



Highlights in

*Horticulture*

Baker County

May 2013

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Dear Extension Friends,

Thanks to everyone who came out for the Spring Garden Festival here at the Extension Office! We appreciate your support and hope you'll continue to join us for future gardening classes and events. I would also like to thank all of our local plant vendors who participated this year, all of whom offered some great plants at great prices! If you missed out, then we hope to see you next year!

Best Regards,

*Alicia*

Alicia R. Lamborn  
Horticulture Extension Agent  
Baker County Extension Service

**Rain Barrel Workshop**

**Thursday, May 16th, 6:00 - 7:00 pm**  
*Baker County Arboretum & Teaching Garden*



Build a rain barrel and save the rain for watering garden and landscape plants.

We provide the materials and tools, and help you build!

\$40 per barrel is due by Friday, May 10th.

**Evening in the Arboretum:  
Attracting Wildlife**

**Thursday, May 30th, 6:00 - 7:30 pm**  
*Baker County Arboretum & Teaching Garden*

From bees and butterflies to birds, bats, and mammals, we'll teach you how to provide food & habitat for Florida's wildlife in your own backyard and door prizes will help get you started.

\$5 registration fee for materials is due by Friday, May 24th. Class will be held in the Arboretum behind the Extension Office; call (904) 259-3520 for more info.



# Carpenter Bees: Friend or Foe?

*Carpenter Bees get their name from their nesting habits: small carpenter bees excavate tunnels in stems of bushes, while large carpenter bees chew nesting galleries in solid wood or stumps, logs, or dead branches of trees. While most carpenter bees can be considered “friends” some large carpenter bees can become economic pests or “foes” if nesting takes place in structural timbers, fence posts, wooden furniture, or the like.*

## **Carpenter Bee or Bumble Bee?**

Carpenter bees generally resemble bumble bees in size and somewhat in color, being black, metallic bluish or greenish black, or purplish blue. Some males have yellowish areas on the face. Both males and females may have pale or yellowish pubescence (hair) on the thorax, legs, or abdomen, but these hairs are not as abundant or as intensely colored as in bumble bees. Large carpenter bees are readily distinguished from bumble bees primarily by the absence of pubescence (hair) on the abdomen, which is somewhat shiny.



Adult large carpenter bee.

## **Carpenter Bee Activity and Nesting**

Carpenter bees are active in Florida from November to January and from April to Summer. Female bees may choose to refurbish old nests, or start new ones, by chewing their way into wood, excavating a burrow about 15 mm in diameter, and using the tunnel to protect their brood. Often these bees go unnoticed until you enter a nesting area, but not to worry since they are more of an annoyance to humans rather than an actual threat. Females have the ability to sting, but rarely do. Males do not have the ability to sting, but may hover or dart at humans who venture into the nesting area. So in general, carpenter bees are not much of a problem.

## **Carpenter Bee Damage and Management**

Four types of damage can be done by carpenter bees: weakening of structural timbers, gallery excavation in wooden water tanks, defecation streaking on houses or painted structures, and human annoyance.

Carpenter bees rarely attack painted or varnished wood, so applying a finish to the wood may solve the problem. Most often, these bees cause problems on structures by boring into the surface of the wood that is the back face of the trim under the eaves, as this surface is usually not painted. A buzzing or drilling sound can be heard but if the hole is not visible, look for sawdust on the ground under the hole.



Entry hole drilled into structural wood by a large carpenter bee.

If problems do arise, use a small amount of insecticide that is labeled for bees and wasps. The labeled pesticide should be blown into the nesting holes. This is more safely done with aerosols than with the other formulations. After a few days, to allow the adult female to become exposed to the pesticide, the holes should be plugged with plastic wood, putty, or similar substance.

## Frizzle Top in Sago Palms

*Most females can relate to the term “frizzle top” as we are well familiar with bad hair days. But did you know that Sagos and other palms can also get frizzle top? Only theirs is a more serious condition!*

The term “frizzle top” refers to how Sago palms tend to look when they are experiencing symptoms of Manganese (Mn) deficiency. This is different from Magnesium (Mg) deficiency which exhibits symptoms in the lower palm leaves instead of the top. In the early stages of Mn deficiency, Sagos will appear light green or yellow and frizzled in the top portion of the canopy (shown right). But as the deficiency worsens, these symptoms progress down into the lower leaves while the top leaves turn brown and begin to die (shown below). Without treatment, the entire plant becomes stunted and eventually dies.



Of course, the best management for this nutrient deficiency is prevention, but once symptoms begin to develop, there are treatment options. Manganese sulfate fertilizer can be purchased from any garden center supply store, either in a granular or liquid formulation. Granular products should be applied to the soil by broadcasting, while liquid (spray) applications should be applied to the leaves (liquid applications are more helpful if roots are damaged). Severely affected plants may benefit from a combined treatment: foliar spray for immediate response and soil applications for long term treatment. Recurring symptoms are often an indication that the soil pH is high (meaning too alkaline or “sweet”), which affects uptake of certain nutrients, including Mn, by the plant. A simple soil pH test can confirm this and your local County Extension Agent can make recommendations for changing the soil pH.

## Did You Know? New FL Firewood Law in Effect



***A new Florida firewood law prevents locally produced or harvested firewood and unprocessed wood products from being moved or distributed more than 50 miles from the point of origin.***



In other words, any wood you collect cannot be moved more than 50 miles (50-mile radius, not 50 road miles) away from where it was collected.

The reason for this new law stems from the on-going problems that Florida has with invasive species. We currently have several non-native insects and diseases killing Florida trees, with more threatening to invade our state and wipe out tree populations.

Both live and dead wood can harbor these insects and diseases, and persons transporting firewood unknowingly spread them to new areas.

Protect the trees you love by only using local sources of firewood.

For more information, visit <http://www.freshfromflorida.com/pi/firewood/index.html>



20,000 ——— Oak trees killed by Sudden Oak Death  
20,000,000 ——— Ash trees killed by Emerald Ash Borer  
100,000,000 ——— Elm trees killed by Dutch Elm Disease

# Master Gardener Volunteer Training

Applications are due by July 1st for training during August and September.



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. Gardening knowledge and experience are not a requirement for acceptance into the program. We will teach you all about gardening, but most importantly, we will give you the training you need to assist the community that relies on our services.



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 July—August—September, 2013 (official schedule available mid-May).

The cost for training materials 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.

Baker County has a good group of Master Gardeners who find their work fulfilling in many ways. There is camaraderie among the group, working together while having fun! We hope you'll consider joining our family!



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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).