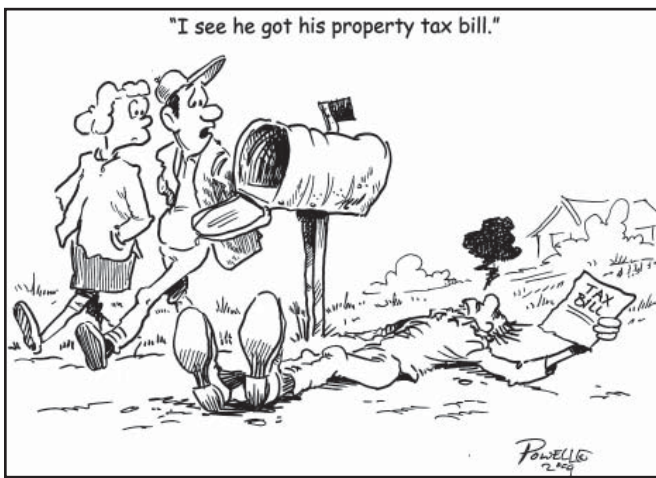


DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY
OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



Letters to The Editor

School Taxes

Our politicians are playing games with us. I just voted for a reduction in school taxes, I feel justified since I have paid school taxes for 54 years even as my kids only covered an attendance span of 17 years. Everyone who has children will have the same experience unless the politicians learn to get realistic with the voters.

Everyone has been having a tough time with reduced incomes, people who have retired on fixed incomes are in the same fix, our incomes have also been reduced over the last several years.

People who work for the infrastructure in some form all seem to feel they are special cases and require special subsidies. The school system has the advantage of gaining sympathy for children as they plead for more. Everyone connected to the school system benefits as the children benefit and so a compromise is reached and the taxpayer pays. Another solution might be for a reduction in the budget. As time passes and taxpayers run out of money that will have to happen.

Meanwhile the politicians throw crumbs our way. The \$8,000 reduction in appraised value on my house becomes a \$32 school tax reduction. School taxes are still 40% of the total tax, taxes were raised this year by 50% where I live so I am going backwards fast under this kind of thinking.

I am still looking for realistic tax relief on school taxes.
 R. Bruce Bryant

Witches & Bats, Oh my.

Once again, Pastor Swisher has blessed us with a rant against the tradition of Halloween. (Oct. 28 2009) and once again I would like to protest. While the Halloween festival may have evolved from pagan rituals, it has been well established that pagans were earth worshipers, not followers of the "devil." Also, if the Druid priests of the Celtic people did indeed offer human sacrifice we must keep in mind that this occurred, (is there proof?) many centuries ago, probably about the same time that the Aztec Indians were doing the same thing. Perhaps we should boycott anything Aztec. Keep in mind, if there is nothing to fear, Pastor Swisher will have nothing to save us from.

I am positive that NONE of the children, or any of their parents, that go to the square for trick or treating are in the least interested in witchcraft, devil worship or anything of that kind. The children are only aware that it's a night they can put on a costume and score a big bag or pillowcase full of candy. Any talk of evil is so far over their heads that they are unaware it is being even thought of, much less discussed.

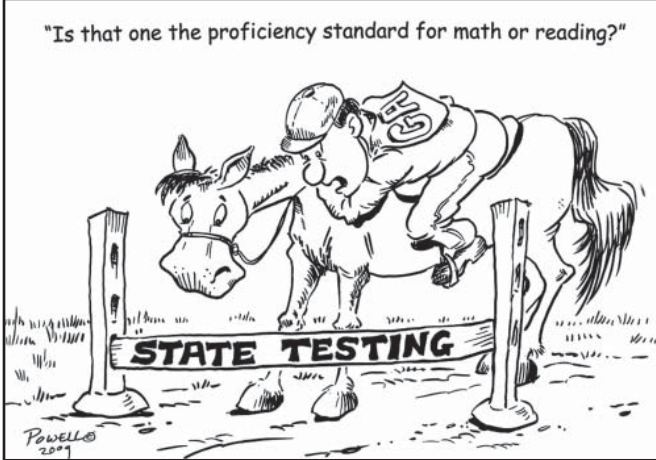
On several previous Halloween nights, I have had the enjoyment of working at the square with other Red Cross volunteers, either handing out candy or helping with other things. It's impossible to attach anything sinister or evil to the fun that the kids have on this evening, and their smiles lift all of our hearts.

Dare I say it? HAPPY HALLOWEEN!
 Jack Gottlieb

Thank You

Brasstown Valley Church would like to thank all who made the benefit yard sale for James Vandereedt on October 24, 2009 a great success. We would like to say thank you to Friends Moving Company for helping us move items and McConnell Memorial Baptist Church for allowing us to use their parking lot. We would also like to thank all of the individuals who donated items for the sale, those who volunteered for the sale, and every person who attended the sale. All proceeds will go towards James's medical expenses associated with his recent liver transplant. To God be the glory!

Holly A. Berndt, MD



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OFFICE LOCATED AT 446 NORTH MAIN STREET
 "THE MALL" HIAWASSEE (706) 896-4454
 Publication Number 635540. Entered as second-class matter on November 8, 1928, at the post office at Hiawassee, Georgia under Act of March 3, 1879. With additional mailing points.

EMAIL Address: tcherald@brmemc.net

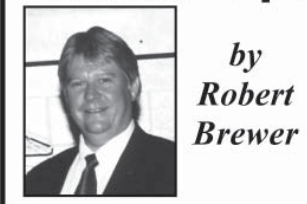
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Extension Tips



by
Robert Brewer

**November Tips
 Turf and Ornamentals**

Talk a walk through your garden as the fall season winds down. Take time to reflect on the successes and failures of your garden this year. Make notes in your gardening notebook for new things to try, and things to fix, next spring.

When placing plants around the home, remember as a general rule, plants with thick leaves can take lower light levels than those with thin leaves.

A November application of fertilizer is very beneficial to a lawn of cool-season grasses. It promotes root development without excessive top growth. With a strong root system, your lawn will be better able to withstand drought conditions next summer.

After several killing frosts have occurred this fall, cut back dormant perennials to about 3 inches above the ground. This step ensures a successful show of plant foliage and color next season.

Dense planting in containers works best for small bulbs. Plant as many bulbs as fit, as long as they do not touch each other or the pot. For a 6-inch pot, try 6 tulips or 15 crocus bulbs.

For best growth, plant spring bulbs where they are out of the direct sun during the middle of the day. Bulbs have a chilling requirement that is satisfied by winter soil temperatures, so avoid planting bulbs near heated basements where the soil may not stay adequately cold.

Invert large flowerpots over semi-hardy perennials, such as dusty miller, to protect the plants in winter. Uncover the plants during warm spells.

After chrysanthemums are killed by frost, cut them down in preparation for winter. Apply a 2- to 3- inch layer of loose mulch, such as leaves, after the ground has frozen.

Peonies can be planted now in full sun and fertile, well-drained soil that is rich in organic matter. Dig holes 18 inches and fill halfway with a mixture of soil, compost, and a handful of 5-10-10 fertilizer. Add a few more inches of soil, and set the tubers so the buds are 1 to 2 inches below the soil surface. Backfill, firm the soil, and water thoroughly. Peonies do not grow well after being moved and will not bloom for several years.

Pine cones, sweet gum balls, and seed pods of many plants, such as redbud and milkweed, add a beautiful touch to holiday ornaments. You can still collect many of these, if you take a walk along a hedge row or through a park or weedy field.

Continue deep watering of evergreens until freezing weather occurs. Cut away suckers from the base of lilacs, forsythia, and crape myrtle. Clean up rose beds. Be sure all diseased leaves are raked up and destroyed. Spring (before

GUEST COLUMNS

From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper. If so, please write. Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BEE-MAILED OR MAILED TO: Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor, PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546. Our email address: tcherald@brmemc.net. Letters should be limited to 200 words or less, signed, dated and include a phone number for verification purposes. This paper reserves the right to edit letters to conform with Editorial page policy or refuse to print letters deemed pointless, potentially defamatory or in poor taste. Letters should address issues of general interest, such as politics, the community, environment, school issues, etc. Letters opposing the views of previous comments are welcomed; however, letters cannot be directed at, nor name or ridicule previous writers. Letters that recognize good deeds of others will be considered for publication.*
 Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.

the plants start active growth) is the preferred season for pruning roses. Do not cut off canes in the fall. It is better to stake and tie extra long canes in fall to prevent winter wind damage.

Select accent plants for your landscape that will provide interesting autumn colors. Trees that turn red include dogwood, black gum, red maple, sweet gum, and red or scarlet oak. Shrubs with red fall foliage include viburnum, winged euonymus, and barberry.

Newly planted shade trees, especially those with smooth bark, are often injured by temperature fluctuations and strong winter sunshine. Prevent sun scald by wrapping the tree trunks with commercial tree wrap, 4-inch burlap strips, or simply shading with a board against the south side of the trunk.

If there is any evidence of scale on trees and shrubs, spray with dormant oil in late fall and again in early spring.

Fruits and Vegetables

Remove grass and weeds from trunks of fruit trees and grapes to prevent damage by mice and rodents. Leave a bare circle (one foot wide) around tree trunks when spreading mulch to keep mice from feeding on the bark. A collar or fence of poultry wire or a commercial tree guard approximately 18 inches high will deter rodents and rabbits.

Remove all mummified fruit from trees, and rake up and destroy those on the ground. Also, rake and dispose of dropped apple and peach leaves. Good sanitation practices reduce reinfestation of insects and diseases the following season.

Dwarf fruit trees have a double purpose-furnishing flowers in the spring and fruit in the fall. They are particularly suited to small lots. Early November is a good time to plant most fruit trees, especially if a light mulch is applied to the soil afterwards.

Plant lettuce and hardy vegetables, such as beets, cabbage, and spinach, in cold frames for winter or early spring crops.

Be sure not to store apples or pears with vegetables. The fruits give off ethylene gas which speeds up the breakdown of vegetables and causes them to develop off-flavors.

When time or weather conditions prohibit plowing or cover cropping, you may wish to let your garden lie under a mulch of compost, nondiseased plant wastes, or leaves all winter to be plowed or tilled under in the spring. However, a mulch of heavy materials, such as whole leaves, can become matted and keep the soil cold and wet long enough to delay planting in the spring. If using large or heavy organic matter, chop it fine enough so it can break down over the winter. If you use manure as a soil conditioner, apply it now and till it under. Manure can be a source of weed seed. Composting before application can reduce the number of viable seeds.

The University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.

The Middle Path
 by Don Perry

It is somehow fitting that yesterday's announcement of GDP growth and its accompanying stock market rally comes on the threshold of our yearly celebration of trick or treat, but unlike the majority of candy collectors on Halloween, most of us will be denied the treat and future generations left holding the bag will not appreciate the trick. Make no mistake; it is a trick and an expensive one at that. When you borrow billions of dollars from foreign governments and inject it into an economy, of course GDP will go up.

Without the Cash for Clunkers program, GDP growth would have actually been 1.89% instead of the 3.5 which sent the market soaring yesterday. Each vehicle sold under this program cost the taxpayers about \$24,000. Of the 690,000 sold, about 565,000 would have been sold anyway, without the hype and without the added debt, but with the extra 125,000 sold, motor vehicle output spiked over 157% last quarter, and some part of that number includes future demand from the fourth quarter. It remains to be seen if there is anything left in the bag of tricks for the fourth quarter, when vehicle demand will probably drive off a cliff. Next quarter GDP will probably have to be de-emphasized as some new set of numbers will be hyped to convince us that the economy is recovering.

Cash for Clunkers was an ill conceived idea from the perspective of what it claimed to be trying to accomplish. The biggest beneficiary among automakers was Toyota, with 19% of total sales under the program. The idea that by trading in gas guzzlers for fuel efficient vehicles we were helping to save the planet was laughable. The small number of vehicles sold multiplied by the minor difference in fuel efficiency between old and new will result in a negligible impact on oil consumption. By scrapping perfectly serviceable vehicles long before their useful life is over and replacing them with new ones, we are actually increasing carbon footprint instead of reducing it.

If, however the true intention behind the clunker idea was to artificially stimulate the public mood upon which our economy of consumption depends, then perhaps the idea wasn't so laughable after all.

The stock market continued to rally throughout the third quarter, and with the release of yesterday's GDP numbers the media is celebrating the end of economic decline and the sure road to recovery. The big banks, too big to fail and upon which we are told our very survival depends, are hopeful that we will abandon the annoying habit we have developed of late of saving our money instead of borrowing more and spending it. Said banks have a tremendous investment in real estate and Obama has done everything in his power to keep the price of housing high. Being surrounded as he is by bankers, it is logical to assume that he is getting the very best advice on how to protect the banks, but unless we begin borrowing and spending again and soon, there are many billionaires who run the risk of becoming ordinary, run of the mill millionaires.

It is disappointing to see our reservations about an Obama administration and a Democratic Congress being proven valid so soon. We may certainly make some progress on social issues and in other areas that make us feel good and enlightened, but egalitarian values are the first to be abandoned when there is hardship and privation. Historically, times have been the best for the most people when the free market was allowed to do what only the free market can do, but what we have today is the antithesis of the free market. Meanwhile, we are still at war.

Unemployment continues to grow. Oil is on the rise again. The Orwellian measures of the Patriot act and the culture of homeland insecurity is as strong as ever. Nothing has really changed except the pair of hands running the shell game. Obama is a gifted writer and inspired speaker, but if his first year in office is any indication he may prove to be the greatest compromiser since Millard Fillmore. We need leadership; we need someone who will tell us the simple truth even when we don't want to hear it. That truth, as many of you may already comprehend, is that the good old days of borrow and spend are over. As the economy "recovers," it will not be to a norm of borrowing from the Chinese to buy things we don't need and can't afford.

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Community Calendar

Towns County Water Board Meeting 3rd Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in the TC Water Office Building.
Towns County AARP Chapter 1859 meets the second Thursday of each month at the Senior Center in Hiawassee at 2 p.m. Luncheons are held at 1 p.m.
Towns County Democratic Party meets at 6:30 every 2nd Thursday of the month at Crossroads Restaurant. Meeting begins at 6. Please call Julie Miller. (706) 896-6076.
Towns County Republican Party meets the 1st Tuesday of each month from 5 p.m.-6 p.m. Dinner at Daniels Steak House, 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. meeting, 896-7281.
Towns County Planning Commission is held the 2nd Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Courthouse.
Towns County Commissioners meeting is the 3rd Thursday at 5:30 p.m. in the courthouse.
School Board Meeting, 2nd Monday each month at 7 p.m. in the auditorium.
Hiawassee City Council 1st Tuesday of month 4 p.m., at City Hall.
Young Harris City Council, 1st Tuesday of month at 7 p.m., Young Harris City Hall.
The Hiawassee River Valley Kennel Club meetings are held at 7 p.m. the 1st Monday of each month at Brother's Res-

taurant on Hwy 64 in Murphy, NC. Call President Kit Miracle: 706 492 5253 or Peggy Moorman: 828 835 1082.
The Unicoy Masonic Lodge #259 meets on the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m.
Board of Voter Registrars meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 4:30 p.m., Courthouse.
Towns County Board of Elections holds its monthly meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 4 p.m. at the Elections Office (Old Rock Jail).
Towns County Historical Society meets the 2nd Monday of each month at the Senior Center in Hiawassee at 5 p.m. Annual dues \$15, PO Box 932, Hiawassee, GA 706-896-1060, www.townshistory.org Bridge Players intermediate level meets at 12:45 p.m. on Mondays & Fridays at the Towns County Health Dept. Call Eden at 706-896-6921.
Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild, Inc (MRACG) meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at ArtWorks Artisan Centre, located at 308 Big Sky Drive (behind the Holiday Inn), Hiawassee. Refreshments at 6 p.m. & the meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. Contact us by calling 706-896-0932, mtncraftsguild.org. mtncraftsguild@hotmail.com.
VFW Post #7807 Fish Fry will

be 2nd and 4th Friday of the month, 4:30-7 p.m., \$9 a plate, all you can eat.
Mountain Computer User Group meets the 2nd Monday of each month at the Goolsby Center at YHC. Q & A at 6 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m.
FPL Retirees Breakfast will meet the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the Hole in the Wall Restaurant on the square in Blairsville at 9 a.m.
Chattahoochee-Nantahala Chapter, Trout Unlimitea meets 2nd Thursday of each month at Cadence Bank in Blairsville. 5 p.m. Fly Tying - 7 p.m. General Meeting. Everyone welcome. www.ngatu692.com.
Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) meets the 3rd Monday of each month at various area restaurants. For information call John Quinlan at 706-896-2430 or visit www.moaa.org/chapter/blueridge-mountains.
Alcoholics Anonymous: 24 hour phone line 828-837-4440.
Mothers of Preschoolers meets on the third Thursday of each month at First Baptist Church of Blairsville from 6 - 8 p.m. Call the church office at 706-745-2469 for more information.
Chatuge Regional Hospital Auxiliary on the 3rd Monday of each month, except the months of July, October and December. in the hospital cafeteria at 1:30