

# South Carolina LIVING



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life—continues thriving

SC RECIPE

Grillin' and chillin'

HUMOR ME

Catering to the bride



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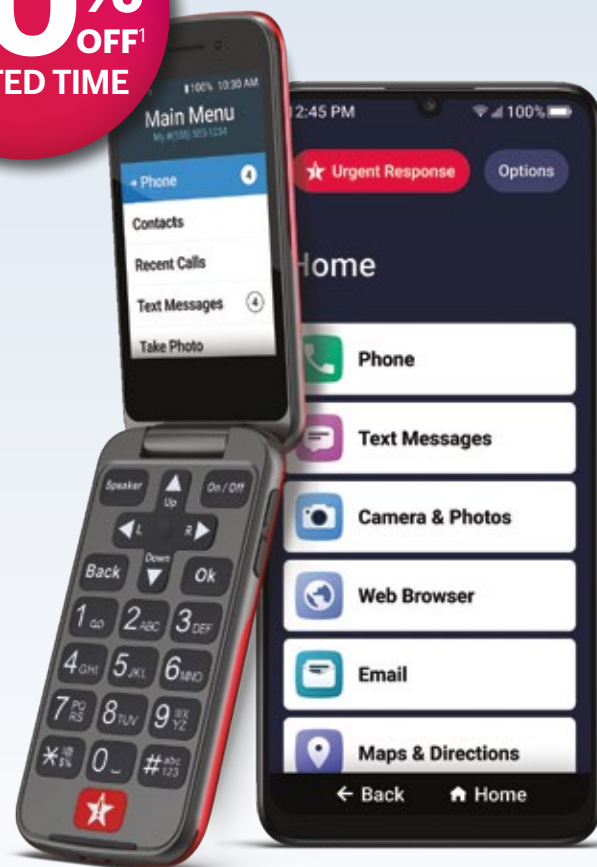
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Read in more than 620,000 homes and businesses and published monthly except in December by

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Sure, a DIY wedding sounds great—until you're the one on  
kitchen duty, Jan A. Igoe reminisces in this classic column  
from February 2010.



A green-dotted queen bee  
basks among busy workers in  
one of the hives at Macri Honey  
Bee Farm near Conway. Above,  
beekeeper Mike Macri tends  
to the farm. Photos by Thomas  
Hammond.





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## Soaring temps strain grid

**WHEN OUTDOOR TEMPERATURES**

soar, electricity use rises along with it. That's because air conditioners typically run longer and more often to counteract the sweltering

heat. Since we all tend to use electricity at the same time, that puts significant stress on the electric grid.

At Tri-County Electric Cooperative, we partner with Central Electric Power, our local generation and transmission cooperative, to ensure you have power when you need it. We work with Central Electric to make sure we have the resources and infrastructure that keeps the electric grid resilient, investing in system maintenance and modernization to ensure reliability in extreme weather.

Still, during extended heat waves, when even more electricity is being used simultaneously across the region, it is possible for electricity demand to exceed supply. Although rare, this situation may require us to ask members to immediately conserve energy. It could also lead to temporary rolling outages necessary to protect the grid.

Tri-County Electric will always keep you informed through our social media feeds and text alerts. TCE's Beat The Peak program is a free and voluntary effort to help control energy costs for all cooperative members. Through the Beat The Peak program, members can sign up to receive alerts asking them to reduce their energy during critical periods when wholesale electricity prices spike. These times are when the requirements for electricity are the highest, such as during hot summer afternoons or cold winter mornings. Visit [EnergySmartSC.org](http://EnergySmartSC.org) to sign up and opt to receive Beat The Peak alerts by text message, email or phone call.

Here are a few things you can do to relieve pressure on the grid during times of extreme summer heat:

- ▶ Select the highest comfortable thermostat setting and turn it up

whenever possible. Your cooling system must run longer to make up the difference between the thermostat temp and the outdoor temp.

- ▶ Seal air leaks around windows and exterior doors with caulk and weatherstripping. Air leaks and drafts force your cooling system to work harder than necessary.
- ▶ Run major appliances such as dishwashers, ovens and dryers during off-peak hours (morning and late evening) when the demand for electricity is lower.
- ▶ Start the dishwasher before you go to bed.
- ▶ Use ceiling fans to make yourself feel a few degrees cooler. Set the fan blades to rotate counterclockwise, which pushes cool air down for a windchill effect.
- ▶ Close blinds, curtains and shades during the hottest part of the day to block unwanted heat gain from sunlight. Consider blackout curtains with thermal backing or reflective lining to block heat and light.
- ▶ Use smaller appliances such as slow cookers, air fryers and toaster ovens to cook meals. Air fryers use about half as much electricity as a full-sized oven.

Understanding the impact of high energy demand is crucial for maintaining a reliable power supply. By adopting energy conservation practices during periods of extreme heat, not only can you save money on your electric bills, but you can also contribute to the resilience of the grid.

*Chad T. Lowder*

**CHAD T. LOWDER**  
Chief Executive Officer

# The generator that saved Christmas Eve

Member's power stays on thanks to TCEC program

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

**THE CHRISTMAS EVE PARTY** was in full swing, with friends and family gathered inside J.D. Sikes' man cave. Just as everyone was about to bow their heads for the blessing, the power went out.

But as quick as St. Nick can come down a chimney, Sikes' standby generator sprang to life, restoring the glow of the celebration.

"The generator came on within about 30 seconds," says Sikes, a Tri-County Electric member in Orangeburg County. "We had a pretty good crowd here, and we didn't miss a beat."

Sikes has had his Generac 22-kilo-watt generator for nearly seven years. Installed through Tri-County Electric's generator program, the system has reliably powered his home, shop, garage and man cave through numerous power outages.

Before choosing to install a permanent generator, Sikes relied on a smaller portable unit.

"Every time the power went out, you had to drag it out, put gas in it, and run extension cords," he says. "Then, as soon as you got everything set up, the power would usually come back on. It was a real hassle."



J.D. Sikes says the generator installed through Tri-County Electric and fueled by two propane tanks easily powers his home, shop and man cave.

Now, peace of mind comes effortlessly. Sikes' generator, fueled by two propane tanks, automatically starts within seconds from when power is interrupted, providing near-seamless electricity. Regular maintenance is hassle-free, handled annually by a trusted local technician recommended by the cooperative.

"I don't have to worry about it at all," Sikes says. "They told me it would run everything I've got, and it does exactly that. I've got no complaints."

The ease and reliability of the system have led Sikes to recommend it to friends and neighbors, highlighting its value for households that depend on medical devices or those living at the end of electrical service lines, like his own.

"A big storm could leave you without

power for days," he says. "With the generator, you're covered. I wouldn't want to be without one."

## A backup built for you

Tri-County Electric's generator program makes it easy for members to weather power outages. Featuring top-quality Generac generators, the program includes professional installation, service from trusted local technicians and financing options.

Interested in protecting your home with standby power? Visit [tri-countyelectric.net/tri-county-generators](http://tri-countyelectric.net/tri-county-generators) or call (803) 874-1215 to learn more and get started today.

## New payment mailing address

Tri-County Electric Cooperative and TriCoLink have transitioned to Lockbox services for all mail payment processing. As part of this change, our new mailing address for all payments is:

### Tri-County Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 70878

Charlotte, NC 28272-0878

### TriCoLink

P.O. Box 70878

Charlotte, NC 28272-0878

If you pay through your bank's online bill pay service or any other third-party payment vendor, **please update your records to**

reflect this new address to avoid delays.

Lockbox services offer numerous benefits by streamlining payment collection, improving cash flow and enhancing overall efficiency. This change reduces administrative overhead, increases security in handling payments and accelerates the processing timeline.

By outsourcing this aspect of operations, Tri-County and TriCoLink can devote more attention to serving our members and strengthening our core services. If you have any questions, please contact our Member Services team at (877) 874-1215.





## Efficiency tips for new homes

**PRIORITIZING ENERGY EFFICIENCY** when building a new home might cost a little more upfront but can create future savings and make living more comfortable.

Several efficiency certifications are available for new-construction homes that may qualify for discounted homeowners insurance, tax credits and other incentives:

- ▶ Homes certified in **Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)** prioritize sustainable resources and healthy indoor air quality. They use 20% to 30% less energy than the average home—with some homes saving up to 60%. And construction can cost the same as non-LEED homes with proper planning, according to the U.S. Green Building Council.

- ▶ **Passive House** certification requires a home to be so efficient it needs little to no heating and cooling equipment while remaining comfortable for its occupants. For a home to achieve up to 90% less energy use than the average home, the certification focuses on maximizing the efficiency of

the building envelope—all components that separate the indoors from the outdoors—including proper insulation levels, air sealing and high-efficiency windows.

- ▶ **ENERGY STAR NextGen** certification recognizes houses that are 20% more efficient than the average home and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% to 80%.

Although various certifications are available, you don't have to follow a set guide. Consider prioritizing these energy efficiency principles in your new home construction:

- ▶ **Advanced framing techniques** maximize the amount of insulated area and save on material costs in wood-framed homes. This can save hundreds of dollars in material costs, 3% to 5% on labor costs and up to 5% on annual heating and cooling costs, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Choose a contractor familiar with these techniques, and check with local building officials to comply with local codes.

- ▶ **Orient your home to the path of the sun** to use less energy for heating and cooling, reducing energy bills and improving comfort, according to the International Association of Certified Home Inspectors.

- ▶ **Request higher insulation levels** in the attic if you are building or buying a new home that doesn't allow options for orientation or framing. More insulation likely won't cost much more for materials and labor, but it can help you use less energy and save money in the long run.

- ▶ **Heating and cooling equipment** should be properly sized using energy modeling tools that calculate the home's needs. Investing in a well-insulated, air-sealed building envelope can reduce the home's heating and cooling load, making it possible to have a smaller, less expensive heating and cooling system.

Optimizing the efficiency of a new home requires a whole-house approach. Analyze all systems and how they work together to ensure maximum efficiency for a safe and comfortable home. —MIRANDA BOUTELLE



MARK GILLILAND, PIONEER UTILITY RESOURCES

**IT WILL PAY OFF** Properly insulating while building a home can reduce the expense of your heating and cooling equipment and lead to long-term energy savings.

## MEMBERS SPEAK ON THE COOPERATIVE DIFFERENCE



**I ♥ MY CO-OP**

**Corey Dixon**

**HORRY ELECTRIC MEMBER**

**HOMETOWN:** Aynor

**OCCUPATION:** Farmer at Dixon Farms

## A family affair

Corey Dixon can trace his family farm's history to before the Civil War, when his great-great-grandfather purchased property in rural Horry County in the mid-1800s. Decades later, Horry Electric Cooperative became a part of the family story when it delivered electricity to Dixon Farms for the first time.

Today, Dixon is one of the farm's owners and operators, growing sweet

**Horry Electric watches out for the farmers.**

—COREY DIXON

potatoes and tobacco on the same land his family has tended for six genera-

tions. Dixon says Horry Electric always goes the extra mile to help farmers like him when outages happen.

"Horry Electric, they usually watch out for the farmers and get your power back as soon as possible," Dixon says.

Dixon grew up with Horry Electric members and employees. He has come to view the co-op as more than just a utility.

"It's like they're family," Dixon says. "And when you call most times, everybody knows you."

## WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

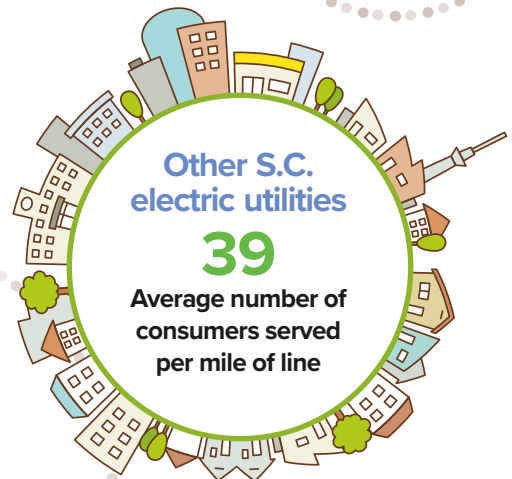
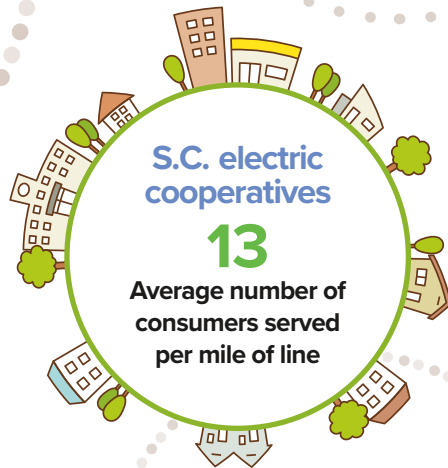


Scan this QR code or visit **SCLiving.coop/stories** to share what you love about your co-op. Entries may be published in future issues of *South Carolina Living*, online and on social media.

## Electric co-op service density compared to other electric utilities

Electric cooperatives maintain more power lines per consumer than other types of electric utilities.

*Even though we serve fewer consumers per mile of line, we always go the extra mile for our members.*



SOURCE: SOUTH CAROLINA ENERGY OFFICE

NRECA/STRAIGHT TALK

## 11TH ANNUAL Juneteenth CELEBRATION

Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park  
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FOR MORE INFORMATION



SCAN HERE

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Leela James – June 14!

### Thursday, June 12th

Naycha and B'uhds | 11:00 am - 2:00 pm | Free Admission  
Sleepover | 6:00 pm - 6:00 am | \$20 Admission

### Friday, June 13th

Children's Day | 11:00 am - 1:00 pm | Free Admission  
Drum Circle | 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm | Free Admission

### Saturday, June 14th

11th Annual Juneteenth Celebration | 10:00 am - 4:00 pm | \$10 Admission  
With Performance by R&B Artist Leela James

### Thursday, June 19th

Annual Juneteenth 5K | 9:00 am

*All events will be held at Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park.*

**CHAIRS ARE WELCOME. PLEASE NO COOLERS OR OUTSIDE FOOD & BEVERAGES**



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**MIKE COUICK**  
President and CEO,  
The Electric  
Cooperatives of  
South Carolina

In our  
past and  
present, we  
are a state  
made up of  
remarkable,  
independent  
people  
grown from  
rich and  
beautiful  
traditions  
and histories.

## Stories with an old friend

**WHEN I WAS A KID**, my Great-Aunt Jenny had what many today would call a side hustle. During the week, she worked at a high-end women's clothing store in Rock Hill, but on the weekends, she would visit everyone she knew, selling Avon products and encyclopedias.

She'd come by our house nearly every Sunday, toting a free sample from Avon. She never failed to persuade my mom to make a purchase. I'm grateful for Aunt Jenny's superior marketing abilities. Often, when I was supposed to be sleeping, I'd instead have a flashlight under my covers, illuminating a volume of the World Book Encyclopedia.

Those encyclopedias fueled a love of learning and reading that I seem to have inherited from both of my grandfathers. My dad's father was a carpenter in Lancaster County who started his work every day by 6 a.m. But first, he chiseled through that day's *Charlotte Observer* newspaper while eating breakfast.

My mom's father was a row crop farmer who waited until after lunch to sit down in his Naugahyde recliner and read three things: the South Carolina Farm Bureau's *Market Bulletin*, the King James Bible and *Living in South Carolina*—the original title of our statewide electric cooperative magazine.

My grandfather introduced me to *Living* and, within it, the column "Boys Are That Way" by James M. Eleazer. What I couldn't learn in the encyclopedias—such as how to catch a crawdad—I'd pick up from Eleazer's stories about growing up in rural South Carolina. (By the way, if you're wondering, partially submerge an open mason jar into the water behind the crustacean and back it into the jar with the lid.)

A lot has changed since those days, particularly how we consume information and how we are exposed to stories that inspire us. In most cases, analog words on a page have given way to digital pixels on a screen.

We've reached an age when many, if not most, of us no longer find a local daily newspaper in the driveway. The very encyclopedias that taught us about dinosaurs are now proverbial dinosaurs. Local, independent bookstores are trending in a similar direction. Flipping through dozens of

algorithm-curated, short videos is now how many of us pass the time on a rainy day.

Perhaps I'm getting old and technology has taken a turn I don't appreciate, but I still prefer the tactile experience of flipping through the pages of a print publication and even picking up the faint scent of ink.

That's why I'm glad *South Carolina Living* is still going strong. Like an old friend who drops by once a month to share colorful stories and reminisce on the good old days, it reliably arrives in your mailbox and on your doorstep. (If you're so inclined, it is also available online at [scliving.coop](http://scliving.coop).)

After more than 75 years, it still delivers great information—we often hear about how much you love the recipes—and wonderful stories about the people around you. Since arriving at *South Carolina Living* last summer, magazine editor Sarah Owen has continued the magazine's legacy of telling the story of loving living here.

My peach-farming grandfather would have enjoyed our profile earlier this year of Clara Dixon Britt, who once rode a bull to St. George's Rosenwald School to keep her perfect attendance. I can hear him saying, "She is made out of the right stuff!"

I'm especially fond of the recent cover feature about "Liberty Mountain," the small, long-running theater production recounting the Revolutionary War's Battle of Kings Mountain. Stories like that preserve our knowledge of our heritage and the role South Carolina men and women have played in America's rich history.

In our past and our present, we are a state made up of remarkable, independent people grown from rich and beautiful traditions and histories. In a time when it's easier to connect to a screen than to one another, *South Carolina Living* fulfills an important role in sharing the personalities and experiences of your neighbors and fellow South Carolinians.

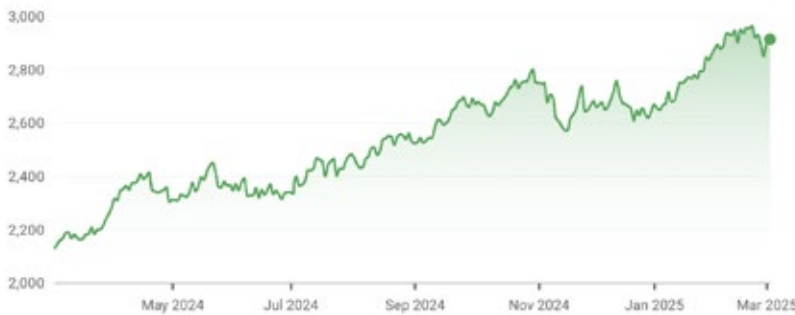




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# GRILLIN' and chillin'



BY BELINDA  
SMITH-SULLIVAN

Summer is here, and it's time to start thinking *outside the house*. This season is all about outdoor fun and relaxation. Get ready to fire up the grill, chill the drinks and invite your friends and neighbors to join in!

## CITRUS SKIRT STEAK FAJITAS

SERVES 4

### MARINADE FOR STEAK

- 1 orange, juiced
- 1 lime, juiced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- ½ cup olive oil, divided
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and minced
- 1 skirt steak, 1½–2 pounds
- Kosher salt
- Fresh ground black pepper

### FOR SERVING

- 1 onion, sliced
- 1 green bell pepper, sliced
- 2 red bell peppers, sliced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Lime wedges
- 6-inch tortillas
- Guacamole
- Salsa
- Pico de gallo
- Sour cream
- Sliced avocado

In a small bowl, combine orange juice, lime juice, garlic, cilantro, olive oil, cumin and jalapeño. Dry off the steak with a paper towel. Season with salt and pepper. Put steak along with marinade in a zip-top bag and refrigerate up to 4 hours, turning occasionally. Preheat grill to medium-high and brush with oil. (This can also be done on the indoor stove with a grill pan.) Toss onions and peppers in oil and sauté, turning occasionally, until slightly charred. Remove from heat to a bowl or platter, cover with foil and keep warm.

Remove steak from marinade, pat dry, and discard marinade. Grill steak for 3–4 minutes for medium rare. Transfer to a cutting board and tent with foil, allowing meat to rest before cutting. Warm the tortillas in a hot cast-iron skillet until warm on each side, then wrap them in a clean kitchen towel to keep warm. Thinly slice steak against the grain and place on a large platter. Surround with peppers, onions and lime wedges. Serve alongside tortillas, guacamole, salsa, pico de gallo, sour cream and avocado.



GWENAELE VOT

## DOUBLE-THICK PORK CHOPS WITH PEACH BARBECUE SAUCE

SERVES 4

### SAUCE

- ¼ cup oil
- 1 sweet onion, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 6 medium peaches, peeled and chopped
- ¾ cup packed brown sugar
- ½ cup apple cider vinegar
- ¼ cup bourbon
- ½ cup Worcestershire sauce
- ½ cup tomato sauce
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper
- ½ tablespoon chili powder
- Kosher salt
- Fresh coarse-ground black pepper
- Juice from ½ lemon

Warm oil in a large saucepan over medium-low heat. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally until tender, about 10 minutes. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute. Stir in peaches, sugar, vinegar and bourbon (or water). Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce heat to medium. Add Worcestershire sauce, tomato sauce, red pepper, chili powder, salt and pepper. Simmer uncovered, stirring occasionally, until peaches and onion are very tender, about 30 minutes. Stir in lemon juice and let cool.

Working in batches, transfer the peach mixture to a blender and puree until smooth. Pour into clean jars and refrigerate up to two weeks.

### CHOPS

- 4 thick (1½-inch) pork chops
- Kosher salt
- Fresh ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar, packed
- 2 teaspoons smoked paprika (aka Spanish paprika)
- Canola oil, for grill

Rinse and pat dry chops. In a small bowl, combine salt, pepper, sugar and paprika. Rub a generous amount of seasoning all over chops. Wrap with plastic and refrigerate for 1–2 hours or overnight.

Preheat grill to medium-high and brush with oil. Place chops on direct heat side of grill, and cook about 15 minutes until grill marks appear. Turn and move to indirect heated side of grill, and cook until chops register 140 F on an instant-read thermometer, about 15–20 minutes. Brush chops with sauce on all sides, cover and cook about 5–10 minutes. Remove to a platter, brush with more sauce and tent with foil until ready to serve. Serve with additional sauce.



**CHEF'S TIP** **Direct and indirect heat:** Generally, on a large propane grill, only half the burners are turned on. The fire-producing burners provide direct heat, while the dormant burners provide indirect heat.





JULIA NEDRYGALOVA

## SPATCHCOCKED CHICKEN WITH LEMON GARLIC MARINADE

SERVES 4-6

- 1 small fryer (3 pounds), spatchcocked
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh-squeezed lemon juice (about ½ lemon)
- 2 garlic cloves, grated
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon fresh coarse-ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon dried Italian seasoning or herbs de Provence
- 2 lemons, halved, for garnish

Pat dry chicken and place on a large sheet pan. In a small bowl, combine oil, lemon juice, garlic, salt, pepper and Italian seasoning. Rub seasoning all over chicken, gently loosening the breast skin and rubbing the seasoning under the skin.

Allow chicken to marinate while grill is heating to medium-high, and brush grill with oil. Grill chicken, skin side down, over direct heat until grill marks form and skin is crispy brown, about 20 minutes. Flip and cook, skin side up, until that side is brown and crispy, about another 20 minutes. (Cook longer if chicken is bigger.) Move chicken to indirect heat side of grill and continue to cook until temperature on an instant-read thermometer reaches 160-165 F. Remove from grill, place on a platter or cutting board and cover loosely with foil. The heat generated from grilling will continue to cook the chicken until it reaches 165 F, about 10 minutes. Grill lemons, cut side down, until grill marks form. Cut chicken into desired pieces. Serve on platter with grilled lemon halves.



### CHEF'S TIP How to spatchcock a chicken:

Spatchcocking a chicken allows it to cook more evenly throughout the thigh and breast areas. Using a sturdy pair of kitchen shears, remove the backbone from the chicken by cutting down each side of the backbone from top to bottom. Open the chicken up, like a book, and flip over onto a clean cutting board. Holding the heel of your palm over the breast of the chicken, press down firmly to crack the breastbone (also known as the sternum) so the chicken will lie flat. (Alternatively, ask your butcher to do this for you.)

GINA MOORE



## HALIBUT STEAKS WITH MANGO SALSA

SERVES 4

### SALSA

- 1 large mango, peeled, pitted and small diced
- ¼ small red onion, peeled and small diced
- 1 tablespoon jalapeño, finely diced
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro
- Juice of 1 lime
- Kosher salt
- Fresh ground black pepper

### FISH

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- Kosher salt
- Fresh ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon dried dill
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley
- 1 tablespoon fresh-squeezed lemon juice
- 4 halibut steaks (or flounder, haddock or cod)
- Lemon wedges, for garnish

In a medium bowl, combine mango, onion, jalapeño, cilantro, lime juice, salt and pepper. Cover and refrigerate. (Make a day ahead, if possible, to enhance the flavor.)

Preheat grill to high and brush with oil. In a medium bowl, combine butter, garlic powder, paprika, salt, pepper, dill, parsley and lemon juice. Spread evenly on halibut steaks. Cook on preheated grill until flaky, 4 to 5 minutes per side. Remove to a platter and serve with salsa and lemon wedges.



# Tips to beat the energy peak

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

**Q** What does “beat the peak” mean, and why should I care about it?

**A** When your electric cooperative talks about “beat the peak,” it is a call to action to reduce electricity use during periods of highest demand. Using less energy during peak times can ease the strain on the electric grid, benefit your cooperative and sometimes lower your electric bill.

Electricity generation and energy supply must match real-time consumption to ensure safe, reliable power. Every moment of every day, an entire workforce monitors energy use, adjusting power plant production up or down as needed to keep the grid balanced.

Small changes at home can make a big difference to the energy grid. Incorporate these energy-wise habits into your daily routine.

As energy demand grows, we all can do our part to use less.

Peak times vary for each electric utility but typically occur in the morning when people get ready for the day and in the evening when they return home from work and school. During these times, we turn on lights, cook, adjust the thermostat, run the dishwasher and do laundry—to name a few of our energy-consuming activities.

Typically, the price of power increases during those times when demand is higher. Reducing your electric use during peak times can lower market prices for everyone and lessen stress on the electric grid.

Electric cooperatives set electric rates to cover costs. Some utilities have time-of-use rates that reflect higher costs during peak demand periods. Whether or

not you have time-of-use rates, these tips can help keep costs down for you and your utility and establish off-peak energy habits.

■ **Try to spread out the use of equipment and appliances.** For example, avoid washing dishes and clothes and cooking all at the same time. Running a lot of hot water will cause your water heater to use more energy, too.

■ **Increase your home’s energy efficiency** to lower its impact on the grid. Weatherize windows and doors and add insulation to improve the comfort of your home. Consider upgrading to energy-efficient appliances or using energy-saving features on your existing appliances. If you haven’t already, switch your incandescent lighting to LED bulbs, which use at least 75% less electricity and last up to 25 times longer, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

■ **Schedule your dishwasher run time.** Your dishwasher may have a “delay start” button, which is also handy if your dishwasher is loud. Setting it to start after you go to bed shifts the energy consumption to off-peak hours, and you don’t have to hear it.

■ **Run your washing machine and dryer during off-peak hours, too.** If you’re in the market for a new washer or dryer, look for a model with a high Integrated Modified Energy Factor and a low Integrated Water Factor to save water and energy.

■ **Charge your phone and other electronic devices during off-peak hours.** If you have an electric vehicle, use the scheduled charge settings. Plug in your vehicle when you get home, and it will start charging automatically during the off-peak hours you choose. ⚡

SWITCH TO LED BULBS



USE THE “DELAY START” SETTING



DO LAUNDRY DURING OFF-PEAK HOURS



CHARGE DEVICES OVERNIGHT





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Table 301



### UPCOUNTRY SWEEPSTAKES

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## The sweet and necessary buzz of beekeeping

**O**n a mild afternoon as spring begins to burst into bloom, beekeeper Mike Macri makes his rounds to check on his 30 beehives. All about him, honeybees swarm and buzz, but Macri moves among them with the nonchalance of a man who's been stung a thousand times.

He stops at “Hive 5”—one of his “docile” hives—and issues a few puffs from a hand-held smoker. He stands back, hooded in his beekeeping suit, and lets the smoke calm the creatures. Then, with a hive tool, he pries open the top of the wooden box, which the bees have sealed with a waxy substance called propolis, or “bee glue.” Inside, 10 wooden frames are stacked vertically, like old pictures in an attic box, and Macri carefully lifts them out, one at a time.

Within each frame, the honeybees have built a honeycomb—one of nature's most marvelous feats of architecture—and there's only one way to describe what's happening: The bees are busy as bees. Some are feeding the young. Some are feeding the one and only queen. Some are cleaning the cells of



**H I V E  
M I N D S**

BY  
HASTINGS  
HENSEL  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY THOMAS  
HAMMOND



the hive. Some are heading out on scouting trips to nearby flowers.

Macri guesses there are around 60,000 to 80,000 bees in this hive alone, an entire colony that seems to be performing a complex dance in anticipation of the upcoming spring's honey flow.

But Macri is quick to point out that honey is only one aspect of beekeeping.

"I mean, yeah, we do honey," he says, referring to Macri Honey Bee Farm, which he runs just outside of Conway with his wife, Joanne. "But my main concern is to make the bee populations grow."

Here he offers up his favorite quote—something he's as fond of saying as he is of showing off the honeybee tattoo on his left arm. "You know," he says, "Einstein once said, 'If bees die, we die four years after them.'"

Like most beekeepers, Macri sees beekeeping as more than a simple pastime or hobby, and he will wax lyrical about how bees pollinate our plants as part of "the great circle of life."

"This year, we helped put bees on a strawberry farm," he says. "The farmer told me yesterday, he goes, 'Boy, my strawberries

**"It's crazy what God's little creature does to our whole food survival."** —BEEKEEPER MIKE MACRI

have never looked so good.' You not only get more berries when you have bees; you get bigger berries."

Strawberries, peach trees, cucumbers, squash, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower—these are just some of the crops that depend on honeybees as insect pollinators. With nectar and pollen, the bees use the mixture to make "bee bread," which they feed to their larvae and their queen.

And when honeybees mix nectar with



**'THE GREAT CIRCLE OF LIFE'** Bees are essential to our food supply, and Horry County beekeeper Mike Macri is committed to helping honeybee populations grow.



**"Of all the agricultural practices we have, honeybees and beekeeping have the lightest footprint and the greatest benefit."**

—BEN POWELL, COORDINATOR OF THE CLEMSON APICULTURE AND POLLINATOR PROGRAM

certain enzymes in their glands, and blow this mixture into one of the cells of the honeycomb, and fan it down to a moisture content of around 17%, they will cap the cell with wax. *Voilà*: their nonperishable winter food, honey.

It's an intricate web of give-and-take, of work-and-make, and beekeepers don't just come in at the end to scrape the comb for honey. Beekeepers are there to ensure that the life of the hive—and the hive of life—continues to thrive.

Ben Powell, coordinator of the Clemson Apiculture and Pollinator Program, puts it this way: "Having honeybees in your landscape improves the ecosystem, and of all the agricultural practices we have, honeybees and beekeeping have the lightest footprint and the greatest benefit."

#### Protect bees, protect life

All of this is why the current news about honeybees is, well, stinging. Bees are dying off in alarming numbers across the country, and although thousands of labs are researching the causes, no one knows why.

At a recent monthly meeting of the Blackwater Beekeepers Association, one of 26 local beekeeping associations in South Carolina, President Rick Vereen shared the latest data. Colony losses over the past winter were drastically higher than usual, and commercial beekeepers had suffered hundreds of millions of dollars in lost revenue. ►►

## HONEYBEE FACTS

8

Estimated number of honeybee species worldwide, out of some 20,000 bee species overall.

1 in 3

Bites of food that have been pollinated by bees.

\$20 billion

Estimated value of honeybees' contribution to U.S. crops annually.

5–6 weeks

Average lifespan of a worker bee, during which time she'll produce about 1/12 teaspoon of honey.

2,500

Number of eggs a queen can lay per day in the busiest summer months.

SOURCES: THE BEE CONSERVANCY, CLEMSON APICULTURE AND POLLINATOR PROGRAM, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS

"For commercial beekeepers, this is very significant," Clemson's Powell says. "They're losing 40% of their stock. Imagine if you were a chicken farmer or cattle rancher. If you lost 40% of your animals every year, that's a significant loss. And so, beekeepers have some challenges, but beekeepers are also very hardworking and industrious people, and they're working diligently to overcome those losses."

Powell emphasizes that people can support pollinators, even if they aren't beekeepers, by being conscious of how they manage their land. They can build native plant gardens and reduce pesticides. They can maintain biodiversity by replacing plants that aren't very productive for pollinators. They can call a beekeeper when they see a swarm of bees, rather than exterminate it.



**STICKY BUSINESS** To get a jar of golden honey, the wax is first scraped off the comb, then the combs are spun at a high speed to extract the honey.



**"Beekeeping, to me, is like being an artist. Every artist puts their paint on the canvas differently."**

—BEEKEEPER MIKE MACRI

### Do it yourself

And if people are interested in becoming a beekeeper?

"If you want to be serious about getting into learning about how to manage bees, produce honey and keep bees either for a trade or for income, my main suggestion is that you look for a local club or a local class," Powell says. "That's the best way to learn how to keep bees in South Carolina."

Macri agrees. He believes the No. 1 thing any budding beekeeper can do is find a good mentor. Or, better yet, several mentors.

"Beekeeping, to me, is like being an artist," he says. "Every artist puts their paint on the canvas differently. Well, you take what you learn from here and there, and you make it your own. You do it your way—what works for you, what's simplest for you."

As Macri is saying this, he finally finds the queen inside one of the frames of "Hive 5." She's noticeably larger than all the other bees, and sure enough, she has an unmistakable green rump. He tells Joanne to checkmark "Spotted Queen" on this hive's



### MACRI HONEY BEE FARM HONEY MUFFINS

YIELD: 6-8 MUFFINS

- 1½ cups white flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- Dash of salt
- 1 egg
- ½ cup local honey
- ½ cup skim milk
- ¼ cup canola oil
- 1 cup blueberries (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease a 12-count muffin pan or line with cupcake papers.

In a bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder and salt. Set aside. In another bowl, whisk together egg, honey, milk and oil. Add in flour mixture and mix until just combined. Divide batter evenly into 6-8 cups of the prepared pan (fill about ¾ full). Bake 15-20 minutes or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean.

Let muffins cool for five minutes before removing from pan. Keep leftovers in a covered container.

inspection checklist, which also includes such items as "Brood Pattern," "Mites," "Hive Beetles" and "Demeanor"—each a potential issue he must monitor.

One problem beekeepers face is a fascinating phenomenon known as "swarming." This occurs when the hive becomes overloaded and splits to make a new hive elsewhere. During a swarm, the old queen will take half the bees and leave, thus drastically reducing honey production.

Macri, for his part, isn't concerned about any potential swarm today. He closes "Hive 5" and moves on to inspect the next one.

In the coming weeks, the bees will fill each comb with honey and then cap it with wax, almost like sealing the lid of a jar. Macri will take these honeycombs (called "supers") and walk them over to his "Honey House"—a storage shed in which he has an extractor and a bottler. He'll scrape the wax off the comb and let the extractor spin out the honey. He'll bottle it up in 16-ounce jars, which he gives to friends and sells locally.

But he will also keep a good bit of honey for the bees themselves. After all, that's how they'll survive the winter. And we need the bees to live, if we want to live.

As Macri puts it, "It's crazy what God's little creature does to our whole food survival." 🐝





## Upstate

### JUNE

**19–21 Juneteenth Celebration**, various locations, Spartanburg. (864) 596-2000 or cityofspartanburg.org.

**20–29 Murder, Plain and Simple**, Centre Stage Theatre, Greenville. (864) 233-6733 or centrestage.org.

**21 Americana Folk Festival**, Hagood Mill Historic Site, Pickens. (864) 898-2936 or visitahagoodmill.com.

**21 Comedian Jerry Carroll**, Abbeville Opera House, Abbeville. (864) 366-9673 or abbevillecitysc.com.

**21 Juneteenth: A Cultural Celebration**, Mauldin Cultural Center, Mauldin. mauldinculturalcenter.org.

**21 Moonlight Paddle**, Oconee State Park, Mountain Rest. (864) 638-5353.

**26–28 South Carolina Festival of Stars**, Main and Saluda streets, Ninety Six. (864) 543-2200 or townofninety-six.sc.gov/sc-festival-stars.

**27–28 Art Feeds the Soul Annual Quilt Show**, Seneca Middle School, Seneca. Imqg.org.

**28 Fairforest 5K**, Croft State Park, Spartanburg. (864) 585-1283.

**28 Freedom Blast**, Greer City Park, Greer. freedomblast.org.

### JULY

**3 Clemson MBA Fireworks**, Unity Park, Greenville. (864) 232-2273 or greenvillesc.gov.

**3 Fourth of July Spectacular**, downtown, Fountain Inn. mainstreetfountaininn.com.

**5 Celebration of Freedom**, Cowpens National Battlefield, Cowpens. nps.gov/cowp/index.htm.

**9–19 South Carolina Peach Festival**, various venues, Gaffney. southcarolinapeachfest.com.

**10–12 South Carolina Festival of Discovery**, Main Street, Greenwood. (864) 942-8448 or uptowngreenwood.com.

**12–Aug. 2 Laser Days of Summer at the Planetarium**, Roper Mountain Science Center, Greenville. ropermountain.org.

**19 Banjo Extravaganza**, Hagood Mill Historic Site, Pickens. (864) 898-2936 or visitahagoodmill.com.

**24–Aug. 10 Million Dollar Quartet**, Centre Stage Theatre, Greenville. (864) 233-6733 or centrestage.org.

## 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.

**26–Aug. 2 Senior League Baseball World Series**, J.B. Red Owens Sports Complex, Easley. littleleague.org/world-series/2025/slbws.

## Midlands

### JUNE

**20 Aiken Master Gardener Lunch Box: Hurricane Helene Recovery Efforts in Hitchcock Woods**, Millbrook Baptist Church, Aiken. (803) 508-7739 or aikenmastergardeners.org.

**20 Summer Nights at the Museum**, South Carolina State Museum, Columbia. (803) 898-4921 or scmuseum.org.

**20–21 The Dam Boat Run**, Lake Murray, Columbia. lakemurraypowerboatrun.com.

**20–22 Juneteenth Rock Hill Festival**, various locations, Rock Hill. facebook.com/juneteenthrockhill.

**20–July 26 Elton John and Tim Rice's Aida**, Trustus Theatre, Columbia. (803) 254-9732 or trustus.org.

**21 Columbia Shrimp & Grits Fest**, Seawell's, Columbia. columbiashrimppandgrits.com.

**21 Juneteenth Freedom Fest & Parade**, downtown, Columbia. juneteenthfreedomfest.com.

**21 Ridge Peach Festival**, downtown, Trenton. ridgepeachfestival.org.

**27–28 WSO Theatre and Film Festival**, Harbison Theatre, Columbia. (803) 407-5011 or harbisontheatre.org.

**27–28, July 4–5 The Hunchback of Notre Dame**, Rock Hill Theatre, Rock Hill. (803) 326-7428 or rockhilltheatre.org.

**28 Great American Campout**, 2573 Lake Haigler Drive, Fort Mill. (803) 547-4575 or ascgreenway.org.

**28 Lake Murray's Independence Day Celebration**, Lake Murray, Columbia. (803) 781-5940 or lakemurraycountry.com.

**28 The Lizard Man Stomp**, downtown, Bishopville. (803) 484-6359 or facebook.com/lizardmanstomp.

### JULY

**4 4th of July Fireworks Show**, Lake Wateree State Park, Winnsboro. (803) 482-6401.

**4 Fort Jackson Independence Day Fireworks Celebration**, Fort Jackson, Columbia. jackson.armymwr.com.

**4 Independence Day, Colonial Style**, Living History Park, North Augusta. colonialtimes.us.

**4 Lexington County Peach Festival**, Gilbert Community Park, Gilbert. lexingtoncountypeachfestival.com.

**4–5 U.S. of Cay 4th of July Celebration**, various locations, Tega Cay. (803) 548-1400 or tegacaysc.org.

**11–19 A Bad Year for Tomatoes**, Aiken Community Theatre, Aiken. (803) 648-1438 or aikencommunitytheatre.org.

**12 Battle of Huck's Defeat Commemoration**, Historic Brattonsville, McConells. (803) 329-2121 or chmuseums.org/brattonsville.

**19 Moths of Lee State Park**, Lee State Park, Bishopville. (803) 428-4988.

**20 Summer Nights at the Museum**, South Carolina State Museum, Columbia. (803) 898-4921 or scmuseum.org.

**26–27 The Big Plant Expo**, South Carolina State Fairgrounds, Columbia. (803) 799-3387 or serareplantmarket.com.

## Pee Dee & Lowcountry

### JUNE

**20 Reggae Nights Summer Concert: Da'Gullah Rootz**, James Island County Park, Charleston. (843) 795-4356 or ccprc.com.

**22 Florence Symphony Rocks!**, Francis Marion Performing Arts Center, Florence. (843) 661-4444 or fmpac.org.

**25 America Sings!**, First Presbyterian Church, Hilton Head Island. (843) 341-3818 or hiltonheadchoralsociety.org.

**26 Sweetgrass Festival**, Memorial Waterfront Park, Mount Pleasant. (843) 884-8517 or experiencemountpleasant.com.

**26–27 Folly Beach Wahine Classic**, 1550 E. Ashley Ave., Folly Beach. follywahine.com.

**28 Carolina Day—Commemoration of the Battle of Sullivan's Island**, Fort Moultrie, Sullivan's Island. (843) 883-3123 or charlestoncvb.com.



COURTESY OF BROOKGREEN GARDENS

As part of its "Summer Light: Art by Night" showcase, Brookgreen Gardens is hosting the exhibit "Gardens of Glass – The Art of Craig Mitchell Smith," which happens to also look lovely in the sunshine.

**28 Conway Riverfest**, downtown, Conway. (843) 248-2273 or conwayriverfest.com.

**28 DragonBoat Beaufort Race Day**, Waterfront Park, Beaufort. facebook.com/dragonboatbeaufort.

**28 Freedom Fest**, Public Square, Darlington. darlingtonchamber.com.

**28 Independence Celebration**, Regional Recreation Complex, Moncks Corner. (843) 719-7952 or monckscornercsc.gov.

### JULY

**4 4th of July Fireworks Blast**, Patriots Point, Charleston. (843) 884-2727 or patriotspoint.org.

**4 Firecracker 5K**, Honey Horn Park, Hilton Head Island. hiltonheadfirecracker5000.com.

**4 Fourth of July Fireworks**, Harbour Town, Hilton Head Island. (866) 561-8802 or seapines.com.

**4 Independence Day 5K and Fun Run**, Grand Park Lake Courtyard on Farrow Parkway, Myrtle Beach. runsignup.com.

**4 Salute From the Shore**, Cherry Grove to Bluffton. salutedromtheshore.com.

**9–Aug. 17 Summer: The Donna Summer Musical**, Arts Center of Coastal Carolina, Hilton Head Island. artshhi.com.

**11–20 Beaufort Water Festival**, Waterfront Park, Beaufort. bftwaterfestival.com.

**12 Fort Motte Exhibition Opening**, Morris Center for Lowcountry Heritage, Ridgeland. morrisheritagecenter.org.

**18 Dancing on the Cooper**, Mount Pleasant Pier, Mount Pleasant. (843) 795-4356 or ccprc.com.

**19 Caribbean Jerk Festival**, Riverfront Park, North Charleston. chsjerkfest.com.

**19 IOP Beach Run**, IOP Recreation Center, Isle of Palms. (877) 607-6467 or iop.net.

**19–20, 26–27 Diary of a Wimpy Kid**, Dock Street Theatre, Charleston. (843) 577-7183 or charlestonstage.com.

**20 Reggae Nights Summer Concert: Well Charged**, James Island County Park, Charleston. (843) 795-4356 or ccprc.com.

**21 Paul Reiser**, Arts Center of Coastal Carolina, Hilton Head Island. artshhi.com.

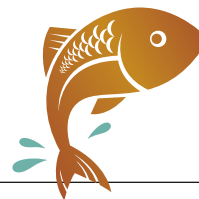
**24–25 May River Shrimp Festival**, Bluffton Oyster Factory Park, Bluffton. bluffton.com.

### ONGOING

**Through Aug. 30 Summer Light: Art by Night**, Brookgreen Gardens, Murrells Inlet. brookgreen.org.

**Through Oct. 5 "Picturing Freedom: Harriet Tubman and the Combahee River Raid,"** The Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston. (843) 722-2706 or gibbesmuseum.org.

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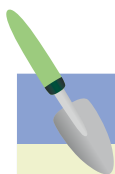
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## FISH & GAME CHART

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.

	AM		PM	
	Minor	Major	Minor	Major
<b>JUNE</b>				
16	10:30	4:18	10:54	4:42
17	11:22	5:10	11:45	5:33
18	—	5:59	12:10	6:22
19	12:33	6:45	12:57	7:09
20	1:18	7:30	1:43	7:55
21	2:03	8:17	2:30	8:44
22	2:52	9:06	3:21	9:36
23	3:45	10:01	4:16	10:32
24	4:44	11:00	5:16	11:32
25	5:46	—	6:18	12:34
26	6:50	12:35	7:20	1:05
27	7:53	1:39	8:21	2:07
28	8:53	2:40	9:18	3:05
29	9:48	3:36	10:11	3:59
30	10:37	4:27	10:59	4:48
<b>JULY</b>				
1	11:22	5:12	11:43	5:33
2	—	5:54	12:04	6:14
3	12:23	6:34	12:44	6:54
4	1:01	7:12	1:22	7:33
5	1:40	7:51	2:02	8:13
6	2:20	8:32	2:44	8:55
7	3:02	9:15	3:28	9:40
8	3:48	10:02	4:15	10:28
9	4:38	10:51	5:05	11:18
10	5:30	11:43	5:57	—
11	6:24	12:11	6:51	12:37
12	7:19	1:06	7:45	1:32
13	8:14	2:02	8:39	2:26
14	9:08	2:56	9:32	3:20
15	10:01	3:49	10:24	4:12
16	10:52	4:40	11:15	5:03
17	11:42	5:30	—	5:54
18	12:09	6:20	12:33	6:46
19	12:56	7:10	1:24	7:38
20	1:48	8:03	2:18	8:32
21	2:41	8:57	3:13	9:28
22	3:37	9:53	4:09	10:24
23	4:35	10:50	5:05	11:20
24	5:32	11:47	6:01	12:15
25	6:29	12:16	6:55	12:42
26	7:23	1:11	7:47	1:35
27	8:15	2:04	8:37	2:26
28	9:04	2:53	9:25	3:14
29	9:50	3:40	10:11	4:00
30	10:35	4:25	10:56	4:45
31	11:19	5:09	11:40	5:30
DATA BY SOLUNAR SERVICES				





## JUNE IN THE GARDEN

■ Make rakes, hoes and shovels even more useful in your garden by marking the handles with paint, permanent marker, or waterproof tape in inch increments. This gives you handy measuring devices to use when it comes to correctly establishing row widths as well as planting distances and depths.

■ If you remove some of the stem suckers off the lower portions of your tomato plants and tuck them away in individual pots filled with moist dirt in a semi-shady spot, many will root and, in about a month, be ready as transplants that are exact clones of the momma plant for the midsummer veggie patch.



L.A. JACKSON

**GOES WELL WITH HONEY** Fig trees are easy to grow—and enjoy.

**TIP OF THE MONTH** Thinking about adding a fig tree to your edible garden? Plant it in a well-draining site in full sun, and keep in mind a young fig tree can take a few years to swing into full fruit production. Since maturing fig trees are sensitive to drought, add mulch and water during the dry times. Typical fig trees can reach 15 feet or more in both height and width, so to prevent them from becoming botanical beasts, prune about a quarter of their growth every few years in late winter, cutting back limbs to leaf or branch joints. “Brown Turkey” and “Celeste” are two popular cultivars.



NO NEED TO HIDE “Hot Lips” turtlehead is quite a cutie.

## Growing turtles

BY L.A. JACKSON

L.A. JACKSON

**I AM SURE THAT, ON OCCASION,** you have spotted a turtle or two moseying around your plant beds. Although they are slow, their visits are usually brief. If you enjoyed those fleeting moments, why not just add turtleheads to your garden?

No, I’m not talking about doing vile things to cute critters. Instead, I suggest a plant called turtlehead (*Chelone* spp.). It is an herbaceous perennial native to the Southeast that has hooded blossoms that look like—with some imagination on your part—turtle heads with their mouths open.

Even with its odd name and look, turtlehead is a rather pretty plant. But you have to wait until midsummer for visual satisfaction, when its clustered blooms supported on 2- to 3-foot stems begin to open, starting a pleasing show that can last over a month.

Turtleheads (deer-resistant, by the way) perform best in sunny to semi-shady gardens. But unlike many other plants, they will even grow well in soggy soil, making them a great addition to rain gardens or low spots in the landscape that turn to muck when it rains. Also, they are obvious options as marginal plants in a water garden.

If the flowers are left to go to seed, your turtlehead patch will continue

to grow, just as long as the soil is kept moist to help encourage new sprouts. In addition, turtleheads can slowly expand their clumps by way of underground rhizomes. And if you want extra turtleheads for other parts of your landscape or to give away to friends, the plants can be propagated by divisions taken in early spring just as new growth begins to appear.

Three turtlehead varieties are typically available at garden shops. Pink turtlehead (*Chelone lyonii*) is the most common—meaning easiest to find—and in particular, the cultivar “Hot Lips,” which is quite a cutie with light-rose flowers hovering over rich green foliage. Prefer white blooms? *Chelone glabra* will deliver with its pleasant pale blossoms. There is even a so-called red turtlehead (*Chelone obliqua*), but the ones I have seen had flowers that were more a deep pink than a flashy red.

Turtleheads shouldn’t be too hard to find at area nurseries, especially ones that specialize in native plants. But if your local hunt comes up empty, these strange, charming beauties are easy online finds. 🐢

**L.A. JACKSON** is the former editor of Carolina Gardener magazine. Contact him at [lajackson1@gmail.com](mailto:lajackson1@gmail.com).

# Beware of the bride

BY JAN A. IGOE

**WHEN MY DAUGHTER DECIDED** she wanted a do-it-yourself wedding at the beach, everybody loved the idea. We didn't realize it meant Daddy would be the designated turkey fryer and 57 relatives would supply macaroni and cheese.

I've entertained a lot of fantasies about what my daughter's wedding would be like, but none of them included me strangling scallops with bacon on her big day. My fantasies starred professional caterers who know how to roast prime rib and marinate meatballs simultaneously—without setting the reception hall on fire. When shells show up in the crab cakes, you need people to blame who aren't your cousins, as any wedding planner will tell you.

But I didn't dare push the issue, because the golden rule of prenuptial peace is not to argue with the bride, who might hurt you if you happen to be her mother.

Any female—no matter how naturally sweet, lovable and easygoing she was prior to her engagement—becomes a ticking time bomb under the pressure of ordering monogrammed M&M's to match the groom's cummerbund. No one knows what teeny detail might push the bridal brain over the edge.

If a normally law-abiding bride-to-be got up one morning and decided to rob a bank, she could just tell the judge she needed extra cash for her cake topper and plead "Premarital Insanity." She'd get off with the court's deepest apologies for her inconvenience, as long as she promised to leave before exploding.

So, in the interest of self-preservation, her dad and I just started nodding in agreement with every word our deranged baby girl uttered six solid months before the wedding.

She didn't want bridesmaids, since it was too difficult to find dresses that flattered everyone's tattoos. The only members of the wedding party would be her



**In the interest of self-preservation, her dad and I just started nodding in agreement with every word our deranged baby girl uttered six solid months before the wedding.**

two Labrador retrievers sporting casual beach attire. And the only rule of etiquette that concerned her was making sure the ceremony would be properly Facebooked, Twittered and blogged.

Thankfully, she didn't want me anywhere near the kitchen. My only job was to decorate the groom's car after the ceremony on the big day, which came before we knew it.

We couldn't have asked for better weather. The warm sunshine was perfect for guests to wait around the beach for the father of the bride, who was still frying fowl when he was supposed to be giving the bride away. The delay also gave the bridal party time to eat their outfits.

By the time the bride and groom said "I do," we'd transformed the groom's black Honda into the picture-perfect wedding mobile. A couple of artistic nephews helped me attach streamers and balloons and stencil hearts all over the car.

We knew the newlyweds would be thrilled with our masterpiece, until they slipped into the other black Honda parked across the lot. My nephews and I backed away from our work and watched as two guys we'd never seen before drove off in our "Just Married" mobile.

We hustled over to the reception, where the party was already going strong and none of the little snafus seemed to matter anymore. Months of craziness were finally over, and the radiant bride was returning to her sane, lovable self. Life was good.

And then her sister caught the bouquet. ☺

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *South Carolina Living* is reprinting some of Jan A. Igoe's previous columns. This "Humor Me" originally appeared in the February 2010 issue. Visit [SCLiving.coop/news/in-memory-of-jan-igoe](http://SCLiving.coop/news/in-memory-of-jan-igoe).



A woman in a blue button-down shirt and a dark apron is reaching up with her right hand towards a glowing neon sign. The sign features a coffee cup icon and the word "open" in a stylized font. The background is a blurred interior of a cafe with warm lighting and hanging plants.

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