

### **VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:**

## Jim Bush

## An Amazing Volunteer

By Carolyn Saft, Extension Director



I have worked with many volunteers in my Extension career and learned something from every one of them, but none more than Jim Bush. He has a wealth of knowledge and experience and freely shares it with our Master Gardener Volunteers and me. Jim is Live Oak's "MacGuyver", a fellow who can fix just about anything and make something out of scraps, he never ceases to amaze us! Jim has volunteered at the teaching greenhouse for several years and has been the brains and brawn behind many of the project improvements we've made.

Jim has the ability to visualize a 3D solution to our many needs. From winterizing our greenhouse, to fixing our electric cart and coming with ways to attach shelving to metal poles, Jim has been our "Mr. Fix-It" and "Mr. Build-It". He is resourceful and has helped us save a lot of money over the years.

Jim also has a great sense of humor and shares many folklore stories and foreign language teachings with us as he toils away. We want to give a big shout out to Jim for helping our program and plants grow. Thank you, Jim, for sharing your time, talent, and skills with us. We are grateful for EVERYTHING you have done!

"It is the essence of genius to make use of the simplest ideas."

Charles Peguy

### JULY/AUG/SEPT 2024

Hurricane Prep for livestock and farms page 2

Cloverbuds 4-H debuts new school curriculum page 3

**Is it allergies or a cold?** page 4

**Processed Foods** page 5

**Meet The Salvias** page 6

**Pesticide Licenses** page 7

Join us for these new events! page 8

**Quarterly calendar** page 5

**Maintenance schedule** page 10



# Preparing Livestock for Safety During Hurricanes



Hurricane season has arrived, and after last year's experience I think we can all agree hurricanes pose a significant threat to livestock and our farming operations, and we need to be prepared early.

### **Risk Assessment and Planning**

• **Evaluate Your Risks:** Potential flooding, high winds, and power outages can all be expected. Utilize resources from local weather services and our office to assess the risks accurately.

Create a Plan: Develop a detailed emergency plan tailored to your farm's needs, that
includes evacuation routes, shelter locations, and a communication strategy. Ensure
all family members and farm workers are familiar with the plan and their specific roles
during an emergency.

• **Inventory and Documentation**: Maintain an updated inventory of all livestock, including detailed records of health, vaccinations, and ownership. Photographs and identification tags are crucial for proving ownership and seeking aid post-disaster.

### **Infrastructure and Supplies**

- **Shelters**: Ensure that barns and shelters are structurally sound and can withstand high winds. Reinforce doors, windows, and roofs. If possible, construct windbreaks to protect buildings and animals from debris.
- **Backup Power**: Install a reliable backup power system or have a generator available to maintain essential operations such as water pumps and feeding systems. Regularly test the system to make sure it will function properly during a power outage.
- **Supplies**: Assemble a two-week supply of feed, water, medications, and bedding materials. Ensure that water containers are clean and sealable to prevent contamination. First aid kits and veterinary supplies should also be readily accessible.
- **Evacuation/Shelter in Place:** Identify safe locations outside the projected path of the hurricane where livestock can be relocated if evacuation is necessary, and make sure it is equipped with adequate shelter and resources. Coordinating with neighboring farmers may be beneficial. If evacuation is not feasible, prepare on-site shelters to protect livestock. Move animals to higher ground or elevated areas to avoid flooding. Secure loose items that could become projectiles during high winds.

### **Animal Care During and After the Storm**

- **During the Storm**: Ensure animals have access to food and water in a safe, confined area. Avoid tying animals or confining them in small spaces where they might panic and injure themselves. Monitor weather updates and be ready to adjust your plan as the situation evolves.
- **Post-Storm Assessment**: After the storm passes, check animals for injuries and provide necessary medical care. Inspect structures such as fences and barns for damage.
- **Back to Normal.** Gradually return to normal operations once it is safe. Ensure animals are rehydrated and fed appropriately; monitor for signs of stress or illness, as hurricanes can have lingering effects on animal health.

### **Communication and Support**

- **Stay Informed:** Keep in touch with local authorities, our office, and weather services for updates and guidance. Utilize social media and community networks to share information and seek assistance.
- **Insurance and Aid**: Ensure you have adequate insurance coverage for your livestock and facilities. Document all damages and contact your insurance provider and local Farm Service Agency promptly. Seek aid from government and non-profits dedicated to disaster relief for farmers if available.

# Cloverbuds Day Camp Pilots New 4-H in Schools



Katie Jones 4-H Youth Development Agent kmjones@ufl.edu



In addition to the wide range of traditional 4-H projects and programs, Suwannee County 4-H is excited to offer a new in school curriculum option for youth in kindergarten through second grades.

**"I Can Be a Scientist"** takes learners through ten lessons about different fields of science and the trailblazers in each. Included in the lessons are science experiments to expand learner knowledge and understanding of the basic concepts of each science discipline. The goal of the program is to help students develop scientific reasoning skills and realize that they too can be a scientist. Each lesson also includes a literacy component with suggested comprehension questions. The curriculum is correlated to Florida's state science standards and utilizes both the Experiential Learning Model and 4-H Thriving Model to provide positive youth development to participants.

This year during day camp, our Cloverbuds piloted the curriculum, learning about Zoologists, Chemists, Geneticists, Astronomers, Physicists, Geologists, Pathologists, and Biochemists. They made lava lamps to study chemical reactions, played balloon volleyball with balloons with varied weights to learn about physics. They also learned about how germs are spread and the importance of handwashing to reduce the spread of germs and

bacteria.

The "I Can Be a Scientist" program joins our other popular Suwannee County 4-H in Schools programs, Embryology (third grade) and Florida 4-H Public Speaking (fourth through sixth grades). Those interested in bringing any of these programs to their classroom in the 2024-2025 school year can contact me for more details.



# Is that sneeze from an allergy or cold?



Katherine Allen Family & Consumer Sciences Agent nrgkate@ufl.edu

Are your itchy eyes and runny nose an allergy or do you have a cold? Knowing the symptoms and reducing triggers can help you limit the number of times you reach for a tissue!

Allergies occur when your immune system incorrectly thinks a substance is harmful and produces an immune response in defense. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, around 1 in 4 adults in the U.S. have seasonal allergies.

#### How do I Tell the Difference?

Some of the symptoms from allergens include rashes, hives, itchy eyes, swelling, breathing difficulty, and/or wheezing. Colds and allergies may be confused with one another as they both can exhibit similar symptoms: sneezing, coughing, blocked or runny nose, and watery eyes. You know you have a cold if you see: fatigue, aches and pains, sore throat and, sometimes, fever.



### What are some Allergy Triggers?

Pollen is an airborne allergen dispersed from flowering plants, trees, grass, and weeds. Usually, pollen counts are higher during the warmer season. In Florida, we have some plants which pollinate year-round! Mold is another trigger and can enter through open doors, windows and in AC systems. Mold can also be brought indoors on clothing, shoes, bags, and even pets. Remember, mold can grow where there is moisture, so fixing leaks will be important.

### **Keep Allergens Away**

- **Be aware.** One of the best strategies is to reduce your exposure to allergens like pollen or dust.
- **Check pollen counts**. Monitor local pollen counts and stay inside when counts are highest (typically between 5 and 10 a.m., according to the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences). When indoors, use the air conditioner. Keep windows and doors closed. Make sure humidity levels are as low as possible. In Florida, keep below 70% relative humidity.
- **Take a shower.** Before hitting the hay, wash off pollen so that when you're sleeping you won't be exposed to the pollen that you collect during the day on your skin and hair.
- **Use exhaust fans**. Fans in the kitchen and bathroom should vent to the outside.
- **Don't sleep with Fido.** Even if you aren't allergic to pets, pet fur can harbor pollen. Keeping pets off the bed, especially those that are both indoor/outdoor, can help to eliminate triggers. Consider making bedrooms off limits to pets.
- **Keep your grass mowed.** Short grass is less likely to release pollen than taller grass. If you have allergies, consider hiring someone else to mow it or wear an n95 filter mask to screen pollen. Sunglasses can also help to prevent pollen from getting in your eyes.
- **Cleaning your home regularly** is an important tool for keeping allergies at bay. If you want more information about cleaning, mold or asthma/allergy prevention, contact our office.

## Processed Food and Your Health



It's common to hear advice to eat less processed food, but what exactly are processed and ultra-processed foods, and how do they impact your health? Let's start by exploring the different types.

**Unprocessed** foods are natural, edible parts of plants and animals. **Minimally processed** foods are slightly altered for easier storage, preparation, and consumption without major changes to their nutritional content. **Processed** foods increase durability or enhance flavor and texture by adding salt, sugar, and fat. These foods typically consist of at least two to three ingredients and are ready to eat without further preparation. **Ultra-processed** foods, or "highly processed foods," go beyond the addition of salt, sugar, and fat to include artificial colors and flavors, preservatives, thickeners, emulsifiers, and artificial sweeteners. They are often mass-produced with low-cost ingredients, making them cheap and ready-to-eat with minimal additional preparation.

When it comes to your health, researchers have found that high intakes of ultra-processed foods have been associated with heart disease, cancer, and 30 other health conditions including obesity, high blood pressure and high blood sugar. With heart disease being the number one cause of death in the U.S. it is no surprise that ultra-processed foods make up about 60% of the total calories in the average U.S. diet. This is partially due to the fact that these foods are convenient, tasty, cheap, and accessible 24/7.

In reality it's not practical to refrain from all ultra-processed foods and they can have a place in a healthy diet. The occasional indulgence in these foods is reasonable but remember that less is better. You can start by focusing on your overall diet quality. If you are mainly eating whole unprocessed or minimally processed food, then a cool ice cream cone every now and then is A-OK!

Unprocessed foods	Minimally processed	Processed foods	Ultra Processed
Whole apple	Pre-packaged apple slices with no additives	Unsweetened applesauce made with apples, water and ascorbic acid to prevent browning	Sweetened applesauce with the prior ingredients plus high fructose corn syrup
Whole oat groats	Steel-cut oats, rolled oats	Instant oats with added sugar and a preservative to enhance freshness	Instant flavored oatmeal with added sugar, artificial flavorings & other additives to improve texture
Peanuts in the shell	Shelled plain peanuts	Natural peanut butter made with only peanuts and salt	Peanut butter with added sugar, salt and emulsifiers
	Homemade or store- bought yogurt with only pasteurized milk	Store-bought plain yogurt made with pasteurized milk, live active cultures and food starch	Yogurt with small amount of added sugar, pectins and gun to thicken/emulsify
Fresh fish	Unseasoned frozen fish filets	Canned or frozen fresh fish with seasoning	Breaded fish sticks
		Canned corn, apple juice, carrot juice, flour	Cake, cookies, candy, chips, pies French fries, ice cream, soda, hot dogs, sugary cereals, ready to eat meals

## **Meet The Salvias:**

## Drought Tolerant & Wildlife Attractors



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The Master Gardener Volunteers and I are frequently asked to recommend drought tolerant plants for landscapes. One group of plants that we recommend are different Salvia species and hybrids. Salvias attract a variety of butterflies, hummingbirds, and other pollinators, and they do not have many serious pest issues.

Salvias come in a rainbow of colors. The flower spikes can be yellow, coral, and various shades of red, pinks, purples, and blues. There are hundreds of annual and perennial species to choose from. Annual salvias are warm-season performers, but the perennial types will bloom year-round if not knocked back by frost or freezes. Our native perennial salvia, commonly known as scarlet or tropical sage (*Salvia coccinea*), can actually have white, pink, or red flowers. The native salvia self-seeds so you will get more plants for your landscape, and you can share plants with friends.

With so many options to choose from, it is easy to find the 'right plant for the right place' for many cultural conditions. Most species grow best in full to partial sun. Morning sun is ideal and some protection from the scorching mid-day sun helps them to thrive. Lighter colored flowering plants need more shade than darker colored flowering plants. Salvias prefer well drained soil so avoid planting them where there is standing water. Once established, most salvia species are quite drought-tolerant and require little care; excessive water and fertilizer can increase fungal disease problems for salvias.

Salvias can be used in mass plantings, in cottage or cut flower gardens, and the shorter varieties make beautiful border plants. The height, spread, flower color, flowering season, and cold tolerance will vary depending on the specific salvia. Some have a loose growth habit so they may need some pruning to keep them tidy. Many species grow from 2'-4' so give them a little elbow room as they can grow as wide as they are tall.

This plant group is also deer and rabbit resistant due to their pungent foliage. Salvias are part of the mint family and have square stems (helps to easily identify) and they can be propagated from seed, division or stem cuttings. For an in-depth description of a few of the over 900 species, click **here**.

We grow a few different species at our teaching greenhouse (located next to the Poultry Barn at the fairgrounds). Stop by on a Wednesday morning from 8:30-11:00 to see the different varieties we have and to chat with Master Gardener Volunteers about salvias or other plants.



Amistad Salvia visited by a hummingbird



Rockin Blue Suede Shoes Salvia



Native Salvia coccinea



Hot Lips Salvia can also be purple and white

## **Pesticide Exam Changes**

What to expect as a current or future pesticide applicator license holder



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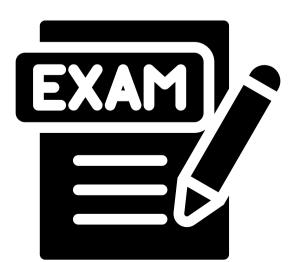
Pesticide safety is crucial for protecting human health, wildlife, and the environment. Proper usage involves adhering to label instructions, using personal protective equipment (PPE), and applying the correct amounts to minimize exposure and runoff. Storage and disposal of pesticides must follow regulatory guidelines to prevent contamination of soil and water sources. Regular training and education on the safe handling, application, and emergency response procedures can significantly reduce the risks associated with pesticide use. By prioritizing safety, we can harness the benefits of pest control while mitigating potential hazards.



The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) is a state agency responsible for regulating and promoting various aspects of agriculture, consumer services, and natural resources in Florida. FDACS oversees a wide range of programs and activities, including food safety, agricultural practices, pesticide regulation, consumer protection, and the conservation of natural resources. The agency also works to support Florida's agricultural economy, ensuring the safe production and marketing of agricultural products.

In an effort to increase pesticide safety in Florida, FDACS has announced some changes to the pesticide exams that will take place starting on January 2025. If you are already a license holder, some of these changes might not affect you as long as you keep renewing your license through continuing educational units (CEUs). However, you might know folks starting a career as growers or people who have expired pesticide licenses that might benefit from this information.

The most significant changes include the phaseout of the paper exams starting in January 2025. This means that no more paper tests will be offered as pesticide license exams will be offered exclusively on computers. Another important change is that starting on October 2025, exams will no longer be offered at the county extension offices. Pesticide exams will be offered at designated testing sites. Hopefully, there will be a testing site per every county.



Other changes include more consequences for cheating during testing, as well as potentially offering exams in languages other than English.

Please let anyone interested know of these changes and to call the local UF/IFAS extension office to schedule exams before January 2025 if they wish to take exams on paper format.





Food • Contests
Cornhole • Parade
Car Show • Fireworks
Duck Race •
Entertainment



## **Erin Jones is first recipient** of Glassy Gator Award

When choosing our first recipient I reached out to different administrators all over the state, and one name kept popping up - Miss Erin Jones of Suwannee County. Erin started her Extension career in July 2022 and just over a year later Hurricane Idalia struck Suwannee County, causing significant agricultural damage. Erin immediately swung into action, assessing damage, coordinating resources, and communicating with various stakeholders including the Florida Farm Bureau, Cattlemen Associations, County EOC, Live Oak City Manager, FEMA, and Agriculture Commissioner Wilton Simpson. She played a pivotal role in sharing information about agricultural damages in town hall meetings with Simpson and later assisted producers in filling out UF/IFAS disaster surveys at the disaster resource center. Erin's proactive approach extended to participating in county meetings, engaging legislative aides and collaborating in video presentation to advocate for agricultural needs. Despite the challenges, Erin's dedication to the ag community has been unwavering. She continues to liaise with FEMA administrators and has been selected as a panelist for a recovery resource for ag communities panel at the Governor's Hurricane Conference in May. Her commitment and passion for agriculture make her a deserving candidate for recognition. This award would not be possible if Erin did not have unwavering support from County Extension Director Carolyn Saft, and her team at Suwannee County Extension.

## **Free Books for Children**

This new initiative from The UF Lastinger Center for Learning sends free books for your child and is open to:

- Any Florida VPK student not yet meeting age-appropriate standards according to FAST Star Early Literacy.
- OR any K-5th grade student in Florida in a public or district-sponsored charter school who is not yet reading on grade level.

#### **How it works:**

- Choose what types of books your child would like to read.
- Select your language: English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, or braille.
- Receive a new book and reading activities in the mail each month for free through fifth grade!
- Grow reading confidence with fun and practical supporting activities.
- Build a personalized home library based on your child's interests.
- Help your child practice reading skills and have fun doing it.



## JOIN US FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS

Visit www.suwanneecountyextension.org for details and registration links.

### **JULY 2024**

- 2: Crafty Camp
- 3: MGV Greenhouse Workday
- 9: Crafty Camp (Intermediate & Senior)
- 10: MGV Greenhouse Workday
- 15-19: Quilt Camp, 9 am-4 pm
- 17: MGV Greenhouse Workday
- 24: MGV Greenhouse Workday
- 25: Lunch & Learn: Preventing Falls, 12 pm
- 25: 4-H Banquet
- 29: A Matter of Balance, 9-11 am
- 30: A Matter of Balance, 9-11 am
- 31: MGV Greenhouse Workday
- 31-Aug 2: Youth Ag Tour Camp

### **AUGUST 2024**

- 1-2: Youth Ag Tour Camp
- 1 & 8: Homebuyer's Education Workshop
- 6: A Matter of Balance, 9-11 am
- 7: A Matter of Balance, 9-11 am
- 7: MGV Greenhouse Workday
- 8: MGV Alumni Meeting
- 12: A Matter of Balance, 9-11 am
- 13: Hurricane Preparedness Workshop
- 14: MGV Greenhouse Workday
- 14: A Matter of Balance, 9-11 am
- 19: A Matter of Balance, 9-11 am
- 20: Advisory Committee Meeting
- 21: MGV Greenhouse Workday
- 21: A Matter of Balance, 9-11 am
- 22: Lunch & Learn: Cheesemaking, 12 pm
- 23-24: Great Southeast Pollinator Census
- 28: MGV Greenhouse Workday

### **SEPTEMBER 2024**

- 4: MGV Greenhouse Workday
- 4-6: Art Fest reception at Suwannee River Regional Library in Live Oak. Exhibit runs until September 19 during library hours.
- 7: Extension Open House, 9 am-12 pm
- 11: MGV Greenhouse Workday
- 12: MGV Alumni Workday & Meeting
- 18: MGV Greenhouse Workday
- 20-21- Small Ruminant Short Course at UF
- 25: MGV Greenhouse Workday
- 26: Lunch & Learn: Beekeeping, 12 pm
- 27: Pesticide CORE Class & Exam













## **MONTHLY MAINTENANCE PLANNER**

## **JULY**

- Clean or change A/C filters
- Seal/caulk any openings or leaks around the house
- Scrub the deck
- Freshen the pool
- Inspect windows for tight fit
- Ge washer and dryer serviced
- · Drain the water heater
- Plant fall garden

## **AUGUST**

- Prune dead wood and other branches from trees
- · Clean gutters
- Practice responsible pest control
- Clean or change A/C filters
- Check hurricane emergency kit is still well stocked - most Florida storms come late summer

## **SEPTEMBER**

- Clean siding pressure wash
- Check pool for safety and make sure you have supplies for closing it up next month
- Clean or change A/C filters
- Harvest fall garden
- Check if lawn mower blades need to be sharpened or cleaned

**OUR MISSION OF EDUCATION.** UF/IFAS Extension provides practical education you can trust to help people, businesses and communities solve problems, develop skills and build a better future. When you use UF/IFAS Extension, you can be confident that experts have reviewed and developed educational programs to ensure that you receive the best information for your needs. UF/IFAS Extension employees and volunteers work hard at improving the quality of life for our neighbors and communities. We provide solutions to everyday problems with a variety of educational programs and information:

- Agriculture and Natural Resources: Local farmers and ranchers are provided technical assistance and education to enhance their profitability and sustainability.
- **Horticulture**: Programs are designed to meet the needs of residents by utilizing Florida-Friendly Landscaping principles.
- Master Gardener Volunteer (MGV) Program: MGVs receive training in exchange for service to the community. They assist with the Seed Library and hold plant clinics every Wednesday from 1-3 pm both at the Live Oak Library. Volunteers also staff a Seed Library and plant clinic at the Branford Library on Tuesdays from 2-5 pm.
- **Family and Consumer Sciences:** These programs offer information about health and nutrition, food safety, food preservation, money management, home concerns, relationships, community development and many other topics.
- **4-H and Youth Development:** 4-H Youth Development program uses a learn-by-doing approach to help youth gain the knowledge and skills they need to be responsible, productive citizens. This mission is accomplished by creating safe and inclusive learning environments, involving caring adults, and utilizing the expertise and resources of the University of Florida and the nationwide land grant university system.

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- Katie Jones, 4-H/Youth Development
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Bonnie Box

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