

Editorial page

Nolia's Notes

My addiction, part 1

by NOLIA BIGGERSTAFF



There was very little to do during the last year with the COVID quarantine. After I deep cleaned the house and tried new recipes, I turned to other things to occupy my time.

I should not have. I should have known better. I am an adult and should have had better judgment but sadly I turned to HGTV.

Yes, I confess I watched way too many shows and overdosed on them. When you watch these shows they seem harmless at first, but soon you are hypnotized by the ease of transforming old and outdated rooms and houses to beautiful visions of the latest trends and fashions.

Now one indication on how false these episodes are, is the before and after of the commercials. Before the commercials, the room/house is in shambles. There are walls knocked out and windows missing. The old carpet needs to be removed and new flooring put down. Usually they say the electrical work needs to be replaced and plumbing redone.

After the commercials (and there are usually fifteen or so of them) the house has made a miraculous transformation. Not only has monumental work been done by an off the air army of carpenters, electricians, painters, etc., but a high end designer has staged the entire place with just the perfect furnishings, the very latest, of course and money is no object!

When the project begins, usually there is a very fit young man (and sometimes woman too), who walks into the kitchen area and says things like, "The kitchen is so outdated, this kitchen is tight, the kitchen appliances are outdated, there is no island for entertaining, the countertops are not marble."

Well, as you watch these shows,

you cannot help but reflect on your own dwelling. The young man and/or woman step back and give the kitchen cabinets a good kick and boom, the entire line of upper cabinets fall to the floor. The bottom cabinets are quickly demolished into quite a pile of splinters. There is a plan to give this kitchen a fabulous new look complete with lighting and furnishings. Usually via TV it takes about 30 minutes to transform a kitchen clearly built and furnished in the 60's to a beautiful modern vision of a kitchen fit for Martha Stewart!

Again, I want to mention they almost always go over budget. In fact, I wonder why they even have a budget because when they list all the work to be done and cost out every job, they are oblivious to the never fail unexpected problems that pop up which almost always include rot, termites, leaks, supporting walls, asbestos, lead paint, etc.

If you watch enough of these shows, like I have, you just get intoxicated by the beauty of these creations and the seemingly ease in which they are accomplished. It really seems effortless.

I especially became addicted to the shows that did the kitchen makeovers. Our house was built in the 70's and over the years I had tried to do updates. I painted and covered the original flooring. We put in new light fixtures, but, nothing that would come close to the work done by the stars on HGTV.

Yes, friends, I developed a very harmful addiction to the redo shows and became truly hypnotized by their ability to work such miracles... so much so that I truly felt, I too, could perform a miracle with our kitchen...stay tuned for part 2.

Oh my goodness!



Consumers get answers from Dept. 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: I am planning a full day's menu that has Georgia products as part of every course. Do you have any ideas for using pecans for breakfast?

A: Consider pecans for any meal and for almost any menu item – entrée, appetizer, bread, dessert, side dish, salad, soup or snack – that could use a little more protein, vitamins, minerals, crunch or flavor. For breakfast, try pecan pancakes or French toast. Chop a few raw or toasted pecans and sprinkle them on your cold cereal or oatmeal. Instead of butter on your toast, try a fruit spread mixed with pecans. Spread cream cheese on a bagel and top it with some pecans. For a quick breakfast that packs a lot of nutrition, smear a banana with peanut butter, then sprinkle on pecans and raisins. One of the best sources for recipes for using pecans is the Georgia Pecan Commission www.georgiapecansfit.org. Whether you

are planning an elaborate "sit-down" breakfast or you need a quick bite as you rush for the door, pecans are a tasty and nutritious way to start the day.

Q: Are bales of pine straw classified as agriculture products in Georgia?

A: They are forest products. In 1989, the Georgia General Assembly granted limited authority to the Director of the Georgia Forestry Commission to regulate the sale of pine straw under Section 12-6-200 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (or O.C.G.A.). You may view a list of Georgia pine straw producers by visiting the Georgia Forestry Commission's website at www.gfc.state.ga.us/ForestMarketing/TreePProducts.cfm.

Q: I heard that microwaving water and using it on plants is harmful to the plants. Is this true?

A: Extremely hot water can kill a plant, but water that has been heated or boiled in a microwave and then cooled will cause no problems. The rumor of microwaves being dangerous to plant water has been around for years, but tests show that there is no structural difference between water that has been microwaved and water that has not.

Q: What is the difference between the "Animal Friend" license plate with the profile of a dog and cat inside a peach, the license plate of a black and white cat and the license plate of the big yellow dog?

A: Proceeds from the sale of all three of these plates help fund Georgia's Dog and Cat Sterilization Program. The program helps pay for spaying and neutering of cats and dogs to cut down on overpopulation and the subsequent burden it places on city and county animal shelters and rescue groups. All three plates are for sale at county tag offices. To see the license plates and to learn more about the program visit www.agr.georgia.gov or call 404-656-3667. Contributions to this program may be sent to Dog and Cat Sterilization Program, 19 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Room 102 – Agriculture Building, Atlanta, GA 30334.

If you have questions about agriculture, horticulture, food safety or services or products regulated by the Georgia Department of Agriculture, write Arty Schronce (arty.schronce@agr.georgia.gov) or visit the department's website at www.agr.georgia.gov.

UGA extension
A certified wildlife habitat in Lincoln County
By Robyn Stewart
Lincoln County Extension Service

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF), America's largest wildlife conservation and education organization, is pleased that Lincoln County Extension has successfully created a Certified Wildlife Habitat® through its Garden for Wildlife™ movement.

NWF celebrates this effort to create a garden that supports birds, butterflies, bees, frogs, and other local wildlife. Every Certified Wildlife Habitat provides natural sources of food, water, cover, and places to raise young, and is maintained in a sustainable way that incorporates native plants, conserves water, and uses integrated pest management techniques.

For over 45 years, the Garden for Wildlife movement has recognized over 227,000 Certified Wildlife Habitats across the United States to date, encompassing more than 2.5 million acres that support wildlife locally.

Lincoln County Extension is excited and proud of our recent Wildlife Habitat Certification through NWF for our Nature Trail. In order to earn this certification, we have asserted that our nature trail does five critical things. First and foremost, our nature trail provides a variety of food sources for wildlife. These food sources include seeds, berries, foliage, twigs, sap, pollen, and more. Second, our wetland habitat and creek provide adequate water for all species of wildlife. Did you know that our waterway is a creek, not a stream, because it is shallow, narrow, and doesn't have much of a current? In addition to food and water, our nature trail provides cover and shelter from weather and predators in the form of ground cover, brambles, wooded spaces, deadfall, and meadows. These areas of cover and shelter are

also areas that wildlife can court, mate, and raise young—the fourth requirement of the certification. Finally, we are using sustainable management practices on our trail such as using mulch, removing invasive species, planting native species, and limiting our water use.

Becoming a Certified Wildlife Habitat is exciting, but even more exciting are the experiences we have on the trail. Our visitors have seen a variety of animals including many species of birds, reptiles like lizards and turtles, and mammals like squirrels and deer. They have also seen a huge variety of native plants, from grasses and wildflowers in the pollinator gardens at the entrance to English ivy, thistle, wild berries, slash pines, and more! As always, we do recommend you visit the trail after a few days of sunshine as it does get muddy when it rains. Please wear good shoes and bug spray, and let us know what your favorite parts are! The trail is located at the Lincoln County Agriculture Center at 2080 Rowland York Rd and is a great alternative to walk during the heat of the day instead of the track. Maps to help you navigate are available at the Lincoln County Extension Office (located in the Ag Center) and is posted at the entrance of the trail. If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know at 3181@uga.edu or 706-359-3233.

Sit, Sew classes

The American Legion is hosting additional classes: "Sit & Sew" classes, meet monthly on the 2nd & 4th Tuesday morning, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

"Quilting Classes" are monthly, on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday, 7-9:30 p.m. Call Linda Buesching/Instructor at (706) 359-1572.

Sewing and quilting stations are appropriated spaced and masks are required.

All levels of quilting welcome. The cost is a "donation" to the American Legion.

Soccer registration

Lincoln County Recreation Department will hold registration for fall soccer June 14-July 15, for ages 5-7 and 8-10. Cost is \$50 per child. There will be no late registration. Season starts Aug. 24. Pictures will be made Mon., Aug. 23 only.

Contact LeTrellis Glaze at 706-359-2236 for more information.

Planning, zoning meetings

The City of Lincolnton Planning & Zoning Board meetings for 2021 are scheduled as follows: June 29, July 27, Aug. 31, Sept. 28, Oct. 26, Nov. 30, Dec. 28. These meetings will be held in City Hall at 5:30 p.m. each month if there is an agenda.

Super Crossword

Answers

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This weeks tips from the BBB

As the rainy spring season gives way to the warmth of summer, many individuals are eagerly planning their summer travel adventures with friends and family. According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, the 16-week period between Memorial Day and Labor Day weekend has historically been one of the busiest for traveling domestically in the U.S.

While the pandemic has affected the rate of traveling for the past year, recent data suggests that traveling is beginning to make a comeback. While still less than its pre-pandemic levels, air travel has seen a marked increase in recent months, with approximately 465,000 domestic flights recorded in March 2021 – a significant difference from the May 2020 all-time monthly low of approximately 180,000 flights.

Unfortunately, with increased opportunities to travel, scammers are looking to take advantage. In the first six months of 2021, Americans have lost over \$370,000 to travel scams across the nation and over \$190,000 just in the past two months, according to reports generated by BBB Scam Tracker.

The rate of travel scams generally increases during the summer months. They can take a variety of forms, either as sweepstakes, airfare, timeshare or rental scams and can completely disrupt even the most meticulously planned travel schedule. Spontaneous traveling can be a lot of fun – but it is important that travelers spend the time to research their lodging arrangements, rentals and any deals or discounts that they are offered by a business and do not allow a sense of urgency to rush them through the decision-making process.

The top five most-reported travel scams include:

- Vacation rental con. These con artists lure in vacationers with the promise of low fees and great amenities. The "owner" creates a false sense of urgency – such as telling potential clients that another vacationer is interested in the rental – to get payment up before doing sufficient research or questioning the legitimacy of the ad.
- "Free" vacation scams. When a cruise or travel company advertises a vacation as "free," it does not necessarily mean the trip is without cost or restrictions. Watch out for add-on fees for air transportation

to the port, port charges, taxes, tips and other undisclosed fees.

- Hotel scams. When staying in a hotel, beware of scammers who use various techniques to obtain credit card information, including fake front desk calls, "free" wi-fi connections and fake food delivery.

- Third-party booking site scams. If you book your airfare, hotel or other travel through a third-party website, be sure to use caution. BBB Scam Tracker continues to receive reports of scammers pretending to be online airline ticket brokers. In the most common version of the scam, travelers pay with a credit card and, shortly after making the payment, receive a call from the company asking to verify name, address, banking information or other personal details – something a legitimate company would never do.

- Timeshare reselling cons. A timeshare owner looking to sell gets a call from someone claiming to be a real estate broker or agent. These scammers claim to specialize in timeshare resales and promise they have buyers ready to purchase. To secure this service, the scammer pressures the target into paying an upfront fee. The timeshare owner pays up, but the reselling agent never delivers.

To assist those with travel plans this summer season, Better Business Bureau recommends prospective travelers follow these guidelines:

- Get trip details in writing. Before making a final payment, get all the details of the trip in writing. This should include the total cost, restrictions, cancellation penalties, and names of the airlines and hotels. Also, review and keep a copy of the airline's and hotel's cancellation and refund policies and the cancellation policies of the travel agency or booking site used.
- "Too good to be true" deals. As is common in various scams, if the deal or discount seems to be too good to be true, it probably is. Scammers often use this tactic to lure in potential victims and use aggressive "limited time" language to entice travelers to pay before they can research the business.
- Avoid wiring money or using a prepaid debit card. These payments are the same as sending cash. Once the money is sent, there is no way to get it back. By paying with a credit card, charges can be disputed and

dramatically limit liability from a fraudulent purchase.

- Call the rental owner. If you are not using a service that verifies properties and owners, do not negotiate a rental solely by email. Many scammers don't live locally. Speaking with the owner on the phone, asking detailed questions about the property and local attractions will clarify if the listing is genuine. An owner with vague answers is a clear red flag.

- Unsolicited offers. Be particularly cautious if you "win" a free trip without entering a contest or sweepstakes. This is especially true if the offer is time-sensitive and requires the consumer to accept and pay for the offer immediately or risk it going to another "winner." Check the official website of the company the offer is originating from to verify that it is legitimate.

For more tips on planning your summer vacation travel plans, visit BBB.org.

If you or someone you know has been a victim of a travel scam, report it to BBB Scam Tracker. Information provided could prevent another person from falling victim.

DENTAL Insurance

Medicare does not cover dental care! That means if you need dental work done, it can cost you hundreds or even thousands of dollars out of your own pocket. Get Dental Insurance from Physicians Mutual Insurance Company. It helps cover over 350 procedures – from cleanings and fillings to crowns and dentures.

- See any dentist you want, but save more with one in our network
- No deductible, no annual maximum
- Immediate coverage for preventive care

Call to get your FREE Information Kit

1-877-718-4863

dental50plus.com/linjour

1 "Medicare & You," Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2020Includes the Participating (in GA: Designated) Providers and Preventive Benefits Rider. Product not available in all states. Acceptance guaranteed for one insurance policy/certificate of this type. Contact us for complete details about this insurance solicitation. This specific offer is not available in CO, LA, NY, call 1-800-969-4781 or respond for similar offer. Certificate C250A (ID: C250E; PA: C250D); Insurance Policy P150 (GA: P150GA; NY: P150NY; OK: P150OK; TN: P150TN); Rider kinds B438/B439 (GA: B439B). 6255

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