



# Shades of Green

Athens-Clarke County Agriculture and Natural Resources

E-Newsletter

May 2023

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# A note from Athens-Clarke County Agriculture & Natural Resources

Hello readers! May flowers are quickly arriving at the Athens-Clarke County Extension Office. We are excited to share some fun events happening at the office and around Athens this month! Most notably, in honor of International Compost Awareness Week, we are providing information on composting for this month's [Green Thumb Lecture](#). Be sure to check out local [Farmers Markets](#) and [other events](#) happening throughout the month hosted by UGA Extension, State Botanical Garden of Georgia, Georgia Museum of Natural History, and Sandy Creek Nature Center, among many others.

We hope you enjoy this month's issue of "Shades of Green".

Take care,  
Athens-Clarke County Agriculture and Natural Resources



# State Botanical Garden of Georgia Encourages Planting for Pollinators

Laurel Clarke, State Botanical Garden

With so many options available, it can be challenging to know what plants to add to your home garden that will look beautiful and help the environment. The [State Botanical Garden of Georgia](#) at the University of Georgia is helping gardeners by selecting four Georgia Pollinator Plants of the Year.

The program, a collaboration between the State Botanical Garden, UGA Extension and green industry partners, began in 2020. The program annually promotes four top-performing landscape plants that support pollinators. Plants are chosen for the following categories: spring bloomer, summer bloomer, fall bloomer and Georgia native.



The pollinator plant of the year program was designed to encourage the use of high-impact plants that support pollinators in private and commercial gardens. It is funded in part by the Vaughn-Jordan Foundation.

“Our audience has been very receptive to the program,” said Heather Alley, the garden’s conservation horticulturist. “These plants always sell beautifully at our plant sales. One of our partner growers has enjoyed highlighting these plants, and their customers are excited about them.”

# State Botanical Garden of Georgia

## Encourages Planting for Pollinators cont.

The 2023 plants in the four categories of the program are:

### Spring bloomer – Blue wild indigo

*Baptisia australis*

**About:** Blue wild indigo is a 4-foot-tall perennial wildflower in the pea family. In spring, this plant has tall spikes of eye-catching cobalt blue flowers.

**Conservation value:** Supports many native bees and other pollinators.



### Summer bloomer – Wild bergamot

*Monarda fistulosa*

**About:** Wild bergamot is a perennial in the mint family that grows 4 to 5 feet tall, with long-lasting white, lavender or magenta summer blooms that attract many different pollinators.

**Conservation value:** Supports many native bees, hummingbirds and butterflies.



### Fall bloomer – Aromatic aster

*Symphyotrichum oblongifolium*

**About:** Aromatic aster is a perennial wildflower in the sunflower family that grows 3 to 4 feet tall with purple flowers in the fall.

**Conservation value:** Supports many native bees, butterflies, hover flies and wasps.

**Conservation value:** Supports bumble bees, small bees, hummingbirds and butterflies.



### Georgia native – Coastal plain Joe Pye weed

*Eutrochium dubium*

**About:** Coastal plain Joe Pye weed is a perennial wildflower in the sunflower family that grows 3 to 5 feet tall with profuse but tiny mauve flowers that bloom from July through September.

**Conservation value:** Supports bumble bees, small bees, hummingbirds and butterflies.



# State Botanical Garden of Georgia

## Encourages Planting for Pollinators cont.

Alley said all the plants selected this year complement each other with cool, blue undertones. They are also easy to maintain. The plants are nominated by gardeners, horticulturists, entomologists, ecologists and green industry professionals throughout Georgia and selected by a committee. The committee announces the plants a year in advance to give growers time to increase the stock of the plants for the public.

Becky Griffin is the community and school garden coordinator for UGA Extension and serves on the pollinator plants of the year committee. She is also the coordinator of the Great Southeast Pollinator Census, a citizen science project created by UGA designed for everyone to participate and make a difference in pollinator conservation.

Griffin said serving on the committee and talking about the nominated plants is a great way to get pollinator plants to the public. She also helps market the pollinator plants to people who want to start pollinator gardens and encourages those who wish to participate in the pollinator census to plant them in their home gardens.

“Planting plants that attract pollinators is a conservation action that we can all do,” said Griffin. “Research has shown that if you build the habitat, they will come. Planting pollinator plants directly impacts our pollinators, which are important for our food crops in Georgia.”

Griffin said you can add the pollinator plants of the year to your space, whether that’s a farm, subdivision or apartment complex.

Although new plants are selected each year, Alley said the goal is to continue promoting all the pollinator plants of the year selections over time. All the plants can work together for a beautiful collection of pollinator favorites that can be added to yearly.

The State Botanical Garden, a unit of [UGA Public Service and Outreach](https://t.uga.edu), sells the pollinator plants of the year at its spring and fall plant sales and in the garden’s gift shop, and works with growers and retailers in Georgia to produce and market the plants.

For more information about the pollinator plants of the year program and a directory of native plant nurseries, visit <https://t.uga.edu/649>. For more information about the Great Southeast Pollinator Census, visit <https://gsepc.org/>.





# What's That Tree: American Chestnut

Lincoln County Extension

I recently had a client bring a bag of chestnuts to the Extension office in hopes that there might be folks in Lincoln County interested in trying to propagate them. The nuts came from a tree on his property which has been confirmed by The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) as one of the only American chestnut trees in this area. This type of tree has a rich history and this client has offered seeds for any individual interested in trying to propagate one.

The American chestnut has been in existence for over 40 million years, and more than a century ago there were over three billion trees growing in the eastern United States. The American chestnut composed more than 25% of the tree population in the Appalachian Mountain range during this time. The trees were fast growing, matured into large, tall specimens that produced wood that was resistant to rot, straight grained, and used for furniture, fencing, and building. At maturity, the trees could be up to 100 feet tall and 10 feet in diameter. They ranged the majority of the east coast, from Maine down into parts of Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi.

The chestnuts produced by the trees fed wildlife like deer, bear, and turkey, humans, and livestock like hogs and cattle. The species was, for all intents and purposes, a heritage tree.

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was an epidemic of ink disease imported from Europe that killed the roots and collars of American chestnuts. It primarily affected trees in the Southeastern U.S. and it is speculated that the population and range of the American chestnut was already negatively impacted prior to the introduction of the chestnut blight, which is what the majority of chestnut decline is attributed to. Before the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a blight fungus caused by *Cryphonectria parasitica* was introduced to the American chestnut population causing a catastrophic population collapse. The disease originated on imported Asiatic chestnut trees and was first noticed on trees in the New York Zoological Park in 1906. The Chinese chestnut tree was able to develop resistance to the blight, but the American variety was not as fortunate.



## What's That Tree: American Chestnut continued

American Chestnuts. Courtesy NPR

The blight kills trees by destroying their xylem and phloem tissues and causes cankers and girdling around the trunk. This damage prevents water and nutrient transport throughout the tree, leading to its death. The fungus was airborne and able to spread 50 miles per year, and within 40 years had killed up to 3 billion American chestnut trees. While the American variety is not technically extinct due to the ability of new shoots to grow from existing rootstock even after the main stem dies, these new shoots rarely grow more than 20 feet tall before blight reinfection occurs, killing them. This means that the species is functionally extinct, since the American chestnut tree cannot

re-establish itself. It is speculated that the population of surviving American chestnuts with trunks over 24" in diameter is fewer than 100 in its natural range on the east coast.

Several organizations are working towards restoring the American chestnut population including the American Chestnut Cooperators Foundation, the American Chestnut Foundation, and a variety of universities. Strategies include intercrossing: breeding resistant American chestnut individuals to produce greater resistance in the population; backcrossing: breeding American chestnuts with resistant Asian chestnut varieties; inserting resistant genes from wheat into the American chestnut genome; and investigating hypovirulent strains of the fungus, which reduces the ability of the blight to impact the trees.

Thanks to my client, the Extension Office has American chestnuts available to the public if anyone is interested in trying to propagate their own tree. We can provide step-by-step information for getting your seedling started. If you are interested, please let us know at [uge3181@uga.edu](mailto:uge3181@uga.edu) or 706-359-3233. Supplies are limited, first come first serve.



# 1000th Certified Master Beekeeper and Counting

Emily Cabrera , UGA Extension

After two decades of participants from 22 states and two countries, the [Georgia Master Beekeeper Program](#) has just welcomed its 1,000th participant.

If you've ever attempted beekeeping, you probably know it's not simply a matter of putting bees into a box. Beekeeping is equal parts science and art. Mastering both requires passion and dedication.

"It's always a special event anytime someone passes the certified exam and enters the Georgia Master Beekeeper Program," said Keith Delaplane, University of Georgia entomology professor and director of the Georgia Master Beekeeper Program.

Founded in 2002, the program is a four-step certification process created as a means for establishing local beekeeping experts throughout the state who offer their knowledge and guidance on all things bees within their respective communities.

"I've always been interested in bees, but in studying for the certification exam I really became fascinated by bee diseases," said Moreen Rebeira, the 1,000th participant to enter the Georgia Master Beekeeper Program. "I would never expect bees to be so vulnerable, but they are so sensitive to varroa mites and hive beetles that introduce diseases. After I lost two of my own hives, I thought: I'll never let that happen again. I'll learn from my mistakes through this program to teach others how to maintain healthy hives."

The certification exam is the first step to entering the Georgia Master Beekeeper Program. The exam is offered by participating local bee clubs as well as annually at the UGA-Young Harris Beekeeping Institute on the campus of Young Harris College. The two-day meeting features a wide array of lectures from world-renowned bee scientists, honey-judging events and beekeeper-training workshops.



# 1000th Certified Master Beekeeper and Counting

Continued

The crucial bottleneck of the program is the move from Certified Beekeeper to Journeyman Beekeeper, explained Delaplane. As participants continue through the various levels of certification, the exam material and requirements become increasingly more rigorous. Delaplane makes no apologies about it — if you want to hold a higher degree of expertise, you'll have to earn it. A zero-fail policy on insect and disease identification establishes a high standard of integrity and ensures that participants in the program are credible and can be called upon by the public for their proficiency in beekeeping.

The capstone of the program is the Master Craftsman Beekeeper certification. The program's highest level of expertise, it is equivalent to a specialized graduate degree.

In the nearly two decades since the program's inception, only five participants have received Master Craftsman Beekeeper certification. Participants are required to do a research project, demonstrating mastery of one or more aspects of beekeeping. They must also show a thorough understanding of integrated pest management practices for healthy hive maintenance.

“For me, it's purely selfish. I love starting new colonies and watching them grow,” said Cindy Hodges, a Master Craftsman Beekeeper who owns a small beekeeping operation in Dunwoody, Georgia, with her husband.

“Hodges spent 10 years working toward her Master Craftsman certification. Her research focused on resins — called propolis — that bees collect that have immune-strengthening properties against bee diseases. Her work was published as a [scientific note in the Journal of Economic Entomology](#).

“I consider myself a senior beekeeper, I'm older and never dreamed I would publish anything in my life. This program



challenged me, and without that push I would not have known I could accomplish something like this,” Hodges said proudly.

To learn more about the UGA Honey Bee Program, beekeeping or the Georgia Master Beekeeper Program, visit [bees.caes.uga.edu](https://bees.caes.uga.edu).

Athens-Clarke County Extension  
**Green Thumb Lectures**

**2023 Free Monthly Gardening Class Series**



**May: Compost**

Please join us for an informative presentation by Suki Janssen, the Director of the ACC Solid Waste Department on topics including:

- Basic concepts and importance of efficient composting
- Materials for composting
- Recommended structures and methods

Gardeners of all experience levels are welcome.

**WHEN:**

Wednesday, May 10th · 6:00-7:30 pm

**WHERE:**

Athens-Clarke County Extension Office  
275 Cleveland Rd  
Bogart, GA 30622

**TO REGISTER:**

Registration is required. Please register by May 10th by visiting

[www.accgov.com/gardening](http://www.accgov.com/gardening)



**For questions:**

Contact Laura Ney, Extension Agent at  
706-613-3640 & lney@uga.edu  
Or contact ANR Educator Victoria, at vlc74120@uga.edu  
*The University of Georgia is committed to principles of  
equal opportunity and affirmative action.*



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# Local May Events

## International Compost Awareness Week

May 7th—13th

Visit <https://www.accgov.com/6542/International-Compost-Awareness-Week>  
To see events scheduled throughout the week.

## Annual Open House and Full Membership Meeting

May 6th, 2023

Georgia Museum of Natural History Annex

## Winterville Marigold Festival is May 13th, 2023, 10am to 4pm.

Pittard Park  
115 Parkview Rd  
Winterville, GA 30683

## West Broad Farmers Market

May Day Celebration

May 7th, from 11 am to 2pm.

300 S. Rocksprings St.  
Athens, GA 30606

## Green Thumb Lecture Series

Cooking with Compost  
May 10th 6:00p.m.—7:30p.m.  
Register Here  
[accgov.com/gardening](https://accgov.com/gardening)

## “Night Hike” at Southeast Clarke Park

May 26th, 2023 8:15 pm — 9:30 pm  
Register Here

[Athens-Clarke County Leisure Services: Hiking \(myrec.com\)](#)

## State Botanical Garden of Georgia ‘Ethnobotany of Native Plants Certificate’ Workshop

May 11th, 2023, 9am to 1pm

The SBGG has great local events occurring each month. Make sure to check out their [event calendar](#) or [discover education activities for home](#).

## Fruit Trees for Backyard Growers

Saturday, May 13th, 11am to 12pm

Athens Library  
2025 Baxter St, Athens GA 30606

UGA Extension offices around the state are working hard at developing quality online presentations on various topics.

Visit the UGA Extension [event calendar](#) to see events happening local to our county as well as virtual opportunities.

## Welcome to the Twilight H2zOne: Tour of the Drinking Water Treatment Plant

May 11th, 2023

6pm to 7:15pm

J.G. Beacham Drinking Water Treatment Plant

780 Barber St, Athens GA.

## Sandy Creek Nature Center

205 Old Commerce Rd

### “Trail Discovery Tour—Cook’s Trail”

May 13th from 10 am to 1 pm

Guided hike discussing plant, animal and mineral residents.

### “Family Fishing”

May 19th 10am to 11:30am

# Local Farmers Markets



The **Athens Farmers Market** is taking place on Saturdays from 8am-12pm at Bishop Park. Make sure to visit [their website](#) for updates and details.

Find them on Facebook: [@AthensFarmers-Market](#)

Follow them on Instagram: [@athensfarmersmarket](#)



## West Broad Farmers Market

Returns to in-person markets Select Saturdays from April 1—December 16

Visit [their website](#) for more information.

Find them on Facebook: [@WestBroadMarketGarden](#)

## MARIGOLD



## MARKET

The **Winterville Farmers Market** is taking place on Saturdays from 10am-2pm starting April 14th at Pittard Park. Visit [their website](#) for more information.

Find out more on Facebook: [@marigoldmarketwinterville](#)

Instagram: [@marigoldmarketwinterville](#)



Image: P Allen Smith

# Fruit Trees for Backyard Growers

Saturday, May 13th  
11:00 am to 12 pm  
Athens Library, multipurpose room B



Presenter: Victoria Clendenning, UGA ANR Educator  
vlc74120@uga.edu, 706-613-3640  
Library contact: Gretchen Elm, gelm@athenslibrary.org



# Annual Open House

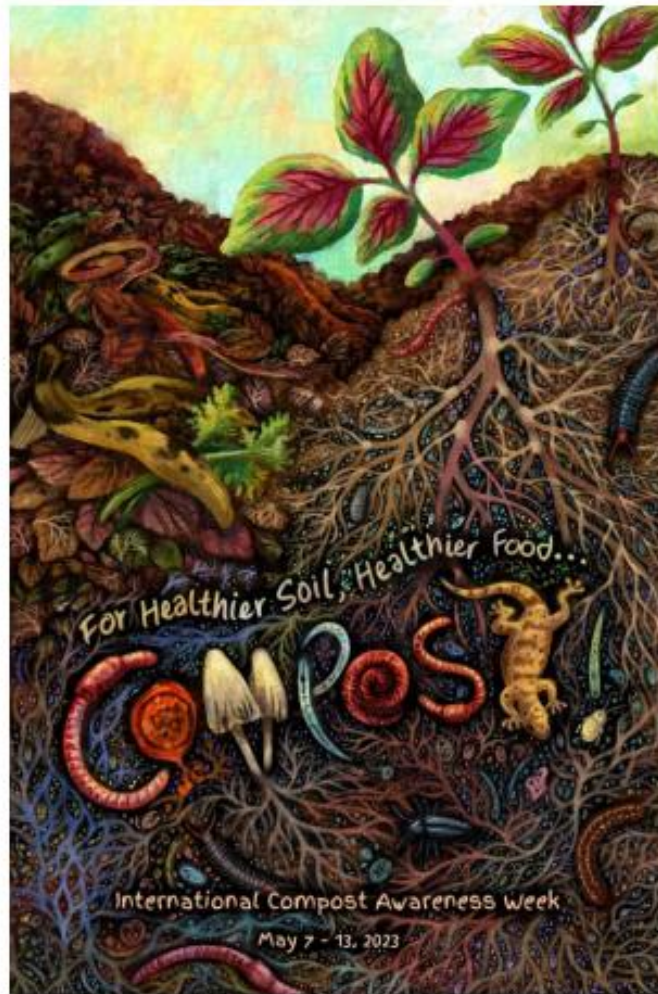
Saturday, May 6th, 1:00-3:00 PM  
Georgia Museum of Natural History Annex  
4435 Atlanta Highway  
Bogart, GA 30622



Open to the public: Tour behind the scenes of our extraordinary collection and catch a glimpse of the 6th largest whale collection in the world!

# International Compost Awareness Week

May 7-13, 2023



Celebrated annually, [International Compost Awareness Week \(ICAW\)](#) is designed to promote the benefits of composting and compost itself for effective resource management, soil health, and plant growth.

ICAW is promoted by holding group activities and events throughout the week.

The events are sponsored locally by ACC Recycling Division, Keep Athens-Clarke County Beautiful, UGA Cooperative Extension, ACC Library, and the State Botanical Garden of Georgia.

For any questions please contact: [recycle@accgov.com](mailto:recycle@accgov.com)

# Join Athens-Clarke County 4-H!



Students in 5<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grades in Athens-Clarke County can sign up for 4-H now. The mission of Georgia 4-H is to assist youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills, and forming attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive and contributing members of society. 4-H meetings will look different this year and are online. There is no charge to be a member or participate in a competition.

To start your 4-H Adventure e-mail the ACC 4-H Agent, Elizabeth Conway, at [ebarber@uga.edu](mailto:ebarber@uga.edu) today!



Virtual 4-H Programs can be viewed on the ACC 4-H website:

<https://tinyurl.com/acc4hvirtual>

The University of Georgia is committed to the principals of equal opportunity and affirmative action.






Concerned about the state of your garden?

Are weeds taking over your landscape?

No need to fear, Clarke is here!

Follow @gardenwithclarke on Instagram  and learn how to battle pests, identify weeds, build your soil and so much more as you garden alongside Clarke, Athens-Clarke County's super gardener!



**gardenwithclarke**  
UGA Extension Athens-Clarke County







## Helpful resources online:

[Find My Local Extension Office](#)

[Bugwood— Pest Images](#)

[Landscape Alerts Online](#)

[Georgia Turf](#)

[Pest Management Handbook](#)

[Pesticide Applicator Info](#)

[Free Online Webinars](#)

[SE Ornamental Horticulture Production & IPM Blog](#)

[UGA Center for Urban Agriculture](#)

[Georgia Certified Plant Professional](#)

[Extension Publications](#)

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## Athens-Clarke County Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources

### Mission Statement

The UGA Athens-Clarke County Extension's mission is to respond to the people's needs and interest in Agriculture, the Environment, Families, and 4-H/youth in Athens-Clarke County with unbiased, research-based education and information.

Visit us online:



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