

Landscape...from Page 1A

opened the day's events with a warm welcome, followed

by more words of welcome from Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris and GMREC Superintendent Ray Covington.

Agronomist Ray Dorsey of GDOT spoke on the department's use of wildflowers along stretches of interstate, and how similar ideas can be employed in home landscaping.

"Gardening and aesthetics just make people feel better, if nothing else," said Dorsey. "When you're riding down the road, that's why we plant wildflowers. It gives that soothing, aesthetic look. If you've had a bad day at the office, you're riding home, you get to see those flowers and it kind of perks you up a little bit."

Heather Alley, a horticulturist associated with the Georgia Plant Conservation Alliance, spoke about native perennial propagation, and gave a small presentation on Monarch butterflies and native milkweeds.

Brad Davis, who teaches at the University of Georgia as a landscape architect, showed people how to cultivate native plants and grasses to make their yards look intentional yet bold, all while shunning the widespread use of mulch as a landscaping feature.

The seminar featured a lunch and several breaks, during which attendees perused the choice selection of vendors invited to the show, and the day's events ended with a

Q&A session followed by the giving out of door prizes.

Last year, Joe and Margaret Kennard attended the Landscape Seminar for their first time, and they were so impressed with what they saw that they decided to join the club, bringing its enrollment totals to 13.

And that's not far off from the group's original roster numbers.

"The garden club was formed in 1940 in Union County with 11 women," said Litton. "We have 13 members now, 11 women and two men."

"It's open membership for anybody who wants to join. We've invited people today who are interested in joining to come forward, and we have articles in the paper from time to time."

Eleanor Exley has attended multiple Blairsville Garden Club Landscape Seminars over the years, and though she's not a club member, she is a Hall County Master Gardener, and as such fully appreciates everything the garden club does.

"Gardening is good for your soul," said Exley, who splits her time between Blairsville and Gainesville. "I feel like, if I don't get my hands in the dirt every now and then, I'm not living well."

Added Exley: "Certainly in this area, the garden centers, the nurseries, the people are so knowledgeable and so willing to share their knowledge with you."

The following vendors were invited to the seminar:

Chattahoochee Nature Center – Roswell, David's Handy Work Draped Pottery, GDOT, Glen Henderson



Earthworm castings sold by Blairsville's own Sandy Asbill of Sangrit Enterprises.



GDOT Landscape Architect Chris DeGrace with Heather Alley of the Georgia Plant Conservation Alliance.

Honey, Hidden Creek Farms, Litton Landscaping Inc., Bob & Carole Maddox Handcraft Wood, Nelson Ace Garden Center, Sangrit Enterprises, Stoneware Pottery by Chris, Tower Gardens with Deborah Raleigh.

Financial support for the seminar included the GDOT Wildflower Program, the Blairsville Garden Club, Ray Anderson Foundation, Litton Landscaping and Logan Turnpike Mill.

Health Fair...from Page 1A

"We want to promote health and wellness," said Julia Barnett, Chief Nursing Officer for Union General Hospital. "We know that there are a lot of people out there who can't afford to get these screenings. Or maybe they don't even know what's available in our community."

"The Health Fair is a nice way for us to be able to provide some free things for them in hopes that, the earlier you catch things, the bigger benefit to be able to treat those earlier, as opposed to waiting until it's catastrophic."

All in all, the Health Fair will be instantly recognizable by anyone who has attended in recent years, and for those who haven't, just look for the people in the purple shirts.

Dozens of hospital volunteers wearing those purple shirts will be educating those in attendance about the services available at the hospital, and will give tours of the hospital's wound care clinic and other departments.

"Lots of our physicians will be here," said Barnett. "Of course, we'll be providing lots of free screenings."

"Northeast Georgia will be here again this year doing free carotid screenings to check for blockages to see if you need further testing. That's a really nice service."

Barnett said area residents will also get the chance to meet the hospital's new ear, nose and throat physician, Dr. Carl Nechtman, who will be there Saturday with his staff, providing free hearing screenings.

It is recommended that people getting lab work not eat for 12 hours prior to having blood drawn for the tests, after which a small breakfast will be available.

A comprehensive lab panel will cost \$30, and there are two additional blood tests available for \$10 each, the hemoglobin A1C for diabetics and the prostate specific antigen test.

As in years past, the \$30 comprehensive lab panel should include: checking levels of glucose, creatinine, electrolytes, total protein, albumin, alkaline phosphatase, AST/ALT, calcium, total bilirubin; a BUN test to monitor kidney function; a lipid screening for total cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, triglycerides, LDL calculation; TSH, which will check thyroid function; and offer a CBC, or complete blood count.

As reported previously, this lab work outside of the Health Fair typically goes for more than \$450, which is a savings of more than \$400 should someone choose to undergo all of the available lab work on Saturday.

And that's just the lab work – people utilizing the Health Fair for all of the free tests will be saving many hundreds of dollars more, as each free test Saturday would normally have its own cost and/or copay or office visit fee.

People looking to take advantage of the free bone density scans will need to call (706) 439-6429 to schedule an appointment for Saturday.

The hospital will also be offering CPR training again this year, through Air Methods and

Union General EMS.

There is no residency requirement to attend the Health Fair, and all are welcome to attend.

"We want the community to know that we are here to support them, to hopefully offer what they need to be able to stay healthy," said Barnett. "That's what our hospital stands for."

"We're a not-for-profit hospital, and the money that we make goes back into services for our community and into our hospital for equipment or whatever else that we need to be able to better take care of people so they don't have to go somewhere else."

Chatuge Regional Hospital in Towns County, which is part of Union General Hospital Inc., will be hosting a Health Fair of its own on May 13 in Hiawassee.



An image from the 2016 Health Fair at Union General Hospital.