



The Baker Bulletin

A
Baker County
Extension
Service Monthly
Newsletter

Baker County Extension Service

1025 W. Macclenny Ave.
Macclenny, FL 32063

Phone: (904) 259-3520

Email: baker@ifas.ufl.edu

Hours: M—F 8:30am to 5:00pm
(Closed Noon to 1:00pm for Lunch)

County Agents

Alicia Lamborn
Horticulture Agent

Shaina Spann
4-H Youth Development Agent

Alicia Halbritter
Agriculture & Natural Resources Agent

Dear Extension Friends,

We have two upcoming fundraisers aimed at raising money for one good cause! Recently, a concrete walkway was installed through half of our arboretum. A teaching pavilion is also planned for this year. But we need your help to complete the second half of the walkway. If you'd like to support our project, please see page 7 for details on our greeting card fundraiser. Then plan to join us on March 27th for our annual plant sale which is by appointment only this year (details on page 8). Tax-deductible donations can also be accepted. As always, thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Alicia Lamborn, County Director
UF/IFAS Extension Baker County

2021 Calendars
Still Available

(FREE — located
in our lobby)



[http://
baker.ifas.ufl.edu](http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu)

[http://
blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/bakerco](http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/bakerco)

[Baker County Garden Spot](#)
[Baker County 4-H](#)

Check out our Livestock
Google Site!



Join us for an online course:

Growing Backyard Blueberries and Blackberries

Presented by Alicia Lamborn, Environmental Horticulture Agent for Baker County

This self-paced online course teaches you how to grow blueberry and blackberry plants in Florida home gardens. Topics include variety selection, preparing to plant, care and maintenance, pest management, and even a section on raspberries!

Registration allows access to our virtual classroom, which includes an instructional video, gardening resources, and recipes for your harvest.

Register online for access to this FREE class:
<https://forms.gle/tRG4MphEbob6xQLW6>

Highlights in Horticulture

By:
Alicia Lamborn,
Horticulture Agent



February in the Garden

Flowers

- Cut dead Canna Lily plants to the ground this month to reduce populations of the Canna Leafroller caterpillar. Disposing of the cut material with the overwintering pupae will reduce population levels of this insect in the spring.
- Looking to plant some bulbs? Try dahlia, crinum, and agapanthus. Provide adequate water for establishment and protect them from cold with mulch.



Canna leafrollers are large caterpillars that feed on the inside of rolled leaves.
Photos by Alicia Lamborn



Trees & Shrubs

- Rejuvenate your bunch grasses by removing the old growth and allowing them to regrow. Cut plants back to the crown using hand pruners or hedge trimmers, or use fire and burn them back if you can do so safely.
- Prune roses this month to remove damaged canes and improve the overall form. After pruning, rake the area beneath the bush to remove clippings and dead leaves. This will help prevent leaf spots and blights this season. Then fertilize and apply a fresh layer of mulch. Blooming will begin 8–9 weeks after pruning.

Lawns

- To prevent warm-season weeds, be ready to apply a preemergence weed killer (**not** a “weed and feed” fertilizer) when temperatures rise to 65–70°F for 4–5 days. Timing is important for good control and generally coincides with the blooming of azaleas and dogwoods, around March 1st.

Vegetables

- Soil testing should be done this month if you are planting a spring vegetable garden. Soil testing is available through the Baker County Extension Service and for \$10 you can learn your soil pH, lime requirement, and fertilizer requirements for the season.
- February is potato planting time! Look for seed potatoes at your local feed store or garden center, which are likely to be good varieties for Florida gardens and have not been treated to prevent sprouting like those in grocery stores.



Fruits & Nuts

- For info on pruning and fertilizing in the orchard:
<http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/baker/>

Tips for Florida-Friendly Yards

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL) means using low-maintenance plants and environmentally sustainable practices to have a beautiful landscape or bountiful garden that saves you time, energy, and money.

Right Plant, Right Place: Did you know? Building materials such as concrete, stucco, brick, mortar, and plaster are strongly alkaline. These materials dissolve into surrounding soil, drastically changing the pH over time. For this reason, azaleas and other acid-loving plants should not be planted near the concrete foundation of a home or along sidewalks. Chronic leaf yellowing is often a sign of high pH problems.



An azalea struggling with iron nutrient deficiency problems due to high pH soil caused by alkaline building materials.



Water Efficiently: Make a rain barrel and water your plants for free instead of paying for water (or paying to run the well pump). They are easy and inexpensive to make and will provide a nearly endless supply of water when connected to a home's downspout. [Learn how to build a rain barrel here.](#)

Fertilize Appropriately: A soil test can help you understand what nutrients are present in your soil. This is important for deciding what nutrients, if any, you should add. Soil testing is recommended every 1-3 years, even if plants are healthy and growing well. This is because pH and available nutrients change over time. If a more dramatic change has occurred since your last soil test, you can avoid plant decline by proactively adjusting your soil amendments and/or fertilizer applications accordingly.

Mulch: Mulch benefits plants in many ways, but also adds beauty to the landscape by giving planting beds a neat and uniform appearance. Its color and texture can also complement plantings. If you find yourself replenishing mulch for color, be sure to rake out the old before adding new to maintain the recommended 2- to 3-inch depth. Adding more mulch can harm plants because mulch can block air exchange and water movement to the roots.

Attract Wildlife: Clean bird baths as needed using soap and warm water or a 10% bleach solution if the bath is exceptionally dirty. For cement baths, use soap and warm water only (no chlorine). Empty and refill with water 1-2 times per week to keep water fresh and prevent algae build-up.



Florida's Native Flora & Fauna

By: Alicia Lamborn, Environmental Horticulture Agent

Featuring some of Florida's native flora (plant life) and fauna (animal life) so you can learn to recognize, appreciate, and protect native species. We'll also aim to dispel myths and provide tips for managing conflicts with wildlife.

Eastern Redbud

Growing in north and central Florida, the Eastern Redbud's native range also extends to the eastern half of the United States and northern Mexico.

This tree is known for its heart-shaped leaves and purple-pink flowers that appear all over the tree in spring, just before the leaves emerge.

Its smaller size (20-30' tall & 15-25' wide), attractiveness, and versatility make it a popular landscape tree.



UF/IFAS

The tree is highly drought tolerant and will grow in full sun, but benefits from some shade and irrigation in hot, dry conditions. The tree will also tolerate occasionally wet soils.



UF/IFAS

While many people may overlook this tree when planting for wildlife, it does provide benefits to many species.

The fruit pods produced in summer provide food for birds, including song birds, quail, and turkeys. Squirrels and white-tailed deer also browse the pods.



UF/IFAS

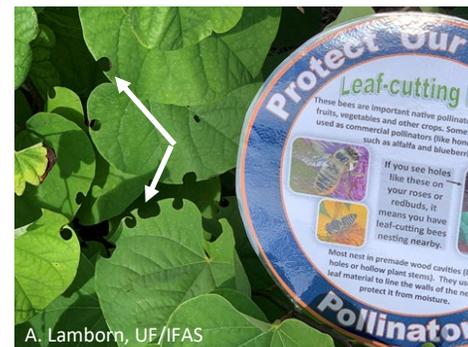
The early-blooming flowers are visited by several species of bee and butterfly pollinators seeking food when not much else has started blooming.

Leaf-cutting bees use cuttings of the leaves as nesting material. (Read more about this in the next article.)

Leafcutting Bees

In Florida, the leafcutter bee family includes approximately 63 species (plus 5 subspecies) within 7 genera. All are important native pollinators of wildflowers, fruits, vegetables, and other crops. Some are even used as commercial pollinators for crops like alfalfa and blueberries.

As their name suggests, these bees cut out distinctly round or oval-shaped holes in leaves. Some favorite plants to obtain leaf cuttings are roses and redbuds.



A. Lamborn, UF/IFAS

The leaves are needed to construct nests in cavities. The leaf material lines the nest and helps control moisture. Within the nest, leafcutters create multiple cells, each with a single egg and a ball of pollen for the larva to eat.

Because they are constructed inside cavities, the cigar-shaped nests (shown right) are rarely seen. Cavities may be located in soil, natural holes in wood (beetle holes), hollow plant stems, holes in concrete/brick walls or other man-made objects.



University of Florida

Most leafcutter bees overwinter in these nests as newly formed adults. Then once spring arrives, adults chew their way out of the nest one by one.

Because leafcutters are solitary bees (do not live in colonies like honey bees), they do not aggressively defend their nests. They are known to only sting if handled so they are not considered a stinging danger to people. While the leaf holes may be unattractive, you can be positive they will not harm the plant and can be happy to have a leafcutter nesting nearby!



MEETING IN 2021

In 2021 clubs will begin meeting again in person! We must follow the University of Florida's Social Distancing Policies at all in-person gatherings. To attend meetings, everyone must pre-register. Pre-registration emails will be sent out in advance of meetings. Members will be considered first, then others, up to 50 people or half room capacity (whichever is smaller). Face coverings are required at all in-person events, no exceptions. For those unable to meet in person, virtual alternatives will be provided. Remember, these are protocols that have been put into place to allow us to meet during a global pandemic.

Foundations in Agriculture, Science, and Technology (F.A.S.T.) Club– Ages 5-7. February 9th @ 6:00pm

Livestock Club– Ages 5-18. TBA.

Cloverleaf Cloggers– TBA.

Junior Beekeepers Club! Coming Soon!

Recipes from 4-H Members

Dirt Cake

Sent in by Cooper Clark

My favorite recipe is a Dirt Cake. Every holiday (Christmas, Thanksgiving, birthday, Easter) my mom will ask what is the one thing you want at dinner and I always say, "I want a Dirt Cake". A dirt cake be dressed up with gummy worms or other things. One year my mom placed candy pumpkins on top to make it look like a Pumpkin Patch. Another time my birthday fell on Easter, what a glorious day to share my birthday with Easter, my mom placed M&M's around to make the number 10. I know this doesn't sound super fancy but it's the little things that make it special. Making this dessert is super fun. Who doesn't like smashing things with a rolling pin? Sometimes we place the cookies in a Ziploc bag and crush them with a rolling pin. Other times we place the cookies in the blender (that is mom's favorite way). My sister and I love to help mom make this recipe. We are her taste testers while she mixes it all together. We make a huge mess but my mom doesn't mind as long as we help clean it up!

Recipe:

1 package crumbled Oreo cookies (blender)

2 packages instant French vanilla pudding

3 ½ cups milk

12 oz cool whip

1 (8 oz) package cream cheese

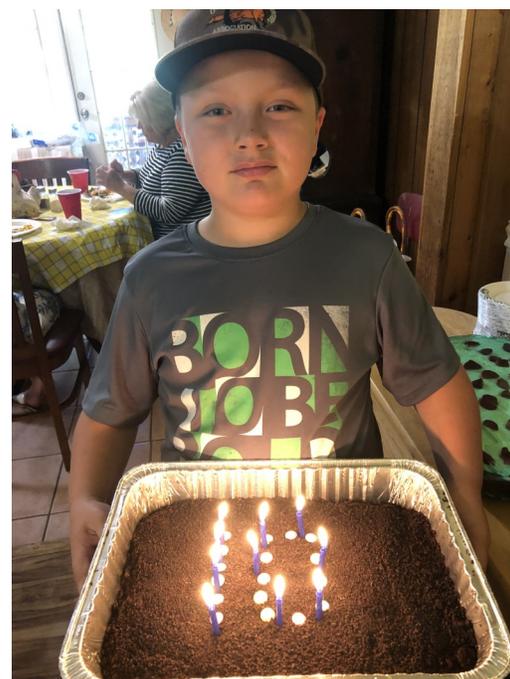
1 ½ cup powdered sugar

Mix pudding and milk together. In separate bowl, blend cream cheese and powdered sugar. Add cream mixture to pudding. Add cool whip into pudding and cream mixture.

Layer 9x13 pan with crumbled cookies, pudding, cookies.

Top with gummy worms, candy pumpkins, or anything you like.

Place in refrigerator to chill, then serve.



Barnyard Bulletin

By:
Alicia Halbritter,
Agriculture Agent



Homesteading Starter Guide

Are you interested in homesteading? Here are a few things to consider incorporating on your property and in your homesteading plan:

Vegetables

One of the easier starts to homesteading is planting a vegetable garden. You can determine the amount of crops, the size of the garden, and how much effort you'd like to input. Plan out your yearly planting calendar to make sure you start your seeds in time and have enough room in your garden to plant them all. Keep track of potential harvesting times as well. And don't forget to research the preservation of your vegetables so you can enjoy them even out of season!

Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh021>
National Center for Home Food Preservation: <https://nchfp.uga.edu/>



Fruit

If you're interested in homesteading and plan to stay on your property for a while, fruit trees are a great thing to incorporate early on. Since these species typically take a few years to get established before producing a crop, it's important you plant them early on in your adventure. Some to think about planting might be citrus, persimmons, plums, blueberries, grapes, or pears, all of which can produce successfully in North Florida if you have the right varieties for cross-pollination, cold-hardiness, and chill hour requirement. Dooryard Fruit Varieties: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mg248>



Chickens

Livestock are beneficial to incorporate into a homesteading system. Not only do they offer another food source (meat, milk, eggs) they also provide manure fertilizer, weed control, tillage, and more. Chickens are an easy animal to begin raising, they do not require much effort to maintain and are rather inexpensive. Chickens can be raised for eggs or meat. Raising Meat Chickens in Small or Backyard Flocks:

<https://poultry.extension.org/articles/poultry-management/raising-meat-chickens-in-small-or-backyard-flocks/>
Raising Chickens for Backyard Eggs: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/an239>



Livestock

Once you are comfortable with your homesteading progress you can begin to incorporate other livestock species. Pigs can be raised and harvested rather quickly, cattle take longer to finish out for harvest and are more expensive, and goats can provide meat or milk. These animals require a bit more time and attention, therefore I recommend building up your knowledge before adding these species.

Raising Pigs for Meat: <https://extension.psu.edu/raising-small-groups-of-pigs>
Small Scale Livestock Resources: <https://growingsmallfarms.ces.ncsu.edu/growingsmallfarms-animallinks/>



Extension Tidbits

Volunteer Spotlight

Mary Ann Ray, Master Gardener

If you know Mary Ann, you know that she is a person who gives unselfishly to others on a daily basis in our community. We have had the pleasure of witnessing her giving spirit as a Baker County Master Gardener for the past 15 years! Because of her love for plants and people, she has volunteered in many areas including educating kids and adults, horticulture therapy at local nursing homes, the horticulture exhibit at the Baker County Fair and helping with upkeep of plants in the greenhouse and arboretum at the Extension Office. No job is too big for her. She is always willing to go the extra mile!

Thank you Mary Ann for your continued support of the Baker County Master Gardener Program and Congratulations on 15 years of service!



Healthy Valentine's Day Treats



Thinking of getting your valentine a sweet treat? Just remember that some of us are still sticking to a "better eating" new year's goal, and so you may want to consider a healthier sweet treat. One option is to go with dark chocolate, specifically if it's at least 70 percent cocoa (the darker the chocolate, the healthier it is). Dark chocolate is healthier than milk chocolate and contains flavonols, or healthy antioxidants, which are also found in produce, green tea, red wine, and other foods, and have many benefits, including promoting cardiovascular health and decreasing the chances of stroke, cancer, or early aging (Hunter, 2008).

Of course, this isn't to say that dark chocolate can replace medications or physical activity. And the best ways to get antioxidants in our diet is through nutrient-dense fruits and vegetables or in green or black tea, since dark chocolate contains a lot of calories.

If you want to skip chocolate altogether, try making "fruit kabobs" with some sweet red and pink fruit, such as strawberries, grapefruit, watermelon, or red grapes, cut into heart shapes and placed on skewers or pretzel sticks. A fruit basket might make a healthier gift as well.

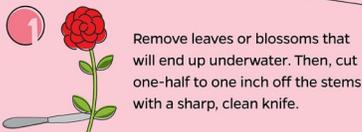
Remember to enjoy everything in moderation. Even with its benefits, dark chocolate is something that should be enjoyed once in a while, such as on a holiday that involves giving sweets as gifts.

Excerpts from: S Bresin, UF/IFAS Extension Pasco County
<http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/pascoco/2018/02/12/happy-healthy-valentines-day/>

Tips for keeping those flowers looking good long after Valentine's Day!

CARING FOR CUT FLOWERS

UF/IFAS
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1 Remove leaves or blossoms that will end up underwater. Then, cut one-half to one inch off the stems with a sharp, clean knife.



2 Place the flowers in a clean vase filled with fresh water and, if you have it, flower preservatives. Do not add sugar, as it will bring bacteria and clog the stems.



3 If the water turns yellow and cloudy, wash the vase with soapy water and add fresh water with flower preservatives.



4 Re-cut and rinse the stems before placing them back into the container.



5 Keep the flowers away from heating and air-conditioning vents, and from direct sunlight.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
TINYURL.COM/CARING4CUTFLOWERS



Stuffed Florida Strawberries

1 pound Florida strawberries
 8 ounces low-fat cream cheese, softened
 3 ounces low-fat yogurt
 1/8 teaspoon vanilla extract

Cut stems off the strawberries and carefully scoop out 2/3 of the inside by using a knife or spoon, creating a "cup" (be sure not to make any holes). Cut off a piece off the bottom tip of the strawberries to allow them to stand up.

Beat cream cheese and yogurt until fluffy, then fold in vanilla extract. Working in batches place cheese mixture into a pastry bag or a ziplock bag with a small corner cut off. Fill strawberries with cheese mixture. Garnish with mint and serve.

<https://www.followfreshfromflorida.com/recipes/stuffed-florida-strawberries/>

CARDS FOR A CAUSE

Fundraiser



For the Baker County Extension Arboretum & Teaching Gardens

5 different boxes to choose from! For \$30, each set comes with a keepsake box and envelopes!

- All Occasion Box #1 comes with dividers and includes an array of 30 cards from birthdays to new home, and get well to weddings.
- All Occasion Box #2 comes with dividers and includes an array of 30 cards from birthdays to new home, and get well to weddings.
- Thanks & Blanks Box is full of 30 unique hand crafted greeting cards. Includes both blank cards and thank you cards.
- Kids Birthday Box includes a wide range of 30 Happy Birthday cards for kids of all ages, with lots of fun details.
- Holiday Cards Box comes with assorted cards for the holidays! Full of individually designed cards in a keepsake box with envelopes. Includes 50 cards for most major holidays including: New Year's, Valentine's Day, Easter, Halloween, Hanukkah, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and many more!

Help us fund our arboretum walkway, tables, and benches!

To purchase boxes: <https://bit.ly/3sPrk6G> or at the Extension Office!

The first round of orders will be placed on February 20, 2021. Please allow up to 3 weeks for delivery.



MARCH 27, 2021

Master Gardener PLANT SALE

New this year:



Pick your 1-hour time slot

Value hour begins @ 11am (most plants marked down)



Purchase your admission ticket by Friday, March 26

\$2 per person (ages 10+); children under 10 are free with paying adult



Shop for plants and help us raise money for the rest of our arboretum sidewalk!

Location:

UF / IFAS Baker County
Extension Office (Ag Center)
Arboretum & Gardens
1025 W. Macclenny Ave.
Macclenny, FL 32063
(904) 259-3520

Safety Guidelines:

- **FACE COVERINGS (MASKS) REQUIRED FOR ALL PERSONS (ages 2 & up)**
- **Limit of 50 shoppers per hour**
- **Social distancing required while shopping**
- **Surfaces disinfected between groups**

Purchase tickets at the Extension Office or online:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/baker-county-master-gardener-plant-sale-tickets-136844185643>



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Face coverings are required for all participants at in-person events. Individuals at a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 (including older adults and vulnerable people of all ages with certain underlying medical conditions) should avoid in-person events and gatherings at this time.