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SOLUTIONS

Newsletter of the Alamance County Cooperative Extension Service

Winter Wonder

For most people winter is a good time to reflect on the previous year and wonder what the New Year might be like. This is also something we do at Alamance County Cooperative Extension. We think about the programs we did in 2018 that went well and the ones that did not quite go as planned. We talk to our advisory committees and clients to get their input on our programming efforts. If you have any suggestions please let us know so we can work them into our plans for our programs for 2019.



There are a couple of changes that have already been planned for 2019. The summer 4-H program is very popular, but Taylor has had suggestions to lengthen some of the classes from one day to several days. That will allow the class participants to learn more about a subject than they could in just one day. The revised 4-H Summer Sizzle class schedule will be out soon.

Chris and I have been working on the 2019 Think Green Thursdays class schedule. We have some new classes planned that will be very interesting. We have had requests for some evening and Saturday sessions so we are adding those to the schedule. This will give the folks who cannot attend the Thursday morning classes an opportunity to attend. Look forward the 2019 Think Green Thursday class schedule in upcoming Alamance Gardener newsletters.

Mark S. Danieley

Calendar Updates

- Fri., Jan. 4: Deadline to register for Med Instead of Meds course (see page 4)
- Fri., Feb. 1:  Project Record Books and Portfolios due
- Thurs., Feb. 7: 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - Grapevine Pruning
- Sat., Feb. 9: 10:00 **THINK GREEN SATURDAY**- Grapevine Pruning at Buster Sykes Farm
- Thurs., Feb. 21: 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - Fruit Tree Pruning
- Sat., Feb. 23: 10:00 **THINK GREEN SATURDAY**- Fruit Tree Pruning at Buster Sykes Farm
- Thurs., Mar. 7: Piedmont Regional Beef Conference, Greensboro
- Thurs., Mar. 7: 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - Small Fruit Pruning
- Sat., Mar. 9: 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY**- Small Fruit Pruning at Buster Sykes

For more information and to register
 Call 336.570.6740 or visit <http://alamance.ces.ncsu.edu>



Wonder What To Plant?

by: Mark Danieley, Horticulture Agent

When I think about Winter Wonder, I think about garden seed catalogs and next year's garden. It is fun to look through the catalogs to see the new vegetable varieties and wonder if they might grow well in my garden. I have spent some time looking through the seed catalogs and pondering the difference between different types of seed. Hybrid, heirloom, and open-pollinated are all different seed types. It is important to know the difference so you can make a good choice when buying seed.



Hybrid seed is the result of a selected cross between two known, but different parent plants. These parent plants have specific characteristics that have been determined to be desirable. These traits may be for improved disease and insect resistance, higher yields, more uniform growth, earlier flowering and greater adaptability to environmental stress. The idea is to combine these superior traits from the two parents into a hybrid plant. The early efforts at hybridization resulted in good-looking fruit that shipped and stored well, but lacked a little something in taste. There is a stronger emphasis now in producing hybrid vegetables that have good taste along with the other desirable characteristics. One problem with hybrid seed is that even if they are self-pollinated, the seeds will not retain the characteristics of the parent plant. That means you will need to buy new hybrid seed every year.



Open-pollinated plants retain the characteristics of the parent plant generation after generation. They are mostly self-pollinating plants, but sometimes can be cross-pollinated by plants of the same variety. Seed from open-pollinated plants can be saved and will produce a similar crop next year, but there can sometimes be some genetic drift in open-pollinated plants. That means the German Johnson tomatoes grown in Alamance County for generations may not be exactly the same as German Johnson tomatoes grown in Wake County. Beans, peas, peppers, and tomatoes are some of the more common open-pollinated crops, but they are also grown as hybrids. It is necessary to know if a plant is a hybrid before trying to save the seeds.

Heirloom varieties are always open-pollinated, but not all open-pollinated varieties are heirlooms. Heirloom varieties have been passed down from generation to generation usually for at least fifty years. They have been selected for taste, color, shape and size and are the result of regional preferences. Heirlooms may not always have the best disease resistance, but have other qualities that make them worth saving.

Wondering About 4-H?

Taylor Jones, 4-H Agent

As we come around the bend on a new year at Alamance County Cooperative Extension and 4-H, we have lots of things to look forward to. I particularly enjoy this time of year because it is a fresh beginning on a brand new year and I love to think of all the new and exciting things the year will have to offer. I love the quote that states, "Tomorrow is the first blank page of a 365-page book. Write a good one". This is how we plan to Make the Best Better in 2019 and I hope all my 4-Hers and you do, too! Check out what makes this winter wonderful in Alamance County 4-H!

Project Record Books and Portfolios

A new year brings the time for your Project Record Books and Portfolios to be turned in. This year Project Record Books are due on February 1st, 2019 by 4:30pm. Please have all of them turned in by this time so we can have them judged and ready to move on for District and State judging in March. If you would like to have your books reviewed before the County deadline, please see your club leader or Taylor in January for advice! We want to have a record number of Project Record Books turned in this year (pun intended)!

Along those same lines, Honor Club Packets, District Officer Applications, AND scholarship applications are all due to the State by February 1st. These things need your 4-H agent's signature so please be sure to bring them in BEFORE February 1st to be reviewed and signed by Taylor! We are extremely proud of all our 4-Hers in Alamance County looking to achieve these things and want to make sure they are turned in on time!!!



Alamance County 4-H Celebration Gala

Celebration Gala is coming up and we want you to just be aware that we are currently working on a new location because our old location has informed us that they no longer are accepting outside organizations. As soon as we have more information we will be sure to send it out to everyone. This is an exciting evening full of 4-H celebrations and we want you to attend. Look out for a date for late February (probably a Friday evening). Again, once we have final details we will distribute them far and wide! Thank you!

Looking ahead into Summer 2019!

We are excited to be finalizing plans for our Summer Sizzle program in 2019. The official brochure will be forthcoming in early 2019 but some exciting camp weeks that we will be having include Life Skills Camp, Healthy Living Week, Residential Camp, Cloverbud and Teen Ag and Art camps, and Environmental Science week, just to name a few. Again, we hope to release this information officially by February 1st but wanted everyone to be aware of some of our themes for 2019! It is going to be here before we know it, even though there is snow on the ground right now!



4-H Embryology Program

This year, Alamance County 4-H is partnering with Alamance-Burlington School System and local private and charter schools to offer the 4-H Embryology Program. The program will have three sessions. One beginning January 30th and ending March 1st, the second beginning on March 6th and ending on April 5th, and the final session beginning on May 1st and ending May 31st. If you or anyone you know is interested in participating in this program please contact our office at 336-570-6740. The program consists of the teacher or educator receiving curriculum, materials, training, and an incubator and hatching eggs from Alamance County 4-H, hatching the chicks in their classroom at the end, then keeping the chicks for a couple days before returning to be taken back to a farm. We are super excited this year because we hope to be able to use quail eggs this year to change it up a bit. If you are interested, please contact Taylor at 336-570-6740.



Going Med Works Wonders

by: Eleanor Frederick, FCS Agent

January is an exciting time for me at the Extension Office because I'll be kicking off my first series program, *Med Instead of Meds!* This six-session course is designed to help you incorporate the Mediterranean way of eating into your life, helping you prevent chronic illnesses like heart disease and even Alzheimer's. For



some people, eating the "Med Way" can result in decreased medications taken for diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. You should always consult your doctor before changing any prescribed medications, but it's worth a shot to see how simple changes in the way you eat can affect your overall health.

Each class includes food demonstrations and samples to taste, so there is a registration fee to cover the cost of materials. \$25 cash or check can be paid the first day of class and covers all six sessions (class dates listed below). You can sign up until January 4th. If you're interested in the program but unable to participate at this time, I'll be offering another class later in the spring. Stay tuned for details!

7 Simple Steps to Eating the Med Way

1. Change your protein

Replace some of the meat in your diet with plant proteins (beans, nuts, and seeds).

When eating meat, choose white meat poultry or lean red meat.

Eat fish and seafood once or twice a week. It doesn't have to be expensive fish, canned will do!

2. Swap your fats

Limit solid fats (saturated fats) like butter and replace with olive oil or canola oil (unsaturated fats).

Use olive oil for cooking, in salad dressings, and in marinades.

3. Eat more vegetables

Get at least three servings (three cups) of vegetables each day.

Eat a variety of colors and choose more dark leafy greens like collards, kale, spinach, chard, and turnip greens.

4. Eat more fruit

Get at least two servings (two cups) of fruit each day

Eat a variety of colors and choose berries often (or at least when they are in season and more affordable)!

5. Snack on nuts and seeds

Have at least three small handfuls of nuts and seeds per week.

Stick with roasted and unsalted (or lightly salted) nuts and seeds.

6. Make your grains whole

Choose whole grains such as oatmeal, quinoa, brown rice and (yes!) popcorn.

Check to make sure "whole grain/wheat" is the first ingredient on the ingredient list when choosing grain-based foods like bread and pasta (If you see "enriched wheat" that's not a whole grain).

7. Rethink your sweets

Limit your added sugar intake.

Try to limit high-sugar foods like sugar-sweetened beverages, desserts, and snacks to three servings per week.

Winter FCS Events

Jan 7 Med Instead of Meds class series begins. Cost: \$25

Jan 14 Med Instead of Meds

Jan 28 Med Instead of Meds

Feb 4 Med Instead of Meds

Feb 11 Med Instead of Meds

Feb 18 Med Instead of Meds

Feb 25 Med Instead of Meds inclement weather make-up date

March 4-6 Safe Plates Food Safety Manager Certification course. Extension office. Cost: \$125. Call for more details.

Winter Wonder: Farmers Helping Farmers

By: Lauren Langley, Livestock Extension Agent

Ever wonder what goes on behind the scenes when a natural disaster such as a hurricane hits? The following story is one out of thousands of how people came together to help those affected by Hurricane Florence. After Hurricane Florence dumped a tremendous amount of rain on North Carolina, many livestock owners found themselves under water. Some lost everything and others lost part of their livelihood. The historic flooding took away livestock, fences, feed and hay supplies, structures, and other important pieces on any livestock farm. Many were just left devastated and not sure where to even turn to pick up the pieces. In response to this major disaster, the Alamance County Cattlemen's Association (ACCA) and I partnered to run a hurricane relief drive for farmers. The drive collected money as well as hay that could be donated to farmers down East. ACCA was able to donate \$6,000 to NC Farm Bureau's Florence Relief Fund, which will help purchase supplies that farmers need to re-build and move forward. In addition to the monetary donation, ACCA was able to put together square and round bale hay donations. So far, 150 square bales and 112 round bales valued at \$5,080 have been donated. The square bales were sent to Bladen County and the round bales to Pender County. The other piece to the hay donations was trucking. ACCA was fortunate to work with two companies and individuals who were willing to donate trucks, trailer, fuel, and their time. The wonder of this effort was made possible by the caring farmers and their neighbors, friends, and families in our area. Everyone came together to help those in need down East. One of the farm families hay was delivered to had lost their home and 250 round bales of hay they had purchased for the winter to feed their cows. They were fortunate that they didn't lose any cows but were still devastated by what Hurricane Florence did to their farm and town of Burgaw. Being part of this effort has truly been the most wonderful and rewarding part of my career so far. Farmers are amazing people who care so much for their own no matter the circumstance and I am thankful to work with them each and every day.



Upcoming Livestock Events

March 7, 2019: Piedmont Regional Beef Conference, Greensboro, NC

Field Crops—Wonder What It's Going To Do This Year?

By: Dwayne Dabbs, Field Crops Agent

It has been a very wet and soggy time for farmers the past few months, and it does not seem like it is going to dry out anytime soon. Farmers are still busy trying to get the last of their corn and soybeans out of the field, and with the wet conditions, they have not been able to get much of their small grain in the ground. Because of the hurricanes that came through earlier this year there is a lot of damaged grain due to the fact that farmers could not get out in the field to harvest in a timely manner. So this has been a bad year all the way around. Farming is a very hard job because you cannot control the weather, but farmers have to depend on it to make a crop.



It is the time for meetings, once we get through the New Year, and a time for farmers to make plans about what they will do, making decisions about which varieties they will plant, fertilization programs they want to try, and try to remain profitable while making yields. Extension will be involved with quite a few of those meetings, trying to educate those farmers with research-based knowledge from NC State University and NC A&T University. For the tobacco farmers the annual Tobacco Production and GAP Meeting will be in January, and will include specialists from NC State talking about the research that was done over this past year and things they may want to consider during the 2019 crop to improve quality.

We will also be hosting a Field Crops Meeting in February, with the Extension Specialist working with Corn, Soybeans, and Small Grains. They will cover the research that they did over the 2018 season, and make suggestions to farmers on things that they may want to consider to improve yields and quality for the 2019 season.

Pond Weeds

I hope that your pond has cleared up by now if you had weeds growing on it during the summer, but now is the time to start making your plan of attack for the coming year. Pond dyes are a good option early in the season, because the dye will not allow as much sunlight in the pond and the weeds will not be able to grow as quickly. I recommend that you start putting a dye in your pond around the middle to late part of March, just as the weather is starting to warm up. However, pond dye works on concentration, so if we have a big rain event, where the water dilutes out the product, you will have to continue to add it to the water to make sure that the dye is strong enough to slow the light from reaching the bottom of the pond. If you have come to the office before and we have talked about what weeds you have growing in the pond, and they start showing in April, make sure that the air temperature is averaging above 55 degrees Fahrenheit before you start applying chemicals other than dye to your pond. Contact chemicals such as Diquat will need weeds to be on the surface before you treat, otherwise they will not kill the weeds that you are trying to remove. If you have questions about when to apply a product, please do not hesitate to give me a call here at the office and we can talk about the best and most economical options to treat your problem.

