

UF/IFAS EXTENSION & ST. JOHNS COUNTY

WORKING TOGETHER

October, November, December 2020

The St. Johns County Board of Commissioners and UF/IFAS Extension work in a cooperative effort to provide relevant programming to citizens throughout the County. Covid-19 shuttered many businesses around the world beginning in April 2020; however, our facility remained open with limited public interaction. Although our extension delivery shifted from in-person to mostly online programming, Agents adjusted and served our clientele needs during this unusual time. During the fourth quarter of 2020, Extension Agents and Staff recorded approximately **3,301 contacts** with clientele that included emails, phone calls, office visits and field calls. Agents conducted **40 on-site visits** (Agriculture, Horticulture, Schools, Livestock, and Forages) to assist residents one-on-one in St. Johns County. Below are a few examples of impacts reported by our Agents during this quarter.



- Although 99% of artichokes consumed in the US are grown in the western USA, our Commercial Ag Agent provided a presentation to the Florida State Horticulture Society titled “**Globe Artichoke Variety Trials** Using Controlled-Release Fertilizer in Northeast Florida.” By evaluating varieties, she has not only been able to demonstrate that **artichokes can be grown in NE Florida**, which varieties work best for our environment, and the effect of controlled-released fertilizers.
- With excitement, our Family Nutrition Program was able to re-engage 454 youth on topics such as **nutrition and food safety**. We were also able to provide support and materials for teachers for our **school garden projects**.
- Two-hundred 3rd grade youth and their teachers from Julington Creek Elementary gained knowledge related to **the UF/IFAS 4-H Embryology** program by participating in an online introductory class provided by our 4-H Department. **Thirty-four chicks were hatched in their classrooms** where youth were able to see each stage of embryo development. Once hatched, they chicks were donated to a member of the Putnam-St. Johns County Farm Bureau where they will be used as laying hens.
- Our Commercial and Production Agriculture Agents **provided pesticide education** to interested clientele in St. Johns County. Participants were able to gain continuing education credits needed to maintain their restricted-use pesticide license or use these classes to prepare to take their pesticide exams.
- The Commercial Ag Agent and St. Johns County Extension Staff proctored **17 pesticide exams** on the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month. By taking these exams, participants who pass can apply for a pesticide license through the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
- Our **St. Johns County Horticulture Agent partnered with a St. Johns County Librarian** to provide monthly “**Edible Gardening in St. Johns County**” interviews to educate county residents on **how to grow vegetables, herbs, and fruit trees**. Topics included cool season crops, alternative fruit selection and frost protection.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2hsq8-GCg4>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INcvUmy4o2c&t=144s>



- The UF/IFAS Extension, St. Johns County Horticulture and 4-H departments partnered to create a **Thanksgiving Greenery Contest for 4-H Youth**. Agents created a video to educate about native plants and demonstrated techniques for creating a centerpiece from native plants. <https://youtu.be/vCYB1xuU8C8>
- The St. Johns County Ag Agents (Christian, Prissy & Tim) assisted the Putnam-St. Johns Farm Bureau Board members with a tour of the HAEC facility and local farms for the **Young Farmers and Ranchers committee from Colorado** on December 1st. Participants were able to **see and learn how commercial row-crop farms operate in NE Florida**.
- Our Production Agriculture Agent along with UF/IFAS Extension Agents from Putnam, Flagler and Lake Counties conducted two **“Living on a Few Acres”** virtual workshops on **Cool-season Forages** and **Toxic Weeds in Pastures**. Participants gained basic knowledge related to these topics and were able to interact with speakers using virtual technology. <https://youtu.be/IOigqVcpBDY>
<https://youtu.be/hPhblr4Bz8U>
- The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners provided a proclamation that October 4 – 10, 2020 be identified and celebrated as **National 4-H Week**. Our County along with hundreds of thousands of 4-H members and alumni throughout the United States celebrate this week to honor the commitments made through 4-H.
- Our Commercial Ag Agent conducted two demonstrations trials, funded by SJC BOCC, that incorporated two new alternative crops to the HAEC Cowpen Farm rotation: green beans and pumpkins. Over **1,000 lbs of pumpkins were donated to farmers for their agritourism efforts**. **Beans were gleaned by a non-profit group which supported hungry families in need**.
- Nine (9) participants graduated from the **2020 Master Gardener Volunteer Training program**, which provided over **50 hours of education and hands-on training**. **Participants will donate 75 hours of volunteer service** during their first year as MGVs to educational gardening programs and projects throughout the county.
- **Two Cool-Season demonstration** projects were installed to evaluate plant varieties and planting methods. Growers who manage livestock can use this data to make management decisions.
- One **on-farm strawberry demonstration** was established at a local potato farm in November to determine if this crop could be part of a bean-potato-berry rotation for the TCAA. Agents work with our growers to identify alternative crops that can be successfully grown in our region.
- The UF/IFAS Extension, St. Johns County Extension Office is pleased to announce that **Allie Anderson** joined our team on December 14, 2020 as a member of our **4-H Youth Development Department**. Her program areas will include **plant and animal sciences** as well as many other areas related to her department.

For more information, visit the UF/IFAS Extension St. Johns County Website at <http://stjohns.ifas.ufl.edu> or contact us at **904-209-0430**.