

Garden Thyme



Monthly Newsletter of the East Central Alabama Master Gardeners Association

July, 2014

From Our President, Ann Hammond...

Summer is officially here. As if we haven't already been warm. Afternoon showers, hot steamy days, sweat everywhere (or perspiration) – what a wonderful way to garden. I'm not complaining, the rain is WONDERFUL. And who doesn't like a sauna!!

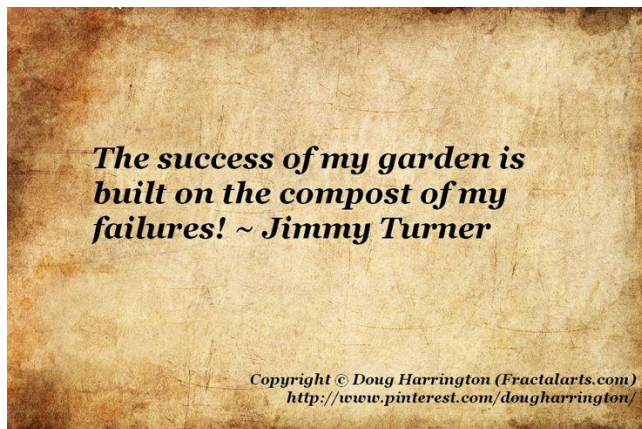
I want to thank everyone for helping with the extension conference items at the last meeting. It is so great to plan and create as a group. Remember, this month the meeting will be a week earlier – July 14th instead of the 21st due to the extension conference dates – and we'll be hearing the presentation that will be done at the conference.

Hope everyone had a happy and safe July 4th !

*Each morning everyone gathered as much as he needed,
and when the sun grew hot, it melted away.*

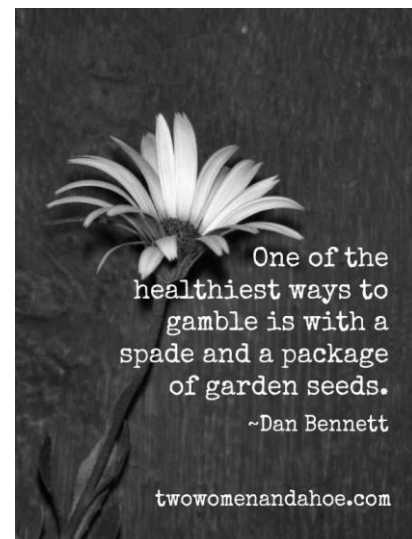
Exodus 16:21

Ann



CONGRATULATIONS
Ann and Darren Hammond
On their First Grandbaby!
LUKE COLE
Born July 7, 2014 @ 2:34 p.m.
7lbs. 5ozs. 21.5 inches tall

Don't forget to let us know if you need help with your gardening. Just fill out the Garden Friends form and give it to Ann. We're here to help.
Form on page 12.

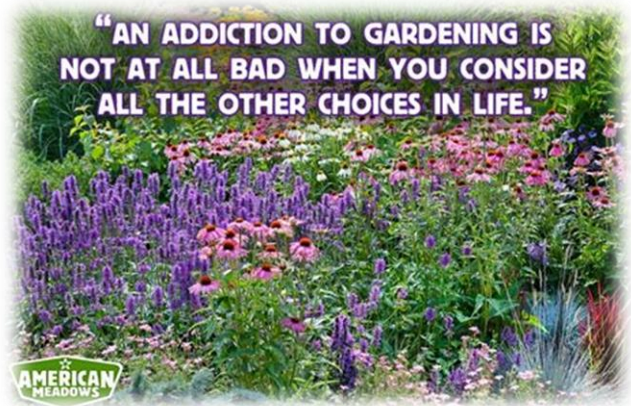


2014 July						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

JULY Birthdays
America – July 4, 1776
Happy Birthday America



"A garden is evidence of faith. It links us with all the misty figures of the past who also planted and were nourished by the fruits of their planting."
by Gladys Taber



Only one president was born on the 4th of July – who was he?

On the fourth of July, 1826 these two former presidents died within hours of each other. Who were they?

July Fun Facts

July is

National Ice Cream Month

National Blueberry Month

National Hot Dog Month

National Watermelon Month

National Baked Bean Month

National Pickle Month

July 6th National Fried Chicken Day

July 7th National Chocolate Day

July 9th National Sugar Cookie Day

July 11th National Blueberry Muffin Day

July 12th National Pecan Pie Day

July 13th National French Fries Day

July 15th National Gummi Worm Day

July 20th National Lollipop Day

July 30th National Cheesecake Day

July 31st Jump for Jelly Beans Day

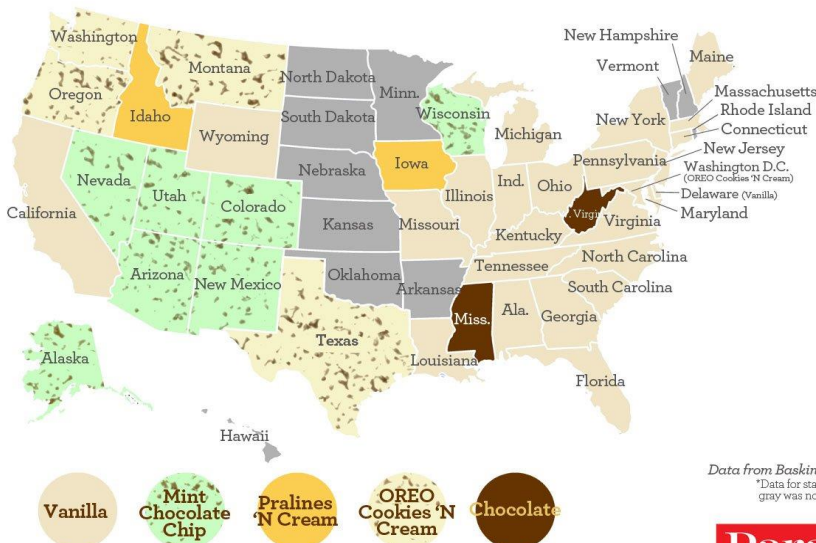
1st Saturday in July is Cherry Spitting Day

July 10th Don't Step on a Bee Day

July 21st National Monkey Day

Most Popular Ice Cream Flavors by State

What's your flavor? These are the top-selling ice creams at Baskin Robbins locations across America.



Data from Baskin Robbins
*Data for states shaded gray was not available.

Parade

Calvin Coolidge was born on July 4, 1872 in Plymouth, Vermont.

John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. Five years later James Monroe died on the fourth of July in 1831.



NATURE'S LABOR FORCE

Pollinators and their place in the garden

By Martin Stone, Alabama Gardener, June 2014

They are the ones who work behind the scenes. We all know them. Their efforts are indispensable for success, yet they are rarely acknowledged, seldom rewarded and usually taken for granted. Few people – including gardeners – realize that pollinators are directly responsible for the growth of more than one-third of our food crops here in the U.S. Please give that some serious consideration as you eat over the next few days.

While pollinators are of great value to U.S. agriculture, it is likely that their value in your garden is much greater. This is because they have the greatest impact on the productivity of fruits and vegetables, while crops such as corn or wheat are pollinated by the wind.

If you are wondering which plants in your garden insects pollinate, there is a simple way to tell: If your plant has a showy flower, it is pollinated by an insect. Squash, watermelon, tomatoes, peppers, apples, peaches, pears, blueberries, blackberries and many more crops on our gardens – as well as in farmer's fields – heavily depend on them.

A successful garden is one that is visited often by pollinators. But it is not enough for them to simply visit. The garden must entice them into extended visits. If you are fortunate or skilled enough, some might even make your garden your permanent home or they may choose to make their home nearby, to stay close to your garden. Therefore, it is important to understand what types of pollinators are visiting and how you can make their visits more productive.

While it is true that most pollinators are bees, keep in mind that there are other pollinators out there. Even among bees, there are more than 4,000 species of native bees, and different species have different behaviors.

Honeybees are not native to the Americas, but they have become an important component of our nation's food production. Even though we often think of them as primarily living in manufactured hives, they also live in the wild. Because they are social creatures, they live in colonies and are most often found in hollow trees and fallen logs. Honey bee hives add a high degree of productivity and sophistication to the garden. Of course, they have the added benefit of producing honey and comb.

Bees that nest in wood and cavities are easy to accommodate in your garden. Simply drill some holes into dead wood on the southeast side a little larger than ¼ inch in diameter and 6 inches deep. A dead log would work wonderfully for this purpose, but untreated wood from the lumber yard would suffice,



too. Attach it to side of a shed or mount it on a pole. The holes should be level with the ground and secured to a post so they do not shade and disrupt the life cycle of developing bees. The holes are most effective when placed 3-8 feet above the ground. Hollow bamboo may be gathered and placed in a similar arrangement.

Bumblebees are some of our most important pollinators, but they are not very well understood by most of us. They live in small colonies in the ground or near it. The female emerges in the spring and seeks a hole in the ground such as a mouse den or in dead leaves piled up in a corner of the garden. Tidiness is not conducive to hosting bumblebees – if you cannot stand having a clump of grass, then designate a “wild” spot where they may exist and your garden can continue to be a good host.

Butterfly houses have been popular in gardens for years. While there may be some question as to their utility, especially if they are purchased based on aesthetics rather than biology, they are better than nothing at all. One of the most important considerations is that there are some twigs for the butterflies to rest on inside the house. If it is empty inside, then it is not useful, but rather just another garden ornament.



Alabama Smart Yard

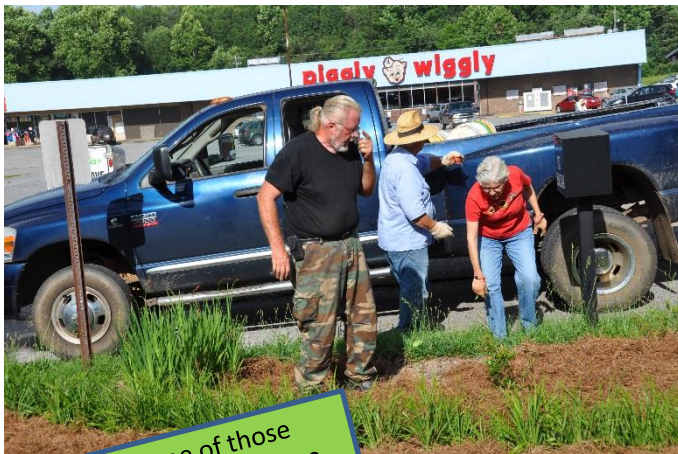
Alabama Cooperative Extension System

On June 24, nine ECAMGA members and a guest descended on the Smart Yard located at the Clay County ACES office building. The yard is now one year old and is growing quite nicely. This trip was to spread pine straw on the yard and spread it we did. Ten bales of straw were spread out as ground cover and we counted the need for 10 additional bales. After chatting about the plants we decided there is a need for additional plants in the area between the curved walkway and the sidewalk. Gary and Janet volunteered to bring some roses to plant.

There was also discussion about the rain barrel. No decision has been made on how to “dress-up” the barrel so give us your ideas. Paint flowers or butterflies or such on it? We don’t really want to hide it as it is the foundation of the Smart Yard. Let us know what you think.



This picture was taken of the Irises at the Smart Yard when they were in bloom this spring. Photo courtesy of Kimberly Good, Clay County Regional Extension Agent.



He's one of those Master Gardeners we hear about...



2014 Fall Flower & Garden Fest Healthy Living – Healthy Gardening

The 2014 Fall flower & Gardening Fest will be held Friday and Saturday, October 17 and 18, at the Truck Crops Experiment Station in Crystal Station, Mississippi, which is about 25 miles south of Jackson. Hours are from 9a.m. to 2 p.m. both days and vendors will have food and drinks available.

This is the largest home gardening show in the southeast. Average attendance is 6,000 people over the two day event. Admission and parking are free. The garden, grounds, seminars and one of the tour wagons are handicap accessible.

There will be seminar sessions – each occurring at the same times at different locations and on really interesting topics. There will also be walking tours and workshops, again on very interesting topics.

Let's see if we can get a group together to check this event out. Folks who have attended in the past said it is THE EVENT that you must attend. I'm in – are you??



Folklore and Old Wives Tales

In summer cut wood on the full of the moon, this drives sap out and wood will cure white.

To pick a ripe watermelon place a broom straw crosswise on the melon. If it turns lengthwise the melon is ripe.

Sow your winter turnips on July 25th – you will make a good crop no matter the weather.

Ice placed on the nape of the neck will stop a nose bleed.

To prevent a cut from becoming infected place a green grape leaf on it.

For an infected cut, beat some banana peels into a pulp and place on the infection.

SURVEY SAYS.....

Well....I have five survey results. Not what I was hoping for but it'll have to do. So here goes.... There was no concensus on the favorite fruit – strawberries made in on four of the lists but not as everybody's favorite. The fruits that made the #1 slot were: cantaloupe, bananas, peaches, all berries and strawberries. The other fruits listed were grapes, green plums, watermelon, cherries, oranges, plums, blueberries and apples. As for the vegetables, two folks picked tomatoes for their favorite with peas, cabbage and squash for the other choices. Also listed were butterbeans, turnips, corn/hominy, cucumbers, peppers, lettuce, okra, potatoes, carrots, asparagus and onions. Thanks to those who offered their favorites.

CEU OPPORTUNITIES

For those of us that need CEUs to maintain certification here are two great opportunities.

Interns, even though you don't need CEUs your first year, these can count as volunteer hours. And, if you don't get to view them as they occur, they get archived so you can watch them later.



All Bugs Good and Bad 2014 Webinar Series



Photo Credit: David Cappaert, Michigan State University, bugwood.org

Minimize Mosquito
Problems

August 1, 2014
2:00 PM EST

Molly Keck

Please join us for this webinar series for information you can use about good and bad insects. Webinars will be on the first Friday of each month at 2:00 PM EST.

Late summer is prime time for mosquitoes and the time of year when West Nile usually peaks. Learn how to protect yourself and your family from mosquitoes by reducing breeding sites, resting sites, and avoiding them altogether.

For connection information, visit: <https://learn.extension.org/events/1370>.

For more information on the series visit:
<http://www.extension.org/pages/70120>.



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Urban IPM, Bee Health, Invasive Species, Gardens and Landscapes &
Disasters.



LUNCH & LEARN



A series of free gardening programs
sponsored by Calhoun County
Master Gardeners & Calhoun County
Commission

Held the 4th Wednesday of each
month at the Cane Creek
Community Garden at McClellan
Noon-1pm ~ bring your own lunch!

July 23rd

Dani Carroll, Regional Extension Agent, ACES
"Creating a Bee Friendly Garden"

August 27th

Jason Powell, Petals from the Past
"Tough Plants for Southern Gardens"

September 24th

Hayes Jackson, Urban Regional Extension Agent, ACES
"Easy Plants for Difficult Places"

As is the garden so is the gardener.

Inch by inch, row by row, I'm gonna make this garden grow.
God made rainy days so gardeners could get housework done.
Only two percent of insects are harmful. Why are they all in my
garden?

"There are no gardening mistakes, only experiments". Phillip's Rule
"I consider every plant hardy until I have killed it myself".

Smither's Brown Thumb Dictum

Weeds multiply in direct proportions to your efforts to eliminate them.
May all your weeds be wildflowers.

August 2, 2014

2014 Farm, Home and Wildlife Expo
Chilton Research and Extension Center
12:00 – 5:00
120 County Road 756
Clanton, AL

Programs, tours activities for the
entire family.



WORK DAY

On June 16th we met prior to our scheduled meeting for a work day to build the Tabletop Garden Table and design the backdrop for our presentation at the NACAA Conference in Mobile on July 20, 2014.



There were 22 members present with Charlie, Gary, Jack, Ralph, Paul and Anna working on the actual construction outside while inside, the “women folk” came up with a design for the backdrop with the club’s banner, pictures and information about the Tabletop Garden.

A really big “Thank You” goes out to Michelle French for being our photographer and volunteering to put the backdrop together.

Another big “Thank You” goes to Anna for volunteering to do the actual presentation in Mobile.



- Other MG groups doing presentations include:
- Autauga – community gardens
 - Baldwin – various vegetable projects
 - Capital City – school garden project
 - Central – cookbook project
 - Chilton – partnership with experimental station
 - Coffee – high school greenhouse project
 - Lee – considering a contribution of effort
 - MGNA – vegetable demo garden
 - Wiregrass – youth services center vegetable garden



A sunny landscape gathers no moss

Danielle Carroll, Regional Extension Agent
Home Ground, Gardens and Home Pests



We need trees for many reasons. Trees reduce air pollution, filtering the air we breathe. The leaves absorb ozone, carbon monoxide and sulfur dioxide and release precious oxygen. Trees reduce the threat of flooding by intercepting storm water runoff. Trees provide homes for wildlife and treehouses for us, of course. The benefits of trees - economically, environmentally and socially - are overwhelming.

The benefit we probably think of first, though, is shade. Strategically placed trees can cut down on cooling bills in the summer, and I don't know many people who want to have a picnic out in a hot open area.

This time of year, many phone calls come in pertaining to lawns a lot of which have to do with moss overtaking the lawn. Moss is not actually taking over the lawn of course, it just happens to grow in conditions unfavorable for the growth of grasses - nature plants a ground cover where lawns do not grow well.

What is moss?

Mosses are small, green, primitive plants with reduced leaves and a mass of fine, threadlike stems. They form a low, green mat atop the soil, which makes an excellent ground cover. Mosses do not steal nutrients and water from lawn grasses as they produce their own food and can absorb nutrients directly from the air when the humidity is right.

I love the almost lime green color of some of our mosses. Many homeowners may gasp at the thought of moss growing in their landscape, but it is quite beautiful and has been a part of Japanese

Gardens for years. It is also a good bio-indicator of air and water quality.

Where do mosses grow?

More than 400 species of moss (liverworts and algae, too) grow in the Southeastern United States. As you can imagine with so many species, moss grows in a variety of places, some even in full sun. But for the most part, moss thrives in Alabama's shady areas. We see it often in our forested areas.

Seeing as how moss will grow on the side of a brick, compacted soils are no problem - remember the nutrients are coming from the humid air, not the ground. Perhaps your yard does not drain well and a good rain leaves behind soggy areas which exacerbate. No worries - moss will grow there too. Maybe your yard is "au naturel", with no fertilizer or lime - moss doesn't mind. Now ask yourself: What do shade, soggy soil, low fertility and compaction have in common? These are all places lawn grasses do not grow well, usually in the shadow of trees.

What can I do about it?

Unfortunately, there is not a magic cure. Sure, you could spray it with something that would work temporarily, but the moss will return and the grass still won't grow there. To actually rid yourself of moss, you must modify the environment.

You have a choice to make. To allow in enough light for grass to grow properly, it is usually necessary to open up tree

canopies or drastically thin or remove trees so the grass receives more sun. I always pick shade - the heat of July and August make up my mind for me. Beside shade may not be the only factor. Fertility, soil pH, soil compaction and water drainage all need to be addressed if moss is not in your landscape plans.

How do I grow it?

Nature does a good job of planting moss. It really is an excellent, low to no maintenance ground cover in gardens and around shady areas. If you already have moss growing, great. Hand remove, or chemically remove, any surrounding grasses and weeds. Scratch the surface lightly - the moss will spread faster.

You can relocate a few clumps here and there, "planting" it in areas devoid of other plants. Keep relocated moss watered, although nature will usually do this for you, and harvest it from areas similar in environmental conditions to where you are transplanting.

Speaking of which, there is a way to speed up the process of growing moss on stone statues or brick paths as well. It may take a month or more before moss starts to establish. Try a simple recipe of 2 parts moss (off your own property), 2 parts water and 1 part buttermilk. Blend well and spread over the area you are trying to cover. Remember to sprinkle or mist often - you don't want it to dry out.

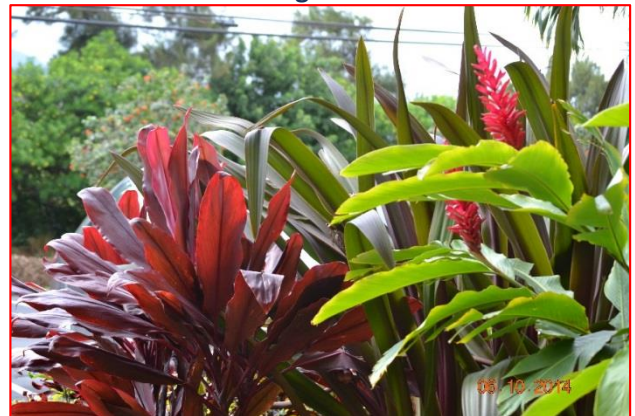
The Anniston Star, June 1, 2014

How Does Your Garden Grow?

All pictures taken and willingly shared by Martha Burnett on her recent visit to Maui, Hawaii, being in the tropics, has such lush vegetation. Thanks for sharing, Martha.

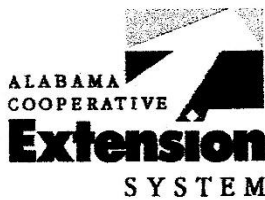


Hawaiian Ti plant with Bromeliad on right



Strange Gardening Facts Quiz

1. What is NOT true about Tomatoes?
 - A) People used to think they were poisonous.
 - B) They are the official juice of Ohio.
 - C) China is the biggest producer of tomatoes.
 - D) There are 57 varieties of tomatoes.
- 2.. Which of the following is a member of the daisy family?
 - A) lettuce
 - B) cabbage
 - C) brussels sprouts
 - D) leek
3. What percent of the following is a member of the daisy family?
 - A) 10 percent
 - B) 30 percent
 - C) 50 percent
 - D) 70 percent
4. Which of the following crops makes the top ten list of the most popular s?
 - A) corn
 - B) tomatoes
 - C) cucumbers
 - D) carrots
5. What was 8 feet 8 inches tall?
 - A) The largest edible fungi
 - B) The tallest sunflower
 - C) The tallest tomato plant
 - D) The largest leaf
6. How old is the longest living bristlecone pine tree?
 - A) about 700 years
 - B) about 1000 years
 - C) about 5000 years
 - D) about 7000 years
7. The largest growing tree grows at what rate per month?
 - A) 5 inches
 - B) 1 foot
 - C) 2 feet
 - D) 2.5 feet
8. How much did the largest tomato ever grown weigh?
 - A) 4 lbs 6 ounces
 - B) 5 lbs 8 ounces
 - C) 7 lbs 12 ounces
 - D) 9 lbs
9. Which is not a member of the lily family?
 - A) onion
 - B) okra
 - C) asparagus
 - D) chives
10. What is not true about pumpkins?
 - A) They were used to treat snakebites
 - B) they were believed to remove freckles
 - C) Most of the world's supply of pumpkin comes from Europe
 - D) They are 90 percent water



FCS-2058

ALABAMA A&M AND AUBURN UNIVERSITIES

Alabama Cottage Food Law

The Law: *Individuals can produce certain nonhazardous foods in their homes.*



Cottage food **cannot** be sold to the following:

- Restaurants
- Grocery stores
- Novelty shops
- Over the Internet



The Cottage Food Law requires the following on labels:

- Name of the individuals or business
- Address of the individual or business
- Statement: **THIS FOOD IS NOT INSPECTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**



Foods that can be sold directly to the consumer:

- Candies
- Baked goods
 - › Cakes
 - › Cookies
 - › Pastries
 - › Doughnuts
 - › Danish
 - › Breads
- Jams and jellies
- Dried herbs
- Dried herb mixes



The person operating a food business under the Cottage Food Law must attend and pass a food safety course approved by the Alabama Department of Public Health every 5 years.



Foods that **cannot** be sold directly to the consumer:

- Baked goods with an ingredient that requires refrigeration:
 - › Custard pies
 - › Danish with cream filling
 - › Cakes with a whipped topping
- Juices from fruits and vegetables
- Milk products
- Soft or hard cheeses
- Pickles
- Barbeque sauces
- Canned fruits and vegetables
- Garlic in oil
- Meats in any form



A note about sales: You cannot exceed \$20,000 in sales of the food described under the Alabama Cottage Food Law.

Jean Weese, Extension Food Safety Specialist, Auburn University Food Systems Institute

For more information, call your county Extension office. Look in your telephone directory under your county's name to find the number.

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The Alabama Cottage Food Law went into effect June 1, 2014.



www.aces.edu

Garden Friends Work Order

Work Order _____

Time _____

Date _____

Location _____

Directions _____

Contact _____

Work to be Performed _____

Tools Needed _____

Other _____