A Note from the Director
Lori Wiggins, County Extension Director

Hello and welcome to the very first issue of “The Dirt”! We are thrilled to have you join our very own Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent, Lisa Strange, as she informs and educates you on Ag adventures in our county and surrounding areas. As the County Extension Director, I would like to thank you for being part of the Taylor County Extension Service and want you to know that we are here to serve and help you in any way we can. UF/IFAS Extension partners with communities to provide quality, relevant education and research-based expertise to foster healthy people, a healthy environment, and a healthy economy. The Mission of UF/IFAS is to develop knowledge in agricultural, human, and natural resources, and to make that knowledge accessible to sustain and enhance the quality of human life. We are here to help and serve you in the areas of agriculture, natural resources, horticulture, nutrition, food safety, youth development and more and we look forward to working with you.

What's That???

- Eggs
- Larvae
- Adult

Photo credit: beebetternaturally.com

For more information contact:
UF/IFAS Taylor County Extension
Lisa Strange lstrange@ufl.edu 850-838-3508
American beautyberry (**Callicarpa americana**) is easy to grow, requiring no maintenance other than elective pruning. The light green deciduous native shrub grows 3-8 feet high and 4-8 feet wide in Florida’s USDA Hardiness Zones 8A-10B. Plant in sandy and loamy soils in sun, partial sun, or dappled shade. It requires moderate-to-low moisture once established. Use as a specimen plant or in groups of 3-5 for an open, informal screen. Blends well with hardwoods, pines, and shrubs. Cut back bare branches by one-third or even down to one foot before spring flowering for a denser shrub. Clusters of lavender blossoms appear late spring until summer, attracting bees and other pollinators.

The last hurrah of summer is around us as we drive the highways and byways of North Florida. What are some of the native plants that we see? This is one shrub loaded with berries that you will see growing along roadsides and in fields. It will add biodiversity to your yard, coming back year after year, saving you time and money. (Continued on page 3)
Fall Blooms and Berries (Continued from page 2)
By late summer, its arching branches are covered with small, shiny purple fruits. Fruits may remain on branches after leaves fall and are a winter food source for local and migratory birds. Many Florida residents harvest the purple berries to make jam (recipes are available on the Internet). Native beautyberries with white fruits are also available and provide a striking contrast in your landscape. This one plant provides blooms with nectar for pollinators, is a host plant for the Spring Azure Butterfly and Snowberry Clearwing Moth (important insect protein for baby birds) and produces fall berries for birds and small mammals. FPS90/FP090: Callicarpa americana American Beautyberry (ufl.edu)
https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/trees-and-shrubs/shrubs/beautyberry.html

Bluebird House Project by Lisa Strange

Ambassadors for the University of Florida, the Taylor County Master Gardener Volunteers, have adopted the Bluebird House Project as one of their contributions in promoting the Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ program (FFL). The (FFL) is designed to help homeowners have healthy and beautiful landscapes that protect Florida’s natural resources, based on (9) researched science based principles:


Principal #5 Attract Wildlife, encourages Floridians to make their yards attractive to birds, bees, butterflies, bats, and other creatures that are being displaced by rapid development. Provide bushes with berries, bird baths, or bat houses; increase vertical layering of plants to provide habitat; manage household pets and reduce insecticide use – these tricks can welcome wild visitors in need of refuge. Many will return the favor by eating pest insects and helping to pollinate your garden.

Attracting Bluebirds: Eastern Bluebird (Sialia sialis) is a member of the thrush family and are one of many birds that are cavity-nesters. They eat insects and berries and love a treat of mealworms, especially during winter months when insects are scarce. The accommodations are specific in dimensions to suit the bluebird while making it undesirable for other species. Many birds migrate south for the winter, here in Taylor County they stay year-round. You can pickup a Bluebird house for a donation at any of our events or stop by the Extension office, 203 Forest Park Dr., Perry, FL 32348. We are always looking for old wood or fencing to help support the project. Please call if you see a pile of wood for trash that we can recycle! Thank you for supporting our community services. Half of the proceeds from your Bluebird House donation will go to a community charity the other half will go back to make more Bluebird Houses. Go to https://floridabluebirdsociety.org/ for more information.
The Trash bug or Aphid lion looks like a vagabond if you look closely. Master Gardener, Martha Frostick spotted one in our demonstration garden. Underneath the heap are legs and a body that move around on stems and leaves, voraciously eating their favorite, aphids. Also, they will eat scales, whiteflies, thrips and other prey. This beneficial insect is the ugly larval stage of the delicate Green Lacewing. The heap on their back is the debris of eaten aphids and sometimes lichen or leaf particles that serve as a camouflage from birds and predatory ants. For this reason, they are used as a biological control. It is hard to imagine from the tiny little eggs, found hanging by a thread-like filament in groups mostly underneath leaves, transform into a little alligator looking insect with 6 legs and large mandibles, then to a delicate flying Lacewing. For more information go to https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/IN965

What's That? Answer! by Lisa Strange

October/November/December
What to plant:
Annuals: Digitalis, petunia, pansy, viola, crysanthemum, snapdragon, alyssum, and lobelia
Bulbs: Amaryllis, crinum, and daylily
Vegetables: Bulbing onions, salad crops (arugula, lettuce, spinach), cabbage, kale, broccoli, collards, and beets
Herbs: Dill, fennel, oregano, parsley, thyme, sage, cilantro, and thyme

Things to do:
October: Gather pine straw and use as mulch. Set strawberry plants in garden.
November: Plant an ornamental Taiwan cherry. Disbud your camellia for larger blooms later
December: Send in a soil test. Use fallen leaves in compost or crush and use as mulch.

Upcoming Events
- **Oct. 13:** Cold Hardy Citrus Workshop
- **Oct. 18-20:** Sunbelt Agricultural Expo, Moultrie, GA, North America’s Premier Farm Show 10-15,000 visitors
- **Month of October - Taylor County Peanut Butter Challenge**
- **Oct. 22:** Florida Forest Festival, Free Fish Fry
- **Oct. 27:** Cold Hardy Citrus Field Day & Master Gardener Volunteer Field Trip, North Florida Research & Education Center, Quincy
- **Oct. 28:**

UF/IFAS Peanut Butter Challenge
UF/IFAS Peanut Butter Challenge has been accepted by Taylor County.

Bring in unopened, unexpired jars of any size or type of peanut butter to the Taylor County Extension office or Ragans ACE Hardware, during the month of October, to help combat hunger. The jars are counted, bragging rights are awarded to counties collecting the most peanut butter. Then the jars will go to our local Food Pantries and the School Backpack Program. We can do this Taylor County! Call us 850-858-3508 with questions or help with delivery.

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