

UF/IFAS EXTENSION & ST. JOHNS COUNTY

WORKING TOGETHER

October, November, December 2017

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. During the fourth quarter of 2017, Extension Agents and Staff recorded approximately **13,298 contacts** with clientele that included emails, phone calls, office visits and field calls. Agents conducted **37 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.



- Twelve St. Johns County 4-H'ers and their parents participated in the **St. Johns County 4-H Fall Round-Up** at the Welaka State Forest Facility on Friday, November 17th – Sunday, November 19th. At this event youth gained horse knowledge, riding skills and confidence with their horse while bonding with fellow 4-H members. The major emphasis was on horsemanship, their chosen discipline, and showmanship. Additional instruction was given on topics such as Horse Health, Hippology and Horse Judging.
- Approximately 3,000 participants attended the **2017 Datil Pepper Fall Festival**. This year's event included 8 restaurants competing for a Professional and People's Choice Awards, led by our Family and Consumer Science Agent, by serving an appetizer and an entrée that included datil peppers.
- **Three demonstration projects** were initiated and/or planted by our Production Agriculture Agent to provide livestock clientele the opportunity to evaluate various varieties of cool-season forages. Geographically, one was located in the Northwest, one in the Central and one in the Southwest portions of the County.
- The **Annual Cole Crops Field** held at the Hastings Agricultural Extension Center was co-led by our Commercial Agriculture Agent. More than 50 participants gained knowledge on how to control the Diamondback Moth.
- During the 2017 Datil Pepper Fall Festival, UF/IFAS St. Johns County Extension Horticulture Department sold 622 Florida Friendly Landscaping plants to 245 customers; 207 of these customers were provided educational information on **Florida Friendly Landscaping**. Additionally, 20 individuals were educated about rain barrels and compost tumblers; 38 were provided diagnostic assistance at the Master Gardener Plant Clinic; 74 were educated about gardening with datil peppers; and 20 were provided tours of the extension gardens.
- As a result of **microplastics education** programs taught by our Sea Grant Agent to students in Flagler County, three school districts in Florida (Flagler, Nassau, Indian River) have replaced cafeteria foam food trays with trays made from recycled paper. Another 28 districts (including St. Johns County) are considering making this change, which will prevent millions of non-degradable foam trays from entering local landfills each year.
- After attending the **International Summit on Dickeya** (an issue affecting potatoes) in Maine, our Commercial Agriculture Agent updated growers at a Lunch and Learn on Growing Better Potatoes Workshop. Because our Agent attended this specialized training, she is better prepared to assist commercial potato growers in the Tri-County Agricultural Area.



- The Production Agriculture Agent and the St. Johns County Parks Naturalist formed a team of scientists from the Florida Wildlife Commission, the Florida Natural Areas Inventory, the UF/IFAS Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants and the Guana Tolomato Mantanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve to evaluate control practices of **Kalanchoe**, an invasive succulent plant that is found in large populations along the coastal dunes of St. Johns County.
- Three hundred and twenty-four participants at the Datil Pepper Fall Festival participated in a **food safety** educational event, led by our Family and Consumer Science Agent, that included quiz on proper steps to handwashing, food storage times and temperature. **Eighty-one percent** (264 participants) increased knowledge of proper handwashing procedures and 86 % (278 participants) increased knowledge of proper time temperature settings of perishable food.
- UF/IFAS St. Johns County Extension **Horticulture Department** (Extension Agent, Program Assistant and Master Gardeners) provided consultations via site visits, office visits, plant clinics, e-mail and phone calls to over 350 individuals. Consultations provided education and diagnostics on Florida Friendly Landscaping; turf, palm, citrus, vegetable and ornamental plant diseases; soil pH test results; plant identification and other horticulture-related topics. Agent and program assistant provided programs to 136 individuals.
- Nineteen adults who participated in our Sea Grant Agent's "Exploring our Environment--Facing the Future" adult day camp learned ways they can **mitigate against climate change** by conserving energy and water. They all expressed that they would be making changes in their behaviors to reduce the amount of plastic waste that they generate.
- Thirty-nine participants took part in the "**Raising Cane in Hastings**" 4-H project, led by our 4-H Youth Development Agent. This project covered knowledge on Florida's sugarcane industry and the planting process. Youth were provided hands-on learning experiences related to harvesting,

stripping, cutting and planting sugarcane. A total of 10 rows of sugarcane were planted by youth and staff from the Hastings Agricultural Extension Center, of which, 3 were syrup cane, 6 chewing cane and one row of wild cane. A follow-up meeting will take place in the Fall when the new cane will be harvested.

- Our Commercial Agricultural Agent provided educational material related to Florida citrus and represented UF/IFAS Extension the St. Johns County Extension office by attending the Annual **Sunbelt Ag Expo** in Moultrie, GA.
- In the spirit of the holiday season and to encourage youth to use their creativity, engineering, problem solving and team building skills, the St. Johns County 4-H Program hosted a **gingerbread house challenge**. Thirty-five youth entered 17 houses in the contest. Entries included 10 individuals, two 4-H Club entries and five team entries. The Marie Ecology 4-H Club entry of the St. Augustine Lighthouse, received the People's Choice Award.
- St. Johns County Extension Arboretum is a display site for All-American Selections (AAS), a non-profit organization that conducts independent testing of flower and edible varieties in North America that are judged for garden superiority by horticulture professionals. We were awarded the 2017 Honorable Mention "**Best at Overcoming Obstacles**" award by AAS, in recognition of Innovative Landscape Designs Featuring All-American Selection Winners. This recognition, which stems nationwide as well as Canada, is a testament to the dedication to the gardens of our Master Gardener team.
- The UF/IFAS Extension St. Johns County Family and Consumer Science Agent taught **exercise programs** from the National Institutes of Health Everyday Guide to Exercise and Physical Activity workbook were taught at five workshops (n=59). Participants gained knowledge on setting goals, weekly exercise and physical activity plans and monthly progress tests.

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**.