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New Master Gardener Class Forming

If you have an interest in gardening and serving your community, this class may be for you. Master Gardeners receive in-depth training in horticulture, and in exchange agree to give 75 hours of volunteer service helping your local county extension office.



Training will include topics such as basic plant science, entomology, plant pathology, nematology, vegetable gardening, fruit culture, woody ornamentals, lawn management, plant propagation, Florida-Friendly Landscaping™, and more. Classes are on Wednesdays from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm, starting on August 14. Most classes are at the Duval Extension Office except one held in Nassau County. You must live in Duval County to apply; if you live outside of Duval County, contact your county extension office. The cost to participate is \$150. If you are interested, email or call Sarah to request an application form at sfreeman@coj.net or 255-7450. The deadline to return your completed application is June 14.

Upcoming May/June Classes

Canning Classes: \$20 per person, pre-payment & pre-registration required. Call 255-7450 to register.

May & June Classes (*) = 9 am-1 pm, All other classes 9 am-Noon

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| Saturday, May 4, Dilly Beans | Saturday, May 18, Beef Stew & Bread* |
| Saturday, May 25, No Sugar/Splenda Products | Saturday, June 15, Sizzlin' Mustard/Cranberry Ketchup |
| Monday, June 17, Mango Chutney* | |

May 22, 6-8 pm, Landscape Design Basics plus 7 Tips for Edible Design at Highlands Library, 1826 Dunn Ave. Please call to pre-register.

May 28, 5:30-7:30 pm, Florida-Friendly Yards featuring Irrigation, 9 Principles, Design Tips and more. West Branch Library 1425 Chaffee Road South. Please call to pre-register.

June 14, 10 am-Noon, What to Do When It's Too Hot to Garden at the Superior Street Demonstration Garden, 1032 Superior Street. \$5 fee to attend. Please call to pre-register.

June 20, 10 am-Noon, Oust the Invaders & Bring on the Natives, Learn the Invasive plants invading your yard and natives that are a better choice. Duval Extension Office, 1010 N. McDuff Ave. \$5 fee to attend. Please call to pre-register.

June 25, 5:30-7:30 pm, Garden Mistakes Others Make...Not You. Check your yard and your vegetable garden. West Branch Library, 1425 Chaffee Road South. Please call to pre-register.



Things to do in May/June by Terry DeValle

Flowers

- **Prune back** tall growing perennials to control height. This also helps to remove aphids on plants; plants like gaura, salvia and others will flush back out and rebloom.
 - **Cut back** petunias and snapdragons, and follow with a fertilizer application to encourage new growth and another bloom flush.
 - **Prune** growing tips of poinsettias lightly to encourage a denser plant. Fertilize frequently with a liquid balanced fertilizer.



Prune back plants like salvias and other perennials to control height and encourage more flowers

Fruits and Nuts

- **Harvest blueberries** in May and June. Visit some of the U-pick growers if you are not growing your own. Refer to <http://www.pickyourown.org/FLnorth.htm> to find local growers.
- **Harvest peaches, nectarines, plums and strawberries** as soon as they are ready, to beat the birds and other critters from eating them.
- **Fertilize citrus** with a citrus fertilizer and provide water during dry weather to prevent fruit from splitting once the rains return. Using a citrus fertilizer will ensure that the plants are getting the right micronutrients.

Lawns

- **Plant/plug lawns now** to fill in cold damaged areas. Go to <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/lh013> for info. Do not plant new sod on top of old sod. This is a bad practice that will lead to disease problems.
- **Calibrate your sprinkler system** to water between 1/2" and 3/4" each time you water. Follow guidelines: odd # addresses on Wednesday & Saturday; even # addresses on Thursday & Sunday. No watering from 10 am to 4 pm. Water when the grass blades fold or when footprints linger after walking on the grass. Avoid mowing with heavy riding mowers when the lawn is drought-stressed.
- **Stay ahead of the weeds** by hand pulling or spot treating as needed. For information on weed control, go to <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep141>.
- **Check brown spots in lawns** for irrigation problems or chinch bugs. Chinch bugs are already ac-

tive and will show up in hot dry spots. Refer to <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/lh036> for more info.

Trees & Shrubs

- **Prune and fertilize** spring flowering trees and shrubs after bloom, if needed.
- **Scout plants frequently for pest problems.** Check plants for aphids, thrips, scale, lace bugs and spider mites. Lace bugs, thrips, and spider mites are problems during hot, dry weather. Now is a good time to treat for scale as crawlers emerge to feed on new plant growth. Because of the mild winter, pest problems will likely be worse.
- **Fertilize palms with a palm fertilizer** that has an 8N-2P-12K +4Mg with micronutrients. 100% of the N, K and Mg should be in a water-insoluble form. Broadcast one pound of fertilizer per 100 square feet of canopy area.
- **Control lubber grasshoppers** when they are young as they congregate on plants. They can be handpicked and dropped into soapy water or rubbing alcohol. Several different pesticides are effective during the early nymph stages but once they reach older nymph stages and adulthood, physical control may be the only solution. Stomping or cutting them in half with clippers are also options and are components of Integrated Pest Management (IPM).



Drop or knock young lubber grasshoppers into a bucket of soapy water or rubbing alcohol

Vegetable Garden

- **Use low volume irrigation** like soaker hoses to supply water during fruit production. This helps to conserve water and reduce disease problems.
- **Scout vegetables for insects frequently**—especially aphids and caterpillars.
- **Harvest onions** as tops fall over. Lift from the ground and place in a shady, cool, dry location. Once dry, remove roots and clip tops back to 1 1/2 inches above the bulb. Store in a cool, dry location. If onions flower, they can be eaten, but not cured for storage.



Keep water off the leaves of vegetable plants by either hand watering or install low volume irrigation

What to Plant in May/June by Terry DeValle

Replace cool season plants with others that can take the heat. Annuals for May include blue daze, calliopsis, celosia, coleus, crossandra, exacum, gaillardia, gazania, hollyhock, impatiens, kalanchoe, marigold, milkweed, nicotiana, ornamental pepper, pentas, portulaca, rudbeckia, salvia,



Blanket flower, *Gaillardia*, is a great annual flower to attract wildlife plus it adds color. In mild winters it acts as a perennial; in cold winters it reseeds.

thunbergia, tithonia (Mexican sunflower), torenia, verbena, vinca (periwinkle) and zinnia. **Plant the underlined plants before June.** To keep annuals blooming, fertilize monthly with a standard fertilizer containing nitrogen and potassium, but low phosphorous (middle number), or use a slow release fertilizer that will last all summer into fall. Many flowers benefit from removing spent blooms, especially if they are forming seeds.

Coleus is an excellent selection for hot weather and will provide color from now till the first frost. Try using those with variegated leaves and plant them with flowers that will enhance the color or other coleus with solid colored leaves.

For adding easy color, don't forget perennials. Salvias, coneflowers, bulbine, stokesia, gaura, porterweed, plumbago, firecracker plant, firebush,

firespike, penta, verbena, lantana and many others are great at providing color that require less maintenance than many annuals.

Bulb-type plants for May include achimenes, allium, alstroemeria, Aztec lily, begonia, blood lily, caladium, daylily, gladiolus, kaffir lily, moraea (African lily), spider lily, tiger flower, walking iris, and watsonia. **Plant those that are underlined before June**, and for June add butterfly lily to the list.

Vegetables to plant include lima beans, eggplant, mustards (**May only**), okra, peanuts, southern peas, and sweet potatoes. Harvest frequently to keep plants producing and be ready to pull plants out when they look bad. Side-dress vegetables with a 6-6-6 or 10-10-10 to keep them productive by placing fertilizer in a band 1" deep and 6"-8" away from plants.

Cool season vegetables like lettuce and spinach will flower with the hot weather, even those that are reported to be 'heat resistant.' Go to <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/VH021> for more information.



Penta and salvia make a great combo at providing color during hot summer months.



Eggplants continue to fruit during hot summer months. This one is 'Round Mauve,' an open pollinated variety, with tender, white flesh.

Indian Pink Is a Showy Native Wildflower by Terry DeValle



Indian pink, *Spigelia marilandica*, is a Florida native wildflower that grows well in our area. Although it is more common in the Panhandle area, it adapts well to other areas in north Florida. Its native habitat is as an

understory plant under deciduous hardwood trees.

This long-lasting perennial plant reaches one to three feet tall and has an upright growth habit. It grows best in light shade and likes average to moist, rich, well-

drained soil. After a winter dormant period, this lovely plant has re-emerged and is displaying its striking flowers. Bright red petals are fused at the base to form tubular flowers. When they flare out, the interior of the flower displays five vibrant yellow tips. One of the benefits is that the flowers are pollinated by hummingbirds and a host of insects. Plants have a fairly long bloom period from late April into July. Some gardeners indicate flowering may continue into the fall.

Propagation is by seed or division. To collect seed, look for the fruit, which is a 3/8" capsule that contains blackish-brown seeds. Plants are available at nurseries that grow/sell native plants. Please don't dig plants from the wild.

Jacksonville's Treaty Oak

by Larry Figart, Urban Forestry Extension Agent

One of Jacksonville's oldest landmarks is the **Treaty Oak**. It didn't always have that name. Years ago it was called "**The Great Oak**." In the 1930's the tree was threatened by development. In order to save the



View from under the canopy of the Treaty Oak

tree, Times Union reporter Pat Moran wrote that a treaty between native Indians and white settlers was signed under the tree and its name was changed to "**Treaty Oak**." The story must have worked because the tree still stands.

There used to be five large oaks in Jacksonville. They were the **Timucuan Oak** at NAS-Jax, the **Episcopal Oak** on

the campus of Episcopal High School, the **Bartram Oak**, on the campus of the Bartram School, and the **Cummer Oak** at the Cummer Art Gallery. Only the Cummer Oak and the Treaty Oak remain.



The Great Oak at Dixieland Park
Photo : Florida State Archives

The Treaty oak is located on a 7 acre city park off Prudential Drive between Main Street and Flagler Street. In the early 1900's the land surrounding the tree was known as the Dixieland

Amusement Park. It was quite the attraction with slides, ostrich races, electric fountains, a band shell, and theater productions.

The property was donated to the City of Jacksonville in 1964 by Jessie Ball Dupont with the stipulation that the park remain a public park for the use and enjoyment of the general public.

The Treaty Oak is not the largest live oak in the state. That distinction belongs to the "Ceylon Oak" in Alachua County. At its last measurement, the Treaty Oak stood 70' tall, with a diameter of 8 feet and a crown spread of 147 feet.

In 1994 the City of Jacksonville built a boardwalk underneath the canopy of the Treaty Oak. The landscape architect in charge of the project, James Turner, designed the boardwalk with the sole purpose of improving access without disturbing the tree. The footers are supported by piers that were set in the ground using water pressure. If a root was encountered, the footer was moved to not disturb the root.

Spend any time at the tree you will discover that it is impacting a diverse group of people. In the mornings hundreds of commuters walking from a nearby parking lot walk along side of the tree. Families spend the day exploring the tree under the shade of its branches. Visit the tree on a weekend and you may be able to see a movie in the park. Also, you will find it is a popular spot for outdoor weddings.

There have been many estimates as to the age of the tree ranging from 200 to 800 years. In his research of the site and the tree, James Turner found that up until about 275 years ago the ground where the Treaty Oak now stands was river marsh. This puts the age of the tree to be around 250 years. With continued care and attention, the tree should make it another 250 years.



Image taken from the boardwalk entering the tree canopy

Lawn Mowing Tips by Terry DeValle

Good mowing practices are an important key to a healthy lawn and are often overlooked. Improper mowing can lead to thatch buildup and an increase in disease, insect, and weed problems.

Avoid mowing the lawn too short; another term is scalping. Mowing height differs by grass type and variety. See table below for mowing heights and suggested frequency of mowing. Lawns that are mowed at the proper height develop a stronger root system and help shade out unwanted weeds. Another way to avoid scalping is to change the mowing direction each time you cut the lawn.

Turfgrass	Mowing Height	Mowing Frequency
Bahiagrass	3.0-4.0"	7-17 days
Bermudagrass	0.5-1.5"	3-5 days
Carpetgrass	1.5-2.0"	10-14 days
Centipedegrass	1.5-2.0"	10-14 days
St. Augustine dwf.	2.0-2.5" *	5-14 days
St. Augustine std.	3.5-4.0"	5-14 days
Zoysiagrass	1.0-3.0	10-14 days

*Dwarf varieties of St Augustinegrass (Seville, Sapphire, Jade, Captiva and Delmar) are the only ones that should be cut below 3".

Never remove more than one third of the grass height when mowing. Removing too much at one cutting will stress the lawn and contribute to thatch problems. For example, if you are maintaining St. Augustinegrass at 3.5 inches, it should be cut when the grass reaches about 4.5 inches.

Keep lawn mower blades sharp. Grass blades are wounded when cut and heal quicker from a clean cut versus a jagged cut. Lawns cut with a dull mower develop a brown appearance because the grass blade is actually torn, not cut.

Aim grass clippings back onto the lawn and away from streets, storm drains, or bodies of water. Either blow grass clippings back onto

the lawn with a blower or sweep/vacuum to remove them from streets, sidewalks, or driveways. If mowing near a water body, bag the grass clippings within a 6' area bordering the water to reduce nitrogen content in our water bodies. Also, keep grass clippings away from storm drains to prevent clogging.



Avoid mowing the lawn when it is under severe drought stress.

Lawns go into dormancy during droughts, become brittle, and are more prone to bruising, especially from the weight of heavy mowers. To prevent this from happening, mow the grass after a rainfall or after your irrigation day. Photo is damage from commercial mower caused by mowing when lawn is drought stressed (photo credit: Erin Harlow).



Never mow the lawn with a rotary mower when it is wet. Clippings from wet grass will clog the lawn-mower causing an uneven cut and will clump more, potentially creating a thatch problem. Let the clippings fall back on the lawn instead of bagging them. As long as the grass is cut at the proper height, this will not create a thatch problem but provides a slow release fertilizer to the lawn. If the grass accumulates in clumps, use a leaf rake or blower to disperse.

Don't use a quick release nitrogen fertilizer in May through August. Instead, apply either a slow release nitrogen or Iron (Fe). For foliar application use ferrous sulfate (2oz/3-5 gal water/1000sq ft). If applying Fe to an acidic soil, use 1 lb of iron sulfate per 1000 sq ft. If soil is 7.0 or above (calcareous), use the container label recommended rate of an iron chelate. Source: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/lh014>

Avoid overwatering. Lots of water will also cause excessive growth. We have no control over rainfall, but we do over irrigation. If the lawn is receiving adequate water from rainfall, turn the irrigation system off. Signs of a thirsty lawn are grass blades that fold (see photo), color that changes from green to bluish gray, and footprints or tire-tracks that remain in the lawn (doesn't bounce back). When you choose to irrigate, apply between ½" to ¾" to encourage a deep root system that is more drought and cold tolerant.



Scout lawn for problems as you mow your lawn.

If it makes you feel any better while mowing the grass this summer, you're burning calories! A 155-pound person burns 387 calories per hour operating a power mower. By the way, riding mowers do not count as exercise.

Urban Garden Program Updates

By Beth Marlowe



Hi! Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Beth Marlowe, and I am the new Urban Garden Coordinator at the Duval County Extension Service. I am excited to take on this position following the retirement of Mary Puckett. In this role I'll be working to

maintain our wonderful established programs and gardens, and looking for new opportunities to assist those interested in growing vegetables and herbs.

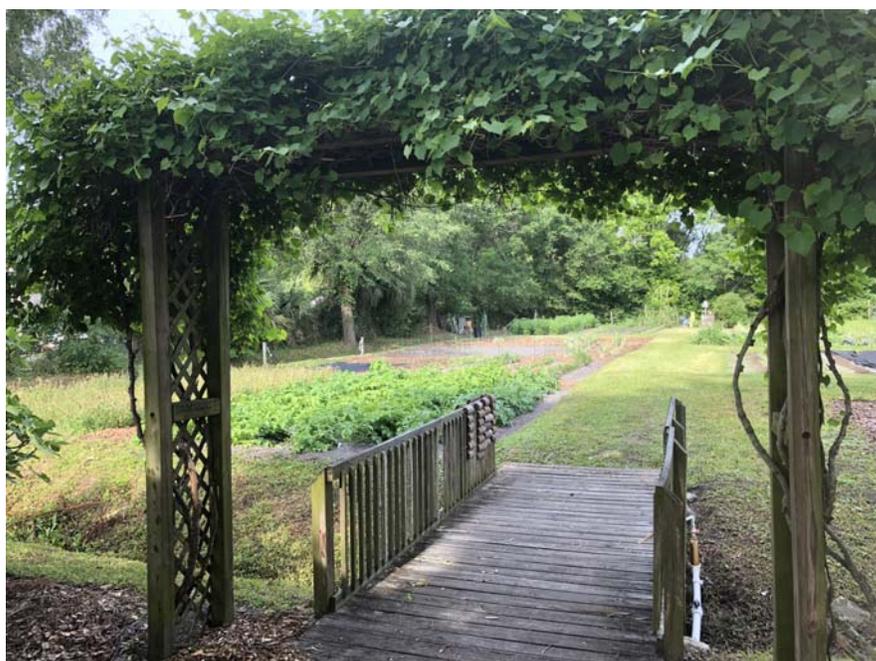
Are you familiar with Duval County's Urban Garden Program? It was created in 1978 to teach families and youth how to economically grow their own healthy food and enjoy eating it. Ever since, we have been teaching workshops to adults and children, offering programs at libraries, and maintaining several demonstration gardens around town. In all these ways we bring the latest research, growing information, techniques and cultivars from the University of Florida to you, and help you learn how to apply it.

With the energetic and knowledgeable assistance of many Master Gardener Volunteers, we work all over Jacksonville with individuals, groups and schools that are interested in starting community or school gardens. We can conduct a site visit with you and help you think through all the costs, steps and planning required to get a vegetable garden up and growing, and how to keep it that way. We can help your established community or school gardens solve problems, or provide educational programs and technical assistance.

The UF/IFAS Urban Garden Program manages a community garden on Superior Street where plots are available to all Duval County residents on a

first-come, first-served basis for a small annual fee. Gardeners sign an agreement to maintain their plots, and they receive educational assistance as needed to grow their own vegetables.

Our demonstration gardens are maintained by Master Gardener Volunteers and provide all Duval County residents the opportunity to see gardening principles put into practice, and to get hands-on experience implementing them. At the Superior



View of in-ground demonstration plots and Superior Street community garden. Photo: B. Marlowe.

Street Demonstration Garden, we show in-ground plots, several types of raised beds, different kinds of containers and even hydroponic growing systems. We teach everything from starting plants from seed to constructing beds and irrigation systems and maintaining your gardening tools.

At a recent Open House at the Superior Street Demonstration Garden, participants had the opportunity to see this working garden in action. They saw how we are transitioning from cool season crops to those that can take our summer heat; the many types of beds and containers that can be used to grow herbs and vegetables; and how we

Urban Gardening Program Updates

Continued from page 6

incorporate edible flowers and herbs that attract pollinators and beneficial insects into our vegetable gardens.

After touring the garden, participants had the opportunity to start seeds and learn how to use a sub-irrigation planter.

If you are interested in learning more about vegetable and herb growing or participating in our

programs, please visit our [web site](#), our [Facebook page](#), or contact me at: bmarlowe@coj.net, or (904) 255-7450. If you have ideas about how we can better serve home gardeners, or programs you'd like to see, please let me know.

Even though some things have changed since our beginnings, our commitment to our core mission of teaching Jacksonville residents how to plant, maintain and harvest vegetables and herbs remains the same.



Pictured left to right: Volunteer Master Gardener Marie Ramos leads a group of visitors on a garden tour. (Middle) Visitors observe varieties of herbs and vegetables in a landscape bed and planters. Program Assistant Vic Groner demonstrates use of a sub-irrigation planter.

Pineapple Guava by Terry DeValle



This evergreen shrub just blends into the background except when it comes into bloom or bears fruit. Then the interest arises. Previously named *Feijoa*

sellowiana, the new name change is *Acca sellowiana*. Even without the flowers or fruit, it is an attractive shrub in its own right. Leaves are a fuzzy grey underneath and upper surface has a bluish cast.

Plants can be used in a multitude of ways. They make an excellent dense evergreen hedge and can be shaped or allowed to grow naturally. Another option is to use it as a patio tree. It requires less maintenance than the popular ligustrum that is

frequently seen in area landscapes. Mature size is 10 to 15 feet tall with a matching width, and the plant shape is round to oval. Plant in full sun to partial shade. Once established, pineapple guava is very drought tolerant and will also withstand salt spray.

Flowers are striking with white to soft pink petals and burgundy stamens. The petals are actually edible and have a sweet taste. Petals can be used in salads, to adorn a plate, or in other dishes. Plants begin flowering in April and continue into May.

In August and September, check plants for oval shaped guava-like fruit. When ripe they turn a reddish color and will quickly fall to the ground. Eat the fruit fresh by cutting in half and scooping out the flesh or make into a jelly.

If grown as a tall hedge or patio tree, it is a good example of a FL-friendly plant.

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Follow us on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/DuvalCountyAgriculture>

Let us help you with your landscape and gardening questions!
Call to speak with a Master Gardener at (904) 255-7450
Monday - Friday
9-noon & 12:30-3:30 pm



Services include...

Soil pH testing for Duval County residents,
UF/IFAS publications on a variety of gardening topics,
troubleshooting insect and disease problems,
plant/weed identification

Links for more information...

<http://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Tips to Avoid Termites by Terry DeValle



Termite alate (Swarmer)

It's termite season, so it's important to know the signs and how to avoid putting out the welcome mat. The two types that are more of a problem are drywood (5% of problems) and subterranean (95%) termites.

Drywood termites infest sound or non-decayed wood in older homes. Signs of infestation are fecal pellets (6-sided), swarmers (May to Nov) and damage to wood. Prevention is the key. Seal points of entry, use pressure treated wood, and use borate and silica gel for wood treatments.

Subterranean termites feed on wood and other material that have cellulose. Most nests are below ground, but they can live above ground if there is adequate moisture and temperatures are moderate.

Formosan is a type of subterranean termite that produces much larger colonies than the Eastern Subterranean termite.

The key to prevention is to avoid feeding/attracting them. Here are a few tips:

- ⇒ Inspect wood items before purchasing.
- ⇒ Remove wood or cellulose material in direct contact with bare ground.
- ⇒ Don't store wood items on the ground.
- ⇒ Remove dead trees & stumps including roots.
- ⇒ Remove all wooden grade stakes, form boards, construction debris, etc.
- ⇒ Direct water away from the home using gutters; keep sprinklers from wetting the walls of your home; fix leaky faucets and water lines.
- ⇒ Turn off exterior lights during Formosan swarming season (May to July) at dusk on warm calm nights. They swarm in the evening and are attracted to light. Use yellow bug lights for porch lights.

For more info, go to:

https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_termites

Once you have read this newsletter, turn "A New Leaf" and pass this information on to a friend.

Terry B. DeValle
Environmental Horticulture Program Specialist

For individuals requiring special accommodations, please contact our office (904) 255-7450 within a minimum of 5 working days of the program. For persons with hearing or speech impairments, when contacting our office please use the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).

Extension programs are open to all, regardless of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, religion, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no endorsement by the Extension Office is implied.

This newsletter is jointly sponsored by the University of Florida/IFAS Extension, Dr. Nick Place, Dean, City of Jacksonville, Lenny Curry, Mayor, and the UF/IFAS Extension Duval County, Mike Sweat, Director.