

Extension Connection

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"UF IFAS Extension Citrus County"



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Extension Notes

Spring Things

Spring is in the air...and so is lots of pollen! Pollen though, and pollination, are essential elements supporting the food chain we rely on everyday. Learn more about your pollination partners in our article on butterfly gardening (p.2), and bees, in our Florida-Friendly Landscaping (FFL) section (p.5). Speaking of supporting the food chain, in our Agric. and Natural Resources section (p.6), we highlight some of the many programs offered by the Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences (FDACS), which agricultural producers rely on.

Food, and how to win the battle of the budget when food shopping is the topic of this issue's 'Living Well' section (p.8). And whilst it is important to take care of your health by growing, purchasing, and preparing healthy food, it is also very important that we take care of our environment, as it takes care of us. Our Earth Day article (p.10) and Nature Naturally (p.12) sections, highlight ways in which we can take care of the planet that we rely on, not only for food, but also water and shelter. Speaking of Earth Day, be sure to join us at the Extension office for our annual Earth Day Expo and Trash-to-Treasure contest celebration on 4/26/25, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Other tips on how to help your part of the planet thrive are offered in our 'Spring Gardening' calendar (p.19), and through our FFL and Master Gardener Library Series (details on p.13-14). Be sure to check out our other classes and events: Living Well FCS seminars, as well as themed youth summer camps (details on pp.15-18).

As always, we express heartfelt appreciation for your continued support of the UF/IFAS Extension mission in Citrus County.

We're here to help you find "solutions for your life."

Your Citrus County Extension Team!



UF/IFAS Extension

Solutions for Your Life

URBAN HORTICULTURE

BUTTERFLY GARDENS

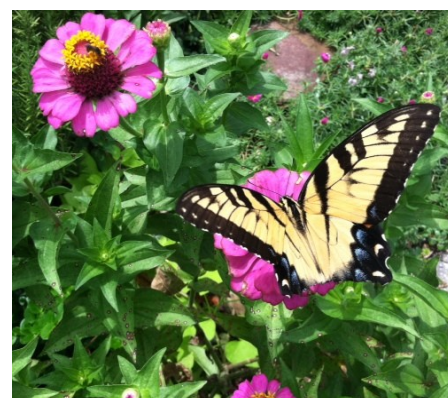
Marguerite Beckford, Director and Horticulture Agent



Gardening for butterflies can be a rewarding experience. More than 180 species of butterflies call Florida 'home', and some of them are native to Florida. To ensure the success of your butterfly garden, it must offer plants which provide food sources for the adult and larval/caterpillar stages, and many native plants are larval hosts. Your garden design checklist should include: adult nectar plants, larval/caterpillar host plants, a sheltered vegetative area for shade/protection, and a clean source of water/moisture.

It is always best to include as wide an assorted variety of butterfly plants as possible, which will help to ensure that your garden will always have something blooming for a nectar source. In addition to a variety of flower colors, varying flower-shapes is also important. Incorporating a variety of plant-sizes is helpful for creating vegetation layers which provide shelter and shade for butterflies. Water sources in butterfly gardens include shallow dishes with moist sand and rocks, to provide 'puddling' spots for butterflies.

In Florida, butterfly season ranges from March to June in northern and central regions, and extends to November in southern regions. To support a thriving butterfly population, it is important to use pesticides sparingly, and avoid using chemicals which are harmful to butterfly adult and larval/caterpillar stages, as well as other beneficial insects such as natural predators.



[left to right: Monarch Butterfly, Gulf Fritillary, Tiger Swallowtail; Photos: UF/IFAS]

(Continued on page 3)

UF/IFAS Extension

Solutions for Your Life

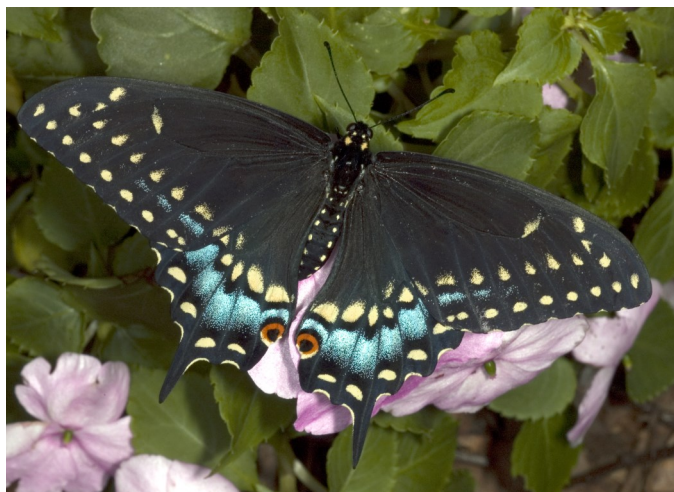
URBAN HORTICULTURE

(continued from page 2) BUTTERFLY GARDENS

For tips about designing your own butterfly garden, **register for our seminar on Apr. 12, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** Registration includes three starter plants for your butterfly garden! Click on this registration [link](#).

Other UF/IFAS Extension butterfly gardening resources include::

- [Butterfly Garden Native Plants](#)
- [Butterfly Gardening](#)
- [Identifying Butterflies](#)
- [Designing a Butterfly Garden](#)



[Top - left to right: Blue Morpho, Zebra Longwing; Bottom - left to right: Black Swallowtail, White Peacock; Photos: UF/IFAS]

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™

Florida-Friendly Roadmap

GARDEN BEES VISITING FLORIDA LANDSCAPES

Steven Davis, FFL Program Coordinator



Bees visiting Florida landscapes may be naturalized exotic visitors like the European honey bee or native pollinating bees, with around 300 different species inhabiting north or central Florida locations. Temperatures in southern Florida limit the expansion of native bee populations as the environment is less appealing, and removal of habitat and nectar sources continues to increase.

Bumble bees are common ground nesters with five species visiting Florida gardens. Many of these *Bombus* species are generalist pollinators. Female bumble bees mate in the Fall, burrow into sandy undisturbed locations, and emerge in the Spring to find a suitable nesting site for the small colony they create of 50-400 members that may visit your Florida landscape.



American Bumblebee



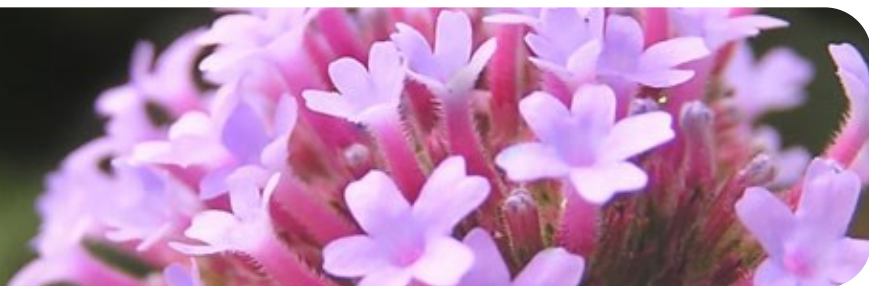
Sweat bee

The sweat bee (*Halictidae* spp.), is a very common visitor to gardens, with 44 species active in Florida. The sweat bees are recognized by the black, green, or blue, shiny metallic luster on their exoskeleton. Named for their attraction to perspiration, the sweat bee is a dynamic pollinator of Florida wildflowers with an attraction to pome fruits, like apple and peach.

(Continued on page 5)

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™

Florida-Friendly Roadmap



(continued from page 4) GARDEN BEES VISITING FLORIDA LANDSCAPES

Blueberry bees appear as a smaller version of the American bumble bee. This bee is a specialized pollinator seeking to visit its favorite flower for only a few weeks in Winter and Spring when blooms appear. Buzz pollinating is performed by this insect, entering and shaking the flower, dusting itself with pollen to transport to the next flower for pollination. Timing is essential as temperatures, rainfall, flower production and bee lifecycles must coincide for successful pollination of the blueberry crop.



Mason bee nest

A year round food source is optimal, although difficult to offer visiting pollinators. Plant diversity, flower structure, mature flower height and a pool of water, will help attract native pollinators. Attempt to leave some unmanaged areas for ground nesting bees, not to be confused with yellow jacket wasps. Un-mulched native or grassy areas with undisturbed soil in the landscape would satisfy a bumblebee as Spring emerges. Some bees construct shelters out of cut leaves and mud.



European honey bee

Artificial houses made of bamboo tubes offer housing for mason bees, another good pollinator. Mix or plant wildflower varieties suitable for central Florida. Flowers with disk shapes like black-eyed Susan, Coreopsis, or “daisy-like” flowers offer a pedestal for many pollinators to land on, enabling collection of nectar and pollen. To be pollinator-friendly in the garden, we apply pesticides wisely including utilize pruning shears to remove pests from flowering plants, and wait until the plant has finished flowering before applying pesticides. If a pesticide application is necessary, make the application at night with a ‘low residual’ pesticide when most pollinators are safe at home.

Learn more about garden wildflowers by visiting the webpage below:

<https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/ornamentals/wildflowers-in-the-garden/>

RURAL & FAMILY LANDS PROTECTION PROGRAM

Alyssa Schortinghouse, Agriculture/Natural Resources



The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) offers vital conservation programs, including the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program (RFLPP), and the Forest Legacy Program, designed to preserve the state's agricultural and forested landscapes. Both programs work to protect Florida's natural resources through voluntary conservation easements that support sustainable agriculture and forestry practices. The RFLPP focuses on safeguarding working farms, ranches, and rural landscapes from development, ensuring that these lands continue to provide environmental benefits such as wildlife habitat, water filtration, and carbon sequestration. Similarly, the Forest Legacy Program aims to conserve forestlands that are vital to Florida's ecosystem, economy, and biodiversity, helping landowners protect their properties from fragmentation and development. Together, these programs support the state's agricultural and forestry industries, enhance wildlife habitats, and preserve the beauty and ecological health of Florida for future generations.



Photo: Courtesy of UF/IFAS Photo Database

Rural and Family Lands Protection Program

The RFLPP focuses on acquiring conservation easements from landowners who wish to preserve their land for agricultural use and natural resource conservation. In exchange for a financial incentive, landowners agree to limit certain types of development on their property, ensuring that the land will continue to provide critical ecosystem services such as wildlife habitat, water filtration, and carbon sequestration. The program prioritizes land that supports sustainable agriculture, protects native habitats, and contributes to the overall environmental health of Florida. This program has already benefited Citrus County, when the Triple S was accepted into the program.

To qualify for this program, the following conditions must be met:

- **Land Ownership:** The property must be owned by a private individual, family, or entity.
- **Agricultural Use:** The land must be primarily used for agricultural purposes, such as farming, ranching, or forestry.
- **Location:** Properties should be located in rural areas and contribute to the preservation of working landscapes or sensitive ecosystems.

(Continued on page 7)

(continued from page 6) *RURAL & FAMILY LANDS PROTECTION PROGRAM*

- **Size of Property:** There is no minimum size requirement, but larger properties with significant agricultural or environmental value are prioritized.
- **Willingness to Participate:** The landowner must voluntarily agree to place a conservation easement on the property.
- **Environmental Benefits:** The land should provide environmental benefits such as wildlife habitat, water conservation, or ecological value.
- **Sustainability:** The Land must support long-term agricultural sustainability and be able to continue its current use after the easement is in place.

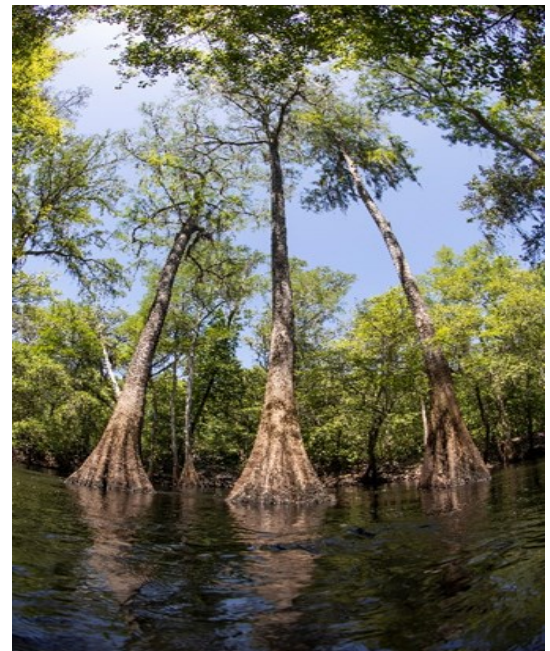
FDACS Forest Legacy Program

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Forest Legacy Program works to conserve important forestlands across the state. The program helps landowners protect their forested properties through conservation easements or land acquisition, ensuring these vital resources remain intact for future generations. By preserving forests, the program supports wildlife habitats, water quality, and sustainable forestry practices.

To qualify for this program, the following conditions must be met:

- **Land Ownership:** Must be privately owned.
- **Forested Land:** Property should consist of forested land or be suitable for sustainable forestry.
- **Location:** Priority is given to lands that protect water resources, wildlife habitats, and key landscapes.
- **Willingness to Participate:** Landowners must voluntarily agree to conservation easements or sell their land.
- **Environmental and Economic Value:** Land must offer significant ecological or economic benefits, such as biodiversity protection or timber production.

In summary, the FDACS Forest Legacy and Rural and Family Lands Protection Programs are essential for preserving Florida's natural resources, agricultural economy, and rural communities. By partnering with landowners, these programs protect forests, farms, and ranches, supporting wildlife conservation and sustainable land use. They ensure Florida's natural beauty and agricultural productivity are safeguarded for future generations, promoting long-term environmental and economic health.



Photos: Courtesy of UF/IFAS Photo Database



EMPOWERING FAMILIES THROUGH SMART GROCERY SHOPPING

Stephanie McMinds, Family & Consumer Sciences Agent



Grocery shopping is a routine task that significantly impacts household budgets, nutrition, and overall well-being. Making informed decisions can help stretch your dollar while providing nutritious meals for your family. Here are some practical strategies to help you shop smarter and make the most of every trip to the store.

Plan Before You Shop

Creating a meal plan and shopping list before heading to the store can prevent impulse purchases and reduce food waste. Plan meals based on what's on sale and what you already have at home. Utilize store flyers, coupons, and discount apps to find the best deals on nutritious options.



Stick to Nutrient-Dense Foods

Prioritize whole grains, lean proteins, fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables, and dairy or dairy alternatives. These foods provide essential nutrients and are often more cost-effective than processed or pre-packaged options. Buying in bulk and selecting store-brand items can also help save money.

Understand Food Labels

Learning how to read and interpret food labels can help you make healthier choices. Look for items lower in added sugars, sodium, and unhealthy fats. Compare unit prices to ensure you're getting the best value per ounce or serving.

(Continued on page 9)



(continued from page 8) *EMPOWERING FAMILIES THROUGH SMART GROCERY SHOPPING*

Reduce Food Waste

Store food properly to extend shelf life and get creative with leftovers to minimize waste. Consider freezing extra portions or repurposing ingredients in new meals. Reducing waste not only saves money but also helps the environment.

Take Advantage of Local Resources

Many communities offer programs to support families in making healthy food choices. Farmers' markets, food co-ops, and extension services provide access to fresh, affordable produce and offer educational resources on nutrition and budgeting.

Bringing It All Together: Smart Shopping in Action

Putting these strategies into practice can transform grocery shopping from a stressful chore into an opportunity to nourish your family while staying within your budget. Consider involving family members in the process—kids can help plan meals, compare prices, or even learn how to read food labels. Teaching these skills early helps instill lifelong habits of mindful spending and healthy eating.



At UF/IFAS Extension Citrus County, we offer resources to support smart grocery shopping, meal planning, and nutrition education. Join one of our upcoming workshops www.eventbrite.com/o/ufifas-extension-citrus-county-9852726659

By applying these strategies, families can make grocery shopping a more efficient, economical, and health-conscious experience—one cart at a time!





CITRUS COUNTY 4-H

MAKING THE BEST BETTER

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES: EARTH DAY IS EVERY DAY!

Dr. Marnie Ward, 4-H Agent



Water, Air, and Soil are the foundations of all living systems and the organisms they grow. Ensuring their quality and quantity is a human duty and responsibility to future generations. With the first Earth Day in 1970, citizens around the country came together to bring attention to environmental issues. As a result of those early efforts, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) was created, and legislation was passed in Congress to proactively protect and preserve natural resources.

Why do they matter?

Water - a compound made of hydrogen and oxygen atoms that occurs in three forms on Earth. Water can be a solid, liquid, or a gas. Water is an essential nutrient for all living organisms. In fact, plants are about 80% water, and the human body is roughly 60% water. Water is responsible for controlling body temperature, transporting nutrients, and removing waste.



Air - the atmosphere of the Earth is composed of a mixture of invisible, odorless gases, primarily nitrogen (78%) and oxygen (21%) with trace amounts of other gases. Oxygen is essential for living organisms. Consequently, air quality is critical for human health. Plants also need oxygen to carry out physiological processes, ensuring abundant crop yields.

Soil - a mixture of minerals, organic matter, water, and air, it forms from the weathering of parent rock or the breakdown of organic materials. This thin layer of material stretches across the globe; it provides an anchor for plants and trees, transports nutrients, filters water and is the environment for farmers to grow the crops that feed the world.

What can I do?

Water – is a universal solvent, which means almost everything dissolves in it. Water can be easily contaminated because fertilizers, pesticides, or other chemicals that get on the ground, become mobilized. As water (rainfall) moves across the surface of the Earth, contaminants are transported to rivers, lakes, oceans, and sometimes to groundwater.



(Continued on page 11)



CITRUS COUNTY 4-H

MAKING THE BEST BETTER

(continued from page 10) EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES: EARTH DAY IS EVERY DAY!!

- Be mindful of the number and amounts of items discarded or thrown away.
- Dispose of waste properly by recycling and landfilling.
- Follow science-based fertilizer and pesticide recommendations.

Air – is a carrier/transporter for gases and particles and can easily be contaminated by emissions from vehicles, industry, and burning of fossil fuels. For particles, the smaller the size, the greater the distance they are carried. Similarly, gaseous pollutants may be carried long distances in response to wind and weather patterns.



- Try alternatives to driving for short trips. Walking and biking are options with other health benefits.
- Learn about public transportation options in your area.
- Follow manufacturer recommendations for vehicle maintenance.

Soil – is a foundation for terrestrial ecosystems and supports plants, trees, animals, and other organisms. Soil can be contaminated by runoff (see the previous section on Water), land application of wastes and solids, or accidental spills of chemicals or substances. Soils are susceptible to erosion and loss when not managed properly.

Importantly, the soil may also function as a filter for some pollutants.

- Advocate for soils in your area by learning more about their roles in the environment.
- Minimize erosion and runoff in your yard.
- Create a compost pile for your home use and apply the finished product to your yard. This naturally replenishes nutrients and organic matter.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has a wealth of resources for everyone to learn more about the environment. So, check out the USEPA page for ideas and then get outside and get started. <https://www.epa.gov/students/games-quizzes-and-videos-about-environment>



Citrus County 4-H is committed to promoting, preserving, and protecting natural resources locally, across the state, throughout the country, and across the world. Youth and volunteers investing together in the future. Contact the 4-H Office to learn more about our programming.

NATURE NATURALLY

BUY LESS, CHOOSE WELL, MAKE IT LAST

Choosing to consume less, buying responsibly, and promoting efficiency, can lead to positive lifestyle changes. In homes, schools, and communities, people have the power to choose the life they lead, but also the quality of the environments they leave for the next generation. As populations grow, natural environments change. In less than 60 years, the world population has doubled from < 4 billion in 1970 to just over 8 billion in 2024. That means availability of fewer natural resources, water, soil, forests, and an increased demand for food, housing, and consumer goods. Here are some interesting facts:



- 1 of every 10 Americans rents storage space outside of their home.
- The median size of a single-family home in 2022 was 2,299 square feet.
- The average U.S. home contains 300,000 items.
- The average American owns 30 outfits.
- The average American throws away 68 lbs. of clothing and textiles each year.
- The average American family spends \$120/month on clothing.
- 28% of landfilled waste is packaging and containers.

What steps can your family take:

Buy less – Make decisions around purchases intentional. Ask yourself, do I need this item, or do I want it? Buy what is needed, so you reduce what is thrown away. Shopping online? Give it a test: put the item in your cart and if you still need it after one week then buy it.

Choose well – Invest in durable, high-quality products when you can. Plan for big purchases, set a budget, and wait for sales. Recognize impulse buying and resist the urge. Choose to ignore the impulses and stop buying storage space.

Make it last – Purchase items with the least amount of packaging. Packaging is made from raw materials that are sourced from natural resources. Less packaging means more natural resources conserved.

These are some of the steps to living a more sustainable and (practical) lifestyle. Where can you and your family learn more?

- Nature Conservancy <https://shorturl.at/u34aX>
- United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) <https://www.epa.gov/sustainability>

Gardening Seminar:

hosted online and in-person - you choose

Register here for these free seminars: <https://ccufflprogram.eventbrite.com>



"Palms in Central Florida"

Tuesday Apr 08
2:00 - 4:00 pm

"Right plant Right place"

Tuesday Apr 22
2:00 - 4:00 pm

"Lawns in Central Florida"

Tuesday May 06
2:00 - 4:00 pm

"9 Florida-Friendly Principles"

Tuesday May 20
2:00 - 4:00 pm

"Invasive and Nuisance Plants"

Tuesday Jun 10
2:00 - 4:00 pm

"Pollinator and Butterfly Gardens"

Tuesday Jun 24
2:00 - 4:00 pm



UF IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA



SAVE THE DATE

9th ANNUAL PLANT SALE

**Saturday October 18, 2025
8:30am - 12:30pm**

UF/IFAS Extension Citrus County, 3650 W. Sovereign Path, Lecanto, FL 34461



**No pets allowed.
Trained service animals only.**



APRIL, MAY, JUNE



Monthly Extension Master Gardener Seminars

Programs offer an opportunity to explore timely garden topics at these seminars offered at each Citrus County Library. No registration required for in person seminars. All programs start at 1 pm, last approximately 1 hour, and are **free**.

ZOOM seminar: pre-register on our Facebook page for the secure link.

April: Water, Water Everywhere—But is it?

May: What a Lawn Should Do

**June: Everything You Want to Know About Citrus County Gardening
(But Were Afraid to ask?)**

1st Monday	Lakes Regional Library	Inverness
2nd Wednesday	Central Ridge Library	Beverly Hills
2nd Thursday	Citrus Springs Library	Citrus Springs
3rd Wednesday	Floral City Library	Floral City
4th Monday	Coastal Regional	Crystal River
4th Thursday	Homosassa Library	Homosassa
3rd Monday	ZOOM —Pre-register on our Facebook page!	

Bring plant problems and questions for expert advice to the Extension office.

Trained Master Gardeners are available most days between 8am - 5pm.

Schedules can vary, so please call ahead (352-527-5700).

Additionally, challenges (pictures are helpful) can be emailed to:

IF-SVC-citrusmg@ad.ufl.edu

CITRUS COUNTY FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

April 1st – Cooking for 1 or 2 at Homosassa Library (10:30 AM)

Free program to learn how to prepare and shop for a meal for 1 or 2 along with a cooking demo.

April 7th – Cottage Food Workshop Part 1: Pear Apple Jam at Canning Center (5:00 PM)

First of a two-part program teaching the implementation of Florida Cottage Food Operations and product creation. Cost is \$40.00, which includes registration and supplies for both Part 1 and Part 2.

April 10th – Water Bath Canning: Grape Marmalade at Canning Center (10:00 AM)

Learn the process of water bath canning safely by making grape jam. Cost is \$20.00. All supplies included.

April 21st – Energy Efficient Living at Coastal Region Library (1:00 PM)

Free program with guidance on energy efficient living.

April 21st – Cottage Food Workshop Part 2: Spice Blends and Infused Oils at Extension Office (6:00 PM)

Continuation of the Cottage Food Workshop.

April 26th – Earth Day Expo at Extension Office (10:00 AM)

Free outdoor event with fun for the whole family. Come enjoy music, food trucks, the Trash to Treasure Recycled Art Contest, and more!

April 29th – Air Fryer Cooking Demo at Floral City Library (10:30 AM)

Learn how to properly use an air fryer to create delicious, healthy dishes at this free program.

May 7th – Cooking Under Pressure at Canning Center (11:00 AM)

Learn how to properly use an electric pressure cooker and air fryer to prepare a meal to enjoy at this cooking program. Cost is \$20.00. All supplies included.

May 9th – Air Fryer Cooking Demo at Lakes Region Library (10:30 AM)

Learn how to properly use an air fryer to create delicious dishes at this free program.

May 20th – Cheesemaking Class at Canning Center (1:00 PM)

Learn the home cheesemaking process with this hands-on program. Cost is \$20.00. All supplies included.

May 21st – Making Mocktails Demo at Central Ridge Library (1:00 PM)

A free program showcasing the preparation of tasty, alcohol-free beverages to sample.

May 30th – Adult Culinary Series: Tailgating at Extension Office (11:00 AM)

Learn how to properly and safely use grilling tools and methods to create a tailgating spread. Cost is \$30.00. All supplies included.

June 7th – End of School Dinner and a Movie at Canning Center (3:00 PM)

Celebrate the start of summer by preparing a meal to enjoy and watching a family-friendly movie. For all ages! Cost is \$10.00 per person.

June 10th through 12th – Youth Tailgating Summer Camp

June 16th through 20th – Future Heroes Summer Camp

More details to come regarding summer camps.

For more information or to register for any of our currently available programs:
visit <https://tinyurl.com/bdfpjt6v> or scan the QR code.



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2025 TRASH TO TREASURE



RECYCLED ART CONTEST



All Entries on Display: APRIL 14th – APRIL 25th
CITRUS COUNTY COURTHOUSE LOBBY
110 North Apopka Avenue, Inverness

**CHECK OUT THE ART & THEN
VOTE FOR YOUR FAVORITE ENTRY!**

**ONE
VOTE
PER
PERSON
PLEASE**

**12:00 PM
April 25th**

**VOTING
ENDS!**

**MON
APRIL
7TH**

**SUBMISSION
DEADLINE**

**SAT
APRIL
26TH**

**UF/IFAS EXTENSION EARTH DAY EXPO
WINNERS & CASH PRIZES
PRESENTED @ 12.00 PM**

WANT TO ENTER?

**SCAN
HERE!**



UF | **IFAS Extension**
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY INSTITUTION



CONSERVE RECYCLE SUSTAIN

RAIN
OR
SHINE

2025 EARTH DAY EXPO

FREE
EVENT

SATURDAY, APRIL 26TH 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

*"TRASH TO TREASURE" RECYCLED ART CONTEST DISPLAY
FUN ACTIVITIES FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY
"ASK A MASTER GARDENER" & MUCH, MUCH MORE!*

UF/IFAS EXTENSION CITRUS COUNTY
3650 WEST SOVEREIGN PATH, LECANTO
(352) 527-5700



Trained service animals only, please.

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CITRUS COUNTY 4-H

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4-H at the Library

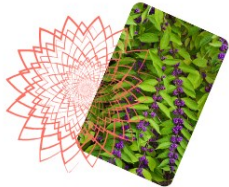
Citrus Eco Art

LAKES REGION LIBRARY

(INVERNESS)

2PM-3:30PM

JUNE 12, 19, 26



Citrus Eco Art
Mandala



Citrus Eco Art
Leather Working



CENTRAL RIDGE LIBRARY

(BEVERLY HILLS)

10:30AM-12PM

JUNE 13, 20, 27



Citrus Eco Art
Flowers

UF | IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
Equal Opportunity



Citrus LIBRARIES
Discover. Learn. Engage.



4-H CAMP CHRISTMAS IN JULY

Let's do Christmas creating in July! One day only!

Campers will need:

- Lunch
- Comfortable clothes (school appropriate)
- Closed toed shoes



July 21, 2025

8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Ages 8-14

- > Checks payable to:
Citrus County 4-H Association
Cost: \$10.00
Cost includes all materials, take-aways, afternoon snack

Location:

UF/IFAS Extension Office
3650 W. Sovereign Path Ste 1
Tecanto, FL 34461-8070

For more information contact:



Toni Noaker
352-527-5722
tnoaker@ufl.edu

Spring Gardening Calendar

What to Plant

Color in the Garden: When we mention color, we are often referring to annuals and perennials. Don't be tempted by late offerings of winter color at garden centers as high temperatures will burn them up quickly. Belamcanda or Blackberry-lily, Bletilla (ground orchid), improved varieties of Clerodendrum (avoid the regular species which is invasive!). These unusual ones are in addition to the tried and true Echinacea, Gaillardia, Gaura, Day-lily, Angelonia, salvia, and Coreopsis.

Herbs: Plant heat-loving herbs, including basil, oregano, sage, Mexican tarragon, and rosemary (evergreen shrub can be planted year-round). Ginger performs well in warm months, but is not the spectacular bloomer of other ginger fame. Plant this one in the back of the garden as a green foil to other plants.



Bletilla



The hybrid *Crinum X powellii*, or Cape Lilly

Bulbs: Summer blooming bulbs include: blood lily, caladium, and canna. A bold statement can be made with tall purple or white agapanthus. Crinum is another tall plant (3-3.5') producing spectacular white to pink blooms.

Vegetables: Continue planting warm-season crops such as tomato, pepper, cucumber, melon, and green beans until summer. As summer approaches, only a few will perform well, including eggplant, southern (dried) peas, sweet potato, and okra. Mulch well to moderate soil temperatures, to prevent weeds, and conserve moisture if rainfall is lacking.

(Continued on page 20)

(continued from page 19) SPRING GARDENING

What to Do

Pests: Monitor landscape plants for aphids and thrips that feed on tender new growth. Be sure you properly identify pests before treating, as there are also beneficial insects present in the garden. These insects should be encouraged in your yard!

Lawn: Apply fertilizer after new growth has started, sticking to the guidelines of the Citrus County fertilizer ordinance. Avoid using a 'weed and feed' product. For lawn problems, before applying fertilizer or pesticides, monitor cultural problems, such as lack of soil moisture, that can mimic other problems like pests and disease.

As temperatures increase, St. Augustine grasses are often plagued with chinch bugs, especially along paved edges. Contact the Plant Clinic for identification strategies. Assure mower deck is set at 3-4" for optimal growth and to help produce a summer-resilient lawn.

Once regular summer rains begin, irrigation systems can be reset to manual mode, to avoid wasting money and natural resources, and contributing to disease.

Shrubs and trees: Choose a Florida-friendly plant; water adequately to get them well established, and once most woody plants adapted to this area are fully established, they typically don't need extra watering. Cap off irrigation heads or turn off zones that irrigate areas with only woody plants.

Watch for spring-bloomers, such as fringe-tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*), Saucer Magnolia, and redbud (*Cercis canadensis*). The spectacular Taiwan Cherry blooms in mid-March.

Gardenias: Yellowing of older leaves is usually normal; yellowing of new growth indicates a micronutrient deficiency. At garden centers, look for a complete or balanced fertilizer, labeled for gardenias or acid-loving plants.

Mulch: Optimal depth for mulch is 2-3". Add mulch to minimize weeds and conserve moisture during dry weather. Avoid rubber or rock mulches as they add no nutritive value and can intensify the summer heat.

For specific gardening information, be sure to contact us—352-527-5700