



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
**EXTENSION**

February 2023  
<https://extension.uga.edu>

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Action, Veteran, Disability Institution*

University of Georgia Cooperative  
Extension DeKalb County Office

# NEWSLETTER

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## Gearing Up for Spring

No matter what the groundhog says, we know spring is right around the corner. Be ready for it by preparing now.

Gardening and landscape equipment can be an expensive investment for both consumers and professionals. However, quality equipment can last a lifetime when cared for properly.

- Frequently used hand tools with wooden handles should be treated with boiled linseed or tung oil, or spray-painted with an outdoor paint to protect them.
- Sharpen pruners with a small mill file or sharpening stone.
- Check oil and fuel on motorized equipment and change if needed.
- Sharpen blades, check for any damage, and make sure equipment is working correctly before you will need it to save yourself a headache later on.





# Landscape Best Management Practices

Research has shown that if you properly select, install and maintain ornamental plant, you greatly increase their survival and performance in the landscape.

## BMPs for getting ready to plant

**BMP 1:** Fall and winter planting of woody ornamentals and herbaceous perennials is recommended because there is less demand for water and nutrients by the top and more energy and food for root growth.

**BMP 2:** Prepare the planting bed properly by deep tilling. When planting individual plants, dig a wide planting hole to provide a favorable rooting environment.

Tip – Soil drainage can be checked by digging a hole approximately 15 inches deep by 15 inches in diameter and filling it with water. If water is left standing in the hold after 1 hour, the site may drain poorly. If water remains in the hole for several hours, site improvements are needed.

**BMP 3:** Add appropriate amendments to the planting bed (when necessary) to improve the physical properties of the soil – water retention, water infiltration, drainage – or to enhance its mineral and microbial content.

Tip – Research has shown that amendments added to individual planting holes are not helpful and can in fact be harmful to the plant. They may act like a sponge, holding too much moisture in the hole. They may also encourage the roots to stay within the confines of the hole instead of growing outward into the native soil. Backfill these plants with the native soil.



# Upcoming In Person Learning Opportunities

**Planning a Spring Garden** - Not sure where to start with your spring garden? Interested in updating your plan? Come join us in Planning a Spring Garden! We will discuss raised beds vs row planting, proper plant spacing, and the importance of bed location. Also learn when to plant what, how to start transplants, along with succession and companion planting. Additional topics we will touch on include soil testing, preparation, and amending, as well as common pest ID and control.

March 6 @5:30p

Sue Kellogg - Stone Mountain Library

**Soil Testing** - Come learn the basics of soil testing. You will learn how to take a sample and interpret the results. We will also discuss how to amend the soil and solve common soil problems such as drainage, compaction, and pests.

March 25 @1pm

*Registration links will be available soon*

*Follow us on Facebook for the most current information*



# Upcoming Virtual Learning Opportunities

"Totally Tomatoes"- March 1st at 6pm -From seed to harvest of this southern garden favorite. Learn how to start tomatoes indoors now and then caring for them in your garden.

"Spring Vegetables & Herbs"- March 16th at 6pm -Starting and caring for a thriving vegetable garden this spring and summer. Get started on the right foot for a bountiful harvest.

"Heirloom Plants"- April 13th at 6pm Fruits, vegetables and landscape plants to add to your garden that have stood the test of time.

"Enchanting Fairy Gardens & Whimsical Landscapes"- Lunch & Learn, May 10th at 12pm- Add some whimsy to your garden with a fairy village or garden accents to enhance your landscape.

"Attracting Pollinators"- May 23rd at 6pm Pollinators are an important part of any garden. Whether you need them to help pollinate your edibles or would like to create an environment that is friendly for them. We will go over some of their favorites.

"Shade Gardening"- Lunch & Learn, June 15th at 12pm Made for Shade. Whether you have a shady landscape or just a shady spot. We will talk about plants to help brighten up the shade in your garden

"Insects Pests & Beneficials"- July 13th at 6pm How to minimize the bad bugs and keep around the good bugs in your garden and landscape.





## HEY GEORGIA!

Receive weekly healthy tips about:

- **Added Sugars**
- **Recipes**
- **Sodium Intake**
- **Nutrition Facts**
- **Physical Activity**
- **And much more!**

Sign up for our weekly Food Talk text messages by texting **FOOD** to **(866) 376-2865**

# WE ARE HIRING!

## **FRESH ON DEK PROGRAM ASSISTANTS**

We are looking for a seasonal, full-time team to join Fresh on DeK Mobile Farmer's Market as Mobile Farmer's Market Program Assistants.

Apply today!  
<https://bit.ly/FODPAAp23>

Questions? Email us [freshondek@dekalbcountyga.gov](mailto:freshondek@dekalbcountyga.gov)



February 2023  
<https://extension.uga.edu>

# BANANA OAT COOKIES

*Desserts Made With Love*

SERVINGS: 25

COOKING TIME: 20 MIN

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup banana, mashed (use an overripe banana)
- 1 cup quick oats (not instant)
- 1/2 cup yogurt, low-fat plain
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/2 cup raisins ( optional)
- 1/2 cup sunflower seeds ( optional)
- spices, such as cinnamon and nutmeg to taste (optional)
- cooking spray

## DIRECTIONS

1. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.
2. Pre-heat oven to 350°F-375°F.
3. Spray a baking sheet with cooking spray.
4. Mash bananas, mix with yogurt and water.
5. Add quick oats. Mix well.
6. Add optional add-ins if you wish.
7. Add spices (optional)
8. The batter should be thick and easily spoonable.
9. Place a tablespoon of dough on the sheet, thin out to a flat disk. Repeat with remaining dough. Refrigerate if any is remaining in bowl.
10. Bake at 350-375°F for 20 minutes or until golden.

## NOTES

- Can add cinnamon, nutmeg or your other favorite spices.
- Walnuts, pecans or flaxseed can be added in addition to or instead of sunflower seeds.
- Golden raisins can be added as an option.

Recipe found on MyPlate

<https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/banana-oat-cookies>



## Modify Your Diet



## Spice It Up



## Keep Moving



# HEART-HEALTHY TIPS FOR AMERICAN HEART MONTH

By Keishon Thomas

February has arrived. Cue the hearts, flowers and Valentine's Day festivities. While we have love on the brain, I would like to challenge you to change your perception of love by caring for your heart. February is American Heart Month.

Noncontrollable factors, like having a family history of heart disease, being of African-American descent, and growing older or postmenopausal, can contribute to cardiovascular disease (CVD). The good news is that most chronic diseases, including CVD, are caused by modifiable behaviors. The three most common risk behaviors for CVD are lack of physical activity, poor nutrition and inadequate weight management. University of Georgia Cooperative Extension encourages you to love yourself by making changes to decrease your risk for heart disease.

Change your diet. Most of us do not get the appropriate number of servings of fruit and vegetables every day. A small change, like ensuring that you have a serving of fruit or vegetables at every meal, can do wonders for your heart. Fruits and vegetables are high in fiber and low in calories, which aids in weight management. Try incorporating a variety of vegetables and fruits into your diet, like kale, asparagus, blueberries and cherries. I have found that drinking fruit and vegetable smoothies also increases fruit and vegetable intake.

Spice it up. Food preparation is just as important as the food itself. Reducing the amount of sodium in foods is essential to good heart health. We may be a society of foodies, and no one likes bland food, but there are ways to make foods taste great without adding sodium. Spices and herbs add flavor without adding extra fat and calories. If you're aiming for an Italian-inspired meal, for instance, try using garlic powder, thyme, oregano and basil. Switching from garlic and onion salts to garlic and onion powders is a small step that could bring big returns.

Make the effort. Physical activity takes effort on our part. Again, small changes can make huge differences. Walking is a cost-effective, easy way to get moving. Walk the entire grocery store, to the mailbox or to the corner. I took my own advice and began walking. I am ashamed to say that, at first, it was rather difficult. I could not walk around the block. Yikes! I kept at it and now I can walk around the block twice. I had to build up to it. I started with a small goal of walking to the end of my block. I added a pedometer app to my phone that lets me know the number of steps I take daily. It serves as a reminder to get up and get moving. My family also joined in and my children and my husband join me on my evening walks.

Consider these Extension tips and make heart health a priority this Valentine's Day.