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Published by Norma Samuel
UF/IFAS Marion County Extension
Service Horticulture Agent

**Timely Gardening Tips for
MARION COUNTY**

by David Y. Goodman,
UF/IFAS Marion County
Master Gardener, In-Training

Fall is in the air, the Christmas displays are pushing out the patio furniture in your local home improvement store... and suddenly... as the mercury drops... gardening is fun again.

Did you start your fall veggie garden last month? If not, there's still time to attack it. If you're from up north, the idea of planting a garden at this time of year probably sounds ridiculous – but in Florida, we can grow through all four seasons. Of course, it's too late to plant tomatoes and hoping for another crop of green beans is probably a stretch, but peas, collards, carrots and other cold-hardy plants are perfect for carrying on through the winter. You can also manage to grow some decent lettuces as long as you're willing to protect them on frosty nights.

On the tree and shrub front, it's time to quit fertilizing. Feeding right now will encourage new growth – and that new growth will be susceptible to frost damage. Let your plants wind down for the year and prepare for winter. Coaxing an extra burst of growth

October 2012

Pollinator Program at Belleview-Santos Elementary

by Anne Lambrecht Master Gardener

It was a stroke of luck that five years ago a savvy first grade teacher at Belleview-Santos Elementary contacted the UF/IFAS Marion County Master Gardener Office requesting that someone teach the life cycle of the butterfly to her class. That school is in my "territory" and I obliged. In those five years we have grown from butterflies to the all-important pollinators that are in the news so much today. We have grown from one class to all eight classes of first graders--160 kids! We've graduated from a simple lesson plan with songs to an actual full-blown, 300 square foot garden that belongs exclusively to the school's first graders.

My brave troop of Master Gardeners, friends, family and neighbors walk into a classroom and introduce ourselves by talking about what a Master Gardener is and how we are educated by the University of Florida in order to teach them. Go Gators! I do the gator clap and they do it too because everybody loves to be a Gator. One little boy shyly raised his hand and said that he didn't like the Gators; he's a Seminole's fan.

I was given a felt butterfly costume that has a black helmet and antennae and a few pairs of wings. The chilliest one of us gets to wear the costume. We pick certain kids to wear the wings. They all want to wear them.

We talk about bugs. Who likes bugs? What kinds of bugs do you like? We tell them that only a small amount of bugs are bad and the rest are good. We want them to become good stewards of the earth. We ask them if they'd like to become a "Member of the Earth". Raise your right hand (they have a little trouble with this) and repeat after me:

*I am part of the Circle of Life
I will not waste water
I will try to recycle
I will respect all creatures
I am a MEMBER OF THE EARTH.*

Then we give them cute little bee stickers. They love stickers.

Butterflies are so pretty and nice. They do not have germs. They do not bite. Guess how long they live? Two weeks! Our state butterfly is the zebra longwing. Can you say zebra longwing?

I draw a circle on the board and divide it into four sections and draw the butterfly life cycle: egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, and adult, as we sing the song Pretty Butterfly (to the tune of "Up on the Housetop")

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out of them before the end of the year isn't worth the destruction that could result. Tender new growth on citrus, pomegranates, cattley guavas, figs and olives suffer terribly.

Speaking of cold, do you have a greenhouse? If so, you can keep it warmer for your plants by adding "thermal mass." (i.e., "something that holds heat.") One of the best ways to do this is to buy 55-gallon drums, fill them with water and place them about the space. I did this in my unheated greenhouse and was amazed at the difference it made. The gentle warmth of the barrels protected even my fully tropical plants - there wasn't even a touch of frostbite. Just having that slight radiant heat is very helpful - and it saves you from more expensive heating options. In Florida, simply holding on to the heat of the day is usually good enough for most greenhouse plants.

Also, if you've ever wanted to grow tropical plants but haven't been able to pull it off, take a look at the south side of your house. Do you have a sunny wall there? You might be surprised by what you can grow. I'm currently growing pineapples, bananas and a key lime tree right next to my south wall. It's my own little piece of USDA Zone 10 and I love it. Experiment and see what you can do - I've noticed that if I get further than 2' from the wall, the frost damage really picks up. Just like barrels in your greenhouse, a nice concrete wall really holds the heat... think about trying something new there.

October is a good month for putting in deciduous trees. If you've always wanted a peach or a plum, a live oak or a dogwood, snag one and plant it now. It'll go to sleep and awake refreshed and ready to go in the spring. Though we don't see leaves in the winter, the tree is still putting out roots and gathering strength while it awaits the return of warm weather. Plant now and you get a jump on next year.

Until next time, enjoy your garden.

Pollinator Program at Belleview-Santos Elementary

by Anne Lambrecht Master Gardener
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*Oh, see the caterpillar spin and spin
A little chrysalis to sleep in.
Oh, oh, oh, wait and see, Oh, oh, oh, wait and see.
Out of the chrysalis, my, oh, my, Out comes a pretty butterfly.*

One time after singing this song seven times, my mind turned blank and I totally forgot the tune so I just made up my own little tune and the kids followed along.

What does a caterpillar like to eat? What does a butterfly like to drink and lay eggs on? In the fall, we've got a ton of larvae munching away on milkweed and we bring them in see through net containers for the kids to look at. They want to pet them and they love to see the "poop".

Class by class we go out to the garden. They walk single file on a painted blue line that is in the middle of all sidewalks at the school. It is a special honor to be the line leader. As I usually am somewhere near the front, sometimes they'll hold my hand. Out in the garden there are butterflies, dragonflies, wasps, bees, caterpillars, spiders. The kids are allowed to walk all around and in the garden as long as they don't step on anything. The kids are so excited to learn that this is their very own garden. One time there were some immature grasshoppers gobbling up a garden plant. Now you and I know that grasshoppers are really good-for-nothing critters except maybe a tasty morsel for a bird, but these kids just took the pledge to respect all creatures. "Miss Anne, look at these". I looked and said sharply "KILL THEM!" There was horrified silence as they all turned and looked at me with big eyes.

Pollination is an easy to learn concept. Pollen is dust, like powder, that lives in all flowers. Sometimes it makes you sneeze. The flowers' colors and smells are very attractive to insects and animals because they contain sweet nectar that becomes these creatures' food, their energy source. While feeding on nectar, the incidental pollen sticks onto their bodies and gets dropped from flower to flower, thus enabling the plant to complete its goal to make fruit. Butterflies, hummingbirds, bees and bats are very important because they move pollen from flower to flower as they sip nectar.

I made up a pollinator coloring book with hand drawn birds, bees, bats and butterflies and the flowers they like which we hand out at the end.

We also give them a really cool little fold-out laminated pamphlet put out by the Florida Museum of Natural History (the place that has the butterfly rainforest in Gainesville). The cover shows the state butterfly and her eggs, larva, chrysalis, and what she likes to eat, the purple passionflower. On one side are all the butterflies found in Florida and on the reverse are all the flowers they visit.

All of this happens in the course of about 20 minutes! With their short little attention spans and wriggly little bodies and all the dialogue, it's time out.

The Villages Wood working club, built us a trellis with money donated by The Villages Garden Club North. We grow passion vine which is the larval food for Gulf fritillaries

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by Anne Lambrecht Master Gardener
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and Florida's state butterfly, the zebra longwing. Also on the trellis is Dutchman's pipe vine, a larval food for the pipevine swallowtail.

The first year I wrote a grant and received two thousand dollars from Lowe's. I've been stretching this money out over the years and now it is gone. I apply for as many grants as I can and this year I'll continue.

In the spring we come back and each child actually plants a flower that will attract a pollinator. We repeat the Member of the Earth pledge and hold hands and sing the butterfly song.

Then again, just before school lets out for the summer, we have a Garden Goodbye Ceremony with a real butterfly release. The children gather all around the garden and they cheer as each one flies away. The office staff comes out to watch.

The school may feel lucky to have us there but we are the lucky ones. Our time at the school has been such a rewarding and happy time. It has been our sincere honor to be there. And the "cute factor" is an added bonus.

What's Bugging You?

by Urban Horticulture Agent Norma Samuel

Find out what local residents are calling in about.

My ligustrum tree has a lot of brown spots surrounded by yellow on the leaves. How can I get rid of this problem?

This is Cercospora leaf spot which is a very common problem on ligustrum in this area. I usually do not recommend for clients to spray as it is more of an aesthetic problem.

To control, rake and remove fallen leaves to prevent buildup of the pathogen. Avoid overhead irrigation and excessive pruning. If it is in a shaded area you may need to let in more light.

Copper and sulfur based fungicides and neem oil are recommended for control. However, they do not produce consistent results. Best results will be achieved in combination with the cultural practices listed above. Treat both the upper and lower surface of the leaves. Multiple applications may be required. Be sure to read and follow instructions on the pesticide label.



Cercospora Leafspot of Ligustrum
Picture courtesy of B. Lacombe

Items below are available for purchase at the UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service. Please come to see these environmentally-friendly products.

MICRO-IRRIGATION:

- Eco-friendly
- Plants love it
- Saves time & money

Eco-Friendly
MULCH
AVAILABLE
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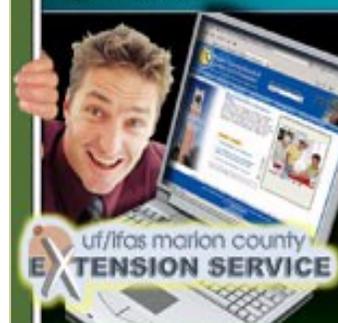


Cost-Saving,
Eco-Friendly
Rain Barrels
FOR SALE!



Got Questions?

What does 4-H have to offer my child? When is the best time to prune crepe myrtles? How can I make money off 10 acres of land? What is the difference between type 1 and type 2 diabetes?



uf/ifas marion county
EXTENSION SERVICE

We Have Answers

UPCOMING LECTURES/ EVENTS:

Educational seminars and events are presented by UF/IFAS Extension Agents and or Master Gardeners.

Unless otherwise indicated, to pre-register, please call 671-8400 or e-mail Donna.Redner@marioncountyfl.org

UF/IFAS Master Gardener Fall Gathering

October 6,
8:00am—noon
Marion County Extension
No Charge

Invasive Species Workshop

October 12
1:00pm—5:00pm
Marion County Extension
Auditorium
No Charge
Registration Deadline October 9

Gardening to Protect Your Home From Termites

October 16
2:00pm—3:00pm
Dunnellon Public Library

Butterfly Gardening

October 18
10:30am—11:30am
Marion Oaks Library



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UF UNIVERSITY of
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IFAS Extension

Foundation for the Gator Nation
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FREE Invasive Species Workshop

The economic impact of a single invasive species can cost millions of dollars. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Invasive Species Information Center, Florida's avocado industry is being threatened by two new invasive species – laurel wilt disease and the red ambrosia beetle which spreads the laurel wilt fungus. Losses to the avocado industry alone could range from \$183 - \$356 million. Although we do not have an avocado industry in Marion County we should still be concerned as the fungus-beetle duo also affects red bay, swamp bay, and sassafras. Invasive species are often difficult to control once they become established in an area. Consequently, backyard gardeners, farmers, and commercial nursery operators play an important role in early detection.

Other invasive species currently of interest to us in Florida are whiteflies, brown marmorated stink bug, European pepper moth, day lily leaf miner, and sudden oak death. Please join us for an invasive species workshop that will provide an overview on what they are, where they came from, where they have been detected so far, how to identify them in the field, damage done, similar species (if applicable), and management recommendations.

Workshop date: Friday, October 12

Time: 1:00 – 5:00 pm

Place: UF/IFAS Extension Auditorium, 2232 NE Jacksonville Road, Ocala, FL 34470

Cost: FREE

Registration Deadline: Register by October 9 by calling 352-671-8400 or email donna.redner@marioncountyfl.org.

Schedule:

- 1:00 - Introduction
- 1:15 - Whiteflies (bondar's, Rugose, and ficus)
- 1:30 - Brown marmorated stink bug
- 1:45 - European pepper moth
- 2:00 - Examine the specimens so that they can identify them in the field

15 minute break

- 3:00 - Laurel wilt
- 3:15 - Sudden oak death
- 3:30 - Daylily leaf miner
- 3:45 - Examine the specimens so that they can identify them in the field
- 4:00 - Online training materials available
- 4:15 – Submitting samples – who, what, where, and how
- 4:30 – wrap-up