

# Healthy Georgia Connections

Issue No. 4

NEWS YOU CAN USE FROM **UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA** COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

## EXTENSION FEATURE

### Spring mosquito control

**Elmer Gray**

*Research professional, Department of Entomology*

There has never been a better time to focus on mosquito prevention around our homes and yards than while being at home right now.

All mosquitoes require standing water for their larval and pupal development. The female mosquito that emerges from these habitats requires a blood meal to stimulate the egg development cycle, hence the well-known biting behavior that they are infamous for.

Eliminating all forms of standing water around homes and yards is critical to reducing mosquitoes and is the first step in an integrated mosquito management program.

The Asian Tiger mosquito, *Aedes albopictus*, is described as a container-breeding mosquito and is our most common and widespread pest in Georgia. This pest, and many other species of mosquitoes, can develop in essentially anything that will hold water around our homes.

Common sites that are used as larval habitats include the trays under potted plants, buckets, tires, tarps, birdbaths, pet bowls, boats, rain barrels, gutters, downspout drain pipes and any type of underground drainage system.

Many of these sites can simply be eliminated by using the “tip and toss” practice of dumping out standing water and getting rid of things we don’t need or use, or positioning items so that they don’t catch water. Items that can’t be eliminated can be safely treated with the biologically based mosquito dunks that are available at many stores.



We’ll surely be dealing with other mosquitoes that develop in low-lying areas around our communities. Our extremely wet winter has created excellent mosquito habitat in many areas.

Low-lying areas across the state are holding water and are sure to produce a wide range of mosquito species as temperatures rise. In some cases, drainage can be improved and standing water eliminated, but many times the larval habitats are large or difficult to locate. In these cases, homeowners will need to take additional action to provide relief.

The first line of defense around our homes and residences are the screens on our doors and windows. Now is a great time to make sure they are intact and sealing tightly, particularly since it’s still early in the spring and we have time to open our windows and let some fresh air in — never a better time than during a pandemic.

Read more at [t.uga.edu/5VM](https://t.uga.edu/5VM).



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**AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES****Container gardening basics****Melissa Matte***UGA Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources agent, Fulton County*

Container gardening is a versatile and accessible way to grow food — no matter your space restrictions. Few things are more satisfying than growing, harvesting and eating your own fresh fruits and vegetables. Here are some tips to help you with container gardening.

**SUNLIGHT**

Before you choose what to plant, get to know the light availability of your space and use it to your advantage. Vegetables need about eight hours of sunlight per day to flower and set fruit, while many herbs can still produce several harvests with only four to six hours of sunlight. Areas with southern or western exposure will receive the most sunlight and are the best for plants like tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers, while herbs can thrive with northern or eastern exposures.

**SOIL**

If you are planting in containers, always use potting soil. It's not actually soil at all, but more of a compost with the ideal level of drainage. Some potting soils even contain additional fertilizers and nutrients that support your plant for up to six months. If you use one of these soils, do not add any other amendments until the available nutrition runs out.

**CONTAINERS**

The right container can make all the difference for your crop. Many ready-to-grow kits provide popular vegetables in 1-gallon pots, but most plants need much more space. Tomatoes need at least 5 gallons, while annual herbs like basil and dill can thrive in a 1- or 2-gallon pot. Containers should always have some form of drainage to allow excess water to escape.

**WATER**

Fruits, vegetables and herbs cannot survive long without water, especially in the Georgia summer heat. Depending on weather conditions, you may need to water every day, or you might be able to go several days without watering. Before you drench your plant, insert your finger about 1.5 inches into the soil. If the soil is dry, it is time to water. If it is hot and sunny and you are going out of town for a few days, you can fill a narrow-necked glass bottle with water and insert the entire length of the neck into the soil. This will slow-release water for up to two days and give you some extra time between watering.

For additional information on specific vegetables, visit [extension.uga.edu/publications](http://extension.uga.edu/publications) and read the [home gardening series](#), as well as the following publications: [Circular 787](#), "Gardening in Containers," [Circular 963](#), "Vegetable Gardening in Georgia," and [Bulletin 1432](#), "Starting Plants from Seed for the Home Gardener."



**4-H YOUTH****Reaching out to our military audience**

Laura Goss, 4-H military program coordinator  
Sue Chapman, associate state 4-H leader



In addition to the normal stressors affecting military families, military dependents are now faced with new challenges due to the COVID-19 crisis, such as online learning at home, social distancing and limited access to entertainment resources.

The 4-H Military Partnerships organization is “a collaboration of military and land grant university partners who intentionally integrate research-based programs and resources for military-connected youth, families and communities to thrive. 4-H Military Partnerships focus on positive youth development through providing opportunities for youth to engage in intentional learning experiences,” according to [4-hmilitarypartnerships.org](http://4-hmilitarypartnerships.org).

Like most youth-development organizations across the state and country, the majority of military partners have temporarily discontinued their on-site school-age and youth programs. However, the partnerships continue to support military installation staff, families and youth with virtual resources during the pandemic.

**MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD**

4-H, Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA), Army, Navy and Air Force youth programs virtually celebrated the “Month of the Military Child” in April. Photos and videos were shared worldwide using the hashtag #VirtualMOMC to highlight military youth and to help them stay connected.

**ONLINE INFORMATION**

The 4-H Military Partnership in Georgia offers several ways to connect and stay informed. Our blog, [site.extension.uga.edu/military](http://site.extension.uga.edu/military), provides biweekly updates on training opportunities, 4-H resources and upcoming events for military-connected individuals. Installation staff and 4-H member families can also connect to 4-H programs through county Extension office social media pages in order to stay up-to-date with local programming.

**EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR MILITARY DEPENDENTS**

4-H Military Partnerships also provide general educational programming to military youth. Curricula, webinars and other teaching materials can be downloaded at [4-hmilitarypartnerships.org/resources](http://4-hmilitarypartnerships.org/resources). Georgia 4-H has another list of educational activities for youth at home on its website at [georgia4h.org](http://georgia4h.org).

**MILITARY CAMPS**

The 4-H Military Partnerships website also posts military camps conducted across the country at [4-hmilitarypartnerships.org/events/camps](http://4-hmilitarypartnerships.org/events/camps). Georgia 4-H typically hosts several camps for military dependents every summer. While most camps are canceled or postponed for summer 2020, campers are encouraged to stay connected with friends, volunteers and staff through the Georgia 4-H Military Summit pages on Facebook at [@Jointreservesummit](https://www.facebook.com/jointreservesummit) and Instagram at [@gamilcamp](https://www.instagram.com/gamilcamp). Please check the website, [georgia4h.org/programs/focus-areas/citizenship/military-programs](http://georgia4h.org/programs/focus-areas/citizenship/military-programs), for updates on future camps and events.

**FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES****Keeping children safe and healthy during COVID-19****Diane Bales***Associate professor and Extension specialist, Department of Human Development and Family Science*

With schools and child care programs closed, families are sheltering at home and stores are facing shortages of toilet paper and other items. In the midst of so much confusion and anxiety, how can you help keep children safe and healthy? The following are a few tips for you and your family.

**Create a routine.** Children depend on routines to help them feel secure. Get up at the same time each morning and plan structured times for eating, play and rest. For school-aged children completing online schoolwork, help them set up a space and times to do that work. Break up worktime with active play.

**Eat healthy and get enough rest.** Eating healthy meals that include plenty of fruits and vegetables, drinking water, and getting enough sleep boosts the immune system.

**Play outside together.** This is not a time for play dates, because children who play close together may share germs. Instead, your family can play together in the yard or go for a walk or bicycle ride together. Physical activity allows children to release energy and build cardiovascular strength.

**Encourage regular, careful handwashing.** Wash your hands regularly and encourage children to wash often. Teach children how to scrub their hands for at least 20 seconds.



Singing “Happy Birthday” through twice is a good way to ensure that you are washing long enough.

**Explain social distancing.** Most children are not used to staying home, except when they are sick. Help them understand why staying away from other people is important. Explain that staying at home reduces the spread of the disease and helps keep more people from catching the virus. Be sure to tell them that social distancing is temporary, and that they will be able to go back to regular activities when the emergency is over.

**Monitor media use.** Children do not have the cognitive skills to understand news reports about the pandemic and may be frightened by news coverage. Choose specific times and sources and watch together so you can answer questions and reassure your child.

**Find ways to help (remotely).** Write letters to people who are isolated. Draw pictures and hang them in your windows. Drop off food on a neighbor’s porch (as long as nobody in the family is sick). Connect with family and friends by phone, text or video call.

The COVID-19 pandemic is stressful and scary for everyone. But with help and reassurance, your children can thrive during this emergency.

## EXTENSION FEATURE

# Resources for fighting the spread of COVID-19

**Laurel Dunn**

*Assistant professor, Department of Food Science and Technology*

In cooperation with North Carolina State University and other land grant universities, UGA Extension has compiled a list of resources to assist the general public, farmers and the food industry during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As you continue social distancing or self-isolating over the coming weeks, please rely on the information available on the UGA Extension Emergency Resources page at [extension.uga.edu/emergencies](https://extension.uga.edu/emergencies). These tools are based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and World Health Organization guidance. Many of these materials have already been translated to Spanish or can be translated upon request.

Visit [t.uga.edu/5VN](https://t.uga.edu/5VN) for a list of recommendations for what you should be doing during this time and the resources that Extension has available to guide you.



## EXTENSION PUBLICATIONS

**Farm Fresh and Fast series:** [t.uga.edu/5Vz](https://t.uga.edu/5Vz)

This series offers tips for quickly selecting and preparing fresh Georgia commodities including berries, beans, spinach, tomatoes and watermelon.



## AG PRODUCTS CONNECTION

In collaboration with Georgia Grown and other industry partners, UGA Extension is using its network of county offices to connect agricultural producers with consumers looking for fresh, Georgia-grown products. Visit [t.uga.edu/5U8](https://t.uga.edu/5U8) for more.



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***Our purpose:** We translate the science of everyday living for farmers, families and communities to foster a healthy and prosperous Georgia.*



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