



Virginia Cooperative Extension

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***The latest news and upcoming events
(usually free or low-cost)!***

Holiday gifts for gardeners:

Permethrin-treated clothing for tick protection

In recent years, insect repellent clothing has come onto the market that uses new technology. It appears that many brands have a long shelf life, and may be less toxic than spraying DEET products directly on your skin. This [factsheet](#) details what the EPA says about Permethrin treated clothing.



You can purchase this kind of clothing in a number of places, including [Bug Be Wear](#), [Exofficio](#), [Zorrel](#), and [Cabelas](#).

Public Announcements:

- [Holiday Guides](#): Where to find local trees, food, decorations, markets and more ...
- [Fire Safe Family VA' App](#) - For iPhones, iPads and Android
- [A Touch of Tech - Helping honey bees](#): Virginia Tech researchers are gathering valuable information about the impact of pesticide exposure on honey bee colony health in Virginia, helping both the apicultural and agricultural industries to reduce the loss of managed bee colonies.

Upcoming Events:

- **Go Natural!** *Learn how to plant a Natural Garden*

January 16, 2014, Home Gardener Day
Newport News, VA

These folks DARE you to go 'Natural' in 2014, by planting a Natural Garden: your new year's gardening resolution. Learn how at this conference. More information and registration click [here](#).

• Winter Wildlife Festival

January 24-26, 2014
Virginia Beach, VA

This event will showcase winter wildlife around Virginia Beach and the Chesapeake Bay.

Workshops include: Oyster Restoration and Osprey Watch.
Excursions include Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel & Fisherman's Island, First Landing Nature Walk, Chesapeake Bay Boat Trip, North Landing River Birding, Beginning Birding, Nature Photography, Back Bay/False Cape Birding, and many more.

To learn more, visit <http://www.vbgov.com/government/departments/parks-recreation/special-events/Pages/winter-wildlife-festival.aspx>.

For more information, contact outdoors@VBgov.com or 757-385-4461. Hosted by the City of Virginia Beach and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.



New Virginia Wildlife Conflict Helpline



The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) is pleased to announce a new **Virginia Wildlife Conflict Helpline**, a resource for resolving human-wildlife conflicts. The helpline is a collaborative effort between the VDGIF and the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Wildlife Services (WS) to address human-wildlife interactions by sharing science-based wildlife information. Techniques recommended to the public are environmentally sound, safe, and selective and meet wildlife professionals' standards.

The helpline is available toll-free at **(855) 571-9003**, 8:00AM-4:30PM, Monday through Friday.

Go Native Go Local guide!

After months of work, the Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC) is releasing the inaugural edition of its [Go Native Go Local](#) guide!



Serving Albemarle, Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier, Greene, Loudoun, Madison, Orange, Rappahannock,
and surrounding Virginia and Maryland counties

The purpose of this guide is to provide the residents of the Virginia Piedmont with a listing of businesses, most of them local, that offer products and services which promote our native biodiversity. *Go Native Go Local* aims to strengthen the local economy and is a sister publication to PEC's *Buy Fresh Buy Local* guide. You can access it on the web, and it is coming soon to the Virginia Cooperative Extension office in Albemarle.

PREPARE FOR WINTER WEATHER!

Winters in Virginia can be cold, snowy and icy and bring extended power outages.



"We've had several record breaking winter storms in the past few years, and they serve as good reminders that it's smart to get ready," said



Michael Cline, state coordinator of emergency management. "Everyone should take steps now to prepare themselves and their families for whatever winter might bring."

Virginians can take a few easy steps to get ready for severe weather:

- **Get a kit.** Imagine you can't leave home because of a winter storm. Basic emergency supplies include:
 1. Three days' food that doesn't need refrigeration or electricity to prepare it.

2. Three days' water (a gallon per person per day)A battery-powered and/or hand-crank radio with extra batteries
 3. After you have these essentials, then add a first aid kit, supply of prescription medications, blankets and warm clothing, supplies for special members of your household, and pet items.
- **Make a plan.** Everyone needs an emergency plan:
 1. Decide who your out-of-town emergency contact will be
 2. Where will you meet up with family members if you can't return home?
 3. Get a worksheet at www.ReadyVirginia.gov or on the new Ready Virginia app
 - **Stay informed.** Before, during and after a winter storm, you should:
 1. Listen to local media for information and instructions from emergency officials
 2. Be aware of winter storm watches and warnings and road conditions
 3. Get where you need to go before the weather gets bad
 4. Get road condition information 24/7 by calling 511 or checking www.511Virginia.org
 - **Download the Ready Virginia app.** This helpful emergency planning tool for iPhone® and Android™ mobile devices features:
 1. Location-specific weather watches and warnings issued by the National Weather Service
 2. Disaster news from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management
 3. A customizable family emergency plan that can be easily shared
 4. A checklist for gathering emergency supplies
 5. Contact information for local emergency managers
 6. Links to register for local emergency alerts, and more

“One heavy snowstorm with power outages is enough to disrupt schedules and cause people to wish they had prepared better,” said Cline. “It’s much safer to take a little time now and get ready before a winter storm arrives.” <http://www.ready.gov/>

Boxwood Blight:

How to Protect Boxwoods this Holiday Season

Be careful when introducing boxwood holiday greenery/plants to your home and landscape

Our beloved boxwoods are being threatened. Please help by doing a few key things this holiday season to keep this destructive and difficult-to-control disease at bay. Please be aware of the **potential for the boxwood blight pathogen to be introduced to landscapes on infected boxwood greenery/plants used for wreaths, holiday roping or decoration.**

The Essential Info:

- Boxwood blight, caused by a fungus, is a serious disease of boxwood that can cause complete defoliation of plants and is difficult to control.
- The disease was first found in Virginia in 2011 in Carroll County and has now spread to Chesterfield County, the City of Richmond, and Fairfax County.
- No matter where you live in Virginia, **WE ALL** (nursery growers, landscapers, historic site property managers and homeowners) **NEED TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS** to minimize the spread of this highly destructive disease to our beloved boxwoods.

Most boxwood cultivars are susceptible to the disease (particularly English and American boxwoods), but some cultivars appear to have a tolerance to this disease. What this means is that although you may not see obvious symptoms of the disease on the plant, it can still be carrying and producing spores that can spread rapidly to nearby susceptible plants.

The bottom line is to be very careful about introducing any boxwood in to your landscape – as greenery for holiday trimmings or as new plants.

Preventative Measures:

Boxwood blight is difficult to control once established, so, the most important means of control is to avoid introduction of infected plant material in the first place.

- Homeowners and property managers should make sure to purchase boxwood greenery (and/or new boxwood plants) from reputable suppliers where box blight has not been found. Ask the retailer if the greenery/plants come from a supplier in the Boxwood Blight Cleanliness Program. Growers who have entered this program follow strict best management practices along with routine inspections by the Virginia Department of Agriculture.
- All incoming boxwood greenery/plants should be inspected carefully for the characteristic combination of symptoms of the disease - leaf spots, leaf browning, black streaks on stems, and leaf drop. (Refer to the images of box blight symptoms below.)
- Wreaths should be assembled away from any existing boxwoods in the landscape.
- Any new boxwood plants should be kept isolated from existing boxwoods for a period of at least a month and monitored for disease development.
- If you have recently purchased and planted boxwood plants this past fall, especially in counties where the disease has been found, monitor plants carefully for disease development.
- After the holidays, boxwood greenery should not be composted or discarded on-site. It should be bagged (preferably double-bagged) and removed to the landfill.
- Note that although the fungal spores do not spread easily by air currents, they can potentially be carried on leaf debris adhering to people's shoes, on clothing or on tools used to trim greenery.
- For businesses: Workers who directly handle greenery or boxwood plants should be educated about the disease.

If you suspect your boxwood has boxwood blight:

Contact your local Virginia Cooperative Extension county office -

<http://www.ext.vt.edu/offices/index.html> and they can assist you in submitting a sample to the Virginia Tech Plant Disease Clinic – and offer additional control recommendations.

The importance of preventing introduction of this disease to landscapes with healthy boxwood plantings cannot be overemphasized. Please help our beautiful, historic boxwoods to continue to live a good, long healthy life.



Leaf spots (left) and black streaking (right) on stems are characteristic symptoms of Boxwood Blight.

Additional information about box blight can be found at the following web sites:

- <http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/PPWS/PPWS-4/PPWS-4.html>
- http://www.ct.gov/caes/lib/caes/documents/publications/fact_sheets/plant_pathology_and_ecology/boxwood_blight-a_new_disease_for_connecticut_and_the_u.s._12-08-11.pdf
- <http://plantpath.cals.ncsu.edu/ornamentals>

Stay safe during hunting season

From: The Office of Emergency Management and the Virginia Tech Police Department

If you are in the woods during hunting season

Like most of the United States, fall is the season for hunting in Virginia. If you are in or near the woods during hunting season, regardless of what outdoor activity you are participating in, then you need to be aware of some basic steps to take to avoid a hunting-related accident.

- Wear blaze orange to increase your visibility and to help distinguish you from a targeted animal. If you are taking your pet with you, be sure to tie a blaze orange bandana or other clothing item around its collar.
- Take extra precautions when venturing out during the peak hunting times, typically around dawn and dusk.
- Use the buddy system. Never be in the woods by yourself.
- Know where the public hunting lands are in your area and the exact dates for the various hunting seasons. Research ahead of time where hunting is and is not allowed.
- Make an itinerary and give a copy to someone who is not going with you. Let them know what you are doing, where you plan to be, and when you should be expected back.
- See **Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries** for more information on hunting seasons and safety in Virginia.

Safety tips and best practices for hunters

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries offers [hunter education courses](#), both in-person and online. The website states, "Since Hunter Education became mandatory for 12–15 year old and first-time hunters in 1988, there has been a 25% reduction in the rate of hunting-related shooting incidents. While hunting is safe in comparison to other common sports, each injury can cause extreme physical and emotional pain for the victim, the shooter, and their families. Hunter Education courses are designed to teach hunting safety, principles of conservation, and sportsmanship. A dedicated cadre of nearly 1000 trained volunteer instructors works with 170 Conservation Police Officers to train over 14,000 students each year."