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SOLUTIONS

Newsletter of the Alamance County Cooperative Extension Service

Summertime, and the Living is Easy

It's summertime and the living is easy! Summer is a time for vacations to the mountains or the beach or just relaxing around the house. I actually prefer relaxing around the house. It seems like it takes a lot of effort to get ready to go on vacation and a lot of work to catch up on the chores when I get back home. I don't have much trouble getting volunteers to come pick tomatoes out of the garden, but not that many volunteers to do the weeding. I can't say that I blame them though.



Summer can also be a very busy time. The 4-H program is wide open. Between club activities and the Summer Sizzle class schedule it seems like there is something happening every day in 4-H! While all these 4-H activities are fun, most can be very educational.

Home gardeners are starting to harvest their summer vegetables. That is quite rewarding after weeks of watering and weeding. Unfortunately, along with the harvest comes insect and disease problems.

Some folks spend a lot of time on the internet trying to diagnose a problem. Sometimes they get it right and sometimes they get it wrong. But, no matter whether it is a field crop, livestock, 4-H or horticulture question, the fastest way to a good, research-based answer is by contacting the staff of Alamance County Cooperative Extension. We're here to help make your summertime living just a little bit easier.

Mark A. Danieley

Calendar Updates

- Sat., Jul. 23 NC Beef Cattle Day CEFS-Cherry Research Farm, Goldsboro-all welcome!
- Thurs., Jul. 28 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - Fall Vegetable Gardening
- Thurs., Aug. 11 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - Improve Your Home's Curb Appeal
- Thurs., Aug. 25 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - Fabulous Ferns and Their Fronds
- Thurs., Sep. 08 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - Fall Lawn Care
- Thurs., Sep. 29 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - Want To Be A Master Gardener?
- Thurs., Oct. 13 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - Interior Plants
- Thurs., Oct. 27 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - Composting

For more information and to register
Call 336.570.6740 or visit
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Summertime, and the Gardening Is Easy!

by: Mark Danieleley, Horticulture Agent

I think gardening is a hobby that can give you a great deal of satisfaction. You can transform a bare piece of ground into an attractive garden by planting a few flower or vegetable plants. Once the planting is done one of the greatest challenges is how to keep everything watered.

Hand watering works very well because it requires you to look at every bed and gives you the opportunity to see potential problems. Insect and disease issues are easier to address when they are just getting started. The disadvantage to hand watering is that it takes a lot of time especially if you have several beds.

I prefer to use drip irrigation in my flower and vegetable gardens.

Drip irrigation is a great time saver and it certainly makes gardening easier. I can turn on the drip and while the garden is being watered I can weed or pick vegetables. Sometimes I just like to sit in my chair in the shade while the garden is watered.

Drip irrigation systems for vegetable gardens are easy to install and relatively inexpensive. The installation starts by attaching the garden hose to the pressure reducer and filter assembly. The water pressure in most homes is about 40 psi and drip systems generally operate at 10 psi. The pressure reducer is required to avoid damage to the drip irrigation system. The water then passes through the filter which removes any pieces of trash that might clog the system.



The next part is the distribution line which takes the water to the

garden beds. This is typically a ½ inch poly tube. It can be installed in raised beds or multiple ground beds by using elbows and tees. Connectors to the drip tape are inserted in the poly tube. These can be

straight connectors or connectors with a valve. I prefer the valve connectors so I can turn off a bed that is not in use.

The main part of the drip system is the drip tape. This is a thin poly tube that has drip emitters formed inside the tube. I don't understand how it

is made or how it works, but it is a great invention. Many of us have used soaker hoses in the past. The soaker hoses release a lot of water next to the hose connector and very little at the end of a fifty foot hose. The drip tape is pressure compensating so there is the same flow at the end of a 100 foot run as there is at the beginning.

The drip tape is also very efficient in water use. The drip tape I use only takes 4.5 gallons per minute to operate 1,000 feet of tape. That means I can water my entire garden at one time. Whether I use that time to do other chores or just sit in my chair, drip irrigation makes watering the garden an easy task.



Easy Fun Summers With 4-H

Taylor Jones, 4-H Agent

The schools are all out for summer, and it is time for some easy living while the kids are home from school. However, many youth and families can get stuck in the summer-time boredom phase of summer vacation. Yet Alamance County 4-H is bustling with all of our Summer Sizzle activities happening now. Whether your child is interested in animals or cooking, electricity or drawing, there are tons of activities still available during the summer with 4-H that your youth can be a part of. This year, some of our new programs include a College Cooking

Crash Course, and a Mini-Mechanic workshop. Alamance County 4-H provides quality, educational, and FUN activities year-round, however summer time is our busiest time of year. We have programs going on almost every day. Of course, we have some favorite summertime 4-H events like camp and congress, but some others that you may not be aware of include our sewing class, fishing fun, and Jr. Master Gardeners. There is something for every child with Alamance County 4-H Summer Sizzle. The best part about our summer programs is that they all have an educational component to them. Children tend to become less productive developmentally during the summer. On average, children lose two months of reading during the summer. This can be hard on children when they go back to school in the fall. Our Summer programs try to solve this issue. Your child will not only have a fun time exploring a new subject, but learn



something in the process during our Summer Sizzle classes. They will use reading, math, and science skills during most of our summer sizzle classes. All of our summer programs are specifically focused on age groups. Most programs have children within 3 years of age together. This helps the instructors to further impact our audience by keeping the information at a certain age level. This is unlike many other summer programs in our community that cater to a larger age range. One advantage to Alamance County 4-H Summer programs is that it can lead to a more long-term program such as joining a 4-H club. We have 11 4-H clubs scattered throughout the county and they each have their own focus or area of interest. We have clubs that have horticultural focuses, a horse club, clubs that complete community service projects, and others. If your child participates in our summer sizzle classes, this gives them a snapshot of some of our clubs that they can become a part of and hopefully attend their monthly meetings. Alamance County 4-H has something to offer every youth with any sort of interest. If you are looking for a quality youth development program to become active in, our 4-H Summer Sizzle and 4-H clubs are excellent choices!



Living is Easy When You Have Automatic Waterers!

By: Lauren Langley, Livestock Extension Agent

This summer, why not make your chores a little easier by adding automatic waterers? Nobody likes sweating and getting sunburned while waiting for a 100 gallon tank to fill. Not to mention the added benefit for the animals- fresh water, cooler water in most cases, and as much as they need when they need it! No matter, if you have a few chickens or 50 head of beef cattle there is an automatic waterer out there for you. Let's take a look at a few options:

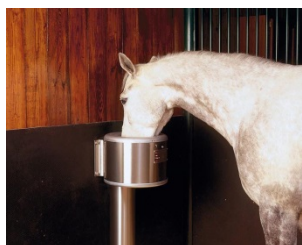
Poultry



Swine



Equine



Sheep/Goats



Cattle



As you can see, there are a lot of different options available from low cost stock tank floats to gravity fed insulated automatic waters (ball drinkers). Water is the most critical nutrient to livestock and consumption will increase with high temperatures. Adding automatic waterers can benefit livestock owners as well as livestock year round. There is even limited funding available in certain circumstances where water is limited and your primary water source is a pond or stream. Contact Soil & Water (Alamance County) at 336-228-1753 for more information.

Technology Making Farming Easier

By: Dwayne Dabbs, Field Crops Agent.

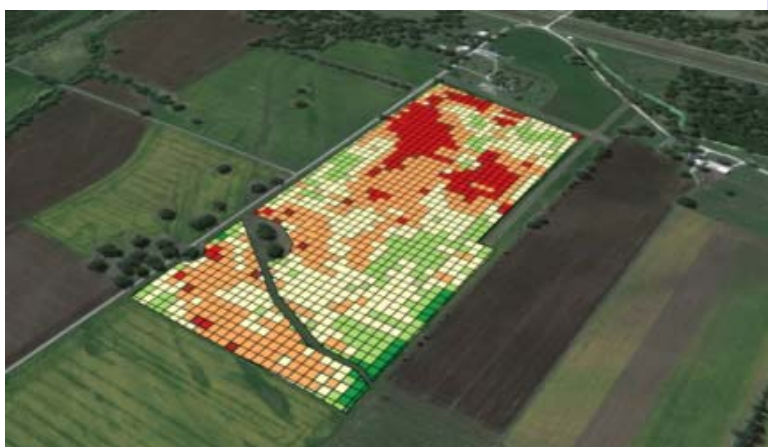


When it comes to farming, there is very little that is easy, from the long hours, to the back breaking work. However, since this issue is about what makes life in farming easier, I'll talk about the ways that technology has been incorporated in most aspects of farming. With this being said, as everyone knows, regardless of what walk of life you are from, new technology is expensive. You will not see this new technology on every farm in Alamance, but over time I think it will be adopted or incorporated as the cost comes down.

There are many more guidance systems available to farmers now than there were say 15-20 years ago, and these systems allow for a farmer to be more precise in the field and save money. Most of the newer systems allow a piece of equipment to be accurate to a couple inches when they are planting or spraying their crop. This in turn helps to reduce duplication, and save the farmer money either in seed or chemical costs.

What most people are most familiar with would be the simple GPS systems, which are very similar to a GPS unit that you would have in your vehicle. The farmer programs his fields into this system, and it gives a guide while planting, spraying and harvesting a crop, also helping to reduce overlap and be more efficient. The more evolved the systems get the better accuracy the farmer can get. For example, the RTK GPS systems allow for the equipment to be within an inch or two, but these systems are very costly and you need to have a lot of land in production in order for the system to be economically justified.

Another form of technology that farmers have at their disposal is Variable-Rate-Technology. This allows the farmer to be more productive on the land that they tend. Most farmers have a yield monitor on their combine that takes readings continuously in the field. With this form of technology, a farmer can create a map of their field based on how that crop yielded; this is done for several years to get a baseline for each individual field. From there, the field is soil sampled on a grid (squares that are equal size throughout the field). The size of the grid square will vary depending on the size of the entire field, so it varies greatly from farm to farm. The farmer gets their recommendations from each grid square and then applies the recommended nutrients in the field, so some parts of the field will get more or less nutrients depending on what the recommendation was. This will allow the farmer to be more productive because he is adding nutrients only where it is needed. This saves them money and allows the crop to produce more yield.



Pond Weeds

By: Dwayne Dabbs, Field Crops Agent.

I know that most folks are seeing pond weeds thriving now with the sustained hot weather we have been having. If you have a problem with weeds taking over your pond, there is still time to treat the problem. I ask that you gather a sample of the weed in a container with a tight fitting lid, and bring it by the Extension Office for me to look at. The larger the weed the more that you will need to get, because some weeds can look almost identical, and the stem or leaves are the only way that I can discern what the weed is. After we figure out what the weed is, I can tell what the most economical means of control is going to be. Unfortunately, grass carp will not control all the weeds that can grow in a pond, so we may have to go to a chemical treatment, but we can figure it out.

Summertime and the Veggies are Easy!

Whether from your garden or the Farmer's Market, summer produce is here! Following are a couple of tasty recipes to help you use some of that summer surfeit.



Squash Fritters

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|--|--------------------------------------|
| 3 T vegetable oil, divided | 2 T. sour cream |
| 1 egg, beaten | 2 T. finely-shredded Parmesan cheese |
| 2/3 c milk | 1/4 t. Cayenne pepper |
| 1/2 c self-rising cornmeal | 1/2 t. salt |
| 1 c firmly-packed grated yellow squash | 1/4 t. black pepper |
| 2 T grated onion | Prepared or fresh salsa |

Combine 2 tablespoons oil, egg, milk, cornmeal, squash, onion, sour cream, cheese, cayenne, salt and black pepper; mix well. For thinner consistency, add additional milk, or if batter is too runny, add another tablespoon cornmeal. Heat remaining tablespoon of oil (or more, if needed) in a large skillet over medium heat. Spoon 1/4 cup of batter per fritter into skillet. Cook approximately 4 minutes on first side and 2 minutes on second side. Fritter should be golden brown on both sides. Repeat with remaining batter until all batter has been used. To serve, place one fritter on plate and top with salsa. Then stack second fritter on top. Cover with salsa and add additional sour cream, if desired.

Fresh Salsa

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|----------------------------------|---------------|
| 2 bunches green onions | 2 T. vinegar |
| 1 small can chopped black olives | 2 T. oil |
| 6 large tomatoes | Salt & pepper |
| 2 fresh jalapeño peppers, seeded | |

Chop green onions, black olives, tomatoes and jalapeño peppers very fine or in a food processor. Add vinegar, oil, salt and pepper to taste. Store in refrigerator



Recipes are from the cookbook:

The Garden Plate—Recipes from Alamance County Master Gardeners

Available for \$15.00—proceeds benefit Arbor Gate Teaching Garden

