

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Fire Prevention Week Theme

The National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®), the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week for more than 100 years - has announced "Cooking safety starts with YOU! Pay attention to fire prevention" as the theme for Fire Prevention Week, October 8-14, 2023.



RC&D
Frank Riley
Executive Director

This year's focus on cooking safety works to educate the public about simple but important steps they can take to help reduce the risk of fire when cooking at home, keeping themselves and those around them safe.

According to NFPA, cooking is the leading cause of home fires, with nearly half (49 percent) of all home fires involving cooking equipment; cooking is also the leading cause of home fire injuries. Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home cooking fires and related deaths. In addition, NFPA data shows that cooking is the only major cause of fire that resulted in more fires and fire deaths in 2014-2018 than in 1980-1984. These numbers tell us that more public awareness is needed around when and where cooking hazards exist, along with ways to prevent them, and this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign will work to promote tips, guidelines, and recommendations that can help significantly reduce the risk of having a cooking fire.

Following are cooking safety messages that support this year's theme, "Cooking safety starts with YOU! Pay attention to fire prevention":

Always keep a close eye on what you're cooking. For foods with longer cook times, such as those that are simmering or baking, set a timer to help monitor them carefully.

Clear the cooking area of combustible items and keep anything that can burn, such as dish towels, oven mitts, food packaging, and paper towels.

Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove. Keep a lid nearby when cooking. If a small grease fire starts, slide the lid over the pan and turn off the burner.

Create a "kid and pet free zone" of at least three feet (one meter) around the cooking area and anywhere else hot food or drink is prepared or carried. Staying in the kitchen, using a timer, and avoiding distractions that remove your focus from what's on the stove are among the key messages for this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign.

Fire Prevention Week is celebrated throughout North America every October, and is the oldest public health observance on record in the U.S. Entering its 101st year, Fire Prevention Week works to educate people about the leading risks to home fires and ways they can better protect themselves and their loved ones. Local fire departments, schools, and community organizations play a key role in bringing Fire Prevention Week to life in their communities each year and spreading basic but critical fire safety messages.

This theme also reinforces the critical importance of developing a home escape plan with all members of the household and practicing it regularly. In a fire, mere seconds can mean the difference between a safe escape and a tragedy. Fire safety education isn't just for school children. Teenagers, adults, and the elderly are also at risk in fires, making it important for every member of the community to take some time every October during Fire Prevention Week to make sure they understand how to stay safe in case of a fire.

In addition, this October represents the 101st anniversary of Fire Prevention Week, the nation's longest-running public health observance on record. Since 1922, the NFPA has sponsored the public observance of Fire Prevention Week. In 1925, President Calvin Coolidge proclaimed Fire Prevention Week a national observance, making it the longest-running public health observance in our country. During Fire Prevention Week, children, adults, and teachers learn how to stay safe in case of a fire. Firefighters provide lifesaving public education in an effort to drastically decrease casualties caused by fires.

Fire Prevention Week is observed each year during the week of October 9th in commemoration of the Great Chicago Fire, which began on October 8, 1871, and caused devastating damage. This horrific conflagration killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures, and burned more than 2,000 acres of land.

On October 8, 1871, the Peshtigo Fire swept through northeast Wisconsin. The Peshtigo Fire is the most devastating forest fire in American history, claiming 1,200 lives and scorched 1.2 million acres. The damage estimate was at \$169 million for the time, which would equate to over 38 billion dollars in 2023."

To learn more about Fire Prevention Week and this year's theme, "Cooking safety starts with YOU! Pay attention to fire prevention," visit www.fpw.org or contact Chattahoochee RC&D at info.crcrd@gmail.com.

Letters To The Editor

Remember When?

Dear Editor,

When you're talking to someone from Generation X, or younger, and you begin a sentence with "I remember," be prepared for rolling eyes and a complete disconnect. But, in fairness, you can't really appreciate the past unless you've lived it. One should never try and live in the past, but some of the things we put up with today are ridiculous.

I remember calling the doctor, drugstore, restaurant, or whoever, and a real person would answer and help me. Today, it's "please listen closely as our menu options have changed." Selecting the number you deem appropriate is useless because they're away from their phone or on another line. Really!! Most calls today related to anything and everything are sent to some other country where they don't speak my language and I surely don't speak theirs.

Here's another change. Just a few years ago, it was embarrassing to receive welfare assistance. Today, jobs go unfilled because so much "free stuff" is available for those who choose not to support themselves. Please understand that I'm not referring to someone who is physically unable to work.

And, let's not forget about working from home. In most cases, productivity suffers beyond the pale. For me and my family, a dream catcher was a second or a third job, however many it took to provide for us or to catch our dream. Oh well, I'd better hush for now before someone starts rolling their eyes.

Gene Vickers



My Corona

"When you gonna get to me, g-get to me - Is it just a matter of time Corona?" From the song "My Corona" by Chris Mann

I was loaded up for a trip to the tropics (south Georgia) to see my brother. Tracey had a case of the sniffles. "I'm fine. You go ahead and go." She felt warm to me; too warm. "I don't have a fever!" Her temperature was over 102.

"It's just a sinus infection." We gave her Tylenol, and the fever came down a bit but persisted to the next day. I began to look for those Covid-19 tests leftover from the pandemic. Still haven't found them. One drugstore was out and didn't know when they would have more. The other two drugstores in town were closed. A kind neighbor gave us a test kit, and it showed a positive result. We repeated the test to be sure.

At this point, I'm happy to report that our much-maligned and heavily burdened healthcare system worked, and it worked very well. We logged into our medical provider on a Friday at about 3:30 PM and requested an online consultation. We were talking to a doctor within 15 minutes, and I had a course of Paxlovid in hand within an hour, thanks to the tired and overworked but devoted and kind pharmacist in town. I can't mention the name of the pharmacy, but you drive past it on Main Street every day.

Let me tell you, that stuff works. It leaves a taste in your mouth that's a cross between quinine and wood ashes, but it works. Tracey's fever was gone by the next morning, and within two more days, she was feeling almost normal.

I was just about to congratulate my immune system on keeping me from harm when I noticed a burning in my eyes. At first, I wrote it off as having used a bee smoker working with the hives, but it persisted, day and night for two days while my antibodies did battle on my behalf. Then on the third day, the runny nose and sneezing started, and I had a low-grade fever. After almost 3 years of precaution and dread, fear and hype, and vaccinations, my Corona had finally arrived.

And I'm here to tell the story. The current mutation is for most of us akin to a bad summertime cold but with a fever. For others, it's more like a case of the flu.

Yes, it will kill some people. Colds and flu will do the same. Like many of us, we also lost family to Covid during the pandemic. Or perhaps it was the flu, the result is the same. The point is when we take a hard look at the numbers, there are curiosities to consider.

According to the CDC, in the 2019-2020 flu season, there were up to 56 million cases of flu. During the pandemic, there were 9 million cases but over 35 million cases of Covid. What happened to all the flu?

Thus far in the US, Covid has been associated with over 1.1 million deaths in just under 4 years for an "average" of about a quarter of a million deaths per year, but more at the height of the pandemic. Compare that to cardiovascular disease, which kills about 875 thousand in the US every year. A third of Covid deaths were among people 85 and older. Ninety-two percent of the deaths were among people 65 and older. According to some number crunchers, the majority of death occurred among people who had approached or exceeded the average life expectancy in the US.

So Covid, like many diseases, culls the herd. It targets the elderly and the unhealthy and the otherwise healthy who have certain genetic traits that are not as yet thoroughly understood. For the vast majority of people, it will pass like any annoying cold or flu. For a few, it will be a death sentence or leave behind chronic health problems.

Covid is most assuredly something to avoid. It calls for common sense precautions, even vaccinations if your doctor recommends it. In my own experience so far, Real Doctor is 4-1-0 while Dr. Internet is 0-1-4 when it comes to advice on how to stay healthy during a pandemic. Your Real Doctor is where you need to get the information you need to act upon, not from the networks, pixel pushers, friends and neighbors, newspaper articles, or even the government.

Whenever the government gets involved, the cure is often worse than the disease. We're coming into an election year as well, and these partisans will do anything to gain or retain power. The last thing we need going into the fall and winter is a fearful public conditioned by the never-ending onslaught of breaking news and permanent emergency. The next-to-last thing we need is the other half of the public who thinks the whole thing is a conspiracy and refuses to take any precautions whatsoever in some kind of misguided political gesture.

Yes, the 'rona is among us and on the hunt again. Stay calm. Use the common sense. If you feel sick, stay home. There is no reason to fear it, but if you don't respect it, you may soon come to regret that decision.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO:

Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor
P.O. Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546
Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net

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Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.

Lawn Planting

Tall Fescue is the type of grass that I recommend the most often for lawns here. However, it is a cool season perennial. That means that its management is going to be different from warm season perennials like bermudagrass or St. Augustine grass. Let's talk about seeding tall fescue for a lawn because we are approaching the time of year when it's appropriate to seed it.



UGA extension
LAWNS
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams

Tall fescue is a perennial grass, meaning that you don't need to reseed your lawn with it every year. However, if you seeded tall fescue in the spring you will most likely need to reseed it. Because tall fescue is a cool season grass, it doesn't like the heat. If it's not well established,

the summer heat will kill it. That's why I recommend planting it in mid-September. Planting in mid-September will give it time to establish throughout the fall and spring before going through the heat of July and August.

There are a number of varieties of tall fescue available. Usually when you buy a bag of tall fescue seed it will have several different varieties in that bag. This is a good thing because the different strengths and weaknesses of each variety are able to cover for each other. Kentucky 31 variety is the old standard for tall fescue. However, there are many new hybrids, which are much better for lawns.

One of the reasons that I like tall fescue for our area is that it has some of the best shade tolerance. With the amount of trees that we have, shade is often a limiting factor to plant growth. Creeping red fescue is actually a different species from tall fescue but it has even better shade tolerance than tall fescue. These grasses will still struggle in deep shade. What they have is a tolerance of shade, meaning they still prefer full sun, but can take some shade.

When planting tall fescue it is important to prepare the soil first. Taking a soil test and bringing it to your County Extension Office (67 Lakeview Circle Hiawassee or 165 Wellborn St Blairsville) will give you a lot of information about your soil. You'll get fertilizer recommendations and lime recommendations specific to your soil for a soil test.

Before planting till and incorporate all the lime and fertilizer that is recommended on your soil test. Incorporate the lime and fertilizer into the top 3 to 4 inches, or deeper if possible, of the soil. Ideally, you want to seed 5-6 pounds of seed per 1000 ft2. After seeding rake the seed into the top quarter inch of the soil with a hard rake. If the seed goes too deep, it will struggle to germinate. Apply straw mulch on top of the soil. This will help to conserve moisture in the soil and keep your seed from being washed away. Ideally, you want to keep the top 2 inches of soil moist, but not wet for the first 3 weeks. After that just water once a week if there is no rainfall.

Start out cutting tall fescue at 2 inches as the grass matures you can raise the height to 2.5 to 3 inches. In areas of shade, it's better to let the grass grow a little taller to give it a better chance to compete with weeds.

If you have questions about a tall fescue lawn contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

"Push Forward"

The Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashanah) begins on the evening of Friday, September 15th. While it is a Jewish holiday, it actually commemorates the anniversary of the creation of the first man and woman, Adam, and Eve. So, this is a good time to examine one's thoughts, speech, and actions over the past year to see if any of them fall short of one's best self, and then to resolve to do better in the coming year. It's hard to imagine anyone who wouldn't benefit from such an exercise.

The process of self-examination and the commitment to do better is known in Hebrew as "Teshuvah," a concept similar to "Repentance." The word actually means "return," as in returning to the right path. The prototype for repentance occurs in the aftermath of Cain's brutal slaying of his brother Abel and can be found in the Book of Genesis (4:3-17).

While not a hero by any stretch of the imagination, Cain did ultimately acknowledge to G-d, "My sin is too great to bear." Second, Cain was sent by G-d to "dwell in the land of the wanderers." The sages of the Torah teach that solitude generates a spirit of humility within a person, aiding him in his soul-searching. Third, Cain understood he could never undo his mistake and could not bring his brother back to life, but that didn't deter him. Rather, he used his sin as an impetus to build an entire city, rather than wallow in depression. He knew he would have to actively repent for the rest of his life, but at least he could repair in some measure the world that he damaged.

Sin breeds depression, and depression breeds sin. Nobody is exempt from this cycle. The question is what to do after the sin.

Initially, Cain played dumb with G-d by asking the infamous question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" But once he admitted his guilt and set out to repent, he was able to successfully dedicate his life to something greater than himself. So even if one is responsible for terrible mistakes and disastrous consequences, one must strive to make a positive difference in the world. The lesson from Cain is that no matter what happened, or because of what happened, one must push forward.

Repentance in Judaism is focused on restoring one's connection and relationship with the Almighty. It is not based on the mere desire for self-improvement, but on finding the best way to serve the Creator. Committing oneself to a relationship with G-d will ensure that the resolution to be a servant of G-d will endure.

I would love to hear your thoughts on this week's column. Please email me at yonatan@chabadruralgeorgia.com.
Wishing you G-d's abundant blessings,
Rabbi Yonatan Hamburger



Echos from Sinai
"Torah for Everyone"
Rabbi Yonatan Hamburger

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Phone: (706) 896-4454 **Fax:** (706) 896-1745 **Email:** tcherald@windstream.net
Or mail to: PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546