

The Baker Bulletin



The UF/IFAS Extension Office is available to help you with your farming, gardening, landscaping, and 4-H youth development needs by providing educational programming, free consultations and information. Contact us at:

UF/IFAS Extension Baker County

1025 W. Macclenny Ave. Macclenny, FL 32063

Phone: (904) 259-3520

Email: baker@ifas.ufl.edu

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

County Agents

Alicia Lamborn, Horticulture Agent

Shaina Spann, 4-H Youth Development Agent

Alicia Halbritter, Agriculture & Natural Resources Agent



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May 2025



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Programs & Events

- May 3 National Wildfire Preparedness Day Community Event - 9am - 1pm @ St. Mary's Shoals Park 9316 Odis Yarborough Rd, Glen St. Mary, FL. Learn how to be firewise and have some family fun with activities, demonstrations, and touch-a-truck!
- May 22 Pesticide Sprayer Calibration - Free event with dinner provided, Equipment & spray rig demonstrations to learn how to properly calibrate your sprayer for efficient applications. RSVP for dinner: https://bit.ly/bcla_sprayer
- Online Florida-Friendly Landscaping - This free, self-paced, online course will guide you through the 9 principles to keep your yard and garden healthy using less time, money, and resources. Register here: <https://forms.gle/o87D5gYauQVQNQ2s7>
- Online Butterfly Gardening - Learn the basic garden design elements for a successful butterfly garden. Helpful resources and seeds for your garden included! Free, self-paced course. Register here: <https://forms.gle/o3SVghr6xtvwGQ637>

Florida's Native Flora & Fauna

By Alicia Lamborn, Environmental Horticulture Agent



Spider-lily

The Northern Spider-lily, a striking member of the Amaryllidaceae family, is a long-lived perennial flower prized for its delicate, fragrant white blooms. Scientifically known as *Hymenocallis occidentalis*, this native plant adds elegance and interest to gardens with its showy, spider-like flowers and aromatic presence.

Growing to a height and width of 1-2 feet, the Spider-lily forms attractive clumps that make it ideal for use in houseplant collections, water gardens, bog gardens, or along stream edges. It thrives in full sun to part shade and prefers moist conditions. While tolerant of a variety of substrates, including sand, loam, muck, and organic material, it grows best in acidic to neutral pH environments often found on floodplains or adjacent forested uplands.

In northern Florida, this bulb-forming plant is winter dormant, with new leaves emerging in midwinter. Flowers appear May through September. Propagation is possible through seed or by dividing clumps, and plants are available through native and high-quality nurseries. However, gardeners should be cautious, as the bulb is poisonous if ingested.

With its natural charm, fragrant blooms, and ability to attract insects, the Northern Spider-lily is a standout choice for gardeners looking to blend beauty and biodiversity.



Bee Fly

As spring arrives, keen observers might notice small, furry insects hovering just above the ground. These are bee flies, particularly from the genus *Bombylius*, and these fascinating creatures are expert mimics of bumblebees.

With their brown, fuzzy bodies and buzzing flight, *Bombylius* flies closely resemble bees, but a closer look reveals distinct differences: only two wings instead of four, oversized eyes, spindly legs, and tiny antennae. Their most striking feature is a long, stiff proboscis used to sip nectar while hovering in front of flowers—much like a hummingbird. This feeding behavior allows them to avoid landing, which may help them evade predators. Despite barely contacting the flowers, pollen clings to their hairy bodies.

However, their charming appearance masks a more sinister role. Bee flies are also parasites. Hovering over bare patches of soil, they hunt for bee nests. When a mother bee leaves her nest to gather pollen, the bee fly swoops in. Without landing, it flicks an egg into the open tunnel. The fly larva, upon hatching, crawls down to the bee's chamber, consumes the pollen provisions, and ultimately devours the bee larva.

By the time spring returns, a new generation of bee flies is ready to emerge, continuing the cycle of mimicry, pollination—and parasitism.

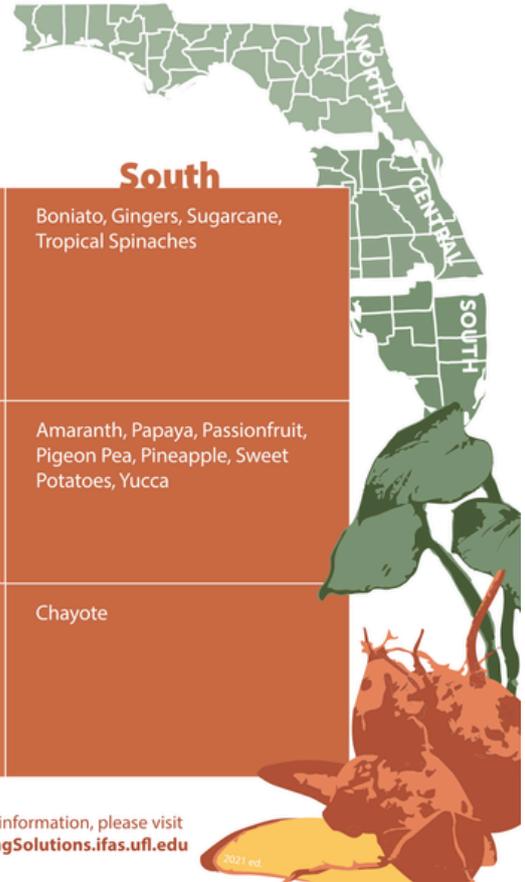


HIGHLIGHTS IN HORTICULTURE

By Alicia Lamborn, Environmental Horticulture Agent

EDIBLES TO PLANT IN

May



Growing Tips:

Sweet Potatoes: Sweet potatoes can be planted in the spring through the end of June. They grow well in sandy soil and don't require much fertilizing. 'Centennial' and 'Beauregard' are two varieties that grow well in Florida gardens. Gardeners with less space should consider 'Vardaman', a bush type of sweet potato that's great for smaller gardens.

	North	Central	South
Easily Survives Transplanting	Boniato, Gingers, Roselle, Tropical Spinaches	Boniato, Gingers, Roselle, Sugarcane, Swiss Chard, Tropical Spinaches	Boniato, Gingers, Sugarcane, Tropical Spinaches
Transplant Carefully	Amaranth, Calabaza, Long Squash, Luffa, Papaya, Passionfruit, Pigeon Pea, Seminole Pumpkin, Sweet Potatoes	Amaranth, Calabaza, Long Squash, Luffa, Papaya, Passionfruit, Pigeon Pea, Pineapple, Seminole Pumpkin, Sweet Potatoes, Yucca	Amaranth, Papaya, Passionfruit, Pigeon Pea, Pineapple, Sweet Potatoes, Yucca
Use Seeds	Chayote, Okra, Peanuts, Peas (southern)	Chayote, Okra, Peanuts, Peas (southern)	Chayote



For more information, please visit GardeningSolutions.ifas.ufl.edu

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Florida-Friendly Landscaping Tips

May

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.

✓ ATTRACT WILDLIFE:

No butterfly garden is complete without a butterfly puddling station! Because butterflies cannot drink free-standing water, they seek out places with mud and wet sand to sip liquids and minerals through their proboscis. A puddling station that holds sand and pebbles, and collects rain or irrigation water, will entice adult butterflies to stop for a drink.

Using a coffee can or plastic container, put several inches of clean sand or earth in the bottom, sink it into the ground, and fill it with water. Place rocks in the middle and at the sides for use as landing pads. Change the water regularly to keep mosquitoes from breeding there. To make your puddling dish more attractive, sprinkle a pinch of table salt over the top before adding water, and occasionally add a capful of natural fish emulsion. An alternative to fish emulsion is to add a thin layer of compost or composted manure to the top.

✓ MANAGE YARD PESTS RESPONSIBLY:

Don't treat by default. Plants with aesthetic damage do not always need to be treated. Consider the amount of damage you are willing to accept. Remember that there will always be insects in any healthy landscape, and don't worry about minor damage.

✓ PROTECT THE WATERFRONT:

Whether you live on a natural or man-made water body, it's important to designate a "maintenance-free zone" of at least 10 feet between your landscape and the riparian zone.

This area helps to protect the water from runoff. Don't mow, fertilize, or apply pesticides in the maintenance-free zone. Select plants that will do well without fertilization or irrigation after establishment. If your landscape already features a buffer zone that's larger than 10 feet, you don't need to create an additional maintenance-free zone.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/>

<https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/baker/>



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BARNYARD BULLETIN

By Alicia Halbritter, Agriculture Agent

Growing Your Own Thanksgiving Turkey



Have you ever considered raising your own Thanksgiving turkeys? Raising meat birds can be a rewarding, short term project that provides fresh, local food to your dinner table. If you are successful, there is opportunity to expand to a small agricultural business. Now is the time to start planning so your birds will be ready by November!



Choosing a Breed

There are a number of turkey breeds which are suitable for meat production. Some breeds reach harvest weight in 14-22 weeks, while others, like heritage breeds, take 25-30 weeks, because of this, choosing a breed is one of the first steps to take. If you choose a heritage breed, you will likely need to have your poult purchased in late May or early June.



Number of Birds

Turkey poults are notoriously difficult to raise and often succumb to a variety of health or predator issues. Even though you likely only have the need for one turkey on the dinner table, it is advised to purchase 3-5 poults the first year to ensure you are successful. Extra birds can be processed at the same time and frozen for later use.

Turkeys generally dress at 75-80% of their body weight. While toms (males) grow bigger and faster, both males and females can be utilized for meat production. A typical bird will yield at least an 18 lb carcass, enough to feed 12 guests, however breeds can vary. If you plan to feed more than 12 for Thanksgiving, plan to raise more than 1 bird.

Spacing Requirements

Poults will need to be kept in a brooder for the first six weeks, allotting a minimum of 2 to 2 and a half square feet per turkey. After 6 weeks they can move to a larger grow pen/coop which should encompass 6 to 10 square feet per bird to accommodate their spacing needs all the way up to harvest weight. It is not recommended to mix these birds with other species (chickens or waterfowl) as they will require different feeds.

Nutrition

Turkeys require different diets during different growth stages. Poults need a diet very high in protein so they can grow and gain muscle quickly. Generally, a starter feed will need to be around 30% protein, these can often be found in game bird feeds or turkey starter feeds. After the birds reach 8 weeks of age they can be lowered down to a feed that is 20% protein until they reach harvest weight. Clean water is required at all times.



LUCKY CLOVER CHRONICLE

By Shaina Spann, 4-H Youth Development Agent



Summer Adventures

June 8-10: iLEAD overnight camp at University of Florida Campus

Ages 11-13 (as of 9/1/24) Registration due May 21st via 4HOnline Cost: \$275

All intermediate aged youth are invited to the University of Florida's campus for a two night and full day leadership development experience. They will have the opportunity to connect with others from across the state of Florida and explore potential interests to ignite their spark in life.

County Day Camps

Summer

Registration Open!

Fun

These day camps will travel to different locations every day! From traversing the Okefenokee to the Alligator Farm to making candied fruit, it's going to be an amazing time! Each day campers will need to bring a lunch with an ice pack and water bottle. We will provide a snack. Transportation for each camp will be provided. Payment SECURES registration and is on a first-come, first-served basis. Camps are Monday - Thursday, 9am-4pm.

June 16-19: Wonderful World of Water ENROLL

Ages: 8-13 (as of 9/1/24) Cost: \$100

Come explore the water that makes our world! This camp will visit fresh and saltwater ecosystems in Florida.

June 23-26: All About Animals ENROLL

Ages: 8-13 (as of 9/1/24) Cost: \$100

This camp will explore animals! Participants will visit animals that are exotic, farm, aquatic, and more!

July 14-17: Sweet Treats ENROLL

Ages 8-13 (as of 9/1/2024) Cost: \$100

This camp will explore all things sweet to eat! From fruit to candies, it's definitely going to be delicious!

July 21-24: Full S.T.E.A.M. Ahead Camp ENROLL

Ages 8-13 (as of 9/1/2024) Cost: \$100

This camp will focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics. We will take field trips to various places and investigate the amazing realm of the sciences.

4-H Club Meetings & Events

- May 5- Cloverbuddies, 4pm, Auditorium LAST MEETING
- May 12- 16- Mrs. Shaina at Conference
- May 27- Livestock Club, 6pm, Auditorium
- May 27- Livestock Club, 6pm, Auditorium
- May 31- Coop to Plate Processing Day
- June 2-6 Mrs. Shaina on vacation
- June 8-10- iLEAD Gainesville
- June 16-19 Water Camp
- June 23-26 Animal Camp

REMIND APP

text @bakerco4h to 81010 to be added to the 4-H Remind text group.



Check out our Livestock Google Site!

EXTENSION TIDBITS

Florida Watermelon Pops

Ingredients

- 4-6 cups Florida watermelon (seedless), cubed
- 4 tablespoons Florida Key lime juice
- ¼ cup Florida sugar
- 1 lime, zest only



Preparation

Add all ingredients to blender, puree until smooth. Pour into popsicle mold (use wooden popsicles sticks or molds that have sticks provided) and freeze for at least 3 hours to set. Unmold and serve immediately.

<https://www.followfreshfromflorida.com/recipes/florida-watermelon-popsicles>

UPCOMING EVENTS

BAKER COUNTY LIVESTOCK ASSOCIATION **UF IFAS Extension**
PESTICIDE SPRAYER CALIBRATION
DINNER PROVIDED & MEMBERS ONLY RAFFLE ITEMS
In-Person Demonstrations with Equipment & Spray Rigs
6:00 PM **MAY 22ND**
The Ag Center
1025 W Macclenny Ave
Dinner is graciously provided by the Baker County Livestock Association to all who attend. Raffle items only available to current and new members of the association.
Register for Dinner: https://bit.ly/bcla_sprayer
For more information, call us: 904-259-3520

NATIONAL WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS DAY
Community Event
TOUCH-A-TRUCK | FAMILY FUN | DEMONSTRATIONS
MAY 3RD, 2025
9AM-1PM
ST. MARYS
SHOALS PARK
9316 ODIS YARBOROUGH RD
GLEN ST MARY, FL
LEARN HOW TO BE FIREWISE & PROTECT YOUR COMMUNITY FROM WILDFIRES!
Logos: Florida Forest Service, Fire Rescue, Baker County, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, UF IFAS Extension
Illustration of a house with flames at the bottom.