



The Newsletter of Lee County Master Gardeners

President's Message



Rhododendron "Mary Belle"

It is only May, yet we have had an eventful and successful year already! We are a strong and vital community organization who is more active, visible, and engaged around the County than ever. Events such as our annual native azalea sale, the OA News Home and Garden Show, and Garden in the Park have already occurred and all have been very successful. Thank you to those who have stepped forward to lead these events and to those who have assisted. We have many great volunteers who view Master Gardener as the organization that can make a real difference in our communities.

Our Community Gardens are likewise in great shape and there to educate the public. Our mission is to help Extension educate the public and we can be very comfortable with the way we are fulfilling our duty. The public has already gained immense transfer information from our efforts to date. In the many places I have lived in the past 40 years I never recall seeing a mention of Master Gardeners in newspapers or otherwise. But you are invaluable asset in the transfer of horticultural information to the public.

Although we are a year away from our 2016 Garden Tour, Nancy Golson and Su-

san Price are making great strides in identifying gardens and lining up publicity and community support. Please share your ideas with them so that this will be our best yet. We especially need a garden where the owner has focused on native plants and has created a natural area that attracts birds.

I look forward to seeing you in the garden.

--Dennis

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Camellia in Eufaula April 10



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Master Gardeners are encouraged to submit articles, ideas, notices, etc. to:

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The Master Gardeners Program educates volunteers in science-based gardening and landscape practices and helps them effectively extend research-based information to the public as Master Gardeners. The Master Gardener's role is primarily that of "educator."

There are many different ways our volunteers in Lee County help the Alabama Extension System (ACES) expand outreach to the community. We construct and maintain community demonstration gardens and help implement community projects. A variety of garden-related programs and workshops are offered to the public.

Lee County Master Gardeners Visit Eufaula

On Friday April 10, 2015 Lee County Master Gardeners and friends visited Eufaula, AL during the 50th annual Eufaula Pilgrimage.

We visited two heritage homes and saw lovely gardens, In addition, the lunch at the Country Club was excellent, and we were serenaded at several locations..

See photos for some of the pleasures seen during our visit.





Smelly Kudzu Bugs Making Spring Appearance

Liu Yang, Ph.D. Student, Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology, Auburn University Xing Ping Hu, Extension Specialist/Professor, Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology; Alabama Cooperative Extension Service, Auburn University

Spring is the time that the overwintered stinky kudzu bug adults make appearance in residential areas. There are several different ways that kudzu bugs have potential to bother residents. They may invade home, infest tender buds/stems of plants in your backyard garden and landscape, and land on house, vehicle, and even on you.

Kudzu bug, *Megacopta cribraria* (F.), is fairly small (Fig. 1), resembling ladybug in size, but is olive green in color with dark punctuation (Fig. 2). Many people mistake them for beetles, but they can easily be differentiated by their beaklike piercing sucking mouthparts and their strong odor. Adult females deposit small brownish particles on the underside of their egg masses.

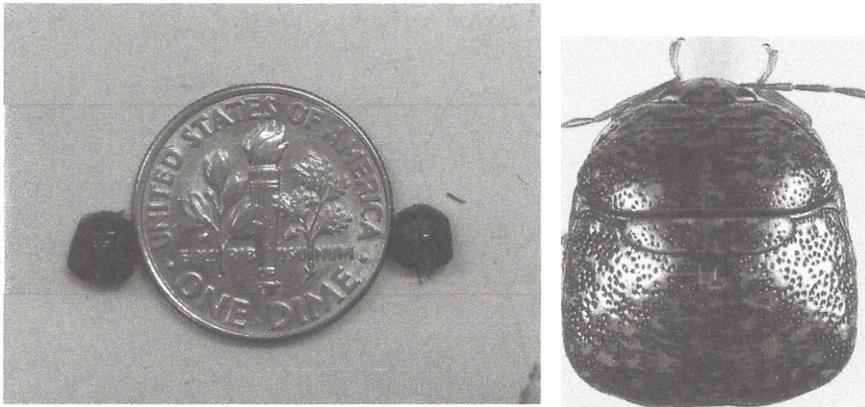


Fig. 1. Kudzu bug next to dime for size comparison . Fig. 2. Dorsal view of adult (Joe. E. Eger, Jr. 2010)

The warm weather has waked up the kudzu bug from their overwintering sites including crevice where a group of bugs can aggregate, gaps under the bark of trees, gaps under the siding of homes. The overwintered adults are swarming out, migrating to aggregate on numerous trees or plants with new buds and flowers, since the middle March in southern counties, later March in central AL and now in northern AL.

These plants are not necessarily what they like to feed on (sucking the sap). They may simply get a taste to satisfy their empty stomachs after long winter dormancy. They do like to taste wisteria, satsuma, fig, and other horticultural tree buds and tender leaves and twigs. But don't panic, they will not stay on such non-hosts long. They may lay eggs on a variety of plants but the offspring will not survive. As soon as kudzu and soybean plants become available, they will move on to these host plants. Host plants are those the pests can develop on to reproductively mature and produce next generation.

Kudzu bugs cause plant damage by sucking phloem sap of above-ground plant parts with their piercing-sucking stylets, and preferentially feed on young and tender growths, which can result in spots discoloration, defoliation, improperly developed pods, and wilting and poor seed sets.

This bug also likes to land on anything of light-colored, such as white and yellow. Unfortunately, this means they may aggregate on or nearby your home, on you, or your vehicle, and may accidentally wander into your home. When landing on human body, they may leave a stain on your skin and cloth. Sometimes, though not common, an allergic reaction may occur, resulting in skin irritation.



Kudzu Bugs—continued

Generally speaking, there is no need to spray pesticide unless to where they aggregate in great populations and where applying chemical will not cause harm side-effect. However, if there are kudzu patches nearby, residents should consider to spray the kudzu vines after the bugs migrate back. This pest is not known of resistance to common pesticides. Any product using an active ingredient ending in -thrin should be effective, such as deltamethrin.

You may use the following cultural practice to kill them.

Wash them off your home and plants with a high-powered hose or soap-water is an option.

Shack or knock the plants they are on with a rod to let them fall down to ground, or into a container you put beneath the plant is another option. This bug plays dead when being disturbed. If you let them fall on ground, vacuum them up and dump the bag in hot-soapy water before through the bag in trashcan. If you collect them in to a container, get the bugs into a plastic bag, seal the bag and dump the bag to dumpster.

Set up a white-panel trap (Fig. 3) on the edge of your property. Use a piece of white poster board and cut it in half, attach the two halves by cutting a line up the middle of the two piece and put them together. Place a bucket with soap-water underneath the panel trap and you may deter some bugs from landing on your home.

Set up light-colored sticky card/board to trap them.

Other suggested exclusion measures include:

Place screening over possible routes of insect entry into the house

Check to make sure screens on windows are well-seated and without holes

Check to make sure soffit, ridge, and gable vents are properly screened

Stuff steel wool into openings where screening cannot be used, such as around pipe penetrations

Make sure doors establish a tight seal when closed

Install doors _weeps

In the event they enter your home, don't try to crush them, a crushed kudzu bug may leave stains and release awful odor hard to eliminate. Rather, they should be vacuumed.

The overwhelming numbers of insects combined with nearby source(s) of re-infestation can make sustained control difficult. Ultimately, the elimination of the kudzu bug relies on the physical removal or death of kudzu via herbicide, so if possible, the homeowner should try to remove nearby kudzu in the summer.

Keep in mind, don't spray chemicals when kudzu bugs start laying eggs. A naturally occurring wasp has been discovered in 2013. This tiny parasitic wasp develops inside individual kudzu bug eggs and kills the eggs.

To assist us with a continuing a survey on plants this bug may aggregate on, we would encourage and appreciate extension agents and residents to inform us what you may observe along with photos. Send your message to huxingp@aces.edu. Thank you in advance.



“Loveliest Village Award”

Robert and Shelia Allen are the most recent recipients of the Auburn Beautification Council’s Loveliest Village Award. The Allens’ garden, located just off of Glenn Avenue at 237 Hickory Woods Drive, consists of three raised beds overflowing with green cabbages, broccoli, cauliflower, strawberries and herbs. The raised beds are surrounded by a rock pathway as well as a wooden beam border landscaped with evergreen boxwoods and drift roses. An artistically crafted arbor welcomes people to explore what the garden has to offer. The garden project, completed in January of this year, was inspired by horticulture students of Auburn University associate professor Dr. Carolyn Robinson and Justin Carlson of C & C Land Development. Shown, from left to right, are Loveliest Village Award recipients Robert and Shelia Allen and Auburn Beautification Council members Julie McGowin, Peggy McDonald, M.C. McCarthy and Maury Matthews.



Native Azalea Sale



Well we did it again! Our third annual native azalea sale was a huge success. Thank you to all who came for the fun event.

About 330 Native Azaleas arrived around 0800 and 100+ buyers were not far behind. The sale was scheduled to begin at 0900 but we had **sold all of them before 1000**. Ernest Koone, grower, said that he had not seen anything like that before. I stayed until 1110 letting folks know we sold out and they were still coming as I gathered the sandwich board sign and departed.

We owe a big thank you to Raleine. Publicity made it work and it worked beyond what any of us expected. We had a front page article and nice advertising in the OA News and a front page article in the Opelika Observer. And we had good visibility in other mail outs. With this event and the Home and Garden Show, Raleine certainly has a basket full of eggs.



Davis Arboretum Training Classes

Thursday mornings in spring and fall, a group of MGs, Friends and others meet at 10 am for informative lessons on the Alabama trees and plants that make up our native flora. Patrick Thompson, conservation gardener and arborist at Auburn University's Davis Arboretum leads the group in topics that we decide as a group to explore. So far this spring we have learned about spring wildflowers on a tour of the arboretum and unusual native shrubs in the landscape paired with a tour of a new subdivision using natives in their common areas.

In return our group volunteers to help with activities in conjunction with school group tours and arboretum events such as plant sales.

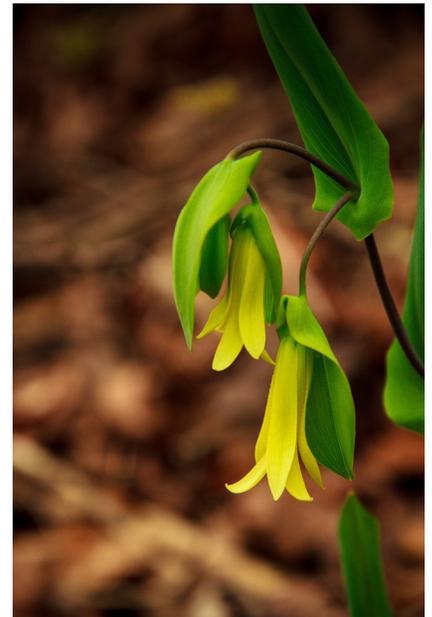
Patrick is a natural born educator with a wealth of knowledge to share. The classes are open to anyone, even if you don't want to be a docent, and the sessions serve as CEUs. We meet every Thursday from 10-12 at the Davis Arboretum pavilion with free parking available beyond the B-zone lot off Garden Dr. within the arboretum on a parking pad.



This subdivision is being developed with detailed attention to ecologically preserving the environment and using sustainable practices in construction. A common area has been built for the community, which includes a garden utilizing raised beds made from stacked stone and a covered stage and picnic pavilion fashioned from reclaimed wood recycled from old buildings. Pictured at the entrance to the community garden are (l-r) Billie Oliver, Patrick Thompson and Tomie Dugas.



In the natural wooded area of the subdivision is found the state champion river birch (shown here) and a large pawpaw tree patch being preserved along the banks of the Saugahatchee River.



Bellwort—Photo taken by David Peterson at Chewacla State Park



Lee County Master Gardeners Helping Educate Children

This winter the Lee County Master Gardeners began two new educational programs involving youth in our communities. The first was a container gardening program presented to the Learning Clovers, 4-H Group on February 26, 2015 at Lakeview Baptist Church.

The 4-H leader is Marie Tennant, with co-leader Brenda French.

The group is part of the Home Schoolers at Lakeview Baptist Church, with the 12 children of the Learning Clovers.

Colorful containers were planted with yellow pansies, pink dianthus, and blue violas. Note cards were made by the children and placed in the containers.

Once the containers were finished, the children took them to Monarch Estates Assisted Living (which happened to be next door to the church). They then discussed with the residents the type of plants used in the containers, whether they like sun or shade, and explained the importance of dead-heading the plants to keep them blooming.

The second project involved donating native trees, and planting them (with the help of 3rd graders) as part of the Master Gardener's beautification and educational program. At Beauregard Elementary School on March 9th, two tulip poplars and one bald cypress were planted by Pamela Hoggart's 3rd grade class. Master Gardeners Gene Galloway and Pat Giordano spoke to the class about how to care for the newly planted trees and explained the benefits of trees to people and animals.



Beauregard Elementary School



"Diggin in"



Sanford Middle School



Making a Wine Bottle Border

What to do with wine bottles....

Dazzle up the garden with glass bottles to edge a garden bed or path. Your paths will look pretty when the sun shines through the colored glass.

How to make a bottle border

1. Soften the soil by watering the area
2. Use a garden hose to make straight or curved guide lines
3. Dig down about 6 inches with a square edged shovel
4. Set bottles evenly in the trench and fill in the dirt firmly



Flower bed with wine bottle border

LCMGA Demonstration Gardens at Kiesel Park

Charlot Ritenbaugh MG class of 2010

Look up!

There is a beautiful Japanese maple that pulls your eye up into the Alabama sky in the Meditation Garden. A 'Spencer Roy' creation, an eight-foot pyramid shaped trellis pulls your eye upward as it will the coral honeysuckle vine. Returning passion vine sprouts will cover a five-foot wall of fencing squares by summer's end. The grape arbor, freshly stained a lovely driftwood color, supports new growth from the Muscadine vines. Four healthy liriiodendron provide perch spots for all kinds of songbirds including our nesting bluebird couple. New growth has been spotted on two additions to the Alabama Native plants selection, a true native *Clematis virginiana* and *Symphotrichum carolinianuma*, a climbing aster.

When your back is tired from pulling weeds look upward and see the shade from the pergola covering on the deck. We are grateful to Adrian and Carol for overseeing its placement this spring. This is a great time to enjoy the upward views in our gardens and in your garden. Make plans to take the time to appreciate an elevated point of view.



Cover Crops at Kiesel Park Demo Garden

By Adrian Boone

At the Kiesel Park vegetable demonstration garden, we had a root knot nematode infestation, which decimated crops. In the fall of 2013 and repeated in 2014, we used both Sunn Hemp and “Taproot Radish” (obtainable online from Sustainseeds.com) in an Integrated Pest Management approach. The beds were first planted with Sunn Hemp in August and allowed to grow for 60 days. Then the 5-6 foot growths were pulled up, spread out on top of the beds and allowed to dry for one week. Then Taproot Radish seeds were simply broadcast over the beds and allowed to grow through the winter. Some were killed by the frost, but there were survivors. These were simply pulled and spread out as green manure. Composted manure was spread out on top of the beds in late winter to aid in decomposition. Using the non-till method, spring vegetables were planted directly into the soil beneath the decaying cover of Sunn Hemp and Taproot Radish. Benefits of using cover crops such as “taproot” and “forage” radishes include the addition of organic matter rich in nitrogen and other nutrients; increased fertility of the top soil; deep penetration of long “bio-tilling” roots that can break up or prevent compaction; promotion of deeper rooting by crops that follow; potential for weed and pest control as most brassicas produce chemicals toxic to soil-borne pests and diseases.

Taproot Radish, similar to Daikon Radish, has a larger, deeper penetrating tap root to aid as a biological tool to reduce soil compaction and is non-food grade. Daikon Radish (aka “oilseed,” “tillage,” “forage,” “fodder,” “Oriental,” “white radish,” “winter radish,” “white radish,” (cf. usda.gov) has some culinary uses and animal feed uses globally, as well as agricultural uses aimed at preventing soil compaction. Both scavenge nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorous and calcium and bring them upwards to provide nutrients for the next planted crop. In the Spring, the radish plants may be pulled and used as green manure or flipped into the soil before planting the next crop.

Sources:

“Nematode Control in the Home Vegetable Garden,” Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Alabama A&M and Auburn Universities, May 2009, ANR-0030



Adrian in the vegetable garden

Grandma's Garden in early Spring





East Alabama Home and Garden Show

The Lee County Master Gardeners Assoc. participated this past March in the second annual East Alabama Home & Garden Show. The show was held at the Event Center, downtown Opelika. It was hosted by Opelika Auburn News and sponsored by our local Home Depot.

Our welcome board was titled "Ask a Master Gardener ..." with the catchphrase this year being "... about the birds and bees and other gardening questions." We used bird and bee themed items to decorate our space, many of which were provided by our membership. We were promoting our Native Azalea Plant Sale in April, and wanted to educate the public on the importance and advantage of using native plants in a home landscape and the importance played by birds and bees to the health and growth of that landscape.

Our participation in the Home & Garden Show was a great success. We were located at the front entrance so, as people came and went, we were right there to greet them and help them with their gardening questions. With assistance from our local extension office, we had many flyers and brochures to offer to the public, covering a wide range of gardening topics. To entertain the children we gave away small plants (donated by Glenda James with the Lee County Extension Service), we provided crayons to color drawings of bees and we gave away honey sticks (donated by Jane Jones, LCMG),

Hundreds of people passed through our space with over 200 of them indicating they wanted additional information sent to them about the Master Gardener program.

Our success was also due to the contributions of our supporters and sponsors. Home Depot provided an extensive assortment of plants with which to decorate our space. Hal Smith, owner of Wild Birds Unlimited located in Auburn, offered decorations and provided a large bag of bird seed as a door prize. As we were also taking advantage of the show to promote our plant sale, our second door prize was a \$20 gift certificate to be used at the sale. Publix at Hamilton Place provided small packs of crayons to give away to children. Patrick Thompson, with Auburn University Arboretum (who set up a display alongside ours) was a great help in answering some of the more complicated questions from our visitors. And lastly, the show would not have been the success it was without the time and energy contributed by our membership, both at the show and behind the scenes.

There's too many to mention, but I want to offer my thanks and deep appreciation to everyone who helped me make the show the success it was. Here's looking forward to another great show next year.

Raleine Sillman



Jason Schoonhoven, manager of Home Depot, sponsor of this Spring's Home and Garden Show in Opelika made the Lee County Master Gardener booth come alive with a generous loan of abundant flowers and green plants. We thank him for this support and Home Depot's past sponsorship of the 2014 Garden Tour. He'd surely appreciate a "Hi!" next time you're in the store. *(Photo and info submitted by Sarah Fair.)*



Wildflower Walk with an Expert

At Callaway Gardens

Friday, March 27, 2015 to Friday, May 15, 2015

Fridays, 2 p.m.

Callaway Discovery Center

Take in the beauty of native Spring flowers on an informative and enjoyable walk along the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Trail with a Callaway Gardens Horticulturist. Native flowers were a favorite of both our co-founder, Virginia Hand Callaway, and her good friend, Mrs. Johnson. During this easy walk, guests will discover where native plants, including many rare, threatened and endangered species of Georgia, are featured in the Gardens.

Closed-toe walking shoes recommended. Meet at the Callaway Discovery Center at 1:45 p.m. Will return by 3 p.m.

A self-guided walk on the Wildflower Trail is extra special in February and March as it is the best time of year to see early-blooming wildflowers, or Spring ephemerals. These unique plants bloom early, before the leaves of the trees shade the forest floor. Sunlight is able to reach through, allowing them to bloom -- creating a colorful Spring display.



Quarterly Quote

We are living beyond our means,
As a people we have developed a life
-style that is draining the earth of its
priceless and irreplaceable resources
without regard for the future of our
children and people all around the
world.

Margaret Mead



Garden Tour Home in Eufaula
(Note the huge pear trees)



'As convenient as a pencil'

A selection -- from *Bold* by Peter H. Diamonds and Steven Kotler. In 1888, George Eastman and his Eastman Kodak Company made his newly-invented camera available to the public and in so doing made photography "as convenient as a pencil":

"The year was 1878. George Eastman was a twenty-four-year-old junior clerk at the Rochester Savings Bank in need of a vacation. He chose to go to Santo Domingo, in the Dominican Republic. At the suggestion of a coworker, Eastman bought all the requisite photographic equipment to make a record of the trip. It was a lot of equipment: a camera as big as a Rotweiler, a massive tripod, a jug of water, a heavy plateholder, the plates themselves, glass tanks, an assortment of chemicals, and, of course, a large tent -- this last item providing a dark place in which to spread emulsion on the plates before exposure and a dark place to develop them afterwards. Eastman never did go on that vacation.

"Instead, he got obsessed with chemistry. Back then photography was a 'wet' art, but Eastman, who craved a more portable process, read about gelatin emulsions capable of remaining light-sensitive after drying. Working at night, in his mother's kitchen, he began to experiment with his own varieties. A natural-born tinkerer, Eastman took less than two years to invent both a dry plate formula and a machine that fabricated dry plates. The Eastman Dry Plate Company was born.

"More tinkering followed. In 1884, Eastman invented roll film; four years later he came up with a camera capable of taking advantage of that roll. In 1888, that camera became commercially available, later marketed under the slogan 'You press the button, we do the rest.' The Eastman Dry Plate Company had become the Eastman Company, but that name wasn't quite catchy enough. Eastman wanted something stickier, something that people would remember and talk about. One of his favorite letters was K. In 1892, the Eastman Kodak Company was born.

"In those early years, if you would have asked George Eastman about Kodak's business model, he would have said the company was somewhere between a chemical supply house and a dry goods purveyor (if dry plates can be considered dry goods). But that changed quickly. 'The idea gradually dawned on me,' Eastman said, 'that what we were doing was not merely making dry plates, but that we started out to make photography an everyday affair.' Or, as Eastman later rephrased it, he wanted to make photography 'as convenient as a pencil'

"And for the next hundred years, Eastman Kodak did just that."

Editor's note— Most of us take photos , many with our smart phones. I found this excerpt very interesting and wanted to share it with you.



Caroline Dean Wildflower Trail

Early April days are delightful for strolling along the wildflower trail. The Caroline Dean Wildflower Trail began its development into a native plants garden with native azaleas from Caroline Dean's personal garden, widely recognized for her collection by 'plant' people across the Southeast. Others who share her love of these beauties have contributed to the original azalea collection, extending the bloom season into summer months. On the trail the first blooms to greet spring are presented by the Piedmont azalea, *R. canescens*, pink blooms breaking ahead of leaves, to welcome to the returning Ruby-throated hummingbird. Racing behind is the more colorful Florida azalea, *R. austrinum* - flaunting vibrant yellows and oranges, some with red-tinted tubes. Its colors are not found in non-native azaleas. Inhale their sweet fragrance. A brilliant orange Oconee, *R. flammeum*, stands in the mid-section, a flash of bright in the woodland. After blooming, these natives will drop their faded blooms quickly, passing the show to the pastels of coastal azalea, *R. atlanticum* and *R. Colemanii* in May. The fragrant *R. viscosum* or swamp azalea usually blooms in June, and the orange-red *R. prunifolium* flower in July on the trail garden. (For choosing their preferred site in your garden, link to Patrick Thompson's article under CDWT @ www.lcmg.org).

The competing colors of native azaleas sometimes distract us from the little beauties at their feet. Ephemeral beauties like bloodroot offer their delicate blooms in late March. April reveals Atamasco lily, rue anemone, columbine, iris cristata, garden phlox, purple-eyed grass, trilliums, and spiderwort. Green and gold reaches out, and the foamflower *tirella cordifolia* pushes up to begin its flowering season which lasts until frost. Similar to *heucheras* and *heucherallas*, *tirella* have lobed maplelike leaves that are smaller in size and they make low dense mats. There are selections that offer more leaf pattern and color, but the species is an excellent plant and preferred in a native garden setting.

Spencer Roy has completed the fencing of the upper section to guide visitors along the path. In late April, Christmas fern, *tirella*, and other wildflowers will be added along the flagstone borders thanks to the grant provided by the F. Allen and Louise K. Turner Foundation. The plantings and edging are functional as well as attractive, helping to define the paths and manage water on the slope. Botanical labels now help identify shrubs and small trees.

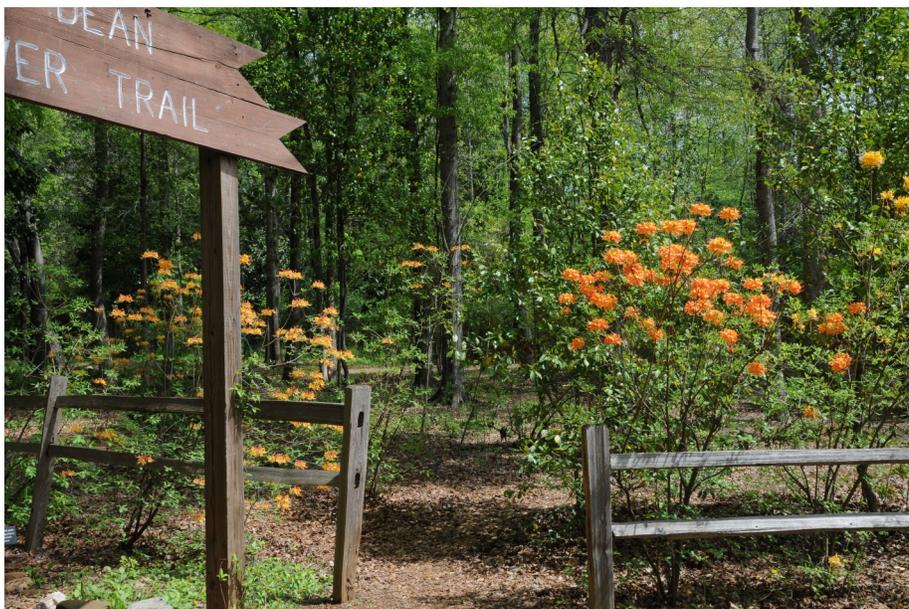


Photo by Sam Oliver



Mulching Tips for Shrubbery in the Home Landscape



Mulching may be your shrubbery's best friend, especially during hot, dry periods of summer. In addition to retaining soil moisture, mulches suppress weeds and prevent crusting of the soil surface. Also, as mulch breaks down, it adds organic matter to the soils which acts as a natural fertilizer and great for soil structure.

"In most landscape situations, mulching material should be applied to provide a three-inch depth after settling. However, in a heavy clay soil, reduce mulch depth," said [Mallory Kelley](#), a regional home grounds agent with [Alabama Extension](#). A variety of materials may be used for mulch added Kelley. Some popular mulches include:

Pine Straw – Pine needles are long-lasting and do not mat down excessively.

Grass Clippings – This material decomposes rapidly and has a tendency to pack down. Place only 1 to 2 inches of fresh clippings on the surface at one time. Do not use clippings from a lawn treated with weed killer.

Pine Bark Chips – This material is attractive and is effective in weed control.

Plastic Film – Back polyethylene plastic can serve as an effective mulch for long term weed control. It is unsightly but it can be covered with an attractive material such as pine straw. Don't use plastic in poorly drained areas. It often causes the soil to hold too much moisture and reduces soil oxygen.

Sawdust – Sawdust makes an effective mulch with a neat appearance. However, microbial breakdown of sawdust can rob the soil surface of nitrogen. This can be overcome by making several light applications of a nitrogen-containing fertilizer during the growing season.

Straw – Straw from grains such as wheat, oats or rye is somewhat unsightly until it settles. It may also contain seed that will germinate, and it can be a fire hazard when very dry.

Other mulch materials include peanut hulls, pecan hulls, hay and newspaper.

Kelley does not recommend using landscape fabrics. "They are good for the first two or three years, but when the mulch you put on top of the fabric breaks down and turns into dirt that dirt allows a place for weeds to take root. With this happening year after year and as more dirt accumulates on top of the fabric, you then have a major mess on your hands and it is almost impossible to remove the fabric once stuff starts growing into the soil that is on top of the fabric."

Have a gardening question? Call the Master Gardener Helpline. To reach the helpline, dial 1-877-252-GROW (4769).

