This summer has been a busy one at Camp Cane Creek! We had a total of 18 campers and 7 counselors over the course of 2 sessions, held in June and July. Campers learned about a variety of topics including organic and conventional gardening, nutrition, composting and recycling, electricity, weather and climate, water quality and chemistry, and wildlife biology.

The campers were able to grow their own snacks throughout camp including cucumbers, tomatoes and sweet potatoes. In addition to growing their own food, they learned to cook food. The campers made s’mores using a pizza box solar oven.

They spent a large deal of time outdoors, exploring and learning about the natural environment around them. They seemed at their happiest spending time in the creek, splashing around catching crawfish and salamanders.

Cane Creek Camp benefited greatly from having local staff and citizens visit. NEP Educator Lea Huddleston, and 4H Educator Meaghanne Ramsey talked to the campers about healthy eating and the importance of exercise. County 4H Agent Stephen Faughn showed the kids his collection of animal Skins & Skulls and talked about Alabama Wildlife. David West and Dani Carroll showed the kids how to use plasticulture to plant pumpkins. Crystal McPherson, 4H Educator, and the 4-H Tree Amigos group helped the kids learn how to test the water quality of the creek. Extension secretary Pat Killian helped the kids create recycled snowmen using some paint and an old CD, and Choccolocco Creek Watershed Alliance Director Christy Claes showed the campers why rain barrels are a “good thing”.

NEP Educator Lea Huddleston, and 4H Educator Meaghanne Ramsey talked to the campers about healthy eating and the importance of exercise.
SOW, it’s Planting Time

You can grow vegetables and fruits year-round in Alabama and across much of the Southeast. The challenge for many gardeners is knowing what to plant, how to plant it and when to plant it. But SOW, a new mobile app from the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, takes the guess work out of garden planting.

Kerry Smith, one of the leaders of Alabama Extension’s horticulture team, said the free mobile app is available in both the iTunes and Google Play stores.

“SOW is designed to tell you all the information you need to plant each crop in your home garden,” said Smith. “You can also keep a planting diary and basic notes on what you planted.”

Smith notes that more than 35 percent of American households are growing some of their own fruits and vegetables.

“Alabama Extension’s SOW app puts the most crucial information on food gardening right in the gardener’s hands when they need it.”

Jonathan Davis, Alabama Extension’s director of information technology said the app, which is designed specifically for mobile devices, is easy and intuitive.

“Simply choose your location and start planting,” said Davis. “Click on a crop’s photo to see more information including days to harvest, spacing and other crop details.

Davis adds that an app offers an effective way for Alabama Extension to reach new people with its resources.

“Alabama Extension has a wealth of knowledge to offer about gardening,” he said. “Since smartphones are an integral part of many people’s daily life, an app is an excellent tool for us to provide accurate and timely guidance to gardeners.”

Smith agreed that the demand from Alabama residents for gardening information continues to increase.

“Alabama Extension fields more questions about gardening and horticulture than any other topic,” said Smith.

The SOW app features several ways for the user to access additional information. A More Information button is featured with every vegetable and fruit in the app’s database. Clicking on that button takes the user to relevant publications and other information on the Alabama Extension website.

If that does not provide the answer a gardener needs, the Ask an Expert Option allows the user to send a question to a horticulture expert in his county or state.

One of SOW’s unique features is the Today’s Crops option. Currently only available for gardeners living in Alabama, the Today’s Crops option tells the gardener what can be planted on any day of the year.

Davis said that the app will be upgraded in the future to add additional states to Today’s Crops option.

SOW joins “Gardening in the South” iBook series in Alabama Extension’s growing electronic catalog. Based on proven Master Gardener training and university research, the “Gardening in the South” series is packed with information, tips and tricks. You can find the series on iBooks.
Plasticulture demonstration garden at Cane Creek. Thanks to the help from the Cane Creek Campers, the pumpkin seeds are in the ground & beginning to sprout.

Cane Creek Community Garden received the 2015 Excellence in County Administration Award. Pictured at right are members of the Calhoun County Master Gardeners, Extension staff, and County staff accepting the award.

From left, Gary Lawson, David Pirritano, Janet Evans, Emily Richardson, David West, Carolyn Patton, Linda McDaniel, Stephen Faughn and Brian Rosenbalm.

New compost bin has been installed near the back gate. Thanks to Rachel Brinks & her crew for their hard work.

Buckwheat after 42 days at cane creek. Suppressing weeds with no boundaries fantastically. Native pollinators abound!

Thanks to the 2015 MG Intern class for adopting and landscaping the front bed at Cane Creek. It looks great! Cane Creek was also awarded the CCBB Beautification Award for District 1.

Rain Barrel Workshop ~ Friday, August 27, 2015 ~ 9:00-11:00am
Attend a rain barrel workshop to learn more about water conservation, protecting our Alabama waters and collecting rain water from Extension Agents Hayes Jackson, Dani Carroll, and Rachel Brinks. We’ll show you how to build a simple, inexpensive and easy to maintain rain barrel. Then you will build your very own rain barrel. Be prepared to get a little dirty and have a lot of fun. And don’t forget that a rain barrel may not fit in your trunk! Barrels are $40.00. Contact the Extension Office to register.

Are you interested in becoming a Master Gardener?
There will be an orientation meeting in November, classes will start in mid-January, and run through mid-April. Classes will meet on Wednesdays, from 9am-3pm. Call the Extension Office for more info and an application.
CALHOUN COUNTY ADVISORY BOARD / GRASSROOTS COMMITTEE

Calhoun County Extension’s 2015 Advisory Board has met twice this summer, with their third meeting scheduled for this month. The Advisory Board is made up of area businessmen and women, educators (both current and retired) and other volunteers. Their mission is to provide guidance, insight, and to help prioritize Extension programming.

Board members have had the opportunity to participate in and/or observe some of the programs Extension has offered, and in July, the meeting featured program reports from those Agents, Agent Assistants and Regional Agents that serve Calhoun County.

Members of the 2015 Advisory Board are: Jean Ann Oglesby, Kim Johnson, Brittany Franks, Jordan Phillips, Jeannie Frazier, Michael Magouryk, Christy Claes, Matt Carroll, Barry Gamble, Joyce Hutchins, Sharon Stockdale, Gillian Bond, Kathy Wells, Helen Weeks, Lemuel Davis, Dick Pritchett, Kris Schmit, Justin Hill, Mary Banks, Commissioner Fred Wilson, Gloria Floyd, Judge Alice Martin, Sheila A. Webb, Tubby Bass. We appreciate their interest in Extension and it’s programs.

MEET AMBER MARABLE

Amber Marable is the new 4-H Foundation Agent serving Calhoun and Cleburne Counties. Growing up on her great-grandparents’ farm in Marshall County really inspired Amber to love nature. From the time she was little, she wanted to become an educator and share her love of the outdoors with others. She attended Auburn University, where she majored in Wildlife Science, and later returned for a Master of Natural Resources degree. She recently transferred from Barbour and Russell Counties, where she served 3 years as the 4-H Foundation Agent. Moving to Calhoun County has been an exciting opportunity for Amber, and she is looking forward to serving you this year! You may contact Amber by calling our office at 256-237-1621, or via email dunnamb@auburn.edu.

Congratulations!

Weaver Elementary School is the proud owner of a newly certified Outdoor Classroom.

Congratulations to students, teachers, staff and administrators for your hard work.

Enjoy learning, outdoors, this school year!
EAT YOUR VEGGIES!
Lea Huddleston, NEP Educator

This summer has gone by so quickly! For me it has been filled with fun activities as well as preparation for the new school year.

You have probably heard that most people do not eat as many vegetables as they should. The servings of vegetables that you need can vary depending on how old you are and how many calories you need, but most people should try to eat about 3-4 servings of vegetables each day. I found some recommendations for helping children to eat more veggies on the MyPlate website.

- Adults should set a good example for children by eating vegetables with meals and as snacks.
- Let children help decide on the dinner vegetables or what goes into salads.
- Depending on their age, children can help shop for, clean, peel, or cut up vegetables.
- Allow children to pick a new vegetable to try while shopping.
- Use cut-up vegetables as part of afternoon snacks.
- Children often prefer foods served separately. So, rather than mixed vegetables try serving two vegetables separately.

Here’s an easy way to include more veggies!! This dip can be made quickly and would be a great afterschool snack or party food.

**Tasty Taco Dip**

1 can black beans, rinsed and drained
1 can corn, drained
1 can diced tomatoes and green chilies, drained
1 package taco seasoning

Directions: Mix all ingredients together in a bowl. Serve with tortilla chips, corn chips or whole grain crackers. Store leftovers in the refrigerator.

Sunscreen Safety Tips for Children
Debra Ward, Regional Extension Educator

Because infants have thinner skin and underdeveloped melanin, their skin burns more easily than that of older kids. But sunscreen should not be applied to babies under 6 months of age, so they absolutely must be kept out of the sun as much as possible.

- For kids age 6 months and older, select an SPF of 30 or higher to prevent both sunburn and tanning. Choose a sunscreen that states on the label that it protects against both UVA and UVB rays (referred to as “broad-spectrum” sunscreen). To avoid possible skin allergy, don’t use sunscreens with PABA; if your child has sensitive skin, look for a product with the active ingredient titanium dioxide. Also check medications for possible reactions from sunlight.
- Reapply sunscreen often, approximately every 2 hours, as recommended by the American Academy of Dermatology. Reapply after a child has been sweating or swimming. Be protective of children being over exposed to sun’s rays.
- Sun exposure can damage eyes of children, as well as adults’. Not all sunglasses provide the same level of ultraviolet protection. Purchase sunglasses with labels ensuring that they provide 100% UV protection.
- Check the date of the sunscreen lotion to be certain it has not expired.

To learn more about sunscreen safety, call me 334-750-1253.
CALHOUN COUNTY BEAUTIFICATION BOARD AWARDS

The CCBB held it’s annual Awards Luncheon on Friday, July 17th, at the Anniston Country Club. Winners were presented with a certificate and a sign for display. Congratulations to our winners:

District 1:
Ghislaine Mathieu
Cane Creek Community Gardens, McClellan

District 2:
Daniell & Becky Brown
“Mary’s Garden”, Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church

District 3:
James & Pamela White
Oxford Fire Department, Chief Dewey Webb Station

District 4:
Frank & Sandra Dale
Joseph Smith

District 5:
Linda & Jim Abel
Klaus Duncan & Sandra Kelly

Members of the Calhoun Co. Master Gardener Association accepted the award on behalf of Cane Creek Community Gardens

Mary’s Garden, Sacred Heart Church, District 2 Winner

District 2 winners Daniell & Becky Brown with Board Member Janet Evans and Commissioner

Board Members Jerome Freeman & Carol Bush with District 1 Winner Ghislaine Mathieu and Commissioner Fred Wilson

Members of the Oxford Fire Department accept the award from Board Members Donna Carroll, Belinda York, and Commissioner Don Hudson

Kris Schmit & Bess Valieant accepted the award for Sacred Heart Church, presented by Commissioner Hodges

Congratulations to our winners:
Beautification Board Awards, continued:

District 5 winners Klaus Duncan and Sandra Kelley, with Commission Wilson and Board Chairman Truman Norred

District 5 Winner - home of Jim & Linda Abel

District 3 winners James & Pamela White with Board Members Belinda York, Donna Carroll and Commissioner Don Hudson

District 4 winner Joseph White with Board Members Shirley Heifner and Betty Hines, and Commissioner Fred Wilson

District 1 winner, Ghislaine Mathieu

Do you know of a residence or business that should be recognized? The Calhoun County Beautification Board accepts entries for their annual awards during April and May each year. Winners will be recognized in July. Contact the Extension Office for more information. 256-237-1621.
# Fall Fest 2015
Saturday, September 19th ~ 9am til 2pm
Bring the whole family out for a day loaded with fun!
$1 Admission

## BAKED GOODS CONTEST / CAKE WALK
All items are to be submitted for judging between 9-10am, Saturday September 19th. Judging will take place from 10-11am, with the winners posted at noon. All entrees must be in disposable or non-returnable containers/plates, with the recipe attached.

All entries will be “Walked-Off” at the Cake Walk, which will begin after entries have been judged, and will continue until all baked products are gone.

All entrees will be judged on:
- Originality
- Volume
- Appearance
- Presentation

First, Second and Third place winners will be awarded.

- First Place: Ribbon & $20 cash award
- Second Place: Ribbon & $15 cash award
- Third Place: Ribbon & $10 cash award

Items accepted: Cakes, Cookies, Candy, Pies

Entry Fee: $1.00 per item

## CANNING CONTEST
Entries must be in glass, standard, half-pint, pint or one quart canning jars. Half gallon jars, mayo jars, or any other type jar will not be accepted. All jars must be sealed, using flat canning lids, with rings left on.

All entries must have been produced, prepared, and processed by exhibitor in the past year. Youth & Adult entries will be accepted.

Entries are to be submitted between 9-10am, Saturday, September 19th. Winners posted at noon. Categories:
- Vegetable Mixture (Soup mix)
- Tomatoes
- Other vegetables
- Berries
- Peaches
- Other fruit
- Whole Pickles
- Pickle slices
- Sauces
- Catsups and relishes
- Sugar sweetened jelly
- Artificially sweetened jelly
- Sugar sweetened preserves-jams
- Artificially sweetened preserves-jams
- Sugar sweetened fruit butter
- Artificially sweetened fruit butter

Products will be judged on:
- Quality of Product (appearance, natural color)
- Quality of Pack (good proportion of product to juice)
- Quality of liquid (clear and free of sediment)
- Appearance of jar (clean standard jar, new lids and bands)

Awards:
- Adult Categories – 1st, 2nd, 3rd place ribbons
- Youth categories – 1st, 2nd, 3rd place ribbons

Overall
- Adult Grand champion $20
- Adult Reserve champion $15
- Youth Grand champion $20
- Youth Reserve champion $15

## ADULT HANDICRAFTS CONTEST
Categories:
- Fiber Arts: Macrame', crochet, knitting.
- Miscellaneous: Basket weaving, leather goods, wood carving, other
- Glass: Stained glass, ceramics, pottery, jewelry
- Painting: Decorative, oil/acrylics, landscape, watercolor
- Sewing: Dress clothes, smocking, embroidery, crewel, cross stitch
- Scrapbooks (1 page only): Celebrations / Family / Misc

Rules:
1. Items accepted between 9-10am. Items must be signed in (and out). Items must be picked up by 2pm
2. $1.00 entry fee for each item entered.
3. Judging begins at 10:00 am.
4. First, Second & Third Place ribbon awarded for each category. (No cash prizes).
5. Overall winners receive a ribbon and a cash prize:
   - 1st place: Ribbon $20 cash
   - 2nd place: Ribbon $15 cash
   - 3rd place: Ribbon $10 cash
Activities include:

Inflatables for the Kids
Hay Rides
Food/Craft Vendors
4H ChickenQue & Beef Cook Off
Live Animal Show
4H Chick Chain Show & Auction
and Much MORE!

FLOWER SHOW

1) $1 entry fee, per item.
2) 3 categories: Potted plants, single flower and flower arrangements.
3) Items accepted for judging from 9-10am.
4) Judging begins at 11am, winners posted at noon.
5) First, Second and Third place ribbons for each category. Winners also receive a plant.
6) Items must be signed in and signed out, and picked up by 2pm.

Quilt Contest

Hand Quilting ~ Machine Quilting ~ Quilted Accessories ~ Wall Hangings

If you wish to display a quilted item that is not entered in the contest, there is no fee. Quilt contest and display will be held indoors. **Limit of three items per participant.** Contest rules:

1. Items accepted for judging between 9-10am. Items must be signed in (and out). Items must be picked up by 2pm.
2. $1.00 entry fee for each item entered.
3. Judging begins at 10am, winners posted at noon.
4. Ribbons for First, Second and Third place in each category.
5. Overall winners receive
   1st place: Ribbon $20 cash
   2nd place: Ribbon $15 cash
   3rd place: Ribbon $10 cash
CANNING SALSA

Patti West, Regional Extension Agent

Hopefully, your garden has been filled with delicious red ripe tomatoes and you are looking for some way to preserve them. Well look no more; you can make the best salsas you’ve ever had. Most salsa recipes contain a mixture of low - acid foods, such as onions and peppers, with acid foods, such as tomatoes. It is important to always use tested salsa recipes to ensure they contain enough acid to be processed safely in a boiling water canner.

First, be sure to use only high quality tomatoes for canning salsa. Do not use tomatoes from dead or frost - killed vines because these will not give you high quality salsa. Another tip to consider is to use only high quality peppers. With any approved recipe, it is important to follow it as closely as possible. Do not increase the total amount of peppers and tomatoes in any recipe. However, it is ok for you to substitute one type of pepper for another. For example, bell peppers may be substituted for long green chiles. The oils from the peppers can cause serious eye and hand irritation, so be sure to wear plastic or rubber gloves while handling hot chilies and do not touch your eyes.

Adding acid as an ingredient to the salsa will help to preserve it. This is done because the natural acidity in the tomatoes may not be high enough to prevent bacteria from growing and making someone sick. Two of the commonly used acids in salsa are vinegar and lemon juice. Lemon juice is more acidic than vinegar, but has less effect on flavor. You should only use vinegar that is at least 5% acid and/or bottled lemon juice. Spices add flavoring to salsa so the amounts of spices and herbs may be altered in recipes. Do not can salsa that does not follow research tested recipes. These tested recipes can be found at your local County Extension Office or on Extension websites. Salsa made by any other method or recipe may be frozen or stored in the refrigerator for a few days.

If you are using an approved recipe, do not thicken salsa with flour or cornstarch before canning. It is important to closely follow recommendations to ensure you have a safe product. If salsa is processed properly, it can be kept on the shelf for up to one year. However, after opening, please use within one week.

If you would like to have more information on canning fruits and vegetables, please contact your local Extension Office.

Chile Salsa (Hot Tomato-Pepper Sauce)

- 5 lbs tomatoes (as purchased)
- 2 lbs chile peppers (as purchased)
- 1 lb onions (as purchased)
- 1 cup vinegar (5 percent)
- 3 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- Yield 6 to 8 pints

Caution: Wear plastic or rubber gloves and do not touch your face while handling or cutting hot peppers. If you do not wear gloves, wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before touching your face or eyes.

Peel and prepare chile peppers as described in making Mexican Tomato Sauce. Wash tomatoes and dip in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds or until skins split. Dip in cold water, slip off skins, and remove cores. Coarsely chop tomatoes and combine chopped peppers, onions, and remaining ingredients in a large saucepan. Heat to boil, and simmer 10 minutes. Fill jars, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Adjust lids and process according to the recommendations in Table 1.

Table 1. Recommended process time for Chile Salsa in a boiling-water canner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style of Pack</th>
<th>Jar Size</th>
<th>0 - 1,000 ft</th>
<th>1,001 - 6,000 ft</th>
<th>Above 6,000 ft</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hot</td>
<td>Pints</td>
<td>15 min</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alabama Cooperative Extension System is committed to affirmative action equal opportunity and the diversity of its workforce. Educational programs of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System serve all people regardless of race, sex, religion, color, national origin, age, disability, protected veteran status, genetic information, or any other classification protected by applicable law.
SYRUP MAKING WORKSHOP

The Alabama Syrup-Maker’s Association will be sponsoring a syrup making workshop September 26, 2015 at 8:00 a.m. at Landmark Park in Dothan, Alabama. Anyone that is interested in making old fashion cane syrup is encouraged to attend. Each segment will be covered with hands-on experience from stripping the cane, cutting the cane, squeezing the cane, filtering the cane juice, cooking the cane juice, and bottling the syrup. Lunch will be provided at no expense to the attendee. Each person will receive a bottle of cane syrup for their labor of love. The fee to attend is $25 for adults and $12 for children 12 and under. To register please call President Earl Stokes at 334-494-3037, Vice President Thomas Moore at 334-806-6769, or Glenn Dickerson at 334-790-9235.

You are invited to...

...a series of free gardening programs sponsored by the Calhoun County Master Gardeners and the Calhoun County Commission. Held the 4th Wednesday of each month at the Cane Creek Community Gardens at McClellan, noon-1pm. Bring your lunch & learn with us!!

August 26th  “Saving Seeds”  Dani Carroll, ACES
Sept. 23rd  “The Edible Landscape”  Hayes Jackson, ACES

Speakers & topics are subject to change. Contact the Extension Office to confirm. 256-237-1621

Anniston Downtown Market
Behind Anniston City Hall, 12th & Moore
Saturdays, 7am-noon
March 28th-Oct 31st
Mgr: Jean Ann Oglesby, 256-624-7172
Find us on Facebook “Anniston Downtown Market”

Jacksonville Farmers Market
On The Square,
Saturdays, 8am-noon (May 2nd-Oct 31st)
Tuesdays, 4pm-6pm (June 6th-Sept 1st)
Mgr: Marisa Preunnger, 256-419-4344
Find us on Facebook “Farmers Market of Jacksonville, AL”

Main Street Market
Downtown Oxford, Thursdays, 3-8pm
Simmons Park (in front of 1st Baptist Church, Oxford)
May 7th-Aug 27th
Mgr: Teresa Crosson, 256-310-2532
Find us on Facebook “Main Street Market”

The Original Farmers Market
1702 Noble Street (behind the County Admin Bldg)
Wednesdays & Saturdays ~ 7am until ?
Contact: David West, 256-237-1621
Find us on Facebook “Calhoun County Farmers Market-Anniston, AL”
MEADOWS & PRAIRIES - A WILDLIFE FRIENDLY ALTERNATIVE TO LAWNS

In the United States, over 24 million acres of lawn surround our homes. As suburban development continues to spread into open and forested land alike, we lose more and more of our native vegetation and wildlife habitat. By replacing all or part of your lawn with native vegetation that provides food and cover, you can create a refuge to attract a variety of wildlife. This not only will provide much-needed habitat, but it also will create an opportunity for you to see and learn about wildlife.

Although lawns can provide benefits, large expanses of lawn displace other diverse natural habitats that most wildlife species find appealing. The lawn, clipped short and consisting of very few species, is a rather hostile, sterile environment for most wildlife, being devoid of food and places to hide or nest. Planting and maintaining a lawn also has time, economic, and environmental costs.

As homeowners become aware of the costs of maintaining lawns, both to people and to wildlife, many are choosing to replace all or part of their lawns with more wildlife- and environment-friendly alternatives.

Before you begin the process of creating a wildlife-friendly environment, consider how much lawn you would like to retain. For instance, do you want to keep part of your back yard as a play area for children and a small patch of lawn in the front? Once you determine the minimum amount of lawn that you need, then you can start to consider how to convert the remaining lawn into a wildlife-friendly environment.

If you have an open, sunny area on your property, you may want to create a meadow or a prairie garden. Both prairies and meadows contain a mixture of native grasses and wildflowers, although prairies generally have a higher percentage of grasses. In addition, prairies usually are dominated by “warm-season” grasses that grow when the soil and weather are warm, whereas meadows have more “cool-season” grasses that grow in the cooler spring and early summer months. But many of the same species can be found in both prairies and meadows, and the two terms are used interchangeably.

There essentially are two types of meadows or prairies: annual and perennial. Annual meadows grow rapidly the first year, providing an abundance of color quickly. This is the type of meadow you encounter when you buy and plant packaged or canned meadow mixes. Some species to avoid are bull thistle, crown vetch, Dame’s rocket; Queen Anne’s lace.

Although more and more homeowners are beginning to realize the environmental, aesthetic, and health benefits of replacing lawns with wildlife-friendly alternatives, “weed” ordinances occasionally can lead to controversy over natural landscaping. These laws, which are usually set by county or local governments, restrict the height or type of plants that may be grown. Recently, many of these laws have been challenged, and in some instances changed, by people who wish to abandon the traditional lawn concept. If you live in an area where most residents still cling to the traditional lawn ideal, you may want to take the following steps to avoid conflicts:

1. Research your local ordinances to find out what local laws are in existence.
2. If there are local laws that may conflict with your goals for your property, apply for a variance.
3. Start with smaller plantings in the backyard, and expand from there.
4. Share your plans with your neighbors, explaining to them the benefits of what you are doing.

Most likely, any objections that you receive will come because your property does not conform to the norm of a manicured lawn. However, some neighbors may discover that they find your alternative more appealing and may subsequently follow your lead.

Taken from www.extension.psu.edu
STEER CLEAR OF ‘TOUCH-ME-NOTS’

Southern summers are the annual itchy time for many folks that enjoy the outdoors. Good outdoorsmen know what to do if a snake is spotted and have plans in place for contact with an unhappy wild animal, but wildlife is only part of the issue to consider when spending time in the great outdoors.

Poison ivy and poison oak are responsible for the old saying, “leaves of three, let them be.” Alabama Extension 4-H Agent Amber Marable has some tips for steering clear of Touch-Me-Not on your next outdoor outing. Marable, whose educational background is in forestry and wildlife sciences, said poison ivy is the most commonly seen and touched plant in the Touch-Me-Not category.

When hiking along forest trails, or working in flowerbeds or in the yard, it’s likely you can come in contact with poison ivy.

“As people are walking along trails they tend to see beautiful green carpets along the forest floor, unfortunately a lot of it is poison ivy,” Marable said. “If you set your gear down in it, you’re likely to get very itchy very soon.”

Poison ivy is more common than the other two touch-me-nots in the state of Alabama. There two key characteristics that can be useful in identifying and staying away from poison ivy:

Poison ivy has three main leaflets that come together at a bright red center. Leaves have jagged edges and sometimes look like gloves or mittens. Poison ivy grows as a vine. It can be anywhere from a tiny vine to a couple of inches in diameter. The vine always has hairy root-like projections coming from the vine, making it look much like a centipede.

“Poison oak is a little more limited in distribution,” Marable said. “You’ll find it in sandy, acidic soils — but it does look very much like poison ivy.” The leaves have more rounded edges than poison ivy and do not grow on a vine, but in a low shrub. Poison oak may be a little harder to recognize and can be confused with fragrant sumac, which is not poisonous.

Marable said poison sumac is different from poison ivy or poison oak. Poison sumac is a shrub, sometimes reaching 15-20 feet tall. Poison sumac leaves have 7-15 leaflets with smooth margins. The leaf stalks are distinctly reddish. Poison sumac is typically restricted to wet sites and swamps.

“Dealing with exposure is relatively easy,” she said. “If you can get to water within the first 10 minutes, you may be able to stop the reaction to the oily compound known as toxicodendrol, which is what causes the rash.”

Toxicodendrol is found in the leaves, roots and stems of Touch-Me-Not. Wash the area with cold water. Cold water will keep pores from opening and allowing more toxicodendrol into your skin. Use soap or baby wipes. Anything with an alcohol base such as rubbing alcohol or hand sanitizer may help as well.

Posted by Katie Nichols on http://news.aces.edu/blog/2015/08/10/steer-clear-touch-nots/
Scouting Hayfields Prevents Damage from Armyworm Invasion

Henry D. Dorough, Regional Extension Agent, Animal Science & Forages

Farmers across the region are already experiencing forage loses due to fall armyworms and they should be scouting hayfields on a regular basis in order to catch an invasion early and avoid significant damage and expensive remedies.

Typically a problem in dry years, the fall armyworm can begin to infest the area in July and become a widespread problem in August and September. Fall armyworms feed on a variety of forages but prefer lush, green, well-fertilized bermudagrass. Fall armyworms are typically most active early in the morning, late in the afternoon or in early evening making these ideal times to scout fields.

For some farmers, fall armyworm damage seems to appear “overnight” when in fact, they have actually been in the field for several days going unnoticed. The best time to find them is when they are small, allowing plenty of time to make the best management decision simply because young armyworms don’t eat much. Almost all the damage is caused by the oldest caterpillars which eat more than all the other ages put together. Therefore, an infestation may have been present but not detected because of the small size of the caterpillars.

Scouting is a very simple process that involves only a few minutes every few days, can help prevent economic damage and allow for the use of less costly, targeted pesticide applications, or possibly avoid spraying altogether and simply harvest the hay without incurring significant loss.

A sweep net is the best tool to scout for fall armyworms early in the morning or late afternoon while they are small. Three or more caterpillars per square foot will require some action to prevent economic damage.

If a damaging population of small caterpillars is discovered, there will be time to make sound management decisions. If the hayfield is nearing harvest, the best option would be to go ahead and cut it. If the armyworms are still small, their continued feeding will hardly be noticed. If the hay is too short to harvest, there are several relatively inexpensive pesticide options available to prevent a lost hay crop.

Recent meetings held in Marshall, Jefferson and Calhoun Counties focused on the fall armyworm, how to scout and management alternatives to consider if they are discovered. A few farmers were presented with sweep nets to use and report back to the Extension office if armyworms were found in their fields. As a result, those farmers, through persistent scouting efforts were able to save valuable hay production by finding small armyworms early and taking timely action. Unlike those times when some farmers discover large brown patches in their hayfield from extensive armyworm feeding, these proactive farmers were able to utilize cost effective strategies to stop armyworms in their tracks and put valuable hay in their barns.

Valuable resources on fall armyworm can be found at www.alabamaforages.com including a fact sheet and video on how to use a sweep net, facts about fall armyworm, pesticide options for control of fall armyworm and an interactive map tracking armyworm movement by county across the State of Alabama. From the main page, click on Forage Management, then Pest Management and then Insect Control.

The Fall Armyworm Watch Map is a valuable tool every farmer needs to bookmark and check on a regular basis throughout the summer to be aware of fall armyworm outbreaks in their region. Being proactive by keeping track of armyworm movement across the state and routine scouting will save money usually spent on more expensive pesticide applications and more importantly, allow farmers to put much needed hay in the barn.

The Alabama Forages webpage also provides a wealth of other information related to forage production in Alabama.

For more information on fall armyworm, contact your county Extension office or email me at dorouhd@auburn.edu.
VENDOR SPACES AVAILABLE

Saturday, September 19, 2015 ~ 9am-2pm
Cane Creek Gardens @ McClellan
Cost $20 per space

- Limited number of spaces are available, and will be on a first come, first served basis.
- Spaces are 10x10 and are NOT under cover.
- You will need to furnish your own table, chairs, tent, etc.
- No electricity or meals are furnished.
- Gates open at 7am, you must be set up and ready to sell by 8:30am. Gates close at 2pm.
- Come by the Extension Office, 1702 Noble, Suite 108, to reserve your space. For more info, call 256-237-1621.