Sunny Times

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2025

HIGHLIGHTS

HELLO EVERYONE!

Welcome back to all, after our summer break, I hope you are refreshed from the rain like our green spaces and now look forward to the cool dry weather ahead. At this time our native trees and shrubs will be green, some flowering to attract pollinators. Some are producing seeds for birds in this fall season.

The Broward County Extension had an array of presentations and workshops in the summer season and for September and October, a lot of speakers with topics to choose from. In case you missed it, our Master Gardener Volunteer Webinars with interesting topics are at this site:

https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/resources/webinars/ Check them out. There are upcoming workshops on p.1 & events on p.2 in this new Sept/Oct newsletter format. What a celebration we had Oct 25 at the Flamingo Learning Center. Pins for volunteer hours given. Certificates given. So many achievements by our Master Garden Volunteers written beautifully on certificates by UF/IFAS Broward County Extension. The Extension appreciates all their skills & efforts. See photos on the next pages. Enjoy reading this edition. Any questions, you can email me at **Stephen.deegan@ufl.edu**

Steve

FEATURED CONTENTS

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS UF/IFAS BROWARD

Oct 23

Growing Tropical Fruit Trees in your Backyard
Register Link-Eventbrite.com p.3

Nov 4

Protecting Your Home from Pests: FFL Solutions
Register Link-Eventbrite.com p.3

18

Shade Gardening: Selecting the Right Plants for Your Shade Places
Register Link-Eventbrite.com p.3

19

Marvelous Mango Masterclass
Register link-Eventbrite.com p.3

MGV BIRTHDAYS

Bob Betz	September 30

ANNIVERSARIES

None recorded

WHAT'S HAPPENING

LIVE EVENTS

CELEBRATION

2025 Broward County MGV Celebration & Graduations

We had our annual MGV Celebration on Sat Oct 25, 2025 -what-a-celebration-it-was- so many awards given, loads of friends to see again! We honored achievements of Broward County MGVs, recognized our newest graduates, celebrated exceptional volunteer contributions at Flamingo Gardens Learning Center Davie FL

A good time, a good turn out! Thank you MGVs!

2025 Southeast Regional MGV Conference in Broward County

If you have not registered do not miss our 2025 Southeast Regional MGV Conference taking place on **November 13** at Flamingo Gardens Learning Center. This is a great opportunity to network with fellow MGVs from our southeast district (nine counties) and learn together. This year's theme is "Celebrating Nature, Managing Change." Register here:
Master Gardener Southeast District Regional Training Tickets, Thu, Nov 13, 2025 at 9:00 AM | Eventbrite
Do not miss this opportunity

BROWARD COUNTY EXTENSION'S OPEN HOUSE
on Saturday, November 15th from 9am to 12pm
This takes place in Broward County Extension Auditorium. Address below. Featuring many demonstrations, all MGVs including potential MGVs will join us
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2025-ufifas-extension-broward-county-master-gardener-volunteer-open-house-tickets-1416991482669?aff=oddtdtcreator

Hope to see you there! Contact:

Name: Lorna Bravo UF/IFAS Extension Broward County Agent II
Address: 3245 College Ave, Davie FL 33314
Phone: 954.756.8519 Email: lbravo1@ufl.edu

EVENT IN PICTURES

A good time, a good turn out!

MGVs Given Awards

2025 Broward County MGV Celebration & Graduations

PICTURES COURTESY OF MGV Gabriel Clarke photographer. Any questions, please contact Lorna Bravo UF/IFAS Extension Broward County Agent II and Steve Deegan MGV Coordinator

Address: 3245 College Ave, Davie FL 33314

Phone: 954.756.8519 Email: lbravo1@ufl.edu

ct:

MGV FEATURED PHOTO IN THE SPOTLIGHT

"Drink Up!"

Photographer: Ryan Xu, MGV
Specimen: Horace's Duskwing, *Erynnis horatius*
Location: UF/IFAS Extension Butterfly Garden

View Upcoming Virtual Workshops UF/IFAS Broward

In your browser select **https:// Eventbrite.com.** And the title of your workshop example: **Growing Tropical Fruit Trees in your own Backyard**
This will bring up all the current workshops

Any questions, email Steve Deegan at:
stephen.deegan@ufl.edu
954.756.8519

Bookworm Club

Recommended Reading

Native Florida Plants for Shady Landscapes
Craig N. Huegel
Butterflies of the East Coast
Rick Cech and Guy Tudor
Florida Native Yard
Ginny Stibolt and Marjorie Shropshire

MGV Help Desk & Other Volunteer Opportunities

Check out opportunities with.....

Steve Deegan, MGV Coordinator, UF IFAS Extension Broward County at:
stephen.deegan@ufl.edu
954.756.8519

THE MAGIC OF LEAVES

WHY LEAVES ARE IMPORTANT

We take for granted what miracles a plant offers through its leaves when healthy and thriving. The benefits even compound when there's a cluster of healthy green plants. Many plants display all year leaves in beautiful colors, hues & silver tones. During the fall we also see vibrant orange gradients. This creates a show for the eyes. Some leaves have different surfaces or various shapes, which all serve a purpose but arrange like an interesting puzzle.

Leaves are an important component of ecosystems. Plants will use nutrition from water and soil to make leaves; dead ones enrich soil and make mulch. Animals use leaf piles as homes. One of the most important roles of plant leaves is the release of oxygen we depend on as a byproduct of photosynthesis. That's a series of chemical reactions occurring inside plant cells in response to sunlight.

So how do leaves get variegated colors? It's from the yellow carotenoid pigment that, for e.g. Coleus, a Florida-Friendly-FFL plant has. See https://floridafriendlyplants.com. Or they may have the Anthocyanin red pigment & dashes of green from the chlorophyll, displayed in leaves like FFL Crotons. Two-toned color leaves are also evident in pinelands here, seen in Florida's Tetrazygia, *Miconia bicolor,* a native shrub. The attractive lance-shaped 6-inch leaves, are shiny dark green on top, with a silvery underside. It also has showy white and yellow flowers for pollinators. South Florida's native Satinleaf, *Chrysophyllum oliviforme* a medium to tall tree, 45ft high has a two-toned leaf structure, with a glossy dark green on top of its 6-inch elliptic shape while the undersides have fine copper bronze hairs. As those leaves rustle in the breeze, the glow of bronze-green colors ripple with wind, surely making a show.

Look at those leaf shapes, so, so-many and they serve a purpose too. The long and narrow lanceolate; oval and flattened elliptic; shaped like a spatula, spatulate. The heart-shaped cordate; the kidney shaped reniform; or the fan shape flabellate. The leaf-runcinate, has deeply toothed, lobed margins.

An elaborate look. The teeth or lobes are triangular, curved backward & points to the base. E.G: Dandelion leaves, shaped so the leaves collect water competing with grass in the wild. Leaf shapes of pine trees are like needles; built so smaller, waxy cuticles will minimize water loss.

And shaped like a lyre is the lyrate leaf, like turnip, kale or radish. Seen everywhere in Broward FL is: Silver Buttonwood, *Conocarpus erectus var.sericeus* with velvet-soft silvery-gray leaves that are covered in fine hair; pleasing to look at.

But those added elements also serve a purpose to protect the leaf; they are drought and salt tolerant.

Leaves make food using sunlight, water drawn up from tree roots and carbon dioxide in a marvelous process called photosynthesis, usually happening in the middle part of leaves. Within the leaf on the top part there are chloroplasts or tiny cells called organelles which are responsible for: photosynthesis. The pigment chlorophyll captures light energy from sunlight as water comes up from the roots, meanwhile carbon dioxide goes through the stomata-which are tiny stomatal pores bordered by guard cells. These stomatal spaces open and close to regulate the intake of carbon dioxide for photosynthesis and transpiration-the release of oxygen and water vapor. By capturing sunlight, the leaf converts these inputs-water, light, carbon dioxide into glucose, the food for the plant, then releases oxygen as a by-product through the stomata.

Leaves mature, they transition to another purpose in nature, abscission or falling of leaves. Trees send ethylene gas to where leaves are attached, chlorophyll is removed, leaves go brown or change color like those trees preparing for winter. Also, they spread nutrients and moisture back into soils as: mulch, responsible for erosion control. Dead leaves provide homes to: spiders, worms, beetles, millipedes, mites-which supports birds & toads for food. Ants use leaf piles to create nutrient-rich fertile soils through their waste. A benefit to pollinators, butterflies and moths also disguise their cocoons and chrysalises in dead leaves. Major leaf bearers such as trees remove air pollutants through photosynthesis, supports soils as well helping to regulate water cycles. This is what nature gives us. People consume thousands of different products, linked to photosynthesis. Meats and dairy come from animals that were fed plant-based foods. Starchy grains are from photosynthesis dependent plants. Spices in supermarkets come from tree: leaves, root, bark, flower or a stem - all linked to photosynthesis.

Although 50-80% of earth's oxygen is generated by ocean plant life, healthy older trees will produce the most oxygen in neighborhoods. Leaves play a critical role absorbing carbon dioxide C02, a greenhouse gas that lessens climate change; leaves also give us the magic of creating oxygen gas-02, clean air and quality of life.

Pat Rossi MGV

FROM GARDEN TO KITCHEN

Pineapple plants, *Ananas comosus*, are a great addition to any garden. They can even successfully fruit in pots and containers. The long leaves are like serrated swords that help keep those larger lizards away. I have found that nothing tastes better than a fresh pineapple grown in your own garden. They almost require zero maintenance, this is a plant that I always just let Mother Nature care for. South Florida is the ideal climate to grow these beautiful bromeliads. They are very tolerant of dry conditions, but excessive wet conditions could cause root rot.

Did you know you can start your own pineapple plant just by propagating the top portion of the plant? So, don't just throw away the top of the pineapple of your store bought fruit, put it in water to root and plant the top crown. If it's in a container, it may take two years to produce fruit, but I promise you it's worth the wait. I allow my pineapples to ripen on the plant, but you can also remove earlier when it's a light green color and let it ripen off the plant.

This fruit is full of potassium, vitamin C and A. Most importantly it has bromelain which is an anti-inflammatory ingredient. This sweet treat is a lovely addition to any fruit smoothie, salad or cocktail garnish. All around this is a great essential for any South Florida garden.

By Jenal Menola, MGV

Click Here for more information on cultivating pineapples from UF/IFAS.

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Sources, Useful info on Leaves

Xerces.org/blog/Leave-the-leaves
Britannica.com/science/photosynthesis
Britannica.com/science/chloroplast
Nsf.gov/news-How plants tune their greenness to light quality
'Learn to recognize different types of leaf shapes' video
P. Rossi

Editor- Pat Rossi
Contributors-
Lorna Bravo
Stephen Deegan
Jenal Menola

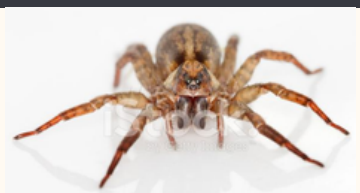
SPIDERS

BLACK WIDOW SPIDERS

WOLF SPIDERS

FOUND IN DARK

creepy but useful

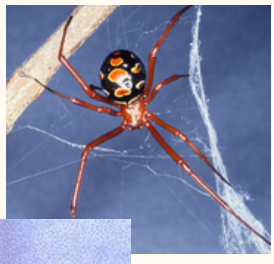


What are fast runners, found on the ground, is large and hairy? This could be a wolf spider. They're light brown and brownish-yellow, to tan. Wolf spiders can have a chevron [V-shaped] marking on the back of its abdomen. As well as two bands of black stripes from the eyes to the abdomen. On the sides are spots. On the legs, are bands of faint or distinct stripes. Males are lighter colored, smaller in size than females. They creep you out with 8 eyes. Some large, some small, they have excellent vision to spot prey. And looking at the gangly legs, some species start at ¼inch but reach up to 2inches. After mating, the female carries a ball of eggs on her back. The spiderlings hatch, living on mom's back, until they fend for themselves. Wolf spiders are found on the ground camouflaged in grass, within leaf piles or wooded areas. They shelter under rocks, logs, wood piles or debris. Or they're found in urban settings.

Some species of wolf spiders in Florida are the Carolina wolf spider, the Rabid, the Beach, the Field, and the Santa Rosa which live on coastal or scrub areas. Their homes are holes in the sand. Spiders are not insects, they're arachnids, under the Animal Kingdom called Arthropods. They're in the class with mites, ticks & scorpions; with two body areas that include a head, thorax, abdomen & 8 walking limbs.
https//www.blogs.ifas.ufl.edu:WolfSpiders

Spiders are beneficial, including wolf spiders, among the reasons are, they consume what we consider pests; chasing them or waiting for them to come – mosquitoes, flies, beetles, crickets, ants, earwigs and worms. Even eating vertebrates like lizards and frogs, given the opportunity. They're our natural pest control. Spiders control disease-carrying insects. Farmers benefit, as spiders prey on insects that damage crops. In the food chain spiders are food for birds, lizards, frogs, representing a balanced ecosystem. Wolf spiders will use tarsal leg claws to grab prey. Without teeth they use two front head fangs on either side of the mouth of the face to pierce, inject venom. This, in order to subdue, liquify or mash its prey. The so called 'sucking stomach' pulls in the meal.
https://www.Spider_Facts.tohonochul.org.

All but a few spiders are venomous, the best known are the web-builders. The widows with long legs size are up to 1.5in. Living in FL is the northern black widow & the red widow-both pictured. Living here is the brown widow and the southern black widow which possesses venom that's the most serious to humans. Normally they avoid humans, doing work to eradicate our pests, give them deserved appreciation instead of creepiness.



KEEPER

Pictured. Top: Wolf spider: free pingaa.com. On left to right: Black widow, Red widow spiders. https://www.fdacs.gov/Consumer-Resources/Health-and-Safety/Venomous-Spiders-in-Florida

BY
Pat Rossi MGV

Sources, Useful info on Spiders

https://www.edis.ifas.ufl.eduENY201/MG206:Spiders
https://www.ncbi.nim.nih.gov:Characterisation of protein families in spider digestive fluids
https://www.desertmuseum.org:Spiders
https://www.edis.ifas.ufl.edu:SouthernBlackWidow

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