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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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).

Master Gardener Training Starts Soon!

We are now accepting applications for Master Gardener volunteers.

The Master Gardener program is a national program of volunteers who are associated with the Extension Service. Trained Baker County Master Gardener volunteers help extend unbiased, research-based horticultural information to people in our community who need that information.

In Baker County, a Master Gardener might serve in one of the following roles:

- ◆ Work with horticulture extension staff at the office
- ◆ Assist horticulture agent with extension programs
- ◆ Assist horticulture agent with yard visits to homeowners
- ◆ Answer homeowner questions at plant clinics
- ◆ Work with youth to plant and maintain school gardens
- ◆ Plant and maintain demonstration gardens
- ◆ Grow a flower crop in the extension greenhouse
- ◆ Work with youth in the Jr. Master Gardener Program

This is a great opportunity for anyone who enjoys gardening and wants to volunteer for our community. We will teach you everything you ever wanted to know about gardening and you will pay us back by volunteering in 2011!

Applications accepted until July 16th at 5 pm.

Classes are held from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm each Wednesday starting August 4th until mid October. Just pay \$55 for materials and the training itself is free!

The materials you will receive include a CD full of reference materials, The Florida Lawn Handbook (book), Weeds of Southern Turfgrasses (book), a hand lens (for identifying insects/diseases), and your Master Gardener name tag.

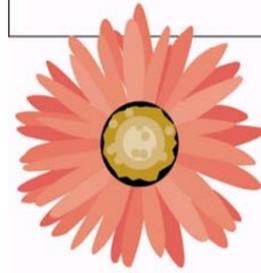
Visit our website or stop by the extension office for an application packet.

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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>.

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IFAS EXTENSION



Highlights in

Horticulture

Baker County

Dear Extension Friends,

July 2010

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We are currently looking for Master Gardener volunteers to join our family. Being a Master Gardener is both fun and rewarding, and there are many “jobs” to choose from that help to educate and improve the lives of people in our county. Don’t know much about gardening? The training we provide will turn your brown thumb to green! Live too far from our office? You can choose to work on projects and educate those in your own community! If you are considering the Master Gardener Program, please visit our website for more information, or call our office with questions.

Best Regards,

Alicia

Alicia R. Lamborn
 Horticulture Extension Agent



Upcoming Programs & Events: July & August

All programs will be held at the Baker County Extension Office (Agricultural Center).

July 9th — **Indoor Composting (with Worms)** 10:00 am to 11:00 am. A worm bin can be used inside the home to reduce food waste while creating worm castings (worm manure), which can then be used as an excellent, nutrient-rich organic fertilizer and soil conditioner for your house or landscape plants. Worms can also be used as fish bait. The class is free; bring your own container & receive free worms to get started. Please call 259-3520 to save your seat!



July 26th — **Identifying Nutrient Deficiencies in Plants** 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Have you ever had a yellowing plant that your fertilizer couldn’t fix? Knowing exactly what nutrient the plant needs is the first step to correcting the problem. Come learn how to diagnose a nutrient deficiency and fertilize appropriately to correct the problem. This class is free, just call 259-3520 to register by Thursday, July 22nd.



August 9th-13th — **Jr. Master Gardener Summer Camp** Youth are invited to join us for a week long gardening day camp. Each day will have a different gardening theme and attendees will learn about plants and gardening through hands-on educational activities, experiments, and games! Daily snacks are provided and many activities will be indoors due to the extreme summer heat. The cost of the camp is \$50 per child and will run from 9 am to 3 pm each day. Call 259-3520 for more information.

August 20th — **Botanical Bullies** 2:00pm to 3:00pm. Don’t let badly-behaved plants take over your yard. Come learn which plants cause problems in Baker County & how to get rid of them! This class is free, just call 259-3520 to register by Wednesday, August 18th.

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Ragweed vs. Goldenrod

Clearing the Confusion for Allergy Sufferers

Many people with allergies blame plants for their misery (rightfully so), and summertime can be tough for hay fever sufferers. Hay fever is an allergic reaction that certain people have when they inhale pollen from specific plants. During summer, one of the most colorful plants we see blooming in roadside ditches is goldenrod (*Solidago* sp.), and since hay fever symptoms seem to be worse when it is in bloom, it is often blamed for causing hay fever. However, the true culprit is ragweed. Both plants bloom during the summer, but are actually quite different in many ways.

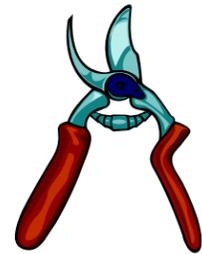


Ragweed flowers (shown left) actually look nothing like Goldenrod flowers (shown right).

Goldenrod produces masses of bright golden flowers on single-stemmed plants, and has relatively large, heavy pollen grains that are intended to be carried off by bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. Ragweed bears greenish yellow flowers in small heads which produce copious amounts of pollen, carried by the wind rather than insects for pollination. The flowers are not showy which means plants are easier to identify by their stems and leaves. Ragweed has branching purplish stems that are rough and hairy, and leaves which are smooth, but deeply divided into lobed portions (shown below).

Summer Pruning

While most trees & shrubs should be pruned in late winter, there are some exceptions.



Summer pruning should be completed this month on plants that flower on previous season's wood. Some plants form flower buds during late summer and fall, overwinter on the plant, then break bud in spring to provide a beautiful display of color. Pruning these types of plants in late summer, fall, or winter (after the flower buds have already formed) will decrease or eliminate their display. Therefore, these plants should be pruned soon after flowering to prevent flower bud removal, but only as needed since not all plants require yearly pruning.

Some common plants that should be pruned after flowering include the following....

Anise, Azalea, Banana Shrub, Camellia, Dogwood, Forsythia, Fringetree, Holly, Honeysuckle, Hydrangea, Indian Hawthorne, Magnolia, Mockorange, Pear, Quince, Redbud, Spirea, Sweet Shrub, Sweetspire, and Viburnum.



This photo, taken in Baker County, shows how tall ragweed can get (notice the mailbox on the right), but can actually reach 6 feet in height.

Since 75 percent of all Americans who are allergic to pollen-producing plants are also allergic to ragweed, removal of this pest plant is important. Control of this shallow-rooted plant is best achieved by hoeing, hand-pulling, or mowing while plants are still young, particularly before their flowers begin to form. Select herbicides for use on broad-leaf weeds can also provide control, but should not be used in right-of-ways and ditches since other wildflowers may be present.

Proper Maintenance is Key for a Healthy Lawn

Let the Mowing Begin!

Mowing may seem like the bane of your existence during the summer months, but it is actually one of the most important home-lawn management practices. Follow these suggestions for a healthy, happy lawn:

- **Mow at the highest height for your grass species.** For St. Augustinegrass and Bahia-grass, this is 3.5–4 inches. If you have St. Augustinegrass "dwarf" cultivars 'Delmar' or 'Seville', mow at 2–2.5 inches. Mow Centipedegrass at 1–2 inches.
- **Never remove more than 1/3 of the leaf blade at any one time.** Cutting too much of the leaf blade can stress your lawn and leave it susceptible to insect or disease invasion. If you miss a mowing session, raise the mower height and bring the grass back down to the recommended level gradually over the next few mowing sessions.
- **Leave grass clippings on the lawn.** They do not contribute to thatch, and actually return a small amount of fertility and organic matter back to the lawn.
- **Keep your mower blades sharp.** Dull mowers tear the leaf blades. This makes the lawn look bad and leaves it susceptible to insect or disease invasion.
- **Do not mow your lawn when it is wet.** This is tough on the mower and bad for the grass.



Irrigation or Irritation?

More lawns are damaged by improper irrigation practices than any other single cultural practice. Train your grass to be more drought tolerant using the following methods:

- **Irrigate less frequently.** Each time you water, water for a slightly longer time. This will help train your roots to grow deeper in the soil, which will in turn make your lawn more drought tolerant. Grasses irrigated in this manner will have a better chance of surviving watering restrictions.
- **Turn your automatic sprinkler system to the "off" position,** and turn it on when your lawn shows signs of needing irrigation. Adjust your timer seasonally. Irrigation frequency will vary depending on rainfall, as well as the amount of shade in the landscape, soil type, etc.
- **Irrigate your lawn as-needed, rather than on a schedule.** A lawn is ready for watering when the leaf blades show at least one of the three wilt signs: when leaf blades start to fold in half lengthwise, when the grass takes on a bluish cast, or when footprints remain visible in the lawn long after being made. Irrigate when about 50 percent of the lawn shows one of these signs, unless rain is forecast in the next 24 hrs.
- **Irrigate to apply 1/2–3/4 inch of water.** Purchase a rain gauge to keep track of rainfall and irrigation output. Time your sprinklers to see how long it takes to provide the correct amount of water.



Fertilize Appropriately!

- **Consider applying iron instead of a complete fertilizer during summer months.** Applying nitrogen when your grass is already growing fast can weaken the lawn and act as an open buffet for lawn pests, not to mention require additional mowing. Applying iron will green up your lawn without the extra growth. You can choose to apply iron sulfate (one pound per 1000 square feet), chelated iron (as recommended on the label), or for foliar applications, use ferrous sulfate (2 oz. per 3-5 gallons of water per 1000 square feet).
- **Don't guess, soil test!** A soil test conducted through the Baker County Extension Office will tell you exactly how to fertilize for optimum growth and health.