

# Shades of Green

Agriculture and Natural Resources

E-Newsletter

June 2025







# A Note from Athens-Clarke County Agriculture & Natural Resources

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Thank you for tuning into the June edition of Shades of Green.

We kicked off summer by celebrating with the 2nd annual Athens Honey Bee Festival on May 24th, 2025. The day was a huge success with over 500 attendees who participated in craft activities, games, honey tasting, and hive explorations! We want to extend a huge thank you to all of our sponsors, vendors and amazing volunteers who helped make the day enjoyable for all involved!

## Events

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UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
**EXTENSION**  
Athens-Clarke County



# Rare firefly identified in UGA's State Botanical Garden

August 29, 2024

Kate Hall

A rare species of firefly has recently been discovered at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia at the University of Georgia. The Loopy Five, named for its looping flight pattern, has been spotted in high concentration in the wetlands boardwalk area on the garden's orange trail.

The firefly, petitioned to be on the Endangered Species List, was first spotted by a community scientist involved with the [Firefly Atlas](#) outside his home in Monroe, according to Anna Yellin, a wildlife biologist with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Georgia DNR investigated and found more Loopy Five populations in the surrounding Athens area.

"It's exciting to find such a rare firefly in this area. It shows we still have opportunities to discover and conserve native species within our communities, even in areas surrounded by development," said Yellin.

The Loopy Five firefly has been spotted in a handful of locations in Georgia,

South Carolina and Tennessee, but there's not much documentation on this species, according to the Firefly Atlas.



Fireflies light up the sky over the wetlands boardwalk at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia (Photos by Laurel Clark).

# Rare firefly identified in UGA's State Botanical Garden

August 29, 2024

The search for the Loopy Five and the partnership between Georgia DNR and the State Botanical Garden led biologists to identify the garden as a potential location for the fireflies. The garden's wetlands boardwalk area contains what biologists suspect are the right conditions for these fireflies to thrive, and on a visit to the garden, DNR biologists found many Loopy 5 fireflies.

"It's a great site that can be accessed without disturbing vegetation," said Yellin. "There's been such a decline in wetlands that places like this are not as common as they once were."

The State Botanical Garden of Georgia has over 290 acres of natural areas that garden staff work to preserve as an example of stewardship of Georgia's natural Piedmont habitats. In recent years, the garden has received funding from the federal Recreational Trails Program, which Georgia DNR administers in the state, and the Riverview Foundation to renovate and widen sections of the garden's trails, build an accessible boardwalk and install adjacent ADA-accessible parking spots.

"Identifying the Loopy Five at the State Botanical Garden demonstrates how important it is to preserve native ecosystems," said the garden's director, Jenny Cruse-Sanders. "We are proud to be a partner with Georgia DNR, and a prime location for scientists to research native species of all kinds."

The Loopy Five can be identified by a series of light blinks, usually four, followed by a loop of motion on the fifth blink, thus giving the species its name. Yellin says that this unique pattern makes them easier for non-firefly experts to identify.



Lexi Bryan records environmental data and observations on the Loopy Five firefly.



# Transplant Shock

## Paul Pugliese, UGA Extension Bartow County

As a general rule, anytime a tree or shrub dies within the first year of planting, there is usually a root issue involved. Spring planted trees and shrubs are generally more stressed from summer heat, since their roots are still underdeveloped during the first year. This results in excessive wilting, which causes well-intentioned gardeners to literally water their plants to death.

Fall and winter planted trees and shrubs can more quickly become established in their new environment while they are dormant—giving them far more resilience during their first summer. Even with proper timing and planting technique, woody plants may still take a few years to fully establish and recover from transplant stresses.

Spring plantings are also more likely to suffer from chronic transplant shock. Under stressful conditions, plants are unable to recover, continue to decline, and eventually die. The most common reasons for transplant shock and root-stress are planting too deep, poor drainage, backfilling with composted soil amendments, damaging the stem/root ball connection during planting, or excessive watering. It's possible that a combination of these issues may be involved, especially with the amount and frequency of rain we've had the past few years in North Georgia.

From my experience, it seems that many problems related to transplant shock are the result of old habits and misinformation. Many folks that are new to North Georgia don't know what to do with our clay soil. If you are human "transplant" from Florida, South Georgia, or the West coast, how you plant trees and shrubs in those regions is very different than here. Clay soils function differently than sandy/loamy soils found elsewhere. Clay has the ability to hold water for several days, drains very slowly, and has less oxygen available to roots—especially if compacted.



Spring-planted Dwarf Hinoki Falsecypress showing transplant shock four months after planting.

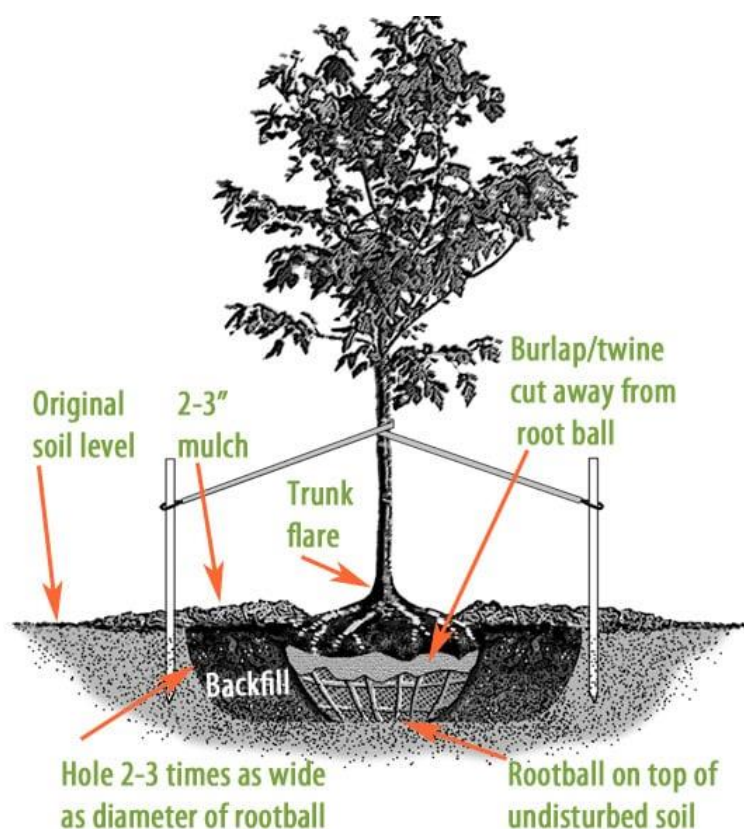
# Transplant Shock

## Paul Pugliese, UGA Extension Bartow County

These unique traits of clay soil are the reason why we don't recommend backfilling with composted soil amendments, which can act like a sponge in a bowl—staying either too wet or too dry and disrupting normal drainage. Water tends to accumulate at the bottom of the bowl and results in root rot. Also, it's best to allow trees and shrubs to breathe a few days between watering. One inch of rain or irrigation can take several days to fully drain from clay soil. Roots can literally suffocate from watering too frequently. Planting roots too deep will make problems worse in clay soil due to poor drainage. The root flare at the base of the stem should always be visible or slightly above grade in a clay soil.

Unfortunately, root stresses do not have a good remedy. Mulch is an important part of planting and caring for landscape trees and shrubs. Maintain a 2" to 3" inch mulch layer of pine straw or wood chips to conserve soil moisture. Dead branches that result from transplant shock should be pruned out as needed. Note that adding fertilizer can actually stress new plants further by forcing new growth that the roots are not yet able to sustain.

In most situations it is best to replace the plant once you experience more than fifty percent die-back. Also, realize that even if a plant "survives" transplant shock, it will continue to be stunted/stressed for several years and may never reach its fullest potential. If you do decide to replace the plant, wait until fall or early winter, which is the best time to plant.



Proper planting technique

UGA Extension

For more information view UGA Extension Bulletin 932, "Soil Preparation and Planting Procedures for Ornamental Plants in the Landscape" available your County Extension office or on our website at [extension.uga.edu/](http://extension.uga.edu/)

# June Events

## Night Hike at Southeast Clarke

June 21st, 2025

8:45-10:00 PM

### Southeast Clarke Park– Trails

Discover local trails by moonlight! Come along on our guided night hike. Enjoy activities that enhance the beauty and magic of our forest at night.

## Course: Insect Pollinators in our Gardens

Tuesday, June 3, 2025 9 am-1 pm

### Virtual, State Botanical Garden of Georgia

This course allows participants to evaluate plant-insect interactions in gardens from an ecological perspective. For instance, instructors will focus on the importance of maintaining plant and insect pollinator diversity and the ecological factors that may influence this outcome. Among the factors that will be discussed in this course are the role of disease and pesticides on pollinator's survival and how these factors could interact with plant species and produce certain outcomes. <https://botgarden.uga.edu/event/insect-pollinators-in-our-gardens/>

## Small Space and Straw Bale Gardening

June 5th, 2025 6:00-7:00 PM (Virtual)

**Gwinnett County Extension:** [Use the Zoom link provided or contact us @ 678-377-4010](#)

Gardening in a small space is an art, but don't let that stop you from maximizing your gardening potential! Tune in to learn about various small-space gardening techniques like container gardening, vertical gardening, and hydroponics, while shining a spotlight on straw bale gardening—an eco-friendly method perfect for compact areas. Filled with practical tips, visuals, and ideas, this presentation is designed to inspire gardeners to thrive no matter the space constraints. Join Lisa Klein with UGA Extension Gwinnett as she walks you through how to turn vacant spaces into vibrant, productive gardens that nurture both plants and people. This program qualifies for master gardener continuing education credit.

## Garden Gala

Presented by: **UGArden**

**2510 S. Milledge Avenue, Athens GA 30602**

6:00 PM to 10:00 PM

Price: \$120

In celebration of 15 years of UGArden, the student-powered community farm at the University of Georgia, is hosting a farm-to-table dinner event that will bring together supporters, community members, and local leaders in sustainable agriculture. Guests will partake in understanding UGArden's impactful journey and the individuals who have made it possible, all while raising crucial funds to support the farm's continued growth. Attendees will enjoy a delicious meal and experience a living testament to the work that has been accomplished—and the important work that still lies ahead.

Sponsorship opportunities are available. For more information, email [ugarden@uga.edu](mailto:ugarden@uga.edu).

<https://gail.uga.edu/events/caes/garden-gala-2025>

## Backyard Berries

June 24th, 2025

12:00 PM-1:00 PM

**Gwinnett County Extension:** [Use the Zoom link provided or contact us @ 678-377-4010](#)

Transform your backyard into a berry paradise! Discover different types of berries you can grow at home, from strawberries to blueberries to unique options like gooseberries and elderberries. Learn which berries are the easiest, which ones require a bit more effort, and tips for selecting the best varieties for your space and climate. Packed with practical advice and expert tricks, this presentation is your guide to cultivating a bountiful and delicious berry harvest right in your own backyard. Special guest Sarah Brodd with UGA Extension Dekalb shares the secrets to having your own berry paradise at your house. This program qualifies for master gardener continuing education credit. For more information, please contact us at [uge1135@uga.edu](mailto:uge1135@uga.edu).





## Plant Sale

All  
proceeds  
support our  
garden!



**Trial Gardens**  
College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences  
**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

# PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

DATE **7 JUNE** 2025  
START **9:00AM**  
END **12:00PM**

**220 W. Green St, Athens, GA 30602**



## Garden Tours

9AM-Dr. A  
10AM-Dr. Ruter  
11AM-Sandy



## People's Choice Awards

Vote for  
your  
favorite  
plants!





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EXTENSION

Athens-Clarke County



Ask a  
Master  
Gardener  
at

April - November 2025

MARIGOLD  
FARMERS  
MARKET!

ATHENS  
FARMERS  
MARKET



# ATHENS FARMERS MARKET

SATURDAY AT  
BISHOP  
PARK

AND

WEDNESDAY AT  
CREATURE  
COMFORTS

YEAR  
ROUND!

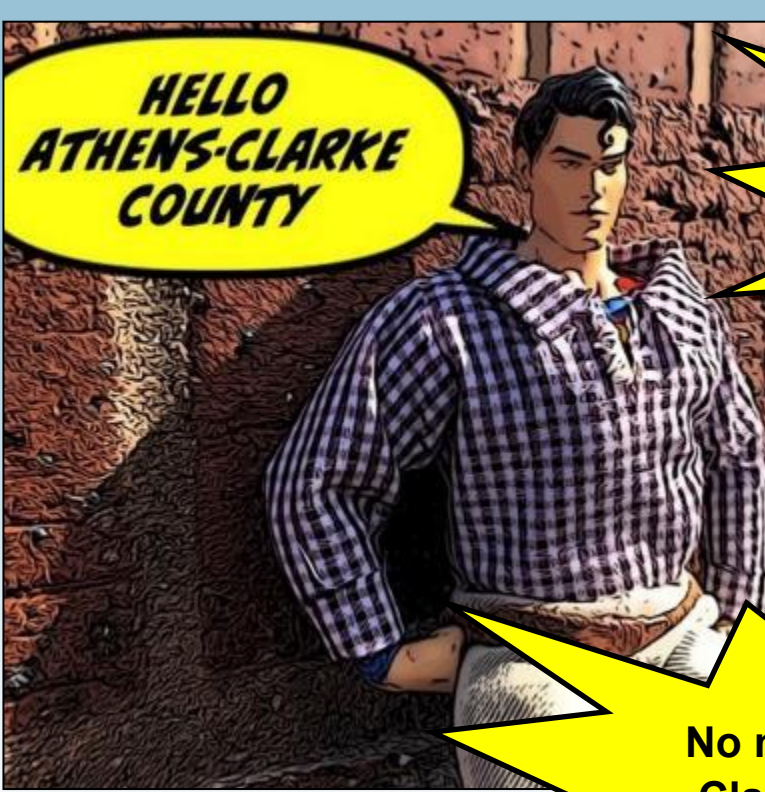
MARCH TO  
NOVEMBER

## MARIGOLD FARMERS MARKET!

Saturdays in Pittard Park | 9am - 1pm








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](#)

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## 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.

**Visit us online:**



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