

FFA...from Page 1A

a person.”
 Added Rayfield, speaking on FFA and 4-H: “Those programs are probably some of the best programs I’ve ever been a part of. They help you develop your personal skills and leadership skills, and I think those are very important values to have.”

“Mr. (Timothy) Jennings, Mr. (Ryan) Talton and Mr. (Chris) Crump, they all teach us to do our best and put in the time and work with these projects, so they can be the best and we can compete at a high level.”

Timothy Jennings is the University of Georgia Extension Agent and 4-H Coordinator for Union County, and Chris Crump is the high school agriculture teacher.

Showing swine were: Trey Bradley, Wyatt Holland,



Photo by Shawn Jarrard
FFA members Hannah von Hof and Travis Kerr with their show swine.

Hannah von Hof, Travis Kerr, Joanna Martin and Tanner McGee.

Showing heifers were: Logan Anderson, Denver Bradley, Preston Dyer, Camer-

on Elliott, Colby Elliott, Tanner Smith and Luci Talton.

Showing steers were: Champ Collins, Brianna Hemphill, Bailey Rayfield and Sara Talton.



Photo by Shawn Jarrard
Students and their show steers/heifers behind the scenes of the Union County Schools Agriculture Center.

Blue Ridge Mountain Cattlemen to meet February 27

The Blue Ridge Mountain Cattlemen will meet Tuesday, February 27th, 6 p.m., at the UGA Mountain Research and Education Center, 195 Georgia Mountain Experiment Station Road, Blairsville, GA. United Community Bank is the sponsor of the dinner meeting.

Dr. Levi Russell, University of Georgia, Assistant Professor, Agriculture and Applied Economics, College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, will discuss the cattle cycle, cow/calf and

stocker budgets and the 2018 market. Russell works on interdisciplinary teams examining production, management, marketing, and policy issues relevant to Georgia producers, as well as conducting his own research into the economics of regulation in the livestock and poultry industries.

If you are involved in the beef cattle industry and would like to attend this dinner meeting of the Blue Ridge Mountain Cattlemen’s Association, contact Ryan Talton atrtalton@ucschools.org by

noon on February 26th.

Members of the Blue Ridge Mountain Cattlemen’s Association reside in Towns, Union and Fannin counties in GA and Clay and Cherokee counties in North Carolina. The chapter is affiliated with the Georgia and National Cattlemen’s Association and promotes conservation, improved land and cattle management, and cattle health. Such practices ultimately improve the consumer’s beef experience with a focus on quality, value, and nutrition. NT(Feb21,A2)SH

March Garden Chores from your Master Gardener Extension Volunteers

Start vegetable and summer annual seeds indoors. Your seedlings will be ready to transplant into your garden after the soil temperature warms up in six to eight weeks.

Start planting cool season vegetables in late March – carrots, radishes, lettuce, collards, English peas, spinach, and beets. Warm season vegetables like tomatoes, peppers, corn and okra should be planted after the soil temperature warms up and the danger of frost has passed.

Complete all major pruning by mid-March. Maple trees bleed sap when pruned now, it’s better to wait until late April. Do not prune spring flowering shrubs like forsythia and quince until after they have bloomed or you will not get any blooms this year.

Fertilize trees and shrubs following label instructions in March and follow with an application in early May and early June.

Planting the same vegetables in the same spot in your garden year after year can lead to an accumulation of insects and or diseases in your soil. To avoid this problem, rotate your crops.

Prune crape myrtles if needed, removing any suckers, cross branches and dead branches. Prune roses before buds break. Divide overgrown hostas and daylilies as needed when you see the leaves unfurling above ground.

Have your garden soil tested. Your County Extension Agent has soil test bags and instructions. If your soil test

indicates that you need to add lime, it needs to be added two to three months prior to planting your garden.

Rejuvenate the pansies you planted last fall by fertilizing them with a water-soluble fertilizer as the temperature warms up.

English Ivy can be very invasive. Good ground-cover substitutes include ajuga, mondo grass and creeping raspberry.

Dig up the new flowerbeds you plan to plant this spring when the soil is not soggy and mix in plenty of organic matter.

Set your lawnmower blade on its highest setting and cut back liriopse before new growth begins, being careful not to damage the crown of the plant.

Avoid mixing freshly cut daffodils with other flowers in arrangements. They produce a chemical that injures blooms. Place daffodils in another container for a day after cutting, then rinse the stems before arranging.

Cut back your butterfly bush to half the size you want it to become this summer.

Plant bare-root roses. Sharpen or replace lawn mower blades if you have not already done so.

Spring bulbs should be fertilized as flowers fade. Remove foliage only after it begins to fade.

Fertilize spring bulbs with a 10-10-10 fertilizer (one pound of fertilizer per 100 square feet of flowerbed). To control weeds in your garden,

apply a two to three inch layer of mulch.

Pull mulch at least six inches away from tree trunks to prevent soggy conditions and possible disease or insect damage.

Sprinkle crushed eggshells around plants susceptible to slugs and snails, especially hostas.

Lift stepping stones that have sunk below grass level, spread sand in the low area and replace the stepping stone.

Be on the lookout for summer bulbs at your favorite garden center. For better selection, buy them when they become available but do not plant them until late April or early May.

Clean leaves and other debris from ponds and water features. Repot root bound houseplants before moving them outdoors in warm weather and begin fertilizing them at half the recommended strength.

Put out hummingbird feeders. Plant clematis and other vines.

Prune evergreen shrubs back to a manageable size before new growth starts.

If you want flowers on your cactus, plant it in a small pot. Most cactuses bloom sooner if rootbound.

Plant broadleaf evergreens. Purchase azaleas when they are in bloom so you will be sure of the color you are buying.

Jo Anne Allen
 Master Gardener
 Extension Volunteer
 706-400-8139

NT(Feb21,Z8)CA

Art contest to benefit Hamilton Gardens

Hamilton Gardens invites you to submit your two dimensional art in their “As Our Gardens Grow” art contest. This contest will benefit Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge, Inc. and is the forerunner to A Blooming Affair at Hamilton Gardens. On April 14 and for several weekends following, there will be plant sales and various activities to celebrate the beauty of the Gardens and share with the community what is happening as our gardens grow.

Artists are encouraged to

include one or several botanical elements in a creative yet realistic piece. The image size must be no smaller than 11” x 14” in oil, acrylic, watercolor, mixed media or drawing. Cash prizes will be awarded to the first, second, and third place winners with amounts to be announced later. The deadline to enter your art will be April 20th.

Our friends at Artworks in Hiawassee will be displaying all of the entries beginning April 23rd. ArtWorks Gallery is owned and operated by the Mountain Regional Arts and

Crafts Guild, Inc. a 501c-3 organization, where members may sell their work and share their expertise with students on a regular basis by teaching classes. Artists participating in Hamilton Gardens’ Art Contest, with the exception of the winner, may have their art entries available for sale while the exhibition is open at Artworks. A complete set of rules and guidelines and an entry form are available at hamiltongardens.org . You may also call (706)970-0011 for more information. NT(Feb21,A1)SH