

# South Carolina LIVING

# THE MAGAZINE FOR COOPERATIVE MEMBERS

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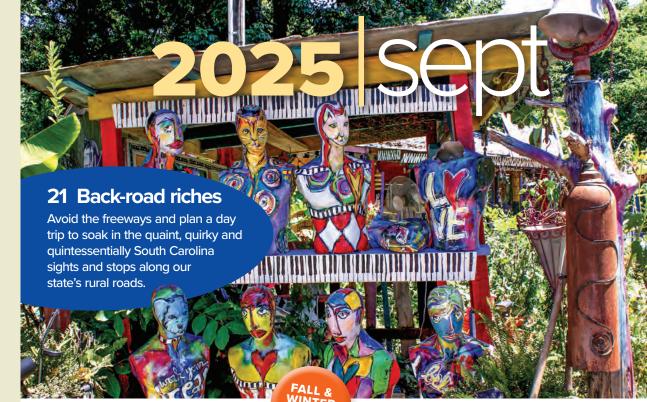












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It's one thing to dog-sit. It's another thing when the dog is big enough to sit on you, Jan A. Igoe writes in a classic column.







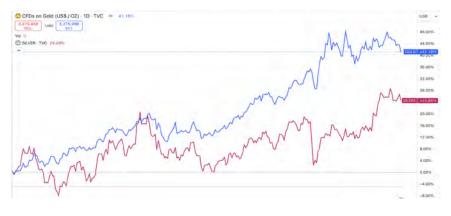
Let back roads take you to sites in Bishopville, Newberry, Winnsboro, Rock Hill and beyond. Above, artist Christy Buchanan's SHE Garden. Photos by John Russell and Libby Wiersema.



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Chad T. Lowder

### **CO-OP NEWS EDITOR**

Sheila D. Rivers



# Investing in bright futures

A VISIT TO the governor's office, lessons in public speaking and a Q&A session with a state legislator seems like a jam-packed summer. But thanks to Tri-County

Electric Cooperative and South Carolina's electric cooperatives, a local high school student experienced those things and more in the span of just four days in July. Jam Mcmichael of Calhoun County High School represented Tri-County Electric at Cooperative Youth Summit, an exploration of the state's capital, civic engagement and the cooperative business model.

The students, 51 in all from across the state, learned about South Carolina's contribution to space exploration at the South Carolina State Museum, met with some of Gov. Henry McMaster's top advisers in his office at the State House, and were exposed to the importance of safety around electricity at the CEEUS facility in West Columbia. CEEUS is the materials supplier for the state's electric cooperatives.

Cooperative Youth Summit isn't just about visiting interesting places and meeting interesting people. An important

objective of the annual program is to develop students to be leaders in their community and to learn about the role co-ops play in those communities.

Guided by former television personality and co-op executive Lou Green, the students worked in teams to develop presentations related to current political and cultural debates such as regulating artificial intelligence and subsidizing electric vehicles. Each group took a stance on the issues in front of their peers and a panel of independent judges. The students on the highest-scoring team were awarded \$1,000 each.

Youth Summit students also learned about civic engagement and government from John Frick, vice president of government relations at The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina. Frick taught them about how our government works and challenged them to "keep the republic," referencing Benjamin Franklin's iconic response to a colonial woman inquiring whether her new nation was a monarchy or a republic. Franklin answered, "a republic madam, if you can keep it."

S.C. state Rep. Micah Caskey answered questions from the students and encouraged them to consider public service in their futures.

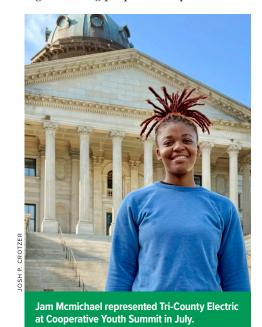
We don't sponsor local students on Youth Summit just to give them a memorable summer experience. It's an investment meant to have longer, further benefits.

In the same way we build new connections in our electrical distribution system to ensure reliable power for years to come, Cooperative Youth Summit builds pathways of opportunity and learning for young people in our community.

When their light turns on, everyone's future is bright.

Chad T. Lowder

CHAD T. LOWDER
Chief Executive Officer



# We're ready for storms. Are you?

**WE'RE ALREADY** four months into the 2025 hurricane season, but some in our community are still feeling the effects of last fall's Hurricane Helene. It's a reminder that storms can leave long-lasting impacts.

This year, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicts a 60% chance of a more active than normal hurricane season.

While we can't control what Mother Nature does, we can control how prepared we are. Now is the time to make sure you and your family are ready.

Here are a few steps to help you stay safe:

- ▶ Build a basic emergency kit. Make sure you have enough supplies to last at least three days. Include items such as water, non-perishable food, a flashlight, batteries, a first-aid kit, medications and a battery-powered radio.
- ▶ Stay informed. Sign up for local emergency notifications and make sure your contact information with Tri-County Electric is up to date to receive updates from the co-op. If you need to report an outage and your phone number does not match an account in our system, your outage will not be accurately reported.
- ▶ Plan for outages. Be ready to live without power, internet, water or phone service for a couple of days, just in case. Visit our online Storm Center at tri-countyelectric.net/storm-center for more guidance about preparing for outages.

At Tri-County Electric, we've taken steps to prepare, too. "We have state-of-the-art dispatch and communication



Tri-County Electric crews are ready to respond when storms take down power lines.

systems and mutual aid agreements in place to bring in extra crews, if they are needed," says vice president of Safety, Keith Schneider. "Most importantly, we have a dedicated team of employees who care about this community and are ready to respond quickly and safely when outages happen."

If you do lose power, be sure to report your outage by calling (877) 874–1215 or using the TEC mobile app. Follow us on Facebook (tricountyelectricsc) or check our website for updates on outage restoration.

We hope for a quiet end to hurricane season, but we'll be ready, no matter what.





# What sets co-ops apart

when business owners and homeowners talk about their electric service, most simply credit "the power company" that issues the monthly bill for the energy they've used. But not all power companies operate in the same way.

Electricity across the U.S. is delivered through three types of power providers: **investor-owned utility companies** (IOUs) serve two-thirds of American homes and businesses, **public power utilities** serve 15%, and **co-ops** deliver power to 13% of the nation's consumers.

▶ The biggest difference among the three is profit motive—or lack thereof. An investor-owned utility is owned by shareholders. It aspires to provide reliable electricity to its customers, but its goal is to maximize profits for its owners.

Local-government-run public power utilities and electric co-ops are both not-for-profit organizations. Their primary purpose isn't to make money but to deliver reliable electricity at the most reasonable cost. However, a co-op, unlike a government-run utility, is owned by its members. **Co-ops return any extra revenues** they generate to the members in the form of capital credits.

▶ **Governance is also a differentiator.** Investor-owned utilities are large corporations that may be headquartered hundreds of miles away from the folks who pay the bills. Public power utilities are often managed by the same officials elected or hired to manage services like streets, parks and public safety.

Co-ops are different. Co-ops are run by career professionals and overseen by volunteer boards of directors made up of members. These board members represent their neighbors and are obligated to consider other members' concerns and preferences. A co-op member who has questions about rates or concerns about service can turn to a local director for answers.

▶ Another major difference concerns population density. IOUs and public power providers tend to serve cities, suburbs and towns with high population densities. Most co-ops service large rural areas and small communities with members who are often widespread. Co-ops average just 7.98 members for each mile of power lines. Compare that to 32.4 customers per mile for the other types of power providers.

That means co-ops have significantly more infrastructure to manage despite receiving less revenue than the other types of power providers.

Electric cooperatives overcome that challenge by working closely with neighboring co-ops and their counterparts across the U.S. By banding together on buying power, purchasing equipment and materials and restoring power after storms, co-ops can benefit from the economies of scale that larger utilities enjoy while remaining locally owned and controlled. This close collaboration between cooperatives improves all co-ops' service to their members. —SCOTT FLOOD



# Jeanette Altman SANTEE ELECTRIC MEMBER

MEMBER FOR: Over 20 years HOMETOWN: Lake City

OCCUPATION: Education center director

# **Getting involved**

In her more than two decades as a Santee Electric Cooperative member, Jeanette Altman says the co-op has always provided reliable electric service and quickly addressed any issues. But it's the co-op's community involvement that makes it stand out.

"The fact that they invest in economic development is crucial to our small part of this county as well as the state," Altman says. "We have the Scranton Industrial Site not far from here that couldn't have happened without (Santee Electric's) efforts, and they've been a great community partner in that way."

Altman is involved in education and appreciates the co-op's investment in that field as well. Like many South Carolina co-ops, Santee Electric funds multiple scholarships and grants for students and teachers throughout the year.

"They've always been very supportive of students, in addition to job creation and hiring students into their

workforce," Altman

That's why Altman sees her co-op as more than an energy provider. "They're just part of the community."

-JEANETTE ALTMAN

"The people that work there are neighbors and our friends," she says. "We also see them in lots of meetings. If we ever call on them, they respond. They're just part of the community, and they invest in the community, and that means a lot."



# 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.



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# Home cooking on the road

A FEW YEARS BACK, some friends and I took a road trip through the back roads of the Midlands into the Pee Dee. We had a destination in mind, a bit of a pilgrimage: Scott's Bar-B-Que in Hemingway.

My only association with "Hemingway" to that point wasn't barbecue but literature. But as a South Carolinian—whether born-and-bred, like my friend Susan, who spearheaded our journey that day, or transplanted, like myself and our other traveling pals—a trip to the Scott family's legendary smoking pits is a rite of passage.

The details I remember most vividly from that day trip aren't so much the destination or even the barbecue (it was darn good; that much I know) but the stops we built into our journey. We wound our way to a little country winery out-

The details I remember most vividly from that day trip aren't so much the destination but the stops we built into our journey.

side of Florence, stopped for a snack in downtown Lake City and visited a roadside plant and produce stand somewhere I could never pinpoint on a map.

We'd just barely made it out of Columbia before the first stop of our journey, a breakfast of fried bologna sandwiches at Mr. Bunky's Market down in Eastover. Bunky's is the kind of place that defines a classic day

trip in our state: a small, local joint that offers humble, delicious food that fuels you for your journey and leaves you with a simple, fond memory. It's not the place you pilgrimage to, but it's the place you'll revisit again when you're on the road in certain parts.

I was introduced to another such place a few months back, around the time when *South Carolina Living* explored the character and long-lasting legacy of meat-and-three restaurants. It's just the kind of place—and people—worth stopping and getting to know on your way around our state.

The Wagon Wheel Restaurant became part of the Fort Lawn community in 1956. More than two decades later, so did its eventual owners, George and Joanna Katergaris.

The Katergarises emigrated from Greece in 1974, escaping a military dictatorship and seeking better opportunities



FAMILY TIES Mina Nixon (left) started working at Fort Lawn's Wagon Wheel Restaurant at a young age, after her parents, George and Joanna Katergaris, bought the beloved meat-and-three in 1978. Now she and her husband, Bill, provide comforting food to diners throughout the area.

for themselves and their two children. They purchased the Wagon Wheel in 1978. They were part of a decades-long legacy of Greek

GET MORE See our conversation with Mina and the Katergarises at SCLiving.coop/wagonwheel.

immigrants who left their homeland for the American South. Many found restaurant successes serving the kinds of food they knew their new neighbors wanted.

For the Katergarises, that meant fried squash, turkey and dressing and warm, buttery dinner rolls, to name a few popular menu items. Over the years, George and Joanna have made sure all the ingredients are of the best quality. The produce comes from local farms and, when appropriate, authentic Greek olive oil is used.

It's not just that people love the food at the Wagon Wheel. They also love the Wagon Wheel family. When George was badly injured in a tractor accident in 1995, 40 patrons donated blood to assist in his recovery. The Wagon Wheel is now owned and operated by their daughter, Mina, and her husband, Bill Nixon. But George and Joanna remain active in the business.

Similar food and stories are scattered across the map of our great state. As you dive into this month's cover story about road tripping, or plan your next day-trip itinerary, I hope you'll plan to stop at places like Scott's and the Wagon Wheel and Mr. Bunky's and appreciate the people and the stories (and the food) that make South Carolina special.

Sarah q. over

SARAH ELLIS OWEN
Editor, South Carolina Living





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Find hidden energy users at home

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

UT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND. It is easy to overlook the hidden energy users in our homes.

Even though a few major appliances

Even though a few major appliances are responsible for the majority of the electricity used in your home (think: HVAC, water heater, clothes dryer), every plugged-in device and ready-to-use appliance still affects your electric bill. And we all know every penny counts.

Let's see if we can find some hidden energy savings for you.

A WATER HEATER, already one of the biggest energy users in your home, could be consuming more energy than necessary. Storage water heaters heat water to a preset temperature. When you use hot water, cold water enters the tank to replenish it, which lowers the temperature until the water is reheated to the preset level. If the preset temperature is set higher than needed, it wastes energy. Most water heaters are set to 140 degrees at the factory. But the U.S. Department of Energy recommends setting the temperature to 120 degrees, which saves energy and reduces the risk of scalding. However, do not set it lower than 120 degrees in order to prevent bacteria development in the tank.

EXTERIOR SECURITY LIGHTS, porch lights and barn lights can also use more energy than needed. If they are on every night, all year long, that adds up to 4,380 hours, or half the hours in a year. If those lights use outdated, inefficient technology, they waste energy. With that many hours, even a slight increase in efficiency can yield big energy savings. Switch to energy-efficient LED bulbs. If lights need to stay on, consider upgrading to motion-sensor lights so you aren't drawing energy all night.

**POOLS AND HOT TUBS** can also be big energy users. Since you don't see the pumps or







# Every plugged-in device and ready-to-use appliance affects your electric bill.

heaters by design, it isn't easy to know when they are operating and consuming energy. Pumps filter water to keep it clean and safe for swimming. Energy Star-certified pumps run at lower speeds and can be programmed to match your pool's filtering needs. They can pay for themselves in two years, are quieter and can prolong the life of your filtering system. Set your hot tub to a lower temperature when you're not using it to reduce energy use. If your electric cooperative offers time-of-use rates, consider programming your temperatures accordingly.

**PLUG LOAD** is anything in your home that is plugged into an outlet. As we use more and more appliances and technology in our homes, plug load energy

use increases. Find what is plugged in throughout your home. If you aren't using it, unplug it. For computer stations and entertainment centers, consider using smart power strips. These devices sense when energy is being used and turn peripheral devices on or off as needed.

**GAMING CONSOLES** are often put into rest mode when not in use, which allows them to complete updates and reduces start-up time for the next session. But it also means they are still consuming energy even when not actively used. Instead of rest mode, completely power off your consoles between gaming sessions to save energy. It may require a bit more time for updates, but every kilowatt-hour counts when it comes to saving energy.  $\mathfrak{S}$ 

MIRANDA BOUTELLE writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing nearly 900 electric co-ops.



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# sc recipe

# **VEGETARIAN PIZZA**

MAKES 4 MINI PIZZAS

- 4 mini whole-grain flatbreads
- 1 cup pizza sauce, store-bought or homemade
- 1 cup chopped zucchini
- 1 cup chopped yellow squash
- 1 cup diced red bell peppers
- ½ cup olives

- 1/2 cup diced red onions
- 8 tablespoons pesto

Preheat oven to 425 F. Place flatbreads on a large baking sheet. Top each with ¼ cup pizza sauce. Divide zucchini, squash, peppers, olives and onions evenly over flatbreads. Spoon 2 tablespoons pesto over each, spreading as well as you can without disturbing toppings. Top each with 2 ounces mozzarella, and sprinkle with red pepper flakes. Bake for

10 minutes until cheese is melted and edges start to brown.

- 8 ounces fresh grated mozzarella cheese
- 2 teaspoons red pepper flakes (more if preferred)



### **FOCACCIA SAUSAGE PIZZA**

SERVES 8

- 1 large focaccia flatbread
- 4 ounces pancetta, diced (or diced thick-cut bacon)
- 8 ounces hot Italian sausage
- 1/2 cup pizza sauce, store-bought or homemade
- 2 cups fresh grated mozzarella cheese
- 1 cup fresh grated fontina cheese
- 1/2 cup diced green bell pepper
- 1/2 cup diced red bell pepper
- 1/4 cup diced red onion
- 1/4 cup sliced banana peppers
- 1/4 cup sliced black olives
- 4 ounces sliced pepperoni
- 2 tablespoons fresh grated Parmesan cheese
- 11/2 teaspoons dried Italian seasoning

Preheat oven to 425 F. Place focaccia on a baking sheet lined with foil. In a large skillet over medium heat, cook pancetta until crispy and transfer to a paper towel-lined platter. Repeat with Italian sausage, breaking it up with a wooden spoon until fully cooked. Transfer to paper towel-lined platter. Spread pizza sauce over top of focaccia. Sprinkle with half of the mozzarella and fontina. Add pancetta, sausage, bell peppers, onions, banana peppers, olives and end with pepperoni. Top with remaining mozzarella and fontina, and sprinkle Parmesan and Italian seasoning over the top. Bake for 10 minutes; reduce heat to 375 F and bake an additional 10 minutes or until golden brown and cheese is melted. Let pizza cool slightly and cut into eight pieces.



# **GREEK PITA CHICKEN PIZZA**

MAKES 2 PIZZAS

- 2 pocketless pita flatbreads,6–9 inches round
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/4 cup pesto
- 8 ounces fresh grated mozzarella cheese
- 1 cup halved grape tomatoes
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced red onion
- 1 large bone-in chicken breast, cooked and shredded
- 1/4 cup Kalamata olives
- 1/2 cup quartered artichoke hearts
- ½ cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1/2 cup arugula leaves, slightly torn, for garnish

Preheat oven to 425 F. Place pitas on a large baking sheet lined with foil and brush both with olive oil. Divide pesto between the two pitas and spread evenly, then add mozzarella. Add tomatoes, onion, chicken, olives, artichoke hearts, feta and oregano. Bake about 10 minutes or until vegetables are tender and cheese is melted. Garnish with arugula leaves.





There's no excuse for sitting around bored this autumn. From farmers markets to festivals to that biggest fair of all, here's a sampling of our state's bounty of activities that will provide a fall to remember.



# **Farm to fork**

# Five fab farmers markets

BY HAYDEN DAVIS | PHOTOS BY ALAN HOGLAN

raditionally a season of harvesting, fall is a great time to appreciate South Carolina's agricultural abundance by visiting farmers markets. Almost every community and region has its own markets, both big and small. There are nearly 140 farmers markets operating across South Carolina.

"I would say the No. 1 benefit is learning about where your food comes from and connecting with the person who grew it," says Eva Moore, a spokesperson for the state agriculture department.

And these days, farmers markets aren't just for farmers' wares. Whether you're looking for plants, autumn veggies, locally made crafts or tasty treats, these five markets are worth a trip this season.

# Pee Dee State **Farmers Market**

Only one place in the world is a native home to the carnivorous Venus flytrap plant: the Carolinas' coastline. Sweet Leaf Nursery sells these fascinating plants at the Pee Dee State Farmers Market, where you'll find a unique abundance of plant vendors. Another vendor, Growing Hobby, sells bonsai trees, small trees that require diligent cultivation.

The Pee Dee market is also known for hosting events throughout the year, including Race Fest each August, celebrating car racing in the region, home to the famous Darlington Raceway. Another is the Plant and Flower Festival, held annually in April. The market also boasts a restaurant, Aloha Kitchen, which is owned and operated by a Hawaiian family and offers a wide variety of meals with a Hawaiian flair. The market features a drive-thru lane down its middle, allowing customers easy access to each vendor.

OPEN: Year-round, Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

WHERE: 2513 W. Lucas St., Florence

# **Foothills Heritage Market**

When you buy goat-milk soap or honey products (pictured above) from Flip Flop Farm at this Upstate farmers market, your purchase helps provide



therapeutic beekeeping to military veterans coping with PTSD. Flip Flop Farm is just one of the craft vendors at this weekly, seasonal market run by The Farm Center, a nonprofit focused on connecting local communities with agriculture.

"We want to be a place where agriculture, education and community all come together," says Daniel Rothel, director of the facility. "And we want every Saturday to be an opportunity for our friends and neighbors to not just nourish their body, but nourish their soul."

Of course, with the Upstate region's rich farming tradition, you'll find a variety of locally grown and raised agricultural staples during their appropriate seasons—peaches, apples, okra, corn, blueberries, pork and more.

OPEN: May through October, Saturdays, 8 a.m.-noon

WHERE: 2063 Sandifer Blvd., Seneca



# **Charleston Farmers Market**

Sweetgrass baskets are a famous traditional craft in Charleston. This market features its own basket vendors, including Barbara Manigault, who weaves both traditional baskets and a range of other items, including clocks and picture frames.

The weekly market in downtown Charleston is perfectly situated to provide Lowcountry and coastal produce. And with the ocean close by, the market also hosts a local sea salt vendor, Botany Bay. Looking for something sweet instead of salty? Treats abound here: Consider Lowcountry Lemonade, which offers traditional lemonade alongside tea and Arnold Palmers, or Gelati Moto, which sells creamy Italian-style ice cream.

OPEN: April 12–Nov. 22, Saturdays, 8 a.m.–noon WHERE: Marion Square, 329 Meeting St., Charleston

# **Aiken County Farmers Market**

This market's red-roofed building and tables were built 70 years ago, still standing in the same location the market operates today. Farmers still use the same tables that previous farmers built by hand. Some have been selling here for years, including Robert and Hollie Gartman, who've been selling produce for more than four decades. It's the place to go for a traditional farmers market experience.

Farm classics can be bought here, including tomatoes, corn, okra, beans and more. Vendors also sell a variety of baked goods. Fresh apple, cherry and peach pies are available from vendor Fox and the Bee Farm.

OPEN: Year-round, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, 7:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m.

WHERE: 115 Williamsburg St. SE, Aiken

# **Soda City Market**

Taking its name from the capital city's nickname, "Cola," Soda City Market is one of the state's largest, with a sea of tents stretching down blocks of Main Street in front of the S.C. State House each Saturday. The market averages 200 vendors per week, with a rotation of some 400 vendors in total.

Almost all of South Carolina's produce is represented at the market, along-side crops traditionally found outside the state. Come hungry to Soda City: Most weeks, you'll find dozens of international food vendors offering delights from around the world.

Street musicians keep the mood lively and festival-like. The market also hosts dozens of craft vendors whose wares range from handmade birdhouses to paintings to holiday-themed decorations.

OPEN: Year-round, Saturdays, 9 a.m.–1 p.m. WHERE: 1300–1700 Main St., Columbia



# Feasts, fiddles and Bigfoot

A festival for everyone

s the days start to shorten and the air begins to cool (finally!), pack in as much family fun as you can stand at festivals celebrating the unique cultural gifts of South Carolina, from good music to okra to, yes, even Bigfoot. Here are a few of the many events happening in smaller towns and cities across our state this fall. For more events, check out our Calendar on page 34 or visit **SCLiving.coop/events**. —SARAH ELLIS OWEN



# Field & Stream Music Festival oct. 3-5

This first-year country music festival has an all-star lineup for its three-day run, including headliners Miranda Lambert (pictured above), Eric Church and Lynyrd Skynyrd. Set in a Southern adventurer's paradise, the festival will offer an outdoor-centric experience with options for camping while you enjoy more than 40 live shows across multiple stages. Ticket prices vary, starting at \$92.

WHERE: Carolina Adventure World, 1443 Arrowhead Road, Winnsboro DETAILS: fieldandstreammusicfest.com

# South Carolina Jazz Festival OCT. 16-19

Celebrate the 108th birthday of Cheraw native son John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie, a world-famous trumpeter and modern jazz pioneer. Bebop your way through four days of jazz performances at venues throughout small-town Cheraw in Chesterfield County. Some shows require tickets, which can be purchased at 200 Market St. downtown.

WHERE: Various locations in Cheraw DETAILS: scjazzfestival.com

# food & drink

# Summerville Sweet Tea Festival

SEPT. 20

Sip your way through the historic downtown streets in the birthplace of sweet tea—South Carolina's official state hospitality beverage as you enjoy food

trucks, craft vendors and entertainment. And, of course, vote for your favorite sweet tea sample to help select the Tea of the Year. The festival is free to attend. WHERE: Around Hutchinson Square, Main Street and Little Main in downtown Summerville DETAILS: summervilledream.org/events/sweet-tea-festival

► FAMILY FUN Attending festivals, such as the Summerville Sweet Tea Festival, is a great way to entertain the kids and build lasting memories.

# **Little River ShrimpFest**

OCT. 11-12

Well, you know what they say about shrimp: It's the fruit of the sea. You can barbecue it, boil it, broil it, bake it, sauté it ... (OK, Bubba, that's enough now.) At ShrimpFest, you can enjoy the fruits of South Carolina's coastal waters alongside live music, art and beautiful waterfront scenery. Admission is \$10 per day for adults and children over 12.

WHERE: Historic Little River Waterfront, 4468 Mineola Ave., Little River DETAILS: littlerivershrimpfest.org

# **Loris Bog-Off Festival**

OCT. 18

What began as a town chicken bog cooking contest 45 years ago has evolved into a day-long food festival with vendors and entertainment. The star of the day remains the signature dish, a delicious combo of chicken, rice, sausage and the chef's spices of choice. Enter the bog-off competition, or just chow down and vote for your favorite dish. The festival is free to attend.

WHERE: 4242 Main St., Loris
DETAILS: lorischamber.com/loris-bog-off-festival-1





# Irmo Okra Strut

SEPT. 26-27

Classic, crispy fried okra is the centerpiece of Irmo's signature festival, which features a parade, amusement rides for kids, concerts and numerous craft and food vendors, including much more than okra. This year's festival has been deemed the Golden Strut, as the event celebrates its milestone 50th anniversary. The festival is free to attend.

WHERE: Moore Park, 7473 Church St., Irmo DETAILS: okrastrut.com

# Carolina Mushroom Festival OCT. 10-12

We heard something about a mushroom costume contest and thought, "Sign us up!" This unique festival is slated to include a nature walk, fungi identification, workshops, demonstrations and, of course, food and live music. Prioritizing earth-friendliness, the event plans to compost leftover food and sustainable waste products. Ticket prices vary and start at \$15.







# **Greer Railfest**

SEPT. 27

This afternoon-long event is all about trains, trains and more trains! Model trains, train museums, trackless train rides and railroad safety education will be featured, along with face painting, inflatables, food trucks, live music and chances to win train-themed prizes. The event is free to attend.

WHERE: Greer City Park, 301 E. Poinsett St., Greer DETAILS: Find Railfest on Facebook

▲ FUN AT FOLLY Come party with a few thousand of your closest friends at Mermaids & Mateys. Pirate or mermaid attire optional.

# **Mermaids & Mateys**

OCT. 4

Come for the mermaids and pirates costume contest, stay for the live bands (headlined by Dangermuffin), bounce houses and local eats during this one-of-a-kind event at—where else?—the beach. Tickets cost \$10 in advance or \$15 the day of the festival.

WHERE: Along Center Street, Folly Beach DETAILS: visitfolly.com/festival/mermaids-mateys-event

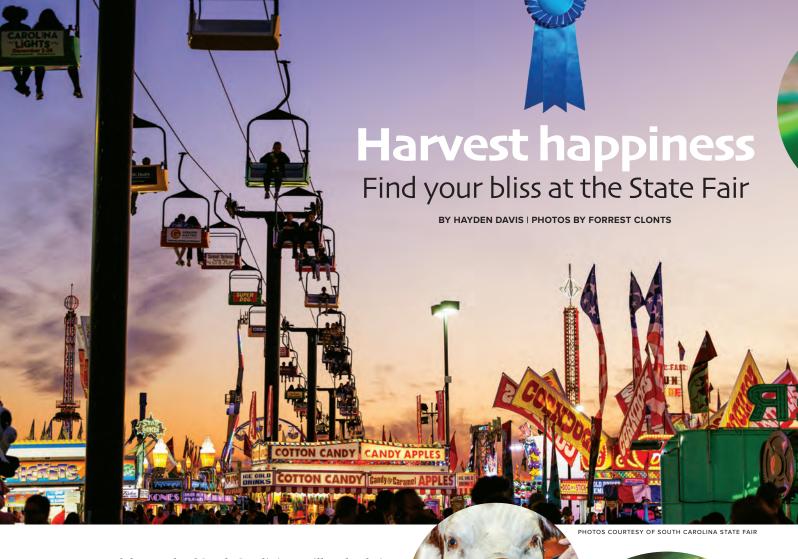
# South Carolina Bigfoot Festival

OCT. 10-11

Move over, Lizard Man. Bigfoot is still the king of monstrous lore in the Appalachians, and this event is dedicated to ol' Sasquatch himself. In its sixth year, the Upstate festival welcomes true believers and skeptics alike for a weekend of Bigfoot tales, speakers, concerts, crafts and more. The festival is free to attend.

WHERE: Along Main Street, Westminster DETAILS: Scbigfootfestival.com





ens of thousands of South Carolinians will make their way to Columbia for the South Carolina State Fair next month—many, perhaps, for the first time.

This year's fair theme is "Harvesting Happiness," a celebration of Palmetto State agriculture and an homage to the joy the fair season brings. As you plan your upcoming State Fair outing, here's what you can't miss in 2025.

### Finest of the fields

South Carolina's farmers will bring their highest-quality produce to compete. The real harvest stars can be found in the mega pumpkin competition, where pumpkins weighing over 251 pounds are displayed. Winners often surpass 400 to 500 pounds! Agricultural events can be found in the Ellison Building near the South Gate.

# Blasts from the past

Next year marks the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. To honor the milestone, a new interactive exhibition will celebrate the history of the American Revolution and give visitors a glimpse of our nation's

founding. It will be in the Ruff Building, adjacent to the fair's iconic rocket. Another exhibit with a similar theme is the Heritage Village, an attraction that presents the history of America's past with live demonstrations and traditional artisan work. Heritage Village can be found at Hampton Plaza, adjacent to the North Gate.

# **Cuties compete**

When it comes to must-see agricultural events, it's a challenge to choose between two perennial fair favorites—the duck slide and the pig races. On the one hand, you've got ducklings tumbling down a small waterslide over and over again, and on the other hand, you've got

little pigs racing around a track in pursuit of a prized Oreo. Honestly, the best option is to see

track in pursuit of a prized Oreo. Honestly, the best option is to see both. Find the duck slide in the smallstock building and the pig races in front of Abernathy Arena.

GROWN BY:

NATTHEW BADIFORD

# Stuff yourself silly

In the mood for some fair food? Of course you are. Long-standing favorite Fiske Fries might be what you're looking for. The fries are made from fresh



Ernest "the Chicken Man" Lee is one of South Carolina's most popular artists. Why is he the Chicken Man? Well, he paints chickens. In addition to selling his signature plywood works from a trailer in downtown Columbia, Lee has become a mainstay at the State Fair, where you'll find him showing and selling his paintings again this year. He can be found in the fairground's smallstock building near the live poultry. By the way, Lee's paintings make great gifts for Gamecock fans.

# Catch a thrill

Although the fair has rides to fit any thrill-seeker's needs, three stand out as must-rides. First is the Sky Glider. Not only are the fairgrounds and Columbia skyline visible from the ride, but its path also provides an unforgettable view of the Carolina sunset. The second is Vertigo, a swing ride with a twist fitting its name. Vertigo takes riders dozens of feet in the air, leading to both a fun and thrilling experience. The third

The "Circus at the Fair" is a can't-miss attraction for family-oriented fun and is included with the cost of fair admission. This year's circus theme is "Disco Daze," and performers range from skillful acrobats to fan-favorite clowns. Ringmaster Ian Garden returns for his sixth year heading the circus, which will be located near the South Gate with three shows a day.

# Meet your mama ...

Long-time fairgoers will know of the fair's landmark meeting spot: the rocket. Standing 70 feet tall, the rocket towers over the fair and has done so for almost six decades. But more imposing is the unique history of the icon. The rocket is not the space-faring kind; it's a decommissioned missile named Columbia, designed by a scientist who played a major role in the Apollo mission rockets that took astronauts to the moon. So, in a roundabout way, the fair's rocket has a connection to one of humanity's greatest achievements.  $\mathfrak{D}$ 

# **GET THERE**

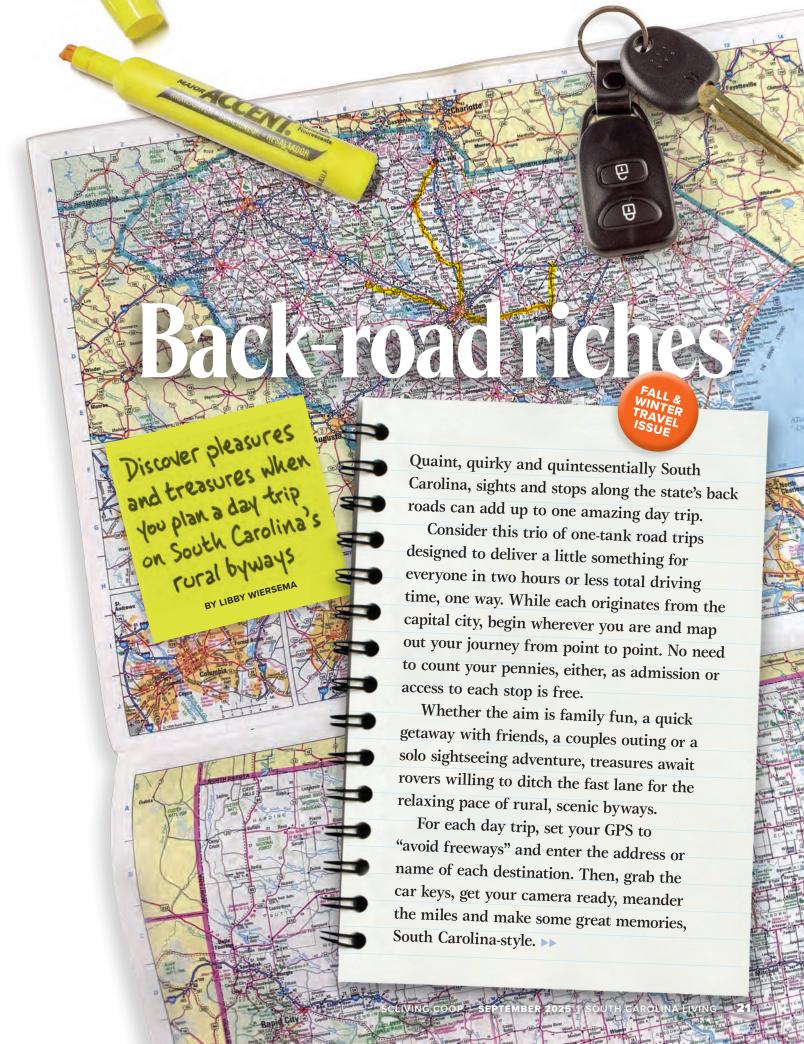
WHEN: Oct. 8-19, hours vary.

WHERE: South Carolina State Fairgrounds, 1200 Rosewood Drive, Columbia.

TICKETS: Purchase admission tickets at scstatefair.org for \$11 between Sept. 9—Oct. 7 or \$16 between Oct. 8–19. Tickets are \$20 at the gate. See website for available discounts and information on ride tickets.

**DETAILS:** Visit scstatefair.org for more information.







# Columbia to Newberry

Back roads: U.S. 76 West, S.C. 34 East Approximate one-way distance: 50 miles Total driving time, one way: About 11/4 hours



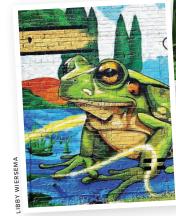
### FIRST STOP

# Little Mountain Unlimited Antique Mall and Café 1528 Main St., Little Mountain

What seems like a modest-sized gift shop on the outside morphs into a grand 25,000-square-foot curiosity shop once you walk through the doors. It's easy to spend a couple hours or more in this marvelous maze of vintage jewelry, glassware, artwork, bric-a-brac, seasonal decor, antique furnishings and collectibles. Don't skip a visit to the basement, where you'll find rock 'n' roll memorabilia and an eclectic, artsy café with a drool-worthy, from-scratch menu. Try the signature PB&J: house-made pimento cheese, crisp bacon and spicy raspberry jam on grilled sourdough.

# SECOND STOP ▶ **Prosperity Frog Mural** North Main Street, Prosperity

History has linked this tiny town to everyone's favorite throaty amphibian: the frog. According to town lore, Prosperity was originally known as "Frog Level," a name that stuck after an inebriated fellow muttered the words after falling asleep near a pond and awakening to a frog symphony. In 1873, residents demanded a name change to reflect their civic pride in



being a hub for the Southern Railroad. Today, residents embrace their froggy roots and adore the colorful mural by artist Austin "Slim" Gee that appoints their quaint Main Street. Mural fans may also want to navigate the few blocks to McKibben Street to see the restored and nostalgic Coca-Cola mural.



# **Tiny Paris Carolina**

1109 Caldwell St., Newberry

Tiny Paris Carolina is a jewel of a find and the next best thing to the real deal. Whether you drop in for lunch, sips or shopping, this diminutive bistro/wine bar/gift shop offers a sweet European experience, à la française. Get cozy over a warm baguette with olive tapenade, herbed butter and a glass of champagne. Just like while on vacation, you'll want to take home a souvenir. Our suggestion: an exotically scented bespoke candle in vintage glassware.



# **◄ FOURTH STOP** Wells **Japanese** Garden 1608 Lindsay St., Newberry

You can go from Tiny Paris to tiny Japan in a matter of minutes. This lovely garden (listed on the

National Register of Historic Places) is small in size but big on Zen with water features and ponds, native and exotic flora, peaceful pathways and traditional Japanese architectural elements such as a temple, torii gate, moon bridge and teahouse. Refresh in the quiet, shaded beauty before heading to your final destination.

# **FINAL STOP Enoree River Winery** 1650 Dusty Road, Newberry



Do a tasting of hand-crafted, natural wines made from grapes grown on this 8-acre vineyard. Stretch your legs then sit a spell on the homey back porch with its sweeping views. Grab an iced coffee or soda and a few snacks for the ride home.

# Columbia to Bishopville

Back roads: U.S. 378 East/U.S. 76 East, U.S. 15 North Approximate one-way distance: 64 miles Total driving time, one way: About 11/4 hours

# FIRST STOP ► Swan Lake Iris Gardens 822 W. Liberty St., Sumter

Home to all eight swan species and 120 varieties of Japanese iris, this park puts on a stunning show each spring. But there's plenty of beauty to behold any time of year. The swans are always in fine form, gliding across the gentle waters as other wildlife—geese, wood ducks, Muscovy ducks, egrets, herons—go about their own routines. (Bring

PHOTOS THIS PAGE BY JOHN RUSSELL



binoculars for a close-up look.) A sensory trail, talking tree trail, rose garden, azalea garden, butterfly garden and chocolate garden filled with plants and flowers that smell like, yes, chocolate invite exploration. Plan to spend at least an hour here. At least.

# **◆** SECOND STOP Sumter Cut Rate Pharmacy

32 S. Main St., Sumter

Tucked inside this compounding pharmacy is a diner and soda fountain that have been serving since 1935. The menu is about as classic as it gets. Think biscuits and gravy, omelets, BLTs, chef salads, chili dogs and patty melts. Recently, Saturday brunch debuted with more adventurous fare like huevos rancheros. But the Cut Rate's most famous dish has always been the Whirly Ding: homemade chicken salad on a bed of lettuce with tomatoes, a pickle and crackers. Elevate your visit with a creamy milkshake topped with a cloud of whipped cream and a cherry—just like in the good old days. Stroll downtown afterward to see local

artists' street installations of fiberglass butterfly sculptures, a symbol of the town's growth and change.

# ▼ THIRD STOP Button Museum

53 Joe Dority Road, Bishopville

The Button King, Dalton
Stevens, died in 2016, but he
left behind for our enjoyment
this most delightfully bizarre
exhibit. Housed on farmland
in a small metal building,
the museum is a self-guided
adventure. Just open the door,
flip the lights on and let the jawdropping commence. A hearse,
a guitar, a piano, a casket and
even a toilet all covered in
buttons glued on by hand—

nothing was off-limits for Dalton, whose first wacky work of art was a suit covered in 16,333 buttons. Locate the remote control to begin a video presentation about the Button King and his many television interviews with big-timers like Johnny Carson. This is the stuff great road trips are made of, and seeing is believing.

# **FOURTH STOP**

# **Pearl Fryar Topiary Garden**

145 Broad Acres Road, Bishopville

Pearl Fryar once called himself a "man who cuts up bushes." While that might be true, it's not quite accurate. Fryar, the son of share-croppers, honed his talents with hedge-clippers and earned international acclaim as an abstract topiary artist. People come from across the globe to get a firsthand look at his craft, so South Carolinians would be remiss not to follow suit. Though illness has forced Fryar into retirement, other topiary artists now help maintain the garden's hundreds of plants. As you walk the pathways, you'll want to give thanks for the man called Pearl and his phenomenal gifts.

# FINAL STOP ► Harry & Harry Too

719 Sumter Highway, Bishopville

Even if you're not real hungry, stop by this rustic restaurant that pays homage to South Carolina's favorite resident of Scape Ore Swamp. The hoopla



of that 1988 sighting of an upright, lizard-like creature has long died down, but the legend lives on through Bishopville's annual Lizard Man Stomp Festival as well as this oddly named eatery. From yard art to wall art and a few nods to reptile lore on the menu, this funky little burger joint is dearly loved by the locals. The Lizard Man burger, topped with pimento cheese and applewood bacon, is a favorite, although the Lizard Man, himself, has yet to weigh in.



# **Columbia** to Rock Hill

Back roads: U.S. 321 North, S.C. 121 North Approximate one-way distance: 73 miles Total driving time, one way: About 11/2 hours

# FIRST STOP ▶ **World's Smallest Police Station**

**South Palmer** Street, Ridgeway

At just 10 feet by 12 feet, this tiny hub of law enforcement could only accommodate a wooden desk, file cabinet, rotary telephone and wood stove when it was active. From 1940 to 1990. it served as the town's police station until a larger one was built next door. It is a superstar of sorts, having appeared in the 1989 film "Staying Together" (filmed



in Ridgeway) and served as an official stop for the Centennial Olympic Torch Relay—yet another proud moment for this arresting little building. Kick around downtown for a bit and check out the quaint shops and cafés, too.

# **▼** SECOND STOP South Carolina Railroad Museum



110 Industrial Park Road, Winnsboro

Indoor and outdoor exhibits at this volunteer-staffed museum tell the story of the railroad industry's glory days and more. Immerse yourself in the experience by making reservations to take a train ride along a once-bustling spur formerly utilized by a nearby granite quarry. Themed train rides, some offering meals, are a fan favorite and sell out quickly, so get on board! Admission to the museum is free, but fees apply for train rides.

# THIRD STOP **Cornwallis Tea Company**

141 S. Congress St., Winnsboro

It's time for a little refreshment, and this charming downtown café is the perfect place to find it. Chicken salad and other delicious sandwiches, soups, salads and sweets are among the tasty offerings. Need a spark to fuel the next leg of your trip? Choose from a list of house-blended teas and order a pot.



# FOURTH STOP **Christy Buchanan's SHE Garden**

1450 Newberry Road, Winnsboro

Artist Christy Buchanan has created a kaleidoscopic garden that is hard to resist. Follow the pathways and feast your eyes on oneof-a-kind folk-art installations bursting with whimsy and color. See something that speaks to your art heart? Chances are you can make a purchase and own an original "Christy." Admission



Old Town Rock Hill

East Main Street, Rock Hill

Start to explore the historic, revitalized downtown with a stroll down Freedom Walkway. The mural and brick path created by local artists invites contemplation. Note the nine stools that represent the Friendship 9, a group of Black men arrested in 1961 after staging a sit-in at a segregated McCrory's lunch counter. The McCrory's site was preserved and is now an acclaimed restaurant aptly named Kounter. Take a seat at the original counter on stools that bear the names of each protester.

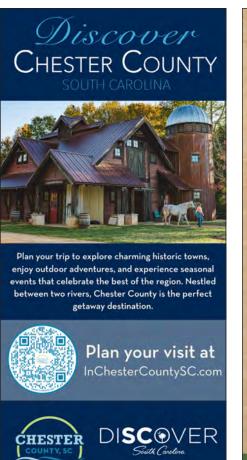
Afterward, head next door to Elsie's, a small deli specializing in Italian meats. While the shaved prosciutto is divine, resist ordering. Instead, pull out your phone and check the deli's Facebook page for the password of the day. Utter it, and the clerk will lead you to a secret door. Behind it, you'll find a dim-lit, elegant speakeasy serving light bites, classic cocktails and mocktails. You must be 21 or older to enjoy this experience.

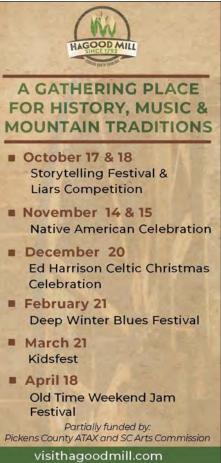
Before leaving Old Town, grab a coffee and pastry on Main Street from the French bakery, Amelie's, then walk to nearby Rock Hill Fountain Park. Watching the graceful dancing waters while sipping a cappuccino and nibbling a Napolean is a perfect way to end this unforgettable back-road adventure. 🥯

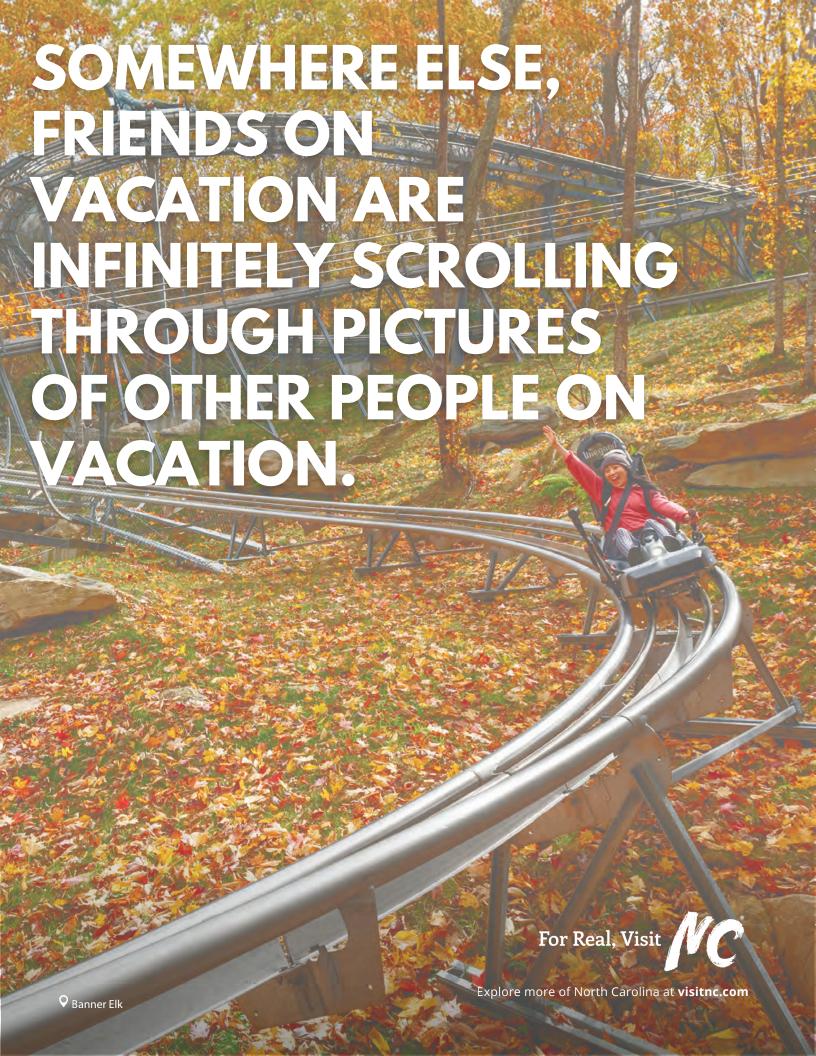


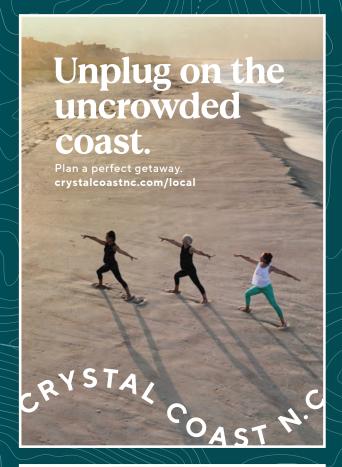


**AIKEN COUNTY** 











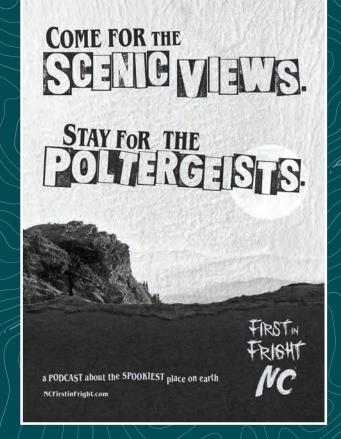


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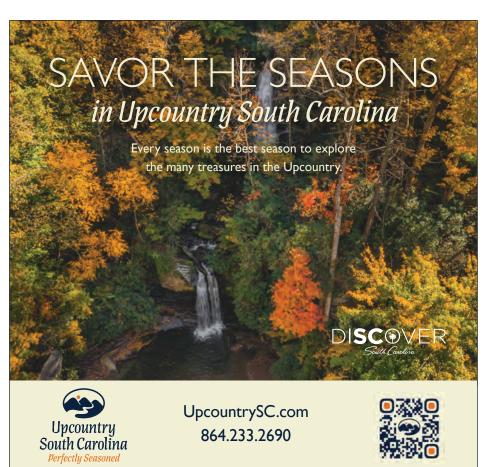
















For more info: www.BROOKGREEN.org/events/harvest-home-weekend

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**MUSEUM** 









# Upstate

### **SEPTEMBER**

**19–20 Old Time Fiddlers Convention,** Hagood Mill Historic Site, Pickens. visithagoodmill.com.

**19–21 Spartanburg Greek Festival,** St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, Spartanburg. spartanburggreekfestival.com.

**19–Oct. 12** *Gutenberg! The Musical!*, The Warehouse Theatre, Greenville. (864) 235-6948 or warehousetheatre.com.

**21 Hispanic Heritage Festival,** Fluor Field, Greenville. (864) 402-4207 or ahamsc.org/hhf.

**27 Railfest,** Greer City Park, Greer. (864) 848-2150.

**27–28 Pickens Jeep Explosion,** Market at the Mill, Pickens. (864) 397-0553 or pickensjeepexplosion.com.

### **OCTOBER**

**1–4 Albino Skunk Music Festival,** The Skunk Farm, Greer. albinoskunk.com.

2–4 Moonshiners Reunion & Mountain Music Festival, Plum Hollow Farm, Campobello. (864) 357-0222 or moonshiners.com.

4 Belton Standpipe Heritage and Arts Festival, City Square, Belton. (864) 958-5264 or beltonalliance.com.

**4 Greer Arts & Eats Festival,** downtown, Greer. (864) 877-3131 or greerartsandeats.com.

**4 Artoberfest,** downtown, Abbeville. (864) 366-4600 or abbevillechamber.org.

**10–11 South Carolina Bigfoot Festival,** downtown, Westminster. scbigfootfestival.com.

**10–12 Fall for Greenville,** Main Street, Greenville. fallforgreenville.net.

**15–19, 22–30 Boo in the Zoo,** Greenville Zoo, Greenville. greenvillezoo.com.

**17–19 Walhalla Oktoberfest,** Highway 183 Sertoma Field, Walhalla. thewalhallaoktoberfest.com.

**18 Fall Book Festival,** Historic Greer Depot, Greer. creativeslingersofink.com.

**18 iMAGINE Lakelands STEAM Festival**, Uptown, Greenwood. imaginesteamsc.org/lakelands.

**19 Hampton-Pinckney PorchFest,** Hampton-Pinckney Historic District, Greenville. hpporchfest.org.

**20 McCormick Gold Rush Festival**, downtown,
McCormick. (864) 852-2835 or
facebook.com/qold.rush.29835.



Celebrate the 108th birthday of Cheraw native son "Dizzy" Gillespie and enjoy four days of performances during the South Carolina Jazz Festival in Cheraw, Oct. 16–19.

**24–Nov. 2** *Hairspray*, Greenwood Community Theatre, Greenwood. (864) 229-5704 or greenwoodcommunitytheatre.com.

**25 Fall Harvest Festival,** Village Green, Pendleton. (864) 646-9409 or townofpendleton.org.

**25 Spooktacular Pumpkin Carving Party,** Hickory Knob State Resort Park, McCormick. (864) 391-2450.

**25 Trick or Treat,** Lake Greenwood State Park, Ninety Six. (864) 543-3535.

27 Clemson University Symphony Orchestra Halloween Spooktacular, Brooks Center for Performing Arts, Clemson. (864) 656-7787.

# Midlands

### SEPTEMBER

**18—21 Columbia's Greek Festival,**Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral,
Columbia. (803) 461-0248 or
columbiasgreekfestival.com.

19–20 Camden Coin Club Fall Show Spectacular, Camden City Arena, Camden. (803) 713-5311 or camdencoinclub.com.

20 Jubilee: Festival of Black History and Culture, Mann-Simons Site, Columbia. historiccolumbia.org/jubilee.

**20 Palmetto Peanut Boil,** 2900 block Devine Street, Columbia. animalmission.org.

**25–27 Raylrode Daze Festivul,** downtown, Branchville. (843) 830-9962 or raylrodedazefestivul.com.

**26 Zoofari**, Riverbanks Zoo & Garden, Columbia. (803) 779-8717 or riverbanks.org.

**26–27 The Irmo Okra Strut,** Moore Park, Irmo. okrastrut.com.

**26–Oct. 18** *Choir Boy*, Trustus Theatre, Columbia. (803) 254-9732 or trustus.org.

**27 Catawba Fest,** Catawba Park, Tega Cay. tegacaysc.org.

**30–Oct. 5 Orangeburg County Fair,** Orangeburg County Fairgrounds,
Orangeburg. (803) 534-0358 or
orangeburgfair.com.

### **OCTOBER**

**3–19** *Dracula: A Comedy of Errors*, Chapin Theatre, Chapin. (803) 404-0015 or chapintheatre.org.

**4 Famously Hot South Carolina Pride Festival,** downtown, Columbia. scpride.org.

**4 Gaston Collard and Barbeque Festival,** downtown, Gaston. (803) 796-7725.

**4 Newberry Oktoberfest,** downtown, Newberry. newberryoktoberfest.com.

**5 JerryFest,** Five Points, Columbia. (803) 748-7373 or fivepointscolumbia.com.

**8–19 South Carolina State Fair,** South Carolina State Fairgrounds, Columbia. scstatefair.org.

**9–12 US Disc Golf Championship,** Winthrop Arena Course, Rock Hill. usdqc.com.

**10–19 Western Carolina State Fair,** Aiken Fairgrounds, Aiken. letsrideaiken.com.

**11–12 Oktoberfest Columbia,** Incarnation Lutheran Church, Columbia. oktoberfestcolumbia.com.

**14–18 Union County Agricultural Fair,** 120 Kirby St., Union. (864) 424-8272 or itsmyfair.com.

**16-19 South Carolina Jazz Festival,** multiple locations, Cheraw. scjazzfestival.com.

**17–30 Boo at the Zoo,**Riverbanks Zoo & Garden, Columbia.
riverbanks.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.

**18 Fort Mill Fall Festival,** Walter Y. Elisha Park, Fort Mill. (803) 547-2034 or fortmillsc.gov.

**25 Creepy Campout,** Lake Wateree State Park, Winnsboro. (803) 482-6401.

# Pee Dee & Lowcountry

### SEPTEMBER

**18–20 Yemassee Shrimp Festival,** downtown, Yemassee. townofyemassee.org.

**20 Aynor Harvest Hoe-Down Festival,** downtown, Aynor. aynorhoedown.com.

**25–Oct. 5 MOJA Arts Festival,** multiple venues, Charleston. (843) 724-7305 or mojafestival.com.

**26–28 Atalaya Arts & Crafts Festival,** Huntington Beach State Park,
Murrells Inlet. (843) 237-4440.

**27 Fall Festival,** St. Paul's Waccamaw Methodist Church, Pawleys Island. (843) 237-2294.

**27 Irish Italian Festival,** Main Street, North Myrtle Beach. (843) 280-5570 or nmb.us/164/parks-recreation.

### OCTOBER

**2–4 Gopher Hill Festival,** downtown, Ridgeland. (843) 305-0075 or gopherhillfestival.org.

2–18 Pawleys Island Festival of Music & Art, The Reserve Golf Club, Pawleys Island. (843) 626-8911 or pawleysmusic.com.

**3–4 Beaufort Shrimp Festival,** Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park, Beaufort. beaufortshrimpfestival.com.

**4 Fall Plant Sale,** Moore Farms Botanical Garden, Lake City. (843) 210-7582 or moorefarmsbg.org.

4 Isle of Palms Connector Run, Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms.

**4 Mermaids & Mateys,** Center Street, Folly Beach. visitfolly.com.

**5 Latin American Festival,** Wannamaker County Park, North Charleston. (843) 795-4386 or ccprc.com.

**9–Nov. 2 Fall Tours of Homes and Gardens,** downtown, Charleston. preservationsociety.org.

**10 Fur Ball Gala,** Hotel Bennett, Charleston. (843) 795-1110 or pethelpers.org.

**10–11 Riverfront Revival,**Riverfront Park, North Charleston.
riverfrontrevival com

**10–12 Pig Pickin' Festival,** downtown, Kingstree. (843) 355-7484 or kingstree.org.

**11 Oktoberfest Charleston,** St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Charleston, oktoberfestcharleston.org.

**11 Charleston Pride Festival,** The Refinery, Charleston. charlestonpride.org.

**11 Summerville Italian Feast,** Hutchinson Square, Summerville. (609) 784-4452 or summervilleitalianfeast.org.

**11–12 Art in the Park,** Market Common Valor Park, Myrtle Beach. wacg.org/art-in-the-park.

11–12 Little River ShrimpFest, Historic Waterfront, Little River. littlerivershrimpfest.org.

**11–19 Historic Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival,** various locations, Bluffton. blufftonartsandseafoodfestival.org.

**15–18 Conway Ghost Walk,** downtown, Conway. (843) 248-6260 or conwayalive.com.

**15–Nov. 2** *Dial M For Murder*, Dock Street Theatre, Charleston. (843) 577-7183 or charlestonstage.com.

**18** Italian Heritage Festival, Coastal Discovery Museum at Honey Horn, Hilton Head Island. iachh.org.

**18 Loris Bog-Off Festival,** downtown, Loris. (843) 756-6030 or lorischamber.com.

**18–19 Georgetown Wooden Boat Show,** Front & Broad Streets,
Georgetown. (843) 520-0111 or
woodenboatshow.com.

**19 Children's Day Festival,** Park West Recreation Complex, Mount Pleasant. (800) 774-0006 or experiencemountpleasant.com.

**25 BOOtanical Garden,** Moore Farms Botanical Garden, Lake City. (843) 210-7582 or moorefarmsbg.org.

**25 Charleston Beerfest,** Riverfront Park, North Charleston. chsbeerfest.org.

**30–Nov. 9 Coastal Carolina Fair,** Exchange Park, Ladson. coastalcarolinafair.org.

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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

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# SC | Gardener SEPTEMBER IN THE GARDEN Thought you missed out on establishing a cool-season veggie patch? Fret not, intrepid gardener—there is still time this month to plant broccoli, Brussels sprouts, rutabagas, spinach, turnips, kale, mustard greens, radishes, garden peas, collards and carrots. Don't prune healthy branches off trees and shrubs now because it could encourage new growth that might not The late show: Mexican

Don't prune healthy branches off trees and shrubs now because it could encourage new growth that might not have time to harden before the first frosts bite. Note the conditional adjective "healthy" because this month is a good time to prune damaged, diseased or dead limbs, which will be easy to spot while your woody ornamentals are still brimming with leaves.



PLAN AHEAD Plant the tubers of flashy peonies such as "Bartzella" now to light up the spring landscape.

TIP OF THE MONTH Now is a good time to buy and plant herbaceous peony tubers. If they are available at your local nursery, pick out the fattest tubers you can find that have at least four to five pinkish "eyes" on each. In the garden, don't plant them too deep, no more than an inch below the soil's surface. This close encounter will expose the tucked-away tubers to the beneficial chill of winter, which they need to develop-and bloomproperly. Also, if possible, site your newbie peonies in an area that greets the morning sun but is somewhat shaded from the harshest afternoon sunrays in the summer.

THE AUTUMN LANDSCAPE will soon be aglow with vibrant yellows, oranges and reds saluting the changing of seasons. So, to this visually stimulating mix of fiery colors, why not add some razzle to all the dazzle with a splash of purple? Mexican bush sage (*Salvia leucantha*) is just the kind of plant to compete with the sizzling colors of fall with its wide swaths of striking purple spikes.

bush sage

Sure, typical annual and perennial salvias are spring and summer work-horses that can be counted on for extended, dependable flower displays. But Mexican bush sage waits.

Only when the long, hot summer is winding down—after melting flower borders and wearing out its welcome with gardeners—does Mexican bush sage come out to play with displays of flowing flower stalks dipped in the violet end of the spectrum and lasting deep into the fall.

As the name suggests, this late-show salvia is native to Mexico, but it is generally hardy for South Carolina gardens. A shrubby perennial, it performs best in well-drained soil in a bright location. In fact, without a daily bathing of at least six hours of sunlight, its branches tend to stretch long, leggy and floppy.

A happy Mexican bush sage (deerresistant, by the way) can grow up to 4 feet tall and about as wide, so place it in a spot where it won't bully other plants. Being drought-tolerant, it is also a good candidate for xeriscape beds, which require no irrigation, or large container plantings.

oush sage

shows off

in the fall

garden.

Much of the eye-catching purple associated with Mexican bush sage blossoms comes from the fuzzy calyces (outer coverings) of the blooms that persist long after the flowers fade and fall off.

The small corollas of flower petals typically glimmer in a contrasting white, but there are exceptions. For instance, the cultivar "Midnight" (also known as "All Purple") lives up to its name with amethyst flowers complementing the embracing purple calyces. The compact "Santa Barbara" puts on a similar purple-on-purple display, although the corollas are slightly lighter.

Mexican bush sage is typically not that hard to find either locally or online. And even if you only buy one, don't worry about it being lonely. This late-flowering beauty is a nectar-laced magnet for lingering bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. So, plant it, and they will come.  $\mathfrak{S}$ 

L.A. JACKSON is the former editor of Carolina Gardener magazine. Contact him at lajackson1@gmail.com.

# sc | humor me

# Send in the mastiff

BY JAN A. IGOE

### WHEN YOUR KID DEPLOYS TO

another continent—the kind with lots of camels—you fear for her safety. When she leaves you with a dog that's the size of a camel, you fear for your own safety. Also the mailman's.

While my military daughter is stationed overseas, her "kids" are visiting. There's the 55-pound Lab she rescued—her toy dog—and Clyde, who is a dog only in the loosest sense of the term. Technically, he's livestock.

Clyde is an English mastiff who weighs between 150 and 160 pounds, depending on how many cars he eats before you weigh him. I have no formal training or special license to handle a beast of this size. I'm not even sure our neighborhood is zoned for it. I'm just doing my part for America.

"Ask not what your country can do for you," my daughter said. "Ask what you can do for the mastiff." So we took him.

Clyde is only 3, but he's already been through five families who probably neglected to research mastiff drool, a fast-curing industrial adhesive the dog uses to lubricate his surroundings. Once it dries, the easiest thing to do is buy a new house.

Before Clyde arrived, the three dogs we already own shared one water bowl, which the mastiff empties with a single snort. So we set Clyde up with a commercial stockpot in the bathroom, where he can drain his jowls while inflicting the least collateral damage.

As Clyde drops his mighty head into the pot, there's a deafening rumble usually created by boats with twin-diesel engines. Once his tank is full, Clyde emerges in all his frothy glory, prepared to empty the fleshy flaps that flank his



"That is a BIG DOG,"
everyone assures us, in
case we thought we were
walking a Pomeranian.

face. Each one holds several quarts of liquid and assorted projectiles with an effective splatter range of 10 feet. (Tip: Foaming at the mouth is not a reliable sign of madness in this breed. They're always foaming.)

Since what goes in must come out, we try to empty Clyde frequently. We quickly learned that the pint-size doggie bags adequate for most of the canine world are not one-size-fits-all, so we upgraded to lawn and leaf. My husband thinks the skilled professionals who follow circus elephants around with shovels probably train on mastiffs. And whatever they get paid, it's not enough.

Wherever he goes, Clyde attracts a crowd. Strangers always stop to gape and

point. The mere sight of such a majestic animal seems to trigger a spontaneous reflex as reliable as a rubber mallet tapping your knee: "That is a BIG DOG," everyone assures us, in case we thought we were walking a Pomeranian.

Oddly enough, they'll still charge up and stick an arm in the big dog's face without asking if he's friendly. Or hungry. It wouldn't surprise me to see someone pry Clyde's jaws apart to stick their head in for a photo opp.

Before you adopt a mastiff, I highly recommend taking the dog for a test drive. You might want to hold off until you find one with power steering, cruise control and brakes.

But if you can't wait, my daughter can hook you up with a camel. 3

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** South Carolina Living is reprinting some of Jan A. Igoe's previous columns. This "Humor Me" originally appeared in the April 2011 issue. Visit **SCLiving.coop/news/in-memory-of-jan-igoe**.





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