

Editorial page

Nolia's Notes

Picken' Rules

by NOLIA BIGGERSTAFF



"Listen to me," I said to our grandson, as we got out of the truck. It was overcast but still very clammy and hot. The ominous clouds were on the horizon promising a storm coming our way. The weatherman said there was a tropical depression blowing inland and that meant that our idea to get moving early was a good one.

We had pulled in at Dempsey's farm on St. Helena Island, S.C. Mr. Davis Dempsey, a longtime friend and owner was there this morning and it was a special treat to speak with him as we approached the vegetable stand.

"Listen to me. There are special rules you must follow today," I repeated to Christian.

We were there at the farm to pick sea island tomatoes, arguably the best tomatoes in the whole world. There is a reason they are so, so good. They are grown in salty soil from the sea and they get the warm southern sun and frequent island showers for nourishment. They also have a bit of an acid bite to them, as well.

"Christian, before we begin to pick I want to go over some pickin' rules," I said.

"First, we need to go way out to the end of the row, where most folks are too lazy to walk. We do not want to stay at the front of the row, because the best tomatoes are already picked there.

Second, we must be careful to select the right size of tomatoes. We want red or pink ones that are the perfect size for tomato sandwiches and green ones that are the perfect size for frying, the size of a man's fist or bigger.

Third, before we pick, we need to look closely for worm holes and places where birds have pecked, and possible splits or any other blemish in the skin of the tomato.

Fourth, when we have chosen a tomato we must gently hold it, give it a bit of a twist and then, if needed, a snap of the wrist to remove it from the vine. Red ones will pop off more easily than the green ones, but both will have a bit of a very short stem when picked.

Fifth, that short stem needs to be removed with a twist because if

you leave that short stem on, it will punch a hole in other tomatoes in the bucket.

Sixth, we will take a large five gallon bucket and place it at the end of the row nearest the stand, but we need to take smaller buckets as we pick. The tomatoes in the bucket get heavy fast and we can do much faster work by filling the smaller buckets and then filling the larger bucket as we go.

Seventh, it is best to pick the green tomatoes first, pinkish ones next, and red ones last, to fill the larger bucket. Green tomatoes are firmer and the red ones get squished fast if they are on the bottom of the bucket. Never, ever, place a melon or other veggies on top of the bucket of tomatoes.

Eighth, we need to get home quickly and not leave the tomatoes in a hot vehicle.

Ninth, as soon as we get home, we need to gently remove the tomatoes from the bucket and place them on a soft surface, like a towel or newspaper, and keep them in a cool place, but not refrigerator. We need to space them so they are not touching.

Tenth, the green ones will ripen quickly, so if you plan to fry them, you had better do it quickly. Green tomatoes are firm and will hold up in a batter and frying pan. Red tomatoes or even the pink ones that have begun to have a juicy flesh will just not hold up well to fry," I instructed.

When we got home, suddenly there was a torrential rain storm and high wind. This was another lesson, do not procrastinate!!!!

If we had dawdled around and not gotten up early to pick, we would not have been able to get the tomatoes. They close the fields in the rain and we would have been out of luck.

Instead, we enjoyed a delicious southern delicacy, the tomato sandwich, as we listened to the weather outside. We, of course, used Duke's mayonnaise, just like my momma taught me, on light bread with a sprinkle of cracked pepper. What a joy of summer, one I long for all year!!!!

This weeks tips from the BBB

With millions of Americans going on at least one vacation this summer, safety and security precautions are a must. Proactive measures can help consumers keep their home safe from fire, carbon monoxide, and the threat of burglary while they are away.

The Better Business Bureau is offering the following safety tips for homeowners during the summer season:

- Be careful about the vacation details you share via social media. Burglars can use posts on Twitter or Facebook to determine when you'll be away. In recent polls, more than one third (35%) of Americans said they believed their home is too ordinary and would not interest a burglar. However, a vacant home could be enough to attract unwanted attention, so be careful about broadcasting your travel plans.

- Lock your doors even when you're gone for a brief amount of time. Two thirds (67%) of Americans surveyed agree they do more to protect their homes when they are going away for a night than when they are just leaving for a few hours. But, according to the FBI, more than half (53%) of home burglaries happen during the day, so homeowners should secure doors and windows every time they leave their home.

- Keep an inventory. Take the time to go through your house and make a detailed inventory of your belongings. Your inventory could be a paper list, pictures, video or a combination but be sure to notate the serial numbers or any blemishes that would make your property easily identifiable. For electronics, such as televisions, DVD players, DVRs and game consoles, use a black marker to write your name, address, phone number and maybe your driver's license number on the back or bottom of the unit. This writing won't be noticed by a thief trying to get out of your home

quickly, but it will be noticed by the pawn shop during their inspection or the police once the criminal is caught.

- Check your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors every month. Summer marks the beginning of hurricane season and afternoons thunderstorms, so if a generator needs to be used in a power outage, a quick test of your monitored life safety devices can help keep your family safe from potentially dangerous fumes.

- Keep hedges and bushes around your home trimmed, so burglars don't have places to hide, also ask neighbors to pick up your paper and remove the trashcan from the road.

If you want to relax on vacation, make sure your vacation planning includes securing your home while you are gone. If you choose to contract with a security company, find trustworthy companies and check out their BBB Business Profile first at bbb.org.

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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: Is a nectarine a type of peach?

A: A nectarine is a peach without the fuzz. Nectarines also generally have more red on the skin than peaches. Like peaches, nectarines may have white flesh or yellow flesh and be either cling or freestone. The nectarine is thought to have originated as a mutant of the peach. We grow both nectarines and peaches in Georgia.

Q: I heard that I should buy raw meat and poultry right before checking out in the grocery store. Is that true?

A: It is a good idea to buy frozen items like ice cream and sherbet last to prevent them from melting. It is also a good idea to buy raw meat and poultry near the end of your grocery store visit as well, especially if you are doing a lot of shopping. This will help keep the products cold, decreasing the chances for bacteria to grow and lengthening product shelf life. It also lessens the chances of cross-contamination - which can happen when raw meat or poultry juices drip on other food. Separate raw meat and poultry from other food in your shopping cart and make sure they are put into separate bags at the checkout. Drive directly home from the grocery store and immediately put cold food into the refrigerator or freezer.

Q: Are watermelons with yellow flesh new? I recently saw some at a grocery store.

A: Watermelons with yellow and orange flesh are not new, although

they are not as well-known as red-fleshed varieties. The taste is the same. Combining the different colors makes an attractive fruit salad. Georgia farmers grow yellow and orange as well as red watermelons.

Q: My neighbor has tomato plants and has offered to share some tomatoes with me if I will help pick. I've always been afraid to walk among tomato plants because when I was younger I saw a huge, green caterpillar big around and as long as my baby finger, on a tomato vine. My great aunt called it a tomato worm, and she said it had a bad sting. Is this true?

A: It sounds like you are describing a tomato hornworm. It is a large green caterpillar with a rhinoceros-like horn that looks like a stinger. Its appearance is intimidating, but it will not sting or harm you, although it can certainly eat a lot of tomato foliage. Please put your childhood fears and your aunt's misinformation aside and go pick some delicious Georgia tomatoes.

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.

Celebrate Recovery Thursday

First Assembly of God hosts Celebrate Recovery every Thursday evening at 6:30 pm with a light meal followed by large group worship at 7 pm and small groups at 8 pm. First Assembly is located on the Thomson Highway. Call the church office at 359-7237 for more information.

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Small pecan production in Lincoln County

By Robyn Stewart
Lincoln County Extension Service

The state of Georgia is responsible for producing approximately a third of all pecans produced in the U.S. each year. While the majority of that crop is produced in larger operations, there are a significant number of small pecan producers who are interested in renovating old orchards and managing mature trees for better production. Common pecan questions in the Lincoln County UGA Extension office cover topics like fertilization, disease/pest concerns, and marketing/selling nuts. This year, Lincoln County Extension set out to provide educational programs targeting small pecan producers.

The first Small Pecan Producers Workshop was held on February 2, 2021. This half day virtual workshop featured guest speakers from UGA Cooperative Extension, the UGA Small Business Development Center, Georgia Department of Agriculture: Georgia Grown, and the Georgia Pecan Grower's Association. Andrew Sawyer, UGA Pecan Specialist and Lucy Ray, Morgan County ANR Agent discussed production topics including variety selection, orchard design and layout, fertilization, irrigation, and common disease and pest issues. Representatives from Georgia Grown and the Georgia Pecan Grower's Association gave introductions to their programs and the resources they can offer to small producers.

The day was rounded out with a presentation by the UGA Small Business Development Center on developing a marketing strategy for selling pecans at a local and regional level. The webinar had 109 participants from seven states and

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 Le'Trellis Glaze at 706-359-2236 for more information.

Clark benefit fund at FSB

A fund to benefit Joy Clark had been established at Farmers State Bank. Donations are needed to help Joy with medical expenses as she has been diagnosed with liver cancer. Donations can be made at Farmers State Bank or mailed to PO Box 99, Lincolnton, GA 30817.

Assessors board to meet

The following dates are for the 2021 regular scheduled meetings of the Lincoln County Board of Tax Assessors. All meetings are scheduled for 5:30 p.m. in the conference room of the Lincoln County Tax Assessors Office located at 182 Humphrey Street.

Any changes in meeting, dates, and times will be posted on the bulletin board of the Lincoln County Courthouse, and the front door of the Tax Assessors Office. When time allows, we will also notify the Lincoln Journal.

Tues., Aug. 17; Tues., Sept. 21; Tues., Oct. 19; Tues., Nov. 16; Tues., Dec. 21.

City Council meetings

The Lincolnton City Council meeting dates for 2021 are as follows: Aug. 3, Sept. 7, Oct. 5, Nov. 2, Dec. 7. All meetings are held at 7 p.m. at City Hall.

three countries in attendance. One attendee commented "This was extremely useful and very appreciated. The topics covered are pertinent and I really like that resources provided. Very, very helpful!"

Following the success of the virtual workshop, plans were made to offer a field day on July 14, 2021 in Lincoln County, Georgia at Heritage Farm and Forest, owned by Matt and Lindsey Ellington. Heritage has approximately 50 mature pecan trees on three acres, and the Ellington's hope to more than double their orchard size in the future, which made them an ideal host for a small producer's program.

The program opened with an introduction to the UGA Small Business Development Center and the Georgia Pecan Growers Association, then UGA Pecan Specialist Andrew Sawyer took the floor. He discussed his top low-input varieties, differences between irrigation and fertilization needs for young and mature trees, and the most common disease and pest issues producers can expect to see.

After our formal presentations, producers were served lunch and invited to visit with Andrew and the Ellington's to get all of their production questions answered. The field day had 24 attendees from four states in attendance. Final comments included "great event and information" and "thank you for a great program and helpful information!"

The reception of the pecan community to these programs has been exceptional. As a result, our team is considering how we might continue to offer expanded educational opportunities in Lincoln County and beyond. If you have suggestions on topics or field days, please let us know at age3181@uga.edu or 706-359-3233.

Scholarship fund

The 10th Annual Jennie L. Garnett Scholarship Fund Program of Newberry Missionary Baptist Church will not be held this year. However, contributions may be made to Newberry Missionary Baptist Church, P.O. Box 173. The program is sponsored annually by the Jennie L. Garnett Inspirational Choir.

The late Jennie L. Garnett was a strong supporter of education. She often shared with others her struggle to get an education.

We appreciate your support and generosity. Willie J. White, pastor.

Homecoming at Goshen

Goshen Baptist Church will celebrate its 234th year of ministry with a homecoming service Sun., July 25, at 11 a.m., with a noon meal to follow.

Revival services will be held Mon., July 26-Wed., July 28. There will be special music nightly and Pastor Donnie Walton will be guest speaker for the homecoming and revival. The public is invited to attend.

Sunday services

Blessed Hope Bible Baptist meets at the Presbyterian Church on Sundays at 11 a.m. and Wednesdays at 7 p.m. for prayer meeting. Come join us. For more information call 706-359-6759.

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