

Gaston Grower Spotlight- November 2020 (Giving Thanks to Our Staff)

A Month to Reflect and Give Thanks

Our office here in Gaston County host folks from a wide range of backgrounds and each member offers something special to contribute to our community. What better month is there to thank the Gaston County Cooperative Extension Office than November? Our personal endeavors range from forming recipes utilizing local foods, molding future growers, landscaping, and growing our own foods. Some of our staffs' efforts this year will be highlighted below.



Linda Minges- Butternut Squash Recipe

Linda Minges is our Family and Consumer Sciences Agent works diligently at educating Gaston County citizens on how to utilize local foods for healthy and nutritious meals. Check out one of her recommended recipes for [oven roasted butternut squash](#). Butternut squash has flowers that are produced during the summer and fruits maturing late summer to fall. Winter squash grows well in our county, sow your seed around June or July when the soil is warm.



Lara Worden- Forages and More

Lara Worden our Agriculture Agent knows her forages well and helps our county's producers make the best management decisions when it comes to their pastures. She is an equestrian who applies her knowledge on her own small farm. Lara also host workshops on growing specialty crops like Shiitake Mushrooms. One of these workshops is coming up December 12th, you can learn more about the workshop [here](#).



Julie Flowers- The Garden Expert

Julie Flowers splits her time between Cleveland and Gaston County as the Consumer Horticulture Agent. Julie spends her time fielding the public's questions regarding proper plant care and facilitating the Extension Master Gardener Program. Many of those involved in the program contribute to beautification efforts seen throughout our county. Here is a video of Julie highlighting the [esthetic benefits of the yucca plant](#) earlier this year.

Students at Sadler Elementary



Marcus Cyprian- Growing for the Future

Marcus is our 4-H Youth Development Program Assistant. He spends his time developing the skills of young growers in school gardens like Sadler Elementary or the Highland Youth Garden through Cooperative Extension's Healthy Harvest Program. Marcus utilizes his growing skills at his home and around the office. Growing food is a useful skill for our youth and one that impacts our community's future.



Youth at the Highland Community Garden



Judith Garcia- Affordable Nutrition

Judith is our county's EFNEP Educator and if there is something cooking at our office she is usually the one behind it. EFNEP, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, offers free (income guidelines apply) nutrition classes to help families and youth cook healthy meals at home, be more active, save money on food costs, and handle food safely. This **fish taco recipe** is one example of a recipe that could include ingredients produced by local growers. If you'd like to see Judith in action take a look at [this video](#).



David Fogarty- Directing Growth

David is Gaston County's Extension Director and is the one that supports us at implementing our programs that serve Gaston County citizens and growers. David doesn't remain behind the scenes, he is an active part in our engagement efforts. David uses his forestry knowledge for situations like accessing tree damage such as this ash tree pictured on the left. Making discoveries like this one can help folks prevent issues from spreading to healthy trees. If you'd like to learn more about Emerald Ash Borer (the culprit behind this damage) [click here](#).



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