

**NC**

**COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION**

**2022**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

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*This Report to the People is compiled for the community residing in Forsyth County, North Carolina. North Carolina Cooperative Extension's strategic directions include agriculture, foods & nutrition and 4-H youth and family development.*



[forsyth.ces.ncsu.edu](http://forsyth.ces.ncsu.edu)

[forsyth.cc/CES](http://forsyth.cc/CES)



**336.703.2850**

# Come Grow with Us

## Who are we?

N.C Cooperative Extension, Forsyth County Center, is committed to creating and embellishing opportunities for growth and development for all residents. Our mission dictates that we will strive to connect people to research-based information.

Extension is a partnership between Forsyth County government and our land-grant universities ~ N.C. State and N.C. A&T State ~ in tandem with the United States Department of Agriculture/National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA/NIFA).

Our team members are dynamic, informed, enthusiastic and energetic. They are continually learning and growing to be the best in their areas of expertise.

**Come Grow with Us** as we look to the future and discover new and exciting programs to engage in. We hope to hear from you soon!

Below are pictures and names of our staff along with their areas of expertise.



Kimberly Gressley  
County Director



April Bowman  
4-H & Livestock  
Agent



Taylor Darnell  
Commercial Hort &  
Field Crop Agent



Virginia Lopez  
Family Consumer  
Science Agent



Monique Pearce-  
Brady  
4-H Youth Agent



Celine Richard  
Urban Horticulture  
Agent



Leslie Rose  
Horticulture Agent



Phyllis Smith  
Ag & NR Agent



Mike Bowman  
Soil & Water



Jeffrey Cates  
STEM/Urban



Kathy Hepler  
Admin. Assist.



Alex Kiser  
Soil & Water



Rhett Kyle  
Wellness Produce Box



Derek Morris  
Horticulture Tech.



Anika Parks  
Volunteer Coord.



Matthew Scoggins  
Community Garden



Laura Weaver  
Technician

# A Message from the Forsyth County Extension Director



Dear Friends of N.C. Cooperative Extension,

As I reflect on the past year with this hardworking team, it is apparent to me that our accomplishments are countless. Our theme for this report is **Come Grow with Us**.

We base all of our programming on the goals and objectives of Forsyth County Government and N.C. Cooperative Extension strategic plans with both NC State and N.C. A&T State Universities. Our most important goal is to serve the residents of Forsyth County in all areas of Agriculture, Family and Consumer Sciences, and 4-H Youth Development. Throughout this report you will learn more about our mission and how we are addressing our clients needs to make their lives better every day!

## How We Grow Together:

### 1. Building Partnerships and Positive Collaborations

Through these partnerships we discover together our challenges, commonalities and opportunities for growth and celebration.

### 2. Listening and having Great Conversations

We all can make amazing differences in our community by working together as a team.

### 3. Leading and Teaching throughout the County

We practice innovative techniques to serve our clients. We come prepared for lively programs and thought-provoking discussions.

In this year's Report to the People, you will see our various programs highlighted by stories, data and innovative practices by our skilled staff, volunteers and youth leaders.

We appreciate the Board of Commissioners, County Departments and various community supporters for their trust in our team to bring the best research-based programming to our clients.

Wishing you the very best!

*Kim*

# 4-H Youth Development

4-H is based on the mission of learning by doing. 4-H members enroll in clubs, school enrichment and outreach programs throughout the county. They have the opportunity to explore project areas such as science and technology, healthy lifestyles, animals, plant sciences, citizenship, leadership and civic engagement. 4-H volunteers assist by providing teaching, mentorship, guidance and leadership opportunities.

Because of our work:

- 4-H reached 2323 youth through the engagement of STEM activities by partnering with public libraries, schools, and the parks and recreation department.
- 4-H volunteers have volunteered 1130 hours equaling an economic value of \$33,843.50 (per Independent Sector).
- 4-H is currently implementing Teen LEADS (Learning to Educate others About Doing STEM), Summer Adventures 2023, Tech Changemakers, #Passthem, 4-H clubs, dog programs, Wildlife Habitat, Forestry, Presentations, Public Speaking, Talent Show, Large/Small Livestock, and a Teen Leadership program with community networks.
- 4-H was able to send 7 under-represented youth and 1 Leader-In-Training to a 4-H Overnight Camp at no cost to the youth (total value of \$4,500).
- Sent 3 youth to NASA Space Camp in Alabama and created Forsyth County 4-H's first drone team.
- Laurelyn Ridge won the NC 4-H Citizenship Traveling trophy. She is the 3rd Forsyth County name on the trophy!





## Because of our work:

- **The Forsyth 4-H Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program or WHEP team won the state competition and went on to place 3rd in the Nation. Nineteen Coaches and other volunteers donated nearly 600 hours of time educating 4-H youth virtually and in-person about wildlife habitats.**
- **The State 4-H President for 2022-2023 is Forsyth County 4-H'er, Laurelyn Ridge; 10 years after Nathan Barrick had the same honor.**
- **Forsyth County hosted more Japanese Exchange students than any other county in North Carolina. Luke Arrowood was the only student in North Carolina to travel outbound this year, taking an amazing trip to Norway!**
- **Nathan Patton won North Central District 4-H Youth Volunteer of the Year.**
- **Despite the Avian Influenza outbreak, Forsyth County held the first 4-H Poultry and Rabbit Show.**
- **Nineteen youth completed the poultry project.**
- **11 youth entered the rabbit show. For 85% of participants, this was their first livestock experience. A post-show survey showed that all parents felt their child had learned responsibility, 77% thought their child had improved knowledge of financial management and record-keeping, and 67% thought their child had improved public speaking skills.**
- **72 youth participated and voted in Forsyth County Kids Voting for the first time, allowing youth to be involved in Citizenship and Civic Engagement; one of the three mission mandates for North Carolina 4-H.**
- **4-Her's completed 525 hours of community service amounting to \$15,824.11.**

**April Bowman, Agent  
Monique Pearce-Brady, Agent**





# Commercial Horticulture and Field Crops

Field days, commodity meetings, pesticide certification, fit testing, seminars and other educational programs help agricultural producers and industry representatives with field crop work. Emphasis is placed on best management practices discovered through research-based test plots.

*Because of our work:*

- *Forsyth County hosted two pesticide safety schools in 2022 with 97 individuals receiving education on safe pesticide handling to prepare them to become licensed applicators.*
- *215 horticultural professionals, arborists, right-of-way managers, and greenhouse growers received over 450 hours of continuing education facilitated by Extension.*
- *We have successfully recycled 189 pounds of agrochemicals and 2550 pounds of chemical containers!*
- *In 2022, 75 farmers were trained in field crop education, commodity meetings, pesticide recertification, and fit testing events.*
- *As people have transitioned from tobacco to specialty crops (tomatoes, blueberries, corn, pumpkins, etc.) GAP - Good Agricultural Practices - credentialing has increased 115% as compared to 2021 numbers.*
- *23 tobacco growers in Forsyth & Stokes Counties have been recertified as GAP compliant. In 2022, approximately 2350 acres of tobacco were grown with an average yield of 1950 lbs./acre.*

**Taylor Darnell, Area Agent,  
Forsyth & Stokes Counties**





# Community Resource Development

*Because of our work:*

- *Our digital reach included: 44,057 unique views on our state-maintained website; 24,164 unique views on our county-maintained website; and 54,810 Facebook page views which reflected an 82.5% increase from 2021!*
- *The Forsyth County Center brought in \$129,361.57 in 2022 to augment our programming and outreach to Forsyth County residents.*
- *A new focus program, the Wellness Produce Box Program, was funded with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars for the next two years bringing nutrition information, physical fitness, container gardening, mindfulness, and cooking/safety education to well over 400 people in our county communities.*
- *Numerous partners, stakeholders and donors interfaced with our team in 2022 (note page 10).*

**Community development is a planned effort to build assets that increase the capacity of residents to improve their quality of life. Programs are often developed and delivered in partnership with participants and “stakeholders” – organizations, individuals, and agencies with a stake in the existence and content of programs and the resources that support these programs.**

**Kimberly Gressley  
County Extension Director  
& Staff**



# Consumer Horticulture

Leslie Rose  
Horticulture Agent

*Because of our work:*

- *Forsyth County hosted 25 classes on home horticulture topics; 18 of these classes were offered in-person and 7 were held virtually. As a result, 771 gardeners learned about best management practices for their gardens and landscapes. 535 implemented best practices, with 461 individuals improving their plant selections.*
- *411 community members participated in the 2nd annual Piedmont Spring Gardening Series. 97% of participants reported using the information they learned. Participants reported more pollinators in the garden, increased fruit and vegetable production, and decreased plant loss by selecting more appropriate landscape plants.*
- *22 community volunteers attended one of three Evening Volunteer Workdays at the Arboretum at Tanglewood Park, contributing 44 hours of service.*
- *24 new Forsyth County Extension Master Gardener SM Volunteers completed initial training. The class prepared all students to answer home horticulture questions. 23 students reported implementing changes in their own gardens. After completing training, they contributed 1075 volunteer hours valued at \$32,196.*
- *123 Extension Master Gardener Volunteers contributed a total of 7121 volunteer hours, valued at \$213,274, in 2022. Volunteers educated 974 community members through their volunteer activities.*

**Working with a team of over 120 Extension Master Gardener Volunteers, Forsyth County's citizens benefit through educational programming for the home gardener. Educational gardens in Forsyth County managed by this Agent include The Arboretum at Tanglewood Park and the Demonstration Garden at the Agricultural Building.**



# Community Gardening

Because of our work:

- *Community gardeners in 28 gardens across Forsyth County received seeds of fruits and vegetables from N.C. Cooperative Extension. As a result of this seed distribution, gardeners at all participating sites increased their consumption of fruits and vegetables.*
- *114 people reported growing food they ate at home.*
- *482 pounds of produce were harvested for home consumption and an additional 615 pounds were donated to a local food pantry.*
- *Work continued for the 90+ community gardens throughout Forsyth County comprised of over 300 gardeners and 45 trained Community Garden Mentors.*
- *Hiring was a priority for this program in late 2022. A newly hired Community Gardening Program Coordinator was hired in December with a start date of early January 2023.*

**Community gardening supports residents in establishing and sustaining the gardens, primarily by developing local leader's skills in community organizing and sustainable horticulture. By growing gardens and garden leaders, we help residents improve access to fresh produce, enhance environmental stewardship and provide outdoor education for all ages.**

**Matthew Scoggins  
Program Coordinator**



# Success Stories are a significant way we document impacts and outcomes.

## Here are just a couple to enjoy:

To address requests for gardening information, the Horticulture Agent in Forsyth County collaborated with agents in surrounding counties to offer the Piedmont Spring Gardening Series (PSGS) in 2021 and 2022. The virtual series was hosted using Zoom and included eight sessions in 2021 and six sessions in 2022. Topics included: planting, garden maintenance, soils, lawncare, growing fruits and vegetables, integrated pest management, and pollinator gardening. Classes included a lecture, question and answer session, and evaluation questions via Zoom polls to capture participant knowledge gain. Over two years, 810 community members participated in the PSGS. A website hosted recordings of each class as well as additional Extension resources. The website was visited 490 times and people viewed recordings of individual sessions 143 times. In fall 2022, 73 participants responded to a follow-up survey sent by email to collect long-term data on program impacts.



A 12 week (24 session) Urban Farm School course was implemented through which 12 new and beginner small farmers in Forsyth County received research-based training on small scale market gardening practices so they might maximize the production efficiency of a small growing space to supplement participant income. These students attended classroom sessions and established and maintained field plots in which spring crops were grown and maintained. Topics covered included site selection, soil health, crop selection/establishment, production mapping, irrigation, fertility management, integrated pest and disease management, business planning, pre/post harvest produce safety, and direct to consumer marketing. All students identified themselves as employed part-time or unemployed, majority came from zip codes containing documented food deserts where healthy food access is considered inequitably distributed and 2/3 of participants reported having access to less than 1 acre of land for growing.

# Growing Impacts Everyday with our Partners:

We would like to extend a special thank you to the partners, donors and contributors below who worked with us in 2022 to better serve our community.

Alpha Graphics  
Bethany Baptist  
Blanket Creek Nursery  
Carolina Classic Fair  
Central Library and Chef Floyd Davis  
Church Childcare Center  
City of Winston-Salem  
Ephesus Junior Academy  
Evergreen Garden Club  
Forsyth County Agricultural Advisory Board  
Forsyth County ARPA Funds (American Rescue Plan Act)  
Forsyth County Beekeepers  
Forsyth County ECA Association  
Forsyth County Extension Advisory Council  
Forsyth County Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Association  
Forsyth County Farm Bureau  
Forsyth County Government  
Forsyth County Libraries  
Forsyth County Parks and Recreation  
Forsyth County Social Services  
Forsyth County Soil and Water Board  
Forsyth County Smart Start  
Friends of the Arboretum at Tanglewood Park  
Garden Club Council of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County  
Guilford Soil and Water Conservation Service  
Habitat for Humanity of Forsyth County  
Insight Human Services  
Julian Gibson Elementary  
Keep Winston-Salem Beautiful  
Ken Carlson Boys & Girls Club  
Kerner Ridge Assisted Living  
Latino Community Services  
Lewisville Community Center

Lewisville Library  
Little Green Garden Club  
Miracle Grounds Farm at Crossnore  
Communities for Children  
NC Agricultural Foundation  
NC Native Plant Society  
NC Piedmont Triad STEM Education Ecosystem  
NC State Pesticide Safety Education Program  
Neighborhood Hands  
Oaklawn Baptist Church  
Partnership for Healthy Forsyth  
Positive Wellness Alliance Food Pantry  
Quality Education Academy  
Salem Montessori  
Second Harvest Food Bank  
Shallow Ford Foundation  
Southside Calvary After-school  
The Academy at Middle Fork  
The Barn Loft  
The Downtown School  
Triad Baptist Christian Academy  
Venley Clothing, Los Angeles  
Webster Brothers Ace Hardware  
Winston Lake YMCA  
Winston-Salem Rescue Mission  
Winston-Salem Fairgrounds  
Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools  
Winston-Salem Foundation



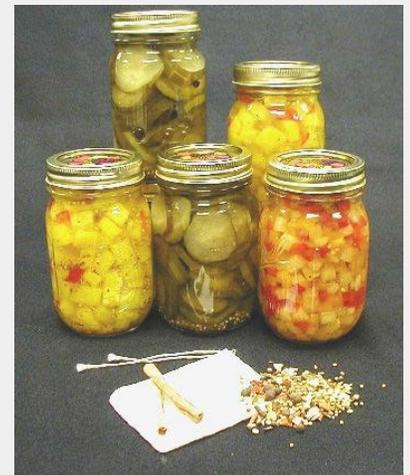


# Family & Consumer Sciences (FCS)/Foods & Nutrition

*Because of our work:*

- *The North Carolina Extension & Community Association (ECA), Inc. volunteers reached over 3200 people and contributed over 5800 volunteer hours amounting to \$173,710 in volunteer service!*
- *The Med Instead of Meds Program reached over 900 people in four counties who increased their fruit and vegetable consumption and now support local foods when cooking, preparing and preserving foods.*
- *Home Preservation classes included over 390 participants who increased their knowledge on food safety and preservation.*
- *Youth nutrition reached 629 children who increased knowledge in fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity.*

**The Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP–Ed), empower children and adults to live a healthy lifestyle through nutrition and physical activity. FCS programs focus on healthy food choices, active lifestyles, prevention of chronic diseases, resource management and environmental intervention. Materials are available in English and Spanish.**



**Virginia Alejo-Lopez  
FCS Agent**

# Livestock & Forage Crops



## Because of our work:

- *Twenty-eight attendees participated in a meat-bird production course. 67% had an increased knowledge for building a business plan, 87% of evaluations indicated an improved knowledge regarding flock biosecurity with 73% planning to create and implement a biosecurity plan.*
- *Over 180 producers registered to attend the Meat Rabbit Production series, with 99 producers attending at least one of the three sessions. Sessions were also recorded and emailed to all those who registered. Sixty-nine percent learned how to develop a business plan, 87% increased knowledge in meat rabbit nutrition, breeding, and reproduction, while 78% gained skills and knowledge to start production or increase production for local markets.*
- *Eighty-three percent and 78% plan to or are implementing recommended practices related to meat rabbit nutrition and related to meat rabbit breeding & reproduction, respectively. Respondents plan to have an average of a 19 doe operation, with a range of does from two to 100. Participants reported an estimated economic impact of \$36,204 would be made or saved as a result of participation in the series.*
- *725 livestock producers were provided technical assistance.*



**This program focuses on the husbandry of domestic livestock that provide meat, fiber, milk or food production, including but not limited to cattle, sheep, swine, equine, goats, poultry and specialty animals, as well as, the forages they consume.**

**April Bowman  
Livestock Agent**

# Natural Resources & Environmental Systems



This program focuses on the value and stewardship of our natural resources by promoting best management practices in the areas of air and water quality, wildlife management, native plant preservation and pollinator protection.

Because of our work:

- 235 participants received technical assistance for wildlife management, including bluebird nest box monitoring, pollinator protection, insect identification and chronic wasting disease in white-tailed deer populations.
- 59 residents, Park Managers, professional landscapers and pesticide applicators learned Integrated Pest Management for invasive plants. Approximately 60 Trees of Heaven were removed from Forsyth County government property.
- 142 residents improved local water quality by receiving technical assistance or programming in the areas of stormwater control, rainwater harvesting, streambank repair and rain gardens.
- 92 participants improved their identification skills regarding the Spotted Lanternfly and its impacts on crops, forest resources and agritourism. An additional 8389 residents increased their awareness of the SLF through digital, social media and local news media outlets.



Phyllis Smith  
NRES Agent



# Growing Everyday!

## Soil & Water Conservation

*Because of our Work:*

- *Facilitated a \$320,000 grant from the North Carolina Land & Water Fund on behalf of Forsyth County and the Smith Reynolds Airport regarding the Stream Restoration of Brushy Fork Creek.*
- *Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) enrolled 10 farms with 354.71 acres bringing the county total to 137 farms with 8,043.36 acres.*
- *Agricultural Cost Share Program (ACSP) awarded four farms with \$33,570 for best management practices.*
- *Two farms qualified for \$22,500 in cost share for the Agricultural Water Resource Program (AgWRAP) best management practices.*
- *Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP) included one residential land owner who qualified for \$4,800 for best management practices.*
- *The no-till drill was utilized by 15 farmers who planted 167.5 acres.*
- *Soil and Water Board consists of 5 elected/appointed individuals who discuss the above listed programs and give support to community events and activities.*



Mike Bowman  
Alex Kiser  
Conservationists

# STEM & STEAM Programs

Science Technology, Engineering and Math  
Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math

Because of our work:

- 387 Forsyth County youth and families participated in gardening classes. Class sessions were paired with garden workshops leading youth from seed to salad.
- 335 Forsyth County youth and families participated in workshops on STEAM: Topics ranged from ocean exploration, robotics, engineering, etc. Youth were often invited to consider specific careers in STEAM.
- 288 Forsyth County youth and families participated in workshops on STEAM Art: conversations about the languages of the universe that work in cooperation. Hands-on art activities allowed students to exercise those principles.
- 52 Forsyth County facilitators participated in training workshops focused on teaching in outdoor learning centers, irrigation, and other agriculture topics.
- 1100 Forsyth County youth and families were met in outreach events, promoting agricultural literacy.

Jeffrey Cates  
Program Assistant

Agricultural literacy equips youth to better understand the languages of the universe using the 4-H model of experiential learning. In schools, after-school programs and public institutions like libraries, STEAM programming is offered to Forsyth County youth and families. Through these in-person conversations, attendees explore the principles that govern science, technology, engineering, art and math. National education standards are honored and reinforced through research based 4-H curriculum. Each session includes hands-on activities which deepen a love of learning.



# Urban Agriculture & Local Foods

Because of our work:

- 1159 community clients including small farmers, food business owners, and home and community gardeners participated in programming spanning topics of vegetable, fruit, and specialty crop production, management and distribution, gaining knowledge and/or skills related to local food systems, agriculture and food production.
- 2128 individuals had questions answered related to food production in conversations at their farms or while using garden scales.
- 97 individuals began home food production by starting a vegetable and/or fruit garden.
- 12 new and beginner farmers were trained via the Forsyth County Urban Farm School Program.
- 69 farmers increased or improved knowledge, attitudes, and/or skills as related to best management production practices, pest/insect, disease, weed, and wildlife management, financial farm management tools and practices, or alternative agriculture, and value-added enterprises
- 7 farmers and community organizations received grant funding with the help of Forsyth County Center Extension staff.

**Providing educational programming for small and limited resource farmers, as well as, new urban growers and other residents about fruit and vegetable production on the farm and in home gardens. Extension works to provide technical advising on marketing of locally grown produce and food products to consumers through farmers markets, local stores and the Visit NC Farms phone application to help our local farmers and consumers.**



Celine Richard - Urban Agriculture  
& Small Farms Agent  
Jeffrey Cates - Program Assistant



# Volunteer Development

Because of our work:



## Volunteer Hours & Dollar Value:

- **Total: 14,498 hours, \$434,216 @ \$29.95 (Independent Sector, 2022)**
- **4-H: 1,130 hours, \$33,843.50**
- **Advisory Councils: 42 hours, \$1,258**
- **ECA: 5,826 hours, \$174,489**
- **EMGV: 7,121 hours, \$213,274**
- **Other Areas: 166 hours, \$4,972**

## Top Volunteer Impacts:

- **110 adult participants acquired the skills needed to serve as a volunteer.**
- **Community Garden Seed Distribution: EMGVs contributed 49 volunteer hours (\$1,468 dollar value) to distribute seeds to 28 community gardens. Nine gardens completed an evaluation and reported that 114 people were growing food to eat at home. 482 pounds of food were harvested for home consumption and an additional 615 pounds were donated to a local food pantry.**
- **The first EMGV training was held since 2019 - 25 students were accepted into the program, and 24 completed the initial training. The new volunteers, in their first year, contributed 1075 volunteer hours, at a value of \$32,196.25. Students reported feeling prepared to handle questions asked by members of the public, changing their gardening habits because of knowledge gained during the course, and gaining more confidence in new and routine tasks around their garden.**
- **A 4-H Volunteer coached 4-H teams that won State competitions in Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program (WHEP) and Forestry Judging. One team won 3rd place in the National WHEP competition, and another will attend Nationals for Forestry Judging in 2023.**

Anika Parks  
Volunteer Coordinator



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