

## SUSTAINABILITY DEPARTMENT



WELCOME TO 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!

# Perilla Mint

## INVASIVE SPECIES OF THE MONTH

IMIR ROBINSON

Perilla mint, also known as beefsteak plant, is a member of the mint family native to East Asia. Though it was originally introduced to the United States for culinary, medicinal, and ornamental uses, it has since become an invasive species throughout the southeastern U.S. and poses a serious threat to both ecosystems and livestock.

This annual plant typically grows two to three feet tall and, like many in the mint family, features square stems. The leaves and stems emit a strong minty aroma when crushed. Its oval shaped leaves with toothed edges grow opposite of each other in pairs. Their color can range from green to deep reddish-purple –the latter giving rise to its common name, as the rich hue resembles raw beef.

Perilla mint begins to flower in late July through August, producing small, pale purple to white blossoms on a spike. It is a prolific seeder, with a single plant capable of producing up to 1,500 seeds. Research has shown that many of these seeds remain viable for up to four years, contributing to the plant's persistence and rapid spread.

This invasive mint prefers semi-shady, moist environments and often thrives in



PHOTO CREDIT (TOP, RIGHT): MARISA WILLIAMS, BUGWOOD

PHOTO CREDIT (TOP, LEFT & BOTTOM): CHRIS EVANS, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, BUGWOOD



pastures, along roadsides and streambanks, and at the edges of wooded areas. It especially excels in disturbed sites. In Athens, for example, we've seen it quickly colonize bare ground where stormwater runoff has stripped away existing vegetation and leaf litter.

Beyond its aggressive spread, Perilla mint is particularly dangerous because it is toxic to livestock, especially cattle and horses. Ingesting the plant can cause lung damage and, in some cases, death. Animals tend to eat it when other forage is scarce, so its toxicity poses the greatest risk during dry periods when grazing options are limited.

Control efforts depend on timing and persistence. Since Perilla mint is an annual, hand-pulling young plants can be effective in small areas—especially when the soil is moist. Mowing before the plant flowers helps reduce seed production. For larger infestations, herbicides such as glyphosate or triclopyr may be used, but these should always be applied with care and in accordance with label instructions.

Whether in a pasture, roadside, or backyard, keeping an eye out for this fast-spreading plant can help protect both native ecosystems and farm animals from its harmful effects.



PHOTO CREDIT (ABOVE): PERILLA MINT SEED, MARISA WILLIAMS, BUGWOOD



PHOTO CREDIT (TOP & RIGHT): MARISA WILLIAMS, BUGWOOD

PHOTO CREDIT (LEFT & ABOVE): RICHARD GARDNER, BUGWOOD



[FOR SOURCES CLICK HERE!](#)

# 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:

## ECO-ANXIETY

HANNAH CHAFFEE

Do you ever find yourself staring off into the middle distance imaging the ever-impending environmental disaster we call reality? My friend, that is what we call climate anxiety. An increasing common experience, climate anxiety describes distress people have about humans' impact on the planet and how those impacts then affect people. According to [a recent Yale study](#), about 10% of Americans report feeling down, depressed or hopeless about global warming several days a week.

Climate anxiety can rear it's ugly head in many forms. Some people experience it as a vague sense of dread or fear for future generations. Others are clouded with hopelessness because they feel like they have no control or that there is no justice. Climate anxiety can also take a more personal form with some fearing what the current and future affects of climate change will have on their family's lives.

It's important to acknowledge that these feelings are valid. It's true: *there are* major injustices in the world, and *you alone* cannot stop climate change.



Climate anxiety is a rational reaction to the situation the world is in. Fighting climate change feels like a big problem *because it is*. Climate anxiety comes from a place of care —you care what happens. That's a good thing!

The key is separating that desire for sustainability from all the ways anxiety can take a toll on us emotionally. At the same time, we must turn that desire into dedication through action. But how do you do all that?

1. To start, if you're worried about the climate, don't freeze: do something about it! **Explore ways you can make your life a little more sustainable.** Climate change is a result of systemic greed. Real change will only come from systemic changes, but that doesn't mean the small stuff doesn't help whether that's turning off the lights when you leave or switching to a reusable water bottle!

### **3. Acknowledge that you cannot 'fix' the climate.**

The world may need all the good you can do but you cannot do all the good the world needs.

2. **Engage others and take collective action.** Talk to people about the climate. Join a club. Get people out voting! There are so many people who care — just like you, and we can do a whole lot more good when we work together!

4. **Do not feel guilty for existing!** When you care about the environment, it's easy to hold yourself to too high of a standard for your daily environmental impact. Living has a environmental toll —and that's ok. If buying or doing something specific would truly spark joy or improve your quality of life, (as long as you're doing so in moderation) allow yourself that joy free of guilt.

5. Sometimes, you will choose the less sustainable option. Life can be hard, and you're not always going to have the time or mental capacity. **Give yourself grace!** You're only human.



6. Acknowledge that **being able to make the sustainable choice is a privilege.** It's a lot easier to be sustainable when you have ample money, time and energy to dedicate.

7. **Connect with the world your fighting for!** Get out into the woods! Spend time with your family and friends! Hug a tree. Pet your cat. Help your neighbor. Meet new people. Try new foods. Dance! Plant some flowers. The purpose of sustainability is for everyone to be able to continue experiencing the joys of this beautiful world —that includes you!

# MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

## GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER ELECTION FOR DISTRICTS 2 & 3

SPECIAL PRIMARY RUNOFF: JULY 15<sup>TH</sup> 2025

SPECIAL ELECTION: NOVEMBER 4<sup>TH</sup> 2025

(IF NEEDED) SPECIAL ELECTION RUNOFF: DECEMBER 2<sup>ND</sup> 2025

All Georgia residents vote for every district, regardless of where you live in Georgia!

YOU MAY VOTE IN THE SPECIAL PRIMARY RUNOFF EVEN IF YOU DID NOT VOTE IN THE SPECIAL PRIMARY ELECTION!



### REGISTER TO VOTE

Are you registered to vote? If this will be your first time voting you will have to register to vote. You only have to register to vote once, however if you have moved, you may have to update your voter registration. To do so or to register to vote [here!](#)

**LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE IN SPECIAL ELECTION: MONDAY OCTOBER 6<sup>TH</sup> '25**

### EARLY VOTING

**Monday July 7<sup>th</sup> - Friday July 11<sup>th</sup>**

Early voting for the GA Public Service Commission Election for the Special Primary Runoff will take place Monday through Friday July 7<sup>th</sup> through July 11<sup>th</sup>. There is only one Early Voting location for the GA Public Service Commission Special Primary Runoff. All persons registered to vote in Athens-Clarke County may use this location for early voting, but must vote in their own precinct on Election Day Voting.

You are allowed to vote in the Special Primary Runoff even if you did not vote in the Special Primary Election (as long as you are registered to vote).

For Early Voting, you will need to bring a valid photo ID or a voter identification card.

**Athens-Clarke County Elections Office  
155 E. Washington Street Athens GA 30601**

**Monday July 7<sup>th</sup>:** 8:00am-5:00pm  
**Tuesday July 8<sup>th</sup>:** 8:00am-5:00pm  
**Wednesday July 9<sup>th</sup>:** 8:00am-5:00pm  
**Thursday June 10<sup>th</sup>:** 8:00am - 5:00pm  
**Friday July 11<sup>th</sup>:** 8:00am-5:00pm

Advanced voting for the General Special Election will begin as soon as possible and no later than **Monday November 24<sup>th</sup> - Friday November 28<sup>th</sup>**.

[Learn more about early voting!](#)

### ABSENTEE VOTING

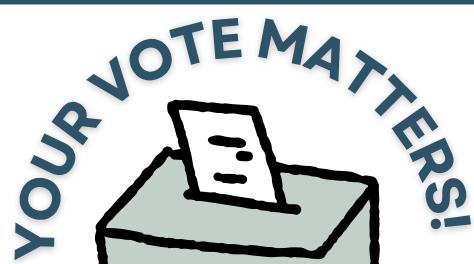
To request an absentee ballot for the Special Primary Runoff, you'll need to complete an Absentee Ballot Application. Your application must be received by July 7th to the registrar's office of the county you are registered to vote in.

[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. If you are in line by 7:00 pm, you are allowed to cast your ballot.

[Find more information here!](#)



# UPCOMING EVENTS:



## Community Energy Workshops

ATHENS LIBRARY (2025 BAXTER STREET)

6:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.

Join us for two free workshops to learn how to reduce energy costs, improve home efficiency, and understand your utility bills. Refreshments will be provided at both events.

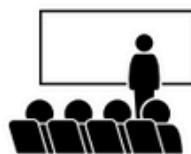
**RSVP NOW**

Scan the QR code or to reserve your spot.



<https://bit.ly/AthensEnergy>

### Who Should Attend?



- Homeowners and renters interested in lowering utility bills.
- Anyone curious about energy efficiency or seeking assistance programs.

### Why Attend?



- Get practical advice on weatherization and bill management.
- Learn directly from Sierra Club and local utility experts.
- Connect with neighbors and local organizations committed to energy equity

Sponsored By:



Athens Land Trust Community  
Advisory Board | Southern  
Sustainability Institute | Sierra Club



**SIERRA CLUB**  
GEORGIA CHAPTER



**Athens Land Trust**  
Celebrating 30 Years



**Southern  
Sustainability  
INSTITUTE**

# Community Energy Workshops

**ATHENS LIBRARY (2025 BAXTER STREET)**

**6:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.**

## Workshop 1: July 17, 2025

**6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

- ✓ Overview of local weatherization programs and how to apply
- ✓ Resources and guidance from the Southern Sustainability Institute and Athens Land Trust Community Advisory Board

**7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

- ✓ Keynote presentation by Keyanna Jones Moore, Sierra Club
- ✓ Georgia's energy burden explained
- ✓ Sierra Club initiatives to support communities in need

## Workshop 2: August 14, 2025

**6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

- ✓ Bring your most recent energy bill (Georgia Power, Jackson EMC, Walton EMC) for a hands-on walkthrough
- ✓ Utility representatives on hand to answer your questions about rates, fees, and payment assistance
- ✓ Interactive stations:
- ✓ "How do you conserve energy?" (share your best tips)
- ✓ "What does energy burden mean to you?" (tell us your experience)

*Join us for two free workshops to learn how to reduce energy costs, improve home efficiency, and understand your utility bills. Refreshments will be provided at both events.*



## RSVP NOW

Scan the QR code or to reserve your spot.



<https://bit.ly/AthensEnergy>



**Keyanna Jones Moore**  
Sierra Club Chapter Organizer

# UPCOMING EVENTS:

## **“CONTROLLED BURN” BY TOM SCHRAM EXHIBITION ON DISPLAY AT LYNDON HOUSE ARTS CENTER**

**‘CONTROLLED BURN’ BY TOM SCHRAM USES POST-CONSUMER MATERIAL INSTEAD OF RAW NEW MATERIAL.**

**FREE TO PUBLIC, ON DISPLAY UNTIL SEPTEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup> 2025**

**Tuesday & Thursday: 10:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

**Wednesday, Fridays & Saturday: 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

For more information, please call 706-613-3623.



PUTTING ENERGY INTO GREENER SPACES  
Athens-Clarke County Sustainability Department

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

706-613-3838