March 2007

Inside this issue:

- **WPS Update** 2
- **Pasture Fertilization** 2
- **Gardening in March** 2
- **Shoals Park Update** 2
- **Lichens** 3
- **Spring Blooming Trees** 3
- **Weed of the Month** 3
- **Beef Cattle Management** 3
- **Invasive Plant for March** 4
- **Upcoming Programs** 4
- **Warm Season Vegetable** 5
- **Planting Guide**
- **Turf Fertilization** 6

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**Dear Extension Friend**

March is “prime time” for home lawn and landscape care. It is also the time to plant spring vegetable gardens in order to take advantage of spring rains, milder temperatures, and smaller numbers of garden insects.

This issue is packed with useful information for the farm and home. Our web site at [http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu](http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu) has more detailed information including photographs and recommendations that did not fit in the newsletter. Be sure to check it out!

We have scheduled many upcoming programs this spring. Hope you will attend one or several of these. See you then.

Respectfully,

Barbara Smith
Horticulture Extension Agent

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**Pesticide School April 12th**

Our Annual Private Applicator Pesticide School will be held on Thursday, April 12th at the Baker County Extension Service, 1025 West Macclenny Avenue.

This all-day course will train individuals to be able to take the Private Applicator’s Pesticide Exams. The exams will be offered as part of the school.

Participants will need to study the 2 training manuals: Applying Pesticides Correctly and Private Applicator Agricultural Pest Control. They will be used as part of the class. Training manuals are available through the Extension Office at a cost of $15 for both.

If you need a pesticide license or know someone who does, this will be an excellent opportunity to participate in a refresher course and take the exams all in the same day.

The school will also offer CEU’s for those needing credits to re-certify.

The cost for program materials and refreshments is $5 per person. Reservations are required by calling the Baker County Extension Office at 259-3520 by Tuesday, April 10th.

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**Special Interest**

Check out the University of Florida’s new website:

[www.solutionsforyourlife.com](http://www.solutionsforyourlife.com)

This new website will give you more answers and help you find the solutions you need. We will be making updates and changes to our website in the months following.
WPS Update

The recent Pesticide Update featured an update on the Worker Protection Standard and how to survive a WPS Audit.

~ Provide WPS training for workers & handlers as required. After 5 days, for workers and for handlers before any spraying or handling of pesticides.

~ Post the treated areas according to the label – oral warnings, posted signs or both. Post only the treated field not entire farm. Post no more than 24 hrs before application and not longer than 3 days after the REI.

~ Provide a Central Posting Area, be sure to have the name & address of medical facility and your spray records.

~ Check your decontamination supplies. Workers require water, soap and single use towels. They must be available for 30 days after REI expires.

~ Handlers require water for body washing, soap, paper towels & coveralls at the mixing loading site. Also eyewash bottles if required on label.

~ Must also have PPE for handlers and early re-entry workers as required on the label.

Pasture Fertilization

Now is the time to fertilize bahiagrass pastures with at least 100 pounds of actual nitrogen and the soil test recommended amount of phosphorous and potassium.

A soil test from the University of Florida costs only $7 and can pay for itself many times over in fertilizer cost savings. Stop by our office to pick up a soil test kit.

Gardening in March

● Azaleas and camellias can be pruned after they finish flowering. Generally, most flowering plants should be pruned right after blooming. Later pruning can interfere with normal flowering cycles.

● Garden soil pH can be checked by taking a sample 6" deep from several areas of the garden. Mix the samples together and mail to the University of Florida Soil Testing Lab. Soil Test kits with instructions and mailing containers are available from the Extension office.

● Prune any plants damaged by cold weather after new growth has begun. When pruning before the new growth begins, it is easy to remove more of the plant than necessary and it takes the plant longer to recover.

● Begin heavy pruning of hedges any time after mid-March. Earlier pruning may encourage new growth that could be damaged by a late freeze.

● Begin planting tender annuals and vegetables. Be prepared to protect these plants from late-season frosts and freezes. Covering with straw or newspaper will protect them from frosts in early March. If we get a hard freeze, though, be prepared to cover with frost cloth, plastic, or inverted plastic pots over each plant.

● Continue planting fruit and shade trees this month.

● Wait two weeks after our last freeze before fertilizing lawngress.

St Mary’s Shoals Update

The St Mary’s Shoals Environmental Education Park continues to develop. The 1600 acres along the banks of the St Mary’s River in northern Baker County is being developed into a multi-use facility with hiking trails, equestrian trails, nature study areas, interpretive displays, and recreational facilities. We have just completed the property survey and fencing is now underway. In addition, through a special Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Program grant from NRCS, food plots and natural areas are being established for the large deer, turkey and quail population that calls the 1600 acre site home. Follow the progress of this exciting project on our extension website, new photos are being added as work progresses.
**Are lichens killing my trees?**

Lichens: These grayish-green-colored, curious-looking organisms are catching the attention of many Baker County residents this month. While deciduous trees are bare, we can more easily spot lichens growing on tree limbs or trunks.

They may look suspicious, but lichens are not harming the trees. They are just using tree limbs and trunks as a place to anchor. More photos & information on lichens are available on our website. Just follow the horticulture links or come by the extension office for the handout on Lichens.

Photo at left: Two different lichens, one foliose form, one fruiticose form grow on pecan limb. (Photo by Barbara A. Smith 2/25/2007)

**SPRING BLOOMING TREES AND SHRUBS**

Many of our spring blooming trees and plants are starting to put on a show this month, despite the short freezing spell. Oriental magnolias are looking beautiful. Maples are out, in landscapes and in the forests around the county. Cherry laurels are, too. The first flowering vine of spring, yellow jessamine, with its bold yellow flowers is brightening fencerows and tree trunks where it climbs. There are still a few camellia flowers left as the azaleas start to color up. Redbud and dogwood trees are not far behind.

Pictured (right) are flowers of *Gelsemium sempervirens* (Carolina Jessamine or Yellow Jessamine) blooming along SR 121. (Photo by Barbara A. Smith Feb 2007)

If you don’t grow these early bloomers in your landscape yet, look for ideas as you travel around the county this month. Choose plants for next spring’s color now, while nursery plants have flowers. It’s the best way to make sure you don’t get a red azalea when you wanted a white one.

Containerized trees and shrubs can be planted anytime of the year. Remember to keep newly planted trees or shrubs watered until established. For more on establishing trees and shrubs, go to our website and follow the horticulture link or call the extension office and ask for UF IFAS Extension publications: Circular 858 *Selecting and Planting Trees and Shrubs*, Circular 500 *Selected Shrubs for North Florida*, ENH-29 *Ornamental Trees for North Florida*, or Circular 860 *Vines for Florida*.

**WEED OF THE MONTH**

If you see this plant, known as burning nettle or stinging nettle, give it a wide berth. This weed, growing now in pastures and yards looks pretty inconspicuous. Your first indication of its true nature may be when you step on it or brush against it. And it won’t be a nice surprise. Contact with any part of this plant can be very painful. It is covered with stinging hairs that act like little hypodermic needles when brushed against human skin, injecting a fluid containing histamines and acetylcholines into the wound. This results in a reddening of the skin and painful itching and burning, an experience you will want to avoid, surely.

Control of stinging nettle not growing in turf, can be as simple as pulling them up (protect your hands and arms). You could also kill them with the herbicide, triclopyr, the active ingredient in Brush B Gon. If nettles are surrounded by grass, use a mixture of 2,4-D and Dicamba, available in products such as Weed B Gon.

Get a close-up look at this and other weeds in our WEED BANK, growing now at the Baker County Extension office.

Photo: Burning nettle or stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) with stinging hairs visible on leaves and stems. (Photo by Barbara A. Smith, 2007)

**Beef Cattle Management**

- Prepare land for summer crops.
- Fertilize warm season permanent pastures
- Check and fill mineral feeders, use high magnesium mineral for heifers grazing winter pastures.
- Deworm cows as needed.
- Observe bulls for condition and success. Rotate and rest if needed.
- Make sure calves are healthy and making good weight gains.
- Hang forced-use dust bags by April 1st for external parasite control or use insecticide impregnated ear tags.
- Identify, vaccinate, implant and work late calves.
- Consider planting pearl millet or sorghum-sudan grass for extra summer grazing.
Invasive Plant for March is *Lygodium japonicum*, Japanese Climbing Fern

Japanese climbing fern’s looks are deceiving! The delicate looking fern is very badly behaved! As shown in the photo (above, right), this invasive non-native vining fern climbs trees, widening its territory by spreading spores in the wind to other areas. It may also be found growing over shrubs and fences, crowding out everything it covers. The leaflets may freeze back, but the rachis remains each year and over time, builds up a wiry, twisted mat that blocks light below. Another problem with this plant is that during a forest fire, it can serve as a pathway allowing fire to reach the tree crown, damaging trees and spreading the fire. Japanese climbing fern is already naturalized throughout the southeastern U.S. and occurs in north Florida including Baker County. Be on the look out for this problem plant on your property.

Japanese climbing fern is invasive and not recommended by IFAS faculty as stated in The IFAS Assessment of the Status of Non-native Plants in Florida’s Natural Areas. It is also prohibited from use in Florida according to the Noxious Weed List of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

If you see this invasive non-native vine on your property, you should eradicate it. For questions about Japanese Climbing Fern & recommendations for control, including herbicide information, contact Barbara Smith, Baker County Horticulture Agent.

**UPCOMING PROGRAMS OF INTEREST TO GARDENERS**

**Improved Water and Fertilization Mgmt For Strawberry & Other Field Crops**
Monday, March 5th 3-6 pm
Bradford County at Wainwright Farm
3.3 miles east of US-301 on SR-16, Bradford County
No fee. Call 904-966-6224 for info. & to register

**Spring Seminar in Clay County**
Saturday, March 10th 9-3 pm
Clay County Extension
2463 SR-16 West, Green Cove Springs
Fee: $10 Call Lee Henry (904-269-5107) for info.

**Lets Get Growing - Vegetables and Fruits!**
Basics for homeowners and small farmers
- soil tests, garden prep, crops, cultural practices
- fertilizer, irrigation, pest management
Monday, March 12th 6:30-9 pm (supper at 6)
Baker County Extension Office
1025 W. Macclenny Ave.
Call 904-259-3520 for more info.

**Lets Get Growing – Alternative Crops!**
Beyond the basics: new crops, new methods, marketing
- herbs, cut flowers, floating water gardens, hydroponics
- container gardening, non-traditional vegetables
Tuesday, March 13th 6:30-9 pm (supper at 6)
Baker County Extension Office
1025 W. Macclenny Ave.
Call 904-259-3520 for more info.

**Honey Bee Short Course**
March 17th 8am – 4:30 pm
Clay County Extension, 2463 SR-16 West, Green Cove Springs
Fee: $25 each or $30 per couple (includes lunch)
Call 904-284-6355 for info. Register by March 13th

**Trees & Shrubs in Your Home Landscape** (1st in a series)
Thursday, March 22nd 6:00—7:30 pm
Baker County Extension Office
1025 W. Macclenny Ave.
Call 904-259-3520 to register by March 21st

**Stop in at one of our Baker County Master Gardener Plant Clinics** at these retail nursery outlets this spring:
Wal-Mart Garden Section March 17th….10am – noon
Ace Hardware Garden Section March 24th….10am – noon
Glen Cash Store April 6th……….10am – noon
Mulch & More April 21st (this date may change)

Baker County Master Gardeners will be answering questions about home gardening and the Master Garden program. They will have free UF/IFAS Extension publications on gardening, too!
# Warm Season Vegetable Planting Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CROP, TYPE AND VARIETIES</th>
<th>Seeds or Plants per 100' of row</th>
<th>Spacing (inches)</th>
<th>Seed depth (in.)</th>
<th>North Florida Planting</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rows</td>
<td>Plant</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BEANS, SNAP/ SHELL</strong></td>
<td>1 lb.</td>
<td>18-30</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Mar-Apr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snap: Bush Blue Lake, Contender, Roma, Harvester, Provider, Cherokee Wax <strong>Shell: Horticultural Pinto</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BEANS, POLE</strong></td>
<td>½ lb</td>
<td>40-48</td>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Mar-Apr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dade, McCaslan, Kentucky Wonder 191, Blue Lake</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BEANS, LIMA</strong></td>
<td>2 lb</td>
<td>24-36</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Mar-Aug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fordhook 242, Henderson, Jackson Wonder, Dixie Butterpea, Florida Butter (Pole), Sieva (Pole)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CANTALOUPES</strong></td>
<td>½ lb</td>
<td>60-70</td>
<td>24-36</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Mar-Apr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smith's Perfect, Ambrosia, Edisto 47, Planter’s Jumbo, Summet, Super Market</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CORN, SWEET</strong></td>
<td>2 oz</td>
<td>24-36</td>
<td>12-18</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Mar-Apr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Queen, Gold Cup, Guardian, Bonanza, Florida Staysweet, How Sweet It Is</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CUCUMBERS</strong></td>
<td>½ oz</td>
<td>36-60</td>
<td>12-24</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Feb-Apr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slicers: Poinsett, Ashley, Sprint, Sweet Success, Pot Luck <strong>Picklers: Galaxy, SMR 18, Explorer</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EGGPLANT</strong></td>
<td>1 pkt or 50 plts</td>
<td>36-42</td>
<td>24-36</td>
<td>½</td>
<td>Feb-July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Market, Black Beauty, Dusky, Long Tom, Ichiban, Tycoon</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>OKRA</strong></td>
<td>1 oz</td>
<td>24-40</td>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Mar-July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clemson Spineless, Perkins, Dwarf Green, Emerald, Blondy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PEAS, SOUTHERN</strong></td>
<td>½ oz</td>
<td>30-36</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Mar-Aug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackeye, Mississippi, Silver, Texas Cream 40, Snappea, Zipper Cream, Sadandy, Purplehull</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PEPPERS</strong></td>
<td>1 pkt or 100 plts</td>
<td>20-36</td>
<td>12-24</td>
<td>½</td>
<td>Feb-April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Sweet: Early Calwonder, Yolo Wonder, Big Bertha, Sweet Banana, Cubanelle <strong>Hot: Hungarian Wax, Jalapeno</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>POTATOES, SWEET</strong></td>
<td>100 plts.</td>
<td>48-54</td>
<td>12-14</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>Mar-June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porto Rico, Georgia Red, Jewel, Centennial, Coastal Sweet, Boniato, Sumor</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PUMPKIN</strong></td>
<td>1 oz</td>
<td>60-84</td>
<td>36-60</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Mar-April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Max, Funny Face, Connecticut Field, Spirit, Calabaza, Cushaw</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SQUASH, SUMMER</strong></td>
<td>1½ oz</td>
<td>36-48</td>
<td>24-36</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Mar-April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer: Early Prolific Straightneck, Dixie, summer crookneck, Cocozelle, Gold Bar, Zucchini, Peter Pan, Sunburst, Scallopini, Sundrop Winter: Sweet Mama, Table Queen, Butternut, Spaghetti</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SQUASH, WINTER</strong></td>
<td>1 oz</td>
<td>60-90</td>
<td>36-48</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Mar-April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer: Early Prolific Straightneck, Dixie, summer crookneck, Cocozelle, Gold Bar, Zucchini, Peter Pan, Sunburst, Scallopini, Sundrop Winter: Sweet Mama, Table Queen, Butternut, Spaghetti</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOMATOES, STAKED</strong></td>
<td>1 pkt or 70 plts</td>
<td>36-48</td>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>½</td>
<td>Feb-April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOMATOES, GROUND</strong></td>
<td>1 pkt or 35 plts</td>
<td>40-60</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>½</td>
<td>Feb-April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WATERMELON, LARGE</strong></td>
<td>1/8 oz</td>
<td>84-108</td>
<td>48-60</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Mar-April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large: Charleston Gray, Jubilee, Crimson Sweet, Dixielee <strong>Small: Sugar Baby, Minilee, Mickylee, Seedless: Fummy</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WATERMELON, SMALL</strong></td>
<td>48-60</td>
<td>15-30</td>
<td>48-60</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Mar-April</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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A Guide to Turfgrass Fertilization in North Florida for a Moderate-Input Lawn

The following recommendations for bahia, centipede, and St. Augustine grasses are based on a homeowner preference for a moderate-input grass. Consult the horticulture agent for information on growing grass with less or more maintenance inputs (fertilizer, water, and mowing).

In general, 2 wks following spring green-up of lawn grass (after the last frost), apply a complete fertilizer at the rate of ½ (water-soluble) to 1 (slow release) pound of nitrogen per 1000 square feet. Look for a fertilizer with 2 percent or less phosphorus such as a 15-2-15. The three numbers on the fertilizer bag refer to the percentages of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, in that order.

With any of these lawn grasses, do not apply more than ½ lb of water-soluble nitrogen per 1000 square feet at any one time. When using a fertilizer with at least 50% of the N in slow-release form, up to 1 lb per 1000 square feet may be applied at one time.

Bahia: two to three applications from spring green-up through fall to equal a total for the year of 2-3 lbs N per 1000 square feet of lawn.
When: 2 wks after last frost – complete fertilizer, May – slow release nitrogen only, August – complete fertilizer. Established bahiagrass lawns have relatively low fertility requirements.

Centipede: one or two applications from spring green-up through fall to equal a total for the year of 1-2 lbs N per 1000 square feet of lawn.
When: April – complete fertilizer, June – Iron application only
Established centipedegrass lawns have low fertility requirements. Centipedegrass is a low-maintenance turfgrass and does not respond well to excessive use of fertilizer, especially nitrogen. Do not fertilize centipedegrass to equal the color of St. Augustinegrass.

St. Augustine: two to four applications from spring green-up through fall for a total of 2-4 pounds per 1000 square feet of lawn.
When: 2 wks after last frost – complete fertilizer, May – slow release nitrogen only, July – Iron application only, September – complete fertilizer.

An acceptable-quality St. Augustinegrass lawn can be grown with a low to high level of fertility, depending on what the homeowner wants. Decide how much time and effort can be spent on lawn maintenance. A lower-fertility lawn is best for those with little time to spend on lawn care. A high-fertility lawn may be better suited to those who want a manicured appearance for the yard. This type of maintenance will require more time and money for lawn care.