

Highlights in

Horticulture

Baker County

August 2015

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Dear Extension Friends,

The Master Gardeners would like to invite you to show a plant or two (or three, or four...) in the fair this year. While October is still some time away, don't let the time get away from you—start preparing your plants now using the tips on page 4. This is a fun, learning experience and nothing like a professional plant show. So whether you have something rare or common—if it is special to you, they want to see it in the show!

Best Regards,

Alicia

Alicia R. Lamborn
Horticulture Extension Agent
Baker County Extension Service



<https://www.facebook.com/UFIFASBakerCountyGardenSpot>

Upcoming Workshop

Dripline Irrigation and the Landscape

Friday, October 2nd

Choose your session: 10am or 3pm

Drip irrigation is a great way to cut costs on water. It is also more effective at providing water directly to the root zone of plants. This workshop discusses the importance of protecting Florida's water resources and will show you how to install a system at home.

Workshop is free but seating is limited; RSVP by calling (904) 259-3520.

Course taught by Taylor Clem, a Ph.D. candidate in University of Florida's Department of Environmental Horticulture. For more information call the Baker County Extension Office or contact Taylor Clem at taylorclem87@ufl.edu



Butterfly Garden Expansion Project

Over several years, the Baker County Extension Butterfly Garden has been spreading its wings and is now soaring to new heights. Originally planted in 2010 by 4-H members and expanded in 2011 by Master Gardener Volunteers, the garden generates much interest from visitors who enjoy learning about low maintenance plant species that attract butterflies with their colorful flowers. With over 200 people viewing the garden each year, the need for further improvements was identified by three volunteers who took charge of the project. Over a one month period, Master Gardeners created their ideal butterfly garden design and each presented their work to the group. With guidance from the agent, project leaders created a final plan for the garden using features from each of the designs and began preparing the area for the transformation.

While the old garden had approximately 25 plants of 11 species, the new garden features over 100 plants of 28 species and includes both nectar and host plants. New edging with gentle curves gives the garden a nice shape while easing maintenance for mowers. Two species of vines now use the chain link fence as a trellis and will one day provide a more attractive backdrop for the garden. A new stone path guides visitors through the garden allowing for a closer look at both flowers and pollinators, while a stool positioned opposite from a puddling dish serves as an invitation to sit and watch as butterflies stop to take a drink of water. Butterfly-shaped plant markers compliment the garden theme and help visitors identify plant species.



Looking north, Master Gardener Mary Ann Ray is busy planting the new section of the garden. Project leaders strategically placed evergreen perennials towards the outer edges of the garden to mask the cold damaged perennials that die back in winter.

The growing number of flowering plants has attracted the attention of many species of butterflies, bees, wasps, and other insects, as well as gardeners. If you would like to visit the garden yourself, the Extension Office welcomes you. Just check in at the front office and we'll provide you with a butterfly garden plant guide so you can learn more about the plants you see in the garden.

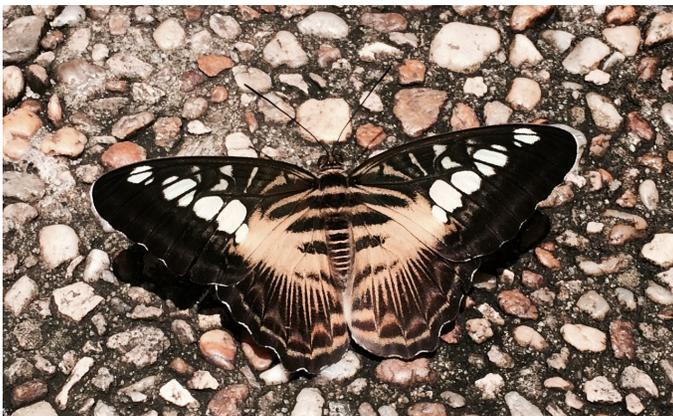


Looking southwest, the garden now contains flowering perennials planted in masses for added interest.

How To Make A Puddling Station for Your Butterfly Garden

Water is an important component of a butterfly garden and you can attract butterflies to your garden just by providing a puddling station that collects rain or irrigation water and entices them to stop for a drink.

Butterflies can not drink free-standing water. Instead they sip liquids and minerals from mud and wet sand through their proboscis. Therefore, your puddling station should consist of a shallow dish with sand and pebbles to create an ideal landing pad for butterflies.

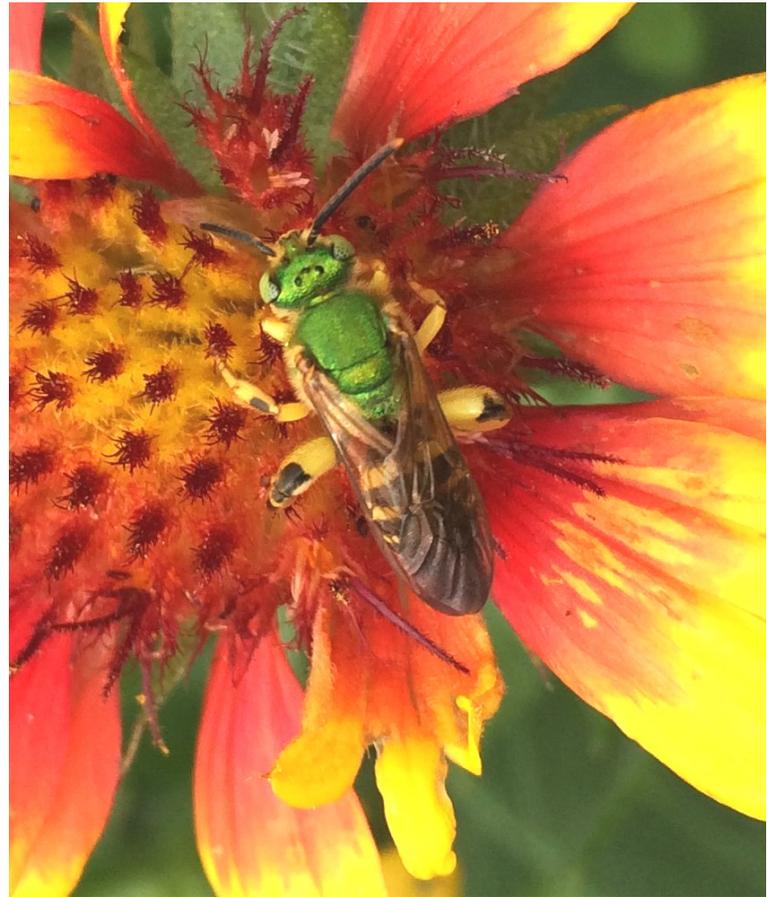


A large, plastic plant saucer (16+ inches in diameter) works great as a dish, as it will hold water longer, enable butterflies to find it easily, and allow room for more butterflies. Once you've filled your dish with sand you may cover the top with pebbles. To make your puddling dish more attractive to butterflies, sprinkle a pinch of table salt over the top before adding water, and occasionally add a capful of natural fish emulsion. An alternative to fish emulsion is to add a thin layer of composted manure or compost to the top.

Did you know? "Puddling" or "Puddle-clubs" is when butterflies are seen grouped together around a puddle or muddy area. These butterflies are "drinking" minerals, such as salt, from the soil. Most puddling butterflies are males getting the extra nutrients they need for mating.

Featured Creature

This creature is known as a Sweat Bee (believed to be species *Agapostemon splendens*).



Males of the species are approximately 11mm long and have a metallic green head and thorax with a yellow and black-striped abdomen. Females are only slightly smaller and their entire body is a brilliant metallic green color.

These bees cover a wide range: from North Dakota to Maine, south to Texas and Florida. Where we live, they are most commonly seen from April to October visiting several families of plants in search of pollen. Flowers that attract them include Aster, Brassica, Coreopsis, Gaillardia, Ilex, Ligustrum, Prunus, Solidago, Stokesia, Vaccinium, Verbena, and many more.

The male Sweat Bee above was photographed in the Baker County Extension Butterfly Garden while visiting the many Gaillardia plants growing there.

For more photos of these bees, see:
<http://bugguide.net/node/view/74478>

It's Time to Get Your Plants Ready for the Fair!

The horticulture exhibit at the Baker County Fair gives local gardeners of all ages a chance to show off their plants. Adult and youth entries follow the same judging procedures but are judged separately, and it doesn't cost anything to participate. In fact, you can earn some cash for each plant you show plus you'll receive a free entrance pass to come see what you've won. All types of plants are accepted but only qualified entries receive a ribbon and cash prize. It's easy to qualify, but now is the time to get your plants ready to show.

To qualify: All plants must have been grown by you, and in your possession for at least three months prior to the fair. All plants must be free from disease and insects. **Other helpful tips:** Remember to rotate your plant regularly so that it looks full and symmetrical. Grooming your plants to remove leaves with holes and dead tips is usually necessary before the show. **Entries:** You may enter up to 25 plants, but not more than one of the same cultivar or variety of plant. Categories include: Flowering/Fruiting (must have flowers or fruit), Foliage Plants (plants grown for foliage; without flowers/fruit), Special Display (container garden, mounted, or topiary), Bonsai, Cacti & Succulents, Hanging Plants (hanging baskets or mounted plants meant to hang), and Patio Plants (containers 14" or larger).

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR HORTICULTURE ENTRIES:

Entries accepted: Tuesday, Sept. 29th from 12pm-7pm & Wednesday, Sept. 30th from 9am—3pm

Plant Pick-up: Sunday, October 11th from 1pm—5pm

Fair Rules: Available from the Baker County Extension Office, and at www.bakercountyfair.com

Questions? Call Cindy Jenkins, Horticulture Chairperson @ 259-9517

Judging procedures: If you are intimidated about showing plants at the fair, don't be! Showing plants at the fair is a fun, learning experience. Here's how the judging works: **Round 1:** Judges look at each plant individually, judging it based on health of the plant and general appearance when compared to the standard for that particular plant species (the standard is how that particular plant is supposed to look). Plants are awarded a 1st (blue), 2nd (red), or 3rd (white) place ribbon and judges may write comments on your entry tag that they believe might help you score higher next year. **Round 2:** Judges select plants worthy of an 'Award of Merit' ribbon, and may compare blue ribbon plants to each other since they are looking for plants of exceptional quality. **Round 3:** The judges select a 'Best in Show' plant from all the 'Award of Merit' winners.



Premiums for Ribbons: Blue \$3 – Red \$2 – White \$1 – Award of Merit \$5 – Best of Show \$10



4-H Members: Receive an extra \$1 premium from Ms. Shaina



Baker County Extension Service

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For Extension Programs offered around the state, see the IFAS Extension Web Calendar at <http://calendar.ifas.ufl.edu/calendar/index.htm>.

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 ten (10) 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).