



Shades of Green

Agriculture and Natural Resources

E-Newsletter

July 2025

A Note from Athens-Clarke County Agriculture & Natural Resources

Hello readers!

Thank you for tuning in to the July 2025 edition of Shades of Green! This month, we are featuring an article from UGA's Cultivate series– Did you know you can grow: Kiwi. Along with a publication featuring a UGA study on variety performance of beebalm, we hope you enjoy this month's articles and local events! As always, feel free to reach to our office at 706-613-3640.

Included in this issue...

Articles

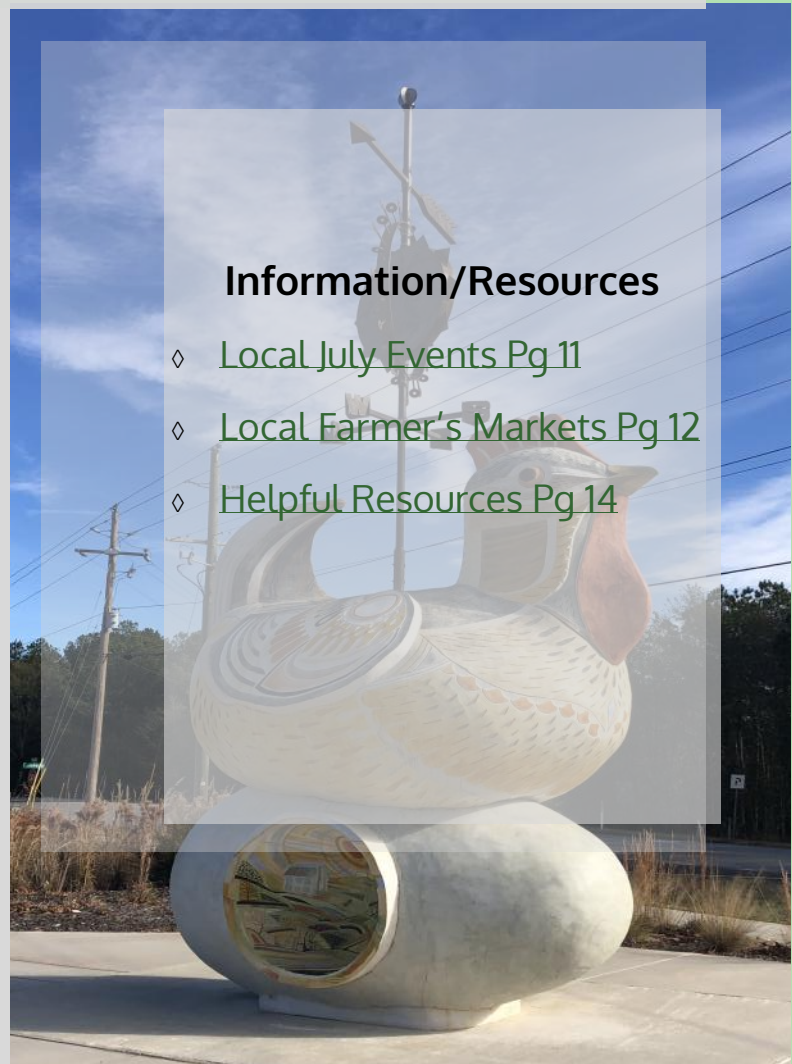
- ◇ [A Note from Athens-Clarke County Agriculture and Natural Resources Pg 2](#)
- ◇ [CAES Cultivate: Did you know you can grow: Kiwi](#)
- ◇ [Discovering the Beauty and Benefits of Beebalm, Part 1: A Journey into Monarda's Horticultural Excellence UGA Circular 1332-01](#)

Information/Resources

- ◇ [Local July Events Pg 11](#)
- ◇ [Local Farmer's Markets Pg 12](#)
- ◇ [Helpful Resources Pg 14](#)



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
EXTENSION
Athens-Clarke County



Did you know you can grow: Kiwi

UGA Extension experts provide information on growing uncommon Southern delights in your own backyard.

By Makenna Reavis | Estimated read time: 4 minutes

Georgia, traditionally known as the Peach State, is famous for its peaches, pecans and peanuts. But thanks to its mild climate, the state also supports a variety of uncommon and exotic fruits.

In a monthly series inspired by [University of Georgia Cooperative Extension](#) publication “[Minor Fruits and Nuts in Georgia](#)” and edited by UGA Extension consumer horticulturist [Bob Westerfield](#), we’ll highlight lesser-known fruits that can thrive in Georgia home gardens.

This month, we are focusing on kiwi. Although often considered exotic, kiwifruit can be grown in several regions in Georgia. Fuzzy kiwi, *Actinidia chinensis* or *A. deliciosa*, is the type you find in the grocery store and the most common. Cold hardy to winter temperatures of 10 degrees Fahrenheit, kiwi usually grow well in [Plant Hardiness Zones 7-9](#).

Where did the kiwifruit come from?

Kiwifruit — or kiwi, for short — is a small fruit with brown, fuzzy skin and green pulp with black seeds. With an acidic taste similar to a strawberry or watermelon, all parts of the kiwi are edible, although some choose to remove the skin before eating.



The kiwi is a bird unique to New Zealand, known for its small size and fluffy brown feathers.

The kiwi was originally introduced from China as the Chinese gooseberry to New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the U.S. in the early 20th century. But the gooseberry was not a popular fruit. So, in 1959, New Zealand officially renamed it kiwifruit after its small, brown, fuzzy national bird, the kiwi. This led to much greater popularity, and New Zealand has remained a top grower of kiwi globally.

Selecting kiwi varieties

Growing kiwi requires both a male and female variety. Male varieties only produce flowers, while female varieties produce both fruit and flowers. One male can pollinate up to eight female plants.

'Hayward' and 'Bruno' are popular female varieties that can be grown with the male variety, 'Matua', in Georgia.

Where to grow kiwi

Although kiwi requires a bit more work than other fruits, it can be a very rewarding crop for dedicated growers.

A kiwi plant should be planted in an area that receives full sun and is protected from the wind. Plant in sandy loam or sandy clay loam soil with adequate drainage to prevent root rot.

To improve drainage, amend the soil with rich organic matter, but do not use peanut straw or hulls, as kiwi are susceptible to a root disease carried by peanut litter.

[Blueberries](#), a Georgia favorite, grow in very similar conditions, making it a great companion plant. Kiwi can also be planted next to herbs and ornamentals like lavender, geranium, lemon balm, marigold and clover. These attract pollinators, improve soil health and deter pests from growing kiwi.



Kiwifruit only grows on the female variety of the plant.



Herbs like lavender will attract pollinators that support kiwifruit plants.

Planting and pruning

Propagating young nursery plants is the best option for growing kiwi, as seeds are not always true to type and take much longer to grow. Young plants can be found at some plant nurseries or online.

Kiwi are vining plants and can grow rapidly up a trellis, arbor, fence or wall, but may require some training.

UGA Extension recommends a T-bar trellis for the best growth and fruit production. One or two trellises should support a basic home gardening operation, with one for the male plant and one for the female plant. Space kiwi plants and their trellises about 15 feet apart.

Kiwi plants require some training and pruning to properly grow on a trellis. Allow the trunk to grow upwards until it almost meets the wire, then pinch out the top bud and train two shoots in opposite directions down the wire. As the plant grows, gently wrap the vines around the center wire with degradable string, tape or cloth.

Branches of the kiwi typically only produce fruit once. After each season's growth is done and new branches have grown, last year's branches can be pruned.

For more detailed pruning information, read the kiwi section of the "[Minor Fruits and Nuts in Georgia](#)" resource from UGA Extension. To learn more about trellising, check out viticulturist [Sarah Lowder's](#) "[Introduction to Wine Grape Trellising, Training, and Pruning Terms](#)."



Many vining plants require pruning to produce a good crop.

Care and harvesting

Kiwi plants require 10-10-10 fertilizer. Apply 4 ounces during March, May and July in the first year of growth. Apply 8 ounces in the second year, 16 ounces in the third year and 32 ounces once the plant is 4 years old or older.

Kiwi is drought-sensitive and needs plenty of water. Water multiple times a week when the plant is young, and immediately if the leaves start to fold or wilt. Mature plants require consistently moist soil, but standing water can lead to root rot.

Kiwi typically matures to full size in August but will not be fully ripe until around October. The fruit is ready to harvest when it is slightly soft and its seeds are black.

For help getting started or managing your kiwi plants, contact your [local UGA Extension office](#).



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Discovering the Beauty and Benefits of Beebalm, Part 1: A Journey into Monarda's Horticultural Excellence

UGA Circular 1332-01

Introduction

Monarda, commonly known as beebalm (also written as bee balm), is a North American perennial naturally found in woodlands, meadows, and floodplains (Figure 1). *Monarda* belongs to the mint family, and shares features with other relatives, such as leaf fragrance (from essential oils within the leaves).

The best-known species, *M. citriodora* (lemon bergamot), *M. didyma* (sweet bergamot), *M. fistulosa* (wild bergamot), and *M. punctata* (dotted monarda), and the ornamental *M. bradburi-ana*, and *M. x hybrida hort.* (hybrids of *M. didyma* and *M. fistulosa*), have been studied for their essential oil composition and **ethnobotanical** (a study of the cultural relationships between plants and humans) uses. Aside from its aesthetics, beebalm offers environmental benefits, as its flowers, seeds, and shoots provide forage and habitat for many species of wildlife, including insects and birds.

The genus has many cultivars established in the garden trade and several species native to Georgia. *Monarda* has been trialed at the Chicago Botanic Garden and Mt. Cuba Center, but in-depth studies from southeastern locales are scarce. We set out to investigate how 10 of these plants that are popular in the trade performed in the montane and piedmont (i.e., northern) Georgia regions.



Figure 1. Beebalm Growing Along a Roadside in Fulton County, GA.

Discovering the Beauty and Benefits of Beebalm, Part 1: A Journey into Monarda's Horticultural Excellence

UGA Circular 1332-01

Of particular interest for us were horticultural performance in the landscape, time and length of bloom (flower phenology), and powdery mildew tolerance. Powdery mildew is a bane of many garden plants, but beebalm has been particularly affected by it. The disease symptoms include white growth (Figure 2), especially in conditions with high humidity and temperature fluctuations.



One of the key findings of the study was the variation in flowering periods among the different *Monarda* taxa. By carefully selecting species that bloom at different times, gardeners can ensure a continuous display of flowers from late spring through early fall. For instance, *M. bradburiana* blooms in late April and May, while *M. punctata* extends the flowering season into September and October.

How We Evaluated Beebalm

The evaluation of *Monarda* was carried out at the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center in Blairsville (Figure 3) and at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia in Athens, GA.

The plants were monitored over two growing seasons, with data collected on several key performance indicators:



Figure 3. Monarda Plot at the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center in Blairsville, GA.



Figure 4. *Monarda bradburiana*.



Figure 5. *Monarda* 'Sugar Buzz® Grape Gumball'.



Figure 6. *Monarda didyma*.



Figure 7. *Monarda didyma* 'Jacob Cline'.



Figure 8. *Monarda* x 'Judith's Fancy Fuchsia'.



Figure 9. *Monarda* 'Raspberry Wine'.



Figure 10. *Monarda fistulosa*.



Figure 11. *Monarda fistulosa* 'Claire Grace'.

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The Impact of Environmental Conditions on Beebalm

The study also highlighted the role of environmental conditions in the performance of *Monarda*. Factors such as soil type, watering practices, and sunlight exposure all played a role in plant success. For example, *Monarda* thrives in well-drained soil and full sun but can tolerate partial shade. Proper spacing is also crucial to reduce the risk of disease, as good air circulation around the plants can help prevent the spread of powdery mildew.

Outstanding Beebalm Performers

The study revealed several standout cultivars that excelled in multiple categories:

- ***Monarda* 'Jacob Cline'**: This cultivar was a top performer in terms of flowering, producing an abundance of large, vibrant red flowers. It also demonstrated excellent disease resistance, making it a reliable choice for gardeners.
- ***Monarda* 'Petite Delight'**: Known for its compact growth habit, this cultivar is ideal for smaller gardens or container planting. Despite its size, it did not compromise on bloom quantity or quality.

***Monarda* 'Raspberry Wine'**: This cultivar stood out for its unique color, with deep raspberry-red flowers that added a striking contrast to garden landscapes. It also showed good tolerance to powdery mildew.

Practical Beebalm Tips for Gardeners

- **Choose disease-tolerant plants:** Select straight species such as *Monarda bradburiana* and cultivars known for their tolerance to powdery mildew, such as 'Jacob Cline' or 'Raspberry Wine'.
- **Plant in full sun:** Beebalm thrives in full sun but can tolerate partial shade. Ensure your plants get at least 6 hr of sunlight daily.
- **Provide good air circulation:** Space plants properly for good air circulation, which can help prevent disease. For perennial species, divide crowns in early spring before the shoots bolt.
- **Water wisely:** Water beebalm at the base of the plant to keep the foliage dry and reduce the risk of mildew. Avoid overhead watering if possible.

Tidy up the garden space: Removing spent flowers can encourage additional blooming and keep your plants looking tidy. In native perennial gardens, placing *Monarda* behind shorter plants hides unsightly foliage and accentuates the tall blooms. Large, mature seed heads act as a landing pad and snack for birds.

Conclusion

The study conducted by the University of Georgia highlights the versatility and value of *Monarda* in Georgia landscapes. Whether you're looking to add a splash of color to your garden, support local wildlife, or simply enjoy the beauty of these native plants, *Monarda* offers something for everyone. With careful selection and proper care, you can enjoy a vibrant and healthy garden filled with the delightful blooms of beebalm.

Published on May 27, 2025

Local July Events

Alice H. Richards Children's Garden Performance Series

July 19th Performer– Rececca Sunshine Band

State Botanical Garden of Georgia

Every third Saturday of the month, April through August, enjoy a variety of engaging shows taking place on the Theatre-in-the-Woods stage in the Alice H. Richards Children's Garden. Experience music, laughter and connection in nature as our artists bring excitement to your weekend. All performances will take place at 9:30 a.m., with a second showing at 11 a.m.

Athentic Weekly Farmer's Market

Thursdays 4-7 PM

108 Park Ave, Athens GA 30601

Join us on Thursdays from 4-7 for our local farmer's market filled with locally grown produce and delicious treats from Athens artisanal vendors! Standard vendors include: Diamond Hill Farms, Normaltown Bread Company, Katie Bee Honey, Flossie May Forage, Grand Designs Woodworking, and more to come!

"North Oconee River Greenway Discovery Ride" @ Greenway

"North Oconee River Greenway Discovery Ride" on the Firefly Trail

on the Firefly Trail

July 19th, 2025, 10 AM– 12 PM

[https://www.accgov.com/Calendar.aspx?](https://www.accgov.com/Calendar.aspx?EID=28349&month=6&year=2025&day=20&calType=0)

[EID=28349&month=6&year=2025&day=20&calType=0](https://www.accgov.com/Calendar.aspx?EID=28349&month=6&year=2025&day=20&calType=0)

Sunflower Concert Series– The New Orleans Jazz Stompers

Tuesday, July 15th, 2025 7-9 PM

State Botanical Garden of Georgia

The Sunflower Concert Series at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia invites the community to enjoy live music amidst the beauty of the garden. Held in the picturesque Flower Garden, these concerts provide an unforgettable experience.

Guests are encouraged to bring blankets, chairs and picnic dinners to savor while enjoying the music. Each ticket includes snacks and beverages. This year, concerts will feature one band with no opening act. In case of inclement weather, concerts will be relocated to the Visitor Center and Conservatory.

This year, the garden is excited to offer the Picnic Plaza, courtesy of Barron's Rental Center, on the back patio of the Visitor Center. Come early for the concert and enjoy your own picnic dinner under a cozy tent. A fun craft activity for kids will also be available. Season passes, which include tickets to all four concerts, are \$80 for adults and \$40 for children ages 5-16. Ticket prices for single concerts are \$24 for adults and \$12 for children ages 5-16. Children under 5 are admitted free of charge. Adult tickets purchased at the gate will be \$26. Friends of the Garden Members receive a 10% discount. All ticket prices are subject to additional fees. The New Orleans Jazz Stompers are a traditional jazz band that features a front line of trumpet, clarinet and trombone and a rhythm section of piano, sousaphone, banjo and drums. Liam Parke is the featured vocalist. They play jazz styles of the early 20th century that came from New Orleans and then spread across the country and worldwide.

Journey through the Stars Planetarium Program -

"Wonders of Day and Night" at Sandy Creek Nature Center

Sandy Creek Nature Center

July 19th, 2025

10:00 AM—11:00 AM

[https://www.accgov.com/Calendar.aspx?](https://www.accgov.com/Calendar.aspx?EID=28555&month=7&year=2025&day=20&calType=0)

[EID=28555&month=7&year=2025&day=20&calType=0](https://www.accgov.com/Calendar.aspx?EID=28555&month=7&year=2025&day=20&calType=0)



Athens Farmer's Market

<https://athensfarmersmarket.net/>



Marigold Farmer's Market


<https://marigoldcollectivewinterville.com/>



Concerned about the
state of your garden?

Are weeds taking over
your landscape?

No need to fear,
Clarke is here!

Follow @gardenwithclarke on Instagram  and learn how to battle pests, identify weeds, build your soil and so much more as you garden alongside Clarke, Athens-Clarke County's super gardener!



gardenwithclarke

UGA Extension Athens-Clarke County





Helpful resources online:

[Find My Local Extension Office](#)

[Georgia Turf](#)

[Free Online Webinars](#)

[Pest Management Handbook](#)

[Pesticide Applicator Info](#)

[Georgia Certified Plant Professional](#)

[Bugwood— Pest Images](#)

[UGA Center for Urban Agriculture](#)

[Extension Publications](#)

[OnlineLandscape Alerts](#)

Athens-Clarke County Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources

Mission Statement

The UGA Athens-Clarke County Extension's mission is to respond to the people's needs and interest in Agriculture, the Environment, Families, and 4-H/youth in Athens-Clarke County with unbiased, research-based education and information.

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