAEF.