

FARMERS AND CONSUMERS

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General Assembly approves Hurricane Michael recovery package Georgia's delegation to Washington, D.C., urges Congress to act before Dec. 7

By Amy Carter
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Days after the General Assembly approved a \$270 million disaster relief appropriation that includes \$55 million in emergency loans for farmers affected by Hurricane Michael, Georgia's delegation to the U.S. House of Representatives pressed congressional leaders to legislate federal disaster relief before Dec. 7.

Hurricane Michael devastated Southwest and Middle Georgia Oct. 10-11 after making landfall at Mexico Beach, Fla., as a powerful Category 4 storm. Some estimates put the storm at a Category 3 –with minimum sustained winds of 111 mph as measured on the Saffir-Simpson Scale – when it arrived in the far corner of Southwest Georgia.

"This storm hit farmers at their most vulnerable hour during harvest, and it is critical that we assist these producers immediately to ensure there can be a crop in 2019. Impacts to Georgia's agricultural industry have national consequences," the delegation wrote in a Nov. 26 letter addressed to House Speaker Paul Ryan, Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Appropriations Chair Rodney Frelinghuysen and Ranking Appropriations Committee Member Nita Lowey.

The letter was signed by all 14 members of Georgia's House delegation: Reps. Austin Scott, Sanford Bishop, Buddy Carter, Drew Ferguson, Hank Johnson, John Lewis, Karen

Handel, Rob Woodall, Doug Collins, Jody Hice, Barry Loudermilk, Rick Allen, David Scott and Tom Graves.

The Dec. 7 deadline is key because certain departments of the federal government – including the U.S. Department of Agriculture – were not funded in a partial spending plan approved by Congress prior to Oct. 1, the start of the 2019 federal fiscal year. A partial shutdown of the federal government looms if that funding is not approved by Dec. 7.

The call to action by federal lawmakers came one week after the Georgia General Assembly met in a special session called by Gov. Nathan Deal. During that session, lawmakers enacted a storm relief package worth nearly \$500 million to assist farmers and rural residents impacted by the storm, and state agencies and local governments called to respond to it.

Commercial timber and pecan growers in a 28-county disaster area will receive \$200 million in state tax credits to encourage reforestation (read more about this in the *Forestry*

Matters column on Page 6).

Growers and residents in rural areas of the state will benefit from a \$270 million package that offers:

- \$55 million allocated to the Georgia Development Authority to provide secured loans to farmers until federal disaster relief payments are made.
- \$69.3 million to the Governor's Emergency Fund to pay the state's match for federal disaster assistance relating to damages and operating costs, debris removal, road and bridge work, public utility repairs and water and meals for FEMA workers.
- \$20 million to the Georgia Development Authority for disaster assistance provided by the Georgia Forestry Commission for cleanup efforts and debris removal on timberland.
- \$7.4 million for additional firefighting and land-clearing equipment for the Georgia Forestry Commission.
- \$15 million for Regional Economic Business Assistance grants provided by the

Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

- \$25 million for the OneGeorgia Authority to aid local communities and economic development efforts impacted by Hurricane Michael.

Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Gary W. Black said the legislature's action will benefit farm families as they work to rebuild, replant and recover.

State Rep. Sam Watson of Moultrie – a vegetable grower who was impacted by the storm – said the actions taken by the General Assembly have given the people of Southwest Georgia "hope, encouragement and motivation" they have not gotten elsewhere.

"I am grateful for that," Watson said.

State Sen. Larry Walker of Perry said the amendments made to the state's budget to assist in storm recovery will help stabilize the economies in affected regions.

"While Southwest Georgia's landscape will be changed for decades, I know that this legislation will have a direct and immediate impact on the region," Walker said.

WORKFORCE 101: State agriculture, education leaders discuss workforce readiness for Georgia's agricultural industry

By Kendall McWilliams
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MACON – Georgia's Rural Center hosted the 2018 Ag Summit at Middle Georgia State University Nov. 26. State and national leaders were invited to discuss workforce development in Georgia's agricultural sector.

Government officials, representatives from state colleges and universities, and other community leaders were among those in attendance as discussion sparked surrounding the status of Georgia's agricultural employment opportunities and the challenges employers face when hiring and retaining capable employees.

"Through the summit, the Rural Center's goal is to ensure that, as we move forward, we have the educational infrastructure in place to prepare workers and leaders capable of maintaining Georgia's position as a leading producer of agricultural commodities nationally, while also meeting growing demand for agricultural products worldwide," said David Bridges, interim director of the Rural Center.

Agriculture Commissioner Gary W. Black encouraged summit attendees to combine their efforts and expertise to address challenges that lie ahead for employers in Georgia's No. 1 economic driver.

"We are here to share and hopefully bind our organizations together and to bind our efforts together as we look forward to 2019, 2020 and the years to beyond," Black said.

According to American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall, a Georgia farmer, lack of farm labor plagues American agriculture as farms continue to expand.

"We face some tremendous challenges, and some of what you're here to talk about today is the lack of labor on farms," said Duvall. "I'm not just talking about laborers that are going out and doing the hard, manual labor, I'm talking about employees that need to be trained. We need to have college-educated, well-prepared young men and women to hit the ground to help us take on the challenges we face."

AgCareers.com, an online ag-based job board, conducted an agri-



Kendall McWilliams/GDA

David Bridges, president of Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College and interim director of the Rural Center, talks with Stuart Rayfield, vice chancellor for Leadership and Institutional Development for the University System of Georgia, at the Ag Summit.

cultural employment survey on behalf of the Ag Summit Committee. The survey was designed to collect information and feedback from Georgia farms and agribusinesses about expectations for their current and future workforces. Key takeaways from the survey provided insight into trends that will influence the agricultural job market in Georgia.

Kristi Sproul, education and recruitment marketing specialist for AgCareers.com, presented the data and market research collected from the electronic survey sent out to organizational representatives across Georgia. Sproul's report included the trajectories of growth for various job functions, academic requirements of new hires and the expected number of positions to be filled by survey respondents in the coming year.

Macros Fernandez, associate dean and director of Academic Programs at Purdue University's College of Agriculture, co-authored the

See **WORKFORCE 101**, page 11

Notice

Ads for the Jan. 2, 2019 issue – including Farm Services – are due by noon, Dec. 19.

GUEST COLUMN: 'Tis the season to bring nature indoors

By Adam Dale, Ph.D., Entomologist
University of Florida

Every year at the end of November, millions of people in the U.S. purchase a live Christmas tree, bring it into their home, and dress it up with festive decorations. I find it amazing how many people do this, yet how few people recognize where this tree came from and that it has been growing outdoors, exposed to all aspects of nature for the past six-to-eight years. Despite this, people are frequently outraged or disgusted when they find a living insect on a tree that they have brought into their home. It is important to recognize that there may be insects on a live Christmas tree, but very rarely are they of concern. This article will discuss the insects you may come across on a Christmas tree and what, if anything, should be done.

Common insects on Christmas trees

No matter which species of tree you have (unless it is of the plastic variety), there is a chance you will find an insect living on it. Remember, these trees have been living outside for the latter part of a decade. Of the insects that may show up on a live Christmas tree, there are a handful of common culprits to expect, and none of them are dangerous. However, some can be annoying or startling, and one or two may require control.

Insects and other arthropods you may find:

- Aphids
- Adelgids
- Mites
- Praying mantids
- Psocids
- Scale insects
- Spiders

Of the above-listed organisms, aphids are the most likely to require action. Aphids are sap-feeding insects that consume high amounts of sugars from within plant tissue. As a result, they excrete a lot of sugary waste, which coats surfaces beneath them with a sticky substance and promotes the growth of a black fungus (called sooty mold). Aphids are rarely abundant enough on sold trees to cause problems, however, it is important to scout for them to be certain. Also, one of the most common aphids, called the Cinara aphid, is frequently mistaken as a spider, which causes a scare for many homeowners. To be sure, count the number of legs: 8=spider, 6=aphid.

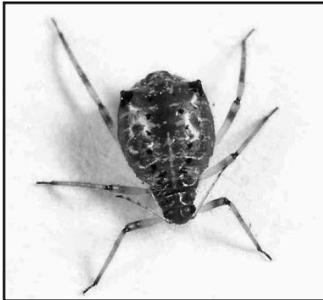
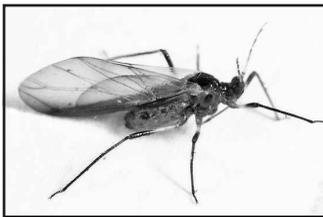
If you have purchased a heavily aphid-infested tree, there are a few options: 1) prune off the infested branches and dispose of them; 2) prune off heavily-infested branches, remove all decorations, take the tree outdoors, and spray foliage with an insecticidal soap; or 3) return the tree to where it was purchased and ask for a refund or replacement. Leaving a heavily infested tree in a home will result in sticky (and potentially black) surfaces on and beneath the tree, aphids flying around the home and a shortened tree life.

Scale insects can also reduce the life and appearance of Christmas trees and should be scouted for. The most common scale insects on Christmas trees are elongate hemlock scale (on Fraser fir) and pine needle scale (on Florida-grown trees); both are armored scale insects. In high numbers, these pests can cause needles to yellow and drop prematurely. If that is happening, look closely at the underside of the needles for elongated scale insect coverings. Although scale insects are relatively immobile, warmer temperatures within the home may cause eggs to hatch and mobile immatures (crawlers) to emerge and fall or crawl onto nearby surfaces. Deal with these similarly to aphids. However, insecticidal soaps will be less effective.

Other organisms listed above, like praying mantids or spiders, may be startling because they are relatively large and fast. However, these are harmless. Both are beneficial in natural areas because they eat many plant pests. Once in the home, they will likely not live long. If one hitchhikes a ride into the home, simply knock it into a cup or plastic container and release it outside. Other insects or spiders that hitch a ride can easily be vacuumed up and disposed of.

This holiday season, remember that Christmas trees are likely to have an insect or spider on them. Most of the time, they are not a concern and can be easily removed or vacuumed away. The challenge with heavy infestations is they cannot and should not be treated with an insecticide after they have been delivered to a retail store or tree lot, and especially not in the home. Therefore, consumers who find severe infestations of aphids, scale insects or mites should remove the tree from their home and return it to where it was purchased. It's great to bring nature into the living room, but not when aphids are pooping on the presents.

-Dr. Adam Dale is the Turf and Ornamental Entomologist at the University of Florida in Gainesville, Fla. His work focuses on understanding the ecology of insects and their plant hosts and developing new ways to manage them.



Tom Murray, Bugguide.net
Giant conifer aphids (*Cinara aphids*), winged and wingless.
Note that each has six legs.

COOK GEORGIA GROWN:

Editor's Note: The holidays wouldn't be the same without fruitcake, the dessert everyone loves to hate. The ghost of Christmas baking past offers this recipe for Candied Fruitcake, pulled from our archives, as a counter argument. The note attached to it says: "Even fruitcake 'haters' love this one!"

For the skeptics who remain in our audience, however, we offer an alternative in the form of banana pudding. While my money's on the banana pudding (no offense to the fruitcake aficionados of the world), either one will make a delicious addition to your holiday gathering!

Candied Fruitcake

Ingredients:

1 lb. whole candied cherries	4 cups coarsely chopped Georgia pecans
1 lb. chopped candied pineapple	1 ¼ cups flaked coconut
1 lb. golden raisins	1 (14-oz.) can sweetened condensed milk
1 Tbsp. all-purpose flour	

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 250 degrees. Grease and flour a 10-inch tube pan with removable bottom or line a regular tube pan with foil and grease.

Combine cherries, pineapple and raisins in a large bowl. Sprinkle with flour and toss to coat fruit. Add pecans and coconut, mix well. Add condensed milk; stir to mix well. Spread evenly in pan.

Bake for 1½ hours. Cool in pan on rack. Remove from pan. Wrap tightly in foil or plastic wrap. Refrigerate for two weeks. Cut into thin slices with serrated knife while cold.

-Originally submitted by Patricia Simmons of Winder

Granny's Banana Pudding

Ingredients:

4-6 bananas	6 eggs* (separate the yolks from the whites if you like a meringue)
Box of vanilla wafers	6 cups milk
3 cups sugar	1 Tbsp. vanilla flavoring
4 heaping Tbsps. plain flour	Optional: ½ to 1 stick butter
½ tsp. salt	Optional: Banana flavoring

Preparation:

Layer bananas and wafers in a bowl of 9x13 pan.

Mix together sugar, flour, salt. Stir in eggs till well blended (see note below). Place mixture in top of double boiler.

Add milk and cook over moist heat until the pudding mixture coats a wooden spoon. Add vanilla, and butter, if desired.

Cool, pour over bananas and cookies.

* If you like a meringue on top, use only the egg yolks in the pudding recipe, saving the egg whites. While pudding cools, whip the egg whites until stiff, adding about ½ cup sugar to sweeten as the whites thicken. Cover pudding mixture after it is in the pan with the meringue and bake in a 450-degree oven until browned, about 5 minutes.

-Submitted by Christine Hurst of McDonough, who writes: "This recipe is from my husband's grandmother. She used way too much sugar for my taste, so I only use half of what she used. Still plenty sweet. Sometimes I also add a little banana flavoring to the pudding mixture."

If you don't have a double boiler, Christine suggests cooking the pudding in a large sauce pan placed inside a Dutch oven-sized pan with a couple of inches of water in it.

GFB foundation for agriculture offers \$58,000 in ag scholarships

MACON – The Georgia Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture is offering \$58,000 in scholarships to Georgia students pursuing degrees in agriculture, veterinary medicine, family and consumer sciences, or related fields.

Since 1959, GFB has awarded scholarships to students entering college with plans to pursue a career in agriculture or family and consumer sciences. Rising college juniors and seniors, technical college students and veterinary college students are eligible to apply.

In 2019 GFB will award scholarships in the following four categories:

- **Scholarship for Agriculture** – For high school students who plan to enter a college that is part of the University System of Georgia, Berry College, Emmanuel College or any accredited college/university in Georgia with an ag program during the 2019-20 academic year to pursue an undergraduate degree in agricultural and environmental sciences, family and consumer sciences or a related agricultural field. Five scholarships of \$3,000 each and seven scholarships of \$1,500 each will be awarded.
- **Technical College Scholarship for Agriculture** – For high school students who plan to enroll in a Georgia accredited technical college to major in an area of agriculture or agriculturally related field of study. Five scholarships of \$1,000 each will be awarded.
- **Rising College Junior/Senior Scholarship for Agriculture** – For college students with at least two semesters of college work remaining to receive an undergraduate degree from a unit of The University System of Georgia, Berry College, Emmanuel College or any accredited college/university in Georgia with an ag program. Applicants must be majoring in agriculture and environmental sciences, family and consumer sciences or a related agriculture field. Ten scholarships of \$2,000 each will be awarded.
- **UGA College of Veterinary Medicine Scholarship** – For students currently enrolled in the UGA Veterinary Medicine program specializing in large animal/food animal practice. Three scholarships of \$2,500 each will be awarded.

The deadline to apply is March 1, 2019. Visit www.gfb.ag/19scholarships to apply. Transcripts and letters of recommendation may be submitted online with the application.

WORKFORCE 101: Human capital is a precious resource

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USDA-sponsored publication *Employment Opportunities for College Graduates in Food, Agriculture, Renewable Natural Resources and the Environment*. He presented data about the expansion of agriculturally related job opportunities across the nation, juxtaposing the findings of the state-wide survey with national-level metrics.

"As we planned this meeting, we wanted to make sure we had someone who could take the results of our Georgia study and cast them into the context of what is seen at the national level," said Bridges.

According to Bridges, restoring agricultural communities and elevating prosperity in rural Georgia hinges on the educational system's ability to produce the next generation of leaders in agriculture. To close out the 2018 Ag Summit, breakout groups discussed the role that Georgia's education system should play in effectively preparing students to meet the demands of the agricultural force. Each group evaluated the ways educational institutions can enhance employability and technical skills and promote career opportunities more effectively.

"The task at hand is, I think, fairly simple. We talk about how we must have finance, we have to have technology, we have to have equipment, we have to have water," said Bridges.

"None of these are of much value to us in sustaining Georgia's number one industry if we do not have human capital. We need an educational system that starts at Pre-K and goes all the way through post-graduate work, that works together to ensure that we met human capital needs of Georgia's agricultural industry."