Hello!

This time of year brings a lot of great things including spring bloomers, song birds, spring break for the kids, and the chance to put winter coats away for the season.

This time of year also brings a lot of great information. In this edition of the Extension Connection, you’ll find some of that great information on cost-effective pasture management, on appreciating our trees (Earth Day is observed in the month of April), information on making learning fun for youth and sound financial information.

Don’t overlook all the other fantastic opportunities to connect with great information through the Extension Service. You can visit our ½-acre shady garden for gardening ideas (this free garden is always open – so stop by the Extension office in Lecanto for a quiet stroll), and you can attend one of our expert’s programs at libraries, and even at the fair and schools, just to name a few. When you have a specific question, be sure to call on us, email us or stop by to see us for Solutions for your life.

Remember, if there isn’t a local expert on a certain topic, we benefit from the entire University of Florida expertise. Take advantage of this local resource, you won’t be disappointed.
Barking up the Right Tree
BJ Jarvis, Director and Horticulture Agent

Most gardeners never think about tree bark. Just like human skin protects bodies from all sorts of problems, tree bark serves an important role as nature’s protective armor. In addition to preventing water loss and moderating internal temperature extremes, bark protects the inner growing layer where water and nutrient conducting vessels lie just below its warty covering.

When leaves have fallen, many trees are easily identified by unique bark patterns. Some are even quite striking. For example, older crape myrtles produce a beautiful cinnamon coloration valued by many gardeners. Alternatively, some barks are useful to people. What would breakfast rolls be without cinnamon, derived from a tropical tree bark? Wine bottles would be topped with a different substance if cork were not available from the thickened covering of the European Cork Oak. And every settler knew to find a willow when they had a toothache to provide nature’s aspirin.

Today, bark provides an extra layer of protection for the tree but it is NOT impenetrable. Overly energetic lawn maintenance workers may inadvertently cause tree damage with a weed eater. Impressive zero-turn radius lawn mowers can easily peel bark layers off.

Girdling, the process of removing the living layers just below the bark from around the entire plant, can cause plants to struggle or die above the damage.

Be extra careful, or instruct others to, when working around a tree’s trunk, especially young tender trees. Add a buffer by applying a ring of mulch around the tree base to give the lawn mower and weed whacker some room for error. Use one of the many mulches made from trees to top-dress planting beds, reducing weed competition, retaining moisture and softening playgrounds. Once alive materials, like barks and chips are far healthier for the landscape than non-living materials such as rock or rubber.

Tree supports or guy systems may not be needed for newly planted trees, but if one is installed, be sure to loosen monthly and remove within a couple months’ time. In northern climes, gardeners could successfully leave supports in place for the entire growing season, but with Florida’s nearly-constant growth, supports left on a tree for long periods of time can cause the same deadly girdling results.

(Continued on page 3)
(continued from page 2) TREES

Caution should also be exercised when spraying weed killers around young, green trees. Until trees mature and the bark produces a tougher barrier, tender bark can absorb herbicides, killing or stunting a new landscape plant.

If your landscape is in need of a new woody addition, consider visiting the Citrus County Extension office where we showcase a 1/2 acre Florida-Friendly garden behind our building at 3650 W. Sovereign Path, in Lecanto. Open any day, at any time, there are dozens of different tree species to investigate for growth habit, flower color, textures and shapes.

Trees are an important component of our landscapes, adding real property dollars at time of sale and shade and appeal in the meantime. Let’s not take trees and their protective covering for granted. After all, money and time do not grow on trees.

Arbor Day

In 1872, Sterling Morton planted an estimated one million trees in Nebraska, with what became the first American Arbor Day. Nationally, most states celebrate Arbor Day in April, but here in Florida we are the first state in the nation to celebrate the mighty tree on the third Friday in January. Whenever you celebrate, it gives us a chance to appreciate the countless ways trees benefit our lives: moderating temperature extremes, reducing storm water runoff, absorbing air pollutants and simply creating a more pleasant environment.

This live oak stands behind the Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville.

For more information about how to protect landscape trees, contact UF/IFAS Extension Citrus County at 352-527-5700 where we provide Solutions for Your Life.
“pHeeding” Your Plants Isn’t So Simple

Steven Davis, FFL Program Coordinator

The simple facts are sandy soils do not hold or capture soluble nutrients for later use by the plant. Fertilizers should be applied at the correct rates when plants are actively growing. Slow release fertilizers are recommended to reduce immediate nutrient transport to surface and ground water. Good job. You are applying slow release nutrients to your lawn and gardens. The right time of year? OK. You don’t apply nutrients prior to heavy rainfall common to our region. And yes, you carefully read the label and clean up spills when they occur. You seem to be doing things responsibly!

Mr. Green called me to inspect his ailing lawn. Lawns are the first cause of Florida homeowner distress and anxiety, also the biggest expense for water, fertilizer and responsible pest control. Everyone wants the perfect Florida lawn. Serenity now!

Mr. Green’s lawn is a typical St Augustine grass planted in full sun, supplemental water provided and cared for by common practices described above. Springtime temperatures are rising and the active growing season has begun. “Please look at my yard. Most of it looks good, similar to the neighbors, but this area seems to be struggling. Chlorotic and spongy. I am applying fertilizer correctly, appropriately watering, not scalping my lawn…… gash”, Mr. Green grumbles.

I am sure Mr. Green is being truthful. He wants the Florida lawn he has always imagined. Less is better is my first response, but lawns do have a place and assist in preventing erosion and filter nutrients when fertilizer is applied correctly. OK. Your lawn is yellow in this area. The roots do not seem to be tacking down. This area is not actively growing. Why? Poor imported soils. Soil compaction. Soil chemistry?

"OK, Mr. Green I am recommending a soil test. No…. Nutrients move quickly through sandy soil. Nutrient testing is not imperative. Let’s do a soil pH test”, Steven suggests. Chemistry happens in our soils. A soil pH test was performed and bingo; the test revealed a soil pH of 7.8.

Nutrients need to be in solution making them available to plant roots. All macro nutrients and micronutrients are soluble and available at pH ranges from 5.5 to 7.0. Strange things happen in soils.

(Continued on page 5)
A pH chart shows us that phosphorus is less soluble, less available at pH 7.8. Phosphorus is available in most Florida soils, although at 7.8 pH soluble P has bonded with other soils elements and is not available to the plant. You could apply phosphorus until the cows come home, but the nutrient is not soluble or available under existing pH conditions. Phosphorus is the powerhouse of the plant. Many chemical reactions happen within the plant and P being an important component. Photosynthesis, carbohydrate synthesis ……no plant energy…. no active growth.

The opposite may also be true. The soil pH can cause the nutrient to be so available creating a phytotoxic condition. Therefore, a plant can show signs of nutrient deficiencies or toxicity even when the correct amount of fertilizer is applied to that plant based on the pH of the soil.

The chart above describes this interaction. The wider the bands above, the more available the element at the indicated pH ranges labeled on top of the chart. Thinner bands indicate less nutrient solubility or availability at the pH indicated. Macronutrients are most affected at acidic ranges, while micronutrients are more affected in alkaline soils. “Mr. Green we need to reduce the pH of your soils so that the phosphorus, typically available in the soil is released and available to the plant”, Steven advises. Slow release sulfur coated fertilizers will slowly reduce the pH and even existing P in your soils will become available to landscape plants and turf. Changing soil pH is temporary so this practice must be accomplished at appropriate times of the year to maintain the pH level.

Iron is a micronutrient and an important component in chlorophyll, making the plant green. “Why do my azaleas have yellow leaves?” asks Mr. Green. “I applied fertilizer two weeks ago and nothing has changed.” Ok. Mr. Green let’s look at the chart again.

Make all fertilizer applications efficient, protecting the environment, while still feeding actively growing plants. Serenity now!
When it comes to pasture management, there are many things that may come to mind. For instance, pasture health, stand persistency, fertilization, water requirements and so on, but what about soil testing? Soil testing plays a vital role within our best management practices guidelines whether we are simply producing an at home garden or growing pasture forage for our grazing livestock. A soil sample is a tool we can use to insure that we are providing the essential and needed nutrients to achieve the maximum production for our particular crop.

So many of us may ask, what is the importance of a soil test? Soil testing is important because it provides the producer a detailed analysis of available soil nutrients as well as the soil pH in its current state. The soil analysis serves as a tool to help ensure a cost effective fertilizer application can be applied, to provide the added amendments to maximize yields and overall production while being environmentally conscious.

This is of high value to a producer because we want to warrant that we will get the most out of our investments while also being stewards of the land. Plants have nutrient requirements needed for active, healthy growth so it is important that we meet these needs but we want to be careful not to exceed them. When it comes to fertilization, more isn’t always better. Nutrients added in excess to a plant will not be utilized and will essentially be lost. This is something to be mindful of, because in Florida especially in Citrus County where we tend to have sandy soils, these excess nutrients can easily leach past the root zone and potentially become a pollutant. As a producer we want to ensure that we are only applying what is needed in order to maximize our return while not investing any wasted dollars and a soil sample can help us do so.

When collecting soil samples we want to develop a plan breaking down our fields into similar management zones. We can do this by observing field characteristic, planned use and dividing the field into sections no larger than 20 acres per sample. When collecting the samples we want to be sure to obtain enough core samples (15-20) to compile an accurate field representation for sampling. Once we have collected our 15-20 core samples we mix them together in a clean, dry bucket and then take one sample from the mixture to be tested for that particular area. This process is then repeated for each additional area being tested.

For additional information regarding soil sampling, please contact the UF/IFAS Extension Citrus County Office at 352-527-5700.
Check up for Your Finances!

Sarah Ellis, Extension Agent, Family and Consumer Sciences

When is the last time you went over your finances? I frequently hear “I don’t have enough money to pay attention to.” But the reality is, it is even more important to look over your financial situation if you don’t have a lot of money. No one plans to get a flat tire or have a car accident, but life happens. Taking some time to evaluate your financial situation and making a plan to save for these situations is critical.

It is very easy to get into the habit of living paycheck to paycheck and to put off saving. Saving money is not just about putting money into a savings account. Sticking to a budget, reducing credit card debt, and cutting out small expenses can make a big difference over time.

In order to be a smart consumer become more informed about your money. First you need to know where your money is going each day. Tracking your incoming income and your outgoing spending is the best way to determine this. What fixed expenses such as rent or mortgage payments do you have, what are your flexible expenses such as food or clothing? Tracking your income and expenses tells you if you have a surplus or deficit each month. If you are overspending you will need to adjust your spending, as deficit spending can result in too much debt. Review your expenses and ask yourself if this is how you want to spend your money? Is there a way you could save money by cooking at home?

Saving might be challenging in the beginning, but in the long term it helps create a more stable financial situation. Start by setting up a fixed amount of money going towards savings. Even a small amount will quickly add up, one dollar a day will add up to $365.00 after a year. Make saving easy by setting up automatic transfers at each pay period.

Need advice on managing your money?
The University of Florida/IFAS Extension Citrus County office has volunteer Master Money Mentors available who can provide one-on-one financial mentoring. There is no cost to work with a Master Money Mentor and all information provided is handled in a nonjudgmental and confidential manner.

If you are interested in working with a mentor, please contact Sarah Ellis or Stephanie Clamer at the Citrus County Extension office at 352-527-5700.

When tracking your income look for spending leaks. Spending leaks are expenses that are not necessary. Sometimes they are little things such as a stop at the coffee shop or lunch but they could be draining your wallet. Try to reduce these unnecessary expenses to help free up some of your money so that you can use your money to work towards a goal such as paying off debt, going on a vacation, or saving for an emergency.
School Enrichment

Dr. Marnie Ward, 4-H Agent

In an increasingly global society, young people grow toward a future requiring greater creativity, resourcefulness and responsibility. Relying simply on the 3 R’s (reading, (w)riting, and (a)rithmetic) of education, undercuts the experiential needs of young people. As a wise man said “Knowledge does not equal understanding”. Engaging, cross-programmatic and innovative delivery methods provide the educational resources these young people need through the UF/IFAS Extension 4-H Youth Development program. The Florida 4-H program offers school enrichment educational experiences in partnership with school faculty, in the classroom, and also through afterschool programs.

Growing needs for well-trained, knowledgeable, tech “savvy” workers to support food, environmental and sustainability initiatives call for an investment in youth education about local, regional and national agricultural, environmental and science industries and established pathways into production and research careers. Appreciation for food-systems and the natural environment are critical needs as the world population approaches nearly 10 billion by 2050. By supporting and promoting extra-curricular educational experiences to the young people in our communities, Citrus County 4-H is proactively addressing the needs of the future and preparing youth to be responsible citizens.

Demands on public school resources and capacity challenge the delivery of many enriching programs and often science programs are lacking equipment and materials to engage students. By providing young people experiential and inquiry-based opportunities, 4-H increases the availability of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) opportunities in Citrus County schools.

In fact, 4-H school enrichment curriculums cover a wide diversity of engaging topics, including embryology, 4-H Tropicana public speaking, entomology, gardening and Florida ecosystems.

Youth may also engage in real-world Citizen Science programs giving back to their communities through the tracking of migratory pathways for butterflies and birds or investigations of ant and beetle behaviors and populations.

To expand the accessibility and availability of 4-H school enrichment and after-school programming more 4-H volunteers are needed. Consider the opportunity to be a “life-long learner” and engage young people with the high quality, research-based projects and programs that are available through the 4-H office. Research has shown that young people who participate in long term 4-H activities demonstrate increased youth leadership skills, are less likely to engage in risky/delinquent behaviors, and have an increased likelihood of choosing to enroll in college.
On February 6, 2016 one of the four member Citrus County 4-H Livestock Judging teams competed at the Florida State Fair in Tampa, FL. The team placed second overall and member Sophia took first place out of 55 individual judgers. Congratulations to all the team members.

Young people participating on Livestock judging teams develop confidence, communication skills, self-discipline, self-motivation, teamwork and organization. These essential life skills have a positive influence on their future professional success.

4-H Jamboree and “Grandmother” Van Ness BBQ

Saturday April 9    10:00 am - 3:00 pm

In honor of Eloise “Grandmother” Van Ness, Faith Haven Christian Retreat Center will be hosting an event at Soquili Stables as Grandmother was widely known for her generosity and leadership with horsemanship, youth and 4-H in Citrus County. Free admission to the 4-H Jamboree which consists of 4-H clubs showcasing exhibit booths and competitions.

Proceeds of the Bar-B-Que prepared and served by M&B Dairy will be used for sponsorship of 2016 Youth programs. Scholarship donations will enable underprivileged youth to attend “Power Tools for Living Program” Donations are greatly appreciated. Program is $1,000 for eight (8) weeks program per youth.

Tickets are available for $10 in advance at: Citrus County Chamber of Commerce, UF/IFAS Extension 4-H Office, Fancy’s Pets, Insight Credit Union, Soquili Stables and local feed stores or $15 at the event. The entrance to Soquili Stables is next to 10970 W Bentbow Path, located just off of Hwy 19 between Crystal River Mall and Seven Rivers Hospital.

For more information contact: Soquili Stables 325-206-2990 or Faith Haven 352-795-7387 FaithHavenCRC@gmail.com, Facebook.com/FaithHavenCRC or Facebook.com/Soquili.Stables.Florida
Pre-registration is required for all classes. Unless otherwise noted, all classes will be held at the Citrus County Extension Office classroom:
3650 W Sovereign Path, Lecanto, FL 34461

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class/Workshop</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Closing Your Seasonal Home”</td>
<td>Friday, April 8</td>
<td>Free program providing tips on leaving your home for extended periods. 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Learn how to prepare your home inside and out, prevent mold and mildew, organize important papers, and protect your home from disasters.</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.eventbrite.com/o/ufifas-extension-citrus-county-9852726659">Link</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>“9 Basic Principles of Florida Friendly Landscaping”</td>
<td>Tuesday, April 12</td>
<td>Free Gardening Workshop Florida Friendly Landscaping™ Contact Steven Davis at 527-5708 to pre-register.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ServSafe® Food Manager’s Training and Exam</td>
<td>Wednesday, April 20</td>
<td>Cost: $110 for class &amp; exam $165 for class, book &amp; exam 8:45 am - 6:00 pm</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.eventbrite.com/e/lecanto-fl-servsafe-managers-class-and-exam-tickets-14448591125">Link</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Responsible Pest Management”</td>
<td>Tuesday, April 26</td>
<td>Free Gardening Workshop Florida Friendly Landscaping™ Contact Steven Davis at 527-5708 to pre-register. 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Basic Soils”</td>
<td>Tuesday, May 10</td>
<td>Free Gardening Workshop Florida Friendly Landscaping™ Contact Steven Davis at 527-5708 to pre-register. 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Turf Basics”</td>
<td>Tuesday, May 24</td>
<td>Free Gardening Workshop Florida Friendly Landscaping™ Contact Steven Davis at 527-5708 to pre-register. 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm</td>
</tr>
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### Classes & Seminars / Special Events

**“Right Plant, Right Place”**
Free Gardening Workshop  
Florida Friendly Landscaping™  
Contact Steven Davis at 527-5708 to pre-register.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Right Plant, Right Place”</td>
<td>Tuesday June 7</td>
<td>2:00 pm - 3:30 pm</td>
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**“Let’s Plan a Florida Friendly Landscape”**
Free Gardening Workshop  
Florida Friendly Landscaping™  
Contact Steven Davis at 527-5708 to pre-register.

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<tr>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Let’s Plan a Florida Friendly Landscape”</td>
<td>Tuesday June 21</td>
<td>2:00 pm - 3:30 pm</td>
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Check out our Summer Day Camps for Youth  
See page 12 for more details

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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.
Looking for something fun (and interesting!) to do when school gets out? Join Citrus County Extension for summer camps. Come to one or come to all! Get on our mailing/registration list by calling 352-527-5700. Camps held at the UF/IFAS Citrus County Extension Office 3650 W Sovereign Path, Lecanto, FL 34461 except for “Filling Florida Forks” which begins and ends each day at the Extension Office, and the Sewing Camp which will be held at the Citrus County Canning Center. Space is limited. Pre-registration and pre-payment required at least two weeks prior to camp start date. Please make checks payable to “Citrus County BOCC”.

**Sewing Day Camp**  
**Monday - Thursday June 6 - 9**  
8:30 am - 4:00 pm  
Sewing for Success with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math)  
Cost: $40, includes all materials and snacks, but bring a lunch each day.  
This camp is for youth ages 8 - 16, and is limited to 20 participants.  
Citrus County Canning Center  
3405 West Southern Street  
Lecanto, FL 34434

Come join us for summer sewing camp - where we explore STEM and all the possibilities.

**“Filling Florida Forks” Day Camp**  
**Monday - Thursday June 20 - 23**  
8:30 am – 4:30 pm  
**Friday June 24**  
8:30 am – 1:30 pm  
Cost: $40, includes all materials, but bring a lunch each day except Friday. This camp is for youth ages 8 - 12 years old.

Join the 4-H team in an exploration of careers in agriculture - visit with local farmers, ranchers, innovators and educators from UF/IFAS Extension Citrus County and the University of Florida Animal Sciences Department. Did you know that Citrus County has more than 300 farms? And more than 8000 head of cattle? Are you ready to have a great week? Hope to see you at the next Filling Florida Forks camp.

**“Empower Your Future” Day Camp**  
**Monday - Thursday June 27 - 30**  
9:00 am – 4:00 pm  
Cost: $25, includes all materials, 1 snack and water, but bring a lunch each day.

This camp is designed to explore career choices through interactive hands on activities. Youth ages 12 and up are invited to attend this camp led by UF/IFAS Extension agents. Campers will learn about a variety of careers and the knowledge and skills needed to make their dreams reality.
Monthly Extension Master Gardener Seminars offer an opportunity for residents to explore timely garden topics at these informative seminars at every Citrus County library. They last approximately 1 hour, are free and require no pre-registration.

April: Fruit Growing - More Than Just Citrus  
May: Florida Wildflowers  
June: Turf Grass

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Wednesday</td>
<td>2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Floral City Library</td>
<td>Floral City</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Wednesday</td>
<td>1:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Central Ridge Library</td>
<td>Beverly Hills</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd Wednesday</td>
<td>1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Citrus Springs Library</td>
<td>Citrus Springs</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Friday</td>
<td>1:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Coastal Region Library</td>
<td>Crystal River</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Tuesday</td>
<td>1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Lakes Region Library</td>
<td>Inverness</td>
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<tr>
<td>4th Tuesday</td>
<td>2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Homosassa Library</td>
<td>Homosassa</td>
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Gardeners may bring problem plants and questions for expert help to Master Gardeners at the Extension office or to these retail outlets. Additionally, challenges (pictures are helpful) can be emailed to: MasterG2@citrusbocc.com

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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
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<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home Depot in Crystal River</td>
<td>1st &amp; 3rd Saturday</td>
<td>9:00 am - 1:00 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wal-Mart in Inverness</td>
<td>2nd &amp; 4th Saturday</td>
<td>9:00 am - 1:00 pm</td>
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</table>
What to Plant:

**Annuals:** Spring garden centers are usually filled to the brim with colorful annuals. Be sure to select plants that will perform well in your garden’s condition.

**Bulbs:** Summer bulbs can be planted right now including striking blood lily, caladium, and canna.

**Herbs:** April is the time to plant heat-loving herbs, including basil, oregano, sage, Mexican tarragon, and rosemary. Water well to establish, then back off on the water as excessive water dilutes herb’s flavorful essential oils.

**Vegetables:** Continue planting warm season crops. Plant beans, corn, cucumber, squash, peas and many other heat-tolerant vegetables this month. Mulch well to prevent weeds and keep pathogens from bouncing up off soil. Water if the weather has been dry.

For specific gardening information, be sure to contact our office. 527-5700

What to Do:

**Pests:** Monitor landscape plants weekly for aphids and other leaf sucking pests on tender new growth.

**Irrigation systems:** Check irrigation system for broken lines and misdirected heads for peak efficiency.

**Lawn Problems:** Many cultural lawn problems such as insect damage can mimic lack of water. Confirm the cause of damage is insects before turning on the hose or applying a pesticide.

**Irrigation Check-up:** Spring is a great time to run the sprinkler system to assure it runs the proper length of time to deliver 1/2 to 3/4” of water during the cycle.

**Trees:** Many beautiful trees are in bloom. Consider planting fringetree, or redbud.

**Fertilize lawns:** Apply fertilizer starting at the beginning of the month after new growth has started. Choose one with no or very little phosphorus unless a soil test indicates a need for it. A fertilizer containing slow release nitrogen will give longer lasting results.

**Daylight Savings Time in the garden:** With the recent change in Daylight Savings Time, it is easy to forget to adjust the time on irrigation controllers while changing home clocks. This is also a good time to change out the controller’s old battery that retains the time and zone settings in place when there is a power outage.
What to Plant:

**Annuals:** Plants that can take summer heat include salvia, butterfly weed (*Asclepias* sp.), angelonia, and ornamental pepper. A few shade-lovers include wax begonia, coleus and torenia.

**Bulbs:** Planting early-, mid-, and late-blooming varieties of daylily ensures months of color from these low maintenance plants.

**Herbs:** Continue to plant heat loving herbs, including basil, rosemary, oregano, parsley, and sage.

**Vegetables:** As the heat really starts to crank up there are a limited number of southern favorites to plant now including okra, southern pea, and sweet potato. They will reliably make it through summer’s heat and humidity.

**Did You Know?**

**Tree and shrub nutrition:** Only a few trees and shrubs need supplemental fertilizers once well-established. They may derive some nourishment from lawn fertilizers, but save time, money and potential pollution by skipping these areas at fertilization time.

What to Do:

**Pests:** Harmful insects become more active as the weather warms. Watch for thrips, scale, and mites on ornamental plants.

**Gardenias:** While some yellowing of older leaves is normal, yellowing of new growth usually indicates a micronutrient deficiency. Contact the Extension office or visit SolutionsForYourLife for more information.

**Oleanders:** Chewed or ragged leaves indicate oleander caterpillars at work. Low toxicity B.t (sold under brand names DiPel and Thuricide) is an excellent control choice.

**Irrigation:** Replace broken irrigation heads with the same type as the rest of the zone to assure adequate plant coverage.

**Tomatoes:** Watch for pests, disease, and nutritional disorders on tomato plants.

**Lawn mowing:** Mowing season is in full swing. Keep mower blades sharp since dull blades tear leaf blades, opening them up to disease entry.

**Trees:** Prepare for hurricane season by checking trees for damaged or weak branches and prune if needed. Hire an ISA certified arborist.

For specific gardening information, be sure to contact our office.

527-5700
What to Plant:

**Annuals:** Annuals that can take full sun during hot summer months include celosia, portulaca, vinca, and some coleus.

**Perennials:** Add bright color to the landscape with a variety of salvias including blue sage, ‘Hot Lips’ salvia, Mexican sage, and rose leaf sage.

**Palms:** Summer’s warm, rainy weather is the perfect time to plant palms. Make sure to not cover the trunk or root ball with extra soil. Establishment of large plants may take many months, so keep an eye on how much rain they get, and water accordingly.

**Herbs:** Plant heat loving herbs, including basil, Mexican tarragon, and rosemary. Pinch back regularly to use in the latest culinary concoction and to prevent flowering and enhance branching.

**Vegetables:** Plant okra, southern pea, lima bean, and sweet potato. It’s too late to plant tomatoes.

What to Do:

**Pests:** Monitor the landscape weekly for harmful insects. Knowing which insects commonly attack a plant can aid in identification and treatment.

**Irrigation:** June is normally the start of the rainy season, so turn the irrigation system to manual operation. But if rainfall has been spotty, watch for drought stress and water as needed.

**Palms and cycads:** Watch for nutrient deficiencies or environmental problems with palms and correct using an appropriate treatment. Never allow a tree service to “hurricane cut” palms! Not only does this rob plants of necessary nutrition, it actually decreases the plants ability to withstand strong wind.

**Pruning:** Many summer flowering shrubs, like hibiscus and oleander, benefit from a summertime haircut to encourage further blooming. Finish pruning azaleas by month’s-end to avoid harming next spring’s flowering.

**Rejuvenate lawn areas:** For areas where grass doesn’t grow well, try replacing it with versatile ground covers.

**Irrigation systems:** As the summer rainy season starts, make sure rain sensors are functioning properly. This device will override system operation when enough rain has fallen, helping to avoid disease development.

**Soil Solarization:** Clean up your vegetable garden and solarize the soil to kill pests and disease including Nematodes which have no chemical control. This method is also environmentally sound too!

For specific gardening information, be sure to contact our office. 527-5700

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**Tap into Mother Nature**

Install a rain barrel to collect summer rainfall. This water source is good for plants and is **FREE**.
Learning Landscape Volunteer Assistance

The Florida-Friendly Learning Landscape is a vital educational tool for Citrus County Extension. Volunteer assistance is needed to maintain an aesthetically pleasing landscape and horticultural learning center at Citrus County Extension located at 3650 West Sovereign Path, Suite 1, Lecanto.

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.

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.
- Catalog and index newspaper articles written by agents.

Choose one or more opportunities:

Work schedule: Friday noon - 5 pm
On-call as needed

For additional information for any of these volunteer opportunities, please contact Betsy at 352-527-5700.

4-H Volunteers:

To sign up to volunteer for any 4-H events/activities, please contact Marnie Ward, 4-H Agent at 352-527-5700.
Come see us at the Crystal River Mall

When stopping by the Food Court or taking in a movie, visit the UF/IFAS Extension display across from the movie theatre. Our current exhibit highlights warm-season vegetable gardening.

Special thanks to the mall for offering us this prime space.