

## SUSTAINABILITY DEPARTMENT

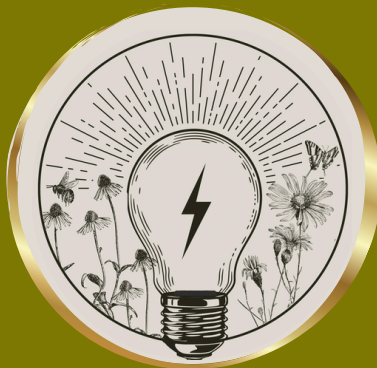


WELCOME TO OUR

# Monthly Newsletter

Welcome to the fifth issue of our monthly newsletter! We are thrilled to be able to share what we are doing at the Athens-Clarke County Sustainability Department with you. Join us each month as we explore all things sustainability and how you can get involved!

*Putting Energy into  
Greener Spaces*



**In this newsletter you will find:**

Latest projects, free resources, and upcoming events!

# TIPS FOR A GREENER LIFESTYLE!

*How can we live sustainably?*

IN THIS SERIES WE EXPLORE HOW WE CAN BE SUSTAINABLE TOGETHER,  
RIGHT HERE IN ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY!



THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

## GEORGIA, YOUR VOTE MATTERS!

HANNAH CHAFFEE



### REGISTER NOW HERE!

Voting is one of the most important ways citizens can better their community. It is our civic duty to be engaged not only in national elections but also in state and local elections!

In order to vote you must first register. The deadline to register to vote is October 7th. You can register in person at your local election office or online [here](#)!

Find who and what is up for vote by looking at a sample ballot and research what candidates stand for before you vote. Check out the sample ballot for Athens-Clarke County [here](#).

Want to go the extra mile? Remind the people around you to vote or get involved with organizations helping others get to the polls!

### EARLY VOTING

Early voting takes place Monday through Saturday October 15th through November 1st with hours and Sunday operations varying from precinct to precinct. You can vote at any early voting location within your registered county. You will need to bring a valid photo ID or a voter identification card. [Find more information here!](#)

### ABSENTEE VOTING

To request an absentee ballot, you'll need to complete an Absentee Ballot Application. Your application must be received by October 25th to the registrar's office of the county you are registered to vote in. [Click here for the Georgia Official Absentee Ballot Application!](#)

### ELECTION DAY VOTING

You will need a valid photo ID or a voter identification card to vote in person. Polling places are open from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm on Election Day (November 5th). If you are in line by 7:00 pm, you are allowed to cast your ballot. [Find more information here!](#)



# JAPANESE CHAFF FLOWER INVASIVE OF THE MONTH!

HANNAH CHAFFEE

Que the dramatically timed lightning and organ music! Nothing is spookier than invasive plants. Japanese Chaff Flower is the newest invasive species to arrive in Athens, having recently been identified at Memorial Park and Bear Hollow Zoo.

Japanese Chaff Flower (*Achyranthes japonica*) is a perennial (regrows each year) herb which grows 3 to 6 ft tall. It's simple smooth-edged leaves grow opposite to each other, and it's flower grows in a green spiky column with no petals. In the colder months, it's stem turns brown but remains upright ([Michigan Invasive Species](#)).

That doesn't sound like a good Halloween costume, you say. And you'd be right! But like something out of the Little Shop of Horrors, this plant is nothing to turn a blind eye to.

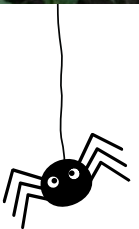
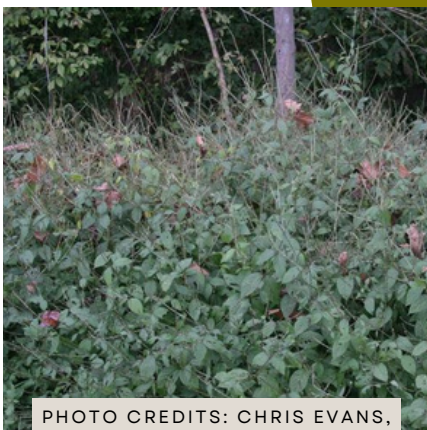


PHOTO CREDITS: CHRIS EVANS,  
BUGWOOD

JOIN US EACH MONTH IN THIS NEW SERIES AS WE LEARN ABOUT  
DIFFERENT INVASIVE SPECIES!



PHOTO CREDIT: CHRIS EVANS,  
BUGWOOD

Invasive species threaten ecosystems because they tend to outcompete native plants for resources like nutrients, sunlight, space or water. They grow and spread quickly. In the case of the Japanese Chaff Flower, its dense colonies of tall plants crowd out other species and block light. Japanese Chaff Flower is particularly prolific when it comes to seed dispersal, producing thousands of seeds per square meter ([West Pennsylvania Conservancy](#)) which can be transported downstream by floods or unknowingly carried to an entirely new location by sticking to animal fur or mowing equipment.

Japanese Chaff Flower seeds can easily stick to cloths or dog fur, so be sure to check yourself and your fluffy companion if you walk outdoors, disposing of any seeds into the trash (in a sealed container).

More often than not, invasive species like the Japanese Chaff Flower relocate, not because of a natural introduction to a new region or gradual growth in a species' range but because humans introduced it —and usually it's



unintentional.

The spread of invasive species disrupts our delicate ecosystem, decreasing biodiversity which results in tangible effects on how we live. We rely on the ecosystem to manage runoff and erosion, provide clean water, pollinate crops and so much more. That's why it's crucial that we take steps to stop the spread of Japanese Chaff Flower before it becomes a wide spread issue in Athens.

You can help by reporting any sightings of the plant. Japanese Chaff Flower can be easily confused with other species, and we want to track where populations currently are in Athens. If you see a plant you think is Japanese Chaff Flower, don't mow it: snap a picture and call or email the ACC Sustainability Department. We will help confirm the species identification and advise options for treating it.

We appreciate your haunting dedication and hope you stay tuned for more hair-raising tales of ecology!



PHOTO CREDITS: CHRIS EVANS,  
BUGWOOD





# UPCOMING EVENTS:



## ATHENS WATERWAY CLEANUP 2024



**Saturday, October 19th**

Join us to make a difference in Athens by cleaning  
our local rivers & creeks!

CLICK HERE  
↓

**Register Online @**

**[WWW.ACCGOV.COM/RIVERSALIVE](http://WWW.ACCGOV.COM/RIVERSALIVE)**

AthensRiversAlive@gmail.com

706.613.3501 x 7861



# UPCOMING EVENTS:



Saturday, October 26th,  
8:00 am - 12:00 pm  
ACC Landfill Outdoor Classroom  
5700 Lexington Rd. Winterville, GA  
<http://accgov.com/vulture>

CELEBRATING  
'NATURE'S CLEAN-UP CREW',  
THE VULTURE!



COME OUT FOR A GOOD TIME WHILE LEARNING ABOUT SOLID WASTE!

## PROJECT FAST CHARGE



FUELING ATHENS' SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

Thank  
You!



ATHENS CLARKE COUNTY  
SUSTAINABILITY DEPARTMENT  
THANKS YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT  
OF PROJECT FAST CHARGE!

We've received 98 signatures, 11 letters of support from community members, and 5 letters of support from local non-profits! We really appreciate you taking the time to help us create a sustainable Athens. Your letters and signatures were submitted with the grant application!

THANK YOU FOR HELPING MAKE  
ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY

**GREENER**  
*together*

PUTTING ENERGY INTO GREENER SPACES

Athens-Clarke County Sustainability Department

[www.accgov.com/green](http://www.accgov.com/green)

706-613-3838