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**Lake County MGVS 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

## ALPHABET NEWSLETTER

Editor Karen S. Kennen, MGVS

### \* A \*

is for aphid, the dreaded and sometimes prolific insect that can infect almost any plant. It will cause damage by sucking plant juice and also by transmitting viruses. Control can be as simple as knocking them off with a strong stream of water or spraying insecticidal soap on the plant.



### \* B \*

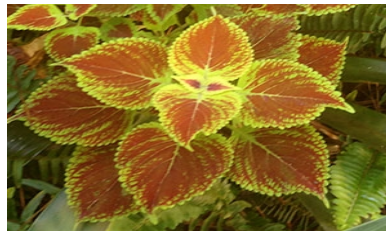
is for borage, an herb that I grew one spring/summer because I thought the delicate, purple flower of the plant was pretty. I started the seeds in a small plot in April and had flowers throughout the summer. Not only did the bees love this herb's flower but it is also edible and has a mild cucumber flavor that is infused with a sweet honey taste. The leaves,



even though they are edible, are not eaten raw because of prickles on the leaf and should be used in tea or a stew to add flavor.

### \* C \*

is for coleus, a very colorful summer-friendly annual that will spice up your flower beds with not only varied colored leaves but differently shaped leaves. This plant has both shade and sun varieties but does like to be kept evenly moist and to have its flowers pinched back so it will not go to seed and last throughout the summer.



### \* D \*

is for double flower, as is exemplified by most roses. The double flower will have 17 to 25 petals circling the center of the bloom. These double flowers are considered abnormalities that were recognized for their beauty and were purposely cultivated.



All photos are from  
 UF EDIS website

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 (352) 343-4101 ▪ FAX (352) 343-2767



## \*E\*

is for elephant ears, an invasive plant that is unfortunately often seen along our waterways. I have spent many hours pulling them from the lake when they appeared five years ago. There is only one species that is not invasive in Florida, *Alocasia*. If you are not sure of the species, please don't plant it and risk having an invasive growing in your yard or waterway.



## \*F\*

is for fern; that is a plant that loves shade and moist soil. This plant will add color and texture to your landscape if you plant it in the right place. Holly fern is perfect to grow under trees to add interest with its green, leathery leaves.

## \*H\*

is for hydroponics and is a system using nutrient enriched water instead of soil to grow herbs and vegetables. But did you know that it has been around for thousands of years? Records exist that the Greeks wrote of growing plants in water. Aztecs had floating gardens called "chinampas" and are recognized as part of an agriculture system today in Mexico City.



Photo FAO.org

## \*G\*

is for grubs. The white grub that you find under your sod is the larva for the chafer beetle and survives by eating the roots of your grass. To check for the white grub cut down around the edges of a one foot square. If the square lifts easily, the roots may have been eaten by grubs. If you see the grubs, count them. If there are ten or more in the square, you can treat for them with a variety of chemicals made specifically for treatment of grubs.



## \*I\*

is for infographics; which are a pictorial, graphic representations of informational topics. This site with a list of these useful and helpful items can be found on <https://branding.ifas.ufl.edu/infographics>. A few are beekeeping calendar, venomous snakes, attracting fireflies; compost basics, a Florida Thanksgiving, air potato invasion, and Asian giant hornet.



## \*J\*

is for jasmine, specifically confederate or star jasmine. This blooming, aromatic twining vine has white star-shaped blooms from April through June. This quick grower can grow on a trellis or even a tree but needs support to grow on a masonry wall. The vine is a fast grower and if you let it grow on a tree, be careful it does not grow out of reach to be pruned. When pruning be aware that the milky sap can stain clothing.



## \*L\*

is for lichen an epiphyte; which contrary to what many believe, is not harmful to plants. Lichen may be flat, leafy, or hair-like and form on tree bark, rocks, soil, fences, etc. Plants that are unhealthy will often lose leaves allowing more sun for the lichen which is attached to its bark to thrive.



## \*M\*

is for monarch butterfly; which derives its poison from eating milkweed, its host plant. Once hatched, the butterfly only lives four to six weeks unless it is the fourth generation which lives eight to nine weeks. This fourth generation are the ones that will migrate to the south for winter. When migrating the butterfly

will fly about 100 miles a day and survive mostly on all that it ate while it was a caterpillar. The migration ends in Mexico and it stays there some weeks until flying back to lay eggs and reproduce.



## \*K\*

is for kudzu, a vine from Japan and southeast China with sweet smelling flowers that was introduced at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876 as an ornamental. Later, in the 30' through 50s, it was a tool to help prevent erosion. Unfortunately, once established, its growth rate of one foot a day makes it overtake everything around it and all that is covered by it will die because the heavy foliage blocks sunlight and prohibits photosynthesis. This category one invasive can be controlled in small patches with mowing and cattle and goats feeding on it. Large patches need herbicide treatments.



## \*N\*

is for noisette rose, a hardy variety of hybrid rose from Chirre rose and moss rose. This persistent, rampant, long-lived climber can grow on a fence, trellis and even a pine tree. Three types to try are Marechal Niel, Reve d'Or, and Lamargue.



Photo courtesy of Maureen Ross

is for okra:

## **What's Cooking?**

Lori Johnson, Family & Consumer Science Agent, UF/IFAS Extension, Lake County

Did you know: okra is an excellent source of Vitamin C which is great for immunity and wound healing. It is a good source of fiber which helps to aid in digestion and magnesium which helps maintain a healthy blood pressure.

Try this healthier alternative to southern fried okra at your next family meal.

## **Oven Fried Okra**

### **Ingredients:**

15 oz. (about three cups) okra cut into ½ inch slices  
2 large eggs (egg substitute can be used instead)  
1 ¼ cup of cornmeal  
salt and pepper, optional

\*Recipe is gluten free

### **Directions:**

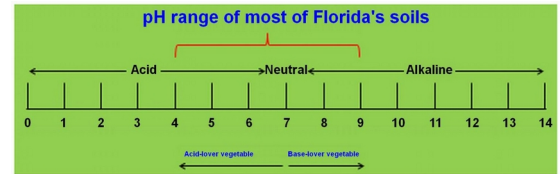
1. Beat 2 large eggs and place in a deep dish.
2. Slice off ends of okra pods and discard.
3. Slice remaining okra pods into ½ inch slices.
4. Add okra to eggs and stir to coat.
5. Let okra soak in eggs for 15 minutes.
6. Meanwhile, pre-heat oven to 400°F.
7. Add yellow corn meal to a shallow dish. Season with a sprinkle of salt and pepper if desired, stir to combine.
8. With a slotted spoon, transfer okra to dish with corn meal and stir to coat.
9. Place okra in an oven crisper basket on tray in a single layer. A baking sheet can be used, but okra will need to be flipped halfway through baking time to brown evenly.
10. Spray okra with non-stick baking spray.
11. Bake for about 20 minutes, or until golden brown.





## \*P\*

is for pH; which is the measure of acidity or alkalinity of soil. In Florida the median pH is 6.1. Vegetable and flower gardens like a pH between 5.8 to 6.3. The best thing to do when planting is to select plants that are suited to your soil type rather than try to change the pH with amendments which can be done but must be monitored and done continually. Publication HS1207 from EDIS has an excellent explanation.



## \*Q\*

is for questions. If you have gardening questions or concerns, one place to go or call is the plant clinic. You can visit the plant clinic from 10 am to 2 pm with your questions. Please remember that COVID cautions are in place and a controlled number of visitors with masks, are allowed into the office.

You can also call at 352-343-4101 or email [lake@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:lake@ifas.ufl.edu) with your questions.

## \*R\*

is for resurrection fern and is aptly named because it can look brown and dead one day but become green and alive the next day when it receives enough water to revive it. *Pleopeltis polypodioides* is an epiphyte or air plant that uses other plants to anchor on and survives through photosynthesis.



Resurrection fern (*Pleopeltis polypodioides*) before rain (top) and after (bottom)

## \*S\*

is for sage; which is an herb used to flavor poultry and can grow from 12 to 18 inches high. This perennial needs at least six hours of sun and water when it is dry.



# “T” is for Treemendous: Tree Risk

Jamie Daugherty, RHA

Trees offer several ecosystem services including producing oxygen, providing shade, and reducing erosion. The public perception of tree risk tends to be higher than the actual risk posed by trees. According to the Florida ISA chapter, there is a 1 in 200,000,000 chance of being struck in the head by a tree limb, leading to significant injury or death. The key to staying safe while living with trees is managing the risk through proper tree maintenance. As trees age, they need to be inspected by a certified arborist about every two years. The number of inspections may increase as the tree ages and if something of concern shows up.

How can you manage your existing trees to reduce the risk they pose during hurricanes? The answer is, do not plan for hurricanes, plan for normal weather. Hurricanes are extreme weather events. Perfectly healthy trees can fail, just as perfectly constructed roofs can come off. Trees managed for normal weather events will be better prepared for major weather events. To prepare your trees you need to be on the look out for open cavities, dead branches, leans, and splits.

Open cavities mean that rot is present and could mean the tree has to be removed, but not always. Most trees are very good at compartmentalizing decay so you can still enjoy the environmental benefits of the tree and the cavity may become the home of an owl, a family of squirrels, or another animal.

Large dead branches should always be pruned out. They are most likely to fall and cause damage or injury. Everything decays faster in Florida so prompt removal is important.

If you have a tree that suddenly starts to lean, this must be inspected by a professional immediately because it could be in danger of falling. If the tree has been leaning for a long time, you may not have to do anything. Trees produce extra reaction wood on the root flare opposite the lean. Trees will often start to right themselves by sending a branch up from the side of the trunk. These are signs that you can leave the tree since the likelihood of failure is small.

Splits between codominant stems are a sign of a weakened structure because the branches are pushing away from each other and could fail. A professional should be contacted for an inspection. There are tree preservation practices that can be implemented if you want to save the tree.

While these are not all of the things that can go wrong with a tree, they are some of the most easily recognized. When hiring a professional a TRAQ qualified ISA Certified arborist will be the most knowledgeable to help.



Tree Cavities



Dead Limbs



Tree with  
codominant stems



## \*U\*

is for UF/IFAS, University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. "It is a federal-state-county partnership dedicated to developing knowledge in agriculture, human and natural resources and the life sciences. UF/IFAS fulfills the university's land grant mission, working to enhance and sustain the quality of human life through its dozen-plus research facilities, Extension services offered in every Florida county, and top-ranked education at the UF College of Agricultural and Life Sciences."

## \*V\*

is for vinca or periwinkle, a warm season annual that can not only add color to your garden but also provide nectar for your pollinators.



## \*W\*

is for wax begonia; that is an annual that adds color to your garden year round. It grows in sun or shade and comes with a single or double bloom in red, pink, or white.



## \*X\*

is for Xeriscape. Coined in 1981, it is landscaping that conserves water and protects the environment. The 7 principles include: planning and design, soil analysis, practical turf areas, appropriate plant selection, efficient irrigation, use of mulches, and appropriate maintenance. The term is trademarked by the Denver Water Department to insure non-commercial use of Xeriscape.

<https://davesgarden.com/guides/terms/go/1038/>

## \*Y\*

is for yarrow, a perennial with feathery foliage and single or double flowers in red, pink, yellow, and white. This 1 to 3 foot tall plant needs well-drained soil and full sun to do well.



## \*Z\*

is for zinnia. This versatile annual grows from seed or can be purchased as a plant and comes in a variety of sizes and colors. Plant it in spring and fall. The plant likes full sun and well-drained soil.



# Events

Please refer to our website for future offerings. The site for is at <http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu.lake/> or <https://lakegardeningprograms.eventbrite.com> Extension programs are open to all persons without regard to race, color, sex, age, disability, religion, or national origin.

## Flavors of Summer

June 12th, 2021 from 10 am- 12 pm

UF/IFAS Extension, Lake County: 1951 Woodlea Road, Tavares

\*Event will be held outside in Discovery Gardens, in the event of rain will be held indoors

\$15 per person This culinary program will inspire you to try new flavor combinations as you fire up the grill and prepare for your summer BBQ's. Learn successful grilling techniques and recipe ideas for health.

Advance registration is required. Register by June 8th by clicking the link below:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/flavors-of-summer-tickets-154430863871>

## Living Your Best Life: Fall Prevention & Bone Health

June 17<sup>th</sup> 10-11 am

Free of Charge

Virtual - Presented by Lori Johnson, Family & Consumer Science Agent, Lake County, Linda Thompson, Lake County Sheriff's Office, and Cheryl Rumbly, Cornerstone Hospice

This is a monthly educational opportunity to enhance your health, wellness and challenges as an older adult or older adults you care for. Our June class will provide tips and strategies for fall prevention and ways to keep your bones healthy and strong.

Advance registration by June 16th is required to receive virtual link to join class.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/living-your-best-life-fall-prevention-and-bone-health-tickets-153333120491>

## 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. Pictured to the right is a fountain at the entrance to the garden.

