



Forsyth Field Notes

July 2020

Forsyth County Cooperative Extension News

In this Issue

- Suspicious Seeds
- Healthy Drinking
- Rain Gardens
- Master Cattleman Program
- Farewell Barbara Worley
- Extension Events & Opportunities
- [Forsyth County Extension Website](#)
- [Facebook](#)

Georgia residents who receive these packages of seeds are strongly urged to leave the package sealed and send them to the Georgia Department of Agriculture Seed Laboratory in Tifton.

“At this time, we are not sure what the seeds are and therefore are urging everyone to be exceedingly vigilant,” said Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black in a press release. “If you have received one of these packages in the mail, please use extreme caution by not touching the contents and securing the package in a plastic bag.”

Suspicious Seeds Sent by Mail

The Georgia Department of Agriculture warned consumers on July 27, 2020 to be wary of packets of seeds they may unexpectedly receive by mail from China or another foreign country.

Mailings contain different types of seeds, and seeds in the packets are not identified. Seeds introduced from other countries may become invasive in North America, causing ecological damage and displacing native plants, along with the pollinators and wildlife that depend upon native plants.



CONSUMER ADVISORY

Beware unsolicited packages of seed

The Georgia Department of Agriculture has been notified that several Georgia residents have received unsolicited packages containing seeds that appear to have originated from China. Recipients are strongly advised not to open the packages or plant the seeds.

“At this time, we are not sure what the seeds are and therefore are urging everyone to be exceedingly vigilant,” Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Gary W. Black says. “If you have received one of these packages in the mail, please use extreme caution by not touching the contents and securing the package in a plastic bag.”

The types of seeds in the packages are unknown at this time and may be invasive plant species. The packages were sent by mail and may have Chinese writing on them.

Invasive species wreak havoc on the environment, displace or destroy native plants and insects and severely damage crops. Taking steps to prevent their introduction is the most effective method of reducing both the risk of invasive species infestations and the cost to control and mitigate those infestations.

Anyone who has received unsolicited seeds in the mail from China or any other country is encouraged to contact the GDA Seed Lab at 229-386-3145 or email SeedLab@agr.georgia.gov.

Recipients of these unrequested packages are cautioned not to handle or plant the seeds, and are asked to contact the GDA Seed Lab at 229-386-3145 or SeedLab@agr.georgia.gov. If possible, seal the mailing package and seeds in a zip-top bag and mail them in a sturdy, well-sealed envelope to:

Tifton Seed Laboratory
PO Box 1507
3150 U.S. Hwy 41 South
Tifton, GA 31793



Drink for Your Health

By Barbara Worley
Family and Consumer Sciences Agent
UGA Extension Forsyth County

Remembering to stay hydrated is always difficult when Georgia summers bring stifling heat. Add the element of wearing masks due to COVID-19, and drinking enough fluid becomes an even trickier task. But forgetting to drink water and other hydrating fluids can cause dehydration and associated negative health impacts.

Signs of mild to moderate dehydration include dry mouth, fatigue, thirst, decreased urine output, dry skin, headache, constipation, and dizziness or lightheadedness.

As we move around and take part in outdoor activities, the dangers of overheating and becoming dehydrated are a great risk. Drinking water to stay hydrated is an important part of keeping our families safe, healthy, and happy this summer.

Our bodies must stay hydrated to function properly. The amount of water needed to stay hydrated varies from one person to the next. As a good rule of thumb, we can determine the amount of water we need by dividing our body weight in pounds by half. This number represents the minimum number of ounces we should be drink daily. For example, someone who weighs 120 pounds should drink 60 ounces of water each day. Weather and activity level may require us to drink more water.

Some water can be taken into the body through foods. With a healthy and well-balanced diet, about 20% of water consumption is from food. Some foods, such as watermelon and strawberries, are comprised of nearly 90% water.

Follow these helpful tips from University of Georgia Extension to stay hydrated:

- Drink water with every snack or meal.
- Drink plenty of water after working out and/or playing outside.
- Keep a bottle of water in easy reach throughout the day - at your desk, in your bag, and in your child's backpack.
- Utilize reusable water bottles to prevent unwanted waste.
- Make your own fruit sodas. Half-fill a pitcher or glass with 100% fruit juice, then top off with seltzer water.
- Instead of fruit flavored beverages or sports drinks, drink 100% fruit juice with no added sugars.
- Make your own flavored water by adding slices of limes, lemons, oranges, watermelon, cucumbers, mint, or basil.
- Avoid sodas and alcoholic beverages.

Make smart choices to quench your thirst and stay well hydrated in the summer heat before, during, and after outdoor activities. And remember, pets need plenty of fresh water to stay cool and hydrated, too.



Pets need to stay hydrated, too.

Rain Gardens

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

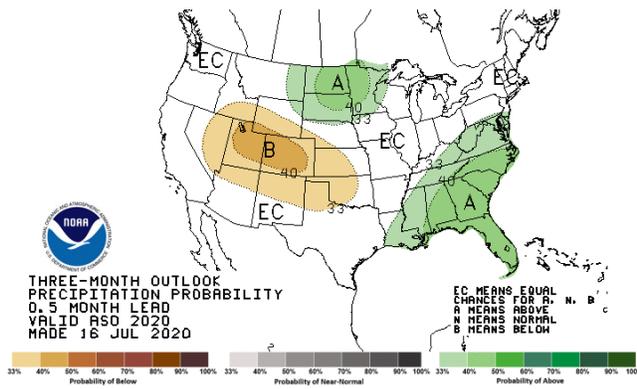
I have been astonished by the amount of rain we have received over the past few months. According to the National Weather Service, the precipitation total for the past five months is only 15 inches away from last year's total. The National Weather Service predicts that the rain will continue through summer. This means our landscapes will have to deal with an incredible amount of rainwater runoff from impermeable surfaces.



yourself: where does water drain off your

Rain gardens capture stormwater runoff and allow the water to seep slowly into the soil.

house or driveway? Where does it move?



The National Weather Service predicts above average rainfall for Georgia through October.

One way to mitigate runoff is to construct a rain garden – a specially designed flower bed that captures rainwater runoff and allows it to soak into the ground. Rain gardens function to reduce flooding and drainage problems, recharge local aquifers, provide habitat for wildlife and pollinators, and add beauty to the landscape. They also decrease the amount of pollution from excess fertilizers, pesticides, and oils that wash into streams from paved surfaces.

The first step for building a rain garden is finding where to place the garden. Observe your property during a rain event and ask

You want your rain garden to be at least 10 feet away from the foundation of your house and perpendicular to water flow paths. To test soil permeability and drainage, dig a hole 6 inches deep and 6 inches wide in the area you want to put your garden. Fill the hole with water and watch the water level to see how quickly it drains. If the hole does not drain within 12 hours, your soil is not suitable for a rain garden. When it drains, fill it with water again and if it drains within 12 hours a second time it is suitable for a rain garden. Avoid areas where water accumulates because these areas have poor drainage and a rain garden is meant to facilitate drainage. If you wish to reduce ponding in an area, place the garden up-hill from where the ponding usually occurs.

The second step is to determine the size of your new garden. This is influenced by the amount of area the garden will drain, the type of soil, and the slope of the landscape.

If you are building a rain garden for a large area, the garden will have to be larger and deeper to accommodate more runoff. If your soil does not drain very well or if the slope is steep, increase the size and depth of the garden. After you have determined the size,



shape, and location of the garden remove 4-6 inches of topsoil. Next, excavate the soil to the desired depth, (no more than 8 inches deep) being careful to keep the bottom of the bed level. Use the extra soil to create a berm on the downhill side of the garden. Lastly, amend the topsoil if needed and put it back into the newly constructed flower bed.

Finally, you can begin to add plants. Keep in mind that rain gardens are meant to drain water away, so the plants you choose must be tolerant of wet and dry conditions. Woody plants such as river birches, sweetbay magnolias, and oakleaf hydrangea are likely to work well in this type of environment. Herbaceous perennials to consider are aster, swamp milkweed, foam flower, and canna lilies.

A rain garden does not need any special maintenance. Simply fertilize it based on a soil report, use mulch to suppress weeds, and water plants during extended dry weather. If you have any questions about how to plan and construct a rain garden please contact the Forsyth County Extension Office, we would love to help!

Master Cattleman Program Offered Online This Fall

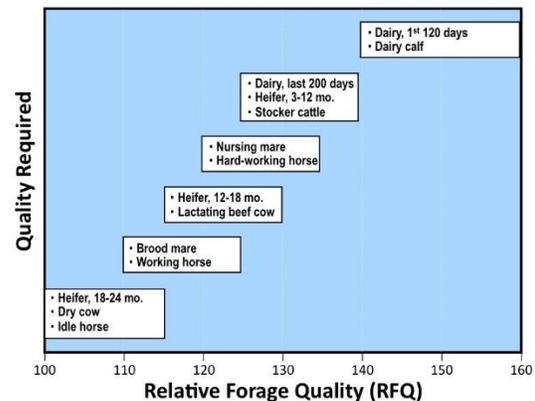
By Heather N. Kolich
Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent
UGA Extension Forsyth County

For many years, the Georgia Master Cattleman Program has helped beef cattle producers improve profitability and sustainability through the application of practical, research-based management practices. A partnership of the University of Georgia and the Georgia Cattleman's Association, the eight-session course is taught by UGA veterinarians, specialists, and Extension agents. Traditionally, MCP rotates around the state by geographic region

each spring and fall. Forsyth County Extension is hosting the Northwest Georgia program this fall, but in the interest of safety and convenience, we're breaking with tradition and offering the course as a series of live webinars.

MCP begins on September 3, 2020 with Beef Quality Assurance, a national certification program developed to enhance consumer confidence in beef production through a commitment to herd health, food safety, and sound management practices. In each subsequent weekly session, instructors dive more deeply into sound, sustainable practices for managing forage systems, improving reproduction, minimizing impacts from disease and parasites, methods for fencing, record keeping, economics of the beef industry, and more. Throughout the course, producers learn about tools and techniques that help increase profitability and mitigate loss.

Dr. Lawton Stewart, a professor in the UGA Animal and Dairy Science Department, teaches the Nutritional Management class and has made possible a program bonus of free forage testing for the first 20 participants who register for the Fall 2020 Georgia Master Cattleman Program. Laboratory testing is the only way to know the nutritional value of forage.



Adapted from Undersander et al., 20
Livestock nutrition needs vary depending on workload and production.



Based on surveys from previous MCP classes, Stewart found that about half of North Georgia cattle producers who don't forage test over-estimate the energy available in the forage they feed, and underestimate the protein content. That energy shortage can cost producers – a loss of up to \$100 per cow – by delaying return to breeding condition after calving.

Whitfield County cattleman Bob Bethel was just starting his cow-calf operation when he enrolled in the Master Cattleman Program in 2018. He said he had heard good things about the program and decided to sign up after looking at the line-up of speakers and topics covered.

“I really think, for the new person starting out or for someone who's thinking about it, there's a ton to learn from this program. But there's also a lot for experienced people to learn from hearing these experts in the industry and having the chance to ask questions.”

Bethel said learning about management of the land was important to him. “It all ties together,” he said. “Your land and your grass and your herd. Having that good, holistic understanding of how it works helps you make good decisions.”

The Fall 2020 Master Cattleman Program will meet online each Thursday evening from September 3 through October 22, 2020. The program fee is \$60 and preregistration is required by or before August 24, 2020. Participants will be provided with educational materials supporting the topics of each session. Participants who attend at least six of the eight sessions will receive a certificate of completion and a UGA Master Cattleman ballcap. The first 20 registered participants will also receive a free UGA laboratory F-2

analysis of one forage sample. In addition to measuring protein, fiber, total digestible nutrients, and nitrate, this analysis provides a Relative Forage Quality (RFQ) score and guidance to help producers determine how much of that forage their animals need to eat to get the nutrition and energy they need.

For MCP details and registration form, please visit the UGA Extension Forsyth County website at <https://extension.uga.edu/county-offices/forsyth.html> or email us at uge1117@uga.edu.

Schedule & Speakers

Thursdays 7-9 p.m.

Sept. 3: Dr. Jason Duggin: Beef Quality Assurance

Understanding the Beef We Produce

Sept. 10: Dr. Lisa Baxter: Forage Management

Sept. 17: Dr. Lee Jones: Improving Reproductive Management

Sept. 24: Ms. Sara Longbridge: Sire & Female Selection

Mrs. Charley Godowns: Georgia Cattleman's Update Record Keeping & UGA Program

Oct. 1: Dr. Nancy Hinkle: External Parasite Management

Dr. John Worley: Farm Facilities and Fencing Methods

Oct. 8: Dr. Brent Crofford: Herd Health Management, Disease, and Biosecurity

Oct. 15: Dr. Lawton Stewart: Nutritional Management

Oct. 22: Dr. John McKissick: Beef Industry Economics Graduation

For your safety and convenience, this program is offered through live webinar sessions.



Join University of Georgia professors, beef cattle specialists, and Extension agents for the

2020 Northwest Georgia Master Cattleman Program

September 3-October 22, 2020, 7-9 p.m.

Learn practical, science-based management techniques to increase profitability and sustainability in your beef cattle operation.

\$60 Registration Includes program materials for all eight live webinar sessions.

Program Bonus! Free forage sample lab analysis for first 20 paid registrants.

Preregistration required by Monday, August 24, 2020. Use registration form on next page.

For more information, contact the program coordinator: Heather Kolich, CEC & ANR Agent Forsyth County Extension 770-887-2418 | hkolich@uga.edu



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Extension is Still Open – Just Differently

From drop-off boxes for agricultural samples, to distance diagnostics for plant pathology and insect identification, to online programs, Forsyth County Extension is still here to serve you. Please visit our [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page to see what's happening.