



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA EXTENSION



NEWS & EVENTS

Sweet Vidalia Onions

In a nutshell, Vidalia Onions are very mild, sweet onions grown in a specific territory in south Georgia, comprised of 20 counties, centered around Vidalia, GA. For farmers to grow & call sweet onions 'Vidalia,' they must be grown in this specific region due to its unique blend of soil & nutrients that help produce their distinctive flavor. Vidalia sweet onions love the sandy loam soil and mild conditions of the southeast Georgia growing region. When these onions are ready for harvest, their delicate nature requires they be harvested by hand, thoroughly dried & cured, and treated gently during grading and packing. The Vidalia season start changes every year, as it's directly set by the farmers based on the readiness of the crop. For all of you who purchased these wonderfully sweet onions from Elbert County 4-H, we are thankful! Over 400 bags were sold to support our local 4-H programs.



Congratulations Elbert County 4-H Senior Poultry Judging!!



The Elbert County 4-H Senior Poultry Judging Team tied for 1st place in the 2024 Oglethorpe Area Poultry Judging contest on Monday, April 18. Team members are Josue Bravo, Shannon Freeman, Emily Hobbs, Gracie Kidd, Allie Stephens, Samantha Walsky, and Julianna Walsky. Julianna scored Second High Senior Individual, and Samantha and Shannon were in the Top Ten. As the four top scoring members in the area contest, Julianna Walsky, Samantha Walsky, Shannon Freeman, and Allie Stephens will represent Elbert County in the State Poultry Judging Contest.

The State Poultry Judging Contest presents an opportunity for every member of this team to achieve the prestigious Master 4-H'er status, and the First Place Senior Team will represent Georgia at the National Poultry Judging Contest in Louisville, Kentucky.

Members of the Elbert County 4-H Poultry Judging Team have attended practice sessions and workshops in such poultry judging classes as live birds, egg quality, ready-to-cook carcasses, parts identification, and further processed poultry. They 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. 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. Poultry judging allows students to improve leadership abilities, build character and assume citizenship responsibilities, and develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes for lifelong use.

AG & NATURAL RESOURCES

Have you heard the hum? Cicadas are Here! Brian Bradford , Elbert County ANR Agent

I'm sure that by now, many people have heard about the cicadas that are emerging this year. Because this will be a once every thirteen years event, we should dive right into the conversation. Let's talk about what they look like, what they eat, and any other facts you might need to know about cicadas.

Adult cicadas are winged insects that grow to about 2.5 inches long. Their bodies are black with some red stripes down the wings. They sometimes get confused with locusts

because people associate them with coming in waves or plagues. Cicadas are not nearly as destructive as locusts. The main issue with cicadas will be the amount of noise they create. In groups, their sound can reach 100 decibels. This is the same as a jet flyover at 1000 feet or a helicopter at 100 feet. The males trying to attract a female to mate create this noise. After mating, the female will lay her eggs inside the trees. If young trees are completely swarmed, they can be damaged. You can use a net to protect them. These eggs will hatch in 6-10 weeks. The nymphs fall to the ground and burrow in, starting the 13-year cycle over again.



Cicadas will begin to emerge when soil temperatures reach 64 degrees. We typically start to hit those temperatures at the end of April. Cicadas do provide some benefits. The nymphs in the soil burrow and create channels for roots. They are a source of food for wildlife like wild turkeys. Moles also feast on the underground nymphs.

Here are some thoughts from UGA entomology professor Nancy Hinkle on the subject. "This year, we anticipate over a trillion cicadas will emerge in 12 to 14 states. You will not see any periodical cicadas before Tax Day, and none will emerge after the end of May." The cicadas that will surface in the spring are known as "Brood XIX." For 13 years, periodical cicadas have been underground, feeding on tree roots, preparing for the emergence.

Unlike the larger cicadas that emerge in Georgia each summer, periodical cicadas have a distinct color. "Periodical cicadas are red and black," Hinkle said. "We claim them here at the University of Georgia." Annual cicadas are larger than periodical cicadas and typically have green bodies with black eyes. Periodical cicadas do not pose a threat, and several animals, including humans, can eat them.

"Periodical cicadas are perfectly harmless. They cannot bite or sting, and they are not poisonous," Hinkle said. Because they are not a pest, you really should not do anything to try and control them. There is no need for pesticides or removal. These adult cicadas will only be around for a couple of weeks and then start dying after mating. Be patient and the nuisance will be gone soon. So sit back, enjoy the show, and take this opportunity to teach your kids about this marvelous part of nature.

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES

Tips for Keeping Your Indoor Air Clean **Christa Campbell, Elbert County FACS Agent**

According to the EPA's Guide to Air Cleaners in the home, indoor air contains pollutants that can affect human health. Some of these pollutants come from outdoors, and others come from indoor sources and activities, such as cooking, cleaning, secondhand smoke, building materials, consumer products, and home furnishings. The most effective ways to improve indoor air are to reduce or remove the sources of pollutants and to ventilate with clean outdoor air. In addition, research shows that filtration can be an effective supplement to source control and ventilation. Using a portable air cleaner and/or upgrading the air filter in your furnace or central heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system can help to improve indoor air quality. Here are things to consider if you want or need to keep your indoor air as clean as possible.

1. Get a portable air cleaner, being sure to avoid products that produce ozone. Here are a few things to consider: (1) To filter particles, choose a portable air cleaner with a clean air delivery rate (CADR) large enough for the size of the room or area in which you will use it. (2) To filter gases, choose a portable air cleaner with an activated carbon filter or other filter designed to remove gases. (3) Generally speaking, higher fan speeds and longer run times will increase the amount of air filtered. The EPA website has more information on [selecting an air cleaner](#).
2. If you can't find an air cleaner, you can build a [do-it-yourself version](#) using a box fan.
3. Use a high-efficiency HVAC filter with a Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value or [MERV-13 rating](#) if your HVAC system can accommodate it. Check with an HVAC professional for guidance.
4. Don't create more indoor air pollution. Avoid smoking indoors, vacuuming, frying or broiling meat, or burning candles. All these activities create particulate matter.

Learn more about improving the air you breathe on the [EPA website](#).



4-H & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

4-H Knight at Medieval Times

Get ready to watch an epic battle of steel and steed take place before your eyes as Medieval era Spain comes to life. Watch knights jousting and sword fighting. See horsemanship and falconry! Transportation, dinner, and show are all included for this summer activity which any 4-H'er can attend. **Saturday, June 1st**, is the event, from 3:00-11:00pm, and the cost is **\$45**. Sign-up starts May 17th. You must register and pay by Friday, May 24th. Spots are limited and filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Friday, May 17th, through Monday, June 3rd.

Lake Hartwell Wildlife Safari

Join us on **Friday, June 14th**, to go on a drive-through adventure to meet ostriches, bison, zebras, deer, antelope, camels, alpacas, llamas, kangaroos, and more! The registration for this event is **\$15**. Students may register at the 4-H Office between Friday, May 17th and Friday, June 7th. Spots are limited and filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Additional fees (optional): each feed bag \$5, and each Budgie Experience \$3. Bring money for lunch in Hartwell.

Farm Camp

Are you curious about what it takes to survive farm life? Then Farm Camp is for you! Join us over this three day camp to visit Elbert County farms and learn about all the fun (and challenging) activities farmers deal with daily. Farm Camp is held in conjunction with Elbert County Farm Bureau and will be Monday-Wednesday, June 10-12. The total cost for Farm Camp is \$50; you must pay \$25 to reserve your spot, and spots are limited! The camp will run from 8:00am-5:00pm each day. More details will be provided to those who register! Registration can be completed from Friday, May 17th, through Monday, June 3rd.



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

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