



Highlights in

Horticulture

Baker County

May 2011

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Dear Extension Friends,

If you missed the grand opening of our new arboretum, you can stay informed through our website, which will soon have information on all of the tree species found in the arboretum, as well as future opportunities to visit and learn in this unique environment.

Best Regards,

Alicia

Alicia R. Lamborn
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Baker County Extension Service

Don't Miss The Next Class in our Vegetable Gardening Series:

Pest Management in the Vegetable Garden

Monday, May 16th

6:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Baker County Extension Office



Dealing with pests in the vegetable garden is a gardener's toughest challenge!
Learn how to manage weeds, insects, diseases and nematodes in the vegetable garden to increase your harvest!



Call (904) 259-3520 to register by Thursday, May 12th.
The class is free but seating is limited.



Species Spotlight: 'Little Gem' Magnolia

When it comes to trees, the Southern Magnolia is considered a gem of the south. But these giants are often too big for landscapes. If you love magnolias, but are limited on space, consider planting a 'Little Gem' Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora* 'Little Gem').

The 'Little Gem' is a cultivar (man-made variety) of Southern Magnolia that grows slow and stays compact, reaching a height of only 30 to 35 feet with an 8 to 12 foot spread. Its upright growth habit is more typical of a multi-stemmed shrub than a single-trunked tree, and forms a dense, dark green oval or pyramidal shape, making it suited for screen or hedge planting.

The leathery, shiny leaves are shed as new foliage emerges in the spring. The large, slowly-decomposing leaves are sometimes considered to be messy or a nuisance to clean up, but can be raked and used as mulch. In late spring and sporadically throughout the summer, huge, 8-inch-diameter, fragrant, white blossoms open to perfume the entire garden. Fuzzy brown cones follow these blooms, ripening in fall and winter to reveal bright red seeds which are used by a variety of wildlife.

If moist, organic soils are available, these trees will thrive in full sun and hot conditions once established. If irrigation cannot be provided periodically, plants located in partial shade for several years after planting seem to grow better. This tree is very drought tolerant when grown in areas with plenty of soil for root expansion, but only moderately drought tolerant in restricted-soil areas or in areas with poor, dry soil. Southern Magnolia prefers acid soil but will tolerate a slightly basic, even wet or clay soil.



Whiteflies on Citrus

Whiteflies are common pests of citrus and are easy to identify if you know how to find them.

Adult whiteflies look like tiny white moths, and readily fly away from the plant when you shake the foliage. The immature whiteflies (called nymphs) are oval shaped and flat, and are somewhat transparent to whitish in color. Nymphs can be found hiding on the undersides of leaves on infested plants.



If you find that your citrus has a whitefly infestation, carefully examine whitefly nymphs for evidence of parasitism by a small wasp. If the wasp has found your tree, you should see whitefly nymphs that contain the larva or pupa of the wasp or an emergence hole may be visible on a nymph.

Magnified pictures of the adult whitefly (above) and nymphs (below).



Some whiteflies may also be attacked by naturally occurring fungi (shown below) that appears as orange spots.



If you find evidence of the wasp or the fungus, no chemical control is needed. Just keep an eye on your plant and let nature do the work!

If you aren't fortunate enough to have nature's help, consider an insecticidal soap or oil spray (such as neem oil) that is safe for people and the environment.



Fruit Tree Calendar: May



The following fruit trees require attention this month. All fertilizer recommendations are for optimum growth of fruit trees. It is important to remember that you always have the option of applying less fertilizer, but the amount of fertilizer should not exceed these recommendations.

Apples: Fruit ripens this month; begin harvesting in late May.

Blackberries (Year 1): Newly planted blackberries can be fertilized late this month using 1/4 pound of 10-10-10 with micronutrients per plant or up to 5 pounds per 100 foot of row.

Chestnuts (Year 1): Apply 1 pound of 10-10-10 fertilizer per tree.

Peaches/ Nectarines/Plums (Year 1): Fertilize late this month using 1/4 pound per tree of 12-4-8 fertilizer with micronutrients.

Peaches/ Nectarines/Plums (Year 2+): Fertilize this month using 1 to 1.5 pounds per tree of 12-4-8 fertilizer with micronutrients.

Pineapple Guava: Flowers appear in early May and have attractive thick, fleshy edible petals that are sweet and tasty. This plant doesn't require much fertilizer, and fertilizer should be low in nitrogen to maximize fruit production and avoid excessive vegetative growth.

↑ To access either of our Month to Month Calendars (*Fruits and Nuts* or *Lawns and Gardens*), visit our website and look under 'Gardening Information'. ↓

Lawns and Gardens Calendar

Mowing: Always mow at the correct height for your turf species to prevent stress and improve drought tolerance. St. Augustine: 3-4 inches, Centipede: 2 inches, Bahiagrass: 3-4 inches, Bermudagrass: 1-1.5 inches, Zoysia: 1-2 in.

Watering: Both lawns and landscapes only need 1/2 to 3/4 inch each time you irrigate. Set out catch cans (such as tuna cans) to monitor the amount of time it takes to apply this amount. Then adjust your irrigation timer or schedule as needed.

Planting: Replace declining winter annuals this month with new annuals and perennials that can take the heat and drought while providing a nice long display of color. Angelonia, Beach Sunflower, Blackberry Lily, Gaura, Pentas, Plumbago, Porterweed, Society Garlic, and Zinnias to name a few.

Black Sooty Mold: Avoid the black sooty mold on Crape Myrtles and other plants this year, by scouting regularly for aphids, whiteflies, mealybugs and scale. These insects can be found feeding on the undersides of leaves where they produce a substance called honeydew that drops to the leaves below. This honeydew is the perfect medium for sooty mold to grow and severe insect infestations can cause entire plants to turn black. Early detection and spot treatment (treating infected spots on the plant instead of the entire plant) with insecticidal soaps or horticultural oils, and continuing through the summer will prevent the sooty mold all together.

Roses: Prevent and manage black spot by irrigating with drip irrigation, which helps keep the foliage dry and less susceptible to fungal infection. Fungicidal sprays are also available to prevent the spread. However, choosing a low-maintenance rose that is resistant to black spot is a better management strategy than constantly spraying with fungicides. Other common pests of roses include aphids, spider mites, caterpillars, and thrips. Frequently monitoring will help you detect early infestations.

Baker County Extension Service

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Ask Alicia: Your Gardening Questions Answered

We all need answers from time to time...

If you have a question or problem in your garden, don't be afraid to ask. We are here to help!

Q: Something is attacking my magnolia, what is it and how can I get rid of it?

A: Your magnolia is being attacked by a scale insect, called tea scale. In Florida, tea scale is a pest of camellias and numerous species of holly. It is also considered a pest of tea, citrus, dogwood, bottlebrush, kumquat, mango, and olive here and elsewhere in the world.

The piercing mouthparts of this insect drain the plant of nutrients causing a yellow stippling of the leaf's upper surface. They are difficult to control because they primarily infest the under side of the leaf making spray coverage difficult, and because they are protected by a waxy covering.



Pruning is an effective way to control small infestations (such as the tip of a branch) if it will not affect the overall appearance of the plant. Pruning can also help to provide for better coverage of chemical sprays and increase air circulation. When applying chemical insecticides be sure to get thorough coverage of the leaf's under-side. Repeat applications (2-3) made between 7 to 10 days apart will be necessary to manage a tea scale infestation. The use of insecticidal soaps and oils (such as neem oil) are preferable to insecticides because they are usually less harmful to the natural predators of tea scale and are safe for people and the environment.

Even after you have sprayed, dead scales often remain on the plant. Don't confuse these with live scales and spray unnecessarily. Dead scales do not exude body fluids when squeezed between the thumb and forefinger, and can usually be scraped off easily with a fingernail.

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 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).