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“UF IFAS Extension Citrus County”



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## Extension Notes

BJ Jarvis, Extension Director

### Happy New Year!

2021 seems to have flown by. I am always excited about a New Year and the many possibilities it holds!

Whether you have a question today or later in the year, think of Extension resources for Solutions For Your Life. We have a new agriculture and natural resource agent on board (read my interview with newcomer Caetano “Ky” starting on page 6).

If your New Year’s resolution leans toward the outdoors, check out Marnie’s article on recycling. I offer some tips on garden resolutions, including some things NOT to do. Our FFL program coordinator, Steven, shares soil health information with us.

Sarah offers tips to improve your financial health in 2022 beginning on page 7.

Don’t skip Nature Naturally (on page 11-12). This newer section is not just for kids. It is also informative for adult newcomers as well as those who have lived here for multiple generations. See how the Dixon pencil originated here in Citrus County – you can still see parts of the original machinery out by Kings Bay!

As the New Year starts, thank you for continuing to rely on UF/IFAS Citrus Extension. When you or someone you know needs solid information, be sure to ASK IFAS. We are here to help.

Sincerely, BJ



## New Year's (Garden) Resolutions

BJ Jarvis, Director and Horticulture Agent



Historians believe Babylonians were the first to make New Year's resolutions about 4,000 years ago. As the new year started, individuals promised to pay debts, return borrowed items, and pledge loyalty to a reigning King. If the Babylonians were faithful to their promises, their gods would look favorably on them.

This can be true in the garden as well. Making (and keeping) gardening resolutions can have a favorable outcome. As this year winds down, here are five Florida-Friendly gardening resolutions to consider.

1. **Water infrequently in the winter.** When plants are dormant and there is no rain, irrigate turf only every 10-14 days. This helps to avoid disease and wasting water. As the spring warms, water when needed – about once per week if there is no rainfall. And always follow local irrigation rules.
2. **Calibrate irrigation system** to determine how long it takes to deliver  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$ " – the optimum amount for water for thirsty plants. Place several straight-sided containers in a zone and run the system for a cycle. If collected water is greater or less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  -  $\frac{3}{4}$ ", adjust the time clock. Don't know how to do that? Look up the instructions online for a tutorial.
3. **Fertilizer** should be applied after April 1. Like water, turf doesn't process fertilizers in winter, so they can be leached into the aquifer or run off properties. Additionally, select slow-release fertilizers and clean up any spills.



(Continued on page 3)

# UF/IFAS Extension Solutions for Your Life

## URBAN HORTICULTURE

(continued from page 2) GARDEN

- Maintain **mulch** at a 2-3" depth. Pine needles from trees or recycled materials such as bark or melaleuca (commonly sold as Flori-mulch) are best. Melaleuca has proven to be the most termite resistant mulch and is harvested from South Florida where it is an invasive tree.
- Learn which **insects** are good and which are harmful to plants. Some insects may never reach a high enough population to be a problem. When treatments are warranted, resolve to use the least toxic methods first. A strong jet of water, insecticidal soaps or horticultural oils (but only when temps are below 85 degrees F), are the best choices to start. Even though these are "safer", always follow label directions for timing, quantity and personal protection.



## “Good Bugs”

Juvenile Lacewing eating aphid



Juvenile Lady Bug eating aphid



To be even more Florida-friendly in 2022, connect with Extension experts at 352-527-5700 or stop by the office at 3650 W. Sovereign Path, in the Lecanto Government Complex.

# Florida-Friendly Landscaping™

## Florida-Friendly Roadmap



### Healthy Dirt in Florida Landscapes

**Steven Davis, FFL Program Coordinator**



Florida soils have their limitations and often consist of mineral sand created by ages of erosion caused by wind and flowing water. Poor water and nutrient holding capacity is typical, although wet mucky conditions or clay deposits are found naturally in central Florida. As you inspect and evaluate your landscape, take a closer peek at soil conditions. Texture, color, organic content and “friability” are easily observed with less obvious nutrient content and soil pH inexpensively tested. Salt content in coastal soils may impact plant health. Coastal flooding or salt spray can accumulate in soils near coastal Florida. Select plants and lawn grasses which prefer the site conditions your landscape provides.

Nutrient solubility, nutrient exchange and water holding capacity are often weak in local native soils unless amendments are used to alter and improve soil conditions. Things other than soil chemistry are active in healthy soils. Soil organisms including fungi are busy in the soil. We often think of fungus in the landscape as damaging to our plants. Most often the activity is beneficial and not easily noticed. Fungus is the only soil micro-organism which breaks down lignin, the rigid structure of a plant or tree. Fungi serve several functions in the soil system. Decay of organic material is a chief function of soil fungi, improving the soil texture aiding in the soils water and nutrient holding abilities. Second, parasitic fungi attack plant tissue, killing the tissue and living off the results. Third, a symbiotic (mutually beneficial) relationship develops allowing both plant and fungi (mycorrhizae) to co-exist with each benefiting from their union. The development of this soil web

#### **Mycorrhizae and plant root hairs**



allows access to a greater volume of soil for consumption of nutrients and water. Two types of mycorrhizae allow this transfer of resources to the plant. Endomycorrhiza “hyphae” are nourished by plant root exudates and penetrate the root providing access to greater nutrient loads in the soil. Ectomycorrhiza also function as a transport mechanism for water and nutrients, shielding not penetrating into plant cells. These ectomycorrhiza are most often associated with woody plants and may benefit an entire community of forest trees.

*(Continued on page 5)*

# Florida-Friendly Landscaping™

## Florida-Friendly Roadmap



(continued from page 4) *HEALTHY DIRT*

Nitrogen fixing bacteria are also associated with mycorrhizae. Bacteria living in the soil are found in higher concentrations near the roots of established plants. Bacteria convert energy contained in decomposing organic matter into forms that can be utilized by the plant and other soil food web members. Other soil food web members include single celled protozoans which also convert energy into useful nutrient forms and keep bacterial populations in check when necessary. More impressive multi-celled critters like insects, arthropods, nematodes and earthworms play their roles in a healthy soil environment providing aeration, organic input and further decomposition activity.

Some “band aides” benefit soil health when properly performed. When gardening with woody ornamental plants, don’t go to extremes and over amend planting backfill. You are simply helping the “right plant” anchor itself into the landscape. Consider amendments to benefit the newly planted plants for the short term, to get them established. Soon after establishment, when properly planted, the plant roots will migrate past the amended soil and seek water and nutrients from native soils.

A soil mix of 70% well drained sand and 30% organic soil amendment consisting of pine bark, composted manure and additional organic content blended together will supply the backfill soil with the water and nutrient holding capacity enabling successful establishment. Light mulching after planting hinders weed populations, and preserves soil moisture, eventually breaking down to an organic soil component. Richer soil conditions may be necessary when vegetable gardening, for blueberry production or perennial flower



gardening, while being careful to allow for drainage. Occasional lawn aeration, organic topdressing and mulching your grass clippings improve soil quality under your yard. Chemical applications may manage a garden problem, but may also be injuring soil health.

Sand is still a valuable component for well drained landscape soils. Plants can be managed in sandy Florida soil. Proper timing and accuracy of nutrient applications, efficient management of irrigation systems, proper cultural and pest management strategies are all more critical in a sandy “rhizosphere”, while keeping our soil environment healthy.

## Meet our new Agriculture/Natural Resources Agent: Caetano (Ky) Sales



Recently, our new agriculture and natural resource agent and I had a chance to talk. Here is some of our conversation. Caetano/Ky starts here at the Extension office on January 4.

**BJ: Caetano, what influenced your interest in agriculture?**

**Ky:** I would say that my interest in agriculture came from my father. I started young, helping in our backyard garden, which was my initial contact with agriculture. My father, who is an Agronomist, introduced me to the importance of agriculture in our daily lives, how we can be a part of providing food to others and have an impact on the community.

**BJ: Where are you from? And how will your educational background help Citrus County farmers/ranchers?**

**Ky:** I was born in Berkeley, California, where I lived for the first part of my childhood. At the age of 6, my parents decided to move to Brazil, where we lived for over 19 years. I attended university in Brazil, where I studied Agronomy. During my undergrad, I was involved in research in the Weed Science Laboratory of the campus, and I was a part of the Ag Consulting Junior Enterprise. In 2020 I had the opportunity to intern at the University of Florida at the Range Cattle Research and Education Center with Dr. Brent Sellers in the Weed Science program. At the end of my internship, Dr. Sellers offered me a position as a masters' student in his program. All of these prior experiences have prepared me to be an Extension Agent and assist Citrus County farmers and ranchers.

**BJ: Ag here in Citrus County is rather diverse (from livestock to pastures, horses and fruit like blueberries). What impact do you hope to make in Citrus County?**

**Ky:** My first goal is to focus on weed management, which is my area of expertise. I want to generate workshops on best management practices for controlling weeds in pastures as well as invasive weed species identification in collaboration with Nature Coast CISMA. As I learn more about the production systems in the county, I hope to be able to develop programs in specific areas that will benefit the diverse clientele within the county. I am looking forward to expanding the agricultural community in the county by working with the Young Farmers & Ranchers and 4-H youth programs. I intend to continue to study and broaden my skills, with the objective of becoming a valuable source of science-based information.

**BJ: Do you plan to continue to conduct research now that you are here in Citrus County?**

**Ky:** Yes. My priority is to collaborate with UF/IFAS faculty, extension specialists, local producers, and industry on research trials that will be impactful at the local level.



## Improve Your Financial Life

### Sarah Ellis, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent



It's a new year and a great time to set some goals to make 2022 a better year for your money. Maybe you have some debt you want to pay down or you just need to make better money decisions. Now is the time to embrace that motivation!

Start by being deliberate with how you use your money. Being deliberate with your money means that you have control over how you use your money. Your financial goals drive your spending instead of using your money to make impulse purchases you regret later. One way to start being more deliberate with your money is to ask yourself "do I need this" before making purchases.

Setting money goals will also help you be more deliberate with your money. To set money goals, start by asking yourself "how do I want my money to work for me this coming year"? Maybe you want to take a vacation or have some emergency savings available. Write these goals down and rank them by how important they are.

Next, determine how much money you need to save and how long it will take to reach your goal. Let's use the vacation as an example:

You found a lovely all-inclusive vacation for \$1,500.00.

After reviewing your spending, you found that if you stopped getting coffee from the coffee shop for \$5.00 a day you could save \$100.00 a month.

Or maybe you realized you purchase WAY too much stuff that you don't need and if you just stopped spending money on "stuff" you would be on that vacation in no time!

Once you determine how much money you need to save and how much you can save each month towards your goal, you can write your **SMART** goal down. A SMART goal is: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime bound. Using the example above, your **SMART** goal would be:

I will save \$100 a month starting February 1, 2022, ending on May 1, 2023, for a total of \$1,500 for my vacation.



(Continued on page 8)

(continued from page 7) IMPROVE

You might be thinking - I don't have any money left over to save after paying bills. But is this true? You should save some money each month, no matter how small the amount. Take some time to really examine how you are spending your money. Are you paying for a subscription or membership that you don't use? Could you cancel it and save that money instead? Are you eating out often? Could you cook at home more? Track your spending for a while to see if you are spending more on "wants" vs "needs."



If you tracked your spending and still have not found a way to reduce spending, there are little things you can do such as use round up savings to make saving money easy and automatic. Round up savings rounds purchases up to the nearest dollar and transfers that money into a savings account. Many banks offer this program; check with yours to see if they offer it.

*How it works:*

	<i>You Spend</i>		<i>We round up</i>		<i>Total amount debited from your account</i>
<i>Coffee</i>	\$3.47	+	\$0.53	=	\$4.00
<i>Lunch</i>	\$6.89	+	\$0.11	=	\$7.00
<i>Gas</i>	\$27.21	+	\$0.79	=	\$28.00
<b><i>Total amount transferred to savings</i></b>					<b>\$1.43</b>

Lastly, remember that the amount you put in savings does not matter as small amounts add up. If you saved \$1 a day you would have \$365 at the end of the year!





# Florida 4-H Youth Development

Head • Heart • Hands • Health



## Making the Old New Again - Reuse, Recycle, Repurpose

Dr. Marnie Ward, 4-H Agent



It's that time of the year again, you know, the time for getting on track to reach your goals for 2022. Make this year the best it can be, with personal changes to make positive impacts on your community.

In Citrus County, each citizen disposes about 8 pounds of waste every day and considering the population is nearly 150,000 people – that's a lot of waste. Over the past 40 years, landfill managers and regulators have instituted plans and policies to increase the amount of recycling across the county. In fact, nearly 30% of the waste generated is recycled and diverted from landfills. This achievement demonstrates the resolve of individuals to recognize a problem and work on devising a solution. The take-away message here is that one individual can make a difference.

What you can do:

**Buy only what you need** – Make conscious choices to use less and reduce consumption. One way to do this; make a shopping list and stick to it.

**Donate what you don't need** – Let those items be reused by someone who needs them. Clean out a closet or cupboard, free yourself from clutter.

**Value (\$\$) waste** – By recycling items, some materials can be used again. Challenge friends and neighbors to a friendly game - Who can collect the most recyclable items? Keep it going all year long, with a prize for the winner on December 31, 2022.

**Give second chances** - By upcycling items, the old are repurposed or refreshed into something new. Turn unwanted or discarded items into cash. One example is the second-hand clothing market, which is valued at over \$25 million dollars.



(Continued on page 10)



# Florida 4-H Youth Development

Head • Heart • Hands • Health

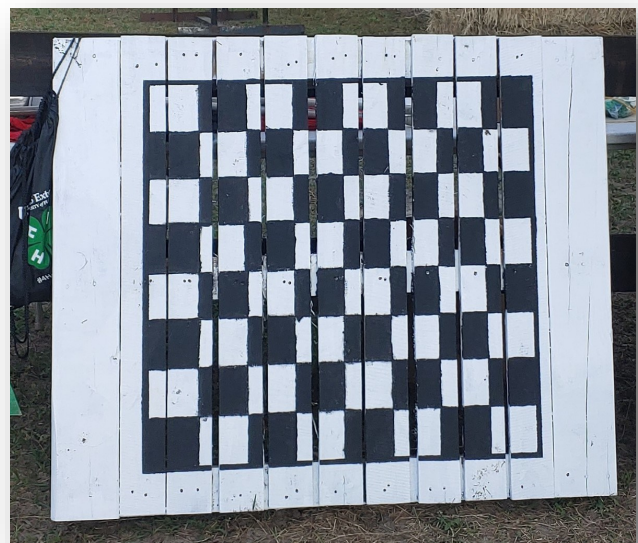


(continued from page 9) RECYCLE

When youth learn about the importance of waste management, they can reduce the amount of material disposed in local landfills. Here in Citrus County, 4-H members repurposed pallets and other items to create decorative art. These items were auctioned to raise money for 4-H member scholarships and recognition. By protecting and preserving natural resources, youth in our community have been instrumental in the push to increase recycling. They have encouraged their parents, teachers, and friends to be creative and to “give second chances”.

**“A LOT OF GROUPS GO OUT THERE  
AND TALK ABOUT IT—WE GO OUT  
THERE AND **ACTUALLY DO IT.**”** 

**JOIN** THE REVOLUTION  
OF RESPONSIBILITY



**In 2022, make old things new again.**

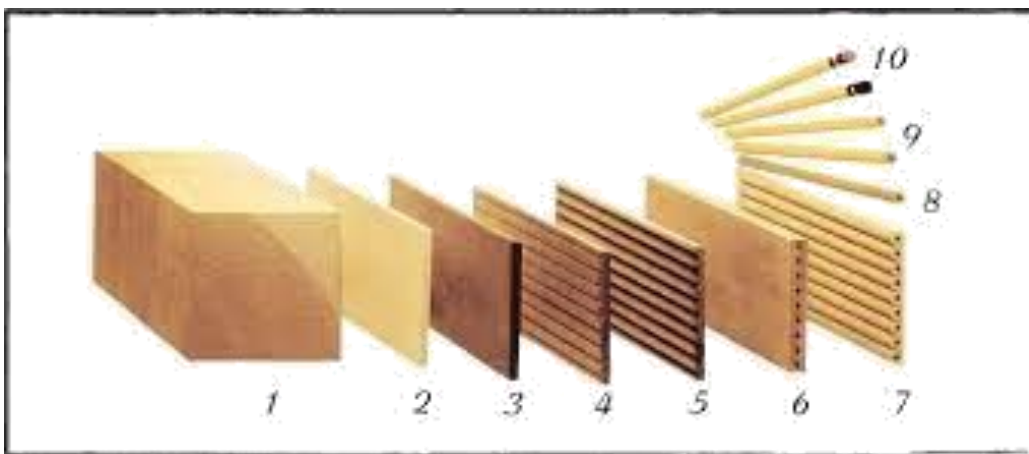
# Nature Naturally

## Pencils, Cedar Trees, and Citrus County

Did you know that pencils were first manufactured in the early 1800's in Massachusetts? Earlier pencils were imported from Europe. While some of those "older" pencils contained lead, a new technology was used in the United States. Joseph Dixon, inventor and industrialist, combined graphite, water, and clay to produce "pencil lead". This composite material was cheaper and easier to use in the production of wooden pencils. Today, the term pencil lead is widely used even though pencils do not contain lead.

### CEDAR TREES

Citrus County had an important role in the production of pencils. Red cedar trees were abundant on island hammocks along the coast and in the sandhills central to the county. These trees were disease resistant, grew quickly, and the wood produced was ideal for making pencils. It was soft, attractive, rot resistant, and sharpened easily without splintering. Located in Crystal River, the Dixon Cedar Mill was a major employer processing the harvested cedar trees. In the early 1900's, the mill employed nearly 200 residents and was a major industry. Cedar logs were processed to make pencil blocks. Blocks were cut down to produce slats.



### PENCILS

Ink quills were the earliest writing utensils, but were replaced by the sleek, comfortable design of the graphite pencil. To learn more about the process to make a pencil watch this YouTube video:

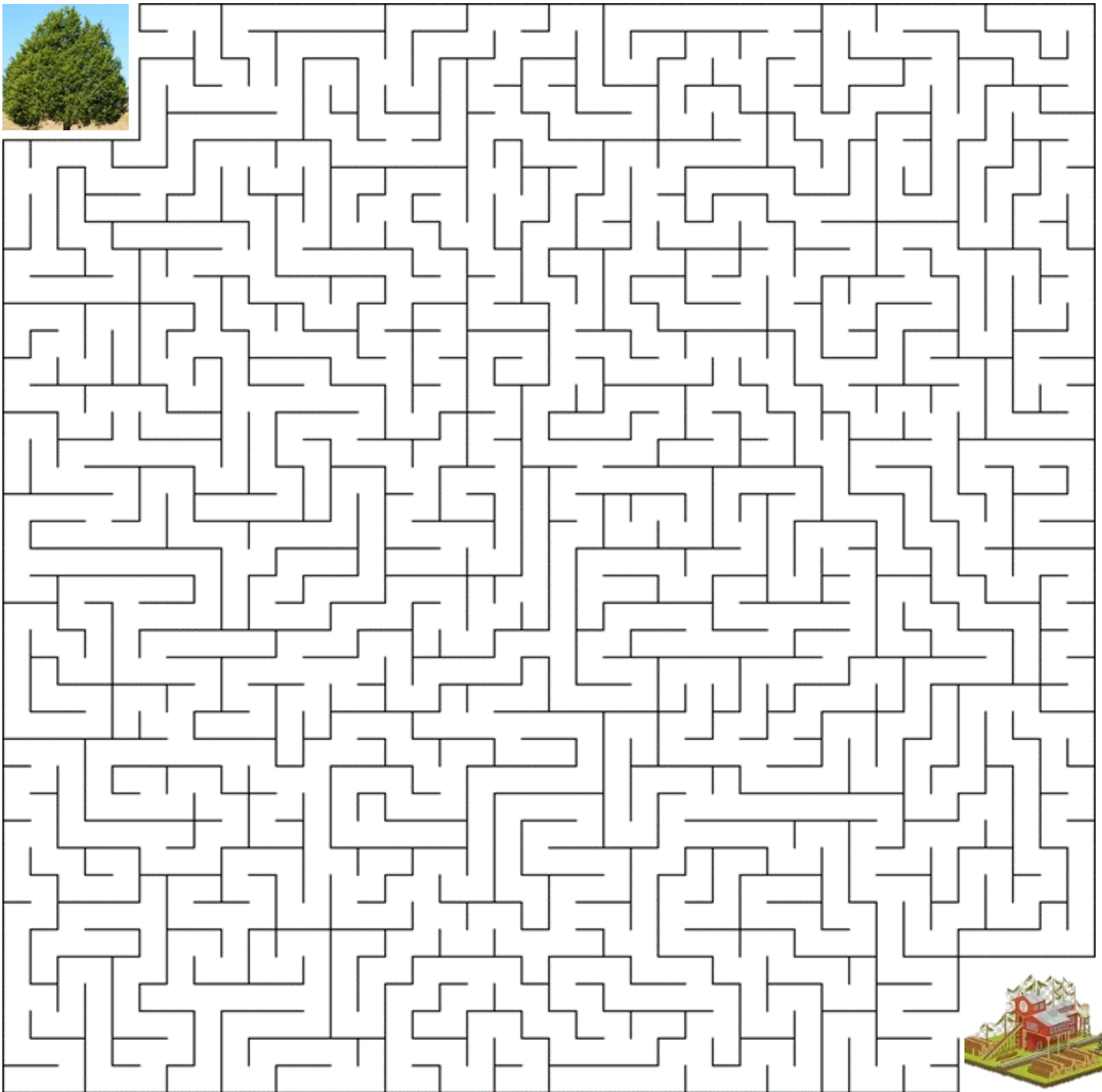
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wsUdR0bilel>

*(Continued on page 12)*

# Nature Naturally

(continued from page 11) PENCILS

Find the path from the cedar tree to the Dixon Cedar Mill





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



Contact Steven Davis at 352-527-5708  
to pre-register for these  
free classes or go to:  
<https://ccufflprogram.eventbrite.com>

**“Right Plant,  
Right Place”**

Tuesday Jan 11  
2:00 - 4:00 pm

**“Create a Florida-  
Friendly Landscape”**

Tuesday Jan 25  
2:00 - 3:30 pm

**“Optimizing Irrigation  
Systems”**

Tuesday Feb 8  
2:00 - 4:00 pm

**“Palms in Central  
Florida”**

Tuesday Feb 22  
2:00 - 4:00 pm

**“Lawns in Central  
Florida”**

Tuesday Mar 8  
2:00 - 3:30 pm

**“Florida-Friendly  
Fertilizing”**

Tuesday Mar 22  
2:00 - 3:30 pm

**SAVE THE DATE**

**Saturday April 23, 2022  
10am - 2pm**

**Citrus County Extension Office  
3650 W. Sovereign Path, Lecanto  
352-527-5700**



Trained service animals only please



## JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH



### Monthly Extension Master Gardener Seminars are now in person!

We are also keeping the Virtual seminar. 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**.

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

**January: Edible Landscaping**

**February: Weed Woes**

**March: Wildlife Friendly Plants**

2nd Tuesday	Lakes Region Library	Inverness
2nd Wednesday	Central Ridge Library	Beverly Hills
3rd Wednesday	Floral City Library	Floral City
4th Monday	Coastal Region Library	Crystal River
4th Monday	<b>Virtual</b> - pre-register on our Facebook page!	
4th Tuesday	Homosassa Library	Homosassa

**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**

# Cooking For 1 or 2

**Cooking for one may seem like an impossible task!**

Find out how to easily plan, shop for and prepare meals for one or two. There will also be a cooking demonstration to show how easy and quick it can be.



Call 352-527-5700 to pre-register or register online at:

**January 13**     *Lakes Region Public Library*     10:30am

Register at: [www.tinyurl.com/4pmz89fy](http://www.tinyurl.com/4pmz89fy)

**February 18**     *Homosassa Public Library*     10:30am

Register at: [www.tinyurl.com/y7cfwv3z](http://www.tinyurl.com/y7cfwv3z)

**March 7**     *Coastal Region Public Library*     10:30am

Register at: [www.tinyurl.com/4h2e26u7](http://www.tinyurl.com/4h2e26u7)

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An Equal Opportunity Institution

# My First Florida Home

HUD approved Homebuyer Education



Thinking about purchasing a home? In this interactive virtual 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.

**4 Thursdays starting February 3<sup>rd</sup> to February 24, 2022**

**Time: 6 pm to 8 pm**

**Registration required by January 20, 2022.**

**Cost: \$15.00.**

**Link to join virtual class will be provided to registered participants via e-mail.**

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

**Register at: [www.cchomebuyers2022.eventbrite.com](http://www.cchomebuyers2022.eventbrite.com)**



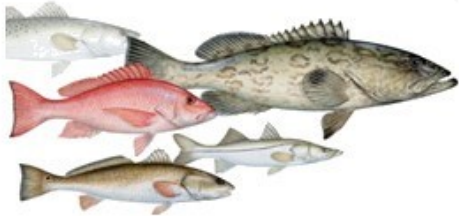


# SAVE THE DATE!!

## 7th Annual For-Hire Charter Captains and Fishing Guides Workshop

**February 2, 2022 from 8:30AM - 3:30PM**

**Marine Science Station, 12646 W. Fort Island Trail, Crystal River**



The pre-registration fee of \$35 includes materials, lunch and refreshments.

Like us on Facebook at “UF IFAS Extension Citrus County” for all updates and information.

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Citrus County Extension Service recently participated in the statewide 2021 Peanut Butter Challenge to collect jars of peanut butter for local families in need.

When the challenge ended on November 24, 206 jars totaling more than 250 pounds of peanut butter were donated to a local food bank that sends food home with school children to share with their families.

Without strong community support, we would not have had such amazing success!

UF/IFAS Extension Citrus County thanks all those involved in helping the community.



## Winter Gardening Calendar

While your northern friend's plants are mostly bare this time of year, there is a startling array of color in the Citrus County landscape. Think beyond the ubiquitous azalea, with an expanded plant palette of winter bloomers.

**Trees and shrubs:** Camellia, star magnolia, maple in bloom, firespike, and the vibrant Chickasaw plum and fringe-tree.

### Star Magnolia



**Annuals/perennials:** Yellow jasmine vine, petunia, Angelonia, pansy, sweet alyssum, and diamond frost Euphorbia.

**Winter vegetable** gardens are at peak during the winter with tons of herbs, lots of leafy greens, many root vegetables (carrot, turnip, and beet), and all the 'cole' crops of broccoli, cabbage, and Brussel sprouts.

**Protect plants** on coldest nights. When especially cold nights are predicted, be ready to cover tender plants to minimize damage. Frost and freezes are likely this quarter.

Coverings can include blankets, boxes, upturned garbage cans, just not plastic. Protection is only offered if the covers go all the way to the ground to trap evaporating ground heat. Also, it is important to note that potted plants and newly planted garden gems are more susceptible to damage in their first year in the ground.



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

Don't follow the strawberry growers all-night vigil with a sprinkler system running as seen on TV news. This is not for the faint of heart; home irrigation systems are not designed to run during a hard freeze. A little water is worse for plant survival than no water.

*(Continued on page 19)*

# UF/IFAS Extension

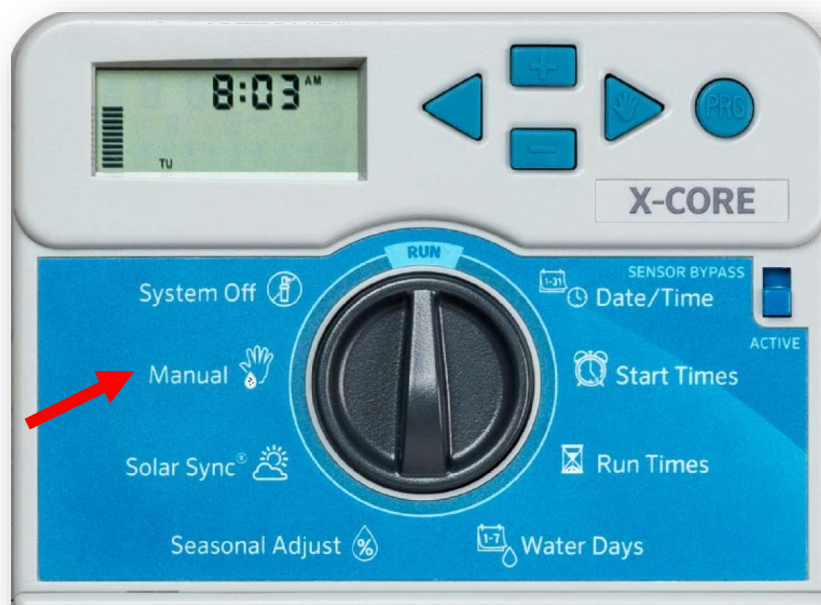
SolutionsForYourLife.com

## What To Do in The Garden

UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA  
IFAS Extension

(continued from page 18) GARDENING

**Turf:** You may have noticed that the grass is growing more slowly (Yay, to less frequent mowing!). Turf also has reduced ability to utilize irrigation and fertilizers. Irrigation should occur no more frequently than once every 10-14 days in winter. If it has rained ½” or more, then no irrigation is needed for another 10 days or so. Turn the irrigation system to ‘Manual’ and turn it on only when it has been dry for prolonged periods.



**Roses:** Prune roses late in Feb or early March and apply mulch to maintain a 2-3” layer. Blooms begin in about 8 weeks, just in time for spring-break visitors.

**Weeds,** weeds, weeds. Apply a pre-emergent herbicide around the middle of Feb to help prevent warm season weeds from sprouting. Once you do, don't disturb the soil or it can inactivate the weed fighter.

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