NEWS & EVENTS

4-H Students Learn During Spring Break

We had a fantastic time at “Cow & Plow” Camp over Spring Break. 4-H’ers who participated include: Noah Bell, Aiden Belli, John Burdick, Ethan Danals, Jessi Mize, Austin Rosenburg, Dessie Lee Santiago, Allie Stephens, Haleigh Todd, Julianna Walsky and Samantha Walsky. We visited Rockhouse Creamery, Farmview Market, Eavenson Farms, Wansley Farms, RC Farms, UGA Meat Lab and Northeast Georgia Livestock Sale. Students sampled many Georgia Grown products and learned how products make it from the farm to you!

Elbert County Cloverbuds Swam with the Sharks

After reading National Geographic’s Sharks, we swam in the ocean with a Great White Shark (photo), sang the “Baby Shark” song and danced using our own names, and played shark fin tag. The Cloverbuds also designed their own Nature-Watch activity kit shark tooth necklaces and painted ceramic shark banks. They looked shark-tastic!

Discount Six Flags Tickets

Six Flags Ticket: $50.00  White Water Ticket: $43.50  SF/WW Combo Season Pass: $74.00

Six Flags/White Water tickets are IN! Prices listed above are for each youth or adult and are not subject to additional tax. Tickets are available at our office, and coupons are included with each purchase! *Cash, check, debit/credit accepted.* We also offer e-tickets through our discount site, which allows you to “print & go”. Use the following to log in at sixflags.com/partnerlogin?m=31350:
Username=ElbertOG Password=SixFlags10
Read the Plant Label When Choosing Tomato Varieties
By Jacob G. Price for CAES News

The desire for fresh, homegrown tomatoes is the main reason many homeowners plant gardens. Most tomato plants are planted in late March and April, and every spring some homeowners run into problems with their tomato plants.

Tomatoes are susceptible to a lot of diseases. Once infected, it is too late to stop most diseases from killing or limiting the production of the plant. Using a few cultural practices and planting varieties that are resistant to disease can make for a more productive tomato harvest.

Two newer, good-tasting, disease-resistant tomato varieties are ‘Red Bounty’ and ‘Bella Rosa’, both of which are resistant to tomato spotted wilt virus.

When selecting plants, look for varieties that have a lot of letters next to the name. This means the plants have a built-in resistance to disease. An example would be a popular variety called referred to as the ‘Celebrity’ VFFNTA hybrid.”

The letters by the name tell the gardener the plant pests and diseases to which the variety is resistant. "V" refers to Verticillium wilt; "F" is for Fusarium wilt; "FF" is for Fusarium wilt races 1 and 2; "N" is for nematodes; "T" is for tobacco mosaic virus; "A" is for Alternaria (early blight); and "TSWV" is for tomato spotted wilt virus.

Tomatoes are classified as determinate or indeterminate types. Determinate varieties produce fruit that ripens over a short period of time, producing a large volume of tomatoes early in the season. Once the tomatoes have been harvested, the plants can be removed. Indeterminate varieties produce fruit continually throughout the season.


Some gardeners prefer tomato plants that produce small fruit. Popular cherry tomato varieties include the ‘Jolly’, ‘Sweet Baby Girl’ and ‘Super Sweet 100’ hybrids.

In addition to buying disease-resistant varieties, gardeners should use good cultivation practices to prevent problems.

Tomatoes like well-drained, high organic-matter soil with a pH between 6.2 and 6.8. Gardeners should have their soil tested and follow test recommendations to correct any pH problems.

Tomatoes frequently experience problems with a condition called “blossom end rot.” This condition turns the bottom of the tomato fruit black. Blossom end rot is caused by a calcium deficiency in the fruit and is made worse when soil conditions fluctuate between wet and dry.

Adding dolomitic lime, which raises pH and contains calcium and magnesium, can help prevent the problem. If the garden soil pH is optimal but the calcium is low, apply gypsum at 1 pound per 100 square feet. Foliar applications of calcium can help provide a temporary fix if the problem is not excessive.

Placing mulch around tomato plants reduces soil moisture fluctuations and keeps weed pressure down. Layers of newspaper can be placed around plants, and mulch can be added on top to further prevent weeds. Pine straw, bark, leaves or most any type of mulch can be used.

Selecting disease-resistant varieties, following soil test results and adding mulch should make this tomato season more productive.

For more information on tomato varieties, see University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Bulletin 1271, “Georgia Homegrown Tomatoes,” at extension.uga.edu/publications.
Americans love the outdoors whether it is camping, boating, or picnicking. Combining the outdoors with good food makes for a great outing. Make sure to keep foodborne illness off the itinerary by following these food safety rules that will reduce the chance of spoiling the fun.

Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold and out of the danger zone; 40°F or below and 140°F or above. Bacteria can grow rapidly in this danger zone and reach dangerous levels after 2 hours. It is easiest to cook foods before leaving home, cool, and pack in a cooler with a cold source. If you are cooking outdoors, make sure you have a hot campfire or portable stove. Cooking food to the safe minimum internal temperature is vital to destroy foodborne bacteria in meat and poultry products.

Plan ahead for how to wash hands, utensils, and clean-up during cooking. Remember, raw meat and poultry juices contain bacteria that can easily be spread by cross-contamination to surfaces, utensils, and cooked foods. Soap and water are a must, so bring it along if none is available. Add paper towels and disposable wipes to the cleaning supplies checklist. When transporting raw meat and poultry, be sure to double wrap it in re-sealable zipper food storage bags or snap-on lid containers that will not drip raw juices on other foods. Also, do not place cooked food in containers or on platters that have held raw meat or poultry. Keeping everything clean is very important!

By planning carefully, you may decide to cook and refrigerate or freeze foods in advance and then pack into coolers with a cold source. Transport uncooked items in a separate cooler with a cold source. This will prevent ready-to-eat foods from coming in contact with raw foods that require cooking to be safe. Cold sources can include ice, frozen ice packs, frozen bottles of water, and frozen food. Place a refrigerator thermometer in the cooler to keep a check on the temperature to make sure it has not reached the danger zone.

Activities such as boating, camping and picnicking are fun ways to get outside and experience the great outdoors. Eating healthy and safe foods make those outings more enjoyable. Keep foodborne illness off your itinerary by practicing simple, yet important, food safety rules. For more information on food safety or food preservation, contact Christa Campbell at (706)283-2037.

4-H & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Painting Class on May 21st
If you love art, join us for a fun painting class at the Elberton Arts Center with Jennifer Clements on May 21st, from 3:30-5:30pm! Cost of this fun activity is $25. You must pay and register before May 14th. A minimum of 10 participants is required. At sign-up, vote for your favorite painting (sea turtles or campfire by the lake). We will paint the one with the most votes! Sign up today! This is going to be so much fun!!! Let's get our paint on!

Garden Club
If you want to learn more about growing plants and your own food, make plans to join us after school at the 4-H Center on Thursday, May 9th, until 5:00pm, to work in the 4-H Garden! Clover Points will be awarded! Let's get dirty and get plants growing!

Scholarship Opportunities
Did you know Elbert County 4-H offers college scholarships to our Junior and Senior 4-H’ers? 7th-12th graders can apply for a 4-H scholarship each year. Applications are due to the 4-H Office by 5:00pm on Friday, May 24th. Ask Ms. Sophie or Ms. Lauren for an application today or come by the 4-H Center to pick one up!

Art & Photography Contest
Elbert County 4-H is proud to sponsor an Art & Photography Contest. Any student may enter. Artwork may be submitted using any type of medium (ex. Pencil, pen, marker, charcoal, etc.). Photographs may be submitted in print or digitally by emailing to LMDYE@UGA.EDU or messaging to the Elbert County 4-H Facebook Page. Winners will be recognized in each age group (Cloverleaf, Junior & Senior) and artwork will be used for future 4-H promotional items. The categories are: Animal, Landscape (nature) and People. Entries must be the work of the 4-H’er! The deadline to enter the Art/Photography Contest is Friday, May 24th.

Forestry Team
Did you know Georgia’s forestry industry is the second largest in the state? Did you know you can obtain a college degree in forestry? Did you know people who spend time outside or more likely to be happy? The woods have so much to offer—whether it is your livelihood or well-being. If you are interested in spending more time outside learning about our amazing trees and forests, we invite you to sign up for the Forestry Team! We will enjoy so much time together learning and hiking. Sign-up today in club meetings, by calling 706-283-2037, or by texting 706-986-6582 or emailing LMDYE@uga.edu.

District Project Achievement
It is that time again! Don’t delay, sign up for 2019-2020 District Project Achievement today!!! The sooner you sign up, the better your chances of doing well at this AMAZING competition!!! 6th, 7th and 8th graders who plan on competing next year should make plans to come to the Portfolio Workshop held on our early release day, Thursday, May 23rd, from 1:00-5:00pm at the 4-H Center! We can’t wait for another great year at DPA!!!

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Closed 12:00pm-1:00pm

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