

South Carolina Living

Congaree magic

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SC RECIPE

Seeing seafood

HUMOR ME

Don't feed the vultures



Joe Namath

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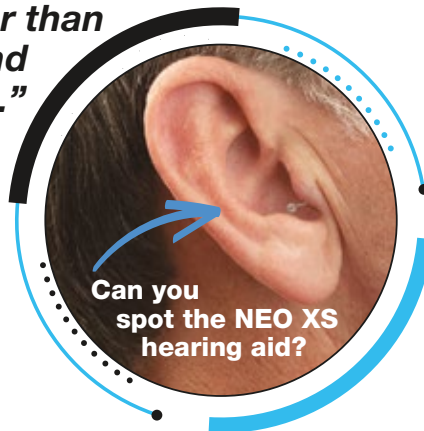
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Congaree National Park, home to rare synchronous fireflies and knobby-kneed cypress trees (above), is a precious environment and a unique national gem. Photo by Thomas Hammond.



tri-countyelectric.net

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Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Friday, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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Santee, SC 29142
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CO-OP NEWS EDITOR

Sheila D. Rivers



“We’ll keep showing up, planning thoughtfully and putting in hard work to fulfill our shared mission—to make life better.”

A step forward, a reason for hope

AT TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, our promise to you has always been clear—to deliver energy that is safe, dependable and affordable, not just for today, but for future generations, too. This promise is especially important now as South Carolina continues to grow. With new homes, schools and more industries continuing to pop up, the demand for electricity is rising faster than any of us has seen before. To keep up with this growing demand, we need energy policies that promote smart planning and smart investment.

Earlier this year, the South Carolina General Assembly took a meaningful step forward by passing the South Carolina Energy Security Act (H. 3309). This important legislation begins to address the growing strain on our state’s electric grid. It opens the door for additional power generation, streamlines regulatory processes and places long-term grid reliability at the forefront of South Carolina’s energy planning.

At Tri-County Electric, we have been advocating for these kinds of changes for a long time. We know that maintaining balance between affordability, reliability and planning for growth in our communities is a tough challenge. But this new bill is a sign that our state leaders are really listening, and it provides hope that together, we can make things better.

While the new legislation puts us on a better path, there is still important work ahead. Building new infrastructure takes time. It requires careful planning, teamwork and the support of people across our state. It’s going to take collaboration between cooperatives, lawmakers, regulators and each of you, as our members, to ensure our grid can handle future demands without sacrificing the service you rely on today.

At Tri-County Electric, we’re focused on the tasks at hand. We’re investing in our systems and our workforce to keep the power flowing. We’re making sure to engage in state and national discussions so that your voice isn’t just heard but valued. We are committed to keeping you informed throughout this process, because we know that trust and transparency are what being part of a cooperative is all about.

As we look ahead, challenges are bound to arise, but so are new opportunities to grow, adapt and lead. With each opportunity comes a renewed sense of purpose. That purpose fuels our commitment to building strong partnerships, reinforces our focus on long-term reliability and guides us as we work together to shape a future that reflects the values, resilience and vision of the communities we serve.

Thank you for your continued support. We’re committed to the long haul. We’ll keep showing up, planning thoughtfully and putting in hard work to fulfill our shared mission—to make life better.

Chad T. Lowder

CHAD T. LOWDER

Chief Executive Officer

Is your name on our list?

See unclaimed capital credits at co-op's website

TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE has unclaimed capital credits for former members of the cooperative. The current list of names and last-known addresses can be viewed online at tri-countyelectric.net, or you may obtain a list at one of our office locations.

If your name appears on the list, please contact the office. If you recognize a name and know where that person is, please have him or her contact our office. In order to claim the capital credits, the individual will need to provide identification and proof they are the member who owned the account with the unclaimed capital credit.

In order to claim the capital credits for a deceased person, the cooperative will need a copy of his or her Death Certificate and a copy of the Certificate of Appointment from the Judge of Probate, or you may obtain a Capital Credit Affidavit at one of our offices.

In order to claim funds, please contact us by e-mail at capitalcredits@tce.coop or by calling the cooperative's office at (877) 874-1215 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday–Thursday, and 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Friday. Please reference your call as concerning unclaimed capital credits.

Petition candidate deadline Sept. 16

THE DEADLINE is 5 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 16, for petition candidates for Tri-County Electric Cooperative's Board of Trustees to submit petitions to run in the election to be held Saturday, Nov. 15, at the 2025 Annual Meeting of Members.

Qualified candidates can run for the board by petition of fellow members. Official petition forms must be obtained from the cooperative no earlier than Aug. 18 and must be signed by any 50 or more active members. Running by petition is one of two methods by which candidates can seek seats on TCE's nine-member board, which governs the cooperative, setting rates and policies. The other method is for candidates to be nominated by the Nominating Committee. This committee, made up of appointed co-op members, meets between 60 and 90 days before the annual meeting to name candidates.

By either method, a candidate for a trustee district seat must live in that district. The district maps are available online at tri-countyelectric.net or at any of the cooperative's three offices.

Three trustee seats—those for districts 1-B, 2-C and 3-C—will be up for election at the annual meeting, to be held at the Tri-County's St. Matthews headquarters. Trustees are elected for a three-year term. The members in attendance will have the opportunity to vote by secret ballot for candidates to represent their district. Only members residing in the district whose seat is up for election will be eligible to cast a ballot for that district's seat. If a member has been properly nominated and has no opposition, that member may be voted to the board by acclamation. State law requires members to be physically present when voting.

All members who have been nominated by the Nominating Committee or who have been nominated by petition will have their names appear on the ballot at the annual meeting.

Any eligible member interested in running for the board should contact Tri-County Electric Cooperative's main office at (803) 874-1215 or, toll free, 1 (877) 874-1215.

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SHEILA RIVERS

Washington Youth Tour makes an impact

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

KIMBERLY RIVERA AGUIRRE admits her interests lie more in animals and photography than the military. So, she was surprised by the impact a visit to the National Museum of the Marine Corps had on her.

“Being there woke me up, in a way,” says Rivera Aguirre, a rising senior at Calhoun County High School. “I learned a lot about what they went through and saw so much that I didn’t even know was going on. I have a newfound respect for them.”

Rivera Aguirre’s eye-opening experience in Triangle, Virginia, was a typical takeaway for her and the three other local high school students sponsored by Tri-County Electric on Washington Youth Tour, a five-day trip in June to the nation’s capital and surrounding landmarks. Rivera Aguirre, Auri Lee, Carlitos Alonso-Rodriguez and Ja’Kaden Fredrick joined 67 other high school students representing South Carolina’s electric cooperatives on visits to historic and educational sites such as George Washington’s Mount Vernon, Fort McHenry in Baltimore and the Smithsonian museums in Washington.

During their visit to Capitol Hill, the students were welcomed into U.S. Rep. James Clyburn’s office, toured the Capitol complex and went to the Library of Congress.

“It was such a nice experience getting to see where the Dred Scott case or Marbury v. Madison (another historic Supreme Court case) was decided,” says Rivera Aguirre. “I was thinking, ‘Right here where I am, so many important people stood here.’”

The students also viewed the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, visited the National Holocaust Memorial Museum and found names of fallen soldiers from their area on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall.



Tri-County Electric sponsored (from left) Ja’Kaden Fredrick, Carlitos Alonso-Rodriguez, Auri Lee and Kimberly Rivera Aguirre on Washington Youth Tour.

PHOTOS BY JOSH P. CROTZER

“Right here where I am, so many important people stood here.”

—KIMBERLY RIVERA AGUIRRE

“The Holocaust museum was so sad,” says Lee. “But it taught me a lot more than I’d learned in school.”

The trip was also an opportunity for the students to interact with peers from other parts of South Carolina and the 43 other state co-op delegations that converged on Washington that week. The Youth Tourists traded state pins with one another—South Carolina’s pins depicting the notorious Lizard Man were popular—and came together for Youth Day, where they heard from national cooperative

leaders and inspirational speakers.

“It’s a once-in-a-lifetime experience,” says Lee. “I had a lot of fun and got to meet a lot of different people. It definitely made an impact on me.”

That same can be said for Rivera Aguirre.

“I love my country, but I really didn’t know much about it,” she says. “Being able to see the inner workings and learn more about our history has actually made me a little more patriotic.”



In Contemplative Court at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Auri Lee reflects on what she’s seen and learned.



Carlitos Alonso-Rodriguez salutes during a playing of “The Star-Spangled Banner” at the Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine, where Francis Scott Key penned the words to the national anthem.

Qualifications to run for the board

TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE is governed by a nine-member Board of Trustees. Trustees are nominated by the Nominating Committee or by petition and are elected to a three-year term.

At the next annual membership meeting, three trustee seats will be up for election—those for districts 1-B, 2-C and 3-C. The election will be held at the 2025 Annual Meeting of Members, set for Saturday, Nov. 15, at the Tri-County Electric's St. Matthews headquarters. Once elected, trustees must also meet Continuing Qualifications, as outlined in the co-op's bylaws and excerpted below.

Qualifications

The following are the qualifications that must be met before a member can be elected to the cooperative's Board of Trustees, and are found in Section 5.02 of Tri-County's bylaws: any Trustee or Trustee candidate must comply.

1. **General Trustee Qualifications.** A Trustee or Trustee candidate must:
 - a. Be a natural person;
 - b. Have the capacity to enter legally binding contracts;
 - c. While a Trustee and during the 365 days immediately preceding the Trustee election, maintain their primary residential abode within the boundaries of the applicable residential Trustee District;
 - d. While a Trustee, and during the twenty-five (25) years immediately prior to becoming a Trustee, not:
 - i. Be, nor have been, convicted of a felony; or
 - ii. Plead, nor have pled, guilty to a felony.
2. **Membership Qualifications.** While a Trustee, and during the 365 days immediately prior to becoming a Trustee, a Trustee or Trustee candidate must:
 - a. Be a Member using, receiving, and purchasing electric service from the Cooperative at the Trustee's or Trustee candidate's primary residence, as determined by South Carolina voter registration law; and
 - b. Be current in all respects regarding payment to the Cooperative of Additional Payments and obligations, and not be subject to disconnection for

non-payment of electric service at the Trustee or Trustee candidate's primary residence.

3. **Conflict of Interest Disqualification.** A Trustee or Trustee candidate must not be or have been:
 - a. A spouse or Close Relative of any existing Trustee, Cooperative employee, or Cooperative subsidiary employee;
 - b. Employed by, materially affiliated with, or share a material financial interest with, any other Trustee;
 - c. Engaged in, nor employed by, materially affiliated with, or have a material financial interest in, any individual or entity:
 - i. Directly and substantially competing with the Cooperative or any Cooperative subsidiary; or
 - ii. Possessing a substantial conflict of interest with the Cooperative or any Cooperative subsidiary.
 - d. Previously subject to an involuntary separation of employment from the Cooperative or any Cooperative subsidiary; or
 - e. While a Trustee or during the five (5) years immediately prior to becoming a Trustee, employed by the Cooperative or any Cooperative subsidiary, or engaged contractually (as an employee, principal, owner, partner, or shareholder, except through passive investment) with a firm that contracts with the Cooperative or any Cooperative subsidiary as a prime or sub-contractor.

Nominations

A member can be nominated for the board in two ways:

1. By the appointed Nominating Committee of the cooperative. The Nominating Committee meets between 60 and 90 days before the annual meeting.
2. By petition by fellow members. Official petition forms must be obtained from the cooperative no earlier than August 18, 2025 and must be signed by any 50 or more active members. By either method, a candidate for trustee district seat must live in that district. The district maps are available online at tri-countyelectric.net or at any of the cooperative's three offices.

Elections

Board elections take place at the Annual Meeting. All members who have been nominated by the Nominating Committee or who have been nominated by petition will have their names appear on the ballot.

The members in attendance will have the opportunity to vote by secret ballot for candidates to represent their district. Only members residing in the district whose seat is up for

election will be eligible to cast a ballot for that district's seat. If a member has been properly nominated and has no opposition, that member may be voted to the board by acclamation. State law requires members to be physically present when voting.

The full Bylaws are available in the Member Portal on Tri-County's website, tri-countyelectric.net. Any eligible member interested in running for the board should contact Tri-County Electric Cooperative's main office at (803) 874-1215 or, toll free, 1 (877) 874-1215.

Plan to join us!

Annual Meeting Nov. 15

Tri-County Electric Cooperative will hold drive-thru only registration for its 2025 annual meeting Nov. 15.

Drive-thru registration will take place at the cooperative's St. Matthews headquarters. If an election is held, there will be electronic voting and possibly early voting. An election will only be held if someone files a petition by Sept. 16.

Look for more information in upcoming issues of *South Carolina Living*.

BYLAW-REQUIRED ACTIONS

Nominating Committee

Appointed between 60-90 days prior to Annual Meeting.

Deadline for petition candidates

Sept 16: Eligible members interested in running for the board should contact Tri-County at (803) 874-1215 or toll-free 1 (877) 874-1215. Official petition forms must be obtained from the cooperative no earlier than Aug. 18 and must be signed by any 50 or more active members.

Nominations posted

At least 30 days prior to Annual Meeting.

Notice of Annual Meeting

Published at least 10 days but not more than 45 days before the date of the meeting if there is no election.

Published at least 30 days but not more than 60 days before the date of the meeting if there is an election.



TCE Lineman David Blizzard directs traffic at last year's drive-thru annual meeting.

How home appliances affect your bill

Small adjustments can help you save energy and money

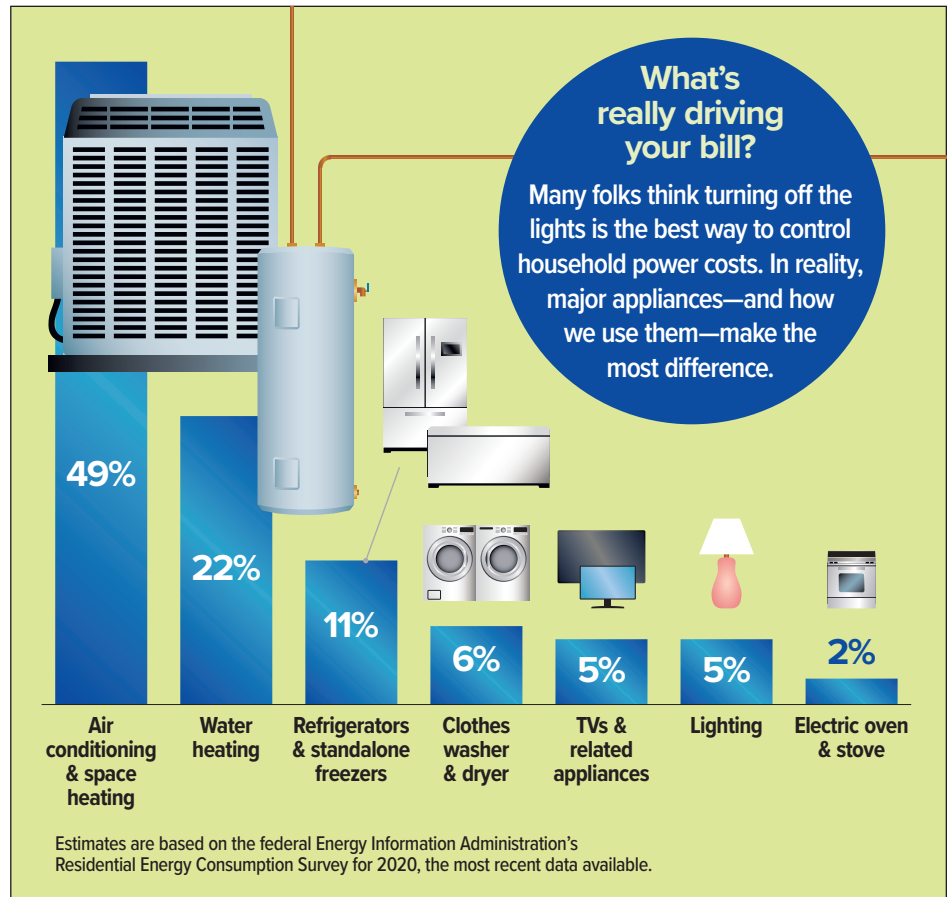
WHILE YOU CAN'T CONTROL the cost of electricity, you can still take meaningful steps at home toward lowering your Tri-County Electric power bill. Being mindful of how much electricity you consume—and when you use it—is the most effective way to take control of your monthly energy costs.

It's true that every little bit counts. But you might be surprised to learn that some steps are more meaningful than others. For example, turning off the lights when you leave a room is a good habit, but it has a minimal impact on your energy bill. Light bulbs are far from the biggest energy users in your home, especially as most modern lighting has transitioned to efficient and long-lasting LED bulbs.

Your heating and cooling system, on the other hand, is the largest energy user in your home, accounting for about half of your household energy use on average.

Your HVAC system runs as often as necessary to ensure the indoor temperature matches the number you set on your thermostat, regardless of the weather outside. The more extreme the outdoor temperature, the harder your system will work—and the more electricity it will consume—to keep the indoor temperature at your desired level. HVAC systems have to work even harder to heat and cool leaky and poorly insulated homes.

Some of the other biggest energy users in your home include your water heater, refrigerator, and clothes dryer. While lights and the fridge themselves don't require a lot of electricity to run, the sheer amount of time they draw power can have an impact.



A small adjustment of your habits can make a difference on your power bill. For instance, setting your thermostat back 7-10 degrees higher or lower, depending on the season, for eight hours a day can save you up to 10% annually on heating and cooling costs, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

You can also use smart-home tools, such as a water heater timer or smart

thermostat, to automatically limit your home's energy consumption even while keeping you comfortable. These steps help you save energy and money.

Every household is unique, making it impossible to estimate exactly how much you could save by taking these easy steps. But understanding how your largest appliances use electricity can help you better manage your energy costs.

Don't get hooked by a phisher

IN A PRACTICE known as phishing, criminals use phony emails, texts or other types of digital communications that lure you to click a bad link or download a malicious attachment. Sometimes, these messages purport to be from Tri-County Electric Cooperative.

If you receive an email or text that you are unsure about it, delete it. Never click on a link, open an attachment from or send a reply to an untrusted source. When in doubt, contact Tri-County Electric Cooperative directly to report suspected email scams.



Big day(s)
in D.C.

Natalyia Jordan
celebrated her
17th birthday
with fellow
Youth Tourists.

JOSH P. CROTZER

Washington Youth Tour makes an impact on student

MONDAY, JUNE 16, HAD ALREADY BEEN an eventful day for Natalyia Jordan. After a morning tour of George Washington's Mount Vernon and an afternoon at Arlington National Cemetery, she and the other 70 South Carolina high school students on Washington Youth Tour had a few hours to rest and freshen up before an evening dinner cruise down the Potomac River.

But first, an assortment of confections from Georgetown Cupcake were waiting for the Palmetto State contingent inside their hotel, making Jordan's 17th birthday that much sweeter.

"It's the best birthday I've ever had," says Jordan. "This is the most 'happy birthdays' I've ever gotten. People who aren't even my friends were telling me happy birthday. It's the most known I've ever felt."

Washington Youth Tour is an annual experience for rising high school seniors sponsored by the state's electric cooperatives. Jordan represented Berkeley Electric, one of 21 electric cooperatives and associations sponsoring South Carolina students.

The five-day, all-expenses-paid trip each June gives students the opportunity to learn how government works, walk in the footsteps of the Founding Fathers and honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom. They

also spent a day on Capitol Hill, visiting congressional offices, touring the Capitol Complex and meeting U.S. Sens. Lindsey Graham and Tim Scott on the Capitol steps.

On their final night, South Carolina's students were among more than 1,800 students from 44 states gathered at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center to hear from national cooperative leaders, former Youth Tourists and paralympic gold medalist Mike Schlappi. Schlappi, who was shot in the chest when he was 14 and lost the ability to walk, gave a motivating keynote address and challenged the students to overcome difficult circumstances.

"I've had a low point in my life where I felt like, 'What's the point of anything?'" says Jordan. "(Schlappi had) a low point, and he's risen from that and he's doing amazing things. It was inspiring."

Jordan says the entire trip through the nation's capital and surrounding landmarks has made an impact on the way she feels about her country and herself.

"It's made me more patriotic and also makes me feel less afraid to be myself," says Jordan. "If you are yourself, you will attract the right people, and I feel like I've done that during this trip."

See our 2025 Washington Youth Tour image gallery at SCLiving.coop/wyt25.

—JOSH P. CROTZER

MEMBERS SPEAK ON THE COOPERATIVE DIFFERENCE



Jennifer Wilson

AIKEN ELECTRIC MEMBER

MEMBER FOR: 18 years

HOMETOWN: Graniteville

OCCUPATION: Teacher

Care in the chaos

When Hurricane Helene hit Jennifer Wilson's home last fall, all she could hear was the sound of trees crashing.

A look outside her window revealed downed trees everywhere. They took out her power and made repairs difficult. But Wilson says Aiken Electric Cooperative crews quickly got to work—sawing through wood and even wading into one of her ponds to drag out trees felled by the historic storm.

"We are always confident that they're going to come and they're going to come right away," Wilson says. "I love it."

"You can't ask for better service than that."

—JENNIFER WILSON

To her surprise, crew members

knocked on her door after days of work to check on her.

"After all that work, they wanted to know, were we OK? Were we satisfied?" Wilson says. "You can't ask for better service than that. You don't get that from anybody."

Wilson says the experience makes her grateful to be a co-op member.

"They take you as ... a family member," Wilson says. "They treat you with respect. They don't want you to be uncomfortable. They don't want you to be without, even though they're going to be without and they're going to be uncomfortable."

WHAT'S YOUR STORY?



Scan this QR code or visit SCLiving.coop/stories to share what you love about your co-op. Entries may be published in future issues of *South Carolina Living*, online and on social media.

A place worth preserving

YOU WON'T CATCH ME at Congaree National Park this time of the year; I can't stand the mosquitoes. But in the 15 years I've lived in Columbia, I've adopted Congaree as one of my special places.

It's where, in less buggy seasons, I've spent humid hours walking alone and with friends, slipped in relentless mud, been turned around by flooded trails, practiced training my dog and learned to appreciate big, knobby trees and quiet forests. There's a lot I haven't done there yet, either. I've never camped out or kayaked at the park, but at least I also haven't been chased by a wild hog.

Congaree National Park is one of the places where I grew my love of the outdoors. And it's a place where, long before it became a national park, a young Alex Sanders grew up duck hunting and learning from his hunting-guide father about principles of ecology.

Sanders, a former state lawmaker, judge and College of Charleston president, is the man at the center of what is, these days, a relatively little-known tale behind the creation of Congaree National Park. In the early 1970s, Sanders organized a swamp expedition near the confluence of the Congaree and Wateree rivers that purported to have discovered the call of the rare, possibly extinct ivory-billed woodpecker. That the precious bird might have existed in the forest, the story has been told, helped save the land from logging so that it eventually was enshrined first as a national monument and later, in 2003, a national park.

"It was my mission to save the trees," Sanders says. "What I wanted was for it to be left alone, not made a tourist attraction."

Sanders believes Congaree National Park would've been created with or without him and his seeming encounter with the ivory-billed woodpecker. And it's true that a number of compelling forces at work over time—politics, business, environmentalism and more—did the work of preserving the park's 27,000 acres.

My most special experience at Congaree happened several years ago with my colleagues from *The State* newspaper when we witnessed the annual mating show of the park's synchronous

fireflies. You can't comprehend the mesmerizing beauty of that event until you've stood, hushed, in the damp, darkened forest and watched with your own eyes the fireflies glow in unison with one another. This spectacle of synchronicity happens in only a few places on this continent, and Congaree park is one of them.

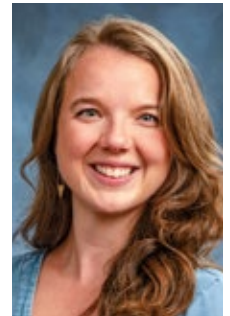
It's a breath-taking scene I urge people to witness if they get the opportunity.

These days, admission to see the fireflies' display is restricted by a lottery to limit the impact of crowds in the forest. I love that many people are getting to experience this dreamy phenomenon, and I'm more than grateful that essential steps are being taken to protect the flashy critters and their environment from their adoring fans.

Alex Sanders never wanted to see this beautiful place overwhelmed by visitors who would endanger the resources that he and others strived to save. I can't blame him. My whole heart agrees with him when he says, "We need places that have been left alone." I'd say the same for any of our national parks and for much of the land beyond them, even down to the simple, wooded rural acres in places like where I grew up and where many South Carolina co-op members live, too.

I'll bet 50 weeks out of the year, there's little danger of Congaree being over-trodden. It is, after all, one of the lesser-known and most poorly reviewed (though unjustly so) national parks in the country, as you'll read in this month's cover story. But the annual two weeks of synchronous firefly viewing magnetize crowds to the forest, and there's something to be said for the exposure to this uniquely beautiful place we have in our backyard here in South Carolina.

And whether it was by activism, politics, business, a bird or some lucky combination of reasons, Congaree National Park has been preserved for those fireflies, for me, for you, and for many generations to come, and I am thankful.



SARAH ELLIS OWEN
Editor, *South Carolina Living*

There's something to be said for the exposure to this uniquely beautiful place we have in our backyard.

Sarah E. Owen

Cool savings

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

Q What are some ways I can improve the efficiency of my refrigerator and freezer?

A We often find ourselves stuck between convenience and conserving energy. While you can upgrade to newer refrigerators or freezers, your care and equipment habits are just as important to saving energy.

Here are tips to keep your equipment running efficiently and ways to limit the overuse of refrigeration in your home.

The U.S. Department of Energy helps us understand what to look for in our existing equipment and new appliances. Generally, the larger the refrigerator, the more energy it uses. The most efficient models are typically 16 to 20 cubic feet. Models with the freezer on top tend to use less energy than bottom freezers or side-by-side units. A refrigerator that is 15 years old or older uses about 35% more energy than an Energy Star-certified model.

Let's explore ways to keep your refrigerator running efficiently.

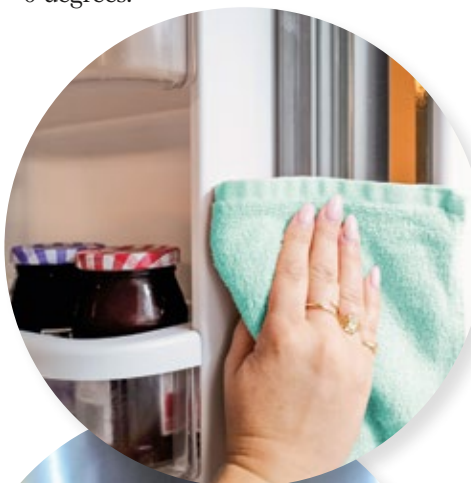
KEEP IT ORGANIZED. One of the biggest issues with refrigerator energy use is frequently opening the door or keeping it open. An organized fridge makes food items easier to find, minimizing open-door time and keeping cold air inside. Place items in the same spots so they are easier and faster to find. I tell my kids to take a quick look inside at the options and close the door while deciding what to eat.

KEEP IT CLEAN. Regularly cleaning the gasket—the flexible strip around the perimeter of the fridge door—ensures a tight seal between the door and the unit, keeping cold air inside. If the gasket is not sealing tightly, it should be replaced. Removing and cleaning the vent at the



bottom of the unit can help with airflow. For the coils at the back, use an extended cleaning brush instead of moving the fridge and risking injury.

KEEP FOOD SAFETY IN MIND. The Department of Energy recommends setting your refrigerator temperature between 35 and 38 degrees and your freezer at 0 degrees.



MAINTENANCE PAYS OFF Keep your refrigerator gaskets clean to ensure a tight seal around the door. Clean the vent cover and remove dust and debris buildup under the front of the refrigerator.

If you have a second refrigerator or freezer, consider the following to help you save energy:

► Do you need it plugged in year-round? Perhaps you can keep it empty and unplugged for part of the year. Maybe you only need it during the holiday season. Unplugging it for the months you aren't using it will save energy, and you'll still have it as a backup when you need it.



KEEP IT COOL Is your second refrigerator in a hot garage? Moving it to a cooler spot, like a basement, if available, will allow it to run more efficiently.

► If you are a hunter or buy meat in bulk, set a goal to empty your freezer before you restock. This habit allows you to avoid food waste and unplug the extra appliance when it is not needed.

► Consider the location. Keeping the second fridge or freezer in a cool basement versus a hot garage requires less energy.

Instilling simple cleaning and food storage habits is an easy way to be more efficient with your in-home refrigeration. ☺

MIRANDA BOUTELLE writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing nearly 900 electric co-ops.

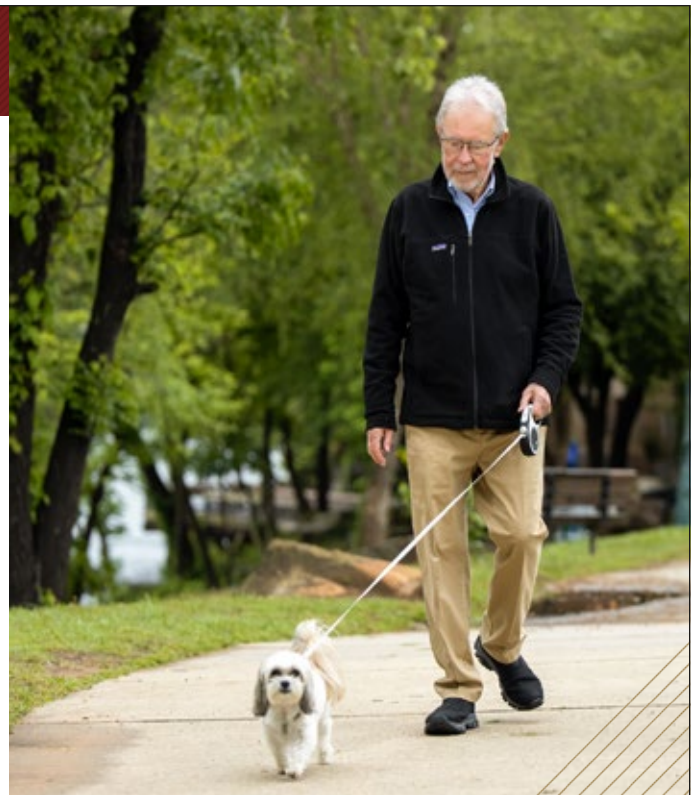
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DISCOVER
South Carolina



GRAPEFRUIT, PROSCIUTTO AND SEARED SCALLOPS SALAD

SERVES 4

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 2 ruby grapefruits, supremed, reserve juice | 4 tablespoons olive oil, divided |
| 2 cups arugula, washed | Kosher salt |
| ¼ cup red onion, sliced | Fresh ground black pepper |
| 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard | 16 large scallops, patted dry |
| ½ tablespoon honey | 6 slices prosciutto, sliced lengthwise |

In a medium bowl, combine grapefruit, arugula and sliced onions. In a small bowl or jar, combine reserved grapefruit juice, mustard and honey. Slowly whisk 3 tablespoons olive oil into the wet ingredients until emulsified. Add salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.

Season scallops with salt and pepper and allow to come to room temperature before cooking, about 20–30 minutes. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, add 1 tablespoon olive oil and cook prosciutto until crisp, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate. In the same skillet over medium heat, carefully add scallops. Cook until lightly brown, springy to the touch and soft in the center, 2–3 minutes. Turn over and cook an additional 2–3 minutes until slightly opaque.

Toss salad with vinaigrette and arrange on a large salad platter, placing scallops on top and sprinkling with prosciutto. Serve immediately.



CHEF'S TIP What does it mean to “supreme” a grapefruit, orange or lemon? Supreming is the process of removing the juicy segments of the fruit from the peel and inner membrane. Once the fruit has been peeled, use a sharp paring knife to carefully slice down each side of the membrane to release the fruit segment.

sc recipe

Summer SEAFOOD light meals

SHRIMP AVOCADO TACOS

SERVES 4

- 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1½ teaspoons chili powder
- Kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper (or less depending on preference)
- 1½ pounds extra-large shrimp, peeled, deveined and tails removed
- 8 or more 6-inch corn tortillas
- 2 cups chopped red cabbage
- 2 avocados, peeled, pitted and diced
- Salsa, store-bought or homemade (see recipe below)
- 2 limes, cut into wedges
- Sour cream

In a large bowl, combine 1½ tablespoons olive oil, chili powder, salt, cayenne and shrimp. Mix until shrimp are completely coated. In a large skillet over medium heat, add remaining oil. Add shrimp in a single layer and cook 1–2 minutes on each side until opaque and pink. (You may have to cook in batches to prevent crowding the shrimp.) Transfer cooked shrimp to a platter and keep warm.

Warm tortillas according to package instructions. To serve, add cabbage to each tortilla, three shrimp, a spoonful of avocado, salsa, lime wedge and sour cream (optional).

EASY HOMEMADE SALSA

This recipe lasts in the refrigerator for up to a week. Serve with chips or use as a condiment for chicken, fish, tacos or scrambled eggs. Make lots—it goes fast!

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 2 15-ounce cans fire-roasted diced tomatoes | 1 jalapeño or serrano pepper, chopped |
| 1 white onion, quartered or roughly chopped | ½ bunch cilantro, chopped |
| 2 cloves garlic, large minced | 1 tablespoon fresh-squeezed lime juice |
| | Kosher salt, optional |

Place one can of tomatoes and remainder of ingredients into the bowl of a blender; blend until smooth. Pour in second can of tomatoes and stir to combine. (This is for a chunkier salsa.) Adjust seasoning by adding more lime juice and/or salt. Put into a storage container and refrigerate, preferably overnight, to allow flavors to fuse.



GWENAELE VOT

GINA MOORE

BY BELINDA SMITH-SULLIVAN

Summer is for spending time outdoors doing fun things—and not toiling over a hot stove. Let these quick and easy recipes help you take advantage of the many joys of summer.

FISH PICCATA

SERVES 4

- 1½ pound haddock fillet or other thin white fish (sole, flounder, hake)
- Kosher salt
- Fresh ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ cup all-purpose flour, for dredging
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- Juice of 2 lemons
- ½ cup chicken broth
- ¼ cup capers, drained
- Fresh chopped parsley, for garnish
- Thinly sliced lemon wedges, for garnish

In a small bowl, combine salt, pepper, oregano, paprika and garlic powder, and season fish all over. Coat both sides of fish with flour, shaking off excess. In a large cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat, add 3 tablespoons oil and 2 tablespoons butter. Add fish and cook 2–3 minutes on each side until firm and flaky. Transfer to a paper towel-lined platter. Add remaining butter to skillet and lower heat to medium. Add lemon juice, broth and capers and cook briefly. Return fish to pan and spoon sauce over fish. Serve directly from skillet, garnished with parsley and lemon wedges

JULIA NEDRYGAILOVA



KAREN HERMANN

LOBSTER SALAD LETTUCE CUPS

SERVES 4

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ¼ cup mayonnaise or aioli | Kosher salt |
| 1 stalk celery, finely diced | 3–4 large lobster tails, steamed, shelled and cut up |
| 2 tablespoons fresh-squeezed lemon juice | Iceberg lettuce head (can also use bibb or butter lettuce, if preferred) |
| 2 tablespoons finely chopped chives, plus more for garnish | Lemon wedges, for serving |
| 2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley | 1 avocado, sliced, for garnish |

In a large bowl, combine mayonnaise, celery, lemon juice, chives and parsley, and season with salt to taste. Fold in lobster meat.

Cut out the hard core at the top of the lettuce, and cut lettuce in half from the top down. Carefully peel off sets of three layers of lettuce leaves to form lettuce cups, placing them on a serving platter. Scoop lobster salad into lettuce cups and garnish with lemon wedges, avocado slices and additional chopped chives. (Alternatively, serve lobster salad on buns for an original lobster roll experience.)

Grief, grit and teal

How Coastal Carolina helped us heal

BY KEVIN MCGEE

I DIDN'T ARRIVE IN OMAHA as a Coastal Carolina fan. Living in Lexington, 90 minutes from the school's Conway campus, I admired the Chanticleer baseball team's gritty underdog spirit. But I wasn't a true supporter—until that changed over three unforgettable days at the College World Series in June.

I've been a lifelong baseball fanatic, playing through high school and college, chasing the game in amateur leagues and coaching at every level, including a 2012 state championship team in North Carolina. Baseball has always been a steadying force for me, where I find stability during life's toughest moments. The connection to baseball became the bridge that slowly closed the distance between my father, who battled demons, and me. There were nights when I bore the weight of his anger, when his drinking turned home into a hard and hollow space.

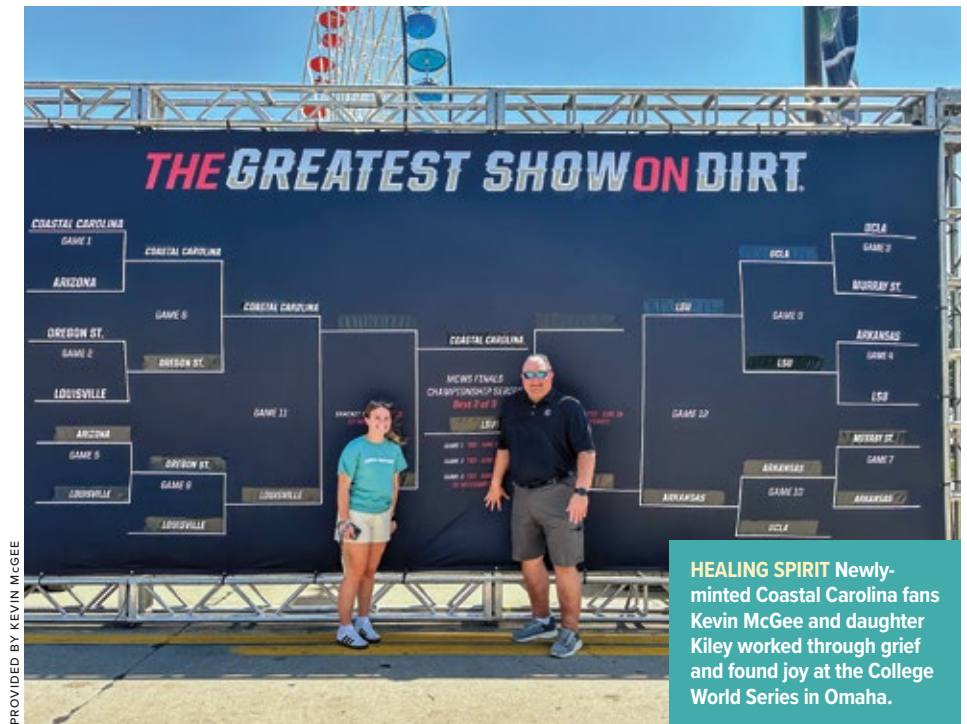
Over time, baseball gave us a shared language when words failed. Now, with him gone, the game is both a comforting salve and an unhealed wound, connecting me to him through memories of what we shared and what we never resolved.

A similar connection is now present between me and my daughter, Kiley. Her love for baseball grew naturally, rooted in the dugouts she roamed as a child, watching her brother play and me coach. Though she didn't play much, the game is in her bones, giving us a bond deeper than words.

Dad passed on May 29, when Kiley was stuck in Omaha for a 10-week clinical rotation for her medical laboratory science program at Charleston Southern. Distance and scheduling left her unable to make the journey home for her Poppa's funeral. It crushed her not to be able to say goodbye.

Her quiet pain broke me in ways I wasn't prepared for. So, I turned to baseball, as I always have, to heal. The College World Series became more than a trip; it was a way for Kiley and me to help each other in the shadow of loss, through the game we both love.

I bought tickets for the championship series before the



HEALING SPIRIT Newly-minted Coastal Carolina fans Kevin McGee and daughter Kiley worked through grief and found joy at the College World Series in Omaha.

field was set, before grief fully settled, hoping for something to believe in. When Coastal Carolina, a school just down the road from us, earned its spot in Omaha, it felt like fate. The team's scrappy, resilient spirit became a symbol of fighting through pain, a beacon for us in our sorrow. The Chanticleers were more than a team to us—they were a lifeline, helping us find peace amid our grief.

The team's journey through the tournament felt personal. They played with heart, fueled by grit and purpose, covered in teal. They burst into the best-of-three finals against an LSU program brimming with power and pedigree. We believed in the underdogs, we needed to believe, as their fight mirrored our own. The championship games were thrilling, gritty and hard-fought, a testament to Coastal's character. They had a chance to pull off the upset, falling short but proving they belonged.

I came to Omaha as a neutral observer. I left a fan. Not just of a team but of a program, a coach and a culture that values the right qualities.

Kiley and I cheered, hoped and connected through Coastal's incredible run. Those moments in Omaha weren't just about baseball. They were about father-daughter time, working through the pain of losing Poppa. We found solace in the stands, rallying for a team that embodied resilience. For that, I'll be forever grateful to Coach Kevin Schnall and his players. They gave us healing, more than any championship ever could. 🧡

Her quiet pain broke me in ways I wasn't prepared for. So, I turned to baseball, as I always have, to heal.

Fishing outside the box

Stepping out for his lunch break, rod in hand, Taylor LeBlanc goes to fish in spots few anglers attempt. Along downtown Greenville's Reedy River, LeBlanc hunts his favorite species, largemouth bass. He prefers to fish a stretch near the city's famous waterfall, with lightweight tackle.

LeBlanc's fishing spots are unique but effective. The largest of the largemouth he's snagged on the Reedy weighed about 6 pounds—not a bad catch.

"At first it was, 'Go have fun pulling a few fish during lunch.' And then it turned into, 'Hey, there's some nice fish in here,'" LeBlanc says.

LeBlanc got hooked on fishing as a kid in Louisiana. There, he fished for redfish and speckled trout in the state's coastal marshes. South Carolina's largemouth bass, LeBlanc says, compares to the fight of a redfish.

"Once a largemouth gets over about 5, 6 pounds, they'll really put up a good fight. And that's really what I love," he says.

Rather than traveling to large lakes, such as Lake Hartwell, LeBlanc sticks to smaller waters. He keeps a compact rod under the driver's seat of his car, just in case he stumbles upon a spot.

"What I've found is a lot of the local lakes, the water is clear, so I can sight fish for them. That's generally how I like to do it, being able to really hunt the fish," LeBlanc says.

LeBlanc doesn't only catch fish; he helps to conserve them. He's on the board of South Carolina's chapter of the Native Fish Coalition, an organization that protects and restores native fish species. He's also a former vice president of Greenville's Trout Unlimited chapter, a similar organization focused on trout populations.

He also offers his expertise as a fishing guide for Mt. Yonder Fly Fishing. In his first largemouth trip of the year, LeBlanc helped his client land an 11-pounder.

"To put somebody on an 11-pound bass out the gate was an incredible feeling of validation that it could be done and that it's something I can take people to do," LeBlanc says. —HAYDEN DAVIS

PHOTO BY MATTHEW FRANKLIN CARTER

Find out how to book a tour with LeBlanc or other Mt. Yonder fishing guides by visiting mtyonder.com or calling (864) 816-0506.

Taylor LeBlanc

AGE: 33.

RESIDES IN: Travelers Rest.

CLAIM TO FAME: As a fishing guide for Mt. Yonder Fly Fishing, LeBlanc has landed his customers on big fish. LeBlanc is known to fish in downtown Greenville's Reedy River during his lunch breaks.

BEST CATCH: LeBlanc made a last cast one day when his 6-month-old daughter, who had come alongside his wife, needed to go home. It was worth it—he landed a 10-pound largemouth bass.

CO-OP CONNECTION: He grew up as a member of Laurens Electric Cooperative.



MAGIC IN THE DETAILS





CAMERON SABIN SLIPS HIS CANOE DOWN CEDAR CREEK, leading a group of intrepid paddlers on an early morning trip through Congaree National Park. They float past towering oaks, majestic tupelos and ancient water cypresses with their distinctive knobby knees.

A barred owl looks down curiously from its perch. A blue heron hunts silently in the shallows. And a brown spider, as big as your hand, works diligently on its web.

Sabin has seen all the postings from would-be travel influencers on YouTube, shutterbugs on Instagram and disgruntled reviewers on Yelp—Congaree National Park is one of the nation's worst. He shakes his head and says, "They're just not looking hard enough."

The park's reputation bubbled up from the depths of the internet and spread like a flood across social media. The complaints are many: There's nowhere to park an RV. The park is dang hot in the summertime. It's easy to get lost on often-flooded trails. It's filled with spiders and snakes. And sometimes it's so thick with bugs that the "mosquito meter" at the visitor center springs from "all clear" to "war zone."

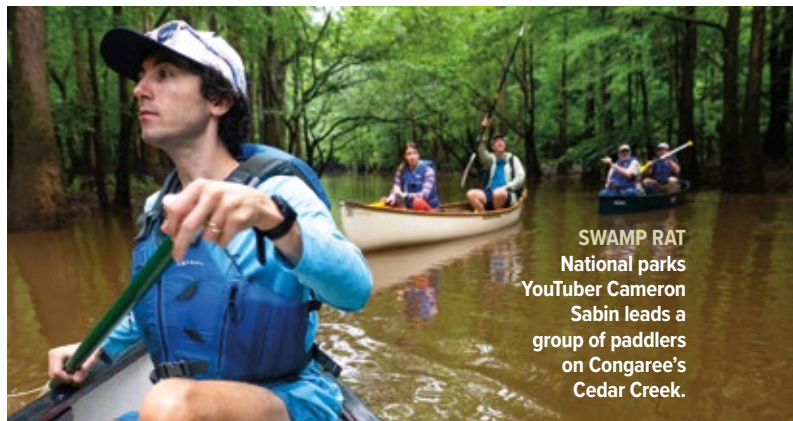
"A hellscape," wrote one traumatized visitor. "There were literally spiders everywhere! One of the most terrifying experiences of my life."

The complaints are justified, Sabin says. But what did you expect from a swamp in South Carolina?

Sabin makes his living online and considers himself an expert on such matters. He holds a degree in biology from Clemson, lives in Columbia and has produced more than 200 videos on YouTube for his National Park Diaries channel, which has more than 82,500 subscribers. Although a local boy, raised in Charleston, he addresses issues facing national parks from Hawaii to Maine. And he's well aware of the online haters of his hometown park, which sits only about a half-hour southeast of the state capital city.

Congaree is "a victim of people's expectations," Sabin says. "They don't know what they are looking at."

Those expectations spring from what many people think a national park should be—"monumental" like Yellowstone and Yosemite, filled with mountains, waterfalls, geysers or



SWAMP RAT
National parks
YouTuber Cameron
Sabin leads a
group of paddlers
on Congaree's
Cedar Creek.

Embracing America's best 'worst' national park

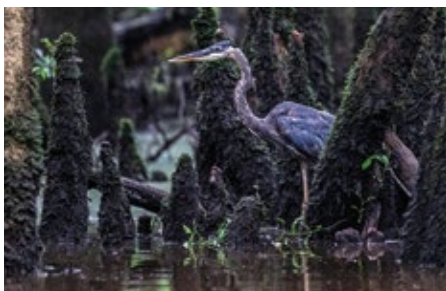
BY JEFF WILKINSON | PHOTOS BY THOMAS HAMMOND

canyons. They should have breathtaking vistas and be teeming with animals like buffalo, black bears and elk.

But Congaree's appeal is more subtle and serves a different purpose, preserving an endangered ecosystem that has remained largely untouched since the first humans wandered in 10,000 years ago. At 27,000 acres, it is the largest and one of the last remaining old-growth bottomland hardwood forests in the country, a landscape that once covered millions of acres on the East Coast before loggers moved in to harvest the giant pines, oaks and bald cypress trees.

Its beauty is dark, sometimes hard to see, hidden in sloughs, creeks and oxbow lakes. It's best experienced by boat, particularly when flooded, or late at night on darkened trails when owls call from the towering trees. It is a mysterious place, a wilderness so remote that runaway enslaved people would hide there and bootleggers found it ideal for stashing stills. And some even claim the cypress knees turn into gnomes at midnight and roam their watery kingdom.

Unlike many national parks, admission is free, the gates are always open, and if you want to take a hike at 2 a.m., you're welcome to do it. Just make sure you're with a friend or ►►





“The beauty is in the little details.” —FRAN RAMETTA



Fran Rametta was an early park advocate who helped build the boardwalk.

group and have plenty of food and water. It's easy to get lost and might get a little dicey, with the alligators, wild boar and all. It's not for the faint of heart.

“It's one of the last great wild places in the Southeast,” says Fran Rametta, who first came to the park in 1980 when it was still known as “Congaree Swamp.” Rametta helped cut trails through the forest and build the boardwalk with volunteer labor. He started the nighttime owl walks that are still held today and watched the visi-

tor center being built years later. Despite the improvements, 90% of visitors still experience less than 1% of the park's deep wilderness.

“Once you're immersed in it, it fuels your primitive instincts,” Rametta says. “The beauty is in the little details. The dragonfly that lands on your finger. The reflection of the pools in flood. The lizard that changes color before your eyes. You get to see miracles.”

Congaree National Park do's and don'ts

Here are pro tips to make your trip to Congaree National Park more enjoyable.

PICK YOUR TIMES. The park changes from month to month and day to day. Avoid the summer months unless you're prepared to battle heat and mosquitoes.

CHECK BEFORE HIKING. The park floods often, so check for updates on the park's condition and trail statuses.

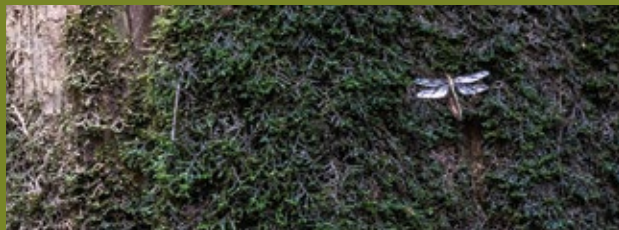
BRING A MAP. Cellphone service is spotty. Get a map from the visitor center before straying off the boardwalk.

FOLLOW A GUIDE. Book a canoe trip down Cedar Creek or go on one of the park's nighttime owl walks.

SEE THE FIREFLIES. For two weeks a year in late spring, rare synchronous fireflies put on their mating show. But you'll need to enter a lottery to get admission.

WEAR BUG SPRAY. Bugs can be a nuisance, particularly in summer. But only apply bug spray in the parking lot. You don't want to drive off the fireflies!

LOOK CLOSELY. The beauty of the park is in the details.



Home to rare beauty

Efforts to preserve Congaree began in the 1950s, when Harry Hampton, a conservationist and writer for *The State* newspaper, and others began campaigning to save the land from the imminent threat of logging. It and other vast tracts of bottomland were owned by forestry mogul Francis Beidler, and Congaree survived in part because it was just too hard to get to.

With help from the Sierra Club and other conservation groups, Congaree was designated a national natural landmark in 1974, a national monument in 1988, an international biosphere reserve in 1983 and the country's newest national park in 2003.

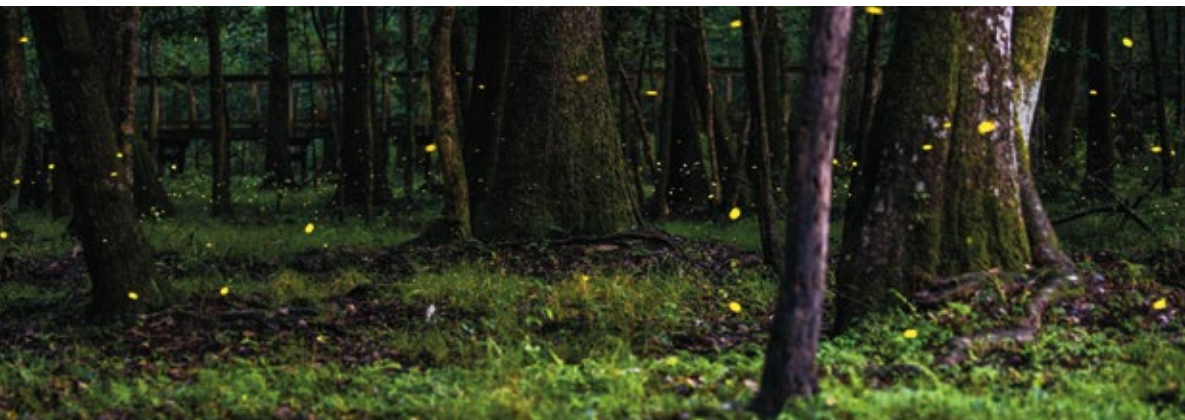
The park's designations are warranted. It has the largest concentration of “champion” trees in the country—25 of the tallest trees of their species—in a canopy that rivals the rainforests. They include a loblolly pine as tall as a 17-story building and bald cypress trees that are more than 500 years old. There may be more champions, because most trees hidden deep in the forest have never been measured. That remoteness, while frustrating for some casual visitors, is beneficial for the trees. It protects their roots from the trampling feet of well-meaning guests and the pocketknives of those who might want to leave their marks on a champion tree.

The park, which is covered by Tri-County Electric Cooperative territory, is also home to a staggering array of birds that feast on the bugs and other critters that thrive there. Woodpeckers and owls are in abundance, drawn by the tall trees. It was one of the last known habitats for the ivory-billed woodpecker, now extinct, and the very much endangered red-cockaded woodpecker, last seen in the park in the 1990s. Predatory eagles and hawks patrol the skies. Wading birds, such as herons, egrets and ibis, ply along its creeks and sloughs. And migratory birds as rare as wood storks have been spotted passing through.

Congaree is one of only three known publicly accessible places in the nation, along with the Great Smoky Mountains and a portion of southwestern Arizona, that are home to large numbers of synchronous fireflies. For about two weeks each spring, the rare lightning bugs flash in unison to attract mates, then, sadly, die shortly after. Since 2021, an annual lottery has been held to limit the number of people who travel from around the country and the world to witness the rare phenomenon. Columbia's minor league baseball team is even named the Fireflies after the intriguing bugs.

Artist Lindsay Lindhult of New Jersey visited this past May to see the fireflies in action. She holds a doctorate in biology, illustrates arthropods for academic journals and researchers and even has a great black digger wasp tattooed on her left arm. (“Bugs are so misunderstood,” she says.)

Visiting Congaree was “a bucket list thing for me,” Lindhult



FIREFLY FEST For about two weeks each spring, rare synchronous fireflies light up Congaree with their annual mating show.

Opposite: Columbia Fireflies baseball mascot Mason and infielder Brennon McNair visit the park. Above, from left: Park volunteers operate booths set up to educate visitors; ranger Shelby Bentley gives a presentation about Congaree's lightning bugs; visitors set off on the boardwalk trail to reach the fireflies' habitat.

says. She calls the park “awesome” and says the claims that it is the worst are “nonsense.”

“It’s one of the most unique national parks I’ve ever been to. It’s cozy and human-sized,” Lindhult says.

‘Check your expectations’

But none of that matters to the online haters, who seem surprised that snakes, alligators and spiders—big ones—might thrive in a “swamp.” (Well, it’s not *technically* a swamp, but who’s to argue?)

One online voice complained that children should be left at home to avoid any interaction with snakes. Another suggested the park should regularly spray for bugs and cut down trees to improve the views of the river. And yet another groused that it was hard to find a convenient spot to take a selfie.

“No amazing Instagram shots,” the post says.

To address the online haters, park rangers have taken to social media as well, posting on Facebook both the most scathing reviews and their responses. “It appears we are not beating the ‘Worst National Park’ allegations anytime soon. So, we’re addressing (it) once again,” park officials write.

“Please ... check your expectations just before your visit during our hottest, buggiest time of year. Please don’t forget that it floods sometimes, that it does get quite hot here in the summer, that you may see snakes, spiders, and alligators, and that you may get a mosquito bite or 12.

“We here at Congaree understand our park just has a little too much nature for some visitors, and that’s okay! We love our real fans and even our haters all the same. See you soon!”

Owning the ‘worst’ and working for better

No publicity is bad publicity, the thought goes, “So we just decided to own it,” says park superintendent Greg Hauburger.

The park even applied to National Park Service higher-ups to begin printing T-shirts that goof on the “worst national

park” theme. No word yet on whether the bureaucrats will buy it.

The park also is continuing to make improvements so it is more accessible for tenderfoots. It has embarked on a \$4.6 million program to rebuild about three-quarters of the 2.6-mile boardwalk, which is all many visitors experience. Some lower sections that often are covered by floods are being raised to give the casual guest an opportunity to see the park inundated with water—which is the floodplain’s function in nature and which nourishes the champion trees.

Officials also are emphasizing the upper level of the park above the bluffs, a separate ecosystem of Southeastern pine forest that is home to deer, fox squirrels and other wildlife. They conduct frequent controlled burns to replace the wildfires that once occurred naturally and are fighting to control non-native, invasive plants. One goal is to provide a more welcoming environment for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker, which has been spotted, oddly enough, at the nearby Fort Jackson military base in Columbia.

National parks advocate Sabin, who led canoe and kayak trips through Congaree while building his online presence, understands why some people are put off by the park. “We’ve got a lot of things that people don’t like—spiders, snakes and mosquitoes,” he says.

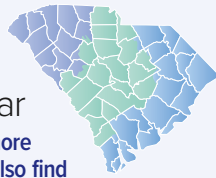
But for those who come at the right time and have an eye for the details, magic can happen.

“There’s a power there,” he says. “You just have to look at it in a different way.” ☺



Park superintendent Greg Hauburger makes the best of the “worst.”

GET THERE The entrance to Congaree National Park is located at 100 National Park Road, Hopkins. Learn more at nps.gov/cong.



SCLiving.coop/calendar

Our mobile-friendly site lists even more festivals, shows and events. You'll also find instructions on submitting your event. Please confirm information with the hosting event before attending.

Upstate

AUGUST

23 Japanese Bon Dance Festival, McAlister Square, Greenville. jaasc.org/events/bon-dance-festival.

25–26 Rock the Country Festival, Anderson Sports & Entertainment Center, Anderson. (864) 260-4800 or andersonevents.com.

30 Upstate Food Truck Festival, Reedy Fork Fairgrounds, Simpsonville. scupstatefoodtruckfestival.com.

30–31 Dacusville Farm Show, 3147 Earls Bridge Road, Easley. (864) 855-9944 or dacusvilleheritageassociation.org.

31 Celebrate Anderson, William A. Floyd Amphitheater, Anderson. (864) 260-4800 or andersonevents.com/celebrateanderson.

SEPTEMBER

5–6 South Carolina Apple Festival, Main Street, Westminster. scapplefestival.com.

5–6 Uniquely Union Festival, downtown, Union. (864) 466-6769 or uniquelyunion.com.

5–21 Grease, Spartanburg Little Theatre, Spartanburg. (864) 585-8278 or spartanburglittletheatre.com.

11–28 Come From Away, Centre Stage, Greenville. (864) 233-6733 or centrestage.org.

12–13 Soobie BBQ Cook-Off, downtown, Mauldin. (864) 404-3291 or mauldinculturalcenter.org.

12–14 Indie Craft Parade, 701 Easley Bridge Road, Greenville. indiecraftparade.com.

12–14 Upstate Renaissance Faire, Piedmont Interstate Fairgrounds, Greenville. upstaterenaissancefaire.com.

13 Music on the Mountain, Table Rock State Park, Pickens. (864) 878-9813.

18–21 101 Dalmatians Kids, Greenwood Community Theatre, Greenwood. (864) 229-5704 or greenwoodcommunitytheatre.com.

19–20 Old Time Fiddlers Convention, Hagood Mill Historic Site, Pickens. visitahagoodmill.com.

19–21 Spartanburg Greek Festival, St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, Spartanburg. spartanburggreekfestival.com.

19–Oct. 12 Gutenberg! The Musical!, The Warehouse Theatre, Greenville. (864) 235-6948 or warehousetheatre.com.

20 Union County Farm Show, Union County Fairgrounds, Union. (864) 466-5533 or facebook.com/unioncountyfarmshow.

21 Hispanic Heritage Festival, Fluor Field, Greenville. (864) 402-4207 or ahamsc.org/hhf.

27 Harvest Day Festival, downtown, Inman. (864) 472-3656 or inmanchamber.com.

27 Railfest, Greer City Park, Greer. (864) 848-2150.

27–28 Pickens Jeep Explosion, Market at the Mill, Pickens. (864) 397-0553 or pickensjeepexplosion.com.

Midlands

AUGUST

22–23 Eutaw Village Festival, 220 Porcher Ave., Eutawville. (803) 492-3374.

22–24 Freedom Festival International, Senate's End, Columbia. (803) 234-0546 or filmfreeway.com/freedomfest-1.

23 Main Street Latin Festival, Main Street, Columbia. mainstreetlatinfestivalsc.com.

23 Native American Lifeways Tour, 1120 Fort Congaree Trail, Cayce. (803) 739-5385 or cayce12000years.com.

23 York Summer Fest, downtown, York. (803) 984-2645 or yorkscsummerfest.com.

23–24 Sandy Oaks Pro Rodeo, Lazy J Arena, Edgefield. (803) 637-5369 or sandyoaksprorodeo.com.

29–30 244th Anniversary Commemoration of the Battle of Eutaw Springs, downtown, Eutawville. (803) 898-3378 or southcarolina250.com/upcoming-events.

29–31 South Carolina Quarter Horse Association Sandlapper Classic, South Carolina Equine Park, Camden. scquarterhorse.com.

30 Civil War Battle of Congaree Creek Tour, 1120 Fort Congaree Trail, Cayce. (803) 739-5385 or cayce12000years.com.



AND THE CROWD GOES WILD Enjoy a roarin' good time at Zoofari at Riverbanks Zoo & Garden on Sept. 26.

30–Sept. 1 Chapin Labor Day Festival & Parade, downtown, Chapin. (803) 345-2444 or facebook.com/chapinlaborday.

SEPTEMBER

5–6 Aiken's Makin' Arts & Craft Show, Park Avenue, Aiken. (803) 641-1111 or aikenchamber.net/aikensmakin.

5–6 The Big Grab 50 Mile Yard Sale, Blythewood, Ridgeway and Winnsboro. (803) 635-4242 or facebook.com/thebiggrab.

13 Savor Sumter Gourmet Burger Cook-Off, Brody Pavilion, Sumter. (803) 847-5834 or palmettooptimistclub.com/burgercookoff.

13–14 Midlands Fall Arts & Crafts Market, South Carolina State Farmers Market, Columbia. midlandcrafters.wixsite.com/mca-craft-shows.

13–Oct. 5 The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, Workshop Theatre, Columbia. (803) 799-4876 or workshoptheatreofsc.com.

14 Soldier's Sprint 5K, Sesquicentennial State Park, Columbia. (803) 788-2706.

18–21 Columbia's Greek Festival, Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Columbia. (803) 461-0248 or columbiasgreekfestival.com.

19–20 Camden Coin Club Fall Show Spectacular, Camden City Arena, Camden. (803) 713-5311 or camdenclub.com.

20 McCormick Gold Rush Festival, downtown, McCormick. (864) 852-2835 or facebook.com/gold.rush.29835.

20 Jubilee: Festival of Black History and Culture, Mann-Simons Site, Columbia. historiccolumbia.org/jubilee.

20 Palmetto Peanut Boil, 2900 block Devine Street, Columbia. animalmission.org.

25–27 Raylrode Daze Festival, downtown, Branchville. (843) 830-9962 or raylrodedazefestival.com.

26 Zoofari, Riverbanks Zoo & Garden, Columbia. (803) 779-8717 or riverbanks.org.

26–27 The Irmo Okra Strut, Moore Park, Irmo. okrastrut.com.

26–Oct. 18 Choir Boy, Trustus Theatre, Columbia. (803) 254-9732 or trustus.org.

27 Catawba Fest, Catawba Park, Tega Cay. tegacaysc.org.

28 Soweto Gospel Choir, Newberry Opera House, Newberry. (803) 276-6264 or newberryoperahouse.com.

30–Oct. 5 Orangeburg County Fair, Orangeburg County Fairgrounds, Orangeburg. (803) 534-0358 or orangeburgfair.com.

Pee Dee & Lowcountry

AUGUST

20 28th Annual Kids' Day, Cross High School, Cross. (843) 214-1160 or checkkorgsc.com.

23 Art of Jazz: Bob Lanzetti, Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston. (864) 641-0011 or charlestonjazz.com.

29–30 Edisto Beach Music & Shag Fest, Bay Creek Park, Edisto Island. facebook.com/edistobeachmusicshagfestival.

29–30 Waves of Praise Gospel Fest, Burroughs & Chapin Pavilion Place, Myrtle Beach. mbwavesofpraise.com.

29–31 Lowcountry Jazz Festival, Charleston Gaillard Center, Charleston. (843) 242-3099 or lowcountryjazzfest.com.

SEPTEMBER

2 Jazz in the Park: John Brackett Quartet, Celebration Park at Coligny, Hilton Head Island. (843) 842-2055 or hhso.org.

3–28 The Sound of Music, Charleston Stage, Charleston. (843) 577-7183 or charlestonstage.com.

9 Music in the Park, Hemingway Ballfield, Hemingway. (843) 558-2824 or townofhemingway.org.

12–21 Society of Stranders Fall Migration Shag Festival, various locations, Myrtle Beach. shagdance.com.

13 Moore Farms Beer Fest, Moore Farms Botanical Garden, Lake City. (843) 210-7582 or moorefarmsbg.org.

14 Edisto Island Concerts: Music for Wind Quartet by Beethoven and Devienne, Edisto Presbyterian Church, Edisto Island. chambermusiccharleston.org.

18–20 Yemassee Shrimp Festival, downtown, Yemassee. townofyemassee.org.

20 Aynor Harvest Hoe-Down Festival, downtown, Aynor. aynorhoe-down.com.

20 Crossroads Music & Market, Village Green, Lake City. (843) 374-8611 or lakecitysc.org.

25–Oct. 5 MOJA Arts Festival, multiple venues, Charleston. (843) 724-7305 or mojafestival.com.

26–28 Atalaya Arts & Crafts Festival, Huntington Beach State Park, Murrells Inlet. (843) 237-4440.

27 Irish Italian Festival, Main Street, North Myrtle Beach. (843) 280-5570 or nmb.us/164/parks-recreation.

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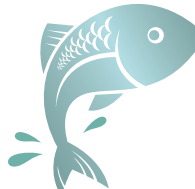
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FISH & GAME CHART

The Solunar forecast provides feeding and migration times. Major periods can bracket the peak by more than an hour, minor periods by a half-hour before and after.

DATA BY SOLUNAR SERVICES

	AM		PM			AM		PM	
	Minor	Major	Minor	Major		Minor	Major	Minor	Major
AUGUST									
15	11:22	5:08	11:49	5:35	1	12:41	6:54	1:07	7:20
16	—	6:04	12:19	6:34	2	1:29	7:43	1:56	8:09
17	12:46	7:01	1:16	7:32	3	2:18	8:31	2:45	8:58
18	1:42	7:58	2:13	8:28	4	3:06	9:19	3:33	9:46
19	2:38	8:53	3:07	9:22	5	3:53	10:06	4:19	10:32
20	3:31	9:45	3:59	10:14	6	4:40	10:53	5:05	11:18
21	4:22	10:35	4:49	11:02	7	5:28	11:40	5:52	—
22	5:11	11:24	5:36	11:48	8	6:17	12:04	6:41	12:29
23	5:59	—	6:21	12:33	9	7:08	12:56	7:33	1:21
24	6:45	12:34	7:06	12:55	10	8:04	1:51	8:30	2:17
25	7:30	1:20	7:51	1:41	11	9:04	2:50	9:32	3:18
26	8:16	2:06	8:37	2:27	12	10:07	3:52	10:36	4:22
27	9:03	2:52	9:24	3:13	13	11:11	4:56	11:41	5:26
28	9:50	3:39	10:12	4:01	14	—	5:58	12:14	6:29
29	10:38	4:27	11:01	4:50	15	12:43	6:58	1:13	7:28
30	11:27	5:15	11:51	5:39	16	1:39	7:53	2:07	8:22
31	—	6:04	12:17	6:29	17	2:30	8:43	2:57	9:10
SEPTEMBER									



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Tourism

www.discoveraikencounty.com

Come on down to Branch Junction for the 57th Annual Raylrode Daze Festival

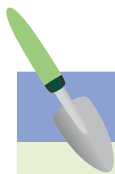
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September 27, 2025 at 11 am

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Night Train, Guns & Roses Tribute Band - Saturday Night

Facebook: Raylrode Daze Festival
www.raylrodedazefestival.com



AUGUST IN THE GARDEN

■ The summer heat is still lingering, but despite the sizzle, this month is a good time to start such cool-season veggies as turnips, radishes, spinach, rutabagas, garden peas, mustard, collards, kale, mustard greens, cauliflower, broccoli, beets, cabbage and carrots.

■ If fall webworms are turning your trees into an undesirable state of ugly, for an all-natural way to put the lights out on their parties, use a long pole to rip open their protective tents so efficient predators such as birds and wasps can get in to feast on the beasts.



L.A. JACKSON

PATIENCE PAYS OFF Foxglove is a beautiful blooming biennial worth the wait.

TIP OF THE MONTH Does the idea of growing biennials, such as hollyhocks, from seeds intrigue you? Well, if you have the patience of a fisherman, here are a few more biennials to start this season:

Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*). A classic springtime showoff that sports towers of bold, tubular flowers.

Sweet William (*Dianthus barbatus*). Another spring beauty with dense clusters of bright, often bicolor, blooms.

Money Plant (*Lunaria annua*). Pleasingly purple flowers give way to thin, round seed pods, which, when peeled, shine like silver dollars.



L.A. JACKSON

The hollyhock challenge

BY L.A. JACKSON

WORTH THE FUSS Double-flowered 'Fiesta Time' hollyhock befriends a bumblebee.

HOLLYHOCKS (*Alcea rosea*) are not for fair-weather gardeners. Why? These plants attract pests such as slugs, sawflies, Japanese beetles, spider mites, weevils and leaf miners, while diseases such as rust and powdery mildew can also be problems.

And then, well, hollyhocks just grow weird. The most common varieties are biennials, meaning if they are seeded this growing season, you have to wait until next year for any ocular satisfaction.

While they can sometimes be a challenge, the rewards you reap visually are certainly worth it because, dang it, hollyhocks are plum pretty in full bloom.

For years, I've held my own in protecting hollyhocks against many bad bugs with well-timed sprays of pyrethrins or insecticidal soap. And slugs have not been much of a problem when I lace the surrounding ground with iron phosphate-based slug pellets.

Disease-wise, yes, rust is a common hollyhock problem, but resistant cultivars are available to help counter this crud. And powdery mildew (as well as rust) can be discouraged by planting in a sunny, open area to improve airflow through the leaves. I am also quite a plant hawk when it comes to hollyhocks, meaning if I see any distressed leaves, I pluck 'em and chuck

'em to prevent the spread of any foliar nastiness.

So, are you up for the challenge? Since they are biennials, this month into early fall is a good time to start hollyhocks from seed. Prepare a planting site by generously mixing compost or a commercial organic soil conditioner deep into the growing ground. And since they germinate better in bright sunlight, just scatter the small, round seeds and then lightly press them into the ground. In the scorching heat of a waning summer, regular waterings are a must.

When small sprouts appear, pat yourself on the back for being such a good seed starter, and then thin the young plants so they are spaced at least 2 feet apart because standard hollyhocks can easily stretch upward 5 to 7 feet tall and have a spread of about 2 feet wide.

Newbie hollyhocks will spend winter developing strong taproots, and by the new spring, flower towers should arise to support an explosion of single or double blooms that will be butterfly, bee, hummingbird and, yes, even gardener magnets! 🐝

L.A. JACKSON is the former editor of Carolina Gardener magazine. Contact him at lajackson1@gmail.com.

Which way to the buzzard buffet?

BY JAN A. IGOE

FOR YEARS, I DREAMED OF a fenced backyard where my darling dogs could romp in the sunlight, torment squirrels and dig to China as nature intended. *Translation: I could throw the mutts out without even getting out of my pajamas, before they irrigate the Berber.* (Sounds harsh, but walking them 27 times a day gets old.)

No sooner did I move to my fenced paradise and release the hounds when the first harbinger of doom weighed in. “Watch out for the vultures,” the neighbor I hadn’t met yet shouted through the fence. “It’s lunchtime.”

“It’s OK. These are live animals,” I yelled back.

“Honey, beach vultures don’t wait around,” she said. “They like fast food.”

My brain struggled to wrap itself around the idea that flocks of carnivorous birds began fortifying their positions the moment Two Men and a Truck backed into my driveway. Hitchcock warned us about that.

That didn’t sit well, so I dismissed my neighbor as a nut. She could be one of those women who allegedly spent 94 hours in labor with a 13-pound breach baby delivered by cesarean during a hurricane by a roofer with a chainsaw. At least that’s what her kind likes to tell newly pregnant females as they run away screaming.

So I remained calm until a happier-sounding neighbor complimented my 9-pound mutt. “The vultures just love them,” he added. “Those are snack size. They just need a little ketchup.”

That’s when I realized the feathers strewn around my yard didn’t belong to sparrows. Above my head, a black,



The feathers didn’t belong to sparrows. Above my head, a black, winged monster was zeroing in on my dogs from a tree.

winged monster was zeroing in on my dogs from a tree.

“There’s no ketchup here,” I screamed at the invader, waving my arms and leaping around, clanking pot lids together in a vain attempt to scare it off. The bird didn’t flinch a feather. My dogs, however, ran inside and hid.

Frantic, I turned to the internet for advice from genuine vulture victims who had experience keeping killer birds away. They recommended:

Setting off fireworks around the clock.

Dangling a dead colleague (of the vulture) in effigy.

Hanging lots of shiny CDs from branches.

Shaking vulture-bearing trees at least twice a day.

Intriguing ideas, but there’s a downside. The guy who tested M-80s as a bird deterrent also set his home on fire. And the birds came back before the fire trucks got there.

Hanging CDs is harmless, but the movement that’s supposed to scare the birds off makes some of them want to hang around and invite their friends.

Pecking the CDs becomes a game, so the more, the merrier. The icing on the cake is watching you try to shake their tree, which is 70 feet tall and 8 feet around. Now that’s a total entertainment package.

No matter what you do, the birds may decide to stay. Just ask the Virginia man who woke up one day to hundreds of vultures staking claim to his yard. He can’t have them removed, because they’re federally protected. So he’s sharing his patio with 200 winged guests and not doing much outdoor grilling.

Anyway, I came up with my own deterrent. It took only 90 minutes to wrap my dog up in his own anti-bird aluminum foil vest. It’s the same principle as the CDs, but now my dog is the shiny moving object. My daughter says it won’t work unless the vultures are afraid of furry baked potatoes.

I’d argue, but the birds have been asking for sour cream and chives. ☹

EDITOR’S NOTE: South Carolina Living is reprinting some of Jan A. Igoe’s previous columns. This “Humor Me” originally appeared in the September 2013 issue. Visit SCLiving.coop/news/in-memory-of-jan-igoe.

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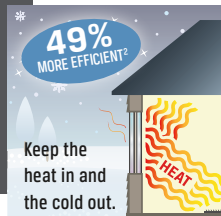
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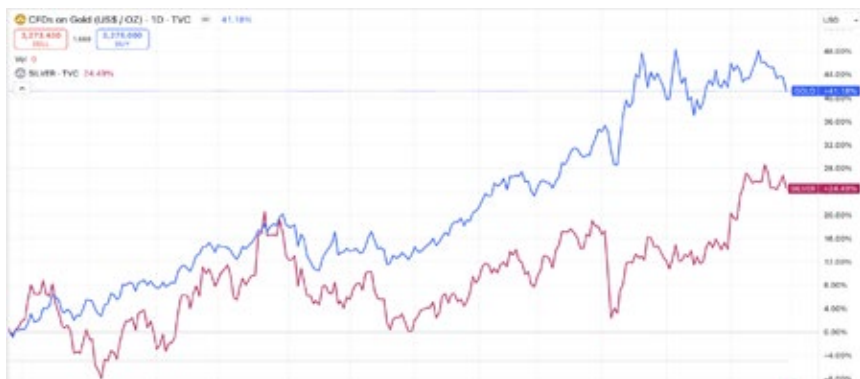
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