

Healthy Georgia Connections

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NEWS YOU CAN USE FROM **UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA** COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

EXTENSION FEATURE

Zebra longwing butterflies make their way into Georgia

Becky Griffin

UGA Extension community and school garden coordinator



The state butterfly of Florida — the zebra longwing (*Heliconius charithonia*) — has made its way farther north, according to reports from citizen-scientists who participated in the second annual Great Georgia Pollinator Census in August.

While it is commonly found in Mexico, Central America, Florida and some areas of Texas, the zebra longwing butterfly hasn't been so common in Georgia. While residents in south Georgia report that they have seen the butterfly for a few years now, those in the northern counties

of Cherokee and Hall noticed that the zebra longwing has spread its wings and expanded its normal range, appearing in 28 Georgia counties during the this year's census.

I spent a lot of time identifying insects during the pollinator census, and I kept seeing the zebra longwing, which is not even in our north Georgia identification books. I put out a query on our companion Facebook page and I had 59 responses, so I asked participants to include their county and send some photos. Some people in south Georgia said that they've seen them the last couple of years, but those in north Georgia had never seen them before.

This information gathered by citizen-scientists throughout the state helps researchers track the health and progress of many different pollinators, making observations researchers could miss. It would normally take weeks for researchers to drive around looking for species.

The presence of the zebra longwing this far north in the U.S. could provide cues for researchers who study insects' travel patterns. It's at least anecdotal evidence that zebra longwing butterflies are expanding their territory, and that opens up other questions to be asked by scientists.

The zebra longwing lives longer than most other butterfly species, surviving months and not weeks. They consume

continued on page 5



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AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES**Get ornamentals planted in fall for spring blooms**

Campbell Vaughn, UGA Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources agent, Augusta-Richmond County

Fall is an ideal planting time for landscape ornamentals. Plant growth slows in cool weather, but roots are still active. If you can get plants in the ground this fall, the stresses of planting can be minimized and root systems will have all winter to establish.

Understanding which plants do well in your area can save you financially and aesthetically in the long run. That cute, 18-inch plant in a pot at the local garden center can morph into a 20-foot-tall monster that covers the entire front of your house, so do the research before making the investment.

Some other things to consider when choosing plants for the landscape includes checking your sun patterns. Traditional camellias (*Camellia japonica*) can't tolerate blazing hot, western exposure Georgia sun, and Sasanqua camellias will perform better in higher sun areas. Mophead hydrangeas (*Hydrangea macrophylla*) need a good bit of shade, while Limelight hydrangeas (*Hydrangea paniculate* 'Limelight') can take more full sun.

Just because you are dying to get a particular plant for your yard doesn't mean you have the right conditions for the plant. Too much sun or not enough sun can mean the difference between a plant thriving or struggling for years to come.

The No. 1 issue causing poor health with newly planted landscapes is installing the plants too deep.

It's critical to know how to properly install a plant. The No. 1 issue causing poor health with newly planted landscapes is installing the plants too deep. A hole is necessary, but a grave is not. Most of a plant's roots grow sideways — not downward — so dig a wide hole and not a deep one.



Remove the plant from the container and massage the soil to loosen the roots. Place the plant so the base of the trunk is about 1 inch above ground level. Spread the dirt back over the area, being careful not to pile the dirt on the base of the plant.

Finally, mulch your plant, taking care to keep the mulch away from the trunk. When there is dirt or mulch on the base of a plant, it increases moisture on the woody base. We don't want your new and pricey ornamental to rot before it gets a chance to shine.

Keep your new plantings moist but not wet. Too much water is a death sentence to most landscape plants. These fall plantings are growing slowly, so they don't need nearly as much water as they do in the heat of the summer.

Remember, fall is for planting, so get these plants in the ground now so that they can adapt during the cold months and be ready to flourish in spring. You could be the envy of the neighborhood come May.

For more information on planting, see UGA Extension [Bulletin 625](#), "Landscape Plants for Georgia" and [Bulletin 932](#), "Soil Preparation and Planting Procedures for Ornamental Plants" at extension.uga.edu/publications.

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES**Are you at risk for prediabetes? Here's how to know**

Hannah Wilson, UGA Extension graduate research assistant
Alison C. Berg, UGA Extension nutrition and health specialist

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, prediabetes affects 88 million Americans and has lasting health outcomes. Fortunately, it can be reversed. Learning your risk is the first step to a healthier future.

People with prediabetes have higher than normal blood glucose (sugar) levels but not high enough to be considered Type 2 diabetes. If you have prediabetes, you're on the road to developing Type 2 diabetes and are also at increased risk for other serious health problems, such as heart disease and stroke.

Unfortunately, nearly 90% of people with prediabetes don't even know that they have it. But it's not all bad news. With the right steps, prediabetes can be reversed. The key is to find out whether you're at risk early on and take steps to reduce that risk.

Your doctor can use a simple blood test to diagnose prediabetes. There are also several things known to increase your risk for prediabetes. These include:

- Being 45 years old or older
- Being a male
- If you are a female, having a history of gestational diabetes (diabetes while pregnant)
- Having a family history of diabetes
- Having high blood pressure
- Not being physically active
- Being overweight or obese

You can quickly find out if you or someone you know is at high risk by taking the prediabetes risk test at DoIHavePrediabetes.org from the CDC and the American Diabetes Association. If you score five or higher on this test, you are at high risk for prediabetes.

If you think you are at high risk or know you have prediabetes, talk to your doctor first. There are other actions you likely know you should be taking for a healthier lifestyle, like eating better, achieving a healthy weight and getting at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week. Research has shown that



weight loss of 5-7% of your current body weight (about 10 to 14 pounds for a 200-pound person) combined with healthy eating and regular physical activity can help you cut your risk by more than 50%.

Need help getting started? UGA Extension offers a variety of programs to help you learn to eat better and move more to get and keep the weight off and prevent diabetes. Several UGA Extension offices are offering PreventT2, part of the National Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), a lifestyle change program proven to cut your risk of diabetes by 58%.

UGA Extension is currently offering the program online during the public health emergency and will be starting new groups soon. A variety of other educational programs are offered like healthy cooking, meal planning, stress management and the weight management program Walk-a-Weigh. Check with your [local UGA Extension office](#) to see what is available near you or offered online.

Know where you stand by visiting DoIHavePrediabetes.org and taking the short online quiz to learn your risk. Then, contact your UGA Extension office to get started on the road to a healthier life. Why wait?

4-H YOUTH**UGA celebrates National 4-H Week Oct. 4-10***Cris deRevere, 4-H public relations coordinator*

Georgia 4-H empowers youth to become self-directing, productive and contributing members of society by establishing personal and sincere relationships, learning life and leadership skills, and enhancing community awareness. During National 4-H Week, Oct. 4-10, Georgians will celebrate all of the exceptional things these 4-H'ers accomplish.

Georgia 4-H programming, part of UGA Extension, is based on research from UGA's colleges and other land-grant universities. Georgia has one of the largest state 4-H programs in the country, consisting of more than 242,000 active 4-H participants this year.

Georgia 4-H traces its roots to 1904, when Newton County school superintendent G.C. Adams organized a corn club for boys. Today, Georgia 4-H attracts students from all areas of interest, not just those interested in agriculture. The majority of participants currently come from small cities, towns and rural non-farms.

“The most important work of 4-H is to help young people become better citizens and enable them to grow into responsible, active adults.”

~ Arch Smith, state 4-H leader

The theme for this year's National 4-H Week, Opportunity4All, is a campaign created by the National 4-H Council to rally support for Extension's 4-H program and identify solutions to eliminate the opportunity gap that affects 55 million kids across America.

With so many children struggling to reach their full potential, 4-H believes that young people, in partnership

**Where Many See Challenge,
Kids see Opportunity**



with adults, can play a key role in creating a more promising and equitable future for youth, families and communities across the country. In 4-H, organizers believe that every child should have equal opportunity to succeed and the skills they need to make a difference in the world.

“The idea of bringing UGA research and resources to Georgia students through the use of county Extension agents throughout the state was a cutting-edge idea over a century ago and remains a vital system today,” said Arch Smith, state 4-H leader. “The most important work of 4-H is to help young people become better citizens and enable them to grow into responsible, active adults.”

Georgia 4-H youth perform community service, conduct research, compile portfolios of their accomplishments, and learn public speaking skills through oral presentations during 4-H Project Achievement. During the 2019-20 school year, more than 16,000 Georgia 4-H'ers participated in Project Achievement on the local level. Some Project Achievement winners received Master 4-H status and/or continue on to represent Georgia on a national level.

Zebra longwing, *continued from page 1*

flower nectar and their saliva also allows them to dissolve protein-containing pollen, absorbing those extra nutrients, which scientists believe contributes to their longevity.

The insects roost at night as a group and demonstrate a social order, and older butterflies appear to get a better roosting spot. Zebra longwings also practice what is called trap lining, returning to the same shrub or plant repeatedly. If a plant they routinely visit is no longer there, the butterflies appear to look for it.

Lantana and verbena are recorded as the butterfly's flowers of preference, with some observers noting seeing them on zinnia flowers this summer.

The butterflies lay their eggs on members of the passion flower family, *Passiflora*, so if you are interested in seeing whether these butterflies are in your area, adding passion flower to your flower garden may help.

For more information on the zebra longwing, visit the U.S. Forest Service webpage on this species at fs.fed.us.

If you enjoy seeing butterflies in your garden, fall is a great time to expand your pollinator garden by planting perennials. Plants like purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), tickseed (*Coreopsis* spp.), and butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) are perennials that can be planted now and should be blooming during next year's Great Georgia Pollinator Census in August.

Extension [Bulletin 1456](#), "Eco-Friendly Garden: Attracting Pollinators, Beneficial Insects, and Other Natural Predators," has many pollinator plant recommendations for Georgia.

EXTENSION PUBLICATIONS

Consumer Horticulture Benefits for Individuals and Families

The plants and gardens that we tend matter for our personal health, providing much-needed exercise, nutrition and diversion while also providing the space to make important community connections:

[Luga.edu/5m8](https://uga.edu/5m8).



AG PRODUCTS CONNECTION

In collaboration with Georgia Grown and other industry partners, UGA Extension is using its network of county offices to connect agricultural producers with consumers looking for fresh, Georgia-grown products. Visit Luga.edu/508 for more.



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Our purpose: We translate the science of everyday living for farmers, families and communities to foster a healthy and prosperous Georgia.



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