

The Green Thumb



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Happy Fall, Gardeners!

While the weather doesn't quite feel like fall yet, hopefully we'll be having to cover our cool season vegetable crops with frost cloth before you know it. Inside this quarter's Green Thumb you'll find information about improvements and changes to the Demonstration Gardens and Master Gardener Program, a lesson on nematodes, a few plants you may not have known were considered invasive (sorry!), and a sweet recipe! We have lots of outreach events coming up so we hope to see you out and about in the community. As always, please let us know if you

have any gardening-related questions or want to give us feedback on how we're doing. Thanks to all of the help and support from Leon County Master Gardeners, Kelly, and Genice. Have a great holiday season and we look forward to a great 2019!

Sincerely,

Mark Tancig

Self-Guided Garden Tour Now Available

We are excited to announce that a self-guided summer garden tour of the UF/IFAS Extension Leon County's demonstration garden is now available to the public. The tour was created by Master Gardener volunteers and horticulture staff, stemming from the desire to increase the number of visitors enjoying and learning from our gardens. What is a self-guided garden tour? Participants follow a detailed map that flows through each of the garden beds, pausing at 12 featured plants that are especially spectacular during the summer. Brochures detailing the self-guided tour are available inside the Extension Office, and is accompanied by an audio piece that is archived on YouTube, and easily accessible by scanning the QR code on the brochure. Master Gardener Carole McKay audibly guides participants as they

take the tour, going into depth about the cultural needs of the 12 featured plants and some other plant species that are viewable along the tour path. A kiosk will soon be housed near the entrance of the Extension Office in Bed 2. As the horticulture program creates tours for the fall, winter, and spring, these seasonal brochures will be kept at the kiosk to be accessed by the public dawn to dusk, and inside the Extension Office building from 8am-5pm, Monday-Friday.

The self-guided tour, taken with or without the audio accompaniment, gives participants the advantage of learning about Florida-Friendly Landscaping and horticulture during and after business hours. With our summer heat, the garden is best enjoyed in the early morning or evening, as the sun is rising and setting.

Come and try out our summer garden tour, available now, and keep an eye out for the fall version, which will be published very soon. We hope you enjoy!



Nematodes, Be Gone

As the 4-H Horticulture Club pulled out spent cucumber and watermelon plants in their garden beds in August, they came across something unusual. The roots of the cucumber plant were covered in fleshy nodules, and the leader of the club, horticulture program assistant Kelly Thomas, immediately knew the culprit: root-knot nematodes.

Root-knot nematodes are microscopic roundworms that enter the roots of certain plant species (endoparasitic) using a spear-like mouthpart and feed on the roots, causing tissue abnormalities called galls or 'root knots' to form. The galls cannot be broken away from the roots and block the flow of nutrients throughout the plant, and lead to deformed fruit, stunted stems and leaves, and a general appearance of stress in the plant. Susceptible plants include beans, peas, celery, cruciferous vegetables such as kale, cucurbits such as cucumber, leaf crops such as lettuce, okra, tomato, pepper, and eggplant. Nematodes are spread through infested soil or transplants of vegetables (a likely cause of the infestation at the Extension Office).

Master Gardeners working in the vegetable garden also noticed galls on the roots of squash species planted in a different area than the 4-H cucumbers. So, the Extension Office sent a sample to the Nematode Assay Laboratory in Gainesville for testing. Indeed, the test came back confirming an infestation of root-knot nematodes. The 4-H garden beds saw numbers of 720 per 100 cc of fluid (unusually high numbers). The vegetable garden beds saw numbers of 11 per 100 cc of fluid. Spiral nematodes were also reported, but in lower numbers (9 and 3 per 100 cc of fluid).

The plan to combat these nematodes (a task taken quite seriously by the 4-h youth) is an integrated approach that includes planting resistant species for a year (including cover crops), growing mustard crops, a bio-fumigant effective in controlling nematodes, in the highly infested areas, destroying roots that may still be in the soil of the garden beds, and practicing proper sanitation such as throwing away plant material and sanitizing tools. Another nematode assay will be conducted after a season of implementing these methods. Hopefully the numbers will be much lower!



Mighty Mustard® Pacific Gold mustard seed from Johnny's Selected Seeds. Planted in September in the 4-H garden for nematode control.



Surprising Invasive Plants

To keep Leon County citizens up-to-date on the latest status of invasive plants, the following plants are now listed as **Invasive (No Uses)** for North Florida by the UF/IFAS Assessment of Non-Native Plants.

Ajuga: *Ajuga reptans*, or common bugle weed, is a groundcover with spires of purple blooms. It sits no more than 6 inches tall including its blooms.

Canna: *Canna indica* is now listed as invasive, but *Canna x generalis* is not. *C. indica* is native to tropical and subtropical Central and South America. It can be found growing alongside road shoulders and in ditches in the SE United States (see top picture).

Princess Flower: *Tibouchina urvilleana* is an evergreen ornamental shrub that grows up to 15 feet tall. Its leaves are velvety and its blooms are royal purple in color, with the most prominent bloom time occurring May-January.

Nightflowering Jessamine: *Cestrum nocturnum* has glossy, smooth, simple leaves 4-8 inches long and intensely fragrant white blossoms that open in the evening. It is native to tropical America and the West Indies (see bottom picture).

Flax Lily: *Dianella ensifolia* is native to Africa and tropical/temperate Asia. It is a spreading perennial with flat, glossy green leaves. It is often used as a border plant.



Fall and Winter To-Do's

Propagation-wise, there are a good number of tasks that can be done in the Florida garden during the fall and winter. As the weather cools, plant growth and nutrient flow tends to slow, which gives gardeners the opportunity to divide and transplant certain species. Fall and winter is a good time to purchase and plant bare root trees, and also pot up or move saplings. Cuttings can be taken from species that propagate best by semi-hardwood (early fall) or hardwood (late fall/winter) cuttings. For reference as to the propagation specifics of landscape species, please visit <https://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/database/lppi/>. The type of cutting that yields the most success is specified for each species.

Bulbs such as daffodil can be divided at this time and moved to other spots in your landscape, or purchased and planted. Be sure to pick an area that is not frequently inundated with water, as the bulbs can rot.

Mid-September and mid-October are a prime time to sow North Florida ecotypes of spring-blooming wildflower species. Fall gives these wildflower species a competitive advantage against weed seedlings and also a winter of cool temperatures, which some species require. When sowing wildflowers, pick an area of your landscape that receives plenty of sun and does not have a lot of other vegetative growth currently growing. Temperature should be taken into account as the germination rate of seeds tends to decline when the soil temperature drops below 60 degrees or rises above 90 degrees. Seeds should be sown in the top ½ inch of soil. If planting during dry spells, supplemental irrigation should be provided, watering to a depth of ¼ inch daily for two weeks. For more information, visit <http://ufdcimages.uflib.ufl.edu/IR/00/00/17/68/00001/EP30400.pdf>.



** Fall & Winter is a good time to plant fruit trees.*

Faculty & Staff



Mark Tancig
Commercial/Residential Horticulture
Agent
606-5217
tancig00@ufl.edu



Kelly Thomas
Horticulture Program Assistant
606-5223
kellymthomas@ufl.edu

Upcoming Events

Art and Garden Festival

October 6th
9:00 am-2:00 pm
100 Research Rd. Quincy, FL

Leon MG's: Extra Bed 6 Workday

October 9th
8:00 am-11:00 am
Extension Office

Farm Tour- AAMG Booth @ Millstone Plantation

October 13th and 14th
10:00 am-5:00 pm Sat. and 12:00pm-
5:00 pm Sun.
6500 Old Millstone Plantation Road Tal-
lahassee, FL 32312

Leon MG's: iNaturalist CEU

October 23rd, 10:00 am-12:00 pm
Extension Office
Speaker Peter Kleinhenz, Interpretive
Write and Planner, FWC

AAMG @ Monarch Festival

October 27th
St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge
10:00 am– 4:00 pm



Master Gardener Class Change :

Detailed in page 4 of this newsletter, the 2019 Master Gardener class will be held in September of 2019 until December of 2019, which will be a 12 week class. Applications are found on our website, <https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/leon/>. Please tell interested friends and family to apply sooner rather than later.

Horticulture

Highlights

In the past three months, Master Gardeners and horticulture staff/faculty have been developing new projects and planning for the future. This includes completing several standard operating procedure write-ups for different aspects of the Master Gardener program. S.O.P.'s will help future project leaders with the processes involved in a given project or area of our program, such as the Master Gardener class, plant sale, marketing, and open house.

Meetings were held regarding changes to our vegetable garden and Bed 6, as well as some extra work days to move those plans forward. In the coming year, Bed 6 will see an addition of a cut flower section and groundcover 'quilt.' Raised triangular beds forming a semi-circle will be built in Bed 5, as well as a food 'forest' at the southern most end of the vegetable garden.

The Veterans Garden Club (picture below right) has been meeting every two weeks under the direction of a core group of Master Gardeners and Agent Mark Tancig. They've discussed general gardening FFL principles, planted a patio garden at the VA, and worked with a group of Veterans at a local apartment complex. Future plans include a raised bed garden at the VA. The 4-H Horticulture Club (top picture right), in addition to knocking out a nematode infestation, has been preparing for the North Florida Fair Horticulture ID contest. This included a fruit lab, where youth tasted and identified over 15 fruit species, most of which are grown in the Extension

Office orchard. A new gardening-related club, the 4-H Insect Club held their first meeting in September, and an exciting and educational year is planned.



2019 MG Program

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus said, "There is nothing permanent except change."

At the Leon County Extension Office, we have decided to change up the Master Gardener (MG) Training program for 2019. Hopefully, these changes will lead to better trainings, more engaged MG volunteers, and more flexibility for other garden-related trainings by faculty, staff, and volunteers.

The schedule for the past two classes, and many before that here in Leon County, has been an annual schedule, where trainees meet once a month for a 4-hour training session and participate in monthly demonstration garden workdays.

Trainees obtain the required 50 hours of education and 75 hours of community service to become certified Master Gardeners during that year. (For a review of Master Gardener policies, please see <http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/volunteers/>).

The new schedule will be a 12-week class starting September of 2019 with weekly 4-hour sessions, and one or two special, optional or weekend trainings. Once the training classes are complete, the trainees will have all the following year to obtain the required 75 hours of community service to become a certified Master Gardener.

Just like the current program, trainees will be required to achieve those first 75 hours by participating in a certain number of demonstration garden workdays and office training, as well as other community volunteer projects.

While this is different from previous classes, this is the schedule that most, if not all, Master Gardener programs follow in other Florida counties. Although the trainings will be more condensed, it opens up part of the year to 1) spend more time working with MGs and trainees on community-oriented projects, 2) host workshops for MGs and trainees to gain more in-depth knowledge and get to know each other better, and 3) potentially set up a MG-led gardening series for citizens who don't have the time for the MG program but still want to learn how to be better, more Florida-Friendly gardeners. More on that to come!

We will continue accepting applications through June of 2019, with interviews occurring in July and/or August. Tentatively, classes will begin September 12, 2019.

