



**Reference & Resources:**

UF/IFAS - Solutions for your life:  
[www.SolutionsForYourLife.org](http://www.SolutionsForYourLife.org)

Citrus Co UF/IFAS Extension:  
<http://citrus.ifas.ufl.edu>

## Extension Director Notes

By: *Dr. Joan Bradshaw, County Extension Director*

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

TOPIC	PAGE
Calendar / Plant Clinics	2
SMART Resolutions	3
4-H County Events	4-5
Spring Vegetable Gardening	6-7
Curb Appeal for You & Wildlife	8-9
Native Plants to Attract Wildlife	10
Gardening Tips - January	11
Gardening Tips - February	12
Gardening Tips - March	13
Invasive: Air Potato	14-15
Agritunity	16
Volunteer Opportunities	17
Staffing Changes	18

### 2013 - The Year of Volunteer Contributions

Citrus County has a long history of partnering with volunteers to fulfill the education mission of the University of Florida/IFAS Extension. Master Gardeners, 4-H Leaders and Family and Consumer Science volunteers are a vital component of the Extension program helping disseminate research-based information to the public. Extension volunteers have shown incredible commitment to the Extension mission as exemplified by the fact that 17 volunteers have each contributed more than twenty years of service to Extension in Citrus County. Helping people help themselves is a key reason why volunteers are so successful and important to achieving the overall goals of Extension.

Recent budget cuts are again on the horizon for 2013 resulting in hiring freezes at Extension. This being the case, volunteer support is all the more important to offset the loss of Extension staff and faculty. In an attempt to meet the ongoing educational needs of Citrus County residents, the support of our dedicated volunteers is essential. Our sincere THANK YOU is extended to all those who have lent a hand throughout the years. For those who may not have volunteered in the past, we invite you to join us as we meet the many challenges facing Citrus County. Please see page 17 for a summary of new volunteer opportunities for 2013.

“Those who can, do. Those who can do more, volunteer.”  
 Author Unknown



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## EVENT CALENDAR & PLANT CLINICS:



### JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH

**Pre-registration is required for all classes/activities; please call (352) 527-5700. No refunds or transfers to other classes will be given. Minimum of 15 people per class.**

DATE	EVENT/CLASS	LOCATION	TIME	FEE
Jan 5 and 19	Inverness Farmers Market	Inv Gov't Center	8:00 am-2:00 pm	NC
Jan 9 - Feb 27 (8 consecutive Wednesdays)	Weight Mgmt. Program	Ext Classroom	10:00 am-11:30 am	\$15.00
Jan 25 and 26	Agritunity	Sumter County Fairgrounds	8:30 am-5:00 pm	\$15.00- \$35.00
Feb 2 and 16	Inverness Farmers Market	Inv Gov't Center	8:00 am-12:00 pm	NC
Mar 2 and 16	Inverness Farmers Market	Inv Gov't Center	8:00 am-12:00 pm	NC
Mar 6	ServSafe Food Manager's Training & Exam	Ext Classroom	8:30 am-5:00 pm	\$165.00

### Citrus County Monthly Plant Clinics

Monthly Extension Plant Clinics offer an opportunity for the general public to learn about timely topics in garden, plant, and landscape maintenance. These clinics are hosted by Extension's trained Master Gardener volunteers. Take your questions or problem plants to one of these regional Plant Clinics for expert help.

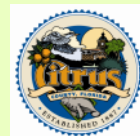
No registration required. If you can't attend the Plant Clinic, email your questions to:

[MasterG2@bocc.citrus.fl.us](mailto:MasterG2@bocc.citrus.fl.us)

**January:**  
**February:**  
**March:**

**Container gardens: flowers, vegetables, herbs**  
**Warm season vegetables**  
**Time to think about Lawn Care**

1st Wednesday	2:00 p.m.	Floral City Library	Floral City	FREE
2nd Wednesday	1:30 p.m.	Central Ridge Library	Beverly Hills	FREE
3rd Wednesday	1:00 p.m.	Citrus Springs Library	Citrus Springs	FREE
2nd Friday	1:30 p.m.	Coastal Region Library	Crystal River	FREE
Tuesdays	1:00 p.m.	Lakes Region Library	Inverness	FREE
4th Tuesday	2:00 p.m.	Homosassa Library	Homosassa	FREE



## Be SMART with Resolutions



By: Monica Payne, Extension Agent, Family and Consumer Sciences

Ever made a New Year's Resolution that you couldn't keep? As we reflect back, how many of us have been able to keep any of our New Year's Resolutions? The truth is only a few people actually keep them and that is why many of us repeat our resolutions year after year.

The reason that most resolutions do not work is that they are too vague, lacking specific information on how to attain the goal. We think if we simply try harder we will succeed next time. Most people have aspects of their lives that they wish to change or improve. Let's try something new this year and resolve not to make a New Year's Resolution. Instead, make a SMART goal for the changes that we would like to see. SMART is an acronym that defines what a SMART goal is.

**S**pecific  
**M**easurable  
**A**ttainable  
**R**ealistic  
**T**imely

To be successful, goals need to have these characteristics. All goals need to be specific. What exactly are you going to do? If you are going to become more physically active this year, then how are you going to accomplish this? Spell out what specific exercise you are going to do, on what days of the week, and at what time. Also, determine how long you are going to do the exercise each time. For example, if your goal is to walk 30 minutes per day four days per week (Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday) from 6:00 pm—6:30 pm, write this down on your calendar. By spelling out specifically what you plan to do, the goal becomes measurable.

You can check this off on your calendar or to do list just like other tasks. You can use this same method to write both short term (less than 1 year) and long-term goals, which are more than a year away.

To be attainable, a goal must be something that you can reach in a specified time frame. It needs an end point. Realistic goals are based on an honest assessment of your present situation. If you are not a morning person, then don't plan to walk at 5:30 am. It is best to start small and then work your way up. If you set too high a standard, you will be less likely to reach your goal and may give up entirely.

All goals need to be time bound. They need to be based on your present needs as well as future needs. For example, you may need to save for a birthday present for a loved one in the next month, but you are also saving for a down payment for a house, which is a longer-term goal. An example of saving for a financial goal, such as an emergency fund would be to save loose change every day and put it in a container. If you saved just \$2 per day, you could save \$730 at the end of one year.

The process of creating and writing down SMART goals for yourself will help to insure that you will reach them. Remember to start small and tackle one goal at a time. Here's to much success in the New Year!





# Florida 4-H Youth Development

Head • Heart • Hands • Health



## 4-H Competitive Events

By: Amy Duncan, 4-H Agent



4-H is a community of young people across America, learning leadership, citizenship and life skills. A strong 4-H County program offers many exciting opportunities for youth ranging from educational project meetings, workshops, and camps to competitive exhibitions, demonstrations, public speaking, and judging events.

Competitive events are historically a part of a strong County 4-H program. Yet, competitive events do not appeal to all youth, so County 4-H programs also offers non-competitive, cooperative learning activities in a balanced, informal educational program.

Competitive events are a planned part of the 4-H curriculum, designed to allow youth to:

- Gain experience and develop skills in gathering, preparing, and presenting educational information;
- Enhance decision making capabilities;
- Make public presentations;
- Learn standards by which comparisons are drawn; and
- Develop good sportsmanship.

Citrus 4-H County Events will be happening February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013. This is the major competitive event for the members of Citrus County 4-H Clubs. There will actually be a number of contests occurring during County Events day. Placings are awarded

based on achievement of standards and peer competition; judges give evaluative comments. Qualifiers for the next level of competition, District Events, are selected at the County level.



### Contests at County Events:

Demonstration/Illustrated Talks are the most popular competition at County Events. These are



presentations in which the youth either literally “demonstrate” how to make or do some task, or “illustrate” some topic. Both types of presentation must utilize visual aids, props or posters.

Presentations are 3 -12 minutes in length for Junior and Intermediate age group members and 5 - 12 minutes for Senior 4-H’ers.

Public Speaking and Horse Public Speaking contests are designed to give 4-H’ers experience in the preparation and delivery of a 4-H related speech. Both types are very similar in format and judging; however they differ in required time length.



(Continued on page 5)



# Florida 4-H Youth Development

Head • Heart • Hands • Health



*(continued from page 4)*

Horse Public speeches are 3 -7 minutes for Juniors and Intermediates, and 8 -10 for Seniors. Speeches on any other topic rather than horses are 3 -7 and 5 -7 minutes long. This type of speech differs from the Demonstrations because they must be memorized word for word, since the judges are given a copy of the 4-H'ers written speech to follow along.



Share the Fun is designed to help 4-H'ers discover their talents, develop them, and give them opportunities to share those gifts with others. Basically, this contest is a talent competition that allows members to share their vocal, dancing, instrumental, dramatic or other performing arts. Acts can be presented as individuals or groups and are always between 3 - 5 minutes in length.

Table Tops are a Citrus County only contest that serves as an introduction to giving demonstrations for the youngest 4-H members. Cloverbuds (5 - 7 year olds) are able to participate only for critique and fun. In this age group everyone is a winner. Then, members 8 and 9 years old may participate as a competitive event. This



contest allows the member to just present their 4-H project with a poster and props in a format that much

resembles a science fair presentation. The youth are able to just have a conversation with the judge about their project, rather than having the stress of preparing and presenting a formal talk or speech.

Competitive events are just some of the many teaching methods used by 4-H leaders and Extension Agents. We encourage everyone to keep competitive events in the proper perspective, making sure the event or award does not become an end in itself. The emphasis should be on providing an educational experience for the 4-H'er and not the importance of winning an award.

Short term volunteering opportunities of judging these competitive events are frequently available.

County Events on February 16<sup>th</sup> is seeking volunteers to serve as judges from 8:00 A.M. till noon, for each of the competitive events discussed. Although volunteers will only be sharing a few hours of their time judging, the rewards will be great. Volunteers make a world of difference because the real winner is the 4-H'er who learns about being a more responsible member of society.



**Call 527-5712 to sign up to judge county events.**





## Spring Vegetable Gardening Primer

By: Dr. Joan Bradshaw, CED, Natural Resources



Whether you have a green thumb or not, growing your own vegetables is both fun and rewarding. Vegetable gardening offers an opportunity to enjoy fresh air, sunshine, exercise, mental therapy, nutritious fresh and flavor filled vegetables, and economic savings just to name a few benefits. To be a really successful vegetable gardener, you'll need to understand what it takes to get started as well as how to keep your plants healthy.



### Getting Started

Preparation is key to the success of a Florida vegetable garden. Unlike in many of the northern climates, a willing gardener cannot simply put a seed in the ground and expect it to grow. Taking a few steps before putting in the garden can help ensure a successful outcome.

- **Site Selection.** Choose a site with at least six hours of sun every day. The site should also be convenient for the gardener and located near a source of irrigation. Many plants can be included amongst ornamental plants. Crop families should be rotated from season to season to minimize pest problems.
- **Choose Wisely.** Make a list of all the vegetables your family likes to eat and that you would like to grow in your garden. Be sure to choose varieties that are well adapted to Florida's climate and the typical pests and diseases found here. The seeds and transplants found in retail stores may not be

appropriate for Florida as they are often ordered in bulk for the whole country. It is a good idea to research varieties before making a decision, and order seeds that have the highest likelihood of yielding a good crop in Florida. Make sure to plant warm season crops at the appropriate times or results will be sure to disappoint.

- **Make a Paper Sketch.** Prepare a simple sketch of the garden area including all the vegetables your family likes to include in a spring garden. When placing plants in the garden plan, be sure to plant taller crops on the north side of the garden to avoid shading shorter ones.

### Soil Preparation in a Florida Garden

Florida soils in many locations are mostly sand and not very fertile. Most garden beds will need to be amended with compost, manure or commercial mixes to improve water and nutrient holding. Organic or synthetic fertilizers may also need to be mixed into the soil to improve fertility.

Before getting started with your spring garden, consider your soil pH. Gardeners need to know their soil pH because it ultimately affects the growth and quality of their plants.



(Continued on page 7)

(continued from page 6) *SPRING VEGETABLES*

Soil pH influences the chemical form of many elements in the soil and soil microbial processes. A soil sample should be taken for testing to determine if there is a need to adjust the pH of the soil. Most vegetables grow best under slightly acid conditions with a pH of 6.0 to 6.8. To test your soil pH, bring a dry sample to Citrus County Extension for analysis. For a small fee (\$3.00), Master Gardener Volunteers will analyze your sample.

### Irrigation in the Florida Vegetable Garden

Irrigation requirements can be reduced by utilizing mulch or organic matter in garden beds, or by placing micro irrigation systems within the garden (for example, drip hoses). Rainwater runoff can also be collected in a rain barrel, but take care not to use roof runoff in a vegetable garden due to potential contaminants (i.e. rodent and bird refuse on the roof can be washed into the rain barrel). Plant early to get crops out of the ground before the torrential rains of summer can drown them (June/July).

Overwatering is a common cause of container garden failure, often leading to fungal diseases that can cripple or kill the plant. To avoid this, use the “second knuckle” test when deciding whether or not to water. When a finger is placed into the soil up to the second knuckle, moist soil means that no additional water is needed while a dry medium means it’s time to water. Water the plant until the excess runs out of the holes at the bottom of the container. For more information on spring vegetable gardening, contact Citrus County Master Gardeners at 527-5700.



Warm Season Crops	Planting Dates	Days to Harvest
Beans, Bush	Mar - Apr & Sep	50-60
Beans, Pole	Mar - Apr, Aug - Sep	55-70
Beans, Lima	Mar - Apr - Sep	65-75
Cantaloupes	Mar - Apr	75-90
Corn, Sweet	Mar, Aug - Sep	60-95
Cucumbers	Mar, Sep	90-110
Eggplant	Mar, Aug - Sep	50-75
Okra	Mar - Aug	60-90
Peas, Southern	Mar - Sep	80-100
Peppers	Mar, Aug - Sep	120-140
Potatoes, Sweet	Feb - Jun	90-120
Pumpkin	Feb - Mar & Aug	40-55
Squash, Summer	Mar, Aug - Sep	80-110
Squash, Winter	Mar & Aug	90-110
Tomatoes, Stake	Mar & Sep	90-110
Tomatoes, Ground	Mar & Sep	90-110
Tomatoes, Container	Mar & Sep	85-95
Watermelon, Large	Mar & Aug	85-95
Watermelon, Small	Mar & Aug	85-95
Watermelon, Seedless	Mar & Aug	85-95



### Creating Curb Appeal for You and Wildlife

By: **Dr. Joan Bradshaw, CED, Natural Resources**



**D**o you want your home to make a great first impression and increase its value? Improving the curb appeal of your home with beautiful Florida-friendly plants not only enhances the overall appearance of your home, it is also inviting to butterflies, birds and other wildlife.

Florida has the third most diverse wildlife population of any state in the nation. But rapid growth of human population is replacing native wildlife habitat with urban development. As our communities expand, we lament the loss of birds and other wildlife, yet our own yards are partly to blame.

A Florida-friendly yard provides habitat for desirable plants and animals that have been displaced by development. As you consider objectives for your new or existing landscape, add a few features for wildlife to bring your yard alive with birds, butterflies and beneficial insects.

To create an attractive landscape for humans and wildlife, there is no substitute for a solid landscape plan. When designing your landscape, special considerations should be made to attract wildlife.



All wildlife, indeed all life, requires three basic elements to survive: food, water, and cover.

Cover serves as protection from natural enemies and the elements, and provides areas where they can reproduce and bear their young in safety. By providing sources of food, water and cover, you can turn your yard into a lively place full of songbirds, toads and frogs, butterflies and other wildlife.



Both your plant choices and your landscape design will determine what birds and animals you will attract. In most cases, wildlife will do best in landscapes with plants that are native to Central Florida. These plants frequently are better at providing the food and cover that are required. When used in the proper location, native plants also require less maintenance and water.

Select your plants carefully to provide the maximum overlap of flowering and fruiting times. Food should be available as needed; for birds, this means a year-round supply. If you opt to have bird feeders, consider maintaining them year round.

*(Continued on page 9)*





(continued from page 8) CREATING CURB APPEAL

In general, plant species that have fleshy fruits or berries will attract fruit-eating robins, mockingbirds, bluebirds, brown thrashers and cedar waxwings, as well as box turtles, gopher tortoises, raccoons, opossums and squirrels.

Consider fruiting shrubs, vines and trees, such as dahoon holly, wax myrtles, choke cherry, mulberry, Virginia creeper and elder berry.

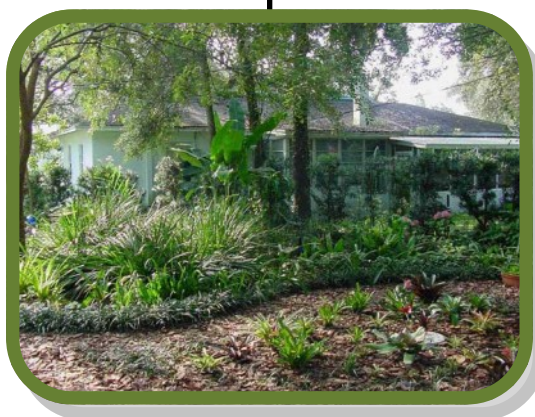


Flowers of some species attract insects, which are in turn eaten by other types of birds. Migratory birds can be attracted to landscapes by use of plants that provide seeds, fruits or insects during

the fall and spring migrations.

Information on where you can purchase native plants for Florida can be found at the Association of Florida Native Nurseries <http://www.afnn.org>. See page 10 for a list of native plants used to attract wildlife.

When selecting plants to incorporate into the landscape, keep in mind that critters need shelter from inclement weather and protective cover from predators such as house cats and birds of prey. If hawks are surveying your domain, they may just be looking for mice or other rodents.



Plant thick shrubbery or other dense planting areas near food sources to provide birds escape cover from predators.

A more specific kind of cover is needed for courting and protecting young animals. This can range from nesting areas for birds and animals, shallow pools for tadpoles to specific plants upon which caterpillars feed. All creatures require water for drinking and bathing, and as a place to raise young in the case of aquatic life. This can be provided in the form of bird baths, fountains, drippers, or ponds.



Group plants together to create attractive habitats for wildlife. Attempt to plant species that will serve multiple functions, such as providing both food and shelter for wildlife. There are a great many native trees and shrubs to choose from in Florida. Every plant has some value to wildlife, but some are better than others.

The best wildlife landscapes require a minimum amount of care. Frequent watering, fertilizing, spraying and pruning disturb animals and limit their use of the area. It also is important that your landscape be attractive to you. Balance your desires with the needs of the wildlife you wish to attract.



(continued from page 9) CREATING CURB APPEAL

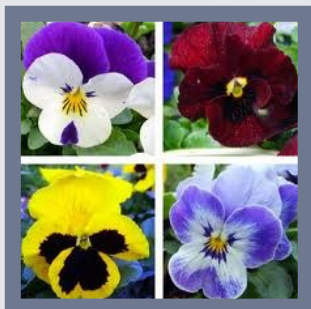
## Native Plants Used to Attract Wildlife

<i>Botanical name</i>	Common Name	Growth Habit	Attractant	Season	Birds Attracted
<i>Callicarpa americana</i>	Beautyberry	shrub	fruit	fall; winter	Mockingbirds, Cardinals, Catbirds, Thrashers
<i>Forestiera segregata</i>	Florida Privet	shrub	flowers	spring	Warblers, Vireos
<i>Hamelia patens</i>	Firebush	shrub	flowers	year-round	Hummingbirds
<i>Ilex cassine</i>	Dahoon Holly	tree	fruit	fall; winter	Cardinals, Mockingbirds, Waxwings
<i>Juniperus silicicola</i>	Southern Red Cedar	shrub; tree	fruit; cover	fall; winter	Tree Swallows, Waxwings, Mockingbirds, Flickers, Sapsuckers
<i>Morus rubra</i>	Red Mulberry	tree	fruit	spring	Woodpeckers, Kingbirds, Blue Jays, Mockingbirds, and other fruit-eating birds
<i>Myrica cerifera</i>	Wax Myrtle	shrub	fruit	fall; winter	Warblers, Vireos, Tree Swallows, Cardinals, Mockingbirds, Catbirds
<i>Myrsine guianensis</i>	Florida Myrsine	shrub	fruit	fall; winter	Fruit-eating Birds
<i>Psychotria nervosa</i>	Wild Coffee	shrub	fruit	summer; fall	Cardinals, Blue Jays
<i>Quercus laurifolia</i>	Laurel Oak	tree	fruit	fall; winter	Woodpeckers, Blue Jays, Warblers, Vireos
<i>Quercus virginiana</i>	Live Oak	tree	fruit	fall; winter	Woodpeckers, Blue Jays, Warblers, Vireos
<i>Sabal palmetto</i>	Sabal Palm	tree	fruit	fall; winter	Blackbirds, Blue Jays, Mockingbirds, Robins

# JANUARY

## What to Plant:

**Bedding Plants:** Plants that can be added to the garden during the coolest months include dianthus, **pansy**, petunia, viola, and snapdragon.



**Bulbs:** Crinum, **agapanthus**, and gloriosa lily bulbs can be planted now. Provide a layer of mulch for protection from cold temperatures.

**Camellias:** Select and plant camellias this month. Visit local nurseries now for the best selection of colors and forms.



**Vegetables:** Continue planting cool season crops including beet, cabbage, turnip, lettuce, **potato**, and broccoli.

## What to Do:

**Deciduous fruit:** Now is the time to plant deciduous fruit trees. This will give roots time to develop before the warm and dry spring months.

**Cold protection:** Frost or freezes are likely this month and next. Be ready to cover tender plants to minimize damage and make sure covers extend all the way to the ground.

**Irrigation:** Lawns and landscape plants are dormant and need minimal irrigation.

**Shrubs and Trees:** Prune non-spring flowering shrubs and trees this month to improve form.

**Arbor Day:** Florida observes Arbor Day on the 3rd Friday of January. To celebrate, plant a tree in your yard or community.



Florida's state tree is the Sable Palm.

**Crape myrtle:** While crape myrtles do not require pruning, removing seed pods, crossing branches and small twiggy growth improves the appearance and form of the plant.

**Pests:** To control scale on citrus, shrubs, camellias, and deciduous fruit trees, apply horticultural oil while plants are dormant.

# FEBRUARY

## What to Plant:

**Bedding Plants:** Plants that perform better in the cooler months include petunia, pansy, verbena, dianthus, **strawflower**, and lobelia. Protect from frosts and freezing temperatures.



**Bulbs:** Many bulbs can be planted now. Provide adequate water to establish and protect from cold weather with mulch. Some to try are **Amazon Lily**, crinum, and agapanthus.

**Azaleas:** With azaleas in full bloom this month, now is a great time to select varieties to add to the landscape.



**Vegetables:** Begin planting warm season crops this month. Bean, pepper, **cucumber**, tomato, and squash can be started while temperatures are cool.

## What to Do:

**Cold damage to Palms:** If cold weather has damaged palms, proper care may prevent loss of the palm and encourage recovery.

**Citrus:** Now is a good time to check citrus trees for scab disease. Apply a copper fungicide when new leaves appear and again when 2/3 of the flower blossoms have fallen.



**Prune Roses:** Roses should be pruned this month to reduce and improve the overall form. After pruning, fertilize and apply a fresh layer of mulch. Blooming will begin eight to nine weeks after pruning.

**Shrubs:** Now is the time to fertilize shrubs. Spread fertilizer evenly over the soil surface and water in. Follow with a fresh layer of mulch, which will conserve moisture and reduce weeds.

**Lawn Weeds:** Apply a pre-emergent weed killer (**not a weed and feed**) to lawns this month to prevent germination of warm season weed seeds. Apply when temperatures rise to 65°F for 4-5 days. Timing is important for good control.



**Fertilize Citrus and other Fruit Trees:** If not done in January, fertilize trees now. Frequency and amount of fertilization depends on the age of the tree.

# MARCH

## What to Plant:



**Annuals:** Replace declining winter annuals with varieties such as **angelonia**, gazania, and salvia that will provide color now and into the summer months.

**Bulbs:** Plant caladium for a showy tropical display all summer.



**Herbs:** In addition to their culinary value, many herbs are ornamental and attract butterflies to the garden, such as **Sweet Fennel** (*Foeniculum vulgare*) and Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*).

**Vegetables:** Warm season crops such as cucumber, eggplant, and **summer squash** should be planted now for late spring harvest.



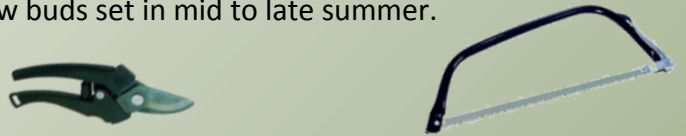
## What to Do:

**Azaleas:** If azaleas need pruning to shape or produce a fuller plant, do it just after plants finish blooming.



**Prune spring flowering trees and shrubs after**

**blooming:** Prune after the last flowers fade but before new buds set in mid to late summer.



**Prune shrubs and trees when new growth begins:**

The end of the dormant season is a good time to prune many trees and shrubs. Cold damaged shrubs can be pruned back to where new growth appears.

**Fertilize:** Palms and any other ornamentals not fertilized last month.

**Irrigation:** Now that dry weather is here, check sprinkler systems for efficient use of water.

**Mulch:** Mulch conserves moisture during dry weather and minimizes weeds in landscape beds. Organic mulches add nutrients to the soil.



## Plant Invaders: Air Potato

By: Dr. Joan Bradshaw, CED, Natural Resources



Plants provide us with food and fiber, decorate our yards and gardens, and serve as habitat for wildlife. That is the good news! When plants grow where they are not wanted however, they are known as weeds. To home owners, weeds may be unwanted plants in lawns and gardens. To farmers, weeds are plants that interfere with raising crops or livestock. To biologists who manage natural areas, weeds are plants that disrupt the functions of natural communities.

Frequently exotic plant species intrude into natural areas displacing native species. Natural area managers have been forced to remove invasive plants to maintain the integrity of natural areas at great financial expense to the community.

Air potato is one such non-native, invasive plant. This vine can grow eight inches a day and produces large numbers of potato-like growths that sprout new plants. Air potatoes are members of the yam family and native to Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Air potatoes can now be found throughout Florida as well as in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. Because of its intrusive nature, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services added air potato to the Noxious Weed List in 1999. Plants on this list may not be introduced, possessed, moved, or released without a permit.

### Identifying Air Potato

Air potato is an herbaceous vine that sprouts from underground or aerial tubers. Its stems can grow up to 70 feet in length. The stems are round or slightly angled in cross section, twine to the left (counter-clockwise), and have rounded edges.

The leaves are alternately arranged along the stem and attached with long stalks. The leaves can grow at least eight inches long and are nearly as wide.

Also, the leaves are heart-shaped and basally lobed, tapering quickly to a point at the end of the leaf.

Aerial tubers (bulbils) form in leaf axils. In Florida, bulbil texture and color are variable. Some bulbils are warty while others are smooth, and their color can range from a light tan to dark brown.

Although air potato rarely flowers in Florida, the plant can produce small, fragrant flowers that arise from the leaf axils and grow in loose clusters up to four inches long. Male and female flowers are found on separate plants. No fruits or male flowers have ever been observed in Florida.



### How Does Air Potato Spread?

Because air potato rarely flowers in Florida, it is not known to reproduce sexually. New plants sprout from aerial tubers (bulbils). These bulbils can be the size of small marbles or as large as softballs. They grow along the vines and are found on plants during fall and winter.

(Continued on page 15)

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## NATURAL RESOURCES: NON-NATIVE AND INVASIVE

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(continued from page 14) *INVASIVE AIR POTATO*

The bulbils drop from the vines in winter (December to February) and sprout in spring. They can be carried over long distances by flowing water.

This versatile plant invades a variety of habitats, including pinelands and natural area hammocks.

It can quickly engulf native vegetation in natural areas by climbing high into mature tree canopies. The vine's many bulbils allow the plant to spread quickly. Air potato is extremely difficult to eliminate because new plants sprout even from very small bulbils and underground tubers.

### Removing Air Potato from Your Property

You can help protect Florida's natural areas by removing air potato from around your home.



Locating and removing bulbils is easier during winter months when plants are dormant and vegetation is less dense. When air potato vines are growing up into trees or are mixed with desirable plants, cut or pull down the vines and destroy them. Remove as many bulbils as possible since those left behind will produce new vines.

It is best to destroy every part of the air potato plant, including the bulbils, in a way that will prevent the vines from spreading to new areas. Bulbils can also be killed by storing them in a freezer overnight.

### Herbicide Application

Any remaining air potato plants should be sprayed with an herbicide solution in spring and early to mid-summer when the plants are actively growing. Several follow-up applications of herbicide will be necessary throughout the growing season and possibly in successive years.

Glyphosate is currently the best product for controlling air potato. Glyphosate will cause most of the bulbils to shrivel up and die. Manually removing the bulbils in winter is recommended to take care of any that may have survived.

Apply herbicides late in the season. Adequate coverage is important; spray the vines almost to the point of run-off. Glyphosate is absorbed through the leaves, so try to cover as many as possible. Spray the plants as high as you can reach, but try to avoid overspray and drift. If the vines grow too high to reach with an herbicide sprayer, pulling them down might be your best option, but this method may not be practical for large infestations.

Herbicides must be applied according to instructions on the label. If you are not trained in pesticide application, contact your county Extension office for information about training opportunities. It may be easier to hire a vegetation management contractor to remove air potato from your property.

# UF/IFAS Extension

SolutionsForYourLife.com

## AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA  
IFAS Extension



January 25 and 26, 2013

West Central Florida Agricultural Educational Center  
7620 SR 471  
Bushnell, Florida

**A**GRitunity 2013 is the 7th edition of a regional farm conference and trade show featuring the most current useful information available for farmers and ranchers - large and small. It is a collaborative effort of the UF/IFAS Extension Offices in Citrus, Hernando, Lake, Pasco and Sumter counties. The conference takes place each year at the West Central Florida Agricultural Education Center (Sumter County Fairgrounds) in Bushnell, Florida. Friday before the conference will include an aquaponics preconference workshop for more in depth training and a farm tour featuring Lake and Sumter farms. The planning committee is busy putting together a fantastic program for 2013. Anyone interested in anything related to agriculture or farming should attend!

To register by credit card please visit Eventbrite at <http://agritunity2013conf.eventbrite.com>

A credit card convenience fee will be assessed.

To register by mail please use this form:

[Registration Form](#)

Friday, January 25, 2013

Pre-conference Workshop \$30.00

Aquaponics Workshop

### Agenda

**1:00 - 1:40 PM** Re-circulating Aquaculture Systems: setup, maintenance, species cultural requirements and marketing potential.  
Carlos Martinez, Tropical Aquaculture Laboratory

**1:40 - 2:10 PM** Hydroponic Plant Production Systems: setup, maintenance, common crops and marketing potential.  
Dr. Richard Tyson, Orange County Extension Service

**2:10 - 2:20 PM** Break

**2:20 - 2:50 PM** Aquaponic Systems: linking aquaculture and hydroponic systems.  
Dr. Richard Tyson

**2:50 - 3:20 PM** Aquaponic Systems and Marketing Panel/Roundtable Discussions:

Carlos Martinez, Dr. Richard Tyson, Gina Cavaliero, Green Acres Aquaponics

**3:20 PM** Depart for field visit to Green Acre Aquaponics

**Saturday, January 26, 2013**

**\$15 Pre-Registered / \$20 At The Door**

Keynote Speaker: Sheri Salatin, Marketing Director Polyface Farms

Be the Middleman: Catch and Keep Those Elusive Profits

Other Saturday Workshops:

- Florida Hay, Truths and Myths
- Grass Fed Beef
- Small Ruminant Health
- Poultry Egg Production
- Biochar/Soil Building
- Mushrooms In A Bag
- Farmscaping/Native Pollinators
- Pomegranate Production
- Developing Buyer's Clubs
- Preserving what you produce
- Permaculture/Making Every Acre Count
- Facebook for Farmers and Other Social Media

**For more information, please visit:**  
<http://sumter.ifas.ufl.edu>



### Current Volunteer Opportunities

For veteran volunteers or for those who may not have volunteered in the past, we invite you to participate in the following volunteer opportunities.

#### Learning Landscape Volunteer Assistance

\*\*\*\*\*

The Florida-Friendly Learning Landscape is a vital educational tool for Citrus County Extension. Due to the loss of our long time landscape attendant, volunteer assistance is being requested to assist in our learning landscape at Citrus County Extension located at 3650 West Sovereign Path, Lecanto.

Volunteer assistance is needed to maintain an aesthetically pleasing landscape and horticultural learning center.

Activities include planting, trimming, weeding, applying mulch and other functions related to the design and upkeep of the landscaping.

Work schedule: Monday to Friday - during working hours 8 am - 5 pm.

For additional details, please contact Joan at 352-527-5700.



#### Receptionist Volunteer:

\*\*\*\*\*

Citrus County Extension is seeking help at the reception area to:

Welcome visitors by greeting them, in person or on the telephone; answering or referring inquiries.

Direct visitors by maintaining employee and department directories; giving instructions.

Maintain safe and clean reception area by complying with procedures, rules, and regulations.

Maintain continuity among work teams by documenting and communicating actions, irregularities, and continuing needs.

Catalog and index newspaper articles written by agents.

Work schedule: Tuesday afternoon 1 - 5 pm, Thursdays and/or Fridays 8 am - 5 pm.

Location: Citrus County Extension, 3650 West Sovereign Path, Lecanto.

For additional details, please contact Betsy at 352-527-5700.





## SPOTLIGHT ON :

### FAREWELL TO GINNY & CARL

OUR SINCERE BEST WISHES ARE EXTENDED TO TWO OF OUR COLLEAGUES WHO HAVE LEFT CITRUS COUNTY EXTENSION.

#### Ginny Celano

After 21 years of working with some of the finest folks, it's time to say farewell. I will be retiring as of January 4<sup>th</sup>. It will be a bitter sweet good-bye. Working with Extension, 4-H Youth Development, the Master Gardener volunteers, Fair folks, and 4-H Foundation friends has been an honor. I have had the opportunity to see 4-H youth grow up and now serve as 4-H leaders of clubs they were in when they were children. I will miss everyone and thank you all for being a huge part of my life.

Now onward to the next ADVENTURE!

I'll remember you all fondly,

Ginny, or as many of you have called me over the years Ms. Ginny!



## Best Wishes!

#### Carl Shott



The Florida Friendly Landscape (FFL) was developed by the University of Florida using low maintenance plants and environmentally sustained practices to create and maintain a beautiful landscape that can save time, energy and money. The FFL learning Landscaping located behind the Extension office has been the work place for Carl Shott for the past three years. Carl worked diligently to maintain the nine basic principles of Florida-Friendly landscaping and took pride in enhancing the appearance of each of the designated learning areas. Carl retired in November 2012 and has moved to Sedona Arizona to be closer to family members. Carl looks forward to continue running and motorcycling through mountainous scenery.

Best wishes and thank you Carl!

All programs and related activities sponsored for, or assisted by, the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences are open to all persons without discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information and veteran status as protected under the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Act.