

Forsyth Field Notes

March 2020

Forsyth County Cooperative Extension News

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Three Practices for a Weed-free Summer Lawn

By Beverly Adams
 Agriculture and Natural Resources Program Assistant

Spring green-up is right around the corner. Following these practices will help maximize turfgrass and minimize weeds.

There are three primary methods of weed control: cultural, mechanical, and chemical. To manage weeds consistently, we need to use all three.

Cultural control. This is the first line of defense against weeds. Through cultural practices, we promote vigorous turfgrass growth and development. A thick, healthy stand of turfgrass helps to smother weeds.

Cultural controls include:

- Selecting appropriate plant species for the planting environment;
- Appropriate and timely watering;

- Managing soil health and fertility. Don't guess, soil test!
- Mowing with appropriate frequency to maintain optimal turfgrass height;
- Timely core aeration; and
- Dethatching as needed.

Mechanical control.

Mechanical weed removal and prevention are our next tools. Hand-pulling a strange or new weed when it first appears will help prevent the spread of that weed.



Hand-pulling annual lawn weeds such as hairy bittercress (*Cardamine hirsute*) before they flower reduces weed-seed banking in the soil. [This Photo](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)

Frequent mowing to remove weed flowers also keeps them from making seeds for next year. Weed-blocking fabric under the mulch of lawn-bordering beds creates a barrier between weed seedlings and sunlight. Fences help keep pets off lawns to reduce lawn thinning caused by stress, urine, digging, and other damage.

Chemical control. Herbicides are the last method in your weed management toolbox. In lawns, we use preemergence herbicides to prevent or minimize annual weeds, and postemergence herbicides to kill actively growing weeds.

In planning your weed control program, three things are very important:

- Weed identification
- Turfgrass species in your lawn
- Timing of herbicide application

Mid-February to Mid-March is the time to apply preemergence herbicides to lawns to prevent germination of lingering warm season weed seeds in the soil. Not every herbicide, however, is safe to use on every type of turfgrass. The product label is the best reference for safe and effective use of any herbicide. Always read the label prior to use of any herbicide. And remember, the use of herbicides without following good cultural practices will not result in a high quality, weed free lawn.

While there are many product choices for postemergence weed control, each product controls only the weeds listed on the label. Most herbicides work best on young weeds less than 2-inches high. Spot spray broadleaf plants like chickweed, henbit, and wild violets early in the day when temperatures are between 65°F and 80°F. Use a foam or large droplet setting to prevent drift to non-target plants and resist spraying herbicides on windy days. Before application, make sure the active ingredients in the product are safe to use on the type of lawn you have. Triclopyr, for example, offers some control of wild violets, but it will damage bermudagrass, centipedegrass, and St. Augustinegrass lawns.

For more tips on cultural controls and herbicides, see the [Georgia Pest Management Handbook](#), 2020 Home & Garden Edition. Also check out our [UGA Lawn Care Calendars](#) for easy-to-follow management guidelines for the common turfgrasses in North Georgia.

Stem, Roots, and Leaves: No-Waste Foods

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



Americans waste nearly a third of the food supply each year. [This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-ND](#)

According to the USDA-ERS, in one year, approximately 133 billion pounds (31%) of the 430 billion pounds of available food supply at the retail and consumer levels, with an estimated retail value of \$162 billion, was wasted. On top of that is the value of inputs, such as land, water, labor, and energy that were used to grow and transport all that wasted food.

This amount of waste has wide-spread impacts on our society.

Consumers create food waste when they buy or cook more than needed, and then throw away extra food and leftovers. Also, improper storage, confusion over best-by, use-by, and expiration dates often leads to food spoilage (and food safety) issues, causing waste when these items must be discarded. Food waste can be reduced in your home with simple shopping, storage, and cooking practices.

Several years ago, I developed a program that taught people how to use “dual-purpose vegetables.” A dual-purpose vegetable is the vegetable version of “nose-to-tail” eating. They are vegetables (or herbs) that play two

or more roles where the entirety of the plant is edible, providing a variety of culinary and dietary uses. The program outlined some common dual-purpose vegetables, and how the various parts of the plant can be enjoyed. For example, the leaves of sweet potatoes and beets, the roots of carrots, beets, turnips, and radishes, the seeds of coriander and fennel, and flowers such as chive blossoms, are all parts of plants that can be used for more than one purpose.

Dual-purpose vegetables are not only sustainable, they help reduce food waste. When you purchase a dual-purpose vegetable, you save money by buying fewer food items. A carrot with the greens attached serves two purposes. The greens can be used where one would use parsley. It is like nature's very own BOGO!

Reducing food waste by using methods such as purchasing and cooking dual-purpose vegetables also has various positive environmental impacts. It conserves energy and resources, preventing pollution involved in the growing, manufacturing, transporting, and selling food (i.e. hauling food waste to the landfill). This in turn reduces methane emissions from landfills and lowers your carbon footprint.

UGA Extension in Forsyth County will be offering a "Lasagna Composting" Lunch and Learn on Friday, March 13, from 11:00am-1:00pm. Family and Consumer Sciences Agent Barbara Worley and Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent Heather Kolich will offer a joint program on reducing, recycling, and reusing food waste. Participants will be engaged in learning about dual-purpose vegetables through the creation of a delicious vegetable lasagna simultaneously as they learn about soil organisms that eat parts of the food we don't eat and turn it into compost using the

"lasagna" method. To register call 770-887-2418 or email uge1117@uga.edu.

Prevention is Key Strategy in Mosquito Control

By Heather N. Kolich
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Aedes aegypti mosquitoes may transmit Dengue, Zika, and other diseases. Photo: CDC.

Georgia is home to 63 different species of mosquitoes. These biting pests can be active anytime the outside temperature is above 50° Fahrenheit, and they may be very active after rainfall. In Georgia, that can be any day of the year. Prevention measures help keep mosquito populations low, but for best effectiveness, we need to start early, well before mosquitoes begin breeding.

Mosquito bites may transmit diseases and parasites

In addition to taking blood from victims, mosquitoes may leave something behind. Mosquitoes are known to carry several diseases that are harmful to humans and animals.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, West Nile Virus is the most common mosquito-borne illness in the U.S., but mosquitoes have also spread dengue, chikungunya, and Zika viruses in



recent years. They can also transmit encephalitis diseases to humans and horses, and they carry the parasite that causes heartworms in dogs.

Prevention is a key management strategy

Once warm weather sticks around, mosquito populations will grow exponentially as the adults breed new batches of babies to replace themselves. One of the best mosquito control methods is to prevent the adults from breeding.

Mosquito reproduction relies on two things: blood and water. A female mosquito needs a person or animal to provide a blood meal before she can produce eggs. Among our 63 mosquito species, we have dawn, daylight, and dusk feeders. So, not only can mosquitoes be active year-round, they can also be active during many hours of the day.

After feeding, the female seeks out a puddle or pool of stagnant water to lay her eggs in. Each female mosquito can lay a “raft” of around 200 eggs.

Mosquito larvae are aquatic; once they hatch, they feed on detritus, microorganisms, and other nutrients living and growing in the stagnant water. Larvae become adults about eight days after hatching. This means there can be many generations of mosquitoes in a season, with huge population increases.

Roll up the welcome mat

Take these measures to make your home inhospitable to mosquitoes and their breeding needs:

Tip & Toss to eliminate breeding grounds.

Female mosquitoes lay eggs in standing water, especially if there’s stuff growing in it. Even a pool of water caught in the fold of a tarp or the bend of a gutter can become a

breeding ground for mosquitoes. To keep young, hungry mosquitoes from hatching around your home:

- Tip water out of drainage dishes after watering patio plants.
- Toss out debris that holds water or provides habitat for mosquitoes.
- Put away items in the yard that hold water after rainfall or irrigation.
- Clean gutters to remove moisture-trapping leaves and pine straw.

Use larvicidal Bti mosquito dunks. Water can’t be tipped out of some places, such as ponds, downspouts, and hollow tree stumps. For these areas, drop mosquito dunks, donuts, or crumbles containing *Bacillus thuringiensis* subspecies *israelensis* (Bti) into the water. Bti kills mosquito larvae when they feed on it, but it doesn’t harm fish, birds, pets, people, or other aquatic insects.

Treat areas where mosquitoes rest during the day. In the heat of the day, mosquitoes look for cool, moist places, like shady ivy beds and the area under your deck. Following label directions, apply pesticides labeled for use in controlling adult mosquitoes (*bifenthrin*, *cypermethrin*, *permethrin*, and others) to the underside of leaves, decks, and perimeter plants where mosquitoes enter your yard. To protect pollinators, treat plants in the early evening and avoid spraying plants that are in flower.

Get neighbors involved. Mosquitoes can fly miles for a bite. Prevention works best when the whole community commits. Organize a neighborhood clean-up to scout out and remove potential mosquito breeding sites.

Mosquitoes can’t bite if they aren’t around. Start your mosquito prevention program early so they don’t call your community home.



Learning with Extension – Events and Opportunities

Lasagna Composting – March 13, 2020, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Forsyth County Extension Office. Join agents Barbara Worley and Heather Kolich for this entertaining – and tasty – approach to reducing food waste. Register at 770-887-2418 or uge1117@uga.edu.

Waking Up Your Garden – March 14, 3-4 p.m., Post Road Library. Get tips for starting your spring garden from Forsyth County Extension Master Gardener Volunteers.

Native Trees – March 26, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Sexton Hall Enrichment Center. Join ANR Agent Heather Kolich and the Forsyth County Extension Master Gardener Volunteers for a Lunch & Learn program on the benefits of native trees.

Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale – April 10-11, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Cumming Fairgrounds. Shop from over 40 vendors for plants, garden accessories, tools, and more. Covered venue, come rain or shine!

Earth Day Celebration – April 25, Hampton Park Library. Join Forsyth County Extension Master Naturalist Volunteers for fun and learning about trees, water, and wildlife.

Spring Festival – April 25, Sawnee Mountain Preserve Visitors Center. Join us to learn about planting flowers, attracting pollinators, and much more. Indoor and outdoor activities throughout the day.

Cooking for One – April 30, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Forsyth County Extension Office. Register at 770-887-2418 or uge1117@uga.edu.

Kid Stuff

Natural Resources Conservation Workshop – June 7-11, 2020, ABAC, Tifton. Wild about wildlife? Fascinated by forestry? This week-long workshop for rising 10th-12th grade students focuses on the value, protection, and conservation of Georgia's many natural resources – while giving students a glimpse of college life. In addition to field trips and recreational activities, over \$17,000 in college scholarships will be awarded during the workshop. [More information](#).

For the Pros

Getting the Best of Pests – March 12, 2020, 3-5 p.m., online. March topics: **Pest Management in Greenhouse Production** and **Greenup 2020: Forecast for Turfgrasses and Pest Management**. Commercial pesticide applicator CEUs available. [Registration information](#).

Storm-damaged Tree Clean-up and Chainsaw Safety – April 2, 3-4:30 p.m., Forsyth County Extension Office. Learn OSHA safety practices specific to clean-up work in storm-damaged areas. Arborist credits available. Register at 770-887-2418 or uge1117@uga.edu.

Getting the Best of Pests – April 17, 2:30-5p.m., Forsyth County Extension Office. Topics: **Diseases of Southern Turfgrasses** and **Pesticide Movement in the Environment**. 2 CEUs for Cat. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 31, and Private. \$20. Register at 770-887-2418 or uge1117@uga.edu.

Georgia Pest Control Association Meeting April 22, 3-5 p.m. Structural pest control CEUs available. Forsyth County Extension Office.