

Forsyth Field Notes

Forsyth County Cooperative Extension News

May 2020

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Declutter for Well-being

By Barbara Worley
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Household clutter can add stress to your life. [This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)

Clutter is a word that is defined differently for every person. To some, having many items surrounding them in their home might make them feel secure. To others, that could

cause frustration and a need to have fewer things in their personal space. Tendencies toward acquiring and keeping possessions is not the same for everyone, and this has led our society to the development of various methods to reduce clutter.

UCA EXTENSION - FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

Focusing on Important Necessities in Your Dwelling

FIND

Ready to FIND a solution?

For each question, circle which answer you can most easily relate to, then total your points!

- 1 A visitor is coming - how long does it take to clean up?
NO TIME (0) | 1 HOUR (1) | 1 DAY (2) | 1 WEEK (3) | DON'T COME! (4)
- 2 Would friends/family/co-workers be able to ride in your car?
SPOTLESS (0) | TRUNK IS STORAGE (1) | ROOM FOR ONE (2) | AFTER CLEARING THE PASSENGER SEAT (3) | NO ROOM (4)
- 3 Do you have a hard time letting go of things?
TOSS IT! (0) | A LITTLE HESITANT (1) | WHEN I FIND IT A GOOD HOME (2) | WHAT IF I NEED IT LATER!? (3) | NOTHING GOES (4)
- 4 How often do you face impulse buying and later remorse?
NEVER (0) | ONCE A MONTH (1) | ONCE A WEEK (2) | ONCE A DAY (3) | I CAN'T KEEP UP WITH ALL MY PURCHASES (4)
- 5 If you need a particular item or document in your home, how long does it take you to find it on average?
30 SECS (0) | 15 MIN (1) | 1 HOUR (2) | ALL DAY (3) | I WILL NEVER FIND IT (4)
- 6 How are your personal relationships affected by your organization or clutter?
NO EFFECT (0) | MINOR EFFECT (1) | COMPROMISE IS KEY (2) | STRESS IS INCREASING (3) | I HAVE LOST/CAN'T MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS (4)
- 7 How much of your home are you unable to use because of clutter or need to organize?
NONE (0) | SOME SPACE (1) | HALF OF IT (2) | MOST ROOMS ARE FULL (3) | ALL ROOMS ARE FULL / NO ROOM TO WALK (4)

Your total!



Flip over



Why do we have clutter?

There are various reasons why some people are more prone to clutter than others.



Sometimes lack of time due to poor time management or hectic schedules results in items such as clothes or mail piling up. Not having a system for organizing items makes things messy. Clutter can also be our social or cultural norm. Some generations who lived through historic periods (i.e. The Great Depression) may hesitate to throw away anything that can be used again. Other people feel like they must buy excessively in order to make sure they are always prepared. Additionally, one's mental health may lead to clutter. A person may find emotional attachments to many of their items and feel the need to keep them, especially if the item belonged to a now deceased loved one.

Benefits of reducing clutter

When things are cluttered, it's often harder to find things we need at a moment's notice, which can lead to stress. Reducing clutter can create a sense of accomplishment. Reducing stress can also improve our relationships. When our homes are not cluttered, we're more likely to invite friends and family over or offer our home as the gathering place for Friday night potlucks. Reducing clutter has a positive impact on our mental health as well, resulting in a sense of calmness and clearer thinking. Also, reducing clutter makes your home safer by reducing tripping hazards.

Barriers to reducing clutter

The reasons people have clutter are vast. Some find the task of organizing overwhelming, while others are attached to memories of objects. Auto-shipments of products and problems with time management can also be a hindrance to reducing clutter.

How to reduce clutter and maintain balance in your life

Everyone has a different idea of how much clutter is manageable. Determining a

manageable level of clutter to fit your lifestyle is as important as finding a method of organization. What's tolerable to one person may be overwhelming to someone else. Figure out what is your motivation to declutter your home. Your primary goal may be to make your home safer and healthier or to reduce allergy and asthma triggers. You may want to redecorate your home. Or, you might find decluttering a way to make money by selling items you don't need.

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Ready to FIND a solution?

INGENIOUS IDEAS

0-6

It's said that "it's better to give than to receive." We hope you'll share tools that have been helpful for you and that you "find" new ways to keep organizing your life.

MOTIVATED MOVES

7-13

Sometimes it just takes a bit of encouragement to move us along and you "found" us! This class will give you the power to make lasting changes!

HANG TOUGH

14-20

Looks like you've "found" just the right class that will offer practical ideas to get you on the path to an organized life. Hang tough - this class will be fun!

NEVER LOST

21-28

We're so glad you "found" us! Organizing one's life (time, money, health, home, relationships) can be overwhelming. Let's FIND a solution!

Find us at:
find.uga.edu

To learn more, please watch the FIND webinar at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XR9MXWEK9TY>.

Evict Invasive Plants from Your Yard

By Heather N. Kolich
Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent
UGA Extension Forsyth County

When my family moved to a new home over the winter, we started getting to know our yard by hand-weeding the lawn and beds. Finding three particular non-native invasive plants in the “naturalized” backyard, however, pushed my integrated pest management strategy to a different level.

I already knew I would have to wrangle with two problematic species. Privet (*Ligustrum sinense*) and nandina (*Nandina domestica*) stay green in the winter while other plants are dormant and leafless. I didn’t notice the third invasive plant until the weather warmed a bit and sent it snaking along the ground. Identifying this plant took some time and effort because it’s dimorphous; the leaf has a different shape during rapid growth. In this case, most leaves looked like perfect, miniature oak leaves growing opposite each other on a red vine. After a lengthy search, I identified the plant as Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), which we usually see with oblong leaves.



Invasive Japanese honeysuckle leaves may look like oak leaves on a vine during rapid growth.
Photo by H.N. Kolich

Several factors make invasive plants problematic: They grow in both sun and shade; they reproduce from both roots and

seeds; they spread rapidly; and they destroy the natural biodiversity of southeastern U.S. forests by displacing native plants. Japanese honeysuckle occurs more commonly than other non-native invasive plants, but non-native privet has taken over 644,317 acres of Georgia forest lands.



Non-native privet has earned top billing on the Georgia Forestry Commission’s “Dirty Dozen List” of non-native invasive plants for several years.
Photo by H.N. Kolich

Controlling invasive plants is a lengthy process that begins with identification. To achieve success, we need to know the lifecycle of the plant and understand how it spreads. Because privet and nandina spread by root suckers, simply cutting down the

plants doesn't eliminate them. Eradication requires a combination of mechanical removal, timely application of appropriate herbicides, and persistence through multiple seasons.

To ensure the safety of other plants and the nearby creek, I'll use a very targeted approach to each of these invasive plants. One component of my integrated pest management strategy involves pruning flowers and berries off the invasive plants to prevent seed distribution. In a second component, I'll cut the stem or trunk of the plant close to the ground and immediately paint the stump with a 20% solution of glyphosate. This application method eliminates the possibility of herbicide spray drifting to non-target plants. When glyphosate is applied to the stump immediately after making the cut, the plant pulls it down into the root system, where glyphosate works to kill roots. The dead roots won't be able to push up suckers, but surviving root sections still can.



Removing berries from invasive plants like nandina prevents birds from spreading seeds. Photo by H.N. Kolich

The third component of my invasive plant eradication plan is vigilance and persistence. If I consistently apply this plan, I expect to see progress this year and eradication in three years.

If you have a weed problem you want to tackle this spring, contact your county Extension office for assistance with weed identification and developing a comprehensive weed pest management plan.

Leaf Gall in Ornamental Shrubs is Seasonal Issue

By Beverly Adams
Agriculture and Natural Resources Program Assistant
UGA Extension Forsyth County



Leaf gall, caused by a fungus, is a springtime disease of several ornamental plants. Photo by L. Gordon

I have had a few residents contact me recently with issues with their camellias, azaleas, or hydrangeas. The leaves look unsightly and are turning colors and dying. The problem is camellia leaf gall, and it's easy to take care of.



This disease is more common on sasanqua varieties of camellias than on Japanese camellia. It is caused by the fungus *Exobasidium camelliae*. It also can occur on azaleas and hydrangeas. The galls are most often observed during the spring flush of new growth. New shoots and leaves become enlarged, thickened, fleshy, and appear abnormal. The color of affected leaves changes from light green to nearly white or pink. Later, the galls will rupture on the bottom of the leaves and produce whiteish spores. Galls eventually harden and become brown. The good news is that plants are seldomly damaged from this disease.

To prevent and treat camelia leaf gall:

- Remove and destroy young galls before the lower leaf surfaces turn white and spores are released, or it will come back next year and be much worse.
- Practice good sanitation around plants by raking up and removing fallen leaves.
- Do not wet the leaves when watering. Gall formations favor humid, moist, shady conditions.

Chemical controls have a limited effect and must be applied before the infection occurs. Fungicides containing mancozeb and labeled for use on ornamental shrubs can help prevent or control camelia leaf gall. Follow the instructions on the label for application.

We are here to help. One of the best ways to contact us is via email, uge1117@uga.edu. If you have a plant problem please send a photo of the plant, description of when you noticed the problem, how many plants are affected and what is happening along with your contact information.

Meet ANR Educator Shannon Kennedy

By Shannon Kennedy
Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator
UGA Extension Forsyth County



ANR Educator Shannon Kennedy joins Forsyth County Extension.

Truth be told, when I was five years old, I was terrified of going outside. I was convinced that if I spent too much time outdoors I would be stung by something, and that was not a risk I was willing to take. But as I got older this outlook began to change. I started to watch nature specials, and there was something compelling about the places that were featured. Every single episode had a backdrop of complexity, even the deserts and tundra. No organism stood on its own; everything was impacted by the creatures and plants around it. These ideas are what lead me to a bachelor's degree in Environmental Resource Management from the University of Georgia. My name is Shannon Kennedy and I am the new



Agriculture and Natural Resource Educator with the Forsyth County Extension Office.

Studying at UGA gave me a chance to learn how to recognize components of an environment and understand how they affect the dynamics of that ecosystem. I learned that the environmental sciences were vast and varied, and if we used the information coming out of the environmental field, we could create better outdoor living spaces. Following my graduation, I spent six months in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park doing field research with the resource department there. We worked ten-hour days to inventory the plant biodiversity of the park. The data we collected will be used to look at the park's vegetation structure, and how it may change over time. The time I spent in the Smokies was priceless, and it has left me with a desire to show people why the conservation of natural resources is so important.

Often environmental sustainability seems daunting to homeowners. People often feel like sustainability projects require a lot of effort and there is little benefit. To many people, environmental health seems to be something that is bigger than any one citizen. I disagree. I believe that sustainability is more achievable than it seems. People often dismiss the impact they can have on the environment around them when in reality it is the small, everyday actions of us and our neighbors that defines the world we live in. Our yards, gardens, and landscapes are the battlegrounds of environmental science. Understanding the ecology of our native environment can aid us in implementing best management practices for our current landscapes. It helps us create beautiful and healthy spaces that improve the environment around us.

I am very excited to be working with the Forsyth County Extension Office. My major responsibilities will include answering questions you may have about your planting endeavors and offering programming that provides information on agricultural and natural resource topics to the public. You may even see me working with the schools to help establish and maintain gardens. Educating the public on how to care for their land in a sustainable way is important to me, and I am excited to be serving the community.

Connect with Food Gardening: Adding Transplants to Your Food Garden

By Heather N. Kolich
Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent
UGA Extension Forsyth County

Many of us have started home food gardens or are at least interested in growing food at home. Some food plants grow best when added to the garden as transplants. Transplants can also help us when weather or other conditions delay our planting plans. Watch our newest webinar in the Connect with Food Gardening series to learn more about Adding Transplants to Food Gardens. See it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYE3ksrYArM&t=1s>

Learning with Extension – Events and Opportunities

As we practice COVID-19 pandemic safety, Forsyth County Extension programs have moved online. To see what's happening and how to join in, please visit our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/UGAExtensionForsythCounty/>

Stay safe, stay positive, and stay connected!