

## Wiregrass Walk-About

Hello to all my gardening friends,

I would like to say thank you all for your prayers, calls and cards the week following my surgery. I am still mending and very thankful. I hope each of you are doing well.



We have hit the summer heat and humidity in Southeast Alabama! Our plants and gardens struggle during these downpours of rain and the heat that follows. Mulch does help in our beds in keeping our flowers and shrubs from drying out! Be careful and drink plenty of water when you find yourself outside working during these hot summer days!

Don't forget we are teaching the children of the Hawk Houston Boys and Girls Club at Aunt Katie's Community Garden. We do need helpers. We usually get there around 9:30 am on Wednesdays. In case of rain we meet down the street at the Hawk Houston Boys & Girls Club. These children are eager to learn and an awesome group each year. If you would like to help please let Helen-Sue or me know.

We still have workdays planned and need people to come out and help. We need to finish the work on the pot rack. We did throw away pots and trays we couldn't use. Now we need to secure the structure and make it more useable. We do need some pots and trays washed and stored. We also have the demo area which needs weeding. This can be done in the early morning hours. And of course our nursery area needs some limbs picked up.

Our Fall Plant Sale is September 23rd this year. We are in need of perennials, shrubs, trees and grasses. If you need a dig at your house, please contact one of the board members and we will schedule it. If you would like to donate plants you already have in pots please label them and contact the plant parent.

Thank you all for your volunteer time with the Wiregrass Master Gardeners Association. We could not be who we are and do what we do in our community without your support! I hope to see you all soon!

Life is a garden, dig it!

*Devonne*

**KEEPING COOL**



## INSIDE . . .

- ◆ Garden Checklist
- ◆ Aunt Katie's Garden Needs YOU
- ◆ Electronic Recycling
- ◆ Myths about GMO
- ◆ Advanced Master Gardener Session
- ◆ Burn Those Calories
- ◆ Top 5 Mistakes

## Wiregrass Electronic Waste Recycling Event

On Saturday, June 24th, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Discovery Recycling, and The Ark Dothan will offer residents the opportunity to have their unused outdated electronics recycled during a FREE Community Recycling Event. (\$1.00/inch diagonal screen charge for disposal fee on glass-screen TVs and glass screen CRT computer monitors).

Drop off your electronic items to be recycled in front of the Dale County Extension Office from 8:00am-12:00 pm. This free event aims to prevent electronics from going to landfills and other areas where it can harm the environment. The drop-off event is open to anyone in the public including businesses. If you are unable to attend the event The Ark Dothan located on West Main Street is now accepting electronic items Monday thru Saturday. For additional information please contact Phillip Carter, Extension Agent at



## Want to Become An Advanced Master Gardener?

If you're interested in knowing more and/or pursuing the Advanced Master Gardener certification, Lucy Edwards is ready to provide you with what you need to know. Please join Lucy on Thursday, June 29<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am at the Coffee County Extension office in New Brockton, AL. We will be meeting in the small meeting room/kitchen area at the office (5 county complex, 1055 East McKinnon Street, New Brockton, AL 36351).



A promotional graphic for the Master Gardener Helpline. It has a white background with a light green and yellow sunburst pattern in the background. The text reads: 'Home Garden Questions? We've got answers! Call the Master Gardener Helpline 1-877-252-GROW (4769) toll free'. The bottom of the graphic is decorated with a colorful illustration of various plants, including raspberries, blueberries, and other berries.



## What's Happening at Landmark Park?

Don't miss some of the events coming up at Landmark Park. For a complete listing of activities, go to <http://www.landmarkparkdothan.com/adult-programs/>

June 29.....Music by Moonlight: Tri State Community Orchestra, 7:30 pm

July 9.....Heritage Forums: Landmark Goes Digital, 3 pm

July 13 .....Music By Moonlight: Troy Dothan Community Band, 7:30 pm

# Fact or Fiction?

## The truth behind GMOS and other myths

### GMO, Genetically Engineered, Bio Technology- What Does it All Mean?

Come join Alabama Extension professionals, researchers, and specialists from Auburn University and Alabama A&M University as we uncover the truth with non-biased & research based information.



Thursday, June 22nd at 6 p.m.

Location: Wiregrass Research and Extension Center – Auditorium  
167 State Highway 134 E, Headland, AL 36345



Joseph Hess, PhD  
Extension Specialist,  
Professor Poultry Science  
Auburn University



Lisa Kriese- Anderson, PhD  
Extension Specialist,  
Associate Professor Animal  
Sciences  
Auburn University



Rudy Pacumbaba, PhD  
Extension Specialist,  
Alabama A&M University

Open to the public- Admission is free!  
Heavy hors d'oeuvres provided

Please pre-register by June 19th

For more information or to register, contact Charlotte Countryman  
at the Wiregrass Research and Extension Center at (334) 693-2010.



The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) is an equal opportunity educator and employer. Everyone is welcome!

# Top Five Mistakes in the Vegetable Garden

by Bob Westerfield

It's hard to beat the fresh taste of homegrown vegetables on your dinner table, and the satisfaction of knowing you produced them yourself. While a successful vegetable garden is within reach of anyone, avoiding a few common pitfalls will help to ensure a bountiful harvest. The following lists are some common mistakes I often see that stump even the seasoned gardener on occasion.

**1. Planting too early.** It never fails that somewhere in mid-February a warm front comes through and everyone gets bit by the gardening bug. Right on cue, the Bonnie's plant farm trucks start rolling into the local garden centers delivering a multitude of tender tomatoes, peppers and other summer vegetables. Because of the sudden warm weather, everyone feels like it must be time to plant. Air temperature, however, is a bad indicator of when to plant. Soil temperature is the key to knowing if a tomato or pepper will survive the cold, not the air temperature. Most summer crops prefer soil temperatures at least 55-60 F. Closer to 65 F if you are talking about sensitive crops like okra and super sweet corn. Planting too early when soil temperatures are too cool will cause plants to stunt or other disorders such as leaf roll or misshapen fruit. Check soil temperatures with a soil thermometer or through your local county extension office to know when it is safe to plant.

**2. Planting when it is too wet.** Planting when the soil is too wet is about as bad as planting when the soil is too



cold. The soil should only be worked and planted in when there is a slight bit of moisture. Tilling or planting in soils that are too wet will cause poor seed germination and transplant survival. To know if the soils are the proper moisture to plant, grab a handful of soil from the garden and squeeze it tightly together in your fist. Take a finger and push it into the soil ball you just formed. If it breaks apart into multiple pieces, the soil is perfect for working. If your finger pushes into the ball and it doesn't break apart, it's too wet to work and may need a few more days to dry out.

**3. Not controlling weeds.** Weeds can be one of the biggest headaches for both the beginning and experienced gardener. It's always easier to try and keep the weeds out then to get them out later. Weeds compete for nutrition and moisture, and take up valuable root space from our intended crop. Prevent them through the use of mulches that include pine straw, wheat straw, wood chips, newspaper or some type of landscape fabric. Weeds can also be kept at bay by the use of both pre- and post-emergent herbicides. Make sure you read the label on all chemicals to be sure you can use it on the vegetable type you are growing.



**4. Improper fertilization.** Nutrition is vitally important to all types of vegetables. Too much or too little nutrition can cause major problems in the garden. Too much fertilizer can cause excessive vegetative growth and few blooms or fruit. It can also lead to an increase in your weed population. Too little fertilizer will make plants stunted and unable to produce a good crop. Start with a soil sample through your county extension office to determine the nutritional needs as well as the pH of the soil. In general, most vegetables need fertilization at planting time and then not until they put out their first small fruit. Additional fertilizer may be needed on continuous producing items such as tomatoes, okra, peppers and others.

*Continued on next page . . .*



- June 20 ..... WMGA Monthly meeting, HPUMC, 6 pm
- June 22 ..... Fact or Fiction? The truth behind GMOS and other myths., 6 pm
- June 24 ..... Wiregrass Electronic Waste Recycling Event—see article for info
- June 29 ..... Info Session—Advanced Master Gardener certification, 9 am, Coffee County Extension Office
- July 20 ..... Work Day at the Gardens, 8 am

### September 23rd—Fall Plant Sale

*Do you have an event you'd like added to our monthly calendar?  
If so, send it to Jane Klosky ([jane.klosky@icloud.com](mailto:jane.klosky@icloud.com))*



## Summer at Aunt Katie's

Master Gardeners have already started the program to help Michael Jackson with the Boys and Girls Club programs in June and July. Classes are Wednesdays continuing through July. Classes are from 10 am–11 am. The program is generally 45-50 minutes long. Students walk to Aunt Katie's Community Garden from the clubhouse nearby. Ages run between 7 and 13 and there can be between 25 and 35 in attendance. We have approximately 40 kids participating this year.

We need help from ALL Master Gardeners. Everyone is eligible to teach and assist and we need many assistants and teachers. So this is a good opportunity to begin working with children. As you can see from the smiles on everyone's faces from last year (photo), it's a great experience.

If you have ideas, we would be grateful. If you would like to participate, teach or assist, please reply to Helen-Sue ([hsdekemp1@Juno.com](mailto:hsdekemp1@Juno.com))



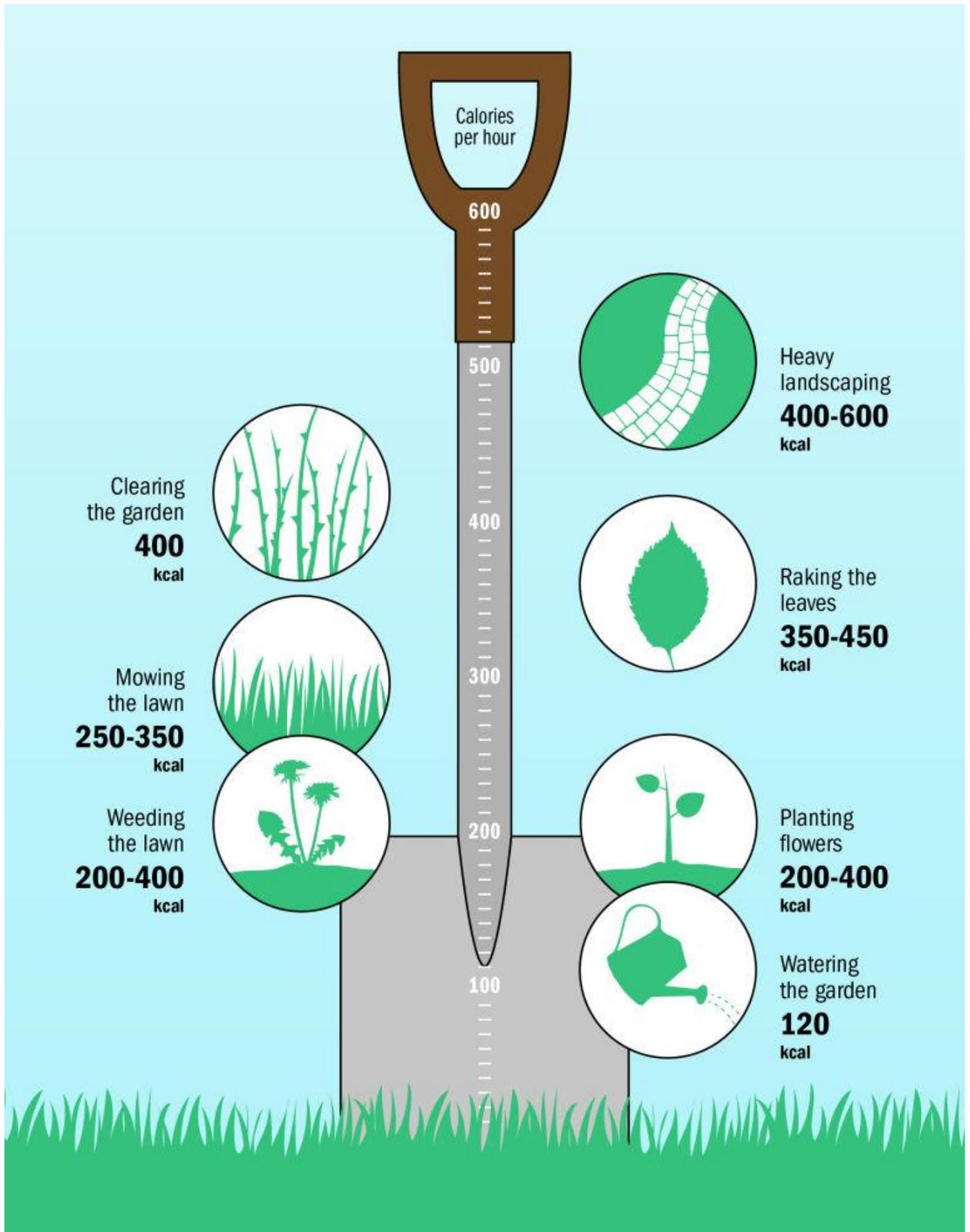
## Top 5 Mistakes (*continued*)



**5. Improper watering.** Water is the most essential component of a successful garden. Just like fertilizer, however, too little or too much can cause more harm than good. Most vegetables need between 1 to 2 inches of irrigation a week to thrive. Frequency depends on the soil type and the amount of supplemental rainfall we receive. It's far healthier for the plants and much more efficient to irrigate with either soaker hoses or drip irrigation. Overhead watering does work, but can lead to foliar diseases and also wastes a lot of water wetting non-target areas.

# Get Fit by Helping at the Greenhouse

Come out and work at the greenhouse—see how many calories you'll be burning.



# SPRING Garden Checklist



## JUNE

### Fruits and Nuts

- ✓ Layer grapes and continue spray programs.
- ✓ Thin apples and peaches if too thick.

### Shrubs

- ✓ Lace bugs may be a problem on azaleas, pyracanthas, dogwoods, cherry laurels, and other shrubs.
- ✓ Water as needed. Fertilize now.
- ✓ Keep long shoots from developing by pinching out tips.
- ✓ Take cuttings from semi-mature wood for rooting.

### Roses

- ✓ Watch for insects and diseases.
- ✓ Keep old flower heads removed.
- ✓ Plant container-grown plants from nurseries or garden centers.

### Annuals and Perennials

- ✓ Keep old flower heads removed to promote continued flowering. Plant garden mums if not already in.
- ✓ For compact mums, keep tips pinched out.
- ✓ Watch for insects and diseases.

### Bulbs

- ✓ Foliage may be removed from spring bulbs if it has yellowed and is becoming dry.
- ✓ Watch for aphids and thrips on summer bulbs.

### Miscellaneous

- ✓ If scale insects continue on shrubs, use materials other than oils.
- ✓ Set houseplants on porch or outdoors in shade and pay close attention to the need for water.
- ✓ If desired, air layer houseplants.

### Vegetable Seeds

- ✓ Plant beans, field peas, pumpkins, squash, corn, cantaloupes, and watermelons.

### Vegetable Plants

- ✓ Plant tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, and sweet potato vine cuttings.

### Lawns

- ✓ Follow a schedule of fertilization and watering.
- ✓ Lawns should be mowed weekly.
- ✓ Planting may continue if soil is moist.
- ✓ Continue weed spraying if necessary.

## JULY

### Fruits and Nuts

- ✓ Protect figs and other ripening fruit from birds.

### Shrubs

- ✓ Continue to root shrub cuttings until late in the month and mulch to keep soil moist.
- ✓ Remove faded blooms promptly from crape myrtle and other summer-blooming plants.

### Roses

- ✓ Keep roses healthy and actively growing.
- ✓ Apply fertilizer.
- ✓ Wash off foliage to prevent burning if any fertilizer falls on plants.

### Annuals and Perennials

- ✓ Water as needed to keep plants active.

### Bulbs

- ✓ Iris and spider lilies may be planted late this month.

### Miscellaneous

- ✓ Keeping flowers, shrubs, trees, and lawns healthy is the major task this month.
- ✓ This demands close observation for insects and diseases.
- ✓ Water.

### Vegetable Seed

- ✓ Plant beans, field peas, rutabagas, squash, New Zealand spinach, and Irish potatoes.
- ✓ Plant cabbage, collards, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, and celery for the fall crop.

### Vegetable Plants

- ✓ Plant tomatoes in central and north Alabama.

### Lawns

- ✓ Watch for diseases.
- ✓ Mow regularly.



