



Comings & Goings

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN FOR EXTENSION

October 2012

After more than three years as Interim Associate Dean for Extension...

...we thank Dr. Tom Obreza for leading our transition as our Interim Dean. His dedication to extension has been paramount and more important than ever as he held the seat for Dean for Extension. During his tenure with Florida Cooperative Extension he has displayed exemplary leadership with both research in his early years and administration in his later. We greatly appreciate all of the outstanding leadership he provides and all of the inexhaustible guidance he offers. He is a great example to us all.

Thank you Dr. Obreza!!!



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One Year After Giant African Land Snail (GALS) Invaded Miami

Last September 8th, Miami-Dade County “celebrated” a year from the first detection of GALS by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) and Division of Plant Industry (DPI).



This mollusk (not -insect) turned out to be not so slow after all. This is the second time Miami is facing a Giant African Land Snail invasion! Quiet a horror movie title, but this pest managed to multiply into thousands of snails and it was getting ready to established Miami as a new home forever!!!

Since that time, UF/IFAS Extension at Miami-Dade County and FDACS/DPI have been working to deliver educational programs for community awareness, especially regarding the prevention of infestations in the agriculture area. This pest can affect more than 500 different agricultural crops, can have a 9-year life span, and can lay up to 1,200 eggs in 1 year. Since Miami-Dade County is ranked first in ornamental production in Florida, the infestation and establishment of GALS would have been disastrous for our commercial plant production operations in the agricultural area. Growers were really proactive about their prevention actions to avoid this pest infestation, thereby avoiding quarantine issues.

Hundreds of homeowners, landscapers, municipality workers, pest control companies, and grove/farm/nursery growers received guidelines from UF/IFAS extension programs on GALS identification, prevention and management in English

and Spanish. So far, 60 program participants have been surveyed. Of these, the average knowledge score was 3.8 out of 5.0, and 58% incorporated snail pest scouting practices as a result of this collaborative program.

As of Aug 30 of this year, about 78,000 GALS were collected during the previous 12 months, distributed across 18 areas. This number is 4.5 times the number of GALS collected during the first GALS invasion in Miami-Dade County (1966-1975). More than 85% of new areas were reported to an FDACS helpline by the public. That is impressive! Education is the key for management.

E. Vanessa Campoverde, Com. Hort. EA I, Miami-Dade Cty

Hydroponics Instruction Impacting Bradford Schools

In need of technical expertise, a Bradford county school FFA instructor sought advice on commercial hydroponic cropping systems. An awarded business grant required the students to grow and market hydroponically grown crops.



Students sterilize, assemble and fill hydro-stacker growing system with soilless media for lettuce, herb and leafy green production.

Bradford Extension Agent Jim DeValerio, Suwannee Valley Multi-County Vegetable Production Agent Bob Hochmuth, and school educators planned to 1) teach greenhouse structural components; 2) teach Integrated Pest Management (IPM); 3) grow four crops with three types of cropping systems; 4) market the produce; 5) use the facility to train farmers; and 6) increase agricultural awareness and appreciation in the community, all within the framework of a hands-on learning experience.

Eleven group teaching events and 26 “train the trainer” sessions reaching 924 attendees included presentations to Rotary, Kiwanis, Farm City, and students. The results were a heightened sense of agricultural awareness and appreciation, and students demonstrating skill development in greenhouse structural components, IPM practices for pest exclusion, growing cucumber, tomato, lettuce, herbs and strawberries using three hydroponic production systems (Bato buckets for climbing cucumber and tomato, vertical growing systems for leafy greens and herbs, and lay-flat bags for strawberries), minimized water and fertilizer use by leachate monitoring, and marketing their produce.

A hands-on demonstration workshop hosting 75 farmers, parents, and students was a public relations success. Several attendees including another

FFA agriculture instructor traversed multiple counties to attend the workshop.

A high impact success, the project exceeded all defined objectives. The transformation of an under-used, cost accruing greenhouse facility into a vibrant learning center has been recognized throughout the community.

Jim DeValerio, Hort EA II, Bradford Cty

STUDENT TEACHERS – LETTUCE HARVESTING



A high school student (far right) assumes teaching role in hydroponic demonstration workshop.

VERTICAL GROWING SYSTEMS/LEAFY GREENS & HERBS



(clockwise from bottom left) Oregano and sage, a lettuce transplant and Jim DeValerio showing off mature hydroponic lettuce.

Broach West 4-H'ers Compete in Sustainable Energy Contest

Broach West Charter School has a large population of students with various learning challenges. Teachers at this school use a variety of learning methods and teaching styles to reach these challenged youth. Due to our emphases on *learning by doing*, 4-H was approached to partner with this school and teach youth hydroponic and gardening skills.

Mr. Joseph Wood (high school teacher) started a 4-H club, Broach West 4-Hers, to meet his goal of hands-on learning by offering the youth opportunities for activities beyond the classroom. As a club, they designed and built a greenhouse and a hydroponic garden to teach youth the concepts of gardening and the life skills of teamwork and lead-

ership. Following Mr. Wood's guidance, the club entered a sustainable energy agriculture contest. To up the ante even further, the 4-Hers were challenged to develop an aquaponic system for this contest. An aquaponic system uses pumps to circulate fish waste water through a series of pipes to "feed" and grow plants. The plants in turn clean the water that is returned to the fish holding tank and the process begins again.



The SCEM - Self Contained Eating Machine, a sustainable aquaponic system

Using the gardening, construction, and teamwork skills they had developed from the on-site projects and a shoe-string budget, 4-Hers developed, designed, and built the aquaponics garden that used solar panels to generate electricity that powered the pumps for the contest. Many challenges were faced along the way, including figuring out ways to repair broken pumps and pipes. The greatest obstacle came a week before the contest, when an adult volunteer who was going to drive the unit to the event dropped out of the program.

The Broach 4-H club overcame every obstacle placed in front of them. On the day of the contest, the 4-Hers interacted with the judges and showcased their Self Contained Eating Machine, also known as SCEM. The youth were required answer a series of interview-type questions about their

creation. At the end of the day, the kids were tired, SCEM had operated as expected, and the club took 2nd place!

Andy Toelle, 4-H EA III, Duval Cty

It's Not Just What You Eat, But How You Prepare It!

In Seminole County, the major causes of adult death are cancer, heart disease, and stroke. The controllable risk factors for these health problems are directly related to obesity, nutrition, and healthy lifestyles. Monthly hands-on food preparation programs have changed family meals and as a result, family nutrition.



All aspects of nutrition are included in learning how to prepare healthier meals, from grocery shopping tips, time and money saving tips and portion control to food safety and environmental concerns. Participants have included moms and daughters, dads and daughters, couples, married and single as well as groups of friends learning together, people of all ages, including one who said it was on her bucket list to learn how to make yeast bread.

Twenty classes were conducted to teach 260 individuals. Post test results showed 62% had no prior experience with the technique being covered in that class. In a follow-up survey, 97% said they learned new food preparation techniques, 94%

have used food preparation techniques learned in class, 72% have saved money as a result of taking a food preparation class, 61% have changed the way they prepare food for themselves or their family after taking food preparation classes, and 62% say as a result of taking food preparation classes, the food they prepare for themselves or their family is higher in nutritional value than before taking the classes.

Rita Law, FCS EA II, Seminole Cty



Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Palm Beach County has nearly 10,000 grandparents who are raising their grandchildren (GRG). The ages of grandparents range from 42 to 91 years. Some have a spouse who helps care for the grandchildren and others are all alone raising 1 to 3 children and sometimes 1 or 2 great grandchildren. The University of Florida was awarded a CY-FAR/SCP (Children Youth & Family at Risk/Sustainable Community Project) grant funded

through NIFA.

Through the grant, the GGrandS (Grandfamilies Resilience & Sustainability) program was developed. This program offers grandparents workshops in areas such as child development, discipline, positive communication, technology, enjoyable time together, positive nurturing, and much more. The goal of the program is to help build family strengths, increase emotional well-being, identify, find and access new resources in the community, and meet other grandparents who are having the same experiences. We bring in special speakers to address topics like legal aid issues, advocacy, teens, and sex. Grandparents come from urban and rural areas and they participate at one of five sites in Palm Beach County. Each workshop is 2 to 3 hours long, and some offer a brown-bag lunch. Each site has an MSW available to help with personal and private matters.

Workshops end with a final de-briefing for grandparents to express their feelings and any concerns they might have. A 67-year old grandmother raising her 14 year old granddaughter stated “I practice listening more, which has resulted in a more trusting relationship... and she is a more balanced child. She is learning how valuable she is and where her talents are. Her character is being enhanced.” A 91-year old great-grandmother raising her 12 year old great-grandson stated “The GGrandS Program has helped me to cope better with my grandchild and to explain better about where the parents are and how his mother is doing.”

This is a one-of-a-kind program that can be replicated across the state as well as nationwide. So far we have reached nearly 267 GRG through workshops, phone consultations, and office consultations. Thirty-eight GRG attended at least 4 of 6 workshops. Of these, 29% (11) reported practicing positive discipline, e.g., setting house rules and being pro-active; 42% (16) reported using positive communication, e.g., listening, observing, and explaining more; 37% (14) reported improved family relationships, e.g., patience; and 90% (34) of all GRGs have used at least two resources that they

learned about through the GGrandS Program.

In the last month we have been developing a blog for GRGs to log onto and read about different topics. The blog lists the GGrandS mission, archived newsletters, workshops, times, dates, and endorsements by grandparents as well as our brochure, event flyers and ongoing topics.

A Resource Fair was held in May, 2011 for all grandparents raising grandchildren to attend. Thirty-two local agencies participated and offered their individual services to grandparents and their families. Some of the agencies that participated were the Legal Aid Society, counseling agencies, schools, healthcare, AA, Senior Service Division, Respite Services, Food Sources, Support Groups, Parks & Recreation, and many more. The event was a success and the grandparents received a lot of helpful information to meet both their needs and those of their grandchildren. We have reached and partnered with nearly 50 local agencies that work directly with and provide services to our grandparents and their grandchildren.

September 5, 2012 was proclaimed Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Day in Palm Beach County by County Commissioner Paulette Burdick. Michelle McGovern also presented at the event on behalf of US Senator Bill Nelson. Ninety participants attended including some members of local agencies that work one-on-one with our grandparents. The grandparents were happy about having a day proclaimed in their honor and being recognized as unconditional, caring warriors in Palm Beach County. Grandparents were recognized as caregivers, providers, and nurturers not just for the safety and protection of the children in their care but also for teaching the children values and morals so that they may become responsible citizens in our society. We have started the first cohort of train-the-trainer to promote program sustainability.

Sue Bartolomeo, FCS EA I, Palm Beach Cty

StrongWomen - Healthy Hearts Program



The StrongWomen- Healthy Hearts (SWHH) program is a cardiovascular disease prevention curriculum that aims to help women reduce the risk of heart disease through fitness and nutrition education. It is a 12-week program that meets twice per week and includes 30 minutes of nutrition education and 30 minutes of aerobic dancing/walking. The SWHH program has been implemented twice in Putnam County with great results. On average, 19 participants reported that they consumed three extra servings of fruits and vegetables per day, increased their daily activity level, reduced daily sitting time by 47 minutes, and lost a total of 38.1 pounds during the 12-week program.



Participant success story: "I participated in the StrongWomen Healthy Hearts class from January to April at the Putnam County Extension office in East Palatka and thoroughly ENJOYED it. I really "needed" a lesson in nutrition; what to eat; what

not to eat and I learned so much... I have achieved my original goal, which was to lose at least 30 pounds and improve my "physical fitness." It has been 11 years since I weighed less than 170 pounds (currently 158 and proud of it!). Also, I was unable to walk more than a quarter of a mile without throwing in the towel before. Now I walk almost every day, from 2 to 4 miles a day, and do the aerobic DVD's 3 to 5 times a week."



Wendy Lynch, FCS EAll, Putnam Cty

Leon County Celebrates Net-Zero Facility

Leon County celebrated the completion of their Net-Zero facility on Friday, Sep 14 at the Leon County UF/IFAS Extension building. The facility, which is also known as the Leon County Sustainable Demonstration Center, is a "net-zero building," meaning that it is a site that produces renewable energy at a rate equal to or greater than the building's total annual energy consumption.

"Thanks to a recent Florida Clean Energy Grant, we have created one of a handful of Net-Zero buildings in the entire Southeast," said Leon County Commission Chairman Akin Akinyemi.

A group of more than 75 people, including State Rep. Alan Williams and representatives from Florida's Office of Energy and the University of Florida joined residents to attend the opening of the facility where they learned about the source of the building's power. There are 253 solar photovoltaic

cells on a ground-mounted structure that also doubles as shaded parking. The solar array is sized to a 60-KW system, which supplies about 40% of the energy needed to power the 13,000 square-foot building. In comparison, the average home may be sized to a 5-KW system.

Also, a large portion of the facility's heating and air system was replaced by a geothermal system that uses the earth's relatively stable temperature of ~68 F to naturally cool or heat the building. A series of pipes carry water through 60 vertical loops in bore holes that are 90 feet deep in the ground. This geothermal system is about 40% more energy efficient compared with a traditional heating and air system.

Friday's event highlighted Leon County's achievements made at the Cooperative Extension facility. The public was invited to view the ceremonial "power up" at the center and to take guided tours of the facility where it was explained that the building was also equipped with a rainwater collection system on the roof. The rain water enters gutters and is directed into one of four 10,000 gallon holding tanks, or "cisterns." These cisterns are re-used petroleum storage tanks that were once used at gasoline stations. During the course of a year, more than 400,000 gallons of rain water will offset the irrigation water supply from another source.

Kendra Zamojski, CED EA III, Leon Cty



Picture (left to right): State Rep. Alan Williams, District Director Dr. Pete Vergot, Director of Resource Stewardship Maggie Theriot, Cty Administrator Vincent S. Long, Cty Commission Chairman Akin Akinyemi, Cty Commissioner Kristin Dozier, and CED Kendra Zamojski.

Food Preservation 101: CAN It Safely

Home food preservation is a popular means for preserving seasonal produce and specialty foods for long periods of time. If done improperly, these foods could be a source of botulism, a potentially deadly foodborne illness. Approximately 145 cases of botulism are reported each year in the United States. Fifteen percent of these are foodborne and they are usually caused by eating contaminated home-canned foods. Foodborne illness resulting in death is estimated to cost \$42,000+ per individual.



FCS Agent Melanie Thomas getting ready to present the CAN It Safely workshop.

Responding to the growing interest in home food preservation, a multi-county (Bradford, Baker and Clay) extension program was created to increase knowledge and confidence about safely canning foods at home. Participants learned the proper USDA techniques for home canning. Classes were set on a county rotation between the three participating counties. To date, 15 workshops have been completed. Each class took about 4 hours and consisted of a lecture plus hands-on activities. Participants were trained in the latest USDA home canning techniques. Water bath and pressure canning processes were covered in detail. Each class concluded with partici-

pants preparing their own homemade jam.



FCS Agent Melanie Thomas and Jackie Schrader presenting the CAN It Safely program to a group of Master Food and Nutrition Volunteers.

After completion of the workshops, ~90% of the participants reported an understanding and intent to follow the guidelines taught in class. There usually were a few participants who remained skeptical about their ability to operate a pressure canner. Individuals were instructed to start small with simple foods such as water-bathed products until they felt more confident.

This program was awarded the 2012 FEAFCFS Program of Excellence Award!

Melanie Thomas, FCS EA I, Bradford Cty

Extension Comings and Goings is a monthly newsletter distributed by the Office of the Dean for Extension via e-mail and on the Extension web site at <http://extadmin.ifas.ufl.edu>.

If you have any suggestions or would like to submit your own recognition or short article of interest, please send them to Valkyrie Shah.

Please feel free to also forward any questions or comments about this periodical to Valkyrie Shah at valkyrieshah@ufl.edu.