NEWS & EVENTS

Madison Brown’s 4-H Journey

Elbert County 4-H celebrates Madison Brown! She has been an extraordinarily active 4-H’er since 5th grade. Madison obtained 4-H Master status with her Outdoor Recreation Project in 2019. She was awarded Northeast District Leadership in Action Winner, McLanahan Crushed Stone Junior 4-H Scholarship, and A. Jalil Senior 4-H Scholarship. She was a Georgia 4-H Leader serving on the 2019-2020 Northeast District Senior Board. Madison was selected to be a counselor at Rock Eagle 4-H Center for the summer of 2020, but due to COVID-19, that is on hold until next year. At the close of her senior year, Madison achieved two big honors; 2020 Georgia 4-H Achievement Scholarship/Wayne Shackelford Scholarship and placed 2nd in the 2020 Dean’s Award for Family and Consumer Sciences. The leadership skills Madison gained through 4-H has allowed her to share those skills with others. Madison always has a smile on her face and in her heart, we will miss having her in the Elbert County 4-H office. We wish her luck as she heads to University of North Georgia this fall.

“People always ask, what does 4-H mean to me? 4-H is a family, one that will never leave your side. 4-H is learning. 4-H has taught me leadership skills, healthy living skills, and countless other life skills through my project work. If it wasn’t for 4-H I wouldn’t be able to get up in front of large groups of people, or stand in front of my district to do a campaign speech. Through 4-H I have gained lifelong friends from all over the state as well as across the country. I have memories and experiences that will never fade. I hope to continue with 4-H into college and beyond. 4-H is a way of life and I am very thankful it has been a part of mine.”  Madison Brown

Looking for Local Growers/Farmers!

2020 certainly has not gone as planned! In an effort to host a local Farmer’s Market, the City of Elberton, Chamber of Commerce, Elbert County Farm Bureau, along with our Extension Office has been busy making plans. Realizing there is still a lot of uncertainty in the air, our efforts are mostly concentrated on making the 2021 Farmer’s Market the BEST possible. However, we will host a 2020 Farmer’s Market, open to any vendor without fees, starting July 11, 2020. If you are interested in this 2020 endeavor, please complete this unbinding Google Form so we may contact you with more information: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc-Sp6p61ZACF68BjO6ngV3IB03OqV_u2dia8ZivtLKdsi7-g/viewform?usp=sf_link. We are also looking for folks who would like to be listed in our Produce/Homemade Product Directory. You may indicate interest for the Directory on the Google Form as well. Thank you.

So Easy To Preserve

The University of Georgia is pleased to announce a 6th Edition of its popular cookbook, So Easy to Preserve. Chapters in the 388-page book include Preserving Food, Canning, Pickled Products, Sweet Spreads and Syrups, Freezing and Drying. So Easy to Preserve cookbooks are $18 each and make wonderful gifts, come by the office to purchase one.
Planning to make cucumber pickles this season? The type of cucumber you use makes a difference! Choose pickling varieties of cucumbers for the best quality fresh pack or fermented pickles. Burpless cucumbers are not recommended. At their normal mature size, these cucumbers produce an enzyme that causes pickles to soften during fermentation.

Select “unwaxed” whole cucumbers for pickling because the brine or pickling solutions cannot penetrate the wax. Choose 1-½ inch long cucumbers for gherkins and up to 4 inches long for dills. Use odd shaped or more mature cucumbers for relishes or sliced pickles.

Do not use cucumbers that show any signs of mold or deterioration. Use safe food handling practices when pickling cucumbers. Wash hands with soap and warm water. Keep all utensils and surfaces clean by washing with soap and hot water before, during, and after pickling. Wash cucumbers under cold running water while scrubbing with a clean vegetable brush; especially in the stem area where soil can trap bacteria that can cause pickles to soften. Drain and blot dry with clean paper toweling and refrigerate at 40 degrees or below if not pickling immediately. Cucumbers deteriorate rapidly at room temperature. For best quality pickles, plan to process cucumbers within 24 hours of picking or purchasing.

UGA Extension recommended procedures provide guidelines for processing safe and quality pickles. Ingredients used when making quick pickled cucumbers can include salt, vinegar, sugar, and spices. Each of these ingredients play a vital role in the success of the finished product! The amount of vinegar is very important to safety and the freshness of spices is important to quality.

**Salt** – Use pure granulated salt labeled as “pickling” or “canning” salt. Other salts contain anti-caking materials that can make the brine cloudy. Recipes for pickles with reduced sodium content are provided in Guide 6 of the USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning. Guide 6 can be found at: [https://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/usda/GUIDE06_HomeCan_rev0715.pdf](https://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/usda/GUIDE06_HomeCan_rev0715.pdf)

**Vinegar** – Use 5-percent (50 grain) cider or white vinegar. Check the label and verify. Do not use homemade vinegar or vinegar of unknown acidity when pickling. Follow UGA Extension recommendations for using vinegar when pickling. Do not dilute vinegar unless UGA Extension recommended recipes specify to do so. Cider vinegar adds flavor and aroma; however, white vinegar should be used for lighter or white fruits and vegetables for clearness of color.

**Sugar** – White sugar is used unless brown sugar is specified in the recipe. Sugar substitutes are usually not recommended because heat and storage can cause bitterness or loss of flavor and do not “plump” the pickles like sugar and keep them firm.

**Spices** – Always use fresh whole spices for the best quality and flavor when pickling cucumbers. Powdered spices will cause pickles to darken and make the brine cloudy. Tie whole spices in a clean white cloth or cheesecloth bag when heating the brine, and then remove before packing the pickles in the jar.

Hard water may interfere with the acid formation and prevent pickles from curing properly. Soften hard water by boiling for 15 minutes, covering and cooling for 24 hours before removing any scum. After the settling for 24 hours, pour the softened water carefully into another container from the top so any sediment on the bottom is not poured out with it.

UGA Extension recipes for both fermented and fresh pack pickles are available at [https://nchfp.uga.edu/index.html](https://nchfp.uga.edu/index.html) or in our So Easy to Preserve book that can be ordered online at [https://setp.uga.edu/](https://setp.uga.edu/). If you need additional information, please contact Christa Campbell at (706) 283-2037 or email christaa@uga.edu.
Be vigilant to keep mosquitoes at bay this summer
By Elmer Gray for CAES News

It officially turned summer this past weekend and the weather forecast seems to agree, with thunderstorms and warm nights in our future. These conditions are pretty typical for summer in Georgia — and excellent for mosquito development.

As a refresher, all mosquitoes require standing water to complete their life cycle and intermittent showers are very effective at filling containers around our homes and neighborhoods. These containers serve as excellent habitats for the larval stage of a mosquito to develop. Consequently, residents need to be particularly diligent about dumping out anything that can hold water and trying to keep things tidy around their properties this time of the year. The more things you have in your yards and on your porches, patios and decks, the better chance that you’re growing your own mosquitoes.

In Georgia, mosquito control is conducted by a wide range of entities from county and town governments to private contractors to homeowners. In addition, the Georgia Department of Public Health and University of Georgia Cooperative Extension conduct surveillance and training programs in an effort to support an integrated pest management (IPM) approach to mosquito control.

The AMCA broadly supports the public health mission of the mosquito control industry and has a wealth of mosquito-related information on its website at mosquito.org. The Georgia Mosquito Control Association also offers resources at gamosquito.org.

Using an IPM approach provides step-by-step methods of mosquito control that anyone can use. The first step is education. It’s important to learn about mosquito biology and where mosquitoes develop. In many areas, it’s in the containers, debris and drainage systems that are right in front of us. This is why, no matter how comprehensive an area’s mosquito control program is, residents must do their part to eliminate potential larval habitats of standing water.

The second step is source reduction. A vigilant “tip or toss” approach — tipping out standing water from flower pots, planters, children’s toys, wading pools, buckets and anything else around your yard that can hold water and tossing out anything unneeded that holds water — will help to minimize local mosquito populations in many instances. Any practice to eliminate standing water and improve drainage will help to limit mosquito populations.

The third step is surveillance. This means getting out there and searching for cryptic, or hidden, larval habitats and working to collect and identify the mosquitoes that are causing the nuisance in a yard or neighborhood. By identifying the pest species, mosquito control practitioners will have a better idea where to look for the larval habitats.

Sometime, this work will show that the mosquitoes causing the problem are coming from swamps or marshes, and using a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency approved larvicide — the fourth step in integrated mosquito management — may be in order. Homeowners can also apply larvicide, using the mosquito dunks that are commonly available in garden and hardware stores to treat small areas of standing water where mosquito larvae, or wiggles, are seen. As with all pesticides, it’s extremely important to carefully read the pesticide label and follow all instructions carefully.

There will be times when the larval mosquito habitats can’t be found or are too expansive to treat with larvicide. In these cases, it is necessary to apply an adulticide — the fifth and final stage of an integrated program. Properly conducted adulticide applications are very effective at reducing the number of mosquitoes present at a given time, but the effects are typically short-lived, as the application is only effective against the mosquitoes that are present at the time of the application.

Adulticide applications require strict attention to pesticide labels and a particular awareness of the need to minimize impacts to pollinators and other non-targets. Communication between beekeepers and organized mosquito control programs has never been more important.

Residents should also be aware that they can help minimize non-target risks. Following these integrated mosquito management practices will reduce the need for adulticide applications. If residents or private contractors are conducting adulticide applications, it is essential to avoid applications around flower plants and to try to make applications as late in the day as possible to allow pollinators to return to their nests.

As summer begins, think about what you can do to reduce mosquitoes in your community. Eliminate any standing water, support your community program or government, and help your neighbors. Together we all can work to reduce mosquito populations in our communities. For additional information, see UGA Extension Circulars 1154, 1155 and 1188 at extension.uga.edu/publications.
CONGRATULATIONS to the Elbert County 4-H Poultry Judging Teams who competed in the Northeast/Southeast Virtual Poultry Judging Contest!! Senior Team Captain is Annabelle Kidd, and Junior Team Captain is Gracie Kidd! Our Junior Team (Averie, Shannon, Gracie, Allie, Julianna, and Samantha) placed 1st, with four team members placing in the Top Ten Junior Individuals: Samantha, Julianna, Allie, and Shannon!!! As a first-year team, placing number one in a district competition is a significant accomplishment! Our EC4H Poultry Judging Team worked hard, and we are so proud of them!

4-H’ers involved in the poultry judging program are challenged with real-life issues as they learn and understand standards used in poultry and egg production and marketing and begin to apply the standards in realistic situations. Members of the Elbert County 4-H Poultry Judging Team evaluate both live specimens and market poultry, identify parts of birds already prepared for market, and evaluate eggs as to their quality and readiness for market. Participants develop the techniques of logical, accurate decision making, learn to recognize reasons for decisions and cultivate the ability to express reasons orally, and thereby acquire the skills of decision making, critical thinking, and problem solving. During the live production class, participants justify their placing through an oral presentation, learning organizational skills as they compose their thoughts into a cohesive set of reasons justifying their decisions. Livestock judging projects give students the opportunity to practice and acquire new knowledge in the fields of animal science, business, technology and leadership. Poultry judging allows students to improve leadership abilities, build character and assume citizenship responsibilities, and develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes for lifelong use.

Annabelle will go on to compete in the State 4-H Virtual Poultry Judging Competition on July 6th.

CONTACT US

Christa Campbell
County Extension Coordinator and County Extension Agent, FACS
christaa@uga.edu | 706-283-2037

County Extension Agent, ANR | uge1105@uga.edu | 706-283-2037

Lauren Macias-Dye
County Extension Agent, 4-H | lmdye@uga.edu | 706-283-2037

Sophie Walsky
County Extension 4-H Program Assistant | emiko.walsky@uga.edu | 706-283-2037

Jennifer Downer
County Extension EFNEP Program Assistant | Jennifer.downer@uga.edu | 706-283-2037

Trisha Willis
County Extension Administrative Assistant | trisha.willis@uga.edu | 706-283-2037

Elbert County Extension
1088 Ruckersville Rd.
Elberton, GA 30635

Phone: 706-283-2037
Fax: 706-283-2038

Office Hours:
Monday - Friday
8:00am - 5:00pm
Closed 12:00pm-1:00pm

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