



Extension Connection

In this Issue

Some like it hot: All about peppers	p. 2
Apple Galls On My Oak Tree	p. 3
Seven Actions to Take When Your Pasture Is Underperforming	p. 4
Grilling Food Safely	p. 6
Ready for the Future - Expanding Agriculture	p. 8
Partnering for Natural Resources	p. 10
Gardening Seminar Schedule	p. 11
Classes/Events/Seminars	p. 12
Gardening Tips	p. 15

Extension Notes

The Summer Solstice has passed, meaning it is officially summer, and the heat is on! For some, Summer conjures up thoughts of fun-in-the-sun beach days, and for others, Summer is officially the start of barbecue season. Learn more about hot- and cold- food safety tips in our article about grilling safely (p. 6). Speaking of hot food, learn more about hot peppers and how they rank (p.2). Taking respite from the summer heat in the shade of a nice tree is always a cool idea, and our Florida-Friendly Landscaping article features information on how to spot gall damage on your oak trees. (p.3).

Learn more about the resources food producers rely on to optimize pasture management in our Agriculture & Natural resources article (p. 4). With increasing growth and development pressures being faced by agriculture enterprises, focusing on ways to increase production efficiency and expand workforce development skills, is crucial to sustaining food security. Expanding agri-enterprise workforce development for youth, is the topic of our 4-H article (p. 8), and youth perceptions of the value of natural resources, is the focus of our Nature Naturally article (p. 10).

Be sure to check out the helpful information offered in our Gardening Tips article (p. 15), and our classes and events list (p. 12): Living Well FCS events, 4-H youth programs, Agriculture & Natural Resources, Florida-Friendly Landscaping™, and Master Gardener Library seminars.

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!

For more information contact

UF/IFAS Extension Citrus County
(352) 527-5700 ■ FAX (352) 527-5748
citrus@ifas.ufl.edu
<https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/citrus/>
SolutionsForYourLife.com



Some like it hot: Hot Peppers

When it comes to hot peppers, what's hot and what's not, can be a subjective experience. What is not subjective, is the heat index used to measure how hot a pepper actually is – the Scoville scale. The Scoville scale measures the heat intensity of a pepper due to the presence of Capsacin. The scale is referenced in units with ranges from low – 1,000 units or less (e.g. sweet peppers – which interestingly enough have lower vitamin content and therefore nutritive value when green, vs. when ripe i.e. red/yellow/orange), to mild – above 1,000 up to 10,000 (e.g. jalapeno, Anaheim, Poblano peppers), to spicier – 30,000 to 50,000 units (e.g. cayenne and tabasco peppers) or 100,000 to 350,000 units (e.g. habanero, Scotch bonnet, Datil peppers), to dangerously hot – 850,000 to 1.4 million units (e.g. ghost and scorpion peppers) or above 1.4 million to 2.2 million units (e.g. Carolina Reaper).

Hot pepper aficionados like to grow different varieties but also like to trade recipes of hot sauces, salsas, chutneys, and pickled peppers. What's great about growing hot peppers is that many of them produce fruit prolifically even when other garden staples like tomatoes and bell peppers have had enough of the Florida summer. Some hot pepper varieties to try in your vegetable garden include: 'Cherry Bomb', 'Hungarian Hot Wax', 'Big Chile II', 'Numex', 'Ancho' 'Thai', 'Anaheim Chile', 'Long Cayenne', 'Habanero', and 'Caribbean Red Habanero'. Some pepper varieties are also grown for purely ornamental purposes – their red, white, yellow, and purple hues adding a splash of color to landscapes.

Hot peppers can be started from seeds but are also commonly grown from seedling transplants sourced at local garden centers. When using seeds (80 to 100 days-to-harvest) or seedlings (60 to 80 days-to-harvest), it is best to look for varieties that are relatively disease resistant, and carefully time the planting season to avoid periods where frost or freezes will occur; otherwise, the plants will need a protective covering as pepper plants are not cold hardy. In order to successfully fruit and flower, peppers require full sun and thrive on well-drained soil high in organic matter. As with all vegetables, adding fertilizer periodically during the growing season will help to boost yield. Scouting for pests such as leaf miners, thrips and pepper weevils, will help to promote a bountiful harvest.

It is also critically important that hot peppers be planted in an area with restricted access by children and pets, to avoid accidental exposure which can cause skin and eye irritation. Another consideration when preparing recipes with hot peppers, is that many of them on the higher end of the Scoville scale can cause eye and skin irritation during handling, so wearing food-grade gloves is recommended.

Source: UF/IFAS Gardening Solutions



Marguerite Beckford, EdD
Citrus County Extension
Director & Horticulture Agent



Credits: UF/IFAS - M. Orwat

Apple Galls On My Oak Tree

Nature has unique ways of upsetting the apple cart. Galls are abnormal growths that appear on plant leaves, twigs and branches. Galls provide a home for developing insects or fungal spores. Apple gall appears to look like a fruit but is produced on a non-fruiting tree. Nature has thrown another curve. Galls appear on trees and shrubs forming what look like fruiting structures, but don't pack a sweet taste. I have not tried to taste them and do not recommend you stimulate your taste buds either. Many galls are formed by tiny wasps, midges or gnats, depositing eggs just beneath the bark, often on emerging tender branches, flowers or leaves as they begin to come out of dormancy. Nematodes, fungi, and bacteria also cause these plant cell abnormalities. Some appear to be quite tasty, but don't be fooled.

Many chemical reactions occur in both plant and animal cells. As the insect eggs are laid, and development of the larvae begins, chemicals react with plant hormones causing them to grow abnormally, creating a shell around the immature insect. The shell that is created takes on many forms and can appear on stems, leaves, acorns or other fruiting bodies. The galls can be symmetrical, or they can grow abnormally into odd shapes. Some galls look like blisters on leaves, have artichoke-like shapes or appear like small edible fruits. The insect host utilizes the gall as both a food source for its development, and as protection from predators or chemical injuries from pesticides. Tiny larval forms can easily be seen in the center of developing galls. As the insect develops and as its food source diminishes, the adult exits the gall leaving a tiny hole and only a shell behind.

Historically, galls had practical uses. Prior to the invention of the fountain pen, oak galls and the tannic acids they contain were used to create indelible ink up until the 1920's. All medieval authors utilized this dura ink in the documents they created. Gall wasps are typically very small, are not problematic, and are often beneficial predators of other insects, although grape gall devastated the French grape vineyards in the mid 1800's. Although most galls are not injurious to the tree, when they are abundant on plant branches, fruit and leaves may fall off due to disruption of water and nutrient channels in the plant.

Be aware that the shape and size of some galls are similar to other immobile insects such as red scale. As always, research and identify the problem before you begin a treatment method. Begin with the least harmful method, which in the case of the gall, simply removing it from the tree with pruning shears is the best method for control of this harmless insect. Gall removal is not necessary to maintain the health of the plant but galls may be unsightly to the viewer.



Steven Davis, MA
Citrus County Extension
FFL Program Coordinator





Alyssa Schortinghouse, PhD
Citrus County Extension
Agriculture/Natural Resources
Agent

Seven Actions to Take When Your Pasture Is Underperforming

A declining pasture is more than just a visual concern - it's a signal that your land's productivity, soil health, and livestock nutrition may be underperforming. For livestock producers and land managers, a well-managed pasture is a key component of a sustainable and cost-effective operation. If your forage stand is thinning, overgrazed, or increasingly weedy, it's time to act.

The Importance of Pasture Management

Pasture systems are critical for both ecological balance and economic efficiency. According to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), proper pasture management can reduce feed costs by up to 50%, enhance soil structure, and mitigate erosion. Ignoring early warning signs - like reduced forage density, visible bare patches, or increased weed pressure - can lead to long-term damage and costly recovery efforts.

Here are seven strategies to help restore pasture health. These steps, supported by agronomic best practices, can help you get your pasture back on track and operating at its full potential.

1. Conduct a Soil Test: A comprehensive soil test is the foundation of any pasture improvement plan. Testing helps identify nutrient deficiencies and pH imbalances that may be limiting forage growth. The University of Florida offers a number of soils tests which can be found at this webpage:
<https://soilslab.ifas.ufl.edu/extension-soil-testing-laboratory/>.

Why it matters: Applying amendments without diagnostic data can be ineffective and wasteful. Soil testing ensures targeted, cost-effective input management.

Action Step: If you have any questions about which test to use or the procedure for collecting samples contact Aly, the Ag. & Natural Resources Extension Agent (aschortinghouse@ufl.edu)



2. Implement Rotational Grazing: Continuous grazing often results in overgrazing and uneven forage utilization. Furthermore, if the number of animals exceeds the recommend sticking rates, overgrazing will occur more quickly. Adopting a rotational grazing system allows forage adequate recovery time and promotes uniform grazing pressure.



Why it matters: Controlled grazing reduces plant stress, encourages regrowth, and minimizes soil compaction.

Action Step: Divide pasture into smaller paddocks and rotate livestock based on forage height typically every 3-7 days.

3. Control Weed Pressure Proactively: Weed infestations often emerge as a symptom of poor pasture health. Timely identification and targeted control - whether through mowing, selective herbicides, or diversified grazing species - can help restore forage dominance.

Why it matters: Left unmanaged, invasive plants compete aggressively with desirable forages, reducing both yield and nutritive value.

4. Overseed Thin or Bare Areas: Once weeds are under control and grazing is managed, overseeding is an effective way to improve pasture density. Use regionally adapted forage species suited to your grazing system and climate.

Why it matters: Overseeding fills in gaps, improves forage quality, and reduces erosion risks.

Timing: Late summer to early autumn is optimal for cool-season grasses, while spring seeding is preferred for warm-season varieties.

5. Apply Fertilizer Based on Recommendations: Following your soil test results, apply only the nutrients your pasture actually needs. This avoids excessive input costs and environmental runoff.

Why it matters: Precision nutrient management supports healthy forage regrowth and maximizes the effectiveness of other restoration efforts.

Caution: Overapplication of nitrogen and other nutrients can lead to leaching and reduced forage diversity.

6. Incorporate Scheduled Rest Periods: Allowing your pasture time to rest is critical to recovery. Even a healthy pasture benefits from periodic rest, particularly after seedling or fertilization.

Why it matters: Resting promotes deeper root development, improved plant vigor, and resilience during dry or cold seasons.

Guideline: Consider 30 to 60 days of rest, depending on seasonal conditions and forage type.



Reviving a struggling pasture requires a combination of assessment, planning, and timely intervention. The most successful producers treat pasture management as an ongoing process - not a one-time fix. With a few focused actions, your land can return to peak productivity and provide reliable, high-quality forage for your livestock. For specific questions, contact Aly at aschortinghouse@ufl.edu.

Grilling Food Safely

There are many options for outdoor recreation with friends and family throughout the picnic and BBQ seasons. But these warm weather occurrences also give foodborne bacteria a chance to flourish. Bacteria can grow quickly on food left out in hot summer temperatures.

Safe food handling is essential when eating outside during the warm-weather months to prevent you, your family, and friends, from contracting a foodborne illness. Continue reading for food safety tips on bringing food to your picnic location, as well as for cooking and serving it properly once you get there.

1. Transporting Food Safely

- Keep cold food cold. Put ice or frozen gel packs in a cooler with cold meals. To stop bacteria from growing, cold food should be kept at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or lower.
- Organize your cooler. Drinks and perishable foods should be packed in separate coolers. The perishable items won't be exposed to the warm outdoor air temps while picnickers open and reopen the beverage cooler to refill their drinks.
- Keep closed. Limit the number of times the cooler is opened once you arrive at the picnic area. This aids in keeping the food colder for longer.
- Prevent cross contamination. Make sure you tightly wrap raw poultry, seafood, and meat. This prevents their juices from contaminating items that have been prepared, cooked, or that will be consumed raw, including fruits and vegetables.
- Clean produce. Before placing them in the cooler, thoroughly rinse all fresh produce, including those with skins and rinds that will not be consumed. Firm-skinned fruits and vegetables should be scrubbed with a clean vegetable brush or rinsed under running water while being scrubbed. Using a fresh paper towel or cloth towel, dry fruits, and vegetables.



Stephanie McMinds, BA
Citrus County Extension
Family & Consumer Sciences
Agent

SAFE COOKING TEMPERATURES as measured with a food thermometer	
GROUND MEAT & MEAT MIXTURES	
Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb	160 °F
Turkey, Chicken	165 °F
FRESH BEEF, PORK, VEAL & LAMB	
	145 °F with a 3 minute rest time
POULTRY	
Chicken & Turkey, Whole	165 °F
Poultry Parts	165 °F
Duck & Goose	165 °F
Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird)	165 °F
HAM	
Fresh (raw)	160 °F
Pre-cooked (to reheat)	140 °F
EGGS & EGG DISHES	
Eggs	Cook until yolk & white are firm
Egg Dishes	160 °F
SEAFOOD	
Fin Fish	145 °F or flesh is opaque and separates easily with fork
Shrimp, Lobster & Crabs	Flesh pearly & opaque
Clams, Oysters & Mussels	Shells open during cooking
Scallops	Milky white or opaque & firm
LEFTOVERS & CASSEROLES	
	165 °F

2. Safe Grilling Tips

- Marinate safely. Never marinate food outside or on the kitchen counter. Instead, prepare then store marinated food inside the refrigerator. Before adding the raw meat, poultry, or seafood, set aside a part of the marinade if you intend to use it as a sauce on the cooked item. Never repurpose marinade.
- Cook thoroughly. Have your food thermometer ready when it's time to prepare the food. Use it consistently to ensure that your meal is thoroughly cooked.
- Keep ready food hot. Moving grilled food to the edge of the grill rack, just away from the embers, will help keep it hot until it is time to serve. This preserves its heat while avoiding overcooking.
- Don't reuse platters or utensils. Using a platter or set of cutlery that was previously used to serve raw meat, poultry, or seafood, permits bacteria from the juices of the raw food, to transfer to the cooked food. Instead, prepare a clean platter and serving utensils at the grill's edge.

3. Serving

- Cold Foods. Cold perishable food should be kept in the cooler at 40 °F or below until serving time. Once you've served it, it should not sit out for longer than 2 hours, or 1 hour if the outdoor temperature is above 90 °F. If it does - discard it. Food like chicken salad and desserts in individual serving dishes can be placed directly on ice, or in a shallow container set in a deep pan filled with ice. Drain off water as ice melts and replace ice frequently.
- Hot Foods. Foods that are hot should be maintained at or above 140 °F. Before serving, wrap tightly and store in an insulated container. These items shouldn't be left out for longer than 2 hours, or 1 hour in temps above 90 °F. To be safe, throw away any food that has been left out for an extended of time.

4. Leftovers

Place leftovers in closed, shallow containers after dividing them into small portions. Within 2 hours of cooking (or 1 hour if it's over 90 °F outside), place in freezer or refrigerator.

Get Ready to Grill Safely

Separate

When shopping, pick up meat, poultry, and seafood last and separate them from other food in your shopping cart and grocery bags.

Chill

Keep meat, poultry, and seafood refrigerated until ready to grill. When transporting, keep 40°F or below in an insulated cooler.

Clean

Wash your hands with soap before and after handling raw meat, poultry, and seafood. Wash work surfaces, utensils, and the grill before and after cooking.

Cook

Use a food thermometer to ensure meat is cooked hot enough to kill harmful germs. When smoking, keep temperature inside the smoker at 225°F to 300°F to keep meat at a safe temperature while it cooks.

145°F	beef, pork, lamb, veal (then let rest 3 minutes before serving)
145°F	fish
160°F	hamburgers and other ground meat
165°F	poultry

Don't cross-contaminate

Throw out marinades and sauces that have touched raw meat juices. Put cooked meat on a clean plate.

Refrigerate

Divide leftovers into small portions and place in covered, shallow containers. Put in freezer or fridge within two hours of cooking (one hour if above 90°F outside).



www.cdc.gov/foodsafety

CS296044A

Learn more about getting a copy of the Money Management Calendar



UF IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Money Management Calendar



FCSS24



Florida 4-H Youth Development

Head • Heart • Hands • Health



Marnie Ward, PhD
Citrus County Extension
4-H Agent

Ready for the Future - Expanding Agriculture

Seventy-five years ago, the Green Revolution transformed agriculture with scientific breakthroughs. High-yield crop varieties, increased fertilizer use, and targeted pesticides, allowed farmers to boost efficiency and feed a growing global population. Today, we stand on the brink of a new agricultural revolution - one powered by precision agriculture, robotics, artificial intelligence, and sustainable practices.

The future of farming will depend on the wise use of natural resources, maximizing crop yields, and addressing climate concerns. It will also require a new generation of professionals equipped with both technical and business skills. Farmers of tomorrow must be able to program field equipment, manage data and operations, and market their product effectively.

To help prepare young leaders for these challenges, the Agricultural Alliance of Citrus County, in partnership with the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Citrus County Extension, launched the inaugural **“Expanding Agriculture: Workforce Seminar”** in 2024. This hands-on program gave students an inside look at diverse careers in agriculture, and guided them toward technical or college-based paths.

Building on last year’s success, the 2025 seminar will expand with new partners and a broader vision. The Citrus County School District joins our collaboration this year, thanks in part to the support of Superintendent Dr. Scott Hebert, who attended the 2024 seminar and recognized its value for all high school students in the county.

Event Details:

Friday, September 12, 2025
Wilton Simpson Conference Center
College of Central Florida
Lecanto, FL 34461



Will Ward on farm

In 2025, the event will grow to include more space for both classroom-based and outdoor field activities on the College of Central Florida campus. Attendees will explore all facets of agriculture, including:

- Laboratory investigations and research trials.
- Robotic & AI-operated agricultural technologies
- Agricultural mechanics & machinery
- Regenerative agriculture
- And much more!

Registration opens in early August. Space is limited, and we expect to reach full capacity - register early! For more information, contact the 4-H Office at 352-527-5712 or email citrus@ifas.ufl.edu.

Why Encourage Students to Attend?

This seminar focuses on the future -offering students the chance to explore, ask questions, and discover career paths in agriculture. The world needs passionate, skilled workers who care about the environment and are committed to producing food, fiber, and renewable fuel at local and global levels.

UF/IFAS Citrus County Extension is proud to support this initiative and provides year-round educational programming in agriculture, horticulture, natural resources, family and consumer sciences, and 4-H youth development. Visit us at **3650 West Sovereign Path, Ste 1, Lecanto, FL 34461** or reach out via phone at 352-527-5700 or email citrus@ifas.ufl.edu.



Will Ward on tractor

NATURE NATURE

Partnering for Natural Resources

In a recent survey by the National 4-H Council, young people, 13 to 19 years old, were asked about their perceptions of nature and outdoors. Youth self-reported feeling happier and less stressed when spending more time outside. At the same time, 88% of teens felt everyone can be part of the solution to address natural resource issues and “small actions” to improve our environment can have a big impact long-term.

Through partnerships and working together, communities are empowered to effectively manage and conserve natural resources. These collaborations address challenges, while promoting sustainable use of resources for the benefit of both humans and the environment.



Marnie Ward, PhD
Citrus County Extension
4-H Agent

Benefits of Partnering

- Work to achieve a common goal focused on conservation, environmental protection, and resource management.
- Share resources, expertise, and funding to support a common goal.
- Engage a wide range of age groups to ensure community participation and an audience with diverse experiences.
- Encourage involvement of government agencies, businesses, community groups, landowners, and youth-serving organizations.
- Promote sustainable practices and actions to protect sensitive ecosystems and conserve non-renewable resources.



4-H Partnerships for the Environment

- Inverness Lion's Club
- Citrus County School District
- Southwest Florida Water Management District
- Marine Science Station
- Citrus County Parks and Recreation
- Citrus County Water Resources Department
- Water Ventures: Florida's Learning Lab
- Color Country Nursery and CBC Plants, Inc



Gardening Seminar Schedule



Hosted Online and/or In-Person

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



“Optimizing Irrigation Systems”

Tuesday July 15
2:00 - 4:00 pm

“Managing Pets Wisely”

Tuesday July 29
2:00 - 4:00 pm

“Vegetable Gardening”

Tuesday Aug 12
2:00 - 4:00 pm

“Planning a Florida Landscape”

Tuesday Aug 26
2:00 - 4:00 pm

“Lawns in Central Florida”

Tuesday Sept 09
2:00 - 4:00 pm

“Palms in Central Florida”

Tuesday Sept 23
2:00 - 4:00 pm

Water Resources - Rain Barrel Workshop

Thursday, July 10, 2025, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

UF/IFAS Extension Citrus County

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

Get tickets at the webpage:

<http://ccufflprogram.eventbrite.com>

Contact: steven.davis@citrusbocc.com



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



(352) 527-5700



citrus@ifas.ufl.edu

Equal Opportunity Institution

Classes/Events/Seminars

JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER



Monthly Extension Master Gardener Seminars

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

ZOOM seminar: pre-registration info available on our Facebook page.

- July: Citrus for Citrus (County that is)
- August: Other Edible fruit
- September: Good Bugs

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

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

Trained Master Gardeners are available most weekdays, between 8:00 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.

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

Additionally, plant clinic questions and pictures can be emailed to:

IF-SVC-citrusmg@ad.ufl.edu

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

CITRUS COUNTY FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES

July 21st - 25th - Food & Fun Summer Camp at Canning Center (8:30 AM - 4:30 Daily)

Participants ages 8-12 will explore the five food groups with fun activities and cooking classes while learning the importance of healthy food choices. Cost is \$75. All supplies included.

August 15th - Adult Culinary Series: Tailgating at Canning Center (5:30 PM)

Get ready to elevate your game day experience!!! Join us to create mouth-watering recipes over charcoal and learn important grilling safety tips. Cost is \$30. All supplies included.

August 17th - Water Bath Canning: Marinated Peppers at Canning Center (1:00 PM)

Learn the process of water bath canning safely in this hands-on class. Cost is \$20.00. All supplies included.

August 20th - Water Bath Canning: Marinated Peppers at Canning Center (1:00 PM)

Learn the process of water bath canning safely in this hands-on class. Cost is \$20.00. All supplies included.

August 25th - Nutrition with Cooking Demo at Floral City Library (1:00 PM)

Free program offering advice on proper nutrition along with a cooking demo.

September 4th - Culinary Series: Greek Cuisine at Canning Center (5:00 PM)

Create a globally inspired meal from scratch to enjoy. Cost is \$25.00. All supplies included.

September 8th - Cooking for 1 or 2 at Coastal Region Library (1:00 PM)

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

September 11th - Culinary Series: Greek Cuisine at Canning Center (12:00 PM)

Create a globally inspired meal from scratch to enjoy. Cost is \$25.00. All supplies included.

September 17th - Air Frying at Homosassa Library (10:00 AM)

Free program outlining the basics of healthy air fryer cooking.

September 23rd - Financial Management at Extension Office (6:00 PM)

Learn essential strategies for budgeting, saving, and planning for the future. Cost is \$10.00.

September 24th - Mocktails at Lakes Region Library (1:00 PM)

Beat the Florida heat with summer-ready Mocktails! Free session demoing the mixology behind delicious alcohol-free beverages with samples to try.

September 25th - Culinary Series: Island Cuisine (5:00 PM)

Create a globally inspired meal from scratch to enjoy. Cost is \$25.00. All supplies included.

October 2nd - Culinary Series: Island Cuisine (12:00 PM)

Create a globally inspired meal from scratch to enjoy. Cost is \$25.00. All supplies included.



To register for any of our available programs,
scan the QR code or call us at (352) 527 - 5700.



9th ANNUAL PLANT SALE

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

- Great Variety & Prices
- Many Native Plants
- Trees/Shrubs
- Perennials

Bring a wagon!



“Ask A Master Gardener” Booth

Citrus County Extension

3650 W Sovereign Path, Lecanto

352-527-5700

Service animals only please!

Cash or Checks Only



Proceeds from the Plant Sale support Extension events and outreach programs.



What To Do in The Garden



Pests: Summer is the time to keep an eye out for pests

Tiny white dots on the leaves of azaleas and other ornamental plants, may indicate a sap-sucking insect lurking on the underside of leaves. Also, many minute, yellow, green, or black insects congregating on the terminal end of shoots may be aphids. There are a few different ways to control these common pests. Before grabbing a bottle of toxic pesticide, consider a forceful spray of water which can dislodge insects and sever their mouthparts. If that doesn't successfully decrease the aphid population, choose one of the safer products such as horticultural soaps. For best results, it is important to ensure full coverage of the undersides of leaves by the soap, if that is where the pests are feeding. Using horticultural oils during summer is not recommended as they can cause leaf burn.

Vegetable Gardens: Summertime heat makes it difficult to grow a wide variety of veggies. Sweet potato, okra, eggplant, dried-type beans, and some hot peppers, are among the list of vegetables that like it hot. Consider taking advantage of summer's heat for solarizing planting beds in preparation for the autumn vegetable growing season (starting around Labor Day). During the 4 to 6 week- soil solarization process, many weed seeds, soilborne diseases and pests are neutralized.

By Labor Day, start preparing to plant vegetables such as green beans, tomatoes, peppers, squash, cucumbers, etc. With the right inputs, they'll provide a robust yield, up until the temperatures drop to frost/freeze levels. Once planted, it is best to wait 2 to 4 weeks after transplanting to apply vegetable fertilizer.

Lawns: Monitor throughout the summer for signs of problems. There are many causes of declining turf in summer including uneven irrigation coverage, chinch bugs, mole crickets, sod webworms, fungal and viral diseases. It is therefore best not to assume what's causing the decline, but instead, take the necessary steps to determine the cause, prior to seeking a remedy.