



Highlights in

Horticulture

Baker County

June 2015

Dear Extension Friends,

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With the weather heating up and summer just around the corner, gardeners should remember to keep cool by drinking plenty of water and wearing plenty of sunscreen. If you need plants that keep their cool in hot weather, check out page 2 for a list of top summer garden performers. Wishing everyone a safe and joyful summer!

Best Regards,



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



Upcoming Gardening Classes & Events

- June 19** **Growing Backyard Blueberries & Blackberries**, 10:00am to 12:00pm, Baker County Extension Office, Macclenny, FL. Back by popular demand! Topics include variety selection, preparing to plant, care and maintenance, and pest management. \$2 registration fee due by June 17th.
- June 26** **Raised Bed Gardening**, 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm, Baker County Extension Office, Macclenny, FL. Learn the basics of growing vegetables in raised beds plus techniques like square foot gardening, straw bale gardening, and easy DIY garden planters. Class is free; call 259-3520 to RSVP by June 24th.
- July 1** **Master Gardener Volunteer Training Course (Applications Due)** Classes will be Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9am to 1pm, August 4th to September 24th at the Baker County Extension Office, Macclenny, FL. Florida Master Gardeners are professionally trained volunteers who assist the county agent by sharing unbiased, research-based gardening information with the community. Applications for this program are being accepted through July 1st. Applications are available online at: http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu/Horticulture/master_gardener.html

10 Top Performers for Summer Gardens

Need plants that can keep their cool when things heat up? Check out our list of plants fit for North Florida landscapes that are proven performers when it comes to summer color, heat, and drought.

Angelonia Often called “summer snapdragon,” Angelonia produces numerous snapdragon-like flowers that come in white, pink, lavender, or purple. Angelonia also makes a good cut flower, lasting for a long time and producing a pleasant grape-soda scent.



Beach Sunflower Also known as Dune Sunflower, this attractive Florida native grows on our coastal sand dunes but is also perfect for landscapes! It is a spreading perennial with small yellow, sunflower-like flower heads that attract butterflies and bloom continuously. Plants die back to the ground in winter, but re-sprout from the roots or reseed in the garden. This plant makes a wonderful, drought-tolerant groundcover that requires virtually no care at all.

Blackberry Lily Sometimes called leopard-lily because of the spotted flowers, the blackberry-lily is really named after the inedible fruit that resembles a blackberry. It makes an outstanding addition to any landscape, making a nice accent plant, stand-alone perennial, or eye-catching focal point when mass planted. A member of the Iris family, the blackberry-lily is a colorful and durable semi-evergreen perennial that needs to be planted in more of our local landscapes.



Bulbine Spreading clumps of succulent, grass-like foliage provide a nice texture contrast to surrounding plants. Depending on the variety, yellow or orange flowers dance above the leaves, blooming repeatedly during spring and summer. Performs well in dry, sandy soils. Clumps can easily be divided and shared with friends.

Glossy Abelia Glossy Abelia is an evergreen or semi-evergreen sprawling shrub with arching stems and fine-textured foliage. Many cultivars are available in the nursery trade, varying in size, foliage color, and flower color. Clusters of small tubular white, pink, or lavender flowers are fragrant and attractive to butterflies. Some cultivars have multi-colored, variegated, and/or fall color.



Ornamental Sweet Potato Vine This bold tropical comes in a wide array of foliage colors including dark purple and bright chartreuse green. It works well spilling out of containers, in borders, and will behave as a groundcover. Other than occasional trimming and watering, this is an undemanding plant.

Pentas Many cultivars are now available, including dwarfs. Flower colors come in red, pink, white and lilac, but typically only the old-fashioned, unnamed varieties (red) are attractive to butterflies and hummingbirds.

Periwinkles Add a pop of color to your landscape with heat tolerant periwinkles (also called vincas) that bloom in apricot, pink, lavender, violet, burgundy, or white. Once established, water only as needed.

Pink Spirea White flowering Bridal Wreath Spirea has long been a Southern garden favorite. But if you'd like a Spirea that's a little different, look for a dwarf pink spirea called 'Anthony Waterer'. This deciduous, dwarf shrub has showy clusters of rosy pink blooms that are eye-catching during summer, and foliage that turns reddish-maroon during fall. It makes an attractive addition to a cottage garden, butterfly garden, or mixed border.



Plumbago This sprawling, mounding perennial shrub is covered with clusters of white or pale blue, phlox-like flowers most of the year. It is excellent for foundation plantings, large containers, and butterfly gardens. Plants die back to the ground after a freeze, but are typically quick to recover in spring, growing back from the roots.

Garden Snails & Slugs

Snails and slugs are despised garden pests. These slimy mollusks emerge at night, chew holes in leaves and flowers of garden plants or fruit, and often disappear during the day leaving you to wonder what caused the damage. If you see plant damage with no obvious source, look under flower pots or nearby groundcover, as these creatures will not move far from their host plants. If you still aren't finding them, try visiting your garden at night to catch them in the act.

Most often, snails and slugs are managed with chemicals called molluscides. But there are actually several options for keeping your landscape slime-free:

Reduce Moisture — Since they favor moist environments, gardeners can reduce the amount of irrigation applied (no more than 1/2 to 3/4 inch of water, once or twice per week) or switch to low-volume, micro-irrigation which only wets the plant roots and reduces the humidity in the plant canopy. Removing mulch, groundcover, wood and/or stones will also help reduce moisture and improve air flow, making the environment less suitable.

Set A Trap — Traps can be created or purchased. A simple saucer or unglazed flower pot placed in a shady location will allow you to hand-pick and destroy snails that seek refuge there during the day. Another option is to create a pit-fall trap using a saucer with steep sides partly sunk into the soil. You'll need to use an attractant such as beer or an apple core for this to work.

Set Up A Barrier — Copper foil and screening is believed to react with mollusk slime to create an electrical current that deters them from crossing the barrier. Similarly, diatomaceous earth can be sprinkled around a garden or planting bed to exclude mollusks, as they dislike crawling over this abrasive particulate material. Barriers, however, do nothing to suppress any that are already present, and the diatomaceous earth is easily disturbed by rainfall and irrigation.

Let Nature Help — Biological control is when natural predators or parasites attack pests. Watch out for the Rosy Wolf Snail, a common native predatory snail that readily attacks other snails. In fact, this snail is so good at eating other snails that it has been relocated to other parts of the world in an attempt to control invasive snails.

Use Chemicals As A Last Resort — Most molluscicides are bait products that contain toxicants which kill by ingestion or by contact. None are completely effective because snails and slugs can learn to avoid the chemicals and sometimes are only poisoned by them (but recover instead of die). Baits should be used only after the garden has been watered, and can be applied around specific plants or the entire garden.

Metaldehyde-containing baits are effective, but are quite toxic to pets and wildlife. Other products contain carbamate pesticides, but these are also toxic to animals. An effective, safer product for use around pets and wildlife is iron phosphate. Regardless of the product you choose, scattering the bait helps prevent pets or wildlife from eating the material. Always read and follow the pesticide label for proper use.



The Southern Flatcoil
(plant-feeder)



The White-Lipped Globe
(plant-feeder)



The Perforate Dome (plant-feeder)



The Rosy Wolf Snail (snail predator)

Photo Credits: University of Florida

Good Bug , Bad Bug, Look-a-likes

Unless you're an entomologist, identifying insects can sometimes be difficult. Some appear similar, making it even harder to determine who's who. Check out these look-a-likes of the insect world, and always remember to correctly identify a pest (we can help with that) before spraying pesticides.

Lady beetle larvae

Lady beetles (more commonly called lady bugs) are predators which makes them beneficial insects. Although there are many different species, most people can easily identify an adult lady beetle but wouldn't recognize the larvae (immature stage) which look very different from the adults. Both stages feed on aphids, scales mealybugs, mites, and other soft-bodied insects. By learning to identify these good bugs you can save money on pesticide sprays and let them control pests for you.



Lady beetle larvae are usually elongate, somewhat flattened, and covered in spines.

Many are dark or black with bright-colored spots or bands.

Others are cream-colored or white, making them look like mealybugs.

Mealy-bugs

Mealybugs are plant feeding insects typically found in the crotches of plant leaves, stems, and sometimes roots. They feed by sucking fluids from plants, causing the affected plant parts to turn yellow. They produce a sticky substance called honeydew which promotes the growth of black sooty mold, causing plants to turn black.



Mealybugs look cottony and leave a white, waxy substance on plants. Some species have "tails" while others do not. Most are white colored, although the pink hibiscus mealybug has a pink, cottony body.