



Dougherty County Extension • 125 Pine Ave., Suite 100 • Albany, GA 31701 • (229) 436-7216

LAWNS



Fallen leaves are a good source of organic matter for your soil when shredded by a mulching mower.

Now is the time to do some maintenance work to your lawn mower and put it away for the winter. Sharpen your mower blade, change spark plug and drain the gas tank.

ORNAMENTALS

Take a look at your forsythia and crape myrtles and cut away any suckers that are present.

Clean up litter that may harbor overwintering insects or diseases from the ground around shrubs.

If there is any evidence of scale on trees and shrubs, spray with dormant oil in late fall and again in the spring. Use Cygon or Orthene on all except hollies. Use Orthene in hollies.

Limit your pruning to dead or damaged wood. If you want to prune evergreens, wait until they are dormant usually in December, January and February.

FRUIT AND VEGGIE

Plant fruit trees now in well drained soils. Till area well and plant trees at the same level as they originally grew.

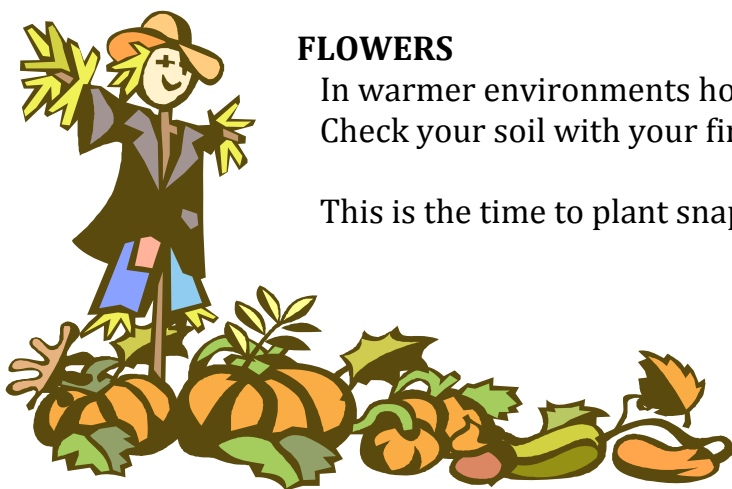
Check fruit trees for scale and treat with dormant oil if necessary.

It is not necessary to fertilize fruits and herbs in the cool season.

FLOWERS

In warmer environments houseplants' water requirements change. Check your soil with your finger to test for dryness.

This is the time to plant snapdragons, wildflowers, bulbs and pansies.



Hornets and Yellow Jackets

By Paul Pugliese (UGA Cooperative Extension)



This wasp, *Vespula maculifrons*, is also known as the Eastern yellow jacket.

This is the time of year that Extension agents receive numerous calls about yellow jackets, hornets and how to control them. Many folks don't know the difference between the various types of hornets and yellow jackets we have in Georgia. The confusion is understandable, considering yellow jackets, wasps and hornets are all in the Vespidae family, and they all make their home in the state. Even within the same species individual wasps, hornets and yellow jackets have varying color patterns, depending on whether they are a male, a worker or a queen. To add to the confusion, many people use the terms hornet and yellow jacket interchangeably. For example, the bald-faced hornet is actually a type of yellow jacket.

In general, the term hornet is used for species that nest above ground, and the term yellow jacket is used for those that make nests in the ground. Colonies start each spring when a single queen, who mated the previous fall and then overwintered in the soil or leaf litter, starts a nest. The nest is made of horizontal combs completely surrounded by a paper envelope made of tiny bits of wood fiber that are chewed into a paper-like pulp. Wasps and hornets use a new nest every year. During the summer months, colonies rapidly increase in size and may reach several hundred workers by September. In late fall, new queens emerge from the colony, mate, and seek shelter for the winter. The old founder queen dies, and as winter arrives, the remaining colony also dies. Wasps and hornets don't reuse the same nest the following year.

Remember, hornets and wasps perform a valuable service in controlling many other insects that attack cultivated and ornamental plants.

Hornets will build their nests from the bark of thin-barked trees, like crepe myrtles or fig bushes, for nest building. This is generally not harmful to trees and shrubs, but may girdle small branches and cause some dieback. Homeowners often call their Extension office after finding a hornets' nest that is the size of a basketball. A nest this size wasn't built overnight and you've likely been living next to this colony all summer. I can sympathize with not wanting your closest neighbors to be a colony of hornets. However, I would also argue that if they haven't bothered you by late summer, why worry about them now?

The best course of action is to warn your family and neighbors about the nest and avoid contact. Mark the nested tree with caution tape to remind everyone to be extra cautious. Hornets are often attracted to porch lights. If they are becoming a nuisance, turn off your porch light and only use it when necessary. It is possible to treat and kill a wasp or hornet nest with pesticides. However, the odds of getting stung during the process are fairly high. If you leave the nest alone, your chances of getting stung are much less likely than if you try to tackle the problem yourself. The colony will die as winter approaches so leaving the colony alone late in the season is a practical solution the problem. They're going to die soon anyway.

When dealing with ground-nesting **Yellow Jackets**, sometimes you have to take action- especially when you encounter them when mowing the lawn. Any attempt to destroy nests should be done in the late evening, when nest activity is at a minimum.

Even at night, any disturbance will result in instant activity by the colony. Work cautiously, but quickly, and wear protective clothing. Yellow jackets are attracted to light, so do not hold a flashlight while applying an insecticide to a nest.

A quick knockdown, jet-aerosol spray insecticide is preferred because yellow jackets may fly out to defend the colony. Direct the insecticide dispenser nozzle toward the nest entrance for best control. These spray compounds, which contain highly volatile solvents mixed with resmethrin, pyrethrins, carbamates or some of the newer pyrethroids, produce almost instant knockdown for wasps hit. Check the colony entrance the next day for activity, and reapply again if necessary.

Sometimes, the location of the ground nest will make it hard to direct insecticide into the nest's entrance. In this case, gently apply a dust type insecticide containing the active ingredient carbaryl to the nest opening. Yellow jackets will track the dust inside the colony over the course of several days and eventually the entire colony will die. As with all pesticides, read and follow all labeled application rates and safety precautions.

UGA County Agent Finds New Ant Species in Georgia

By Sharon Dowdy (University of Georgia, CAES)



The tawny crazy ant has made its way into Georgia for the first time. University of Georgia Extension agent James Morgan of Dougherty County discovered the ant—which originates from South America—on Aug. 15 and submitted a sample to the University of Georgia for identification.

Prior to his discovery, the ant was found only in a few counties in Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. Where it occurs in those states, it is a major nuisance. Morgan stumbled upon the ants at an assisted living facility, after the director called the UGA Extension office for help controlling the insect.

"What I found was thousands of dead ants in a pile in the corner of the bathroom floor," Morgan said. "The duplex was vacant, and the ants had come in looking for a food source. When they came in, they died and we found hundreds of them piled up around baseboards and in corners."

After further investigation outside the facility, Morgan found droves of the ants in an outbuilding. "We found them in the lawn on debris and dead wood, and we traced them back to a storage area that was full of appliances," he said.

Accustomed to identifying Argentine ants, fire ants and other ants common to Georgia, Morgan knew these ants were different. "They're reddish in color, very tiny, and they run around and scurry really fast. And they don't march in a straight row like Argentine ants," Morgan said.

He sent a sample to UGA entomologist Dan Suiter, an Extension specialist in urban entomology housed on the UGA campus in Griffin. The samples were confirmed as tawny crazy ants (*Nylanderia fulva*) by taxonomist Joe MacGown at the Mississippi Entomological Museum.

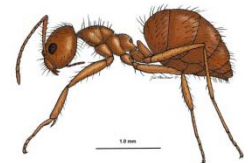
The ant is classified as a nuisance because of its attraction to electricity and because it travels in masses. It likes to get into electrical boxes, Suiter said.

Large accumulations of the ant can cause short circuits and clog switching mechanisms, which can result in electrical shortages in phone lines, air conditioning units, chemical-pipe valves, computers, security systems and other electrical locations.

"Most people will be overwhelmed by the number of tawny crazy ants they'll find. It'll be through the roof," he said. "They'll come in your house, and it becomes a kind of 'ant from hell' scenario." Suiter said once an ant species gets established, it's "really hard to dislodge them."

He expects Georgians to confuse the tawny crazy ant with Argentine ants. Like Argentine ants, the tawny crazy ant travels indoors in search of food and water. It doesn't sting like a fire ant, but it probably has a mild bite, he said. The ant also is capable of spraying small quantities of formic acid, which may irritate some individuals.

About one-eighth-of-an-inch long, tawny crazy ants are slightly larger in size than Argentine ants and have erratic foraging patterns. Argentine ants are dark brown in color, slightly smaller and do not move as fast or as erratically. "We will probably get a lot of reports that people have it when they really have Argentine ants. Those are sugar ants—the ones you see in trails," he said.



Suiter describes dead tawny crazy ants as looking like snowdrifts. "They can be inches deep in a pile," he said. "When they get up and going, the numbers that die will be in the tens of thousands in and around a structure."

Like many non-native, invasive species, no one knows exactly how the ant came to the U.S. or how it made its most recent trip to the Peach State. "It probably came into the U.S., initially, from several Florida ports and one in Mississippi and one in Galveston," Suiter said. He thinks the ant may have hitched a ride on a plant brought into the state from a region where the ant is already established.

Back in Albany, Morgan says the director of the assisted living facility had no knowledge of anyone traveling to any of those regions. To discourage the new ant species and other pests from entering a home, Morgan recommends searching for and sealing any cracks around doors and windows. Due to large populations, the tawny crazy ant typically requires a pest management professional.

To verify the presence of tawny crazy ants, take a sample to the nearest UGA Extension office. For office locations, call 1-800-ASKUGA1 or see extension.uga.edu.

Largest Mushroom Species in the Western Hemisphere Spotted in Georgia

By Merritt Melancon (University of Georgia)

With mushroom caps that can be as large as trashcan lids, the gigantic fungus *Macrocybe titans* looks like something from outer space, but it may be popping up soon in a lawn near you.

University of Georgia mycologists in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences found one specimen of this gigantic fungus - a species that produces the largest mushrooms in the Western Hemisphere - in the lawn of an abandoned home in Athens last October. Although the fungus is commonly found in neighboring Florida, this was the first time the species had been confirmed in Georgia, said Marin Talbot Brewer, a UGA plant pathologist who mostly focuses on microscopic fungi that cause crop diseases.



As she waits for the giant mushroom to emerge again this fall, she's hoping other Georgians will keep an eye out for it, too. Other sightings could help researchers like Brewer learn how the mushroom made its way to Georgia and help them track its spread.

Brewer wasn't looking for giant mushrooms when she found *M. titans*. She was sitting at her desk when she received an email from Athens-area, mushroom enthusiast Kirk Edwards asking for her help in identifying his latest find. The cream and buff caps were 8 to 12 inches in diameter with a dry exterior. From the photos it looked bizarre for this area of the country, but Brewer said the mushroom was even stranger when she saw it in person. "It was huge," she said. "It was just amazing, and so much bigger than it looked in pictures."

She asked her undergraduate research assistant at the time, Jeff DeLong, to check the Athens mushroom's DNA against the DNA of other known *M. titans*. It turned out to be a match. This species was previously known as *Tricholoma titans*, but in 1998 it was renamed *Macrocybe titans*, which translates from Latin into "giant large head." While the caps of the *M. titans* can grow up to 3 feet in diameter, the fungus itself is larger still.

The bulk of any fungus's body lives within its food source, which can be in a log or a tree, or in the case of *M. titans*, underground. Fungi feed by breaking down plant matter in the soil. The mushroom portion of the organism only serves to help the underground portion reproduce. Brewer estimates that the fungal body of the *M. titans* mushrooms found in Athens probably stretches over a 20-foot diameter underground. "It's not harming anything," she said. "It's just decomposing dead material underground."

Until now, *M. titans* specimens have only been found in subtropical and tropical regions of North, Central and South America, so it's unclear how it made its way to north Georgia. "They had some ornamental grasses in that yard, and many of those ornamentals are grown in Florida," Brewer said. "So it probably came in on plant material, that's my best guess." The other explanation is that the mushroom may have been able to spread to Georgia on its own due to our recent mild winters, she said.

While the *M. titans* is reported to be edible, Brewer cautions the public against eating wild mushrooms without a positive identification by an expert. Pets should also be kept away. Different mushrooms affect different individuals and their pets differently, and all wild mushrooms should be positively identified before they become a snack or meal.

If other Georgians find large mushrooms this fall that they suspect might be *M. titans*, Brewer encourages them to call their local UGA Extension agent by calling 1-800-ASKUGA1 or visiting extension.uga.edu.












For more detailed information about the *M. titans* emergence in Georgia, search for Brewer's UGA Extension bulletin "*Macrocybe Titans: Largest Mushroom Species in the Western Hemisphere Found Growing in Georgia*" at www.caes.uga.edu/publications.

Georgia Mushrooms Word Search

L S O U T H E R N F L Y A G A R I C D D E S G E
 S A Q L E G N A H T A E D L L A M S K M E U O L
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- CAESAR'S MUSHROOM
- CITRON AMANITA
- FAIRY BUTTER
- FALSE YELLOW BOLETE
- GOLDEN CHANTERELLE
- GREEN GILLED MUSHROOM
- HEDGEHOG MUSHROOM
- INDIGO MILKCAP
- LACQUERED SHELF FUNGUS
- MEADOW MUSHROOM
- SHOESTRING
- SMALL DEATH ANGEL
- SMOOTH CHANTERELLE
- SOUTHERN FLY AGARIC
- SPINY PUFFBALL
- STARFISH STINKHORN
- VASE PUFFBALL
- VELVETY TOOTH FUNGUS
- VERMILLION WAXYCAP
- VIOLET CORAL FUNGUS
- YELLOW PLEATED PARASOL



SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
Apple Month	<i>National Raptor Month</i>	1 Pear & Pineapple Month	2 Rhubarb Month	3	4  National Taco Day	5 No Salt Week 3-10 New Moon ●
6 Mad Hatter Day	7 World Space Week 4-10	8 Fair Trade Month	9 Rhizomes & Persimmons Month	10 World Rainforest Week 7-13	11  World Egg Day First Quarter ○	12 Columbus Day 
13 Earth Science Week 13-19	14 National Chestnut Week 13-19 	15 National Grouch Day 	16 World Food Day	17 National Pasta Day 	18 Full Moon ○	19
20 	21 Reptile Awareness Day	22 	23 National Mole Day 6.02×10^{23}	24 Food Day!	25 	26 Make a Difference Day Last Quarter ○
27 Mother-In-Law Day	28 Give Wildlife a brake week 27-11/2 	29 National Cat Day	30 Bat Appreciation Month	31 Halloween 	National Book Month	

October-December 2013 Class Schedule

Tulle Holiday Wreaths-

Mon., Oct. 14, 6 – 8:30 pm

\$15 materials fee

Tulle wreaths are the new rage. Learn the two main techniques for making these Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas beauties. Please decide which one you want gracing your door this year and let us know when you register. You have a choice of Monster (Bright Green wreath with teeth), Turkey, Reindeer or Santa (pictures are available at <http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension/dougherty/news.html> You must register by 5 pm Fri., Oct. 11.

Homemaker Club- "Make an Infinity Scarf" Thur., Oct. 24, 6 – 8 pm

\$15 materials fee

Have you seen all the cute Infinity Scarves everyone is wearing. Save that \$30 and come make your own. Learn basic sewing machine operation or brush up on your sewing skills. We'll have several materials to choose from and an embroidery machine in case you want to monogram your creation. All attendees must register by Mon., Oct. 21 in order for me to purchase materials. **Everyone is welcome!**

Keep Your Bones Healthy

Fri., Nov. 1, 10 am – 12 pm

Free to Public

Did you know that Osteoporosis is a childhood disease that does not manifest itself until our older years? Learn how to prevent osteoporosis and preserve our bones for a lifetime.

Identity Theft

Tues., Nov. 12, 2– 3:30 pm

Free to Public

Identity Theft is an ever growing epidemic in America. Learn hints and tips on how to protect your identity and credit from identity thieves. We'll tell you why you should check your credit report regularly, never carry your Social Security card with you, and to deal with identity theft should you become a victim.

Holiday Candy Making 101

Tues., Nov. 12, 6 – 9 pm

\$12 materials fee

Divinity, fudge, peanut brittle, Buckeyes... remember all those holiday favorites from your childhood? Come join us and learn the secrets to successful candy-making and impress your guests this holiday season. Please wear closed-toed shoes, bring an apron, and a container to take home your goodies.

Soap-Making 101

Thurs., Nov. 14th, 6 -9 pm

\$12 materials fee

It's been a while, and back by popular demand is our famous soap-making class. Learn the age-old technique of soap-making just like our Great-Grandmothers made. Soap is the perfect little holiday gift for co-workers, neighbors, and friends. Please wear closed toed shoes, long sleeves, and bring molds if possible for your soaps. Call to pre-register and we will give examples of good molds to use.

Diabetes and the Holidays

Thur., Nov. 21, 6 – 8 pm

Free to Public

Diabetics and people with chronic health problems often feel shortchanged during the holidays. Well, we're going to change that. Join us while we discuss how to manage diabetes during the holidays and taste test some delicious diabetic and heart-healthy recipe demonstrations. Recipe booklet included.

Holiday Evergreen Wreaths

Sat., November 23, 10 am – 3 pm

\$15 materials fee

I am already getting calls to see if I am doing the Annual Evergreen Wreath workshop. **Drop in any time from 10 am until 3:00 pm** for our beautiful wreath class. Learn basic wreath making and bow making techniques. Go home with your one-of-a-kind masterpiece to proudly hang on your door. It takes a couple of hours to make one but it sure beats the \$50 wreaths at the florists!

A Homemade, Hand-made Christmas

Thur., December 5, 6 – 9 pm

\$12 materials fee

Our 5th Annual Christmas Show! Join us as I demonstrate Christmas recipes for your holiday and we'll make some Christmas crafts and gifts to take home. Popular items like Solid Lotion Bars, Lip Balm, Bath Fizzies and Hand-made Tree Ornaments, along with new items, will again be available to make and take.

NAME _____

PHONE _____

Classes I would like to attend:

Tulle Wreaths-\$15

Infinity Scarf-\$15

Healthy Bones-FREE

Identity Theft-FREE

Candy-making-\$12

Soap-making-\$12

Evergreen Wreath-\$15

Handmade Christmas-\$12

Diabetes Holiday-FREE

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Send or bring to:

Make check payable to: *Dougherty County 4-H*

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