



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA EXTENSION



NEWS & EVENTS

Up Coming Classes & Events

Making The Most of Your Garden: Seed Saving

Whether you're a novice gardener or have a green thumb, seed saving from your produce and flowers can be a fun challenge! Seed saving can improve plant genetics, increase desirable traits of produce, save money on purchasing seed, and ensure a sustainable garden over the long run.

Join Lincoln County Extension as we present a FREE and VIRTUAL seed saving webinar on Tuesday, June 18th at 6PM EST.

Register at tinyurl.com/seedsaving2024 to attend.

Contact: **Robyn Stewart**
[706-359-3233](tel:706-359-3233)
rlstew2@uga.edu

Totally Tomatoes!

Tomatoes are the most popular garden vegetable in the United States; you'd be hard-pressed to find any home vegetable garden without at least one tomato plant. GA tomato growers face unique challenges, and Lisa Klein is here to guide you through them. Attendees will learn how to successfully start tomatoes from seed, how to address common tomato disease issues here in GA, how to choose the best tomato varieties for our area and more! June 27 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Join on Zoom: <https://extension.uga.edu/calendar/event/22991/totally-tomatoes.html>

Contact: **Lisa Klein**
[678-377-4010](tel:678-377-4010)
lisa.klein@gwinnettcountry.com

Garden Tips for June

Ornamentals

- * Prune azaleas and camellias
- * Spray gardenias to control white flies and sooty mold
- * Spray crape myrtles with Malathion or Orthene for aphid control
- * Do touch-up pruning when new shrub growth reaches 12 inches

Turf

- * Plant grass where needed
- * Fertilize lawn
- * Apply pre-emergence herbicide for crabgrass control and broad-leaf weeds
- * Check lawn for disease and insect damage

Flowers

- * Continue to plant marigolds, zinnias, salvia, annual vinca and begonias
- * Pinch terminals of flowers to promote branching
- * Spray roses for insects and disease control
- * Plant dahlias
- * Fertilize roses

Houseplants

- * Fertilize every two weeks
- * Clean houseplants that have become dusty

Vegetables

- * Make a second planting of beans, sweet corn, squash, okra and cucumbers
- * Spray tomatoes with calcium chloride to correct blossom end rot
- * Fertilize tomatoes every four to six weeks

Fruit and nuts

- * Thin fruit
- * Fertilize blackberries and apples
- * Spray fungicide for disease
- * Apply insecticide where needed or on schedule

AG & NATURAL RESOURCES

Hay Quality

Brian Bradford , Elbert County ANR Agent

The month of June is already upon us, and many producers in our area have finished up the first cutting of hay and are already gearing up for the second one, coming on strong. Summer is here in our area, and that means many things in the agriculture world, but one thing it means is that the hay season is here and is in full swing! Hay is essential in all of our livestock operations and is a commodity readily sold on the market. Still, all hay is not created equal, and this can be because of many variables and factors a producer may or may not have control over. Let's take a closer look and see what some of these factors are that influence hay quality.

Livestock producers should carefully consider hay quality since forage is the foundation of any livestock feeding program. Paying close attention to forage selection can ensure healthy animals and minimize supplementation costs. Terms like “horse quality” often refer to the visual nature of the hay rather than its ability to meet an animal's nutritional needs. After all, a pleasure horse will have vastly different nutritional requirements than a lactating mare or growing colt, just like a breeding-age heifer has many different requirements than a lactating cow with a calf. Putting all the buzzwords aside, here are a few factors that influence hay quality:

1. Plant maturity at harvest is the most important factor determining quality. Early in the growing season, plants are in a vegetative stage with high concentrations of starch, sugar, proteins, and minerals. As the growing season advances, plants develop elongated stems and seed heads with a higher proportion of fiber. Subsequently, digestibility decreases. Maturity also influences the amount an animal can eat. The first question I ask about hay is how many days since it was last cut.
2. Forage species and variety also play significant roles in the final quality of a hay product. Legumes generally produce more nutritious forage than grasses. Within a species, there may be significant varietal differences. I can think of at least five different types of Bermuda grass produced locally, and I expect different qualities from each.
3. Bale Storage should never be overlooked when hay shopping. Bales should be protected from weather elements. Significant losses to substance and quality occur over time with weather exposure.
4. Good hay is relatively weed-free and free of foreign materials. Many weeds have a poor feed value, and some can be toxic. I rarely buy hay listed as “goat quality” without much clarification. If the producer's idea of goat quality is very weedy hay that only goats would potentially eat, you should probably move on. Aside from feed quality issues, you will also introduce new weed seeds to your property. Other foreign objects in hay are unacceptable. Something like a piece of trash or wire picked up in a bale could puncture an animal's gut.
5. Hay, being free of potential toxins, is also crucial for animal safety. Many toxic compounds become locked in when forage is harvested for hay. A common problem we test hay for is high nitrate content, particularly after drought stress. High moisture content in hay can lead to quality loss and mold danger. Various mold species can present huge safety concerns for livestock and should be avoided.

While fertilization should be important to a hay producer for growth, a hay buyer should not strongly consider it. More nitrogen fertilization can equate to higher protein in a sample but has not been found to increase digestibility. Overall, fertilizer has minimal effect on hay quality. The only way to match the energy and other nutritional factors to the correct animals is to have a laboratory analysis of each batch of hay you purchase. Various stages of livestock production have different nutritional requirements. Lower-quality but safe hay can be used for animals in maintenance (ex, dry females and mature males not currently breeding). Growth, reproduction, and lactation will all require additional energy.

In some situations, a hay test may be impractical. At least some forage quality factors can be subjectively assessed by visual appraisal. If it smells musty or moldy, it probably is. The emergence of many seed heads on grass or flowers on legumes can indicate more mature hay, particularly if the seed heads crumble easily. Larger stems in hay typically indicate a higher fiber content, making it harder to digest and lower in calorie content. Hay with more leaf material present will contain higher nutrient content. Contact your local Extension office if you're new to buying hay. We can advise you on what is needed for the animals you have to feed and where you may be able to find it for sale or put you in contact with the local producers that we know.



FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES

Drink Water for Your Health Christa Campbell, Elbert County FACS Agent

“Drink more water” is an age-old piece of advice. But do you know why you should drink more water or how it helps your body be healthy?

Why We Need Water

Our bodies are made up of mostly water. A newborn baby’s body is 75% water and our adult bodies are around 60% water. Our organs require water to stay healthy. Drinking the recommended amount of water helps your body in the following ways: boosts brain function, helps regulate blood pressure, makes skin healthy, regulates body temperature, helps joints work smoothly, removes wastes and toxins, and decreases constipation.

How Your Body Uses Water

So, you just finished drinking a glass of water. But what does your body do with that water now? Water is necessary to help your blood transport oxygen and nutrients throughout your body and to your organs. Your liver and kidneys require water to help your body get rid of harmful substances. Water helps our bodies to get rid of the extra sodium we eat. Even our brain is about 70% water, which means staying hydrated helps us think clearly.

How much water do we need?

Water needs are different for individuals based on body size, gender, physical activity level and body water losses. We get water from foods we eat and fluids we drink. In general, women need around 9 cups of fluid daily and men need around 12.5 cups fluid daily.

Tips for Drinking More Water

- Carry a water bottle and refill it throughout the day.
- Make water taste better by adding water with fruit, vegetables, and herbs.
- Set a reminder on your phone to drink more water. Water tracker, Waterllama, has a free app to track water intake and set daily goals. You can grow a virtual plant on the Plant Nanny Water Tracker log. Every time you drink water, your plant will grow as you track the water you drink!
- Challenge yourself and family members to set a goal to drink your daily requirement of water.

Replacing Sugary Beverages with Water

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025 recommend that we limit added sugars to less than 10% of daily total calories. Sugar-sweetened beverages make up the largest percentage of added sugars in the typical American diet. [5] Replacing just one 16-ounce bottle of soda with a glass of water every day will save 210 calories. That adds up to a total of 76,650 calories each year! Small changes lead to big results.

The smallest of changes in what you drink each day can make a big difference in your overall health. Start by drinking one cup of water a day.

Visit the Drink Water, Georgia website <https://water.foodtalk.org/en/home> for more tips and join the summer challenge to drink more water!

Written by Leslie Davis, MS, RD, LD, CDCES | Edited by the Nutrition Education Team

4-H & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

2024 Elbert County 4-H Summer Activities

All summer activities are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Students must sign-up and pay the registration fee in advance. The 4-H Staff reserves the right to cancel activities with low participation. Sign-ups are held at the 4-H Office inside Blackwell Learning Center (373 Campbell Street).

June 13 * Kayaking the Broad River Junior/Senior 4-H'ers

Celebrate summer with a splash on a Broad River Kayaking trip that we will enjoy with other Northeast District Counties. Cost \$40, 8am-5pm

June 14 * Lake Hartwell Wildlife Safari

Go on a drive-through adventure to meet ostrich, bison, zebras, deer, antelope, camels, alpacas, llamas, kangaroos, and more! Admission \$15, feed bag \$5, Budgie Experience \$3, and bring money for lunch in Hartwell. 10am-4pm

July 16 * Tubing in Helen and Waterpark

Cool off in the heat of summer while floating down the "hooch" on a tube with friends. After tubing the river, participants will also have an opportunity to enjoy the Helen Water Park. Cost \$45, 8am-5pm

July 30 * Richard B. Russell State Park Northeast District Tailgate

Spend the day swimming, hiking, playing games and hanging out with friends from other 4-H clubs in our district. We'll have a cookout for lunch. Bring towels, sunscreen, and a dry change of clothes. Cost \$15, 8am-5pm



If you need a reasonable accommodation or language access services, contact the Elbert County Extension office at 706-283-2037 or uge1105@uga.edu at least three weeks prior to the program date.

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Monday - Friday
8:00am - 5:00pm

Closed 12:00pm-1:00pm

Visit our website at:

www.ugaextension.org/elbert

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Elbert County 4-H