News writing

Sharon Dowdy
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The writing process

“Writing is easy. All you do is sit staring at a blank sheet of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead.”

Gene Fowler
The writing process
The writing process

- **Plan**: Find an idea, research and organize

  *Vegetable gardening story*

- **Draft**: Get things down on paper (on the screen)

  *Gardening publications from UGA Extension*
The writing process

- **Draft**: Get things down on paper (on the screen)

  *Main points, how to advice, personal experience*

- **Clarify**: Revise your draft

  *Write one day and come back to it the next day.*
The writing process

- **Edit:** Remove the excess

  *Try to keep it under 600 words, aim for 400*

- **Proofread**

  *Print out a copy and have someone edit from the hard copy.*
I have a spelling checker. It came with my PC. It plainly marks four my *revue* mistakes I cannot *sea*. I’ve run this poem *threw* it. I’m sure your pleased *too no*. It’s letter perfect in it’s *weigh*, my checker *toll*ed me *sew*. 
The inverted pyramid

Readers start at the top

Editors cut from the bottom
How is a column different from a news article?

A column is:
• Regular
  (weekly, for instance)
• Personal
  (you talking to your audience)

A news article is:
• Irregular
  (usually, one article)
• Objective
  (balanced perspective)
What makes a column personal?

• Put yourself into it – use “I”

• Write the way you talk. Keep things simple.

• Tell about your experiences, conversations, travels – “While at the Peanut Farm show…”

• Use people’s names– “I was talking to our state’s ag commissioner, Gary Black….”

• Laugh at yourself once in a while. Humor is entertaining.
What information should be in a column?

The possibilities are endless:

• Timely topics – Fruit tree pruning
• Coming events – Flavor of Georgia contest
• Personal observations – Lady beetles inside, calls coming into the office, strange requests
Learn to adapt and make your life easier

- Extension publications
- Calls from the public
- Departmental newsletters
- Information from college websites (like Georgia FACES)
- Information from meetings and other agents
How does a column look?

- A single topic (like a news release)
- A series of shorter topics
- Questions and answers

The style will be determined by you and/or your editor.
Make your editor’s life easy

• Always provide contact information
• Pay attention to grammar and style
• Check your facts
• Have someone proofread your work
• **Always meet your deadline!**
Georgia FACES
A web-based news delivery system
Georgia FACES

Serves a variety of people

- Industry
- Extension/UGA
- Media
- Public
Placement Options

- Departmental pages
- External campus pages
- Extension sites
- Feature story
- College homepage
Top Story for Saturday, January 14, 2012

Top scholar

UGA animal and dairy science professor Franklin West is tapped among the best.

By J Faith Peppers
University of Georgia

Franklin West, a University of Georgia assistant professor of animal and dairy science in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, has been named one of the nation’s top scholars under 40 by Diverse: Issues in Higher Education magazine.

Read the top story.
Daly, Timothy (CAES profile)

Phone: (678) 377-4010
Email: tdaly@uga.edu
Tagline: Timothy Daly is an agricultural and natural resource agent with the Gwinnett County Cooperative Extension office.
Organization(s): University of Georgia
Coverage Area(s): Entomology, Horticulture

This Writer’s Stories

- Install new plant materials during fall’s cool temperatures
- Trees and turf can thrive together
- Inspect sod before buying, installing
- Choose the healthiest plants for your landscape
Daly, Timothy (CAES profile)

Phone: (678) 377-4010
Email: tdaly@uga.edu
Organization(s): University of Georgia, UGA Cooperative Extension
Area(s) of Expertise: Ornamental Plant Disease, Turfgrass disease, Vegetable Disease, Plant Nematodes, Homeowner IPM, Ornamental Plants, Insects, Plant diseases, Horticulture, Vegetable Gardening

Web sites:
None.

This Expert's Stories
- Install new plant materials during fall's cool temperatures
- Leyland cypress trees often planted incorrectly
- Trees and turf can thrive together
- Pest control is more than just spraying chemicals
- Inspect sod before buying, installing
- Choose the healthiest plants for your landscape

This Expert's Media Kits
Doyle, Michael (CAES profile)

Phone: (770) 228-7284  
Email: mdoyle@uga.edu  
Organization(s): University of Georgia, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

Area(s) of Expertise: Food Safety, Food Sanitation, Food Microbiology, Food Pathogens

Web sites:  
- UGA Center for Food Safety

This Expert's Stories  
- UGA scientists develop new sprout-sanitizing treatment  
- UGA scientists recognized for development of food wash  
- Imported food numbers on the rise  
- Legislators tackle food safety on national, state levels  
- Outlook brighter for Georgia agriculture in 2010  
- UGA to host statewide agricultural forecast  
- Imported foods cause for concern  
- Antimicrobial wash is better than chlorine
Search Results for: ants
(Displaying 1 - 10 of 79)

**Fall is fire ant killing time - 9/1/11**
(story) Cool weather is best for treating fire ants.

**Drought drives Argentine ants indoors - 6/9/11**
(story) The ants go marching, indoors.

**Argentine ants 3 - 6/9/11**
Argentine ants feeds on Terro liquid bait

**Argentine Ants 2 - 6/7/11**
Argentine ants drink from a water trough left by a drinking glass.
Search Results for Images
(Displaying 1 - 10 of 713)

New computer - 1/11/12
Bryan County Elementary School fifth-grader Dy'Amound McGhee wins a computer through the 4-H Need a Computer program.

Mistletoe - 1/5/12
Mistletoe grows on a pear tree in Butts County, Ga.

Money and credit cards - 1/5/12
Cash and credit cards
Companion planting

Growing different plants next to each other so that one or both gain a benefit from the other is called companion planting. One plant may offer pest resistant benefits to the other or share essential nutrients.

Carrots and tomatoes are often planted as companions, as are roses and garlic.

Source: Georgia Department of Agriculture
Subscriber options

- Email – daily or weekly
- Region or statewide
- Audience: industry, media, public or UGA
- Content specific
Pitch stories to CAES writers

Sharon Dowdy – Griffin
sharono@uga.edu

Merritt Melancon – Athens
jmerritt@uga.edu

Clint Thompson – Tifton
cbthomps@uga.edu
Content

- News articles
- Photo database
- PSAs
- Media kits
- Infographics
- Tips and trivia
That's all Folks!