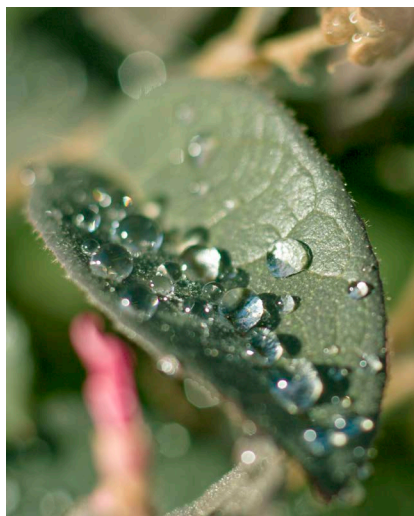


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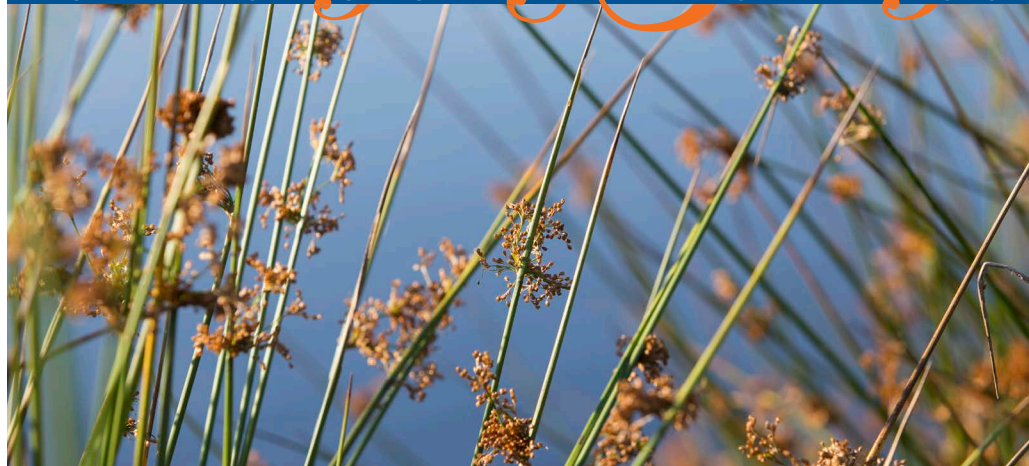
UF/IFAS Extension *Comings and Goings* is a monthly newsletter distributed by the Office of the Dean for Extension via e-mail and on the UF/IFAS Extension web site at <http://extadmin.ifas.ufl.edu>.

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

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

UF/IFAS Extension *Comings & Goings*

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN FOR EXTENSION



EASY FOOD PRODUCTION FOR THE NOVICE

Mark Bailey, Sustainable Ag & Food Systems EA I, Marion County



Multiple carrot varieties showcase a range of shapes and colors.

There are a lot of crops that can be grown in north central Florida, though only a small number can produce a reliable crop with a minimal amount of effort. The region is slightly too far south to have consistent chill hours, yet it's a little too far north to be outside the reach of crop-destroying freezing temperatures. The challenge is to select plants that can handle extremes in weather throughout the year and still dependably produce a crop. With that in mind, UF/IFAS Extension Marion County offers classes that detail the steps necessary to produce substantial quantities of food. The target

audience is anyone interested in growing their own food whether they have small spaces such as a back yard, or minimal resources on a small farm.

One of the first key topics covered in this class is essential plant needs. Each is approached as a variable that can be controlled or mitigated by the person trying to produce a crop. For example, variables like water can be managed

with irrigation, or by simply selecting plants that are highly drought-resistant. Other variables include soil drainage and aeration, access to sunlight, temperature, nutrients, soil pH and soil health.

Once the variables are discussed in detail, the right plant can then be selected for the environment it's best adapted for. It's always easier to choose a plant that is well-adjusted to an environment than adjust the environment to the plant. The planting stage is the point where success or failure often occurs, and participants

are provided with information on how to correctly plant each easy-to-grow crop.

Choosing the specific crop and variety can be a challenge for the inexperienced gardener or small farmer. Each crop is provided a profile, including specific varieties, containing all of the essential information needed for success. The class is provided with a list of vegetable and fruit crops that are highly adapted to the region. Some of the recommended vegetables include beans, several types of greens, carrots, and especially

sweet potatoes. Recommended fruit crops include loquats—which are not to be confused with kumquats—mulberry, figs and muscadine grapes.

Program evaluations indicated all participants gained knowledge and 71% specifically stated aspects of the program they would implement. This program helps residents to realize that anyone, regardless of their initial knowledge or resources, can produce their own food successfully.

EXPLORING LOCAL CUISINE FROM THE ROOTS UP

Mia Wilchcombe, FCS EA I, Lake County



FEAFCS Innovation in Programming Award Recipients and FEAFCIS Excellence in Teamwork Recipients (missing Brooke Moffis)

The majority of U.S. citizens are removed from direct involvement with agriculture and may hold misconceptions about modern farming practices. This distance, and lack of understanding, can contribute to decreased trust in, and poor public perception of, modern agriculture (Duncan and Broyles, 2006).

Compounding this mistrust is the abundance of sensational or misleading media coverage, the ease with which anyone can publish false information online, and the viral nature of social media. These issues present a major challenge to Extension agents who are charged with sharing research-based, non-biased information.

Another challenge faced by Extension relates to the rise of diet-related health problems. Despite access to a safe and abundant food system, the modern U.S. diet often fails to meet the nutritional needs of modern

challenges illustrate a clear need for educational programs that provide an opportunity for participants to feel more connected to local food systems, that clear up misconceptions about agriculture, and that encourage the increased consumption of nutritious and locally available fruits, vegetables, meat, milk and eggs.

Beginning in 2017, UF/IFAS Extension Lake County Agriculture and FCS agents have collaborated to pilot a food systems program called “Exploring Local Cuisine from the Roots Up.” This program was designed to meet the challenges described above head-on and allowed agents an opportunity to recognize synergy in their shared effort.

Each session of “Roots Up” features a different locally-grown agricultural product ranging from eggs and beef to greens and citrus. Products are selected based on season and amount

Americans. Overconsumption of foods with a suboptimal nutrition profile, and under-consumption of nutritious foods, can contribute to the etiology of several leading causes of mortality and morbidity, including obesity, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, cancer, and osteoporosis (CDC, 2017). These

of local production. In each session, Lake County agriculture agents Megan Mann, Juanita Popenoe and Brooke Moffis discuss the production of the featured livestock or crop from start to finish, with a focus on addressing common misconceptions and providing a scientific context to what consumers may have heard in the media. Agents also discuss common marketing labels and help participants to understand what different marketing terms really mean.

The second half of class transitions from farm to table by shifting the focus to consumption. Lake County FCS agent Mia Wilchcombe provides an overview of the featured product’s nutrition and health benefits, recommended serving sizes and culinary uses. The latter half of the class also includes a discussion on food safety including proper preparation and storage. Classes conclude with an opportunity for participants to sample dishes prepared by the agents, and participants leave with recipes that they can try at home. Participants are also encouraged to try their hand at growing some of the featured fruits and vegetables at home and some classes send participants home with planting material and instructions to help them get started.

Since its inception in 2017, a total of 18 “Roots Up” classes have been taught to 515 participants. Participants have reported increasing their consumption of the featured foods and have developed a better understanding of both marketing and nutritional labels. Encouragingly, participants have also

reported sharing some of the “myth-busting” information they learned through “Roots Up” with others in the community.

The “Roots Up” program was shared with Extension colleagues at the Extension Professionals Association of Florida conference in 2017 and at the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences conference in 2018. Mia Wilchcombe has been working with FCS colleagues from around the country to help them adapt the “Roots Up” program to

meet their local needs. Food systems programs like “Roots Up” represent a unique approach to addressing some of the complex challenges faced by Extension. By familiarizing consumers with their local food systems, helping consumers learn to eat healthier diets, and answering consumer concerns with non-biased facts, Extension agents can contribute to improved health outcomes of local citizens while supporting the agricultural communities they serve.

References

Duncan, D. W., & Broyles, T. W. (2006). A comparison of student knowledge and perceptions toward agriculture before and after attending a governor’s school for agriculture. *NACTA Journal*, 50(1), 16–21.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2017). *Only 1 in 10 Adults Get Enough Fruits and Vegetables*. <https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/division-information/media-tools/adults-fruits-vegetables.html>

CELEBRATING A TROPICANA FIRST!

Marie Arick, FCS/4-H CED I, Liberty County



Delmy Pineda, Liberty County Tropicana Contestants

UF/IFAS Extension Liberty County’s 4-H/ Tropicana Public Speaking Contest this year included a special guest speaker with a uniquely delivered speech. Ms. Delmy Pineda, a sixth-grader at W.R. Tolar School, is living with cerebral palsy. Delmy shared with her therapist, Kara Bradley, her desire to participate in the Tropicana speaking contest. Delmy knew this was her last chance to participate being a sixth-

grader, so together they set out to make this happen. Why is this so different? Because Delmy’s primary vehicle of communication is via a speech-assist device—a computer-generated voice provided through a computer program. This is a first for any competitor.

Delmy wrote her speech, “Who Runs the World?”, presented it and won in her class! Although she did not win in her school competition, Delmy embraced the opportunity and really championed the spirit of the competition. With that in mind, the school administration asked if she could present at the county competition as an honorary speaker. Delmy presented her speech utilizing her speech-assist device, receiving a standing ovation. Who runs the world? At that moment, Delmy was running the world!

4-H SPRING BREAK STITCH PERFECT SEWING CAMP

Baylee Sweat, 4-H Program Assistant, Walton County



Walton County 4-H'er working hard on her new purse.

This year, Walton County 4-H had “sew” much fun at their Spring Break Stitch Perfect Sewing Camp! Eighteen youth participated in a three-day sewing camp March 18th-20th at the UF/IFAS Extension Walton County office. The camp is a partnership with the local quilters guild for youth interested in learning how to sew, quilt, hand stitch, knit, cross-stitch or just learn some neat new no-sew projects with 4-H.

On the first day of camp, the youth were introduced to the origin of yarn with FCS Agent Jill Breslawski. Each child then used yarn to create a fiber art home décor piece. A teen council member led the next rotation on embroidery. The Chautauqua Quilters Guild provided instruction for the sewing and quilting projects.

On day two, the youth were able to make colorful friendship bracelets, and this activity was led by a teen council member. 4-H Program Assistant Baylee Sweat taught the art of fabric weaving through a DIY T-shirt rug.

On the final day of camp, Marine Science Agent Laura Tiu educated the youth on marine debris. Each child was able to make reusable beeswax wrap. Agriculture Agent Evan Anderson taught the youth about invasive species and ecology through a learning activity called Lakeville.

4-H Spring Break Sewing Camp, continued



FCS Agent Jill Breslawski working one on one with Fallon Ray.



Walton County Chautauqua Quilters, Stitch Perfect Participants, and Walton County Teen Council Members

Every year the Chautauqua Quilters Guild comes in and teaches our youth an amazing life skill...SEWING... which is a skill many adults (including Ms. Baylee and Ms. Jena) lack nowadays. Some of the projects included tablet holders, cell phone stands, purses, baskets, sewing kit holders, and needle cushions.

This sewing camp is a great way for youth to learn about the history of this fine art and the agricultural products that make it possible.

MASTER OF GARDENS: AN INTENSIVE INTERNATIONAL COURSE FOR LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONALS IN COSTA RICA

Daniel Leonard, Horticulture/Master Gardener Coordinator EA I, Walton County



Alex Bolques teaching principles of soil sampling.



Horticulture Agent Henry Mayer pointing out incorrect pruning and branching structure.



Javier Salazar, Landscape Superintendent at Reserva Conchal, demonstrating water infiltration rates of soils.

This January and February, seven UF/IFAS Extension faculty with diverse fields of horticultural expertise (Andrea Albertin, Alex Bolques, Adrian Hunsberger, Daniel Leonard, Henry Mayer, Julie McConnell, and Dr. Bryan Unruh) travelled to Costa Rica to deliver a four-week intensive horticulture training program, titled Master of Gardens.

Master of Gardens is a partnership formed between EARTH University in Costa Rica, UF/IFAS Extension and the Reserva Conchal Beach Resort, Golf, and Spa to share Extension's extensive experience regarding innovative horticulture practices with the local landscape and golf course

professionals charged with maintaining the delicate balance between local ecology and tourism interests. Reserva Conchal, an extremely employee-oriented and environmentally conscious organization, is located in the Guanacaste Province on Costa Rica's beautiful northern Pacific coastline. This area is home to both intensely managed private resorts serving the vital tourism industry, and extremely unique, fragile native ecosystems requiring the use of sustainable agricultural and horticultural practices for preservation.

The program, comprised of both classroom and hands-on field components, was delivered to 45

primarily Spanish-speaking landscape professionals. The training program was divided into two sections; the first section met Monday and Tuesday each week and was comprised of 22 landscape and golf course crew members. The second section met on Thursday and Friday each week and was comprised of 23 resort grounds supervisors, independent subcontractors, and local landscape architects. Class session topics included soil and fertilizer science, botany, right plant/right place, entomology and integrated pest management (IPM), landscape pruning, irrigation principles and turfgrass management.

UF/IFAS Extension Dean Nick Place, Northwest District Extension Director Pete Vergot, and Dr. BK Singh of EARTH University came down for the graduation ceremony, celebrated by all the class attendees and many other Reserva Conchal administrators

and employees. Due to the success of the 2019 program and the positive ongoing collaboration between UF/IFAS Extension, EARTH University, and Reserva Conchal, the Master of Gardens training program team is planning to offer subsequent editions of the program in the future and hopes to expand to include other area resort grounds crews.

Carol Alberts, CRD EA I, St. Lucie County
Ken Gioeli, NR EA IV, St. Lucie County



UF/IFAS Extension St. Lucie County is pleased to announce the success of our new Advisory Ambassadors program. Extension agents Carol Alberts, Kate Rotindo, Ken Gioeli and Ed Skvarch developed this program to reinvigorate our advisory council through a planned methodology designed to teach members how they can actively advocate for UF/IFAS Extension and increase their community engagement on our behalf.

With the input of IFAS Communications, a toolkit was developed that included promotional brochures and UF/IFAS logo products that were used to promote the UF/IFAS

Extension brand. Agents created a “What is Extension?” presentation for advisory council members to present at other organizations to which they belonged to spread word about Extension and its offerings. A video about Extension created by IFAS Administration was pre-loaded onto a logo-branded flash drive along with the presentation. The flash-drive was included in the toolkit. We also created a schedule of annual timely events that advisory ambassadors could use to promote activities such as the annual 4-H fair or Master Gardener plant sale. Finally, staff created a points system that guided advisory ambassadors through the process. UF/IFAS Extension St. Lucie County will recognize those advisory ambassadors who achieve “Outstanding Advisory Ambassador” status.

A needs assessment for the advisory council members was created, which essentially asked them what tools and training were needed to advocate in the community on behalf of Extension. The assessment was distributed electronically to each council member, with an encouraging message from the council president. We wanted to know if members clearly understood their role as an advisory council member and if they felt they had the tools to accomplish this directive. We also wanted to know if there were any constraints or concerns regarding their perceived role on the council. Twenty-two of the 28 council members completed the survey and overwhelmingly indicated they were happy and proud to support Extension and were mostly confident in their advisory roles, but lacked the knowledge about tools available to them.

The Advisory Ambassadors toolkit and presentations were delivered at the first advisory meeting of 2019, and the response was overwhelmingly positive. Three council members have written letters-to-the-editor in support of Extension's efforts, and one is presenting a talk to the local Rotary Club about Extension. Creating and expanding the awareness of Extension's presence in the community is key to moving recognition of Extension to the level needed, and we are encouraged by these early adopters who are setting the example for their fellow council members.

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!

HIRES

- Amir Razazadeh, Fruit/Field Crops EA II, St. Lucie and Indian River Counties
- Katelyn Mulinix, 4-H EA I, Desoto County
- Joy Hazell, Facilitation/Deliberative Engagement SSA III, Statewide
- Pamela Bradford, EFNEP Program EA II, Hillsborough County
- Jane Cant, Ag/Small Farms EA I, Duval County
- Luara Bertelli Canal, Agriculture EA I, Bradford County
- Rachel Biderman, EFNEP Program EA I, Miami-Dade County

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

RETIREMENT

- Judy Biss, Ag/Natural Resources/Community Development & Sustainability CED III, Calhoun County