

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Numbers Confirm: Extension Powers  
Through the Pandemic ..... 1

**A Message from Scott Angle ..... 2**

National Volunteer Month.....2

Eileen Hart.....3

**Agriculture and Natural Resources**

**Programs ..... 4**

New Ways to Collect Clientele

Contacts and Demographics..... 4

New Shortcuts to IST, Workload, and

Extension Teams..... 4

ANREP Award Winners.....5

**4-H, Families and Communities**

**Programs ..... 6**

Here and Now in Florida 4-H .....6

CRD in Focus .....6

Landscape University: Virtual Pesticide  
CEUs and Landscaper Training ..... 7

Soil Analysis Reduces Excess  
Nutrients, Input Costs .....8

Building Health Literacy and Physical  
Activity Through StoryWalk® .....8

Power to the Pollinators.....9

Why Do We Do What We Do?.....9

Pen Friends Keep 4-H Youth  
Connected.....10

**Comings & Goings ..... 10**

New Hires .....10

Departures .....10

Retirements.....10

Transfers .....10

# UF/IFAS Extension Comings & Goings

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN FOR EXTENSION



## Numbers Confirm: Extension Powers Through the Pandemic

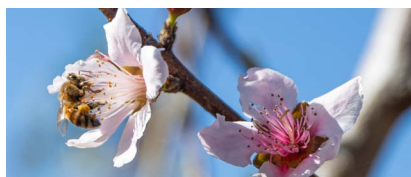
*Tom Obreza, Interim Dean and Director, UF/IFAS Extension*

The data for the 2020 UF/IFAS Extension Workload have been compiled and it shows that Extension's services continued to meet the demand for information and education throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. While we experienced a decline in live, in-person contacts, this shortfall was offset by a phenomenal growth in our online and virtual contacts. The numbers bear out what I've seen with my own eyes: that faculty and staff responded to the crisis, making a quick and effective pivot when our world got turned upside down.

Faculty reported 932,000 fewer in-person contacts in 2020 compared with the previous year. Office visits dropped by 50% and field consultations by more than 60%. Volunteer work also dropped dramatically; we had 6,000 fewer volunteers in 2020, losing more than 350,000 hours of work.

But while we lost a lot of face-to-face contact with our clients, connections by email and text messages increased by 60% during the pandemic. Phone contacts declined by 28%, but I think that's due to a decrease in calls to office land lines during the shutdown.

Social media were by far our most successful outlets, growing by an astounding 128%. Through Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other platforms, we've been able to promote and transmit virtual teaching programs in every Florida county. Not only has Extension "stayed open" through this pandemic, but we expanded our offerings and increased our



UF/IFAS Extension *Comings and Goings* is a monthly newsletter distributed by the Office of the Dean for Extension via e-mail and on the UF/IFAS 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 Aldrari.

Please feel free to also forward any questions or comments about this periodical to Valkyrie Aldrari at [valkyriea@ufl.edu](mailto:valkyriea@ufl.edu).

Contact Type	2019	2020	% Change
Educational Materials	24,597	29,627	20%
Email/Text Consultations	641,248	1,028,266	60%
Field Consultations	70,405	27,599	-61%
Group Learning Participants	1,979,222	1,150,745	-42%
Office Consultations	114,561	53,618	-53%
Phone Consultations	222,587	165,206	-26%
Social Media Contacts	14,914,625	33,741,005	126%
Web Visits	8,582,379	9,530,075	11%
Electronic (email/text/phone)	863,835	1,193,472	38%
In-person (field, office, group)	2,164,188	1,231,962	-43%
Volunteers	25,908	19,888	-23%
Volunteer Hours Worked	927,288	567,434	-39%

audience. Live streaming proved to be an especially useful tool for distributing educational programming in real time.

In spite of (or maybe because of) the pandemic, Extension faculty produced 20% more educational materials than they had the previous year.

This productivity increase is on track with the performance we've seen in IFAS Research, which saw a record number of peer-reviewed publications in 2020. Our faculty contributed 305 new and revised EDIS publications and thousands of blogs, as well as

podcasts, streaming videos, virtual summits, and online courses. Web visits were up by 11%.

All this is good, silver-lining news. It's also a testament to the hard work and ingenuity of our faculty and staff.

At this point, it's hard to predict how COVID-19 will affect the future of Extension. Live, in-person events aren't likely to go away—in fact, they may enjoy a surge in popularity once we're able to be out and about. But the pandemic opened our eyes to the potential for online formats and social media to provide high quality educational materials to a wider audience. This "forced experience" will make virtual programming a permanent part of the Extension Agent's toolbox.

What's important is that we learn from these data and bank our experience, not as the Time Everything Turned Upside Down, but as the turning point for the future. I think that tomorrow's Extension will be more flexible and accessible because of what we've learned.

## A Message from Scott Angle

*J. Scott Angle, Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources*

### Celebrating National Volunteer Month

Clara Mullins came to meet me late last year when I visited the Leon County Extension Office. And why wouldn't she? She jumps at the chance to talk to strangers about plants.

She finds her audience at the nursery and garden store where she's giving a presentation about butterflies. She visits an elementary school to cultivate plants and students' curiosity about them. She sets up a table at [Springtime Tallahassee](#), where people who came out to eat and hear music find themselves asking Clara about the trees in their yard. Then, they walk away with a brochure about pollinators and the plants those birds and bees prefer.

To reach enough people one by one to grow a greener Florida, we need people by the thousands. Fortunately we have Clara and her thousands of [Florida Master Gardener](#) Volunteer peers.

April is National Volunteer Month. Our Master Gardener Volunteers remind us how much our Extension efforts are multiplied by people who promote plants out of passion, not for a paycheck.

- How else to explain why Eileen Hart took the first Florida Master Gardener class ever, in Hillsborough County in 1979, and still travels the county giving talks to people about native plants, ferns and camellias?
- Laurie Albrecht started as a Master Gardener Volunteer, turned her plant passion into a job as educational coordinator at the [Mounts Botanical Garden](#) and then eight years ago began her present position as a Palm Beach County horticultural Extension agent.
- Santa Rosa County Master Gardener Volunteer Suzanne Spencer established 70 miles of roadside wildflowers, giving an extra glimpse of green to countless motorists while saving the Florida Department of Transportation an estimated \$1,000 a mile a year.

The stories go on and on. Their common thread is volunteers meeting people where they are, whether that's in their car at 70 mph or in third grade learning about how certain plants are better than others at attracting butterflies.

Clara even does house calls as part of a Florida Yards & Neighborhood team. It's Clara's willingness to get out into the community that makes her such an important part of outreach efforts, says Mark Tancig, our Leon County commercial and residential horticulture agent.

Leon County Extension Director Marcus Boston adds that he invited Clara to meet me because she's a leader. She oversees the volunteer effort that has turned Bed 4 of our demonstration garden into a magnet for bees, wasps, hummingbirds and the people who are fascinated by them. She takes the lead on instruction of an online monthly 4-H horticulture club.

As someone engaged in this work day-in and day-out, Boston makes the point as well as I ever could: we simply could not

reach the population we're designed to reach (everyone!) without faithful volunteers. In Tallahassee, he reminds me, that population includes people wearing Florida State University garnet and gold.

Clara changes people's relationships with plants. Often it's deepening that relationship, like the time a motorist driving by the Extension office was so dazzled by the blooms in the beds Clara maintains that she pulled over and went into the office to ask Clara about them.

Other times, Clara sparks the interest of someone who wasn't even aware of a desire to identify what's growing around them. You can't put a price on that.

## Eileen Hart



Eileen Hart, UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough County Master Gardener Volunteer.

Eileen Hart has been traveling Hillsborough County for 40 years trying to put more flora in this part of Florida. Camellias in Lutz. Ferns in Valrico. Native plants in Ruskin. She talks in Tampa, Seffner, Riverview, Odessa.

Hart has been teaching classes as a Master Gardener Volunteer as long as there has been such a thing in Florida. She sees her volunteer work as propagating flowers and with them an ethic that she credits Extension with instilling in her: If you know something, pass it along, teach it.

Some of the most gratifying moments of her Master Gardener career are when students she has given clippings and instructions on how to nurture them return to her with a full-blown plant. It's validation, and it's an opportunity. She tells them their work isn't finished, that it's their responsibility to teach a neighbor.

Hart still calls it "Cooperative Extension," just as she did as a 4-Her in rural 1950s Georgia. Back then, it was still an agrarian America where neighbor helped neighbor. You shared the work, and you shared what you knew, like when she stood before a panel of 4-H judges and told them how she'd made the dress she was wearing out of two chicken feed sacks.

The Greatest Generation 4-H volunteers of her childhood taught her another lesson that informs her own volunteerism to this day, that you learn by doing. Hart arrives for each talk not only with a head full of knowledge but a trunk full of clippings. Each student goes home with a piece that can become a plant.

She can do this because she grows and clips her plants on her two acres in Odessa. Over decades of collecting, she's curated thousands of decorative plants she can cull from to turn her talks into hands-on demonstrations. When Hart speaks at a library or a garden club or a camellia society, dirt gets under fingernails.

During National Volunteer Month, the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, which runs the statewide Master Gardener Volunteer program, salutes volunteers like Hart. The success of Master Gardener, 4-H and other programs depends on volunteers.

This column is a public thank you to Hart and other volunteers who make Hillsborough and Polk counties better places to live, learn and labor.

Not all of them do it two or three times a month over the course of eight U.S. presidencies. Nor do they all branch out beyond a single activity to support an entire Extension office's operation. Hart, for example, also serves on the UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough County Advisory Board and on the county's 4-H Foundation board.

At 78, Hart still returns to that family farm in Georgia to ride horses. And just like cataracts have limited the distance she'll travel and the darkness she'll drive in to deliver a talk, she says her old bones limit how far and how fast she rides. But she has no plans to stop doing either. That family farm still has family, namely a 103-year-old matriarch.

Hart volunteered while raising kids and working full-time in the medical field. In fact, she fit that inaugural 1979 Master Gardener training class into her schedule by working all night, going directly from work to the Extension office



for an 8 a.m. start to class, and returning home for a few hours' sleep before starting her next shift. Why, she asks, 14 years into retirement and with her kids long since grown, would she stop?

Hart estimates that she volunteers approximately 100 hours per year, and only keeps a tally because it's a condition for maintaining her Master Gardener certification. She has no idea how many plants in Hillsborough County and beyond trace

their provenance to her two acres in Odessa. But she hopes each carries in its bloom the cultivation of the agrarian spirit of neighbor helping neighbor.

Hart isn't trying to reclaim paved Hillsborough for farming. But she does want to revive its agrarian spirit. If your neighbor needs help, you give it. Share what you know. Grow something. And support your land-grant university because it supports your community.

## Agriculture and Natural Resources Programs

Saqib Mukhtar (Associate Dean for Extension), Holly Ober, and Maia McGuire (Associate Program Leaders)

### New Ways to Collect Clientele Contacts and Demographics

Do you struggle with tracking your educational contacts? Is it a pain to add up all of your numbers for your annual reporting? Two new modules are now available in [Workload](#) in a pilot project to help Extension faculty with this. Aimed at streamlining the reporting process, these Program and Contacts modules were developed by UF/IFAS IT developer Kenny Zaron and the Program Development and Evaluation Center (PDEC), with input and testing provided by a reporting task force formed by Dean Nick Place in 2019.

By using the Contacts module, you will not only be able to see your compiled clientele contacts and demographic

data in real-time, but will also be able to download monthly reports (e.g., for county monthly or quarterly reports). There is also a Notes field so you can put in information about a client or event and have a reminder sent to you via email, or download all your notes in an Excel file.

To access the modules, login into Workload (<https://pdec.ifas.ufl.edu/workload>) and click on the Modules button. It is really **important to read the FAQ before getting started** to understand the modules and project. After reading the FAQ, you will need to create your Program module before you can start entering contacts. This

will take some thought, so plan to sit down with your ROA and set aside some time. Note that once the Program module has been set up, the Contacts module will display on the home page beneath the Modules button, so this will make it easier to add contacts as they happen.

Check out the modules and let us know what you think – email Diane Craig, [ddcraig@ufl.edu](mailto:ddcraig@ufl.edu). This is a pilot project and we know there may be adjustments needed (without any loss of data). The modules are intended to make your life easier so please let us know if they don't meet your needs.

### New Shortcuts to IST, Workload, and Extension Teams

Next time you go to log into IST or Workload, check out the new shortcut buttons for In-Service Training, Workload and Teams (at the bottom of the [PDEC home page](#)).

The **Teams** button will take you to a list of Initiatives & Priority Work Groups where you can find the team's Plan of Action, list of associated faculty, and join the related Microsoft Team. Choose your Initiative, then click on the Priority Work Group (PWG) title. The 'Join this Team' button will take you through the steps to become part of that PWG's

Teams page. Joining more than one PWG is definitely an option, follow the same steps for each.

**Workload** is much more than just reporting. After clicking on the Workload icon and the 'Log into Workload' button you will be able to find the 'Workload Reports' tab next to 'My Report' at the top of the page. Click on this tab to access individual 'Faculty Reports,' 'District Reports' and much more. For example, the 'Initiative Reports' button will get you to the Initiatives, then the Priority Work

groups within an Initiative. Choose the Summary Report or Impacts Report. It's amazing what all the groups are doing and have accomplished.

**ISTs** are in full swing. Several programs are offered each year by the University of Florida IFAS Extension to allow faculty to learn new skills or techniques and/or update their existing knowledge. Click on the **In-Service Training** button to view agendas and register for In-Service Trainings.

#### PDEC Apps (Login Required)

In-Service Training

Workload

Teams

## ANREP Award Winners

Drs. Mukhtar, Ober and McGuire would like to congratulate each of the many ANREP award winners for their outstanding contributions to Natural Resource Extension. These are NATIONAL awards – and UF/IFAS Extension faculty won in almost every single category this year. Impressive job!

### *Book or Comprehensive Program Curriculum*

- Gold – FMNP Marine Habitat Restoration Special Topics Course – **Joshua Patterson, Laura Reynolds, Savanna Barry, Scott Jackson, Shelly Johnson, Shelly Kreuger, Marty Main**

### *Long Publication*

- Gold – Practitioner Guide to Assessing Connection to Nature – **Cathy Jordan, Gabby Salazar, Judy Braus, Kristen Kunkle, Martha Monroe, Nicole Ardoin**

### *Newsletters or Series of Articles*

- Gold – Escambia County “Weekly What is it?” blog – **Carrie Stevenson**
- Bronze – “Healthy Ponds” – **Abbey Tyrna**

### *Promotional and Marketing Materials*

- Silver – “Nutrient Management in a Wild and Scenic River Basin” – **Tina McIntyre**

### *Short Publication*

- Bronze – “Florida-Friendly Landscaping Report Card” – **Holly Abeels, Linda Seals, Lisa Krimsy, Mary Lusk**

### *TV or Video*

- Silver – Video Series for FMNP Marine Habitat Restoration Course – **Joshua Patterson, Laura Reynolds, Savanna Barry, Scott Jackson, Shelly Johnson, Shelly Kreuger, Marty Main**

- Bronze – LIFE (Learning in Florida’s Environment) Science Shorts – **Abbey Tyrna, Adelaide Mahler, Alexa Kurowski, Armando Ubeda, Carol Wyatt-Evens, Jennifer Dehart, Julianna Costanzo, Kassidy House, Katherine Clements, Kevin O’Horan, Marguerite Beckford, Maria Portelos-Romero, Mindy Hanak, Patrick Williams, Randall Penn, Sarah Davis, Sophia Moundous, Tony Clements, Wilma Holley**

### *Websites – Apps – Educational Technology*

- Silver – Discover Wild Florida -- **James Stevenson, Julia Myers, Lara Milligan and Sheree Scheuer**

### *Innovative Program*

- EmpowerU – Empowering Citizens to Engage Decision Makers – **Amanda Tedrow, Amy Regar, Angela Gupta, Emily Dombeck, Gail Epping Overholt, Georgia Peterson, Lauren Grand, Megan Weber, Michelle Prysby, Nate Meyer and Shelly Johnson**
- Virtual Ag-Venture Sustains Interest and Participation in Local Agriculture Education – **Adrian Bowden, Brandi Yancy, Chanel Campbell, Charles Poliseno, Coley Riley, Eric Cassino, Heather Riley, Jacquelyn Rivas, Judi Whitson, Julia Palaschak, Kerri Lefler, Lisa Meredith, Lynann Hudson, Lynn Barber, Nicole Pinson and Stephen Gran**

### *Outstanding Team*

- Gardening in the Panhandle LIVE! Team – **Adam Dale, Beth Bolles, Carrie Stevenson, Daniel Leonard, Danielle Sprague, Evan Anderson, Gary Knox, Julie McConnell, Julie McConnell, L. Scott Jackson, Larry Williams, Mark Tancig, Mary Salinas, Matthew Lollar, Matthew Orwat, Molly Jameson, Patrick Williams, Ray Bodrey, Sheila Dunning, Stephen Greer, Trevor Hylton and Xavier Martini**

### *JCEP Creative Excellence Award*

- **Ana Zangroniz and Shelly Krueger**

# *Congratulations to all the winners!*

# 4-H, Families and Communities Programs

Mike Gutter (Associate Dean for Extension)

## Here and Now in Florida 4-H

Stacey Ellison, 4-H Associate State Program Leader)

Florida 4-H unveils a new website! Last month Florida 4-H released its new website (found at the same URL: [florida4h.org](https://florida4h.org)). There are still many things being added as we move forward but we are excited about this new, updated site!

Florida 4-H Day at the Capitol virtual experience open through April 30th. From now, through April 30th, counties, schools, clubs, and individuals are encouraged to visit the virtual Florida 4-H Day at the Capitol experience at: <https://florida4h.ifas.ufl.edu/events/day-at-the-capitol/>

## CRD in Focus

Linda Seals, RSA & EA III, Southeast; Ramona Madhosingh-Hector, EA III, Pinellas County

What program area is practice-based, an academic discipline, promotes participative democracy, sustainable community development, economic opportunities, equity and social justice? If you answered **community development**, you scored! Florida Extension's community resource development (CRD) falls under Initiative 6. This program area uses a variety of methods to help communities address complex issues, utilize their current assets to build capacity, and supports communities and public agencies to work together to improve services through enhanced decision-making opportunities. Many of you are already doing this work within your current program areas—agriculture, horticulture, FCS, 4-H, natural resources, Sea Grant—we all have worked with our communities in one way or another to build capacity.

Many County Extension Directors have a CRD appointment since much of their work involves local governments and community leaders. A handful of county faculty have CRD appointments, and some counties are funding positions that are 100% community development. This is exciting to those of us who work in the field because we know the impacts that this work can have and there is more than enough of it to go around. While we're excited about the work, we also know there is much work to be done. We are starting at

the beginning by defining what CRD looks like in Florida. Do we call it community resource development? That's been the standard title in Florida. Many states are moving towards community vitality. Should Florida go in that direction? How do we measure success? How do we train new and existing faculty? How do we build interest among our stakeholders?

As mentioned above, there is a lot to do! And you're in luck because the CRD team has gained momentum in a variety of ways that will help us develop a robust framework for Florida CRD, such as CRD at the Extension Symposium, CIVIC, and FACDEP.

### CRD at the Extension Symposium:

CRD is offering several sessions at this year's [Extension Symposium](#). Our first session focuses on the basics of community development. The second session will teach you how to identify a community's assets to build capacity. Finally, the third session focuses on Ripple Effects Mapping, which is a unique way of evaluating the impacts of community development work.

### Community Voices, Informed

**Choices:** The CIVIC program is on fire right now. The 2021 CIVIC in-service training is teaching county faculty how to use CIVIC activities to address healthcare and land use issues. CIVIC is working with a small city in Sumter County to address social injustice

issues and supporting sustainability action planning in the City of Dunedin. CIVIC will present two sessions at the [Extension Symposium](#) and you can learn more about what CIVIC is and how it can enhance your Extension program. CIVIC leadership will also share insights about the program's success in reaching diverse audiences.

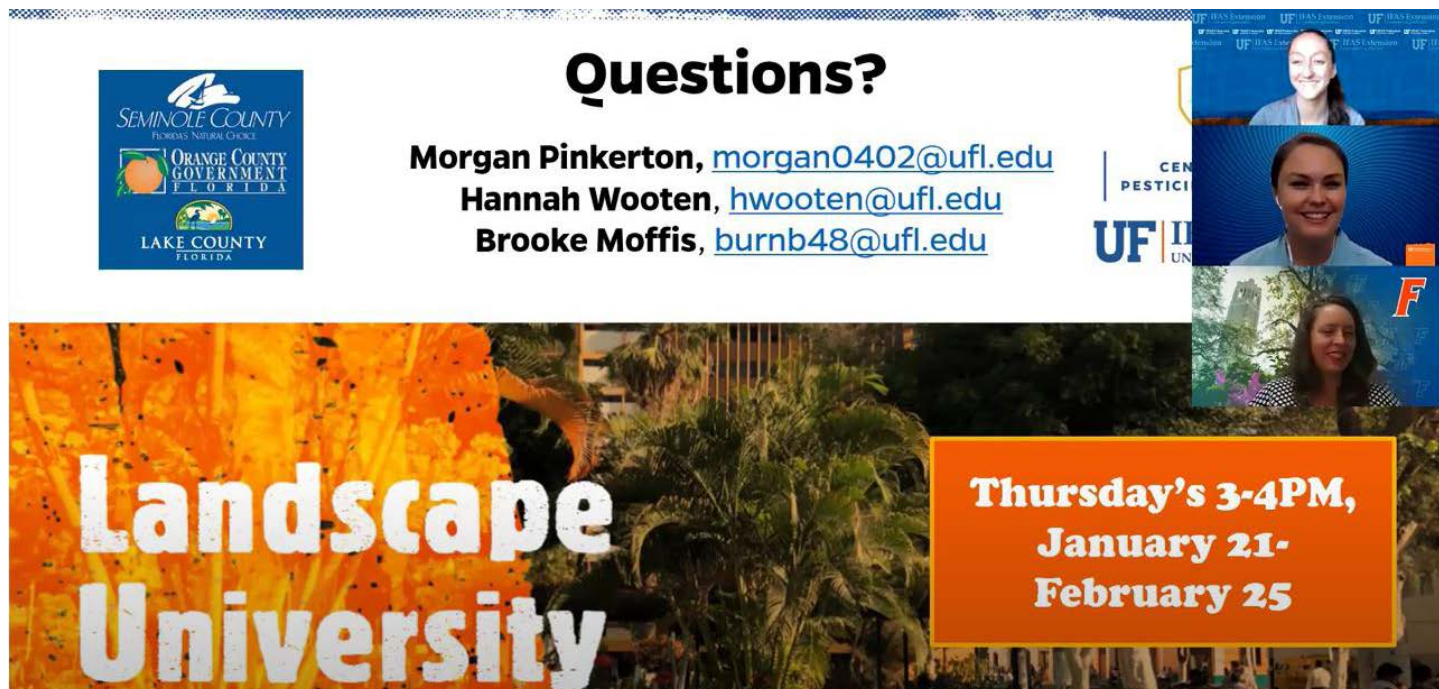
**FACDEP/NACDEP:** Another way to learn and engage with CRD is through our state professional association—Florida Association of Community Development Professionals (FACDEP) and the National Association of Community Development Professionals (<http://nacdep.net>), which will hold its annual conference in May. Like most conferences, this one will be virtual. I encourage you to check it out. If you are interested in joining FACDEP, the first year is FREE! Just email Linda Seals at [lseals@ufl.edu](mailto:lseals@ufl.edu).

Finally, our second quarter CRD webinar on April 14 will feature University of Arkansas Extension's Julianne Dunn who will share her expertise on economic development. Look for this and other professional improvement opportunities on [PDEC](#) and in our quarterly newsletter. Want to learn more or get involved? Join our MS Teams page or email Ramona Madhosingh-Hector at [ramona.m.hector@ufl.edu](mailto:ramona.m.hector@ufl.edu) or Linda Seals at [lseals@ufl.edu](mailto:lseals@ufl.edu).



## Landscape University: Virtual Pesticide CEUs and Landscaper Training

Morgan Pinkerton, Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems EA II, Seminole County; Hannah Wooten, Commercial Horticulture EA I, Orange County; Brooke Moffis, Urban Commercial Horticulture/4-H YD EA III, Lake County



The graphic features a central white box with the heading "Questions?" in large, bold, black font. Below this, the names and email addresses of the three presenters are listed: Morgan Pinkerton ([morgan0402@ufl.edu](mailto:morgan0402@ufl.edu)), Hannah Wooten ([hwooten@ufl.edu](mailto:hwooten@ufl.edu)), and Brooke Moffis ([burnb48@ufl.edu](mailto:burnb48@ufl.edu)). To the left of the text are logos for Seminole County, Orange County Government, and Lake County, Florida. To the right are logos for UF IFAS Extension and Central Florida Pesticide. Below the white box is a large image of a person in a field. Overlaid on the bottom left of this image is the text "Landscape University" in large, white, bold letters. Overlaid on the bottom right is an orange box with the text "Thursday's 3-4PM, January 21- February 25" in white, bold letters. In the top right corner, there are three small video thumbnails showing the presenters.

**Questions?**

**Morgan Pinkerton,** [morgan0402@ufl.edu](mailto:morgan0402@ufl.edu)  
**Hannah Wooten,** [hwooten@ufl.edu](mailto:hwooten@ufl.edu)  
**Brooke Moffis,** [burnb48@ufl.edu](mailto:burnb48@ufl.edu)

**Thursday's 3-4PM,  
January 21-  
February 25**

**Landscape  
University**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, statewide shutdowns and safety concerns have limited face to face interactions between stakeholders and Extension agents. While many industries have seen reduced business, local landscaping and horticultural industries continued to thrive throughout the pandemic. Many professionals in these industries hold FDACS pesticide applicator licenses and apply pesticides as part of their job-related duties at turf and ornamental plant sites. Licensed applicators are required to obtain continuing education units (CEUs) to maintain and renew their licenses to legally be allowed to use these chemicals for pest control. In a normal year, many applicators would obtain their CEUs by attending annual face to face conferences, workshops, or other educational events. For safety concerns surrounding COVID-19, many of these in person events were cancelled or moved to a virtual setting thus disrupting access to CEUs. Pesticide applicators across the state were scrambling to find classes to obtain the required number of CEUs for their licenses before they expired! Pesticide CEU classes also offer the opportunity to teach on integrated pest management strategies that are critical to sustainability of the green industries.

Virtual opportunities open the door for cross county collaborations; therefore, three Central District agents developed a 6-week webinar series titled "Landscape University" to teach participants about the basics of landscaping, pest identification and integrated pest management strategies as it relates to the turf and ornamental industries. Each class had a central theme, with lessons ranging from basic to advanced, and offered one CEU

credit per class in select pesticide license categories. A survey was sent out after each class to evaluate knowledge gain and intent to adopt various practices.

Over the course of the series, we had a total of 295 participants from many different backgrounds, including landscaping businesses, pest control companies, government organizations, schools, research entities and more. Over half of the participants requested CEUs for attending and more than 190 CEUs were delivered. From the post-class surveys, 91.5% (249/272) of survey respondents reported an increase in knowledge on integrated pest management strategies and 92.1% (246/267) reported an increase in knowledge on pest identification. Moreover, results showed that 97.8% (273/279) of survey respondents intended to adopt at least one practice related to sustainability in turf and ornamental plant management. Some of the common practices included proper identification of pests/pathogens prior to treatment, regularly monitoring for pests/pathogens, fertilizing appropriately, rotating pesticide modes of actions and more.

Overall, this series was very successful! Feedback from participants suggest that the virtual format accommodates the busy professional, allowing them to learn and obtain CEU credits from the comfort of their office or home. When it is safe to do so, Landscape University can also be adapted to a full day workshop to accommodate those that prefer to learn in a classroom setting. Lessons learned from this series can help shape the way we offer CEU classes in the future.

# Soil Analysis Reduces Excess Nutrients, Input Costs

Kevin Korus, Ag/Natural Resources EA II, Alachua County



UF/IFAS Specialists and Extension Agents discuss fertilizer management for livestock forage production.

There are 71,273 acres of pastureland in Alachua County (USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Survey, 2017). In order to ensure adequate forage for livestock, producers apply fertilizer to their pastures each year. The amounts are often decided

by what has worked well in the past or by what industry representatives recommended. Unfortunately, under these circumstances, application amounts can be inflated. Excess nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) have deleterious effects on Florida's water systems. The Environmental Protection Agency's water quality standards regulations aim to lower the Total Maximum Daily Load for

nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus into various water systems. In an attempt to reduce these loads, the agent (and specialists from UF/IFAS) teach the agricultural community to develop fertilizer management plans based on soil sample data and plant growth needs. The agent teaches producers to take their own soil samples and to calculate appropriate fertilizer rates based on soil report recommendations.

Example:

A client was planning to apply 300 lbs/acre 20-10-10 dry bulk fertilizer to a 150-acre field. However, the Alachua County Extension Agent, based on data from soil samples and the amount needed for sufficient yield, recommended a lower rate to reduce excess fertilizer. Instead of applying 20-10-10 bulk fertilizer at 300 lbs/acre the producer applied 20-0-5 at the same rate. The total amount of nutrient applied reduced by 6,750 lbs (4,500 lbs P and 2,250 lbs K) and the producer recorded a net savings of \$2,250 (table 1). The agent was able to reduce fertilizer amounts and maintain satisfactory yields. In 2020 alone, the Alachua County Agent educated 36 producers across 5,000 acres of pastureland and obtained similar results across this large area.

# Building Health Literacy and Physical Activity Through StoryWalk®

Annie Sheldon Wallau, CED, FCS EA II, Clay County



MyPlate food group activity



Nutrition visual prompting participants to eat variety of colorful fruits and vegetables

As COVID-19 continues to impact the ability of Extension and community partners such as the public library system to offer in-person programming there is a need to find new and innovative ways to serve our clientele. To meet this need, UF/IFAS Extension Clay County Family Nutrition Program partnered with the Clay County Public Library System to contribute nutrition education content, questions and activities to the StoryWalk® program in Clay County.

StoryWalk® is a fun, family-friendly outdoor activity that helps build children's interest in reading while encouraging healthy physical activity and chronic disease prevention. Pages from a children's picture/story book are posted in kiosks along

a walking path or trail. As you walk and read, discussion questions and activities help little ones build essential early health literacy skills.

For the first book of our partnership, we featured the book "Little Green Donkey" by Anuska Allepuz, a cute story about a donkey who is a picky eater and refuses to try new foods. Probing questions along with nutrition activity pages were created to align with the key educational messages of the story and included information about the importance of consuming a variety of colorful fruits and vegetable and the MyPlate food groups. Additionally, this aligns with FNP's statewide program objectives of increasing fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity.

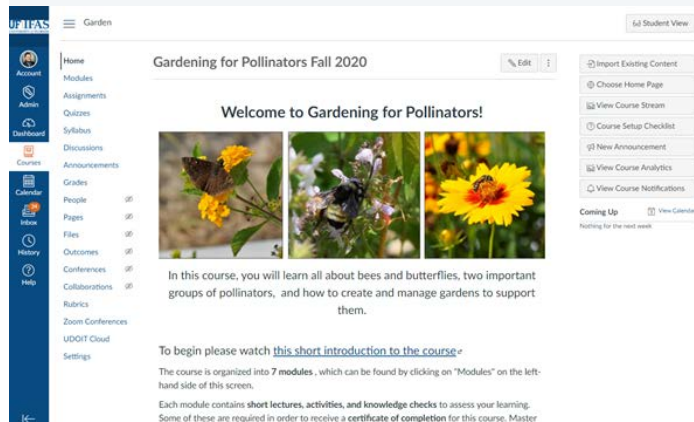
The community of Keystone Heights was selected as the target community for this StoryWalk® due to the prevalence of obesity, poverty, sedentary behaviors and food insecurity. On January 29, the StoryWalk® was installed starting at the Twin Lakes Park Trailhead portion of the Palatka-to-Lake Butler State Trail a 47-mile paved trail. Completion of the StoryWalk® is self-reported by participants through a survey accessible via smartphone (QR code). This will allow for us to account for the total number of minutes participants are physically active while completing the walk along with other valuable feedback.

We are so thankful to be a part of this innovative approach to give families the opportunity to be physically active while enjoying a story as a fun alternative to traditional story time.



# Power to the Pollinators: Expanding Educational Outreach to Aid Native Bees and Butterflies

Wayne Hobbs, Environmental Horticulture EA I,  
Clay County



Native bees and butterflies are a popular topic among gardeners who want to know how we can best protect and attract pollinators in the landscape. However, specialists in this area are not easily accessible by many Florida citizens due to geographic and other barriers. However, as the COVID-19 pandemic put a stop to many Extension activities, online education had a chance to proliferate.

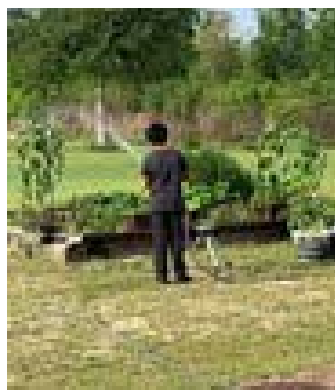
Already in development, the Gardening for Pollinators online course was ready for launch by May 2020. Created by Dr. Rachel Mallinger, Dr. Jaret Daniels, and Wayne Hobbs, the seven-module online program covers native bees, butterflies, and how to support them in the garden. The program proved to be very popular, being attended by 343 individuals over two offerings in 2020. In total, 23 respondents planned to install new pollinator gardens and adopt a total of 366 Florida-Friendly Landscaping practices in their own yards.

One respondent shared: "Great course. Online learning was both effective and efficient. I was able to take what I learned immediately into my garden and put what I learned into practice. As a Florida Master Gardener, I brought considerable prior knowledge into the course but I feel this course took my knowledge to a new level. Presenters did a great job and the evaluation was easy to follow."

The effectiveness and outreach provided by online education will be a valuable tool for agents willing to adopt the technology.

## Why Do We Do What We Do?

Beth Moore, 4-H Youth Development EA II, Madison County



Alex watering the garden at the youth ranch.



Digging potatoes at the youth ranch.

The United Methodist Youth Ranch in Madison County opened its doors 2014. The Ranch is a group home for children with nowhere else to go. These children have usually been abused, neglected, abandoned, and/or have been shuffled from one family member or foster home to another. These children are needing a safe and loving environment to call home for a while. Most of the residents are from urban areas and have never had the opportunity to experience gardening and growing their own food. The Ranch, located on an old farmstead, offers children a rural, country setting in which they can roam, play, and heal from experiences they have faced.

Prior to the pandemic, Madison County 4-H, in partnership with Family Nutrition Program, created a gardening opportunity for the residents of the Madison Youth Ranch. Each resident grew potatoes in their own basket and planted individual grow pots full of carrots, green beans, squash and other veggies. Youth reported that they had never planted any type of vegetables and thought it was "really cool" they had their own little personal garden.

The staff at the Ranch, with the help of the children, planted a large "community" garden as well. Needless to say, the Ranch had a very successful crop and ate vegetables from the garden almost every night! Sugar cane was also planted in the garden; children were able to experience first-hand planting, harvesting and then making old-fashioned cane syrup from the sugar cane right there at the Ranch.

The Ranch director stated that the children were so excited to see their gardens growing and the youth took great pride in their gardens. One young man, Alex, had only been at the Ranch a few weeks when the garden project started. During those first few weeks he was having a difficult time adjusting to his new home, however when the garden project started you could almost see his outlook change for the better. He was excited about the garden and that excitement rubbed off on to the other children. The Ranch director said, "It (the garden) was unbelievably therapeutic for Alex. And it made a huge difference in his transition to the Ranch."

And that is why we do what we do!

## Pen Friends Keep 4-H Youth Connected

*Kristie Popa, 4-H Youth Development EA II, Charlotte County*

4-H agents in Charlotte and Glades counties collaborated to create the 4-H Pen Friends program during the COVID-19 pandemic as a method for youth to communicate with their 4-H peers while gaining communication skills. This program, which began as a multi-county effort, quickly became a multi-state program involving 250 youth from 20 states. Youth participating in the program were provided with a Pen Friend according to their age and the type of delivery (email or USPS mail) they preferred. Prior to youth initiating their letter exchanges, the 4-H Agents created and distributed electronic factsheets covering topics such as bullying, how to address an envelope, correct letter formatting and email & texting etiquette. This effort resulted in a total of 6 agents from 3 states working together to provide programming for these youth. After several months of the youth communicating

with each other through the Pen Friends program, it was established that 57% of the participants learned better communication skills through the program and 53% felt that they have stronger letter-writing skills after participating in the program. In addition, 85% of the youth developed new friendships and improved social skills, 67% felt a sense of belonging through the program and 89% would participate in the program again. One parent stated, "I feel like the Pen Friend program helps my daughter get more personalized conversations that have been lost to this generation with cell phones and texting. She's really enjoyed it." Since concluding this program, the agents have received requests from multiple states asking for assistance with beginning their own Pen Friends program and have had 29 youth sign up for a second round of the Pen Friends program.

## Comings & Goings

We would like to welcome the following newly hired and transferring faculty. These individuals were hired following a highly competitive search, screening and selection process. In some cases, candidates interviewed both on the UF campus in Gainesville and in a county Extension office. Selection was often difficult because we typically have two or three suitable candidates. These faculty are truly the best of the best!

### New Hires

Erin Elsberry, 4-H Youth Development EA II,  
Manatee County

### Transfers

Grantly Ricketts, Commercial Horticulture CED I, St.  
Lucie County

*We would like to wish the following agents the best of luck in their future endeavors.*

### Departures

Jena Gilmore, 4-H Youth Development EA I,  
Walton County

Alisha Hutchinson, 4-H Youth Development EA I,  
Flagler County

### Retirements

Juanita Popenoe, Fruit Crops EA IV, Lake County