

AUGUST 2020

ANR Report

THE EXCLUSIVE NEWSLETTER OF PIKE
COUNTY EXTENSION
AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

If You Don't Test, It's Just a Guess!

"If you don't test, it's just a guess!" While this catchy reminder is true of everything from well water analysis and soil tests to pecan leaf nutrient profiles, what we are really focusing on this time of year is forage.

While bales are being neatly stacked in the hay barn or carefully secured off the ground, consider checking the quality with a forage test before needing to feed this winter. A forage test can tell you things that are otherwise simply a guess. A \$25 analysis can tell livestock owners about the digestibility, sugar content, protein, and more. Knowing these factors prior to feeding can help establish a more efficient feeding program this winter. Simply call the Pike office to schedule a forage sample to be pulled for analysis.

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Common Testing Services

SOIL TEST- \$8
BASIC WATER- \$24
EXPANDED WATER- \$64
TOTAL BACTERIA/ E. COLI- \$46
FORAGE- \$25
RADON IN WATER- \$40
HOME CLOSING KIT- \$95
RADON IN HOME (AIR)- \$15



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
EXTENSION
Pike County

Tasty Tomatoes Year-round

By Elizabeth Andress

Only boiling water or pressure canning methods are recommended for canning foods. Older methods, such as oven canning and open-kettle canning, have been discredited and can be hazardous. The risk of botulism poisoning determines the choice of either boiling water or pressure canners for canning foods. In foods that are acidic (pH 4.6 or lower), the microorganism that causes botulism cannot grow. It is safe to use a boiling water bath canner when you know that foods have a pH 4.6 or below. All other foods must be canned using tested pressure canning processes.

For many years, tomatoes were considered highly acidic. However, new varieties, over-mature fruits, and tomatoes from dead or frost-killed vines may have a pH greater than 4.6. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and university-based researchers have determined that to ensure a safe acid level for boiling water canning of whole, crushed or juiced tomatoes, home preservers should add 2 tablespoons of bottled lemon juice or $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of citric acid per quart of tomatoes. For pints, use 1 tablespoon of bottled lemon juice or $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of citric acid. Acid can be added directly to the jars before filling the jars with product. Add sugar to offset the acidic taste, if desired.

University of Georgia Cooperative Extension has many tested home canning procedures and recipes using tomatoes. They include tomato juice or sauces, crushed tomatoes, whole or halved tomatoes, ketchups and salsas. There are also numerous relishes and pickled green tomatoes. These can be found in "So Easy to Preserve," or online at the National Center for Home Food Preservation.

The safety concerns of pickled tomatoes are the same as those for canning tomatoes. A pH below 4.6 must be achieved before a food can be safely boiling water canned. When pickling, commercially prepared vinegar is typically added to achieve the necessary acidity. Do not alter vinegar, food or water proportions in a recipe or use vinegar with unknown acidity. Use only recipes with tested proportions of ingredients. There must be a minimum, uniform level of acid throughout the mixed product to prevent the growth of botulinum bacteria.



The Great Georgia Pollinator Census will take place August 21 and 22.

Making Pollinators Count

Are you ready to breath some fresh, although humid, air and make a different in pollinator history? Join us for the second annual Great Georgia Pollinator Census August 21 and 22, 2020!

The census is a citizen science project that enlists Georgians to record pollinator interactions in fifteen minute intervals. This is an event that is truly perfect for the whole family! Simply choose a plant that has some pollinator activity on one of the census dates. Record all insects that interact or touch the plant within the fifteen minute observation. Insects are put into categories:

- Carpenter bee
- Bumble bee
- Honey bee
- Small bee
- Flies
- Wasp
- Butterfly
- Other

Submit your final counts to the GGaPC.org page or turn them into the Pike County Extension office on Monday, August 24 for us to do the data entry for you.

The census is a great opportunity to get outside, observe nature, make a different, and watch some incredible pollinators in action! If you have any questions about how to participate, please do not hesitate to contact the Pike County Extension office.

Ornamental Planting on Septic Drainfields

By Sheri Dorn

Ornamental plantings can be attractive and beneficial options for the expanse of open ground designated for a septic drainfield. Properly chosen plants help manage moisture and nutrient levels in the soils around the drainfield, and can discourage activities that may cause site compaction and reduce the effectiveness of the system. The drawback is that poor plant choices can create costly maintenance issues, and any septic drainfield repair work could disturb planting areas.

Remember that septic drainfield lines are often very shallow, some no more than 6 inches from the surface. Excessive digging, rototilling or other methods of soil preparation for planting can damage these lines.

- Do sample the soil periodically (every one to three years) to monitor soil pH and nutrient levels.
- Do wear rubber gloves to protect hands and skin from any harmful organisms within the soil. Wash the gloves in warm soapy water when finished, and allow the gloves to dry before putting them away.
- Do choose plants that will succeed with the amount of sun, moisture, and salt found on your septic drainfield.
- Do choose non-aggressive plants that are unlikely to invade the drain lines. Herbaceous plants can be planted closest to the drainfield, turf can be planted over the drainfield, and shallow-rooted perennials and annuals can be planted nearby. Avoid compaction, crushing or damage to the drainfield during installation.
- Do install woody plants an appropriate and safe distance from the septic drainfield. A good rule of thumb is to use the ultimate mature height of the selected tree as the minimum planting distance from the septic drainfield, then increase the distance. For example, if you are planting a crabapple, plant the tree at least 25 feet from the nearest drain line; 50 to 75 feet would be even better. Consider planting smaller and less aggressive cultivars, if possible.
- Don't interfere with the soil drying process. Avoid adding weed fabric, rain gardens, and hardscapes.
- Don't constructing raised beds or grow vegetables near the drainfield.
- Don't install irrigation systems in the drainfield.

Get even more tips for drainfield plantings in the UGA Cooperative Extension Circular 1030



While much of the 2020-2021 school year is unknown, Pike County Extension intends to offer youth equine programming.

Pike County 4-H Update

While much is still uncertain about the 2020-2021 school year, Pike County Extension is hopeful to get to host 4-H programming for Pike County youth this fall. Some programs may move to a virtual only format, some will be a blended option, and some will remain face-to-face.

Some options that we hope to have available for this school year:

- Livestock Showing
- Horse Club
- Horse Quiz Bowl
- Archery Team
- Shotgun Team
- Poultry Judging
- Jr/Sr Club
- Homeschool Club

If your student is interested in learning more about potential programs for this year, please contact us to receive the most up-to-date information about the program of your choice.

Dates to Remember

Within Pike County

9/1 - FALL FRUIT PLANT SALE FUNDRAISER OPENS

9/7 - PIKE COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE CLOSED FOR LABOR DAY

9/18 - IN THE APIARY (FACEBOOK LIVE)

10/27 - UNDERSTANDING FSA'S HONEYBEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

10/30 - LAST DAY FOR FALL FRUIT PLANT SALE ORDERS

11/7 - ADOPT-A-STREAM CHEMICAL CERTIFICATION TRAINING

11/10 - FALL FRUIT PLANT FUNDRAISER PICK-UP

*PROGRAMS ARE BEING ADDED DAILY. BE SURE TO FOLLOW UGA EXTENSION PIKE COUNTY ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR MORE DETAILS ON UPCOMING EVENTS BOTH FROM PIKE COUNTY EXTENSION AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES.

Other Extension Events (Zoom)

8/12 - FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING (ATHENS-CLARKE CO)

8/12 - MIDVILLE VIRTUAL FIELD DAY (MIDVILLE STATION)

8/12 - HOMEOWNER PECAN TREE MANAGEMENT (JONES CO)

8/14 - SNAKES OF GEORGIA (CAMDEN CO)

8/20 - MASTER EQUINE SERIES SESSION #1 (MURRAY CO)

8/21-22 - GREAT GEORGIA POLLINATOR CENSUS

8/25 - CATEGORY 41 MOSQUITO CONTROL LICENSING PREP CLASS (GWINNETT CO)

9/3-10/22 - 2020 NORTHWEST GEORGIA MASTER CATTLEMAN PROGRAM (FORSYTH CO)

9/11 - SEED SAVING (CAMDEN CO)

*GEORGIA FORAGES FACEBOOK LIVE EVERY THURSDAY AT 7 PM

7 4 G W Y N S T . Z E B U L O N

Stay up to date with Extension

BROOKLYNE WASSEL
770.567.2010 | 678.588.3153
BROOKLYNE.WASSEL@UGA.EDU

