



The Baker Bulletin

A
Baker County
Extension
Service Monthly
Newsletter

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Horticulture	2
Living Well	3
Calendar	4
Upcoming Events	5
4-H	6
Agriculture	7
Notices	8

Dear Extension Friends,

Thank you once again for supporting the Extension Service in Baker County. Please take a look at the information that we have for you this month, including 4-H information for the fair, summer weed control in pastures and how to solarize your soil. While fire risk continues to be low because of rain, please remember to watch out for causes of wildfires and keep those to a minimum. As always, if we can be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Davis
County Extension Director / Ag Agent
Baker County Extension Service



Contact Information—Baker County Extension Service

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Family & Consumer
Sciences Agent



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Highlights in Horticulture

By:

2

*Alicia Lamborn,
Horticulture Agent*

Solarizing Your Soil

Soil solarization is a practice used in home vegetable gardens and small field sites to manage weeds, nematodes, diseases, and insects in soil. The soil surface is covered with clear plastic, which allows sunlight to pass through and heat up the soil to temperatures that are lethal to many of these pests. If effective, solarization can reduce population levels of these pests for 3-4 months, sometimes longer.

Steps for Conducting Solarization

1. Where to Do Solarization: Solarization can be done on any soil type in Florida but for best results, should be done in open, un-shaded areas. If the sun is blocked by trees or buildings during the day, results can be poor.

2. When to Do Solarization: The best times for solarization are during the summer months of June, July, and August because these have the hottest temperatures. It has been attempted in the spring and fall, but may not be as reliable then because temperatures are cooler. June may actually be the best month, because rainfall may be lower than in the other summer months, although this is untested.

3. Site Preparation: The area to be solarized must first be cleared of existing weeds and debris. Tilling the site is helpful to increase penetration of heat into the top 6 inches of soil. Sticks, old roots, and other debris should be removed so they do not poke holes in the plastic.

4. Soil Moisture and Heat Conduction: Water helps to conduct heat, so best results occur if soil is moist but not waterlogged or muddy. If the soil is very dry and dusty, the solarization will not work as well. On sandy soils in Florida, the best conditions are when the soil received rain or irrigation the day before plastic is applied. If rain or irrigation occur just a short time before applying plastic, the soil can be heavy, muddy, or otherwise difficult to work with, and the clear plastic can get dirty.

5. Cover Soil with Clear Plastic: Solarization can be done on raised beds or on flat ground. It is better for the beds to run north-south to ensure that the raised edges receive direct sunlight in the morning or afternoon. A clear plastic sheet or strip is stretched out over the area to be treated. The plastic piece should be a little larger than the area treated because the edges will need to be buried in soil. The plastic sheeting used must be completely CLEAR. Other types of plastic should not be used. Black plastics or reflective plastics will get hot on the surface, but will not allow sunlight through to heat the soil below. Translucent or whitish plastics may allow some sunlight through, but are insufficient at solarizing the soil. At present, there are no recommendations about type or brand of clear plastic to use. Some people think thinner plastic is better, but the main consideration is that the plastic should be strong enough to last for at least 6 weeks in the summer sun in Florida without breaking up.

6. Seal Plastic into Soil: The plastic should be stretched tight and the edges sealed completely by burying in soil. If edges are not completely sealed, heat will leak out and problems may result in these cooler areas.

7. Solarize for at Least 6 Weeks: The plastic should be left in place with all edges buried for at least 6 weeks. After that, the plastic can be removed, and if the procedure was successful, weeds and soil pests should be reduced for 3-4 months. Wait until you are ready to plant to remove the plastic, and do not plant anything until the plastic is removed because the heat under clear plastic will kill seeds and plants!



In the field, plastic covering only the planting rows is typical, whereas in a small home garden, the plastic may cover the entire planting area.

For more information on solarization, visit <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in856> and <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in824>

Adapted and excerpted from: McSorley, R. and Gill, H. K. (2010). *Introduction to Soil Solarization*. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in856>

Food Safety Tips for Summer

Research has shown that incidences of foodborne illness or 'food poisoning' increase as the weather gets warmer. As we enter the warmest months of the year in Florida, take time to remember these tips when you are dealing with food this summer.

- Make sure to wash your hands with clean water and soap often, especially before eating and when preparing foods (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fy725>).
- If there is no clean water available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizers to clean the hands, but make sure to follow the directions on the label.
- The safe shelf-life of a food is a combination of both time and temperature. If the temperature is above 90°F, perishable foods should not be left out more than one (1) hour.
- Treat ice like a food. Keep ice intended for cooling drinks and foods separate from ice that will be used in drinks.
- If you are making home-made ice cream, make sure to follow the safe handling rules for eggs.
- Follow safe handling of fresh fruits and vegetables to reduce the risk of food-borne illness.

Adapted from 'Top Summer Food Safety Tips', by Amy Simonne, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Food Safety and Quality
<http://fyics.ifas.ufl.edu/news/2007/05/summerfoodsafety.html>



Basic Tomato Care



"**Determinate**" tomato varieties are bushy plants that produce a crop of fruit over a short season, while "**Indeterminate**" varieties grow tall, having vines that need to be trellised.

Mulching

A material such as straw, leaves, dried lawn clippings, or plastic which is placed on the soil around the plant is called a mulch. It conserves soil moisture, holds down weeds, keeps fertilizer from leaching, and keeps fruits from rotting on the soil.

Staking and Pruning

Staking is a must for indeterminate types, but will help any variety keep fruit off the ground and help to conserve space. One method of staking is to drive a 6-foot stake into the soil 3 to 4 inches from each plant, preferably before the plant is set. As the plant grows, tie it to the stake with string 4 to 6 times during the season. Make the ties just below the fruit clusters. Old stockings make great ties. There are many other techniques used by gardeners for trellising their plants. Tomato cages are quite popular, and last a long time.

Pruning to remove suckers, also called suckering, is the practice of removing the side branches as they emerge. This reduces the number of fruit, but causes those produced to be larger and easier to find. Leave 2 to 3 main stems to develop canopy and fruit. Watch a video on pruning suckers at:

<http://www.johnnyseeds.com/MediaPlayer.aspx?VideoID=60&source=10tipsheirloomtoms>

Watering

Tomatoes need about 1-2 inches of water per week. If rainfall is not enough, water plants thoroughly once or twice a week. Heavy soakings once a week are better than many light sprinklings. More frequent watering may be needed in sandy soils, especially in the first week plants are set. Include a lot of organics in your soil to help absorb and hold water. Drip irrigation is also available at many garden supply stores and works best in conjunction with mulching to conserve water.

Adapted and excerpted from: Stephens, J. (1994). *Tomatoes in the Florida Garden*. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh028>

June 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 
2	3 	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20 	21	22
23	24	25	26	27 	28	29 
30		JULY 10 	JULY 18 	JULY 19 		

Upcoming Programs are marked with a Program Area Symbol. Please match these symbols with the list on the following page for more information about the program.



4-H



Horticulture



Family &
Consumer Sciences



Agriculture

Upcoming Programs & Events

Programs will be held at the Baker County Extension Office (Agricultural Center) unless otherwise noted.

June 3 **Northeast Florida Equine Culture Seminar, 5:30pm to 9:00pm, Clay County Fairgrounds, 2497 SR 16 W, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043.** The Northeast Florida Livestock Agents Group (NFLAG) presents a program on equine management. Topics include: 1) equine first aid, 2) nutrition and feeding, 3) hay quality and 4) a panel discussion covering participant questions. Registration begins at 5:30pm and the cost is \$5.00 per person (meal included). To register, please contact David Nistler, Clay County Extension, at (904) 284-6355 or contact your local County Extension Agent.



June 20 **Backyard & Small Scale Poultry Production Workshop, 5:30pm to 8:00pm, Baker County Extension Auditorium, 1025 W. Macclenny Ave., Macclenny FL 32063.** This program is intended for backyard poultry growers and enthusiasts who intend to raise poultry for meat and/or egg production. Topics include: 1) Breed Selection, 2) Nutrition & Feeding, and 3) Basic Poultry Management. Registration is free but space is limited. Please contact the Baker County Extension Service at 904-259-3520 to register or for additional information.



July 10 **Northeast Florida Livestock Agents Group Hay Field Day, Santa Fe River Ranch, 29220 NW 122nd St., Alachua FL 32615.** This program is intended for livestock and hay producers with topics including: 1) Body Condition Scoring, 2) Interpreting Hay Test Results, 3) Pasture Integrated Pest Management, 4) Pasture Weed Management and 5) Forage Selection. Please contact your local County Extension Agent for further details in June.



July 18 **Rain Barrel Workshop, 6:00pm, Baker County Extension Service, 1025 W. Macclenny Ave., Macclenny FL 32063.** Learn how to build, install and maintain a rain barrel that saves the rain for your plants and saves you money. The class includes a demonstration with the option to stay and build your rain barrel: tools and assistance provided. The cost is \$40 per rain barrel and is due by July 12. To register, please contact the Baker County Extension Service at 904-259-3520. For additional information, contact Alicia Lamborn at 904-259-3520 or visit <http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu/documents/RainBarrelWorkshopFlyer-July2013.pdf>.



July 19 **Rain Barrel Workshop, 10:00am, Baker County Extension Service, 1025 W. Macclenny Ave., Macclenny FL 32063.** Learn how to build, install and maintain a rain barrel that saves the rain for your plants and saves you money. The class includes a demonstration with the option to stay and build your rain barrel: tools and assistance provided. The cost is \$40 per rain barrel and is due by July 12. To register, please contact the Baker County Extension Service at 904-259-3520. For additional information, contact Alicia Lamborn at 904-259-3520 or visit <http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu/documents/RainBarrelWorkshopFlyer-July2013.pdf>.



4-H Club Meetings & Events:

Livestock Club—

June 27—Club Meeting, 6pm. Extension Classroom

June 29—Livestock Animal Weigh-in, 7-10am. Fairgrounds

Cloverleaf Cloggers—Contact your club leader for future meeting dates

Cooking Club—Meetings will resume in the new 4-H year.

More Upcoming 4-H Events:

June 01—Counselor Training, 10 am

Osceola National Forest Facility.

July 08—Camp Cherry Lake Orientation, 6pm. Ag Center Auditorium

July 09—Record Book Clinic, 7pm. Ag. Center Auditorium

July 15-19—Camp Cherry Lake

July 23—Record Book Clinic, 2pm. Ag. Center Auditorium

June-August—4-H Summer Day Camps

(Summer Camp Registration Forms at <http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu>)

Lucky Clover Chronicle

By:

Shaina Bennett,
4-H Extension Agent

6



Getting Ready For Fair!

I know that the fair seems like it is a long ways away but it will be here before we know it! As always, if you are going to be showing an animal in the fair, including

chickens and rabbits, you need to be working on your project book and your record book. They are two separate books that must be completed to be eligible to show in the fair.

In June the fair weigh-in will be June 29th from 7am to 10 am at the fairgrounds. This is when you should start your record book. Remember that you need a parent/guardian signature AND your club leader or Ms. Shaina's signature on your record book. Don't forget to put the date that you started your record book either, maybe the date could be June 29th...

In July there will be two clinics in the auditorium for all youth that will show in the fair. These clinics will go over the essential information that you need to know to be successful at the fair. The dates for the clinics are:

- July 9th at 7pm—Ag. Center Auditorium
- July 23rd at 2pm—Ag. Center Auditorium

If you have any questions about any of these dates or times please contact Ms. Shaina.



4-H Intern—Regina Honorat

I am pleased to welcome Ms. Regina Honorat to the Baker County Extension Office, who will be our 4-H intern for the summer!

Ms. Regina is attending the University of Florida and is majoring in Criminology. She is from Miami, and her native language is Haitian Creole. She is a member of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Mid-Florida as well as a peer leader for the Office of Academic Support and a Residential

College Advisor. Ms. Regina will be assisting with most 4-H activities including some club meetings, day camps, in the office, and going to Camp Cherry Lake with us!

Ms. Regina's first day was May 28th. I hope that everyone gives her a warm welcome to Baker County!

Birthdays for June:

Wishing all of you a very **Happy Birthday** from the Baker County Extension Office!

June 12—Leah Lovingood

June 12—Selena Girardo

June 14—Jailen Ruise



**Ms. Shaina loves teaching about baby chicks!
Here's a picture!**



Us! www.facebook.com/bakerco4h



Did You Know: In 1987 the Florida legislature designated the American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) the official state reptile. Long an unofficial symbol of the state, the alligator originally symbolized Florida's extensive untamed wilderness and swamps.

Looking for community service? Youth ages 13-18 that would like to earn service hours please contact Ms. Shaina, at 259-3520.

Common Summer Weeds- Showy Crotalaria & Sedges

Showy Crotalaria, or rattlebox, (*Crotalaria spectabilis*) is an herbaceous annual plant that can reach heights of 4 to 5 ft. This plant has been used previously as a soil builder because of its nitrogen-fixing and nematode-reducing attributes, but is now considered a weed in many agricultural practices. Leaves are alternating on the stems and typically 4 to 7 in. long. Flowers are yellow and pea-shaped while the seed pods are smooth and long. Seed pods are light green in color when young, but turn nearly black when the seeds are ripe. The plant is considered toxic to livestock at all stages of growth.

Control: If Crotalaria was an issue in a field last year, spraying in early summer with 2,4D at 3 pts./ac. will help in control. Mature plants should be spot sprayed with either Remedy or Pasturegard at 3 pts./ac.

Image Source: (left) John D. Byrd, Mississippi State University, Bugwood.org, (right) Wendy VanDyk Evans, Bugwood.org

Source: Toxicity of Poultry to Common Weed Seeds, PS-55, Animal Sciences Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. First published February 2001. B. L. Damron and J. P. Jacob.

Showy Crotalaria, or Rattlebox
(*Crotalaria spectabilis*) ↘



Yellow Nutsedge (*Cyperus esculentus* L.) is an erect perennial sedge with unbranched stems which are solid and triangular in cross section. The plant frequently reaches heights of 27 to 35 in. Fruit color ranges from light tan to dark brown.

Purple Nutsedge (*Cyperus rotundus* L.) is a smooth, **erect perennial** sedge with a fibrous root system that is extensively branched. The plant is typically 14–16 in. tall (smaller than Yellow Nutsedge), but can reach heights of 40 in. in moist, fertile soils. Seed heads range in color from red to purplish-brown.

Control: Use Outrider at 1.33 ounces per acre for sedge control in established bermudagrass and bahiagrass pastures. It is effective on a wide variety of sedge species while causing little to no grass damage.

Image Source: Charles T. Bryson, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Bugwood.org

Source: Weeds in Florida, SP 37, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Publication Date: May 1991. Revised: December 2004. Reviewed: February 2009. David W. Hall, Vernon V. Vandiver, and Jason A. Ferrell.

Yellow Nutsedge
Cyperus esculentus L. ↓

Purple Nutsedge
Cyperus rotundus L. ↓



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Extension programs are open to all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, handicap, or national origin. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person needing a special accommodation to participate in any activity, should contact the Baker County Cooperative Extension Service at 1025 West Macclenny Avenue, Macclenny, FL 32063 or telephone (904) 259-3520 no later than five (5) days prior to the event. Hearing impaired persons can access the foregoing telephone by contacting the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8770 (voice) or 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).

Baker County Farmers Market

The Baker County Farmers Market is open for the Spring season. The Market is located on Lowder Street in the lot behind the old Fraser's Funeral Home. The Market is open from 8:00am to 1:00pm on Saturdays. Please come by and support local producers and craft makers. If you are interested in booth space at the Market, please contact the Baker County Chamber of Commerce (904-259-6433).



Master Gardener Volunteer Training Applications due by July 1st

To help meet the demands of the local community, the Extension Service provides training for volunteers who assist in offering educational information and advice on garden-related topics. Master Gardener Volunteer Training will take place at the Baker County Extension Office in Macclenny on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9am - 1pm during a 7 week period of starting July 30. The cost of the training is \$50 (\$60 for couples) and payment plans are available. There is no cost for returning Master Gardener Volunteers who completed the training in previous years. Please refer to the updated Baker County Master Gardener application packet for full program details and requirements. For an application packet, visit the Master Gardener page on our website at <http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu> or stop by our office to pick one up. Please call (904) 259-3520 if you have questions about the training or concerns regarding volunteer requirements after reading the application packet.