

# The Dirt

# Weed All About It!



## Contents

Title	Page
A Note from Lisa .....	1
National Volunteer Week.....	2
Florida Friendly Landscape™.....	3
Marine Agent.....	4
What to Plant .....	5
Upcoming Events.....	5
What's This? Answer.....	6

Make sure to “Like” us on UFIFAS Taylor County Facebook  
<https://www.facebook.com/TaylorCountyExtension/>

## What's This???



Editorial Team: Amanda Beckett, Leigh Ann Grubbs and Lisa Strange

## A Note from Lisa

Ag & Natural Resource Agent



## Happy Birthday Master Gardener Volunteer Program

It all started in 1972 when an Extension Agent, Dr. David Gibby, at Washington State University needed help with his repeated seasonal questions about horticulture. He trained a few folks to assist him answering phones and manning a desk for walk-in’s. This ‘relief’ was working so well, it gave him the idea to train and certify volunteers as ‘Master Gardeners’. The Florida Master Gardener Program started in 1979. According to The Florida Sector’s data the economic value of a trained volunteer for extension programs is \$28.54 per hour. Trained volunteers are contributing their time, life skills, talents, and expertise under the guidance of faculty. In Taylor County, Master Gardeners’ recorded over 2070 hours in 2022, which was equivalent to \$59,078. Florida’s Master Gardener Volunteer Program cited a membership of over 3,200 volunteers donating over 305,000 hours of volunteer service to local communities around the state. At the value of \$28.54/hour, that’s over \$8.70 million dollars of volunteer time was donated in Florida in 2022 alone! For more national information visit the Extension’s website at <https://mastergardener.extension.org/impacts/>



## Happy Birthday Master Gardener Program (cont.)

The Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Program is a volunteer-driven program that benefits UF/IFAS Extension and the residents of Florida. With Gardening being America's most popular pastime, it's easy for dedicated volunteers who have the interest to give back to their communities in ways such as:

- answering horticultural questions over the phone, in person, or through a newspaper article
- community and school garden projects
- giving educational programs to the public and plant sales
- supporting youth activities
- performing soil sample evaluations
- certifying Florida-Friendly yards through the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Program

The educational outreach efforts focus on protecting and sustaining natural resources and environmental systems and improving the quality of human life through the knowledge in agricultural, human and natural resources, and making that knowledge accessible to everyone. All the while we make new friends and bonds with folks that have similar interests. If you have any questions or are interested in joining the Master Gardener Program please contact us at (850) 838-3508, also visit our website <https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/taylor/>

## National Volunteer Week - April 17-22nd by Lisa Strange

Studies have shown that people who volunteer are happier, healthier and live longer. April 17 – 22nd is National Volunteer Week . To commemorate, the Taylor County Volunteers were presented with awards and a dinner on April 13th at the Forest Capital Hall. Identifying



Master Gardener Volunteers left to right standing in the back: William Johnson, David McMullen, Judy McMullen, Jaya Milam, Carrell Robinson, John Wester, Clay Olson, Leigh Ann Grubbs, Vicki Shaver, Lee Breaux, Amanda Beckett ,CJ. Beaty, Taylor Brown; front row: Shelley Hoschar, Susie Summerlin, Laurie Stiles, Sandi Hathcock,

Martha Frostick, Chris Cooksey, Margaret Cooksey, Tom Breaux, Barbara Bratcher and Marine Sea Grant volunteers ; Capt. Crystal Pesek, Capt. Frank Taylor Jr., and Deputy Thomas Gunter.

“We want to let you know just how much your dedication is appreciated and to make sure that you know we here at the Extension Service are forever grateful to each of you. Whether you are a long-time volunteer or this is your first year, and regardless of how many hours you choose to give, it is important for you to know that what you do makes a difference.

Please know that your volunteerism is recognized, appreciated, valued and cherished. We thank you and look forward to continuing to work with you in the future”, stated Lori Wiggins Taylor County Extension Director. Thank you for all you do.

# Harvesting Rain Water by Lisa Strange

Several years ago, Aunt Winnie and I hiked up a steep hillside on Parrott Mountain in Virginia to find my great grandmother, Granny King's, old home place. The small one-bedroom structure with no indoor plumbing had totally caved in, but the cistern was still intact. There was no means of pumping water at 1,900 feet elevation in hard rock, so cisterns were the source of water for residents on that mountain, back in the day! Historically, cisterns were used for both potable and non-potable uses. Many homes have working cisterns that are used as backup systems for non-potable use only.



In newly constructed communities, incorporating cisterns, watertight storage tanks, or rain barrels are “high score points“ if you are trying to become a Florida Water Star-certified home. In 2014, the Florida Water Star program began partnering with the Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ recognition program to achieve additional recognition and add value to a home. Both programs help contribute to a more sustainable approach by reducing the need for fertilizers and pesticides, adding plant diversity and enhancing the water-saving capability in a landscape. For more details on the Florida Water Star go to: <https://floridawaterstar.com/>



The easiest way to capture rainfall is in a rain barrel. During our rainy season (June – August) we have a deluge of rain events almost daily and of course that rain supplies our Florida aquifer. Just think at one rain event, on a 1,000-square foot roof top, 1 inch of rain yields about 625 gallons of water. It takes a few minutes to fill a 55-gallon rain barrel. The benefits of using rainwater on potted plants, blooming plants such as orchids, geraniums, begonias etc. show in their brilliant color, overall health, and vigor. Rainwater does not have the chemicals like water from utility treatment facilities.

Other uses of harvested rainwater include landscapes, potted plants, car washing, cleaning yard tools, flushing toilets when power goes out, and much more. Some cities have water restrictions on irrigating landscapes during drought. We are fortunate in our area for now, but it could happen as our population is predicted to rise according to the Suwannee River Water Management District. Incorporating rain barrels encompasses two of Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ principals, #7 Recycling and #2 Water efficiently. Check with the Taylor County Extension office for the next scheduled rain barrel workshop and how you can get your rain barrel. More information on Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ go to their website <http://fyn.ifas.fl.edu/>.

## Let's Meet Victor Blanco, Marine and Natural Resource/Sea Grant Agent



Victor Blanco is the Marine Extension Agent II for UF/IFAS Extension in Taylor County. Victor, who is native to Venezuela, developed a great interest in marine science at early age after taking his first scuba diving course at age 12 and after several years in the Boys Scouts movement, where he obtained the highest honor: Scout of Bolivar (equivalent to Eagle Scout). He studied marine biology at Universidad de Oriente in Margarita Island (Venezuela), and has taken specialization courses about environmental economics, wetland management, climate change and environmental conflict analysis and resolution in four universities in three different countries. In Spring 2022 he obtained a Master in Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences at University of Florida. He joined Florida Sea Grant in December 2016 as a county marine extension agent in Taylor County, at the Big Bend – Nature Coast region.



Taylor County has about 50 miles of coastline of one of the best-preserved coastal areas in Florida's Gulf of Mexico. The coastal area includes the Big Bend Seagrass Aquatic Preserve, large extension of marshes and estuarine areas, and important waterways. Victor's major programs focus on recreational fishing, especially scallop harvesting as one of the most important economic drivers of the coastal communities. On the other hand, the artificial reef program, to enhance marine habitat and monitor fish abundance and structure in these new habitats, has become one of Victor's most relevant programs. His extension programs focus on increasing awareness and knowledge in marine habitat conservation, fishing resources sustainable use, and also to increase navigational safety in the county waterways. He shares his extension program between adults and youth, including K-12, 4-H, and homeschoolers. Some of the Citizen Science programs that people can get involved include:

- Horseshoe Crab Watch Program (monitoring) at Hagen's Cove.
- Scallop counts.
- Artificial reef monitoring, for volunteer divers.
- Marine Animal Rescue, to attend injured, stranded or dead marine animals.
- Derelict crab traps cleanups.

For more information about these programs and volunteer opportunities, contact Victor Blanco at [victorblancomar@ufl.edu](mailto:victorblancomar@ufl.edu) or at (850) 838-3508.



Florida Master Naturalist Class  
Victor Blanco, Chris Cooksey, Bethany Miesch, Irene Bivins, Bobby Johnson, Marina Mertz, Tanya Conover  
Front Row: Tom Amburgey, Lisa Strange, and Jaya Milam

## April/May/June

### What to plant:

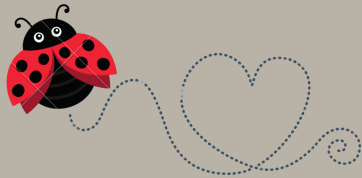
**Annuals/Bedding Plants:** Heat loving plants such as coleus, salvia, angelonia, wax begonia, celosia

**Bulbs:** Blood lily, caladium, canna, dailily

**Herbs:** Heat loving herbs - basil, oregano, sage, Mexican tarragon, and rosemary

**Palms:** June is the perfect time to plant palms

**Vegetables:** heat loving vegetables - okra, southern pea, sweet potato



### Things to do:

**April:** Monitor for aphids, identify and conserve beneficial insects, divide bulbs, ornamental grasses, or herbaceous perennials, apply fertilizer to lawns, add shrubs to your landscape, add mulch to beds

**May:** Watch for thrips, scales, and mites; watch gardenias for nutrient deficiency, monitor lawns for chinch bugs, watch for pests and diseases on tomatoes

**June:** Continue to watch for harmful insects; watch for drought stress and water as needed; watch for nutrient deficiencies in palms and cycads; prune summer-flowering shrubs to encourage more branching

For more information go to:

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/EP451>

## Upcoming Events

4/15 - 9:00-10:00am Water Harvesting Workshop

4/21 - 12-1pm Lunch & Learn Series - Nature Walk and Plant ID

4/22 - 10-11:30am Planting for Pollinators & Butterfly Gardening with Natives -  
Steinhatchee Community Center

4/25 - 10:30am Garden Workshop - Taylor County Library

**5/6 - 9am-1pm Annual Master Gardener Plant Sale!!!**

5/13 - 9:30-11am Compost Happens Workshop

5/16 - 10:30am Fertilizer vs Compost - Taylor County Library

5/20 - 10-11:30am Plant This Not That Workshop - Steinhatchee Community Center

5/23 - 8am-4pm Certified Pile Burner Course

6/6 - 2:30-3:30pm Planting for Wildlife; Wildscapes

6/16 Scallop Season begins

See our Facebook page for signup information

<https://www.facebook.com/TaylorCountyExtension>

Unless otherwise noted, all events are located at:

UF/IFAS Taylor County Extension Office  
203 Forest Park Dr, Perry  
850-838-3508



## What's This? Answer! by Lisa Strange

### Lichen *Foliose lichen*

This photo is Foliose lichen. Lichens are not a single plant but are made up of three organisms: a fungus and algae and bacteria in a symbiotic relationship. They reproduce asexually - microscopic bundles are released in the air and they attach on suitable sites where they grow creating the same body type of the parent lichen. The algae provide the fungus with food, and the fungus provides the attachment and anchorage, and the bacteria component absorbs water and nutrients from the atmosphere. They are most commonly found on tree bark or leaves. There are many types of lichen, some colorful, flat, long tendrils, curly leaflike and many more forms. Some insects mimic lichens for survival. Some moths feed on lichens. People believe lichen will kill a tree. However, they are epiphytic meaning they do not take away nutrients. They just use the trees for support. Epiphytes play roles in habitats for birds, and insects, and some are even listed as threatened or endangered and are to be protected. They are beautiful. Look at them under magnification. My grandmother used to say, 'if you were ever lost in the woods, use lichens as your compass, they grow more heavily on the north side of trees"! For more information on Lichens, several publications are available at UF askifas at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/> then search Lichen.



**UF | IFAS Extension** UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA 

**Master Gardeners'**  
**ANNUAL PLANT SALE**

**May 6, 2023**  
**9:00am - 1:00pm**  
**203 Forest Park Dr, Perry**



**Master Gardener Volunteers**  
will be on site to help with selection and care **Prize Drawings!**

Perennials - Annuals - Veggies - Shrubs - Trees

An Equal Opportunity Institution.  
The University of Florida is committed to providing universal access to all of our events. For disability accommodations such as sign language interpreters and listening devices, please contact JaneSmith@ufl.edu at least 2 weeks in advance. Advance notice is necessary to arrange for some accessibility needs.

A great article written by Anna Lee Beyer, "[Everything You Should Be Using Your Local Extension Office for \(but Aren't\)](#)" beautifully describes services that Extension provides. Thank you, again, to all of our volunteers for all you do. For more information on volunteering for Extension call 850-838-3508.