4-H’ers Excel at DPA

Bibb County was well represented at the 4-H Northwest District Project Achievement (DPA) Competition at Rock Eagle the weekend of 28 February - 1 March.

4-H’ers from 7th-12th grades boarded a bus headed for Eatonton to give presentations and performances in categories including housing, engineering, performing arts, history, cooking, workforce development, health, and many others.

Scores were based on portfolios showcasing year long activities followed by speeches before category judges. Competitors also created posters and exhibits.

Bibb County had seven 1st place winners and many other top placers. Three 4-H’ers will represent Bibb County in State Competition. Two of our 4-H’ers were elected as District Officers to represent the NW district during 2020-2021.

We are so very proud of Bibb County 4-H. Many kids are now looking forward to 4-H Summer Camp. If you are interested in contributing to the 4-H camp scholarship fund, please contact the Extension office.

Pictured left: Ashlee Farler (3rd) and Chris Choi (1st) were among the Bibb 4-Hers who placed at the top of their categories.
Get Your Lawn Off to a Healthy Start
By Karol Kelly, ANR Agent

As the weather warms and the birds begin to sing, many of us anxiously await the day that our lawn begins to green up. Since most of the grasses in the middle Georgia area are warm season grasses, like centipede, zoysia, St. Augustine, and bermudagrass, they go dormant in the fall and resume growth in the spring as soil temperature rises.

It is important to make the right choices for your lawn during green-up so it will arise from its slumber healthy and happy. The timing and rate of spring transition from dormancy are dependent on the variety of grass and the seasonal weather conditions. Some lawns may spring to life in late March, while others may not begin greening until April or even later. Be patient and give it time. Don’t try to rush the process.

Lawns should not be fertilized until after they have emerged from dormancy. This means that at a 4” depth, soils are at least 65°F with the temperatures rising. Often, this is April at the earliest. Additional nutrients do not help with the green-up process and in many cases end up causing damage. Although early fertilization can hasten green-up, it also makes your lawn more susceptible to late season cold snaps.

If you missed the February application of a pre-emergence herbicide, in general, it is best to postpone chemical applications until after spring transition. Herbicides may weaken or damage grass during this period. Weed control at this point is best achieved by mowing and catching clippings. Not only will this improve the look of your yard, it will reduce the number of weed seeds available next season. Don’t forget that correct mowing height and frequency are vital to maintaining healthy grass.

For more information on taking care of lawns in Georgia, as well as a variety of other topics, feel free to contact us.

Soil Testing

Soil tests provide information on the soil’s actual nutrient status. Test results are used to determine the amount and kind of nutrients that should be added for the best growth of lawn, garden, and other types of plants.

Recommendations given on the soil report are only as good as the sample submitted for analysis. Sampling depth for lawns should be 4 inches, but for gardens and ornamentals, sample to a depth of 6 inches.

Use a zig-zap approach to collect 8-10 small amounts from the soil profile and mix them together in a clean bucket. Make sure that mulch, grass thatch, and rocks are removed. If the soil is damp, dry it overnight on a flat surface lined with clean paper, taking care to avoid contamination. A total of about 1 cup of soil is needed.

Bring the sample to the Extension office, and we will send it to the lab at the University of Georgia for a cost of $8. You will receive results in about a week. For more information, see https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C896.
Don’t Just Charge Your Phone: Self Care Tips
By Keishon Thomas, FACS Agent

We are all busy. We could fill every hour of every day with activities, tasks and things we feel we must do. All of that activity lends itself to us being exhausted, stressed and literally rundown. Macon-Bibb Cooperative Extension would like to challenge you to recharge yourself just as you would your cell phone!

Sometimes our batteries are below 10% and we need to recharge. One way to recharge is to unplug. We all love technology but it’s ok to unplug and be alone with your thoughts. It can be soothing, and if you spend that unplugged time with family and friends sans phones, you may enjoy just hanging out.

Eating a healthier diet also helps. A plant-based diet does wonders to provide the nutrients we need to conquer our active lifestyles. Half of your plate should be fruits and vegetables. Don’t forget lean proteins, dairy and grains. It may be convenient to pick up fast food; however, your body will struggle to get the proper nutrients it needs, causing you to feel sluggish and drained.

Get some shut eye! In my house some days (generally grueling Mondays) are go-to-bed-early days. On those days we are in bed early. We also make it a point to turn off the electronics to ensure we are asleep and getting much needed REM sleep. I noticed that everyone is in better moods the next morning because they are refreshed.

Don’t skip breakfast. Seriously, your body needs food to fuel itself. Think of it this way, you wouldn’t miss charging your phone if it were low. Breakfast helps us to avoid energy crashes and getting “hangry”. It will also help to avoid overeating because we feel the need to makeup from missing a meal. When we skip meals we rationalize that we have missed a meal so we can afford to eat more.

Prior to having children, exciting career, etc., I was an avid reader. Life got in the way and I realized I hadn’t read a book (other than a children’s book at bedtime) in years. I also noticed my stress levels were through the roof. I began reading again. Miraculously, I began to feel less stressed and my youngest son began reading to be like Mommy. Take much needed time to de-stress and do something you love. Your state of mind will thank you for it.

Tax Tips

♦ **Beware of frauds and scams** - As tax season approaches, many people start to receive phone calls, emails and text messages from entities claiming to be the IRS. The IRS will never call you on the phone. US mail is the only way the IRS will correspond with you.

♦ **Have your documentation together** - End of year property tax statement, W-2s, Social Security Statement.

♦ **Life Events** - Have documents pertaining to life events, such as having a child, adopting a child, child in college (for which you paid expenses), caregiver, divorce or marriage.

♦ **File even if you can’t pay** - There are tax payment plans available. This will also stop the addition of separate penalties for failure to file.

♦ **Make an appointment** - April 15th is fast approaching it is a busy time for most tax preparers. Make your appointment early.

♦ **Utilize the IRS help line** at https://www.irs.gov/help/telephone-assistance
UPCOMING DATES

Registration already underway for 4-H Summer Camps
March 19      Lee Camellia Garden work day at 9:00
March 19-21   Master Gardener Plant Sale
March 23-27   Georgia Ag Week
               georgiaagweek.com/agweek2020/
April 3-4     Spring Home and Garden Show
April 14-15   Serve Safe Manager Training
April 17      4-H Vidalia Onion Sale orders due

Tex-Mex Salad
[Makes 4 servings, 2 cups each.]

This salad is a great meatless meal that is still high in protein. Eating a couple meatless meals per week is not only healthy, but can save a lot of money.

INGREDIENTS:

- 5 cups chopped Romaine lettuce
- 1 medium tomato, diced
- 15 oz can black beans, low sodium*
- 15 oz can corn, no salt added*
- ¼ cup black pepper
- ¼ cup shredded 2% Colby-Jack cheese

*drained and rinsed

DIRECTIONS:

1. Place chopped lettuce in large bowl.
2. Sprinkle diced tomato, black beans, and corn over lettuce.
3. Add black pepper and mix.
4. Top with shredded cheese and serve with Zesty Sauce as dressing on the side.

Senior 4-H’er, Thane Nye, and Junior 4-H’er, Molly Prevette, lead the Pledge of Allegiance at a recent meeting of the Macon-Bibb County Commission.

Spring Home & Garden Show

April 3-4, 2020

Friday, April 3, 9 AM – 7 PM • Saturday, April 4, 9 AM – 6 PM

Georgia National Fairgrounds & Expo Center Building • 1-75 Exit 135 • Perry, GA

- Plants & Services for Home & Garden from Local Vendors
- Educational Gardening Sessions
- Ask-a-Master-Gardener Booth (Bring your gardening questions!)
- Children’s Activities
- Raffle!

Admission: $5 • Children under 12 FREE
For more information, please visit www.MGCC.org

Coronavirus Update

There are many unknowns in our day-to-day lives with the development of COVID-19. The Bibb County Extension office will still be available for any questions you may have about gardening, nutrition, and much more.

Please continue to reach out to us via phone, e-mail, or Facebook.

Stay safe and remember to keep those hands clean!