

Forsyth Field Notes

March 2022

Forsyth County Cooperative Extension News

In this Issue

Wild Plums
Tips for Savvy Couponing
4-H'ers Shine with Public Speaking
4-H Summer Camp – Register Now!
Extension Events & Opportunities

[Forsyth County Extension Website](#)
[Facebook](#)

Harvesting Nature: Wild Plums

By Heather N. Kolich
CEC & ANR Agent
UGA Extension Forsyth County



Chickasaw plum trees are native, wild-growing plants that produce edible fruit for wildlife and people. Photo by H. N. Kolich.

Did you know that Georgia is home to several species of native trees that produce edible fruit? Chickasaw plums and American plums are two examples of fruit that we can still harvest from the wild. They

also have a place in the natural history of North America.

Habitat and Identification

Wild plum trees grow in sunny, open areas like pastures and prairies, roadsides and fence rows, and at the edges of woodlands. These small, shrubby, deciduous trees are early bloomers, an important feature of identification. Flowering can begin as early as February and may continue through April or May. The 5-petaled, white flowers are small, abundant, and fragrant. Other identifying features include thorny branches; smooth bark with numerous lenticels – pale, raised scar-like features – on young trees; and narrow, pointed leaves with serrated edges. The plums are small, grape or cherry-sized drupes, a fleshy fruit with thin skin and a single pit. They ripen throughout the summer in colors ranging from yellow to red. Ripe wild plums have a white bloom on the outer skin.

Place in Nature

The range of American and Chickasaw plums includes much of the Eastern and Central United States and parts of Canada. The distribution is believed to have been expanded by Native American cultivation of wild plums. Reports of groves of wild plums show up in writings of several frontier explorers.

Because wild plums form thickets, they provide shelter and habitat for several species of songbirds and small mammals. Eastern tiger swallowtails, the official butterfly of Georgia, coral hairstreaks, and other butterflies rely on wild plums as larval



host plants. The fruit nourishes white-tailed deer, wild turkeys, and other game animals.

Wild plums spread through suckering; they put up shoots from the root system to produce new plants. This growth characteristic makes wild plums valuable for soil conservation projects.

Harvesting and Using Wild Plums

Wild plums are a tasty and nutritious food source for people as well as wildlife. Although smaller than cultivated plums, wild plums can be eaten fresh, made into jelly and wine, and used in recipes that feature plums.

When harvesting fruit from the wild, some precautions and environmental considerations are recommended.

- Get permission. Some state or federal lands may require a permit to harvest certain types of wild plants. If harvesting on private land, get the landowner's permission. Avoid trespassing.
- Wear protective clothing suitable for wading through heavy vegetation where snakes, poison ivy, biting insects, and other hazards may be present.
- Take a buddy.
- Harvest carefully to avoid damaging the fruiting plant and its supporting environment.
- Harvest only what you can use.
- Leave plenty of fruit and seeds for the wildlife that depend on them, as well as for reseeding to produce new plants.

More Information

Wild plums can be an enjoyable addition to our diets and landscapes. As small, flowering trees, American and Chickasaw plums are more suitable edible landscape

trees for small lots than other types of cultivated fruit trees that grow large. For more information on propagating wild plums, safe handling and storing harvested plums, and recipes, see UGA Publication WSFNR-21-81A, *Wild Harvesting American Plum and Chickasaw Plum*, at <https://t.uga.edu/7QB>.

Tips for Savvy Couponing

By Susan L. Moore
Family & Consumer Sciences Agent
UGA Extension Laurens County



Spending a bit of time to clip coupons can help save money on weekly shopping.

If you've watched the popular television shows featuring extreme couponers, you may think you have to spend 80 hours a week clipping and organizing coupons to save money. It's not realistic for most of us to spend that amount of time couponing. It's also not a good idea to have outrageous stockpiles of food and products that you don't have room for and won't be able to use before they expire.

Most regular coupon clippers say they spend an hour or two each week clipping and organizing their coupons and putting together a shopping list once they are established and have built up a coupon stockpile. This allows them to save up to 50% or even more on their grocery bills!



The best places to get coupons are from your local newspapers. Some papers have coupons in their Saturday issue, and some have them in their Sunday issue. Some couponers purchase a paper for each member of their household to maximize the amount of coupons they get. You can also ask friends and family members who don't use coupons to pass them on to you. You should also pay close attention to the sales papers from local grocery and drug stores. If you have a coupon and the store has a sale on a particular item, you save even more money. For example, cereal is an expensive item that often goes on sale. By buying it when it's on sale and using available coupons, you can cut the cost from \$5.60 per box to \$3.00 per box. That's an average savings of \$69.00 per year for a family of four. Coupons are also available over the internet. There are some great sites that offer printable coupons, and most stores accept them now. Here are just a few of those sites:

- www.coupons.com
- www.coupons2.smartsources.com
- www.couponing101.com

It is also important to sign up for the savings card memberships at your grocery store and drug store. This is an easy way to save money, and if you don't sign up, you can miss out on sales and special deals. Many stores allow you to load electronic coupons on your card before you arrive at the store, so the savings are automatically subtracted from your bill when they scan your member card. Always read over your receipt before leaving the store to make sure everything is correct. You may have to go to the customer service department to get a mistake corrected, but it's worth it – every little bit adds up! You should also watch the cash register – if a product rings up higher than advertised, or they miss one of your coupons, be sure to let them know.

4-H'ers Shine in Public Speaking Contest

By Heather Haines
4-H Agent
UGA Extension Forsyth County



Forsyth County 4-H'ers earned awards at the District Project Achievement public speaking contest at Rock Eagle 4-H Center on February 19, 2022.

Last weekend, 4th through 6th grade Georgia 4-H'ers, known as Cloverleafs, traveled to Rock Eagle 4-H Center in Eatonton to demonstrate their skills in public speaking. Twelve Forsyth County 4-H'ers competed along with students from other counties in the District Project Achievement public speaking contest.

Project Achievement is a cornerstone in the Georgia 4-H Program and serves to showcase the 4-H'ers knowledge, interests, and communication skills. To earn their overnight trip to Rock Eagle for the district competition, Forsyth County 4-H'ers first participated in County Project Achievement at the new Forsyth County Arts and Learning Center (FoCAL).

To prepare for this annual event, youth select a project area of interest, research the



topic, write a speech, and present it in front of judges using a poster and prop. From Bicycle to Wildlife, there are over fifty different categories for youth to choose from. Some of the more popular project areas include sports, animals, history, and science.

Forsyth County was well represented in the district public speaking event at Rock Eagle by the following students:

- ❖ Aakarsha Gangaraju, Archaeology, honorable mention
- ❖ Alexey Adams, Dog Care and Training, 3rd place
- ❖ Lucas Arnone, Dog Care and Training, 3rd place
- ❖ Elise Cureton, Entomology, honorable mention
- ❖ Ritvik Tavva, General Recreation, 1st place
- ❖ Sai Patnaik, Health, honorable mention
- ❖ Rashmi Tavva, Historic Places and Events, 1st place
- ❖ Ariz Rahman, Human Development, honorable mention
- ❖ Tanmay Kirani, Rabbits, 1st place
- ❖ Jonah Johnson, Swine, 2nd place
- ❖ Panagiotis Maniatis, Sports-Teams, 3rd place
- ❖ Tallulah Bates, Workforce Preparation and Career Development 1st place

Thanks to support from United Way of Forsyth County, County Project Achievement, District Project Achievement, and the overnight trip to Rock Eagle 4-H Center is offered free of charge.

Georgia 4-H provides many opportunities such as leadership, educational programs, citizenship and so much more for youth. See our [website](#) for more 4-H programs.

4-H Summer Camp Registration – Now Open!

By Heather Haines
4-H Agent
UGA Extension Forsyth County

A week of summer camp at one of Georgia's five unique 4-H centers is an adventure that kids remember and cherish for years, if not a lifetime. Every 4-H camp offers adventure, friendship, and fun, while seeking to develop the camper's Head, Heart, Hands and Health to nurture the whole person. Rock Eagle is the world's largest 4-H Center and provides campers with an array of workshops and hands-on experiences that make learning fun! Georgia 4-H is excited to offer a variety of camping experiences this summer for youth in 4th-12th grade.

Forsyth County's Cloverleaf Campers (4th-6th grade) will travel to Rock Eagle 4-H Center June 20-24, 2022. The cost for camp is \$390. The price covers transportation on a Forsyth County School bus, lodging, meals, activities, and a camp t-shirt. Tentative activities during the week include swimming, canoeing, archery, a nature hike, herpetology, lake ecology, crafts, HOP (Health is Our Pledge) and outdoor recreation.

Junior Campers (7th and 8th grade) will have the opportunity to travel to Camp Jekyll on Jekyll Island this summer. Junior Camp will be held July 11-15, 2022. During the week, campers will have the opportunity to learn about all things marine life! Youth will also get to spend time with their friends on the beach, visit Summer Waves water park, take a boat tour, visit Tidelands Nature Center, play putt-putt, ride bicycles around the island, and more! The cost for Junior Camp is \$400. Youth must be a current, active 4-H'ers in order to participate.



Additional camping opportunities include Wilderness Challenge Camp at Wahsega 4-H Center (6th-8th grade), Senior Camp at Rock Eagle 4-H Center (9th-12th grade), and Senior Extreme Camp at Frank Fitch Pioneer Camp on the Rock Eagle Campus (9th-12th grade). For all of these camping experiences, youth must be current, active 4-H'ers. To learn about how to become active in Forsyth County 4-H, email Ms. Heather at heather.haines@uga.edu.

Registration links will be posted on the Forsyth County Extension website. Scan the QR code below to go directly to the summer camp page!

Forsyth County 4-H is supported by The University of Georgia, Forsyth County Board of Commissioners, Forsyth County Board of Education, and United Way of Forsyth County. For more information on the 4-H Program, please call the Forsyth County Extension Office at 770-887-2418 or send an email to forsyth.extension@uga.edu.



4-H Summer Camp Registration QR code. Scan with your phone to go directly to the Forsyth County 4-H Summer Camp webpage to learn more about camp.

New Extension Publications

Check out these new UGA Extension publications.

[Best Practices of Integrated Mosquito Management](#)

[Keep Your Pets Safe Around Plants](#)

[Weed Control in Juniper Beds](#)

[Wild Harvesting American Plum and Chickasaw Plum in Georgia](#)

Upcoming Extension Programs

Lunch & Learn Webinars

All About Trees Lunch & Learn Webinar series, noon-1 p.m. on the following dates:



Next lunch and learn webinar:

TREES FOR BEES

People often overlook trees as important food and habitat. Discover how landscape trees can help our pollinators.



March 3rd from 12-1 pm
Registration required

March 3: *Trees for Bees*. Pollinators rely on flowering trees for food and habitat. Learn how your landscape can help sustain healthy pollinator populations.

March 10: *Abiotic Diseases of Trees*. Pests and pathogens aren't the only causes of tree diseases. Nutrient deficiencies, weather



conditions, and human activities affect tree health, too. Learn what to look for to keep your trees healthy.

March 17: *Tree Selection for Urban/Suburban Landscapes*. Trees are great, but not every tree is suitable for the challenges of urban and suburban landscape environments. Learn what characteristics make some trees better choices than others.

Please visit <https://extension.uga.edu/county-offices/forsyth.html> for registration information.

Healthy Starts for Backyard Flocks Lunch & Learn Webinar – March 24



Healthy Starts for Backyard Flocks

March 24th at Noon

Join our free webinar and learn about housing, feeding, and protecting your backyard chickens, from day-old chick to mature layer.

Registration required



Chicks will be arriving soon at farm, feed, and pet stores – and they are irresistible. Before you bring home a box of cheeping chicks, join UGA Extension Agent Heather Kolich for a free *Healthy Starts for Backyard Flocks* webinar and learn what it takes in housing, nutrition, and protection to keep your backyard flock healthy from fluffy chick to mature laying hen.

Registration required:
https://ugeorgia.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bQ4eAnFgjcjNX8

Save the Dates

Georgia Green Landscape Stewards Program at Sharon Forks Library

Forsyth County is home to over 251,000 people and more than 87,000 housing units, each with some level of landscape. The lawn and garden management decisions we make individually have a huge collective impact on our environment. On Thursday evenings in April and May, Forsyth County Extension is partnering with Forsyth County Public Libraries to offer Georgia Green Landscape Stewards, a 5-session program introducing sustainable practices in 10 areas of landscape care. Save the date and register through FCPL at

<https://www.forsythpl.org/home>.

Georgia Master Naturalist Training

Become a Georgia Master Naturalist

Like hanging out with nature lovers?

Save the Dates!
Fridays June 10-
July 29, 2022
UGA Extension
Forsyth &
Cherokee County

Learn more
<https://t.uga.edu/7Nb>

Warnell School of Forestry & Natural Resources
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

If you love nature, you'll love being a [Georgia Master Naturalist](#)! Come train with UGA Extension this summer and learn about Georgia wildlife, native plants, forestry, water systems, geology, and more. Classes meet from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. on Fridays from June 10 through July 29, 2022. Course applications coming soon at <https://extension.uga.edu/county-offices/forsyth.html>.