Dear Extension Friends,

Spring arrives this month, and for many that means gardening and spring cleaning—both of which are featured this month along with recipes and more. We also have some upcoming events that we invite you to join including a Pond Management Lunch-n-Learn on March 18th (info below), various 4-H activities (page 6), and our Master Gardener Plant Sale on March 27th (pages 4-5). Be sure to get your admission ticket before time slots sell out, and follow our Baker County Garden Spot Facebook page for updates on the plants we’ll have available.

Sincerely,

Alicia Lamborn, County Director
UF/IFAS Extension Baker County
Highlights in Horticulture

March in the Garden

Flowers
- Cool season annuals will continue to flourish this month. Wait until the end of the month to plant warm-season annuals like Angelonia, Begonia, and Zinnia.
- Plant bulbs such as Dahlia, Canna and Gloriosa for spring and summer flowering.

Trees & Shrubs
- Prune azaleas when they have finished blooming to reduce their size and improve their form.

Lawns
- To prevent warm-season weeds, a general rule is to apply a pre-emergent herbicide around March 1st. See our next article to learn why “weed-n-feeds” should be avoided.
- Brown circles in the lawn could be a sign of large patch fungus (brown patch). This disease thrives with mild temperatures and moisture, especially in St. Augustine and Zoysia lawns. For more info: https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/lh044

Vegetables
- Soil testing is recommended every 1-3 years, and is especially important before and after applying lime. For $10 you can learn your lime and fertilizer requirements for the season.
- Many like to get a jump start on planting the garden this month, but freezing weather is still a threat. Consider starting seeds indoors and transplanting after the danger of frost has passed.
- Before planting, consider working some compost — 25 to 100 pounds of compost per 100 square feet — into the garden. This is especially beneficial for sandy, low fertility soils.

Fruits & Nuts
- For info on pruning and fertilizing in the orchard, see http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/baker or click here.

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.

Improving Soil: For best results growing flowers or vegetables, you may need to amend the planting bed frequently by adding organic matter, such as compost, composted animal manure, or sphagnum peat moss. Organic matter retains moisture, provides nutrients, and attracts beneficial organisms like earthworms. When selecting organic matter, choose materials that are decomposed to the point of containing few or no recognizable source materials – in yard waste, that would mean you wouldn’t see any leaves or sticks. The easiest way to add organic matter to an empty planting bed is to put down a layer 2–3 inches thick, then mix it into the soil using a tiller, shovel, or digging fork. In established planting areas, add organic matter as mulch around plantings each spring before the rainy season.

Water Efficiently to Establish Trees: Newly planted trees need regular irrigation to rapidly grow the roots necessary for proper establishment. For trees planted in spring or summer, water two to three times per week. After the first few months, provide weekly irrigation until plants are fully established. Irrigations should be 2 to 3 gallons of water per inch trunk diameter. For example, a 2-inch tree should be watered 4 to 6 gallons each irrigation. Of course, rainfall reduces the need to irrigate.

Fertilize Appropriately: Avoid using “weed-n-feed” fertilizers. These contain herbicides and fertilizer together. March is the correct time to weed your yard with a pre-emergent herbicide. But feeding should wait until April when grass growth resumes, and roots can take up the fertilizer you lay down. Because the appropriate time is different, applying herbicides and fertilizers together almost ensures that one or the other is ineffective, if not harmful. Also consider that pesticides should be applied only to affected areas rather than broadcast over the entire yard, and some “weed and feed” products can injure tree and shrub roots that extend into turf areas where fertilizer would normally be applied.

Irrigation System Maintenance: An irrigation system is only as efficient as it’s maintained to be.
- Check for and repair leaks.
- Unclog and replace broken heads.
- Point heads at plants, not driveways and sidewalks.
- Prune plants that interfere with irrigation systems.
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.

**Red Buckeye**

The red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*) is a small, deciduous tree native to the southeastern United States, extending west Texas and as far north as southern Illinois.

In Florida, it grows well in north and central locations, zones 8-9A. This tree’s small size (15-20 feet tall and wide), course texture, and versatile light requirement and soil tolerances means most landscapes can accommodate a red buckeye.

In winter, gardeners find the light brown, flaky bark appealing. But it’s the springtime display of color that is most attractive.

Beautiful red flowers emerge in clusters on panicles that are very showy. Their tubular shape also makes them attractive to hummingbirds.

Leaves are palmately compound (usually made up of 5 leaflets), adding to the attractiveness of the tree.

Red buckeye will flower well in dense shade but has better form when grown in full sun with some afternoon shade. Plant in moist, well-drained soil, and remember to irrigate during dry spells to keep it healthy.

For more information, see:

*Aesculus pavia, Red Buckeye*

https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/st064

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**Ruby-throated Hummingbird**

Hummingbirds live only in the Americas. Of the 338 species known, 16 are found in the United States and 3 occur in Florida. Black-chinned and rufous hummingbirds can be seen in Florida during the winter, but the ruby-throated hummingbird is by far the most common in the state.

These birds are small—about 3 inches—and weigh as little as a penny (¼ ounce). Their back feathers are metallic green, but their name derives from the ruby red throat plumage found on mature males. The throat feathers contain air bubbles that give off an iridescent red tone in full light.

Hummingbirds have the fascinating ability to perform helicopter-like flying stunts. Not only can hummers suspend their bodies in midair, they can also fly backward, upward, even upside down.

Nesting in Florida begins in April. The walnut-size nest is constructed with plant down, lichens, moss, and bound with spider webs or fine plant fibers. The female lays 2 eggs less than ½ inch long. After 20 days of incubation and 4 weeks of growing, young hummingbirds leave the nest.

Adults feed primarily on nectar. Young are fed insects by their parents, but are switched to a mostly nectar diet by the time they leave the nest. One hummingbird may need nectar from hundreds of blossoms every day to maintain its body weight.

Artificial feeders should not be the sole source of food provided. The sugar solution provides little nourishment and must be changed every 3-5 days to prevent lethal bacterial growth. Clean the feeders with hot water and white vinegar. Do not use soap or chlorine bleach.

For a list of hummingbird plants, see link below!

Adapted and excerpted from: Hummingbirds of Florida

https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/uw059
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

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.
**MARCH 27, 2021**

**Master Gardener Plant Sale**

A fundraiser for the Baker County Arboretum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vegetables &amp; Herbs</th>
<th>Flowers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heirloom Tomatoes</td>
<td>Black-eyed Susan</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Cherry, Ace 55, Golden Jubilee, Brandywine)</td>
<td>Sunflowers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beefsteak, Yellow Pear, Plum Roma, Tomatillo)</td>
<td>Swamp Sunflower</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peppers (Bell, Banana, Jalapeno, Serrano)</td>
<td>Swamp Hibiscus</td>
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<td>Squash &amp; Zucchini</td>
<td>Amaryllis</td>
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<td>Blackberry Lily</td>
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<td>Autumn Sage</td>
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<td>Mexican Sage</td>
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<td>Scorpion-tail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eggplant</td>
<td>Purple Coneflower</td>
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<td>Rosemary</td>
<td>Marigolds</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Mojito’ Mint</td>
<td>Zinnias</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lemon Balm</td>
<td>Indigo Spires</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chives</td>
<td>Salvia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fennel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roselle (FL Cranberry)</td>
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| Cotton Rose                                   | Sweet Tea Olive                            |
| Hydrangeas (Oakleaf, French)                  | Camellia                                   |
| Hollies                                       | Boxwood                                    |
| Sweet Almond Bush                            | Cleyera                                    |
|                                                | Viburnum                                   |
|                                                |                                            |
| Firebush                                      | Purple Fountain                            |
| Pineapple Guava                               | Ruby Grass                                 |
| Sago Palms                                    | Muhly Grass                                |
| Anise                                         | Indian Wood Oats                           |
|                                                |                                            |

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trees &amp; Shrubs</th>
<th>Grasses &amp; Groundcovers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Azaleas</td>
<td>Var. Purple Queen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cedars</td>
<td>White Yarrow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Snow Bush</td>
<td>Cast Iron</td>
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<td>Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow</td>
<td>Flax Lily</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coral Honeysuckle</td>
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<td>Passion Flower</td>
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<td>Butterfly Vine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bleeding Heart</td>
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</tbody>
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*List is not all inclusive*

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MEETINGS 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. 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.

Livestock Club – Ages 5-18. 4th Tuesday of the month at 6pm in the Auditorium. https://forms.gle/KEudi7M2XuRM7unn8

Cloverleaf Cloggers – TBA.

Junior Beekeepers Club! Coming Soon!

VIRTUAL OPPORTUNITIES

4-H & You – March 4th @ 6pm on Zoom. Register here: https://forms.gle/zDnmehJDCMqmcLw9

3rd Executive Board – March 25-26th on Zoom. For Ages 14+. Registration through 4-H Online 2.0.

4-H County Events Entries due April 19th. More details to follow.

4-H Member Recipes

Chocolate Cake
Submitted by: Paisley Lee

Ingredients:
• 4 cups flour
• 2 cups sugar
• ½ cup cocoa
• 4 teaspoons baking soda
• 2 cups mayonnaise
• 2 teaspoons vanilla
• 2 cups water

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour two 9 inch cake pans.
2. In a large bowl add the flour, sugar, cocoa and baking soda. Take a whisk and whisk the dry ingredients to remove any lumps.
3. In a medium bowl add the mayonnaise, vanilla, and water and using a whisk mix together until smooth.
4. Slowly add the wet mixture to the dry mixture and stir just until combined. Do not overmix.
5. Divide the batter between the two prepared pans.
6. Bake for 30 minutes or until toothpick or cake tester comes out clean.

Icing:
2 packs of cheesecake pudding
1 block of cream cheese
8 oz of cool whip

Prepare pudding and then mix in the cream cheese. Once that is mixed, fold in the cool whip and ice the cake.
Equine Vaccines in Florida

Florida can be a hotspot for livestock diseases due to our proximity to foreign countries, high mosquito population, and frequent travelers. It is important to make sure our horses are properly vaccinated to prevent issues with our core diseases.

**Tetanus:** Tetanus originates from the clostridium tetani bacterium in the soil and can often be found in the intestine and manure of horses. Animals typically are affected with this infection through a wound. Without proper treatment cases can become severe and cause death.

**Equine Encephalomyelitis Virus** (Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis (EEE), Western Equine Encephalomyelitis (WEE), Venezuela Equine Encephalomyelitis (VEE)): These viruses are transmitted by mosquitoes from infected birds or rodents to horses. The death rates for encephalomyelitis are quite high and loss is experienced 70-90% of the time. Horses should be vaccinated twice a year (spring and fall) for at least EEE and WEE.

**West Nile Virus:** West Nile is also transmitted by mosquitoes and horses should receive this vaccine annually. Although the death rate is lower (33%), infection can cause neurological problems which may have long lasting effects.

**Rabies:** Rabies infections are rare in horses but are fatal in all cases. Horses should be vaccinated annually, especially where rabies is endemic in the wildlife population nearby.

**Optional Vaccines:** For horses that are traveling frequently, boarded, or are breeding your veterinarian may encourage vaccines outside of the core vaccines. Your vet may recommend vaccination for equine influenza, EHV, strangles, botulism, rotavirus, or equine viral arteritis. These vaccines protect against some of the less common infections and therefore may not be necessary for all horses.

When developing a vaccination protocol for your horse, always work with your veterinarian to determine what is best and aligns with current research. It is possible to vaccinate your horses without the use of a veterinarian, except in the case of rabies which must be administered by a vet in the state of Florida.
Fresh from Florida Recipe

This recipe is perfect for when the days begin to get warmer!

Ingredients
2 clamshells Florida grape tomatoes, rinsed and cut in half
1 pound orzo pasta, cooked according to directions on package and cooled completely
1 cup fresh basil, chopped fine
1 1/2 lemons, juiced
1 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
2 tablespoons olive oil, plus more if desired
Sea salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Directions
Cook 1 lb of orzo pasta and let cool. Rinse 2 clamshells of Florida grape tomatoes and cut in halves. Combine tomatoes, basil, lemon juice, Parmesan cheese, and olive oil in medium bowl. Add salt and pepper to taste, mix thoroughly. Serve at room temperature.

Recipe from: https://www.followfreshfromflorida.com/recipes/florida-grape-tomato-and-orzo-pasta-salad