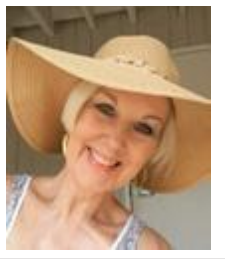


Editorial page

Nolia's Notes

Ignorant, Plain and Simple

by NOLIA BIGGERSTAFF



One thing this pandemic has done for some families is to point out just what students are being taught in school. I have heard parents appalled at the history lessons being taught to their children. Well, this concern is being expressed in national news reports, as well.

I was always told that we learn from our mistakes. Societies learn from past mistakes and wars, so as not to repeat them. We are not helping ourselves when we try to erase history, be it good or bad.

America has its share of past problems and mistakes, but today, it is still the greatest country in the world. Someone asked the question the other day, "Can you name one other country that taxes its citizens and then sends that pot of money to the United States?" Silence!

America is a very generous country. We are blessed beyond what we deserve. Our children of today do not know this.

They see their favorite sports team take a knee during the National Anthem and they try to emulate this behavior without a clue what they are doing. Those team members are ignorant and they do not mind passing their ignorance on to whomever.

First of all, our American Flag does not stand for the current president of our country. It doesn't stand for a recent law repealed or passed. It doesn't stand for a court case of which you might disagree. Any American citizen taking a knee, turning your back or sitting during the pledge is ignorant, just plain and

simple. These folks have failed in history.

I read something very beautiful the other day. It was said that when you see the American Flag blowing in the breeze, you should think of the last breath of life taken by so many soldiers fighting for this great country. Soldiers left their families and homes, knowing they might never return, just so their children and grandchildren could live in the greatest country on earth.

Soldiers died frozen in trenches in foreign countries to protect freedoms of other countries and to keep enemies from treading on American soil, soldiers who were uncomfortable day and night not knowing what the next hour would bring but knowing that they were fighting for the freedoms of their countrymen and women.

I have recently seen a photo of legislators sitting during the pledge. Really, who in the heck voted for them?

Whenever I see someone who refuses to pledge allegiance to the American flag, they are telling me that they are historically illiterate. Our tax money would be well spent paying for a one way ticket to a third world country for these folks. Maybe they would like one of those countries much better. I, for one would not miss them here.

My guess is they have no idea the value of living in the USA and could use a good lesson ASAP. Do not let them back in our country until they can pass an American History exam, just sayin'.

This weeks tips from the BBB

Tax scams, including fraudulent tax return preparation, cost taxpayers billions of dollars every year and is continuing to grow. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) reports that criminal investigations into fraudulent tax return preparers continue to rise.

Dishonest tax preparers can commit fraud in a number of ways. They can claim inflated personal or business expenses, false deductions, unallowable credits or excessive exemptions on returns prepared for their clients. Fraudulent preparers also may manipulate income figures to obtain fraudulent tax credits, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Missing the signs that a preparer could be abusive could cause the taxpayer considerable financial problems. Some of the most common signs include:

- Claiming that they can obtain larger refunds than other preparers.
- Basing their fee on a percentage of the amount of the refund. Fees should be based on the complexity of the return, never on the size of the tax savings or refund.
- Claiming they can get you immediate payment of your return. Keep in mind that this is a loan. Fraudulent tax preparers often pad their pockets by giving cash up front at a high interest rate while presenting it as an instant refund from the federal government.

- Refusing to sign the tax return or provide the taxpayer a copy for his or her records. Always make sure that you have something in hand that shows proof of what trans-

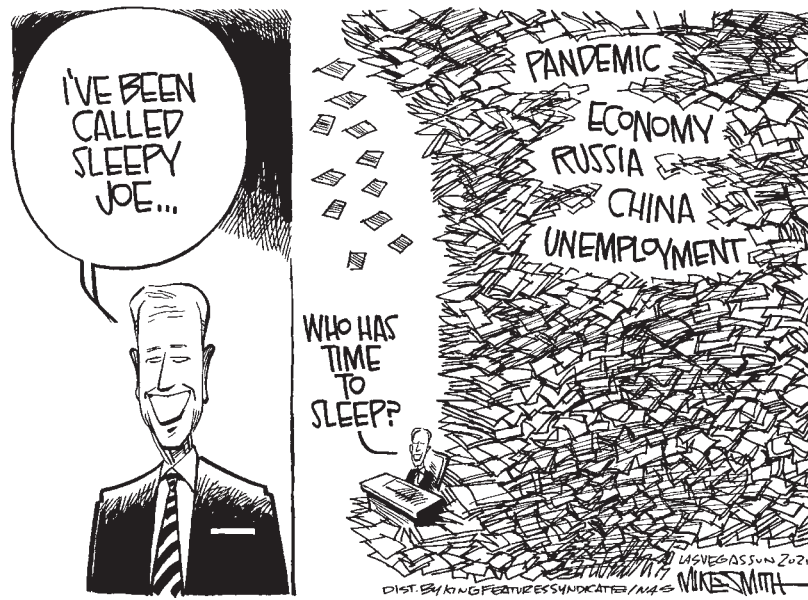
pired, and you should have a receipt for services rendered.

Taxpayers should be very careful when choosing tax preparers. While most preparers provide good service to their clients, a few unscrupulous tax preparers file false and fraudulent tax returns and ultimately defraud their clients. It is important for taxpayers to know that even if someone else prepares their return, they are ultimately responsible for all the information on the tax return. The Better Business Bureau, along with the IRS, recommends that taxpayers follow these tips when hiring a preparer:

- Get referrals from satisfied clients and check their BBB Business Review.
- Ask the preparer about their training, experience and current knowledge of tax law.
- Find out whether the preparer has ever represented taxpayers in an audit or has ever been denied eligibility to do so.
- Consider whether the individual or firm will be around to answer questions about the preparation of the tax return months or even years after the return has been filed.

New tax laws related to COVID-19 can help create confusion that dishonest preparers will capitalize on, so taxpayers should always review their return before signing, ask questions on entries they do not understand. Also be sure to get a copy of the return for your records. Finally, do not ever sign a blank tax form or one filled out in pencil!

For more trustworthy consumer tips, visit BBB.org.



Consumers get answers from Ga. Department of Agriculture

Consumer Q's is a weekly question-and-answer column by Arty Schronce at the Georgia Department of Agriculture. Please share your thoughts, questions and suggestions with him by phone, mail or email.

Q: Is there any way to visually tell if kerosene has been contaminated with gasoline?

A: If the kerosene looks cloudy, it could be contaminated and should not be used. Kerosene should be clear, not cloudy. This is true for dyed or undyed kerosene. If it has a gasoline odor, it could be contaminated and should not be used. But, the only 100% sure way to tell would be to have it tested at the Georgia Department of Agriculture State Fuel Lab. If you suspect you have purchased contaminated kerosene, take it back to the store and contact our Fuel and Measures Division at 404-656-3605.

Q: I'm doing a research project on bee pollination in every state. What are the crops in your state that benefit from honeybees or other bees?

A: In Georgia we are able to grow a wide variety of crops. Many depend on (or benefit from) honeybees or other bees for pollination. Here are a few: watermelon, muskmelon/cantaloupe, peach, apple, blueberry, cucumber, squash, strawberry, eggplant, pepper, tomato, cowpea/field pea, soybean, cotton and okra.

Q: I recently came across a recipe in a 1950s cookbook that utilizes terra cotta flowerpots for Baked Alaska. Is it safe to eat out of a regular terra cotta flowerpot from a garden center? I remember a restaurant that baked bread in terra cotta flowerpots. At the time I thought it was clever, but now I wonder if it was safe.

A: At one time, cooking in flowerpots as you describe became so popular that you could actually find food grade terra cotta flowerpots in kitchen sections of department stores. Thankfully, that fad has passed. Regular terra cotta flowerpots are perfectly safe for growing plants, but you should not cook in them due to food safety concerns. The clay could contain contaminants or heavy metals that could leach into the food. There are many attractive, clever and versatile food grade terra cotta vessels at kitchen

and cooking stores. They are safe and much more useful for cooking than a flowerpot.

Q: Is there such a thing as a purple carrot?

A: Yes. In fact, you can find purple carrots for sale in some grocery stores now. Carrots may also be yellow, red or white, as well as the familiar orange.

Q: How soon do eggs need to be collected after my chickens lay them?

A: Ideally, eggs should be collected the same day they are laid, although waiting a day should not seriously impact the taste or freshness. However, it is better to collect them early so that they do not accidentally get damaged by the chickens or another animal. Freezing temperatures may also damage the eggs if they are not collected immediately. Chickens may also try to hatch their eggs if they are left for too long. During the time that hens "go broody," they may be out of production for 20 or more days.

Q: A friend had a problem at a gasoline pump. She thinks there was water in the gasoline. Who does she report this to?

A: Notify the station manager and call the Georgia Department of Agriculture immediately if you experience a problem like this. Our toll-free line is 1-800-282-5852. This number is on all gasoline and diesel pumps in the state. Our Fuel and Measures Division will send an inspector to check it out. If there is a problem with the gasoline, the affected pumps will be locked down until the problem is corrected.

Q: I had to go inside the gas station to get my receipt because it did not print at the pump. Is this a violation of state regulations?

A: Having to go inside is certainly an inconvenience when you are paying at the pump – an inconvenience that the station will probably want to correct. However, it is not a violation of any regulation as long as the station does offer you a receipt showing the correct gallons, price per gallon, total sale and the product that you purchased.

If you have questions about agriculture, horticulture, food safety or services or products regulated by the Georgia Department of Agriculture, visit the department's website at www.agr.georgia.gov.

Spring fertilizing time
By Robyn Stewart
Lincoln County Extension Service

We are having some wetter than normal days and some changes in temperatures from warm to cold, so we know spring is right around the corner. Around the extension office and out in the community I always receive a large number of questions about when and what to fertilize my landscape trees and plants.

Proper fertilization will help all landscape plants reach their full potential. Taking a soil sample once every three years is a good way to have the best success with the fertility program. Also taking the soil sample is the best method to determine soil pH and lime requirements.

In this article, in the absence of a sample, we will discuss some recommendations for some of the common plants around the landscape.

• **General Ornamental Shrubs** - apply 10-10-10 or 12-4-8 analysis at a rate of 1 cup per 100 square feet under the canopy when spring growth begins. Repeat in May and July. Be sure to uniformly spread the fertilizer over an area six inches from the trunk to well beyond the branch spread. It is not necessary to remove the mulch before applying the fertilizer, but try to avoid getting any fertilizer on the leaves.

• **Perennial Flowers** - apply two cups of 8-8-8 or 10-10-10 per 100 square feet of bed area at planting or early spring and again in mid-summer. Apply when the foliage is dry. Try to keep the fertilizer off the foliage or wash off immediately.

• **Annual Flowers** - Prior to planting incorporate one pound (2 cups) of 10-10-10 per 100 square feet. Repeat at six week intervals or as indicated by plant vigor. Keep fertilizer off foliage or wash off immediately.

• **Ornamental Trees** - First estimate the canopy spread in square

feet. (width x width). Apply two cups of 10-10-10 fertilizer per 100 square feet of canopy spread in March and again in July. Reduce the rate in half for pines, cedars, hemlock and junipers or those trees located in a fertilized lawn. Broadcast the fertilizer evenly underneath the foliage mass and extending well beyond the dripline of the tree. Apply only when grass is dry.

• **Lawn Grasses** - Centipede - apply four pounds of 16-4-8 per 1000 square feet after spring green up and again in mid-summer. Common Bermuda or Hybrid Bermuda lawns apply six pounds of 16-4-8 per 1000 square feet after spring green up and again in mid-June, early August, and September.

• **Pecan Trees** - Pecan trees should be fertilized in late February or early March. Pecan trees need a complete fertilizer with nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. They also need zinc. For convenience sake, many Home and Garden Supply companies sell a "Pecan Special" fertilizer that has all four of the nutrients. A 10-10-10 fertilizer with zinc will work well. Apply up to four pounds of 10-10-10 per inch of trunk diameter measured at the 4.5 foot above soil level.

• **Home Vegetable Garden** - broadcast 30 pounds of 10-10-10 per 100 square feet or apply 10 pounds of 10-10-10 per 100 linear foot of row. This recommendation is for medium feeders such as beans, tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, and peppers. If possible it is better to split applications with one-half at planting and the remainder at side dressing time. Also, should heavy rains occur some additional nitrogen may need to be applied at side dressing.

If you should have any question about fertilizing contact your local extension office.

Consumer Ed answers questions

Consumer Ed: Store Lost my Chainsaw

Dear Consumer Ed: I brought a chainsaw to a store for service. When I went back to pick it up, the store told me it had been lost or stolen. The owner offered to give me another used saw or a discount on a new saw. I am concerned that if I get another used saw, it may not be in the same condition as mine. I think the owner owes me my saw or a new one. What is the owner legally obligated to do?

Consumer Ed says: Unless some other duty of care or obligation on the part of the store is stated in an agreement with the customer, the store is required to exercise ordinary care and diligence of the customer's property or the same degree of care the customer would exercise over his own property.

If you signed any documents when you dropped off your saw for

service, check to see if there are any terms that would limit the store's liability. If there are no stated limitations, then the store should be liable for damages equal to the fair market value of your saw because the store did not exercise the care needed to prevent your saw from being lost or stolen. It would be appropriate for the owner to provide you with the choice of either a used saw having a condition similar to yours, or a brand new saw at a discounted price, with the discount equal to the value of your saw. If you are concerned about the condition of a used saw, you may want to consider the option of purchasing a new saw at a discounted price.

Consumer Ed is brought to you by the Georgia Department of Law's Consumer Protection Division. Remember...We do not give legal advice. Always consult a lawyer about legal issues.

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