Baker County Extension Service
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Upcoming Horticulture Programs & Events: January—March

All programs will be held at the Baker County Extension Office (Agricultural Center).

January 31st — Master Gardener Program—Applications Due
The Baker County Master Gardener program is a program of volunteers who help the University of Florida IFAS Extension Service by extending unbiased, research-based gardening information to people in our community. This is a great opportunity for anyone who enjoys gardening and wants to volunteer for our community, plus we teach you everything you need to know.

All trainings will take place at the Baker County Extension Office on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00am to 1:00pm starting February 15th until the end of March. The cost for all training materials is $55 for individuals and $65 for couples. Visit our website or stop by the Extension office for an application packet.

February 3rd — Budding and Grafting Workshop 6:00pm to 7:00pm. Local growers will be demonstrating budding and grafting techniques and provide materials for a hands-on experience! The cost is $5 in advance; class is limited to 20 participants — sign up today!

February 21st — Vegetable Gardening Class 6:00pm to 7:00pm. Save money and eat healthy by learning to grow your own vegetables! Topics covered: preparing the garden, plant selection, planting, watering, fertilizing. We will also discuss soil pH and the use of lime which is commonly misused. Please call (904)259-3520 to register by Friday, Feb. 18th.

March 26th — Beekeeping Short Course 9:00am to 5:00pm. This hands-on short course, involves working an active hive on Extension Center property. At the end of the course we will demonstrate how honey is “robbed” from the bees and all participants will take home a jar of local honey. This course will allow participants to receive a complete perspective of the process/expense involved with keeping honey bees as a hobby. There is a $10 registration fee ($15 per couple) for the course to cover the purchase of materials. Please visit our website (http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu) for further details and registration form. We must have at least 15 participants registered to hold the course, so sign up today!

Contact Information—Baker County Extension Service

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Species Spotlight

Species spotlight is a new section this year that will appear each month, highlighting a different species of plant, insect or animal. I hope that you will enjoy learning more about some of the special and interesting species found in Florida, and let us know if there is a particular species that you would like us to feature.

This month, we feature two species: the Polyphemus Moth and one of its host plants, the River Birch.

Polyphemus Moth:

The Polyphemus Moth is a giant silkmoth named after Polyphemus, the one-eyed giant of Greek mythology. This moth has a large, oval, transparent eyespot on each hind wing edged with yellow, blue, and black (shown right).

This moth is relatively common in Florida and can also be found throughout the United States, southern Canada, and south into Mexico. The larva (caterpillar) feeds on the foliage of many species of trees (called host plants), including oak, maple, basswood, beech, butternut, walnut, birch, yellow-poplar, sassafras, ash, willow, elm, and sycamore.

This species usually spends the winter in its silken cocoon, which is typically covered in leaves but easily noticed hanging from the twigs of its deciduous host plants. Adult moths emerge from their cocoons after March, although warm temperatures in January or February may cause it to emerge early. Because of Florida’s mild weather, this moth may be seen at any time of the year, usually at night around street lights.

River Birch Tree:

The River Birch (Betula nigra) can grow 50 to 90 feet tall but is often seen 40 to 50 feet. It has a narrow, oval to pyramidal crown when young, spreading wider with age as several branches become dominant. River birch can be easily trained with one central leader or as a multi-stemmed tree. It lacks the white trunk bark associated with other birches but is distinguished by reddish, brown peeling bark which provides interest all year round.

As the name implies, River Birch is well-suited for planting along stream banks but actually tolerates a wide range of soil types including clay, sand, loam, extended flooding and well-drained. It is also very resistant to pests and diseases. This tree grows quickly, needing full or partial sun, plenty of space for root growth, acidic soils and adequate water during dry spells.

The cultivar ‘Heritage’ grows 50 feet tall, has an oval shape, and scaly bark that is beige in color and is the closest to a paper white birch that will survive in hot areas; it is also tolerant of poor drainage. It is the more vigorous of the species.

Arboretum Update

The Baker County Arboretum is currently being installed at the Baker County Extension Office! Installation began on December 15th and will continue into the new year. Don’t forget to visit our website occasionally for up-to-date information and visit the new photo gallery section while you’re there!

http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu/BakerCoArboretumandTeachingGardens.html

The Baker County Arboretum Grand Opening is scheduled for April 29, 2011 (National Arbor Day).

‘High Rise’ Live Oak

Get Your 2011 UF/IFAS Extension Calendar

Stop by the Extension Office to pick up a free 2011 calendar filled with colorful photos and solutions for your life!

Available while supplies last.
Each year, hundreds of people go to hospital emergency rooms because of injuries related to space heaters. When clothing comes in contact with a heating element or flame it can catch fire. Leaking gas can cause explosions. Inhaling carbon monoxide from a malfunctioning, poorly vented, or unvented gas heater can cause death.

### General Safety Tips for All Space Heaters
1. Read the label and follow the instructions for installation and operation.
2. Keep paper, clothing, furniture, and especially children away from space heaters.
3. Keep the heater in safe working condition. Replace any missing grille, guard, or controls at once.

### Safety Tips for Electric Space Heaters
1. Free-standing electric heaters should have tip-over switches. These switches shut off the current if the unit is knocked over. This helps prevent a fire if the heater falls against fabric or other flammable materials.
2. There must be a guard around the heating coil of your heater. A wire grille or other protection is essential to keep fingers or fabrics from touching the hot coil.
3. If you must use an extension cord, make sure it's marked with a power rating at least as high as that on the label of the heater itself.
4. Keep it away from water! Don't use a portable electric heater anywhere in a bathroom or near a sink.

### Safety Tips for Gas Space Heaters
1. Your gas space heater should be properly vented. The vent pipe should have no cracks through which deadly carbon monoxide might leak. An undersized or clogged vent is very hazardous.
2. If you must use an unvented heater, keep a door or window slightly open at all times. Good ventilation during use is crucial!
3. Light the match before you turn on the gas, to prevent accumulation of gas. This will prevent gas from flaring up when you bring the match near.
4. Remember that a space heater can ignite flammable liquids and vapors. Never use a space heater in the same room where gasoline is stored. Never use a space heater where paint thinners, kerosene, or other volatile liquids are being used.

### Safety Tips for Kerosene-, Oil-, or Wood-burning Space Heaters
1. These should be properly vented to prevent the accumulation of carbon monoxide.
2. Use only the fuel for which the heater was designed. Don't use kerosene in an oil heater and vice versa.

Never use highly flammable liquids--like gasoline--to get a wood stove started.

*Source: Harrison, Mary, Keeping it Safe: Space Heaters, FCS5233-02, University of Florida*
Economic Contributions of Ag & Related Industries

Agriculture and related industries contribute greatly to the economy of Florida and Baker County. Below are some facts as they relate to Agriculture and Related Industries in Baker County. For 2008:

- Overall output of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Industries was $66.9 million.
- Exports of these industries from Baker County totaled $22.2 million.
- Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Industries employed 1,039 people.
- Crop, Livestock, Forestry and Fisheries production accounted for $23.1 million in output.
- Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Industries exported 33% or 1/3 of the products produced in Baker County out of the county.

These are just a few of the reasons why Agriculture and Natural Resources are a vital factor in the continued economic stability of Baker County Florida.