



Volume 34 February 2023

Inside this issue:

Native Orchids	2
Vanilla Orchids	3
Clinic Clatter	4
Tremendous: Orchid Tree.	5
Garden of the Month . . .	6
Events	7



Lake County MGW Mission Statement

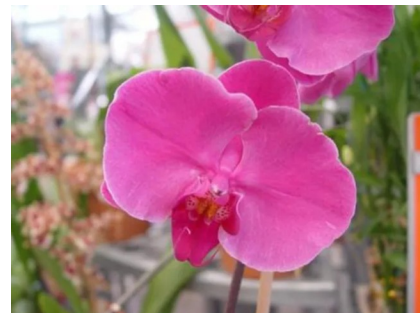
The mission of UF/IFAS Lake County Master Gardener Volunteers is to assist extension agents by providing horticultural education programs and current research-based information to the public through plant clinics, community outreach and Discovery Gardens.

Garden Scoop

Orchids

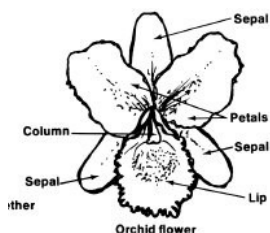
BY K. S. Kennen

Orchidaceae is one of the largest plant families and has from 25,000 to 30,000 species with over 100,000 hybrids. Many people, when they close their eyes and try to picture a tropical orchid, will see the moth orchid (*Phalaenopsis*) with its large bloom consisting of fuchsia or white petals. Just visit a grocery store or florist, especially during holidays like Mother's Day, to find this vibrant flowering plant.



Nassau County Extension

Besides being an aromatic and colorful species, orchids have a structure that establishes essential characteristics for identification of this group. The flowers of the orchid plant are bilaterally symmetrical and have two equal parts when divided with a single line through the middle of the flower. This will create a mirror image. The petal arrangement is also a unique, identifying characteristic for orchids. Each bloom has three sepals in the outer ring of petals and three petals in the inner ring. One of the three petals in the inner ring is different and is called the labellum or lip. The labellum with varied colors, markings, and designs provides a landing platform for the pollinator. The primary characteristic of an orchid's identification is the reproduction column. The top of the column consists of the anther with pollen packets and the stigma (below the anther), a shallow, sticky cavity in which the pollen is placed for fertilization. This means orchids are hermaphroditic.



Anatomy of An Orchid

<https://sites.millersville.edu/>

For more information contact: UF/IFAS Extension, Lake County Office lakemg.ifas@ufl.edu •

(352) 343-4101 • FAX (352) 343-2767

The Foundation for The Gator Nation

An Equal Opportunity Institution

Native Orchids

By Karen S, Kennen, MGV

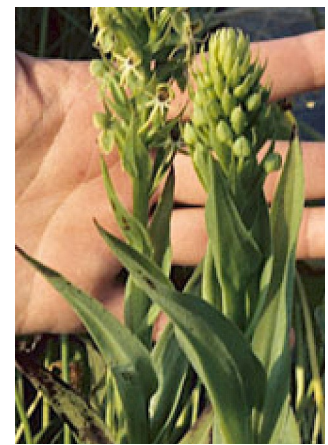
There are 106 native orchids found in Florida. Of that number, 58 are endangered and 18 are threatened. Orchids can be found in a variety of habitats. Epiphytic orchids are found in the subtropical part of Florida attached to trees in the Everglades and other swampy, south Florida areas. Terrestrial orchids are found in low-lying wet areas, such as swamps or on the forest floors throughout all of Florida. Following are only a few that you can find in central Florida.

Calopogon tuberosus, commonly called tuberous grass pink, is found in Canada, United States, and northern Caribbean. It has a magenta, pink, or white bloom that looks as if it is upside down because the labellum is at the top of the flower. It likes to grow in the full sun and moist soil in meadows, pine forests, and even ditches at the side of the road.



North American Orchid Conservation Center NOACC

Habenaria Repens, commonly called water-spider orchid, grows throughout Florida and is listed as a threatened plant. It is terrestrial or aquatic and has 3 to 8 leaves with an inflorescence of 10 to 50 flowers. The sepal are a light green and the petals have a lip that is greenish white. At night the bloom has a very strong vanilla scent to attract moths to act as pollinators.



UF Vic Ramey

Spiranthes odorata, commonly called fragrant ladies' tresses, can be found in bogs, marshes, wet meadows and even standing water. The orchid is easy to spot because its spike of twisting white flowers stands out against the other green growth.



Credit: Chris Evans,
University of Illinois,
Bugwood.org

For more orchids go the UF website Gardening Solutions:

<https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/ornamentals/floridas-native-orchids.html>

What's Cooking? Vanilla and February Fruits

by Tamre Parsons, MGv

Did you know that natural vanilla flavor is from the seeds within the pods of an orchid?

Although there are a few other locations where natural vanilla (*Vanilla planifolia*) is grown, the majority is shipped throughout the world from Madagascar and Indonesia making it the most valuable spice on Earth aside from saffron. Due greatly to transport and cultivation costs, under 1% of vanilla comes from its unique botanical source. Most of what is offered in stores is lab created.

To add to the rareness of this delicate flavor, the flowers only last for 1 day, although the plant will flower for a couple of months. However, pollination is done by hand, then the bean takes about 9 months to form. This is followed by a four-step curing process that takes a few months to complete.

Grow your own vanilla... Vanilla is a "semi-epiphytic." This means it can be planted in the ground or grown as an epiphyte, an air plant. The vine is perennial and can reach a length of over 200 feet.

VANILLA VINAIGRETTE

INGREDIENTS:

- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 3 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

SALAD GREENS with ORANGES and STRAWBERRIES

(Optional: Carambola, star fruit)

- 1 (6 ounce) package salad greens or baby spinach
- 1 (6 ounce) can mandarin oranges, drained or seedless oranges, peeled and sectioned
- 2 cups strawberries, sliced
- 1/2 cup toasted pecan pieces or pralines
- Optional, crumbled feta or blue cheese

VANILLA EXTRACT

from store bought vanilla beans

You need a dark glass bottle and enough standard proof vodka to fill it.

1. Cut the beans open lengthwise and into smaller pieces as necessary.
2. Add bean pieces to your bottle.
3. Fill the bottle to the top with vodka.
4. Store the bottle in a dark cabinet, shaking it a couple times a week.

In about two months, you will have homemade vanilla extract. Keep this in the dark to preserve the flavor as long as possible.

Thanks to hot and humid weather, South Florida's swamps can boast being the home of four native endangered species: *V. barbellata*, *V. dilloniana*, *V. phaeantha*, and *V. mexicana*.

UF/IFAS Tropical Research and Education Center (TREC) is working to bring vanilla production to Florida



Photos and story adapted from UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA "Vanilla" page

Flowers of *V. planifolia* (top left), *V. pompona* (top center), *V. phaeantha* (top right), *V. mexicana* (bottom left), *V. dilloniana* (bottom center), and *V. barbellata* (bottom right) growing in southern Florida.

Credit: Alan Chambers, UF/IFAS



Recipe submitted by Crafty Lady 13 to Food.com

Originally from McCormick's Cooking with Flavor cookbook

Plant Clinic Clatter

By R. Doherty, MGV



DEAR MASTER GARDENER: I would like to create an area in my lanai for my orchids. What kind of pests or diseases should I be aware of?

DEAR HOMEOWNER:

The most common orchid pests are scale, mealy bugs, thrips, and mites – whether grown indoors or out. If you see ants, then you most likely have one of these pests since ants feed on the honey dew the pests produce which in turn cause a fungus commonly called sooty mold.

BEFORE removing them, be sure they are pests and not beneficials. Beneficials are needed to pollinate orchids, so be sure to follow Integrated Pest Management ([IPM](#)) practices.

You can treat small pest problems on some orchids by dabbing the pests with a cotton swab that's been dipped in rubbing alcohol. For larger infestations, you can wash the plants with water or use a horticultural oil or soap spray that's safe for use on orchids. You may need to repeat this process to get the pests in check.

It's a good practice to repot your orchids every two years to help prevent diseases, ants, and cockroaches. Orchids do not like temps below 60°F, so they should be brought indoors to prevent them from damage.

Orchids that are suffering from a disease may show symptoms like streaks, blotches, or even crinkling on their leaves, roots, or flowers. If you suspect a problem, the first step is always to isolate sick plants so that the pathogen can't spread to healthy plants.

With some diseases, you can remove the affected tissue with a clean knife and then treat the orchid with an appropriate bactericide or fungicide. In other situations, the best strategy is to dispose of the infected plants.

Cut down on future disease problems by creating a healthy growing environment and practicing good sanitation. Provide good air movement, avoid getting the foliage and flowers wet, and always use clean tools when transplanting and propagating your orchids.

Resources: [AOS Orchid pests](#) | [Orchids](#) | [orchid pests](#) | [Growing orchids](#) | [Orchid IPM](#)



scale



mealy bug



thrip



mite

Pest photos from UF

Treemendous: Orchid Tree – *Bauhinia variegata*

BY: J. Daugherty, RHA

There are many interesting flowering plants used in the landscape industry. Unfortunately, some end up being invasive. The orchid tree is one example of this. Native to China, the orchid tree species *Bauhinia variegata* has been commonly used in Florida landscapes since its introduction in 1936. The showy flowers and interesting leaf shape are some of the features that were attractive about adding this tree to landscapes. While some cultivars may have sterile flowers, many do not. This leads to the wind dispersal of seeds that can travel great distances with seeds remaining viable for years. The trees are impacting natural areas in central and south Florida. Our own Discovery Garden removed several of these trees over two years ago and we still have an issue with seedlings popping up all over the garden. Classed as a category 1 invasive by the UF/IFAS Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants and Florida Invasive Species Council, UF no longer recommends these trees for use in landscapes.



UFIFAS



J. Daugherty



Master Gardener Volunteer Plant Clinic

Bring your plant, insect, and soil problems to our Plant Clinic for advice Monday through Friday 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The plant clinic is staffed by volunteers. Please call ahead at 352-343-4101 to be sure that someone is in the clinic to assist you with your question.

You may also send photos of your local problems to Jamielyn Daugherty at jdaugherty@ufl.edu or to the plant clinic at lakemg@ifas.ufl.edu.

Garden Of the Month

Congratulations to Cathy Benjamin and Denise Price, co-leads of the Southwestern Garden which has been selected as garden of the month. It is a unique representation of xeriscaping with its reduced need for or total elimination of irrigation through selection of plants. A Florida native that would be perfect for a xeriscaping garden is the prickly pear cactus with its yellow, white, orange, or purple blooms in the summertime. This garden also has another native, the firebush with its bright orange blooms filled with nectar that attract a variety of pollinators. Notice also the choice of mulch, gray gravel, to add to the easy care of this garden.

Well done Cathy and Denise.



Discovery Gardens

Please plan a visit to over twenty different gardens located at 1951 Woodlea Road in Tavares. The hours are Monday through Friday and the third Saturday of the month from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Just like your yard, Discovery Garden changes with the seasons and will reveal something new with each visit. Come see the changes in the garden.



Classes

Volunteer Information Session

February 1st at 6-7 pm Lake County Extension 1951 Woodlea Rd, Tavares, FL 32778

Growing Your Garden Series (1 of 3)

February 9, 2023, 6-7 pm Lake County Extension 1951 Woodlea Rd, Tavares, FL 32778

Join Residential Horticulture Agent, Jamie Daugherty, for a three-week class to learn about growing your own container vegetable garden. Are you interested in learning how to grow an edible garden in a container? This class is for you. Meeting once a week for 3 weeks, you will learn about companion planting, scouting for pests, fertilizing, pruning, and more.

The class fee of \$45 will include the following plants: tomato, basil, and a variety of onions. The fee also includes gloves, a half apron, trowel, cultivator, watering can, and a 17-gallon container.

Register online at <https://lakediscoverygardensprograms.eventbrite.com>

Growing Your Garden Series (2 Of 3)

February 16, 2023, 6-7 pm Lake County Extension 1951 Woodlea Rd, Tavares, FL 32778

Second class will continue to provide information about container vegetable gardening.

Saturday In the Garden: Orchid Repotting

February 18, 2023, 10 – 11 am Lake County Extension 1951 Woodlea Rd, Tavares, FL 32778

Exotic, beautiful, with thousands of species and as many hybrids, orchids are popular with homeowners and can be an obsession of the serious collector. And contrary to popular belief, they are not difficult to grow. Many orchids, like Cattleya and Phalaenopsis, thrive in Florida's heat and humidity and can do well in the home and around the yard. Class fee of \$10 includes a 6-inch pot and planting medium. Please bring a larger pot, if necessary, along with your favorite orchid.

Register online at <https://lakediscoverygardensprograms.eventbrite.com>

GARDEN TOURS Lake Extension Discovery Gardens 1951 Woodlea Rd, Tavares, FL 32778

All tours are either Signage, Audio, or Docent. Each day is a different tour, and you will be surprised with which one you will get when you come!

Monday, February 6 th	Any time from 9am to 1pm
Tuesday, February 14 th	Tours are at 9am, 10:45 am, and 12:30 pm
Saturday, February 18 th	Tours are at 9am, 10:45am, and 12:30 pm
Wednesday, February 22 nd	Any time from 9am to 1 pm

Classes and Events

CLASSES OFFERED TO PUBLIC AT LAKE COUNTY LIBRARIES

FEBRUARY 10, 2023 -- 2:00 to 3:00 PM

FFL – Florida Friendly Landscaping

Free and no registration

Cagan Crossings Library

Are you new to Florida? Are you having issues in your landscape? Do you want a more sustainable landscape? This class introduces the 9 Florida Friendly Landscape principles and how to integrate them into your home landscape.

FEBRUARY 12, 2023 -- 2:00 to 3:00 PM

Orchid Care

Free and no registration

Mount Dora Public Library

Orchids are beautiful plants that people often find intimidating to grow. This class teaches the basics of orchid care, allowing you to gain confidence about growing these amazing plants.

FEBRUARY 15, 2023 -- 2:00 to 3:00 PM

Herb Gardening for high school youth

Free and no registration

Tavares Library

Growing your own herbs is a great way to have fresh herbs easily accessible. Not all herbs grow at all times in Florida. Come learn how to grow them successfully.

FEBRUARY 16, 2023 -- 5:00 to 6:00 PM

Florida Fruiting Trees

Free and no registration

Leesburg Library

Learn about what fruit trees to plant in Florida and how to grow them.

FEBRUARY 16, 2023 -- 2:00 to 3:00 PM

Spring Vegetable Gardening

Free and no registration

Marianne Beck Memorial Library

Learn how to grow your own food. This class looks at how to start a garden, what to grow, how to manage pests, and more.

FEBRUARY 21, 2023 -- 12:00 to 1:00 PM

Flowering Trees and Shrubs

Free and no registration

Eustis Memorial Library

Learn more about trees and shrubs that produce flowers. Golden trumpet tree, crape myrtle, and ligustrum are not your only options.

Check individual library website calendars to verify presentations.