

Extension Connection

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"UF IFAS Extension Citrus County"



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Extension Notes

BJ Jarvis, Extension Director

Welcome 2021!!!!!!

Oh! Are we glad to see 2021 arrive! The beginning of a New Year is a time to reflect on the possibilities of the coming year. Resolutions typically focus on making us better people.

Be sure to check out Sarah's article on health and wealth on page 8. Help children to find a new hobby with Marnie's article starting on page 9.

If you are in the agriculture business, read Clay's article on increasing the efficiency of pesticide application through proper broadcast sprayer calibration. Steven writes about lawn management, and I (BJ) have an article on what to do in shady areas where grass doesn't grow well.

Extension learned a great deal about shifting to newer methods of communicating in 2020. As we move into 2021, we'll keep what works well, bring back what we can, and will look for new opportunities to serve our county in 2021.

Sincerely, BJ



Turf Alternatives - When Grass Just Won't Grow

BJ Jarvis, Director and Horticulture Agent



Grass has its place in most landscapes but it may not be the one for you, or the right plant in the right spot. So often citizens contact the plant clinic with bare spots or other turf struggles only to find that the conditions are not conducive to growing grass. There are options for those areas.

Shady areas are the most problematic for a thick stand of grass, with a never-ending battle of weeds and bare soil. No amount of watering or fertilizing will make grass grow with less than six (6) hours of bright sunlight. Even for so-called shade-tolerant species.

If the area is not large, mulch under a tree or beside your structure may be a good alternative. When there is a rather large expanse however, a plant substitute may be a better solution.

Groundcovers

Mondo-grass is superb in shady locations. Growing only about 3-4" tall, even tolerating some foot traffic, Mondo-grass creates a lush, non-manicured appearance. Mondo also comes in a dark (black?)-leaved form.

Looking for a bit of color? Consider thyme. With its fragrant foliage, thyme grows well between stepping stones and sports pink to lavender flowers for added interest.

Asiatic jasmine also thrives in a shady location. This quick growing groundcover is both drought-tolerant and very cold tolerant. The only challenge with this low maintenance ground cover is that it is a bit slow to establish. Filling in will take more than one year, seeming to sit in suspended animation that first year, before really taking off. During that time, keep up with the weeds that grow between the plants. In subsequent years, jasmine will create a dense ground cover that typically outcompetes weeds. A bonus for gardeners that receive a bit of coastal water spray is jasmine's salt tolerance.

Dark leaved Mondo-grass



Thyme



(Continued on page 3)

UF/IFAS Extension

Solutions for Your Life

URBAN HORTICULTURE

(continued from page 2) TURF ALTERNATIVES

Larger plants

Cast Iron plant is a great turf alternative in shady areas. Growing about 12" tall, this plant really earns its common name. You can choose green or variegated foliage for this sturdy, drought-tolerant plant.

Azaleas are a great option if you have room. Winter-spring blooming really makes a darker landscape spot pop with color. There are also repeat bloomers that will give sporadic color through the growing season.

Coontie is a durable ancient species. Very low-maintenance, drought tolerant and supports the Atala butterfly, a threatened specie throughout Florida.

Gingers are another taller plant that appreciates the shade of a tall tree. Available in variegated forms, their unusual flowers are also a welcome addition to the garden. Just remember that it is common for these to die-back to the ground in winter.

So quit banging your head on that (garden) wall trying to make grass grow in spots that are not suitable. Check out some of these options, or check out over 200 plants in the Plant Selection Guide @ https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/FYN_Plant_Selection_Guide_2015.pdf

Coontie



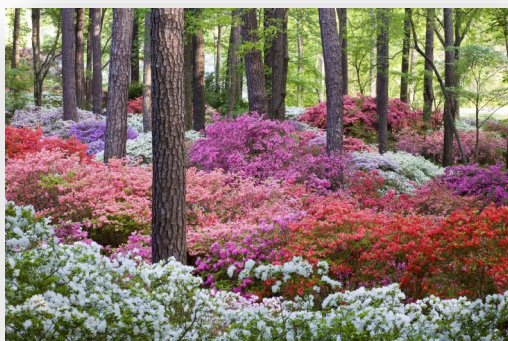
Variegated Ginger



Cast Iron Plant



Azalea



Florida-Friendly Landscaping™

Florida-Friendly Roadmap



Acres of Change for the Florida Lawn

Steven Davis, FFL Program Coordinator



Management of the Florida lawn is complicated with the best strategies being selecting the proper grass, commitment to maintenance and the expectations of what a perfect lawn might be. The best Florida Friendly strategy may be in reducing the amount of grass in our landscapes, lowering cost of care and impact on water resources. Less grass may also allow for a higher quality lawn. Targeting your cost for weed, insect, nutrition, mechanical and water management to a smaller space.

Green grass offers competition to weed invaders. Selecting the right lawn grass to establish in the right spot begins the quest for a healthy lawn. Clumping grasses, like bahia grass, provide open voids between the clumps enabling opportunity for weed born seed germination. Excessive moisture for higher maintenance grasses may encourage water-loving weeds, like nut sedge and dollar weed to thrive. The amount of sunlight exposure, at least 6 hours for lawn grasses, affects lawn quality. After competition provided by an established turf, a timely application of a barrier creating pre-emergent herbicide early in the spring will reduce germination of weed seed invaders. Targeted application of post emergent herbicides may be necessary to control established weeds, but applied only when less harmful strategies have failed.

Insect invaders are another obstacle to consider. A healthy lawn will tolerate some insect activity. Certain bugs, prefer certain plants. Avoiding the costly control of damaging pest populations may be easily avoided by the proper selection of the appropriate grass variety. Chinch bugs target St. Augustine grass, grubs and mole crickets are typically seen in Bahia grass, spittle bugs in Zoysia. Minimizing the lawn space and selection of tolerant or resistant varieties will reduce the cost of pest management and replacement costs of failed turfgrass spaces.

Chinch Bug

Photo credit:
Lyle Buss, UF/IFAS



Tawny Mole Cricket

Photo credit:
T. J. Walker, University of Florida



Spittlebug: nymph (A) and adult (B)

Photo credit: James Castner, UF/IFAS



(Continued on page 5)

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™

Florida-Friendly Roadmap

(continued from page 4) LAWN MANAGEMENT

Fertilize plants when they are actively growing or showing signs of deficiency. Lawns are plants too. Lawns may require nutrients when actively growing, but by the end of September, the garden is pumping the brakes and stalling until temperatures climb in the spring. Applying nitrogen containing fertilizer late in the season with cold and freezing temperatures approaching can significantly damage ornamental turf once damaging temperatures arrive. Appropriate soil pH can affect a lawn's competitive qualities. Testing the soil pH should be done to see if costly nutrients applied will be soluble and effective or potentially damaging to water resources when not collected and filtered by the plant.

Mowing and mechanical care of a lawn is another cost to consider. Mow your grass at the highest appropriate height. Sharpen the blades regularly to minimize tearing the grass blades creating ragged wounds for damaging diseases to enter. Scout for potential pests regularly and clean equipment after each mowing. Avoid mowing areas displaying decline to reduce the spread of disease, weed seed and insects to other areas often trailing on cutting deck and mower tires.

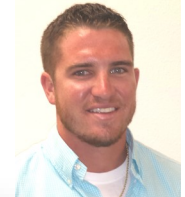


The amount of supplemental water for irrigation use is reduced when we minimize lawn spaces. When evaluating water use in Florida, up to 70% of the water used domestically is for landscape use when automated irrigation is used. During autumn and winter the frequency of irrigation cycles should be reduced as temperatures cool or eliminated if freezing temperatures are expected. Once a month watering of high maintenance lawns is adequate during the coldest parts of winter. Water lingers in the winter landscape and can promote root damage and limit gas exchange in the soil profile damaging a healthy, yet dormant lawn.

Ideally, lawn space should be only functional, enabling movement through the landscape. To conserve outdoor water use and reduce maintenance costs, covering no more than 60% of the area with grass is appropriate when creating a Florida Friendly Landscape. Caring for a lawn in Florida's sandy soil is complicated. Reducing the amount of lawn space in Florida's landscape makes sense when considering the high cost of care and replacement of the 'perfect Florida lawn'.

The Importance of Calibrating Broadcast Sprayer: Small errors can have major impacts!

Clay Cooper, Agriculture Agent



Production agriculture is plagued by many challenges today that ultimately impact the profitability and sustainability of operations across the country. Agriculturalists are faced with rising feed, seed, fertilizer, and equipment costs while commodity pricing has stayed stagnant. Couple this with the pressure from rural urban interface, increased environmental regulations, and anti-agriculture sentiment, today's agricultural producers are faced with adversity far beyond the traditional production challenges. This has placed producers across the country in a position to analyze management practices and find ways to improve overall efficiencies to best remain sustainable and profitable.

One of the production practices that is often examined is the management of weeds within agricultural production systems. Weeds present a major challenge as they compete with crops, may be poisonous to livestock, sometimes are invasive, and often reduce profitability. It has been estimated that weeds cost ranchers statewide over \$180 million annually. Couple this with the increased pressure from consumers for reduced pesticide use, producers often find themselves examining their management practices to combat weeds in the most efficient and environmentally sustainable way.

Though producers have managed to do this extremely well for many years, a Nebraska study indicates that there is room for improvement when it comes to the efficient application of pesticides. According to the study, 2 out of every 3 applicators were above 5% of their targeted application rate. Though 5% may seem like a small margin of error, it can have major negative economic impacts. On the following page, we will look at the economic impact of both over and under applications.

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(continued from page 6) CALIBRATION

Over application:

It should come as no surprise that the over application of any product will have a negative economic impact associated with it. In terms of an over application, more product is applied than necessarily required resulting in an increase of input costs without any additional return. The following table shows the impact of a 10% over application on a sliding acreage scale:

Material Cost	Over application	Acreage	Additional Expense
\$15/A	10%	100	\$150
\$15/A	10%	1,000	\$1,500
\$15/A	10%	5,000	\$7,500

(material cost per acre X over application % X acreage = additional cost)

This example illustrates just the economic deficit from the standpoint of material costs and does not consider any possible crop damage. These additional expenses can be avoided with proper calibration ultimately impacting the bottom line of an operation.

Under application:

Under applications can be just as costly if not more. In the case of an under application if the use rate is too low, the targeted pest may not be controlled, and the total application will be a loss. Combined with the potential yield loss, increased field traffic, fuel, equipment, labor, and additional chemical costs, under applications can have a major economic impact to an operation. The following table shows the economic impact of an under application event requiring a second application:

Material Cost	Acreage	Additional Expense
\$15/A	100	\$1,500
\$15/A	500	\$7,500
\$15/A	1,000	\$15,000

(material cost per acre X acreage = additional expense)

This example illustrates just the economic deficit from the standpoint of material costs and does not consider the additional costs for labor, fuel, equipment, or yield loss.

As we can see, a small margin of error in application accuracy can have major economic impacts. The products on the market today have a lower use rate, and are more selective making the accuracy of applications more and more critical. Therefore, it is vital to properly calibrate all application equipment before each use. To learn how to properly calibrate your application equipment you can access: [SS-AGR-102/WG013: Calibration of Herbicide Applicators \(ufl.edu\)](https://www.ufl.edu/ss-agr-102/wg013/)

For more information on proper pesticide equipment calibration, contact our office (352-527-5700).



Steps to Health and Wealth

Sarah Ellis, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent



The start of a new year is a chance to make changes and do things differently. Often people take this time of year to reflect on things they want to change in their lives. Perhaps they want to be healthier or have more money in the upcoming year, but making changes seems overwhelming. Improving health and wealth doesn't have to be overwhelming, just take small steps.

When making lifestyle changes it is important to remember that many of our habits and behaviors were developed slowly and over a long period of time. Therefore, it will take time to address them. Instead of doing nothing, consider making small positive changes. For example, you don't need to join a gym or diet plan to improve your health. But you do need to get active and eat healthier. Small changes make a big difference over time!

If you aren't sure where you should start, below are ten recommended daily practices that will improve your health and wealth.

Five daily health and nutrition practices to help you live a healthier life:

1. Eat at least 4 cups of fruits and vegetables
2. Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity
3. Drink water or unsweetened beverages instead of sugar-sweetened beverages
4. Eat at least two servings of whole grain foods
5. Learn something new about health and nutrition



Five daily financial management practices to help you improve your wealth:

1. Save a \$1 bill (or more) and/or pocket change
2. Invest \$5 or more per day (including automated retirement savings plan deposits)
3. Track money spent throughout the day
4. Eat lunch prepared at home
5. Learn something new about personal finance



Now is the time to take control of your health and money. Set realistic goals, take small steps to improve your life, and learn from your setbacks. Remember, you have the ability to improve your health and wealth.



Florida 4-H Youth Development

Head • Heart • Hands • Health



HAVE A HOBBY? NEED A HOBBY?

Dr. Marnie Ward, 4-H Agent



Hobby – an activity done regularly in your free time for **FUN**.

What have you done for your hobby, lately?

January is a great time to get excited about an old hobby you have not done for a while or discover something new to try. That is all because, January is National Hobby Month. Imagine an entire month devoted to having fun and trying out some new ideas. Exercise your mind, body, hands, and creativity.

Not sure what to try? I have some ideas just for you:

1. Citrus County has a variety of hiking, biking and skating trails. To get started with some heart healthy and fun activities, check out this link to the Rails to Trails Conservancy <https://www.trailink.com/trail-history/withlacoochee-state-trail/> and learn more about our local Withlacoochee State Trail.
2. For some, exploring the past is a hobby. Citrus County has a rich history of people, phosphate, agriculture, and just a little intrigue. Get started at: <https://citruscountyhistoricalsociety.org>
3. If nature is where it's at for you, then explore the natural coastal environments of King's Bay, <https://www.discovercrystalriverfl.com/> and learn more about the wintertime visitors, manatees. An adventure awaits in the unique freshwater springs at Three Sisters Springs - <https://www.threesistersspringsvisitor.org/sisters>



(Continued on page 10)



Florida 4-H Youth Development

Head • Heart • Hands • Health



(continued from page 9) HOBBY

4. Wake-up your inner gardener with a few Florida-Friendly landscaping classes taught by Citrus County Extension staff. Learn how to select the right plant for your garden, soil type, and irrigation requirements. For a list of upcoming classes visit: <https://ccuFFLprogram.eventbrite.com>
5. Discover local agritourism operations that offer farm to table options and support local businesses with the Farms, Food and Fun guide. Contact UF/IFAS Extension to request your copy at (352) 527-5700 or citrus@ifas.ufl.edu
6. Sharing a hobby by teaching others enriches community. Citrus County 4-H is the youth development program of the University of Florida. Contact our office at (352) 527-5700 to learn more about sharing your talents with the next generation of Florida's leaders.



Kick-off 2021 with a positive focus on self-care. Follow your passion to live, learn and “HOBBY” in the NEW YEAR!!

Keep It Green,

Marnie

★ Until further notice, these will be virtual seminars.
Gardening Seminars

Contact Steven Davis at 527-5708 to pre-register for these free classes or go to:
<https://ccufflprogram.eventbrite.com>



**"Right Plant,
Right Place"**

Tuesday Jan 5
2:00 - 4:00 pm

**"Optimizing Irrigation
Systems"**

Tuesday Feb 9
2:00 - 4:00 pm

**"Lawns in Central
Florida"**

Tuesday Mar 9
2:00 - 3:30 pm

**"Create a Florida-
Friendly Landscape"**

Tuesday Jan 19
2:00 - 3:30 pm

**"9 Florida-Friendly
Principles"**

Tuesday Feb 23
2:00 - 4:00 pm

**"Florida-Friendly
Fertilizing"**

Tuesday Mar 23
2:00 - 3:30 pm

**Family Fun with Extension
Grow and Cook
with Herbs**



Join Extension for some outdoor fun the whole family will enjoy! Bring your family, a picnic dinner, and blanket (groups will be socially distanced) to the Extension lawn at 3650 W. Sovereign Path, Lecanto on Tuesday, Feb 23 at 6:30 pm to discover how to grow and cook with fresh herbs. We will discuss how to prepare some simple, kid-friendly herbal creations.
Individually-wrapped samples to taste!

Pre-registration required no later than Monday, Feb 15 \$15/family

www.familyherbgrowing.eventbrite.com

Group limited for social distancing and CDC guidelines will be followed.

UF/IFAS Extension
SolutionsForYourLife.com

UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
IFAS Extension

JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH

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UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA



citrus
LIBRARIES

★ Extension Master Gardener library programs will be virtual ★

Monthly seminars explore timely garden topics.

They last approximately 1 hour, are free and pre-registration is required.

January 25: Plant Combinations that Work

www.plantcombos.eventbrite.com

February 22: New Colorful Plants for Spring

www.springcolor.eventbrite.com

March 22: Perfect Flowers for Cutting

www.flowersforcutting.eventbrite.com



Like us on
Facebook

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:

MasterG2@citrusbocc.com

Winter Gardening Calendar

Arbor Day: Celebrate Florida Arbor Day on January 22 (annually on the third Friday of January) by planting a tree in your landscape or community. Consider a hurricane-resistant tree, such as live oak (careful these get **BIG**), bald cypress, cabbage palm, or crape myrtle.

See Trees and Hurricanes: <https://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/treesandhurricanes/>

Color in the garden: Cool-season annuals include pansy, viola, petunia, torenia, and snapdragon. Select and plant **camellia** this month. There are two types, sasanqua and japonicas. Sasanqua types bloom from about November through January, while japonicas bloom from January through about March, providing a long season of color. Visit local nurseries now for the best selection of colors and forms.

Camellia - Credit: UF/IFAS



Vegetables: Continue planting cool-season crops through winter. These include leafy greens (lettuce, spinach, and kale), the cole crops (broccoli, cauliflower, brussel sprouts) and root vegetables (carrots, beets, kohlrabi). Try something new. Often the flavors are so much more intense when harvested right from the garden!

Herbs: Herbs that appreciate the colder weather include cilantro (coriander if you let it go to seed), parsley, mints, and dill. As warmer weather starts, you can add other herbs such as rosemary, basil, oregano, fennel, sage, and thyme. Consider growing edible ginger rhizomes later in this quarter in well-drained soil in full to part shade. You can get edible starts inexpensively in the produce section of your grocery or farmer's market.

Cold protection: Be ready to cover tender plants to minimize damage. Frost or freezes are likely this quarter. Be sure to cover all the way to the ground. And potted plants and newly planted gems are more susceptible to damage in their first year in the ground. Don't be impatient to remove or prune plants that may have been damaged. They are resting and may surprise you when spring arrives, flushing out when you least expect it.



Make sure that the cover extends all the way to the ground to trap radiant heat.

(Continued on page 14)

(continued from page 13) WINTER GARDENING

Palms: Give cold-damaged palms proper care to encourage their recovery. When adding palms to the landscape, be sure to select only types that will perform well in our county. For more information See *Cold Damage on Palms*: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/MG/MG31800.pdf>

Irrigation: Water plants if temperatures remain higher than normal and rainfall is scarce. And then only every 10-14 days while plants are dormant. Watering while plants are dormant can lead to root rot and other damaging effects.

Pests: Monitor for persistent scale insects on camellia, citrus, and other shrubs. Follow label directions for frequency, mixing and personal protection when applying any product. Environmentally-friendly horticultural oil is effective now while plants are dormant.

Planting: As warmer weather encourages plantings, make certain that you know the height and spread of any tree or shrub you plan to install. Not all shrubs are suitable for planting next to homes or under windows. See *The Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Guide to Plant Selection and Landscape*: https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/FYN_Plant_Selection_Guide_2015.pdf

Lawn: Apply a pre-emergent weed killer (not a “weed and feed” fertilizer) when temperatures rise to 65°F for 4–5 days to prevent warm-season weeds. Which is likely in mid- to late-February. Timing is essential for good control. Any weeds that have already sprouted (or never died from 2020) will not be affected by this herbicide.



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

ServSafe Training Class Offered

Are you opening a new business in the food service industry? Do you prepare food at any point in your business and require certification? UF/IFAS Extension Citrus County is providing training to help food managers and staff keep food served to Florida's consumers safer.

Cost: Pre-registration is required with a fee of \$110.00 for the course and the exam. Purchase of the ServSafe Manager Manual for \$55.00 is highly recommended.



When: Friday, January 29, 2021 at 8:30am. The class runs approximately 7 hours then participants have a maximum of 2 hours to take the national certification exam. According to University of Florida guidelines, face masks must be worn during the class.

Where: Citrus County Extension Office located at 3650 W Sovereign Path, Lecanto

What to bring with you: Bag lunch and valid picture identification.

For more information please contact Sarah Ellis at ellissm@ufl.edu or 352-527-5700.

To register on-line visit: <http://tinyurl.com/z6dp7jf>



UF | **IFAS Extension**
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA





Are you concerned about falling?

UF/IFAS Extension Citrus County for A MATTER OF BALANCE.
This award-winning program is designed to manage falls and increase activity levels.

This program will teach you practical strategies to manage falls.

Learn how to:

- View falls as controllable
- Set goals to increase activity
- Make changes at home to reduce your fall risk
- Exercise to increase strength and balance

Who should attend?

- Anyone who is concerned about falls
- Anyone interested in improving balance, flexibility and strength
- Anyone who has fallen in the past
- Anyone who has restricted their activities due to concerns about falling.

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.



A MATTER OF BALANCE

MANAGING CONCERNS ABOUT FALLS

Location:

UF/IFAS Extension Citrus County

3650 W. Sovereign Path, Ste. 1
Lecanto, FL 34461

Dates:

February 3, 10, 17, 24
March 3, 10, 17, 24

From: 10:00 am– 12:00 pm

There are eight, 2 hour IN-PERSON sessions beginning on Wednesday, February 3rd to Wednesday, March 24th

Call UF/IFAS Extension Citrus County for more information or to register: (352) 527-5700

Thank you to our sponsor:

CITRUS MEMORIAL

A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls

This program is based on Fear of Falling: A Matter of Balance. Copyright ©1995 Trustees of Boston University. All rights reserved. Used and adapted by permission of Boston University.

A Matter of Balance Lay Leader Model

Recognized for Innovation and Quality in Healthcare and Aging, 2006, American Society on Aging. A Matter of Balance Lay Leader Model was developed by a grant from the Administration on Aging (#90AM2780).

My First Florida Home

HUD approved



Thinking about purchasing a home? In this free, online class you'll learn about

- How to get your finances in order
- How much home you can afford
- How to repair your credit
- How to work with housing professionals
- How to shop for a loan and a home
- How to make an offer
- Why you should get a home inspection
- Closing

This homebuyer workshop meets the education requirements for down payment assistance programs. UF/IFAS Extension Citrus County is a HUD approved housing counseling agency.

Thursdays February 4-25, 2021
6 pm to 8 pm

Pre-Registration is required.

For more information:
ellissm@ufl.edu and/or
352-527-5700



To register: www.cchomebuyers.eventbrite.com

An Equal Opportunity Institution. UF/IFAS Extension, University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, Nick T. Place, dean for UF/IFAS Extension. Single copies of UF/IFAS Extension publications (excluding 4-H and youth publications) are available free to Florida residents from county UF/IFAS Extension offices.

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