



Duval County Extension Office

1010 N. McDuff Ave., Jacksonville, FL 32254

Hours of Operation 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

Office: 904-255-7450 | Email: duval@ifas.ufl.edu

DECEMBER 2025



In this edition, let's celebrate the many ways agriculture, education, and community engagement came together across Duval County. As we close out 2025, we extend our appreciation to the students, volunteers, staff, partners, and community members who help strengthen our agricultural and environmental programs. We look forward to serving the community in 2026. In the meantime, December offers opportunities to stay engaged including growing your own transplants for spring and first-time buyer homebuyer workshops, and more resources! Wishing you all Season's Greetings!

Quick View of Program Areas

- [Lawns, Gardens and Trees](#)
- [Horticulture and Pest Services](#)
- [Agriculture and Agribusiness Management](#)
- [4-H Youth Development, Duval County 4-H Foundation](#)
- [Family and Consumer Sciences and Canning Center](#)



4-H Enrollment for the 2025/2026 Year

4-H Online is open for enrollment.

The membership fee for the year is \$30.

If your family would like to apply for a membership fee scholarship email duval4h@ufl.edu.

Encourage your friends to enroll in Duval 4-H



Join the **Urban Demonstration Garden Program** for a hands-on *Vegetable Seed Starting Workshop*, Saturday, January 24 from 10am - noon at the Urban Demonstration Garden located at 1032 Superior St., 32254.

Start the New Year off right! In this make-and-take workshop, you'll learn everything you need to know in order to successfully start your own seeds and grow your own transplants.

Workshop fee includes a seed tray, growing media and a variety of seeds to take home.

Course fee: \$15 plus fees if registering online.

Pre-registration is required.

For more information, email bmarlowe@ufl.edu

[Click here to register](#)

FIRST TIME HOME BUYER WORKSHOP

Learn the steps to home ownership and how to obtain an affordable mortgage.

This is an online via Zoom event. Registration Required to receive the Zoom Link.

October 16th & 23rd, 5pm - 9pm
November 6th & 13th, 5pm - 9pm
December 5th & 12th, 9am - 1pm



SELECT THE LINK TO REGISTER.

<https://FTHBDuval25.eventbrite.com>

For more information email :
nparks@ufl.edu

2 SESSIONS

Certificate of Completion available.
Must attend both sessions
to receive the certificate.



The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information, and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions, or affiliations. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A&M University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Persons with disabilities needing special accommodations should contact the Extension Office at least 30 working days prior to the event so that special considerations can be given to the request. Hearing impaired persons may access the Extension Office number by requesting the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8770 (voice) or 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).

First Time Home Buyer Workshop

Thinking about buying your first home? Join the **Family and Consumer Sciences Program** virtually to learn steps to homeownership. In this workshop you will obtain knowledge on obtaining an affordable mortgage.

This is a two session workshop. Once complete, you will receive a certificate of completion.

Remaining Available Workshop:

Fridays, December 5 and 12 | 9am - 1pm

Cost: \$28.52 including fee

[Click here to register](#)

Apply for Books & Cooks!



Books & Cooks is a FREE 7-week literacy and nutrition program created in collaboration with New Worlds Reading. Weekly sessions help families support enjoyment of reading, healthy eating, and family connection through fun, hands-on activities. Throughout the program, participants will share their experiences as part of a research study to measure the impact of Books & Cooks.

Families with a child in kindergarten-5th Grade are encouraged to apply!

Please note that spots are limited, and participation is not guaranteed. Classes will be conducted in English with supports in Spanish provided.



Each week, families receive a book, childcare, and dinner for FREE!



Scan this QR code to complete the application

To learn more about the study, contact:
David Diehl, PhD, Associate Professor
Family, Youth and Community Sciences
University of Florida
e-mail: dcdiehl@ufl.edu
phone: (352) 273-3526

Apply for Books & Cooks with the **Healthy Living Program** and discover how reading and cooking can bring your family closer together.

This free 7-week program, designed with New Worlds Reading, helps families build a love for books, healthy habits, and fun in the kitchen through hands-on activities and shared experiences.

Families with K-5 children are invited to apply and be part of an exciting research study exploring how Books & Cooks makes a difference!

Each week, families receive a book, childcare, and dinner for Free! You just have to register and show up.

For more information, email dcdiehl@ufl.edu or call 352-273-3526

[Click here to register](#)



UF IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

FOOD SAFETY

Florida requires all food service employees in a licensed Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) establishment to be trained on correct food handling and hygiene practices. Only DBPR division approved training programs are accepted as meeting the training requirement.

SIGN UP FOR OUR FOOD SAFETY MANAGER TRAINING
Classes available upon request

ServSafe
National Restaurant Association

SAFE STAFF®

Multitple and one day sessions available

For more information contact:
Natasha Parks @
904-255-7450 or nparks@ufl.edu

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information, and other services only to individuals and institutions that furnish with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions, affiliations. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A&M University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners/Commissioners of Cooperative Extension Service.

Ensure your staff is up to code!
Food Safety Manager Training is offered by the **Family and Consumer Sciences Program**.

Florida requires all food service employees in a licensed Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) establishment to be trained on correct food handling and hygiene practices.

Classes are available upon request.

Need a single-day course or a multi-day course option, we have you covered. Our training is flexible to fit your schedule.

To register and for more information contact:
Natasha Parks, Family Resources Agent III via email
nparks@ufl.edu or call the office.

UF/IFAS Extension Duval County 2025 Peanut Butter Challenge Results



Jacksonville, FL, November 17, 2025 – The 2025 Peanut Butter Challenge is complete for the UF/IFAS Extension Duval County Office, a division of the City of Jacksonville's Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department. The friendly competition among Florida counties encouraged residents to donate jars of unopened, unexpired peanut butter – a Florida-grown product and pantry staple – throughout the month of October.

This year, Duval County collected **2,623** jars of peanut butter, totaling **3,457.13** pounds. That's an increase of 66.3% in jars and 70.2% increase in pounds over 2024's collection. The Extension Office has started distributing peanut butter to selected food pantries and will complete all drop-offs by November 21, prior to Thanksgiving

The peanut butter was collected through "Good people in the community helping fight hunger with peanut butter, rather than corporate sponsorships," said Tracy Akers Williams, the UF/IFAS Extension Duval County Marketing Manager who has facilitated the Peanut Butter Challenge the past two years. "So far, food pantries have been thrilled to receive the peanut butter this year, even more so than in previous years."

Other counties around the state decided to extend the challenge into the third week of November, so the statewide bragging rights champion title (for the most peanut butter collected) is still waiting to be crowned. Results will be shared on December 1, 2025.

"We are grateful to the Jacksonville community for coming together to help address hunger through this initiative," said Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan. "The dramatic increase in the amount of peanut butter collected in Duval County this year reaffirms my belief that our city has a big heart."

Special thanks go to the City's JaxCares initiative, Duval County Property Appraiser Office, Duval County Extension Master Gardeners, Jacksonville Garden Club, 4-H Clubs of Duval County, Jacksonville Public Libraries, Standard Feed and Seed, Parks and Recreation, Kappa Alpha Psi Alumni Silhouettes, Wild Birds Unlimited, Mother Midway AME Church, and all citizens who donated. Also, thank you to those who helped spread the word, including WJXT's River City Live, and Se Hola Espanol en Jacksonville.



Ag Venture Brings Agriculture to Life for Duval County 3rd Graders

Each year during the Jacksonville Fair, Ag Venture offers local 3rd graders a fun, hands-on learning experience that shows exactly where our food and everyday products come from. Students rotate through a variety of interactive agricultural stations - meeting farm animals, exploring real farm tools, discovering how bees make beeswax, creating strawberry plants, and even cheering on pig races. From fire prevention lessons to up-close encounters with agriculture, Ag Venture helps students connect classroom learning with the world around them, sparking curiosity and building appreciation for the farmers and natural resources that support our community.

Take a look at some of the fun moments we captured as students dove into these hands-on agricultural adventures!



Larry Figart - Environmental Achievement Award Winner

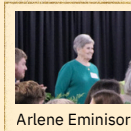
Larry Figart, Urban Forestry Agent with the UF/IFAS Extension Duval County Office, was recognized with the 2025 Christi P. Velita Environmental Award for his long-standing dedication and service to the community. For decades, Larry has planned, delivered, and evaluated impactful educational outreach programs in urban forestry, arboriculture, natural resources, and horticulture. His leadership and commitment have strengthened environmental stewardship throughout Jacksonville, making him a trusted resource and an advocate for a healthier, greener community.

Congratulations Larry, on this well-deserved recognition for your unwavering service to Duval County and our natural resources!!



68th Annual Farm City Luncheon Celebrates Local Agriculture

The Jacksonville-Duval County Agricultural Council, in partnership with the Duval County Farm Bureau, hosted the 68th Annual Farm City Luncheon at the Jacksonville Fairgrounds in honor of Farm City Week, November 16-22, 2025. The event celebrated the vital connection between rural and urban communities, highlighting the people and programs that support agriculture in Duval County. Congratulations to this year's agricultural award winners and scholarship recipients for their outstanding achievements. Mayor Donna Deegan presented the Farm City Week Proclamation and the Mayor's Agricultural Leadership Award, while also sharing exciting updates on opportunities for expanding urban agriculture throughout Jacksonville.



Duval County Extension 2024 Annual Report

UF/IFAS EXTENSION DUVAL COUNTY
2024 YEAR IN REVIEW



From your friends at Duval County Extension

Duval County Video



The Duval County I Know



Helpful Resources

Buy direct from a produce grower near you -
<https://www.fdacs.gov/Food-Nutrition/Buy-Fresh-From-Florida>

The City of Jacksonville's 2024 - 2025 Preparedness Guide:
<https://www.jaxready.com>

Look up your Evacuation Zone - <https://maps.coj.net/evsearch/>

Check Us Out Online and on Facebook!



<http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/duval/>
<https://www.facebook.com/DuvalCountyAgriculture>
<https://www.facebook.com/DuvalCounty4H/>
<http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/duvalco/>

The Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information, and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions, or affiliations. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A&M University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating.

The University of Florida is committed to providing universal access to all of our events. For disability accommodations such as sign language interpreters, listening devices, and alternate formats of written material, please contact the Duval County Extension Office at 904-255-7450 at least 2 weeks in advance. Advance notice is necessary to arrange for some accessibility needs.

<http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/duval/>