



## Up-Coming Events

Feb 1: Community Club

Feb 5; 9 am-3 pm: Toxic Roundup at Mayo Community Center

Feb 8: Culinary Club

Feb 15: Anglers Club

(meeting at 4-H building)

Feb 22 at 10 am: Homeschool Club

Feb 22: Archery Club

Feb 23: 4-H Day at the Capital

Feb 23; 2:00-4:00pm: Commodity Pick-Up

Feb 24: SVYLSX Exhibitor Clinic

March 1: Community Club

March 3: Lafayette County Peanut Meeting

### LES students plant cabbages and learn the importance of Agricultural Best Management Practices

By: Shawn Jackson

Third grade students at Lafayette Elementary School have been busy working in the school garden. Each student planted a cabbage plant in the garden which already has a row of turnips, radishes and carrots which was planted in the fall by second graders. Along with trying to see who can grow the largest cabbage, students are learning the importance of using Best Management Practices in the School Garden. This includes using a drip irrigation on a timer, taking soil samples to guide fertilizer application and integrated pest management. Over half of Lafayette County is covered in wetlands and borders the Suwannee River. Teaching youth at a young age to use BMPs in yards and gardens can be key to have quality drinking water as well as clean rivers and lakes in the years to come.



### New 4-H building construction is well underway

By: Emily Beach

A grant was applied for and approved to have a new 4-H building for club meetings and camps. As pictured, the exterior is nearly complete and insulation has been sprayed in. Plumbing and wiring has been installed. We are very excited to have this spacious area to have meetings and events in!

January Rainfall Totals (in)			
	2022	2021	2020
<b>Cooks Hammock</b>	1.74	2.12	1.1
<b>Mallory Swamp</b>	1.58	1.43	0.74
<b>Midway Tower</b>	1.65	1.78	0.89

## Weather and Agriculture Report

By: Emily Beach

Average seasonal temperatures and normal rainfall proved for a fairly typical January, until last week. We experienced a few days of freezing temperatures and for Florida agriculture, this puts a lot of stress on producers. Hopefully the citrus,

strawberry, and other vital crops fared well due to the considerable preparations made by producers to protect our valuable commodities.

February is the month for planting potatoes, most people usually put them in the ground on or around February 14. This is also the month for pruning roses to remove damaged canes and improve form. After pruning roses, fertilize and apply a fresh layer of mulch and you should see blooms in the spring. Now is a good time to apply a preemergence weed killer when temperatures are 65 degrees for 4-5 days to prevent warm-season weeds. Lastly, fertilize your citrus trees if you didn't do that in January.



### A successful Peanut Butter Challenge

By: Emily Beach

Through the efforts of several individuals, organizations, and Lafayette Elementary School we were able to collect 1240 jars of peanut butter totaling 1290.5 pounds! This was a state-wide effort to provide this nutritious commodity to local food banks for our neighbors in need. As a state, Florida brought in a combined 45,157 pounds of the spread which equates to 22.5 TONS of peanut butter. Our collection will be matched by the Florida Peanut Federation, and it will be distributed throughout our region to food banks for students and those in need. We are very thankful to live in a community that cares about those in need and works to help them.



### Suwannee Valley Youth Livestock Show and Sale March 21-24, 2022

**Exhibitors:** Be sure to be getting your animal show ready, preparing your record book, and talking to buyers to get ready for the show.

We will have a Show Clinic at the 4-H office after school on **February 24** to go over these topics.

*Congratulations to all of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders for your hard work in the 4-H Public Speaking Contest! Good luck to those advancing on in the competition! WE ARE PROUD OF YOU!*

# It was a great month for 4-H clubs!

By: Shawn Jackson and Emily Beach



## 4-H Culinary Club makes biscuits and salad- it's all about balance

A plan was made at the December culinary meeting on to learn how to make homemade biscuits at the meeting on January 11, 2022. During the course of the month in between meetings, we realized that it was time to harvest the lettuce from our tower gardens so we decided to also learn how to make some homemade salad dressings and harvest the lettuce for salads. When the members came in, we got right to our biscuit making by incorporating butter into flour then adding milk and cutting or rolling them into biscuits. While the biscuits were baking, we went out and harvested the lettuce by cutting mature pieces from the towers. By then, the tasty biscuits were ready, so we took them out of the ovens. While they cooled, we cut cucumbers and carrots to add to the lettuce and mixed up the dressings. The club members were able to take home a container of ranch and a container of a vinaigrette that they created from a variety of ingredients.



## Anglers Club

4-H Anglers recently spent a cold breezy day at Picket Lake fishing. Anglers fished with earthworms and artificial bait. While most members left empty handed after hours of casting lines, a few of the members that stayed around had some success catching bluegill just before dusk. February's meeting will be held at the extension office. A special guest will be teaching member how to make their own flies for fly fishing.



## Home School Club

The Lafayette Home School 4-H Club held its most recent meeting on January 25. The members enjoyed a morning of making valentines candy which upon completion were put in treat bags to take home. After cleaning the kitchen, the meeting continued outside where their 4-H Agent demonstrated archery and helped each youth take turns shooting a bow themselves. Before leaving, those in attendance had fun getting exercise playing a game of hide and go seek. If you know anyone interested in joining, call the Lafayette County Extension Office at 386-294-1279.



## Archery Club

Members of the Archery Club met on January 25 to practice their shooting skills. An additional target was added to the 4-H archery shooting range allowing four youth to participate at once. Not only did the Archery Club members practice their shooting skills, they also reviewed the whistle commands that are used in 4-H archery to ensure safe shooting.



## February is the month for Valentines and Potatoes

**By: Emily Beach**

According to a recent UF publication, Americans eat an average of 125 pounds of potatoes a year! Potatoes grow well when the days are warm but the nights are cool which makes February an ideal time for planting. If you are planting potatoes in your garden, you will need to decide what variety you are going to grow and get your area prepared for growing potatoes.



White-skinned and red-skinned potatoes are the best potatoes for the growing conditions we have here. White-skinned varieties include 'LaChpper' and 'Sebago' and red-skinned varieties are 'Red LaSoda' and 'LaRouge'. There are also new and exotic varieties available that you can try, just be sure to educate yourself first on the conditions needed to ensure that they match our conditions here.

Potatoes prefer a loose, well-drained, slightly acidic (5-6) soil which is perfect for our soil here. To make sure that the root zone has adequate drainage beds should be formed in hills at least 10-12 inches above the level soil. Since potatoes are heavy feeders, fertilizers will need to be applied to supplement for exhausted resources. Although you can be certain by conducting a soil test, nitrogen and potassium are generally what is needed for Florida soils so a 10-0-10 works well. The fertilizer should be applied in at least two applications during the season, once planting and the other time around 4 weeks after planting when the plant is 6-8 inches tall.

You should find certified seed to ensure that the seed tubers are free of disease and viruses. It is very important that you don't purchase potatoes from the grocery store to plant in your garden as they have most likely been treated with sprout inhibitors which will prevent establishment of the young plant. Cut the seed potatoes so that there is at least one eye per piece and each one is around the size of an egg, additionally some sources suggest storing the seed pieces in a dark, dry place for a day or two after cutting. When you get ready to put your potatoes in the ground, space them around 8 inches apart and make your rows 36 inches apart. Put your seed pieces around 4 inches deep with the cut side down and eyes facing up.

During the growing season, you can add more soil on the potato row after the sprout emerges so that the new tubers don't push up above the soil surface before they are mature. You may need to supplement with irrigation to provide an adequate amount of water but care must be taken not to overwater due to growing conditions and potentially washing away the fertilizer. Less water is needed when the plant is younger but more must be added as the plant grows. Finding ways to suppress weeds is important as that can be something to reduce yield. Insects and diseases must also be scouted for and dealt with accordingly. Most potatoes are ready for harvest between 80-115 days after planting depending on your preferred size at harvest.

In the May newsletter, we will discuss methods for maturing and storing your potatoes.

IFAS Extension is an equal opportunity Institution. We encourage all races, religions, and ethnicities to attend our programs. There are scholarships available for minority and underprivileged children. Please contact our office at (386)294-1279 with any questions and/or concerns.