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IFAS EXTENSION



Highlights in

Horticulture

Baker County

December 2010

Dear Extension Friends,

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This may be the last Highlights in Horticulture newsletter that you will receive as we are currently in the process of switching to a single county Extension newsletter covering all program areas. You will still be getting the same great information you expect from Extension, only you will be receiving more of it! We hope this change will allow all newsletter recipients to be more involved with Extension programming. Thanks to everyone for a great year and please have a safe and happy holiday season!

Best Regards,

Alicia

Alicia R. Lamborn
Horticulture Extension Agent
Baker County Extension Service



Extension programs are open to all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, handicap, or national origin. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person needing a special accommodation to participate in any activity, should contact the Baker County Cooperative Extension Service at 1025 West Macclenny Avenue, Macclenny, FL 32063 or telephone (904) 259-3520 no later than five (5) days prior to the event. Hearing impaired persons can access the foregoing telephone by contacting the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8770 (voice) or 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).

Greenbelt Workshop and Conservation Easement Update

All landowners that wish to receive a greenbelt exemption and/or conservation easement are invited to attend this upcoming workshop.

Tuesday, December 14th
2:00pm - 4:00pm
Baker County Extension Office

Farmers and forest landowners in Baker and surrounding counties are all welcome to attend this workshop for an update on the current guidelines. Come learn more about the tax benefits of this program and see if you qualify.

There is no cost to attend this training but pre-registration is required.

Please call (904) 259-3520 to register by Monday, December 13th.

2010 Poinsettia Sale and Show

December 9th: 8 am - 4 pm
December 10th: 10 am - 3 pm

University of Florida, Gainesville
1545 Fifield Hall, Environmental Horticulture Greenhouse

Over 40 varieties will be offered for sale:

- Traditional red, pink and white
- Novelty poinsettias including Visions of Grandeur, Winter Rose and Ice Punch (shown below)
- Centerpiece bowls
- New for 2010: poinsettia floral arrangements!



For more info...

(352) 392-1831

Website: <http://hort.ifas.ufl.edu>

Don't miss it!!!

2011 Master Gardener Training Starts Soon!

Applications accepted until January 31st.



The Master Gardener program is a national program of volunteers who help the Extension Service by extending unbiased, research-based horticultural information to people in our community who need that information. This is a great opportunity for anyone who enjoys gardening and wants to volunteer for our community.



In Baker County, a Master Gardener might serve in one of the following roles:

- ◆ Work with horticulture extension staff at the office
- ◆ Assist horticulture agent with extension programs
- ◆ Assist horticulture agent with yard visits to homeowners
- ◆ Answer homeowner questions at plant clinics
- ◆ Work with youth to plant and maintain school gardens
- ◆ Plant and maintain demonstration gardens
- ◆ Grow a flower crop in the extension greenhouse
- ◆ Work with youth in the Jr. Master Gardener Program

All trainings will take place at the Baker County Extension Office and are currently scheduled for Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00am to 1:00pm starting February 15th. (Schedule changes will be considered upon request, but all parties involved must agree to the change.)

The cost for all training materials is \$55.

Visit our website or stop by the Extension office for an application packet.

For Extension Programs offered around the state, see the IFAS Extension Web Calendar at <http://calendar.ifas.ufl.edu/calendar/index.htm>.

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[Baker County Extension News...](#)

Farewell, Dr. Kyle Brown

A couple months ago we announced the arrival of our new County Extension Director and Agriculture Agent, Mike Davis. However, since his arrival, we have lost a familiar face in the office, Dr. Kyle Brown. Dr. Brown, a retired horticulture professor from Lake City Community College, was asked to serve while the Extension office was between Horticulture Agents. Even after I was hired on, he was invited to stay on staff until a new County Extension Director could be found. Fortunately for all of us, it took two years to find one and meanwhile we all benefited from his company and wealth of knowledge he had to share. He has truly served as a mentor to me and our Master Gardener volunteers, and helped hundreds of community members with their gardening questions, concerns and problems. Please help me in thanking Dr. Brown when you see him around town by telling him how much you appreciate his help!

And while Dr. Brown will always be a true master of gardening, we hope to make him an official Master Gardener so that he can still be a part of the Baker County Extension family, doing what he loves...teaching you about plants and gardening!

Baker County Arboretum and Teaching Garden

In case you haven't heard, the Baker County Extension Office has received grant funding to install an arboretum. The Baker County Arboretum and Teaching Garden will be located at the Baker County Extension Office in Macclenny, Florida. The goal for this project is to create a space where community members can visit and appreciate urban forestry, while learning about Florida's diverse tree species and Florida-Friendly Landscaping practices.

The Baker County Arboretum will be home for 54 Florida native and Florida-Friendly trees, featuring 35 different tree species. All species have been selected to demonstrate the use of Florida native and Florida-Friendly plants that promote low maintenance landscapes requiring less water, fertilizer and pesticides once established.

The Baker County Arboretum will cover approximately two acres on the Baker County Extension Office property. As additional resources are acquired, the Baker County Arboretum and Teaching Gardens will be expanded to include various native and Florida-Friendly shrubs, perennials, groundcovers as well as educational demonstrations.

The site is currently being prepared for installation and the grand opening is scheduled for April of 2011. For more information, please visit our website where you will find an up-to-date timeline and events section and links to view the detailed site plan and list of tree species to be featured in the arboretum.

<http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu/BakerCoArboretumandTeachingGardens.html>

New Publications on our Website

I know many of you out there are now growing several types of fruit trees and if you're like me, then you can't quite remember which months to fertilize those fruit trees, what fertilizer analysis those fruits prefer and how much to use. That is why I have been working hard recently to finish a new publication, now available on our website. This publication is a month-by-month calendar that can be used as a guide when caring for fruits and nuts in North Florida, which breaks down what to do each month of the year. Also available now is a month-by-month calendar for lawns and gardens in the North Florida landscape. To access these helpful publications, visit the links below.

Month By Month Calendar: Fruits and Nuts

http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu/Horticulture/documents/MonthlyCalendar_FruitsandNuts.pdf

Month By Month Calendar: Lawns and Gardens

http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu/Horticulture/documents/MonthlyCalendar_LawnsandGardens.pdf

To view all Baker County gardening publications visit: <http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu/Horticulture/fact%20sheets.html>

Caring for Houseplants



As the weather gets colder, many of us will need to start moving our potted plants to warmer locations, which typically include inside the house. However, adverse conditions inside a home can make it challenging for plants to make it through winter, even without the freezing temperatures.

The most important factor for indoor plants is adequate light. Flowering plants, plants with highly colored leaves, and succulents will grow best in a window where they receive full sunlight. Foliage plants, such as ferns and philodendrons, will prefer a window receiving indirect light (north-facing window in winter). Artificial lighting, using standard cool white and warm white fluorescent lamps, can also be used to supplement or replace natural light as needed.

Most plants grow well indoors when temperatures are between 65° and 75°F but sudden changes in temperature can injure plants. Avoid hot or cold spots, including on top of the TV, in the path of heater (or air conditioning) vent, and in windows that are not energy efficient (letting a lot of cold air in at night).

Humidity is another factor to consider when growing plants indoors, especially in the winter. Most plants grow best at a relative humidity of 40 to 60 percent, but the average humidity in most homes is well below 40 percent, particularly during the winter months. Low humidity levels will cause your plant to lose water from the leaves faster than the roots can absorb water, causing leaf tips to become brown and flower buds to drop. Installing an inexpensive humidifier help, as well as placing plants close together or on a bed of wet gravel. The gravel should be 2-3 inches deep and the water level should never come high enough so that the plant is sitting in water. As the water evaporates, the humidity level will increase around the plant.

Overwatering is probably the number one cause of indoor plant death. In general, it is time to water when the soil feels dry, when the soil shrinks away from the sides of the pot, if the pot feels light when you pick it up, or when the soil changes from a dark to light color.

When needed, water thoroughly applying enough water until it runs out the bottom of the pot. You can also water from the bottom of the container but will need to water from the top at least once per month to wash out the excess salts that build up. Either way is fine but do not allow water to stand in the saucer too long.

For those plants that can't come indoors during cold weather, check out the cold weather tips below.

Cold Weather Tips

- If a freeze is predicted, water plants 24-48 hours before a freeze (unless it rains). Keep in mind however, that prolonged periods of saturated soil can cause root rot problems.
- Avoid using overhead irrigation for freeze protection. This method is tricky and is best left to professional growers since many people end up doing more damage than good. Instead, cover your cold sensitive landscape plants with blankets or plastic to trap heat inside. If you decide to use this method, make sure your cover is long enough to reach the ground. You will also need to use a stake (cut bamboo sticks work well) to keep your cover from touching your plant. Some contact is unavoidable, but too much can lead to a transfer of heat resulting in burnt, damaged foliage.
- Citrus fruit is damaged when temperatures stay at 28 degrees or less for 4 hours so be sure to harvest ripe fruit (fruit won't ripen once picked) prior to a hard freeze. You will want to protect the graft union during a hard freeze to prevent damage, especially if you have young citrus. To do this, you can bank clean sand around the base of the tree, use a special tree wrap product, or use foam pipe insulators.
- Pile fallen leaves and pine straw on top of perennials to protect the crowns and roots from damage during those hard freezes. These materials are light enough that you shouldn't smother the plant.

