Meeting Notes – Jul. 25, 2023

The LaFayette Rotary Club met on Tuesday, July 25th. Rotarian Lewis Lowe was responsible for the program and invited as his guest Dani Carroll from the Alabama Extension Service. Dani's region covers eleven counties, including Chambers County. The Extension Service has different sections within the organization, such as Forestry and Wildlife, Commercial, Home Horticulture, etc. Dani is with the Home Horticulture Section and introduced today's program of "Summer Landscapes and Getting Ready for Fall". She opened the program asking for questions from Rotary members about their lawn or landscaping.

 One of the first topics discussed was the March 2023 freeze and its impact in our area. The March freeze did more damage than the December 2022 freeze. Because of warmer temperatures in February, reaching into the low-mid 80's, many plants, shrubs and trees began budding. The freeze in March was very detrimental to them and many of the plants, trees and shrubs have not yet recovered. The stress to the plants caused by the freeze also made many trees, especially thin-barked ones, more susceptible to pests, such as ambrosia beetles.

 Dani also discussed the importance of aeration, ph balance and fertilization for lawns. We also learned that moss grows where grass cannot. Moss does not have roots and is spread through spores. In shady areas or under other conditions where grass cannot grow and will recede, moss can grow. Landscape planting is best done in the fall when the worst of the summer heat is over. A question was asked about preparing raised beds for next year and we learned it was time to start now. Dani told us of an app, Sow App, into which we can enter our zip code and the app will advise us of the best time to plant. We were advised that the best time to plant strawberries was in October and she recommended planting June-bearers. Those berries should be ready to harvest in May. We also learned when planting or transplanting trees or bushes, it is best to dig a hole three times the diameter of the root system and to fill the hole with the same dirt that was dug from the hole, rather than commercial potting soil. Just a sliver of the top of the soil around the root should be above ground.

 Rotary members welcomed two guests, in addition to our speaker, to today's meeting. Jimmy Stewart is the husband of Rotarian Jody Stewart and Dr. Matthew Brewer, is a dentist new to the dental practice of Rotarian Dr. Abby Adams.

Diane Sherriff