

# Annual Report to the People

2008 – 2009

## Home & Garden Information Center

Clemson, SC 29634  
Toll-free: 1-888-656-9988

Monday – Friday  
From 9AM to 1PM

[www.clemson.edu/hgic](http://www.clemson.edu/hgic)

## Mission & Policy Statement

To provide South Carolina residents with a source of accurate, dependable and unbiased information via a toll-free number (1-888-656-9988) and a comprehensive website ([www.clemson.edu/hgic](http://www.clemson.edu/hgic)). This service is designed to complement the network of county Extension agents, Ag assistants and volunteer Master Gardeners by freeing the county agents to deal with commercial agriculture and horticulture questions, and to conduct programming for larger audiences. The HGIC provides over 570 fact sheets on horticulture, pests, food safety and nutrition for distribution to SC residents. The HGIC is staffed with highly qualified, degreed experts in horticulture, food safety and nutrition.

## Award-Winning Website



The HGIC was awarded the 2009 South Carolina Association of County Agricultural Agents (SCACAA) 1<sup>st</sup> Place Website Award.

The information found on the HGIC website is written specifically for SC residents but is applicable to much of the southeast. The HGIC website received **6,356,862 visits** last year with over **32,000,000 hits** from people in **over 220 countries**.

The site has several sections, including Fact Sheets, Hot Topics, Test Your Knowledge, Videos, and South Carolina Updates.

## Fact Sheets

**Thirty-three new fact sheets** were written for a total of 577 fact sheets. In addition, 137 photos were processed, edited and added to 48 new and existing fact sheets. Updated pesticide recommendations were added to 15 fact sheets. Topics of these fact sheets range from landscaping, indoor plants, and vegetable gardening to food safety and nutrition.

### Award-Winning Fact Sheets

- HGIC 1327, *Basil*, SCACAA 1<sup>st</sup> Place Publication Award
- HGIC 2318, *Cogongrass*, SCACAA 1<sup>st</sup> Place Fact Sheet Award
- HGIC 2316, *Bahia*grass, SCACAA 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Publication Award



# Award-Winning Website (continued)

## Hot Topics

Each month timely topics are featured in this section of the website. This **proactive approach keeps the residents of South Carolina informed** on topics that are frequently asked about by clients. The plant topics range from proper plant care to a wide range of insect and disease problems. The food safety and nutrition topics are geared toward helping citizens make wise food choices, safely prepare and preserve food, and maintain an overall healthier lifestyle.

### Award-Winning Hot Topics

*Harvesting & Curing Gourds*, SCACAA 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Fact Sheet Award

*Leaves Turning Black?*, SCACAA 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Fact Sheet Award

#### Don't Let Your Thanksgiving Turkey Make You Sick!

Pamela Schmutz  
Home & Garden Information Center

This Thanksgiving, even if your turkey has a pop-up thermometer, take your turkey's temperature to make sure eating turkey won't make you sick. The one weapon in your kitchen arsenal that can best keep you from getting a foodborne illness after your Thanksgiving meal, is a food thermometer. Measure the internal temperature of your turkey, stuffing and casseroles to be sure they are safely cooked. Turkey is safely cooked when the internal temperature is at least 165 °F. The only way to check this is to use a thermometer by inserting the probe of the thigh and wing as well as in the tip bone. It is perfectly safe to cook the way you like it. Also, cook stuffing and turkey, see HGIC 3560, *How to Cook* your family safe at the Thanksgiving



### Test Your Knowledge



- A. A crazy quilt
- B. Elm mosaic
- C. Chinese elm bark
- D. Bark rust
- E. Orange cork split

## Test Your Knowledge

Each month a new "Test Your Knowledge" quiz is added to the website. These quizzes are **a fun way to engage the citizens** of South Carolina in learning more about the world around them.

The quiz features a photograph of plants, insects or diseases to identify with a list of multiple choice answers. Once the correct answer is selected, the client is taken to a web page with detailed information about the subject.

## Web Videos

The HGIC staff produced **14 high definition web videos**. These videos are available through the HGIC website ([www.clemson.edu/hgic](http://www.clemson.edu/hgic)), YouTube, and iTunesU. These videos cover the cultural needs of trees, shrubs, annuals and perennials, as well as managing disease and insect problems.

## Drought Updates

To keep South Carolina residents up to date with the drought situation, updates are provided on a weekly basis from April to November using data from the USDA-NASS South Carolina Field Office.

## Food Recalls

These updates provide easy access for South Carolina residents to know which food recalls could affect them. Approximately 77 food recalls were posted in the 2008-2009 fiscal year.





# Consumer Impacts



## Training Master Gardeners

The HGIC staff organized and taught classes for Master Gardeners.

At the end of the year, the Pickens County Master Gardeners participated in hands-on training in which they had the opportunity to put their knowledge to work by identifying various plant samples and solving consumer horticulture landscape problems.

A basic plant pathology course was presented to the Richland and Lexington county Master Gardeners via Adobe Connect. This class helped prepare Master Gardeners to accurately

## Investing in Our Future

Seminars were given to Clemson University horticulture students. These seminars gave students an opportunity to ask questions about Clemson Extension and the work that is involved on a day-to-day basis. We also reviewed several real-world examples of questions clients ask. Afterwards, students were asked to participate in role

playing, in which they were the Extension agent evaluating the situation to give the client an answer to the problem.



## Sunbelt Ag Expo 2008

The Clemson Cooperative Extension Service highlighted horticulture at the 2008 Sunbelt Ag Expo in Moultrie, GA, held October 13-16. The HGIC attended and organized a project to involve adults and children in horticulture. Materials to “Pot up a Pansy” to take home were donated from four companies. With this project, **children and adults were able to get hands-on experience with plants** and take one home to watch it grow. The Sunbelt Ag Expo averages **over 100,000 attendees** in a 3-day period.



## SC Botanical Garden's (SCBG) Garden Fest: Building Communities, Growing Vegetables

In response to SC resident's ever-increasing interest in growing vegetables and obtaining locally grown produce, the SCBG held a Garden Fest to help answer their questions and make their efforts more rewarding. Two HGIC staff members manned the Keeping Things Growing information center.

# Consumer Impacts



## Home Lawn Care IPM (Integrated Pest Management)

In February 2009, a *Home Lawn IPM* workshop was held for residents in Greenville County, SC. Many in attendance were Clemson Extension Master Gardeners, who volunteer their time assisting homeowners with lawn care and problem solving.

The importance of proper turfgrass maintenance (i.e. mowing technique, fertilization, and irrigation) and correct pest identification were discussed. Cultural control measures were encouraged to prevent turf problems with pesticide recommendations being a last choice, and only after there was a good understanding of safe application, not only for the safety of homeowners and their families, but also for their neighbors and the environment.

**All of the attendees said they learned useful information to aid them in making home lawn care recommendations.** Ninety per cent (90%) said that they learned to solve home lawn care problems with the use of fewer pesticides.

### Award-Winning Notebook

*Home Lawn Care IPM*, SCACAA 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Learning Module Award

## Phone Calls and Mailings

The HGIC received **24,110 calls** through our toll-free lines. 13,576 calls came through between the hours of 9 AM and 1 PM. Of those, 7,385 calls were answered by a horticulture or food safety specialist.

In addition, **2,251 fact sheets**, **264 educational documents** and **222 user's guides** were **mailed** to South Carolina citizens last year.

## USDA-CSREES Grant

A USDA-CSREES (now the USDA-NIFA) grant was awarded to fund two future Home Lawn IPM workshops in 2010.

## Pesticide Recommendations

The HGIC assisted the Clemson Plant Problem Clinic with 30 insect pest control recommendations for residential landscape problems. These replies included relevant information on the life cycle of the insect pest, and cultural and chemical pest control measures.

## Food Safety

Food Safety information was provided for community outreach activities in the Upstate region including at a retirement center and a local high school.

To provide accurate canner testing in the counties, the staff evaluated the need for updated testing equipment and developed a form to report results to consumers.





# Commercial Impacts

## Southeast Greenhouse Conference

Staff participated in the Southeast Greenhouse Conference in Greenville, SC.

A staff member served as a panelist in the Vegetable: Cultivars, Uses and Marketing session. Information was provided to the greenhouse grower audience about what new and experienced gardeners are looking for in vegetable gardening today.

Two sessions of a hands-on disease identification workshop were conducted. Participants used microscopes to identify common diseases occurring on greenhouse crops.



## Environmental Landscape Certification (ELC)

With a grant from the South Carolina Landscape & Turfgrass Association (SCLTA), the HGIC staff revised and expanded the Environmental Landscape Certification Plant List and Details. The list was updated to include about **300 popular South Carolina landscape plants** with color images, proper botanical names and culture, including height, width, form, foliage, USDA hardiness zones, origin, site requirements, flower/fruit information, growth rate and comments. A total of **1,045 images were processed**, edited and used to illustrate the training CD for SCLTA. This information is available through the SCLTA ELC program to improve the knowledge of professional landscape companies. This will prevent companies from planting trees, shrubs, perennials, and vines in an area with the wrong cultural requirements.



## Carolinas Golf Course Superintendents Association (CGCSA)

A day-long course on microscopic identification of turfgrass diseases was presented to golf course professionals at the CGCSA Conference in Myrtle Beach, SC. This program helps turf professionals accurately identify turf diseases. With this knowledge, turf professionals can modify environmental conditions, when possible, to prevent future disease problems, avoiding the use of unnecessary chemicals.



## HGIC Image Library

A total of **1,878 new photographs**, including images of ornamental and edible plants, horticultural techniques, materials and tools, weeds, insects and pests were added to the HGIC Image Library. These will be used to provide visual information in future facts sheets and on the website.

# In Print and On Air

## Your Day Radio

The HGIC staff participated in 6 **Your Day Radio** call-in shows in 2008/2009. Through this show staff members were able to assist South Carolina residents with landscape and plant problems. Your Day **airs on 8 public radio stations** and is available online through live web streaming

Your Day radio airs Monday through Thursday from 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm EST.



## carolina GARDENER



## Carolina Gardener Magazine

An HGIC staff member became the Midland Regional Reporter for *Carolina Gardener* magazine beginning in May/June 2009. *Carolina Gardener* magazine is written by and for Carolina gardeners. Over the years the *Carolina Gardener* magazine readership has expanded across the Southeast.

## Nutrition Newsletters

Eight nutrition articles were published in these newsletters:

*Nourishing News*

*EFNEP Digest*

*Healthy SC Challenge*

Topics ranged from *Controlling Holiday Weight Gain* to *Making Meal Times Pleasant*.

## Nutrition on iTunesU

Digital recordings of **26 nutrition fact sheets** were made available on Clemson University's NIRC web site ([www.clemson.edu/itunesu](http://www.clemson.edu/itunesu)).

## Staff

**James H. Blake, Ed.D.**

Extension Associate

**Millie Davenport**

Horticulture Extension Agent Associate

**Janis Hunter**

Nutrition Specialist

**Vicki Landreth**

Administrative Specialist

**Karen Russ**

Horticulture Specialist

**Pam Schmutz**

Food Safety Specialist

**Janet McLeod Scott**

Horticulture Extension Agent Associate

**Joey Williamson, Ph.D.**

Horticulture Extension Agent

## PSA Vision Statement

To provide leadership in food, fiber, environmental sustainability and human health systems through innovative research and education programs that will drive economic development and improve quality of life.

## PSA Mission Statement

Stimulating innovation and strengthening agriculture and natural resources through leadership and partnership to enhance economic development. To meet the current and future needs of South Carolina's agriculture and natural resources industries, we also examine and refine the missions for each of the units in the statewide system.



The HGIC Staff from left to right (back): Joey Williamson, Vicki Landreth, Karen Russ, Janis Hunter, Pam Schmutz, and Millie Davenport (front): Janet Scott and James Blake

## Overview of the Home & Garden Information Center

### Website Data

- 6,356,862 visits
- >32,000,000 hits
- 220 countries

### Fact Sheets

- SCACAA Award-Winning Web site
- 33 new fact sheets added
- 577 total fact sheets available
- 137 new images added to fact sheets
- 3 SCACAA award-winning fact sheets

### Hot Topics

- 24 hot topics added
- 2 SCACAA award-winning hot topics
- 59 new images added

### Test Your Knowledge

- 12 test your knowledge added
- 66 new images added

### Web Videos

- 14 new high definition videos
- Available on 3 websites:
  - [www.clemson.edu/hgic](http://www.clemson.edu/hgic)
  - iTunesU
  - YouTube

### Food Recalls

- 77 food recalls affecting SC residents posted

### Drought Updates

- Weekly updates posted Apr. - Nov.

### Training Sessions

- 3 Master Gardener classes taught
- 3 Clemson University Hort. classes taught
- Home Lawn Care Workshop in Greenville
- 4 Commercial Horticulture classes taught

### Phone Calls and Mailings

- 24,110 calls received
- 13,576 received between 9AM and 1 PM
- 7,385 calls answered by specialists
- 2,251 fact sheets mailed
- 264 misc. educational documents mailed
- 222 HGIC user's guides mailed

### HGIC Image Library

- 1,878 new photographs added

### Radio and Print

- 6 Your Day radio call-in shows
- 9 Newsletters
- 26 fact sheets added to iTunesU

Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to people of all ages, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital or family status and is an equal opportunity employer.