

Coastal Connections

Mississippi State University Extension Service-Jackson County

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Jackson County Master Gardener Class 2011



The Jackson County Extension Service is now taking applications and registration for the Spring 2011 Master Gardener Training. The classes are scheduled to begin on February 23rd and extend through April 20th. Classes will be held each Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. at the Coastal Research and Extension Center located at 1815 Popp's Ferry Road in Biloxi. Participants will receive training in the areas of soils, plant propagation, weed science, lawns, ornamentals, fruits and nuts, as well as vegetables.

The cost of the course is \$85.00 which will pay for a training manual and supplies needed for the class. Following extensive horticulture training, Master Gardeners agree to donate 40 hours of community volunteer service within the first year after taking the course. To recertify, Master Gardeners are required to volunteer 20 hours of community service as well as receive 12 hours of educational instruction annually. Master Gardeners are noted in the community for all of their volunteer work, whether it be through beautification projects, newspaper articles, or speakers to different civic organizations.

Class size will be limited to 30 and the deadline to register is February 11, 2011. For more information please call Stephanie Pendleton at 769-3047 or email sdoulgas@ext.msstate.edu.

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Gardening in the Winter!?!

By Stephanie Pendleton

It is officially winter and most of our plant life is sleeping soundly. Winter can be a time of year that people get the blahs, which leads to over active minds when we begin seeing the signs of spring. Most gardeners are aware of what components are necessary to grow a plant, but sometimes timing gets confusing. So what exactly can we as homeowners and gardeners do now and in the near future?

Planting Trees and Shrubs

Now is the time to plant your new trees and shrubs. Often times, people get confused about setting trees out when they are “naked” or without leaves. But it is the best time to do it, unless you like providing gallons of water every day to the trees planted in the summer! There is far less shock associated with plantings in the cold months due to the dormancy of the plant material. Some tips to keep in mind when planting:

1. Site Selection- Consider the mature size of the tree or shrub and the location in which you want to plant. Make sure the location is suitable and will accommodate the life of the tree. So many times, people plant trees for the size they “want” them to be versus what size they are destined to become resulting in problems down the road.
2. Planting-Dig the planting hole at least 2 times the **width** of the root ball. This allows the roots to grow out in all directions and helps in the prevention of girdling. However, do **NOT** plant the trees/shrubs any deeper than the original depth which it is actively growing in the pot or the root ball. With bare roots, retain the root flare above the ground.
3. Water- The most vital component in life. Water is still very important to provide even in the winter months. It is recommended that you soak with 5 to 10 gallons of water after planting. Water should be provided every 3 to 5 days depending on rain for the first several months. Trees should be provided necessary water throughout the first year to ensure good establishment.
4. Mulch—Mulch can offer many benefits that are quite regularly overlooked such as weed control, water retention, insulation in the winter, improving soil conditions, and one of the most important, provide a barrier from weed eaters and other lawn equipment. It can be added from 2-4 inches in depth around the circumference of the tree extending out 3 feet. There should be about an inch separating the trunk of the tree from the mulch. This will prevent insect and rot damage.

Fertilizing

Trees (landscape and fruit/nut) and shrubs should be fertilized when actively growing. Here in the coastal area, generally speaking, the best time to apply is between March and October. Notice I say generally. Like any living being, trees and shrubs have specific needs depending on plant species and stage of life. Young plants usually require more fertilizer than mature ones due to the growing activity. These young plants will benefit from being fertilized at several regular intervals throughout the growing season. An important thing to note is NOT to apply fertilizer to newly established trees and shrubs until after about 4 weeks. Mature well-established trees typically will benefit from one application annually.

Fruit and nut trees vary depending on what you are growing. For instance, citrus trees fertilizer recommendations are three times annually between February and September.

ACTIVELY growing plants. You might be fertilizing the weeds!

encourage flower production and fruit development.

the late winter or early spring before new growth appears.

*It is the perfect time to add lime to your lawns and fields if indicated by a soil analysis.

*Notice pruning for size control isn't considered a good reason to prune. If you find yourself cutting back the same plants due to obstructing views or growing outside of the "allotted" space, it may be your best option to remove the plant and replace it with one more suitable for the location.

Keeping these times in mind will help prevent cutting off the growth that is going to provide next year's feature.

Pruning

Pruning isn't a mandatory task in the growth cycle of plants. It is however, necessary in several cases. Listed below are some of the reasons homeowners might want to consider pruning (but by all means make sure it is necessary before you follow your neighbors in taking your plants to slaughter.)

Timing is also an important factor to remember before getting out the shears. A general rule of thumb is to prune after the feature (flower, fruit) of the plant has passed.

You should always avoid pruning shrubs after midsummer to prevent possible winter damage on new growth. Removing diseased, dead, or damaged limbs, or suckers can be done throughout the year regardless of season.

These are just a few things that will occupy your time while waiting for the greening up of our lawns and bedding plants. We have numerous publications on the topics discussed throughout this article as well as much more.

1. Aesthetic: Pruning to achieve or maintain a certain shape or to help develop a structurally sound limb systems.
2. Health: Removing diseased, dead, or damaged limbs.
3. Stimulation: Cutting back can

General Time Guidelines for Pruning

- Spring/Winter Flowering plants should be pruned after blooms.
- Summer Flowering should be pruned during the dormant period (late winter) or early spring.
- Evergreens should be pruned in

Call or email for more information.

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Upcoming Events

January 18, 2011

Pruning 101 will be held at the Ocean Spring Public Library beginning at 6:00 PM. Dr. Wayne Porter will discuss why, how, and when to prune landscape plants and shrubbery.

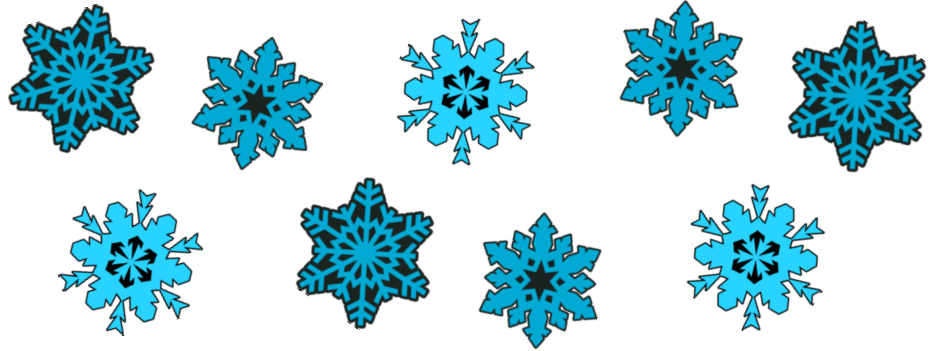
February 17, 2011

Lawn Maintenance will be held at the Ocean Springs Library beginning at 6:00 PM. Stephanie Pendleton will discuss the needs of the home lawn and how to best manage maintenance activities.

February 23, 2011

Backyard Citrus will be held at the Ocean Springs Library beginning at 6:00 PM. Dr. Wayne Porter will discuss the ins and outs of growing citrus down here on the coast. Things to expect such as fruit production, fertilization, and pests and their solutions.

Jackson County 4-H Update



CAN YOU BUILD IT?

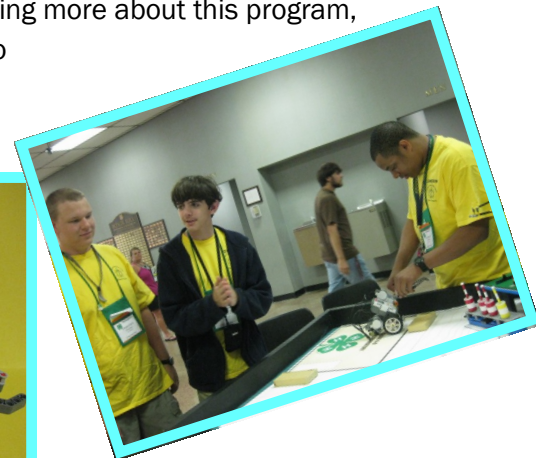
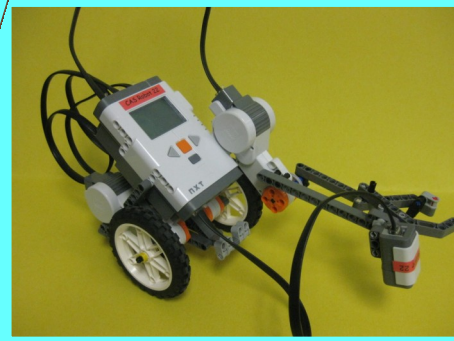
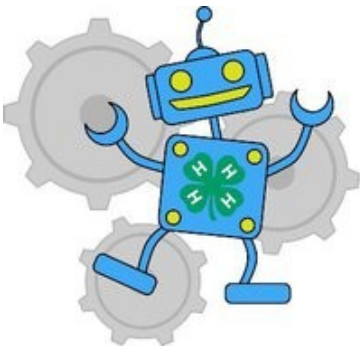
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Jackson County 4-H kicked off it's first robotics program a year ago. The first robotics club was formed at Pascagoula High School, with Mr. Dave Maxwell serving as the club leader. This small, but hard working team learned the power of creativity and teamwork by using the NXT Lego MindStorm robot kits to build and program their very own robot. They headed to competition and returned as the 3rd place team in the state!

This year the PHS team is looking for new members and our first ever Junior 4-H robotics team is being formed. Youth ages 10-13 (Junior 4-H) who are interested in Legos, computers and technology are encouraged to join a robotics club. The club meets monthly for a statewide videoconference with other clubs and then meets regularly afterschool to build and prepare their robot for competition this Summer.

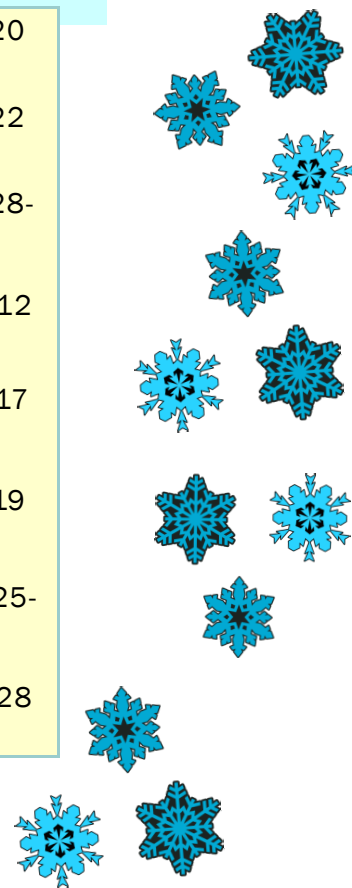
Robotics club is a free opportunity for all youth ages 10-18. We are also currently looking for additional adult volunteers who would be willing to sponsor clubs. Training is available and it is not expected that adults be familiar with the MindStorm software. Adult volunteers are an important part of making the program a success, young people are looking for positive and educational ways to spend their afterschool hours.

If you or a child you know is interested in learning more about this program, please call or email 4-H Agent Evelyn DeAngelo



Mark Your Calendars!

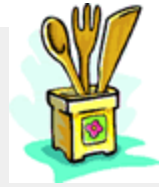
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|--|----------------|
| Robotics Videoconference Meeting | January 20 |
| Shooting Sports @ Welford Range | January 22 |
| Southeast District Livestock Show | January 28-30 |
| Super Saturday @ Pascagoula Family Interactive Ctr | February 12 |
| Robotics Videoconference Meeting | February 17 |
| Shooting Sports @ Welford Range | February 19 |
| Mississippi 4-H Volunteer Leaders Conference Starkville, MS | February 25-26 |
| 4-H Advisory Board Meeting | February 28 |



JACKSON COUNTY 4-H RIFLE TEAM

IN DECEMBER THEY HAD TO BUNDLE UP FOR THEIR MONTHLY PRACTICE. THE TEAM MEETS TO LEARN AND PREPARE FOR SPRING COMPETITIONS. 4-H VOLUNTEERS AND YOUTH WORK TOGETHER TO GET ON TARGET!





GADGETS – THE HEALTH SAVVY KITCHEN

As the New Year kicks off, think about the opportunities for gift-giving that will be approaching, beginning with Valentine's Day and progressing through Mother's Day, Father's Day, spring birthdays and weddings. Kitchen gadgets and devices that make it quick and simple to prepare healthy meals are great pleasers and may be the perfect choice for the occasion. Here are a —baker's dozen|| to choose from or to bundle into a gift basket full of healthy intentions:

1. The **micro-plane grating tool** makes quick work of citrus peel, producing perfectly fine zest that is easily removed from the top of the planer. Use it to add a healthy boost of flavor to many dishes from salad dressings to dips to the main entrée and dessert. Natural seasoning from plants helps eliminate the need to season with salt and other sodium rich seasonings. Use it for ginger, hard cheese, and other firm foods.
2. Healthful fruit and yogurt smoothies need only a simple, **inexpensive blender or food processor**. Some blenders come with smaller containers to blend and store healthy salad dressings and dips.
3. **Fat separating pitchers** (resembling a two cup measuring cup, with the spout coming up from the base of the pitcher) are great for pouring off broth while leaving the fat behind.
4. **Steamers** allow preparation of tender crisp steamed vegetables, as well as steamed chicken and fish. Some models have dual containers to prepare two steamed dishes from one steaming period.
5. **Small electric coffee grinders** can also be used for grinding peppercorns, cardamom, nutmeg, and other spices and dried herbs. Try them for grinding nuts and grains, as well.
6. **Pump spray bottles** designed to hold oil make it possible to spray pans, meats, poultry, fish and vegetables for roasting with your own choice of oil, without the need for aerosols.
7. Let the fat drip away from grilled seafood, chicken and meats by using a **ribbed skillet** or an **indoor grill** – works for veggies, too!
8. **Shallow containers** that are only two to three inches deep help with safer quick chilling of healthy home-made soups and stews prepared in larger quantities for freezing.
9. An **indoor rotisserie** allows roasted/seasoned poultry year _round.
10. **Instant read thermometers** allow a quick check of the final internal temperature for cooked ground meat dishes, chicken, pork, beef, fish and leftovers. Don't forget sanitizing spray for kitchen surfaces and plastic food handling gloves to cut the risk of food borne infection!
11. **Salad spinners** quickly get those washed greens ready to dress or refrigerate.
12. Veggie choppers come in various designs – making it easy to add some nutrient rich chopped or minced vegetables to salads, soups, stews and casseroles.
13. **Flexible chopping mats** make quick work of transferring chopped food to the bowl or pan – simply lift and funnel the food into the container.

If it just happens that the cook you buy a micro-plane for turns out to be you, try this quick and delicious recipe:

Lemony Fresh Fruit Topping:

One 6 oz. container plain non-fat Greek style yogurt

2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice

¼ teaspoon grated lemon zest

1 teaspoon sugar or 1 packet sweetener (to taste)

Whisk together the topping ingredients. Mix together two cups of fresh fruit (one cubed apple and one cubed orange work well). Pour the fruit topping over the fruit and sprinkle with coarsely chopped walnuts for a healthy treat!

Sweet tooth?

Sugar Substitutes can be a good alternative to Sugar!

| Non-Nutritive Sweeteners | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Sweetener and Trade Names | Safety concerns | Sweetness compared to Sugar | Ok for Baking and Cooking? |
| Saccharin: Sweet 'N Low, Sweet Twin, Sugar Twin | Not for pregnant women | 300x | Yes |
| Aspartame: NutraSweet, Equal | Not for people with phenylketonuria | 180x | Do not bake; Add only <u>after</u> cooking |
| Acesulfame-K: Sunette, Sweet One | Safe for everyone | 200x | Yes |
| Sucralose: Splenda | Safe for everyone | 600x | Yes |
| Stevia: Truvia, PureVia, Sun Crystals | Safe for everyone | 200-300x | Yes, but breads will not rise as well |

Adapted from International Food Information Council (IFIC) website



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