

Thank you for volunteering to help with the Farmers Markets this month. Please remember to wear your Master Gardener shirt and badge. I recommend that you familiarize yourself with all the brochures from the ACES and MSU Extension websites and that you watch the videos listed below so that you will be well versed on the topics for the day.

The July Topics for Farmers' Markets are as follows:

1. Fire Ants – The focus will be on how to treat for fire ants safely and effectively.

Please read the following articles and watch the video from ACES and MSU:

a) Spring Into Spring Free of Fire Ants

<https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/lawn-garden/spring-into-spring-free-of-fire-ants/>

From this article:

Professionals **do not recommend** control methods such as grits, club soda, molasses, boiling water, mixing mounds together, gasoline or diesel fuel. These are not effective means of control.

The key to fire ant management is to control the queen. Fire ant queens can lay hundreds of eggs per day and can live for years. Worker ants pick up bait products and take them back to the mound, where they feed the bait to the queen. Using baits ensures true colony control.

b) Managing Fire Ants with Baits

<https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/crop-production/managing-fire-ants-with-baits/>

From this article:

The baits should be applied when the ants are actively foraging. This means the baits should be applied when temperatures are between 70° and 95°F, and not before or after a rain. The label will tell you the best times to apply the baits and to what sites the bait can legally be applied. Keep in mind that the baits are only good for a short period of time after the application, so ensure conditions are right.

c) Watch this six minute video, **Fire Ant Control** - MSU Extension Services, by Dr. Blake Layton, Mississippi State Extension. Dr. Layton covers how to bait your yard, spot treat mounds, and liquid treat mounds.

<https://youtu.be/hrz5qdIk1OY>

d) **Control Fire Ants in Your Yard** by Dr. Blake Layton, MSU Extension Services

<http://extension.msstate.edu/publications/control-fire-ants-your-yard>

This is a detailed article providing names of chemicals to use to bait, powder, and liquid herbicides to treat spots and yard. This article is attached as a pdf to this email.

“Where they are properly applied two to three times per year, baits will give 80 to 90 percent control.” (Remember that we do not recommend specific brands but can guide citizens to types of herbicides as listed in this article.)



Display:

* Sign with pic of fire ant mound and QR code to MSU pdf in (d).

* Hand held spreader

* Fire Ant Treatments – Brand names hidden by covering the label but not covering the treatment and chemical names. One pesticide each for bait, powder, and liquid with chemical name in large print.

2. Order your Spring bulbs now!

Please read the following articles from ACES and MSU:

a) Plant Spring Bulbs Now by Maggie Lawrence, ACES.

<https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/lawn-garden/plant-spring-bulbs-now/>

b) Tips on planting bulbs from Dr. Gary Bachman, MSU Extension Service

<http://extension.msstate.edu/news/southern-gardening/2021/november-ideal-bulb-planting-time>

“Planting bulbs in the past was a difficult chore, but using bulb augers attached to cordless drills makes the task much easier. An 18-volt or larger drill works best. If you don’t already have one, this could be the perfect excuse to buy yourself a tool. It also makes a great gift for a gardening friend.

Drill the holes to the proper depth, place the bulb in the ground, and cover. Done!

The depth of the hole is determined by the size of the bulb. Generally, you need to dig a hole that is two and a half times the bulb diameter.

Always plant the widest end of the bulb down, as this is usually where the roots are formed. But even if you slip up and plant some upside-down, the roots and shoots find a way to grow in the proper directions.”

c) Species tulips

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/bulbs/tulips/species-tulip-information.htm>

“Species Tulips are **diminutive, long-lived beauties ideal for rock gardens or the front of borders**. Species Tulip bulb mixes are delightful in containers if protected from freezing north of zone 7. They are also the most perennial of all Tulips.”

Display:

* Rocking Chair, small table, hat, coca cola bottle, notebook with TO DO note, bulb planter, and catalogs. Please set up in front of table to draw attention to booth.

* Sign with this information on it:

Shop NOW for Fall Planted Spring Blooming Bulbs

- Make plans for your spring beds
- Shop online or from numerous catalogues
- Best to order in July

“Daffodils or narcissus are favorites in the South because they thrive even in our warm winters.

Daffodils come in a huge variety of colors, flower sizes, and shapes.”

Megan Jones Alabama Extension

* Second Sign with this information:

If you are a tulip lover, you need to try **Species Tulips**. They are as reliable as daffodils. They are perennials, returning annually in larger groupings. Deer tend to leave them alone. They are shorter, smaller, and longer lived than one and done, large tulips. They are perfect in rock gardens, drifts or in front of borders. (Includes photos of species tulips. Index cards to attach to outside of sign.)

3. Blueberry Care and Growing Tips

Please read the following articles from ACES:

a) Home Gardening – Rabbiteye Blueberries ANR-1078 (attached to this email)

<https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/fruits-lawn-garden/home-gardening-rabbiteye-blueberries/>

From this article (that is included in the poster for display)

Take a soil test to determine your pH level

Blueberries are fussy about this.

? More that 3 years since you last soil test? Do a test!

Fertilize with a fertilizer for azaleas or camellias. Blueberries are sensitive to too much fertilizer.

Cottonseed meal is an inexpensive, organic, acidic fertilizer, NPK 6-0-4
Soil improvement from Cottonseed meal:

- if your soil is tight/dense it will aerate the soil
- if your soil is light/sandy, it will help the soil retain water

Prune the long canes from the ground or older branches.

- Prune at waist height, your berries next year will be chest high!
- If you plant new bushes this fall, plant on a little mound so the bushes are not planted too deep.

b) Deciding which blueberry cultivars to plant

<https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/fruits-lawn-garden/deciding-which-blueberry-cultivars-to-plant/>

Display:

* Blueberry Care Begins Now poster (contains info listed above and QR codes to these two articles)

* Bag of cottonseed meal

* Optional to have a container of blueberries on the table

The following information will be included each month for ongoing discussion and sharing of information.

4. Soil Sample kit distribution and explaining the importance of testing. There are two soil kits – one from Alabama Extension and one from a privately owned company called Powered by Soil Kit. The Soil Kit gives exact product recommendations (from their sponsors). Both use the Auburn University lab. As Master Gardeners, we do NOT make product recommendations.

5. Grow More Give More growing cards for Tomatoes, Okra, Green Beans, and Squash are available for distribution. Bushel baskets and Share Your Harvest cards will be on hand for donations. Small stand-up sign for display with Share Your Harvest card is available as well.

6. Helpline cards and Smart Yard brochures available for distribution.

7. Start a Garden brochures to distribute: Raised Bed Gardening ANR-1345, Container Gardening ANR-1139, Five Gallon Bucket Supply List ANR-2663, Raised Bed Supply List ANR-2664, and Garden Box Supply List ANR-2665. Only place 2-4 brochures on the table at a time to prevent “grabby” hands. Share the Grow More Give More resources on the ACES website via the QR code on the small sign. An additional QR sign is available for the lengthier

The Alabama Vegetable Gardener ANR-0479.

8. Brochures on tomatoes: Tomato Insect Pests & Scouting Methods ANR-2206 and Pruning Fresh-Market Tomatoes ANR-1060. Recommended that you also read Blossom End Rot ANR-1059 (not in tubs).