There are times, when something really cool happens, that I sit back and think about how lucky I am to work for Extension. Most recently, in a 4-H Day Camp, a mom told us how her child looked forward to coming each day that week to complete the project. This is during summer, when most kids would prefer to be sleeping in or swimming!!

To remind myself how lucky I am to work for Extension, I find little reminders. Like when someone calls to donate money for the 4-H banquet, donate canning jars for canning classes or donate cotton fabric for our sewing camp to help reduce the cost for others to attend. Sometimes what reminds me is when, without provocation, a kind word is shared or note is sent by a participant to let us know how much they enjoyed the class, how much they needed the class and how they used the class information.

People have stopped me in grocery stores to tell me they were finally able to buy a house. A builder won an award after utilizing the principles explained in class. People have written wills, start canning, developed emergency preparedness plans, and used a thermometer to ensure safe meat in a restaurant. Think about this: I am only ONE of the Extension Agents working in Suwannee County!

People have stopped me in grocery stores to tell me they were finally able to buy a house. A builder won an award after utilizing the principles explained in class. People have written wills, start canning, developed emergency preparedness plans, and used a thermometer to ensure safe meat in a restaurant. Think about this: I am only ONE of the Extension Agents working in Suwannee County!

I have met AMAZING volunteers who selflessly donate time to help a child, beautify places, share knowledge and sometimes just listen! I am lucky enough to have met impressive professional colleagues who do exciting (ok, sometimes boring but necessary!) work and have become lifelong friends through the process.

Recently, we received news that we were selected to start another Weight Loss research project for adults with Dr. Michael Perri. This has been a wonderful experience getting to know and help people become healthier. If you might be interested in starting in late January 2016, please call 1-877-273-5235. We will also be looking to have some volunteer taste testers for a lettuce research project in August this year. Call the office if you might be interested 386-362-2771.

If you haven't signed up for a newsletter, a class, or to volunteer—WHY? You might be missing out on something fabulous!
### Extension Calendar

#### July 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-23</td>
<td><strong>4-H Bovine Buzzer Battle Day Camp</strong> (Please call the Extension Office for more information and availability.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td><strong>Master Gardener Volunteer Training</strong> (Class #1), 8:30am-4pm at Extension Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-31</td>
<td><strong>4-H University</strong>, Gainesville.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td><strong>Master Gardener Volunteer Training</strong>, (Class #2), 8:30am-4pm at Extension Office.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**FREE NEWSLETTER SIGN UP**

UF/IFAS Extension in Suwannee County publishes *The Center Pivot* for free each quarter. You can receive an email reminder for a link that takes you directly to the website. The electronic format reduces our costs (i.e. Your tax dollars.)

I would like to receive *The Center Pivot* by e-mail:

Name __________________________________________

E-Mail __________________________________________

Phone __________________________________________

Clip and return this slip to our office at: 1302 11th St. SW, Live Oak, FL 32064. Send an email to peburke@ufl.edu requesting to be added or call 386-362-2771.
## August 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>4-H Energy Day Camp, 9-3, $30, (Please call the Extension Office for more information and availability.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>Suwannee Young Riders 4-H Club Pony Day Camp, 9am-4pm at Coliseum Arena. Cost is $50 for current 4-H members and $52 for non-4-H members. For more information or availability please contact the 4-H Office at (386) 362-2771.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Master Gardener Volunteer Training (Class #3), 8:30am-4pm at Extension Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Master Gardener Seed Library, 1-3pm at Live Oak Library.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4-H County Council, 3pm at Coliseum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Suwannee County 4-H Awards Banquet, 6pm at Coliseum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4-H State Dairy Quiz Bowl, Gainesville.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Master Gardener Volunteer Training (Class #4), 8:30am-4pm at Extension Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Master Gardener Seed Library, 1-3pm at Live Oak Library.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Master Gardener Potluck Luncheon &amp; Alumni Meeting, 11:30am-4pm at Extension Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14, 21 &amp; 28</td>
<td>Annie’s Project-Business Management for Ag Women, 9am-3:30pm, $50 includes lunch and all materials. Class size is limited at Extension Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Overall Extension Advisory Committee, 12-2pm at Extension Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Master Gardener Volunteer Training (Class #5), 8:30am-4pm at Extension Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Master Gardener Seed Library, 1-3pm at Live Oak Library.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Master Gardener Volunteer Training (Class #6), 8:30am-4pm at Extension Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Home and Community Educator Volunteers’ Council Meeting, 10am at Extension Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Master Gardener Seed Library, 1-3pm at Live Oak Library.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Home and Community Educators (HCE) News by Pat Mathews.**

Here we are another year has come and gone. After an nice break we will resume our HCE meetings on August 26, 2015 at the Extension Office. Then we will meet every first Wednesday of each month for council then individual clubs meet on scheduled days. Come out and see what we are all about. Our goal is to help in the community and to teach. We want to make a difference and many hands make light work. We need fresh faces and new ideas on how to help in the community.

If you have a passion to make a change, come share with us and maybe together we can make a difference. You can belong to many social clubs, but to be a member of a club that contributes to the community is what we are all about. See you at our next meeting.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Master Gardener Seed Library</td>
<td>1-3pm</td>
<td>Live Oak Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Florida Native Plant Society</td>
<td>6:30pm</td>
<td>Hatch Park in Branford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Master Gardener Volunteer Training (Class #7)</td>
<td>8:30am-4pm</td>
<td>Extension Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Master Gardener Seed Library</td>
<td>1-3pm</td>
<td>Live Oak Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Happy Homemakers’ HCE Club Meeting</td>
<td>10am</td>
<td>Extension Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Master Gardener Workday, Brown Bag Lunch &amp; Alumni Meeting</td>
<td>8:30am-4pm</td>
<td>Heritage Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>4-H County Council</td>
<td>6:30pm</td>
<td>Extension Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Take Charge of Your Diabetes (TCYD)</td>
<td>Monday’s 9-11am</td>
<td>Register by September 7, 2015. See below for more information or call Cathy Rogers 386-362-2771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Protect Yourself Against Fraud and Identity Theft</td>
<td>7:30pm</td>
<td>McAlpin Community Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Master Gardener Volunteer Training (Class #8)</td>
<td>8:30am-4pm</td>
<td>Extension Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Master Gardener Seed Library</td>
<td>1-3pm</td>
<td>Live Oak Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Family and Consumer Sciences Advisory Committee</td>
<td>12-2pm</td>
<td>Extension Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>4-H Leader Meeting</td>
<td>6pm</td>
<td>Extension Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Master Gardener Volunteer Training (Class #9)</td>
<td>8:30am-4pm</td>
<td>Extension Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Master Gardener Seed Library</td>
<td>1-3pm</td>
<td>Live Oak Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Home and Community Educators Volunteers’ Yard Sale</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>Extension Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>National Restaurant Association’s ServSafe course</td>
<td>8:30am</td>
<td>Extension Office. Certification is good for 5 yrs. Class, exam &amp; book $165. Must register 3 business days prior to class, no walk-ins. Bring lunch and photo ID. Call toll-free 1-888-232-8723 or via web <a href="http://foodsafety.ifas.ufl.edu">http://foodsafety.ifas.ufl.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Master Gardener Volunteer Training (Class #10)</td>
<td>8:30am-4pm</td>
<td>Extension Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Master Gardener Seed Library</td>
<td>1-3pm</td>
<td>Live Oak Library</td>
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</tbody>
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**Take Charge of Your Diabetes**

Take Charge of Your Diabetes (TCYD) is an educational program for persons with type 2 diabetes. There is a $75.00 fee per person with diabetes, which includes, five 2-hour educational sessions, and an individual nutrition consultation with a registered dietitian.

Spouses are encouraged to attend all sessions at no extra cost.

….because you can live a quality life with fewer complications when you know and live the facts.

**Classes to begin September 14th and will be held on Monday’s 9-11am. Pre-registration required by September 7th call Cathy Rogers at (386) 362-2771**
Summer to me means picnics, fishing and lazy days near the water. But summertime can also be hazardous if you don’t pay attention to how food is being chosen, transported, cooked or stored.

If you are buying fish and shrimp, they should smell like seaweed or the ocean, but NOT ammonia-like. All of the fish and shrimp should be refrigerated or frozen or on ice. Fish should have clear, bulging eyes; red, moist gills; and the flesh should bounce back after being pressed (should not leave a fingerprint). Shrimp flesh should be translucent and shiny. Live shellfish should have a label or a shellstock identification tag. These tags mean the shellfish, such as oysters, mussels and clams, were harvested and processed in accordance with national safety controls. The shells should not be open or should close up when the shell is tapped. If they don’t close, don’t buy them. Live crabs and lobsters should show leg movement. Crustaceans spoil rapidly after death, so only live crabs and lobsters should be selected and prepared.

If you are purchasing frozen seafood, look for ice crystals. Ice crystals are an indication that a product has been thawed and re-frozen. In addition to being a potential food safety issue, ice crystals damage the cell structure of the food and can make it mushy and unappetizing. Avoid packages that sit above the “frost line” in the frozen case at the supermarket.

For any packaged items, check to make sure the package has not been damaged, crushed or torn. Also, check the expiration date or use-by date to make sure you have enough time to use the item.

Once you purchase the seafood, make sure to get it on ice or placed under refrigeration or freezer as soon as possible. If you don’t plan on using the seafood within two days, wrap the item tightly in plastic, foil or freezer paper and freeze.

There are four safe ways to thaw food. Under refrigeration is the best, but you may not have the time necessary, so you can also thaw under cold, running water. The third safe way to thaw is in a microwave and the fourth safe way, if it is a smaller item, is to thaw as part of the cooking process (this is what we do many times with frozen, pre-processed food items).

When handling, start and finish with washed hands. Cutting boards, dishes, utensils and countertops need to be cleaned as well as sanitized. To make your own solution, use one tablespoon of plain, unscented, liquid chlorine bleach to one gallon of water.

Cooking seafood is easy! Most will need to be heated to an internal cooking temperature of 145°F. Make sure that fish flesh is flaky and opaque. Shrimp and lobster should be white and opaque. Scallops should turn opaque and the flesh should be firm. All of the bi-valves (ie. clams, mussels, oysters, etc.) should open during cooking. If they don’t, throw them out.

If seafood sits out of refrigeration for more than two hours, throw the food out. Always transport in a cooler with ice or ice packs. If the cooler is outside, keep it in the shade. Keep cold seafood on ice or serve throughout the party or meal from platters kept in the refrigerator.

Seafood includes essential nutrients for brain health and is a part of a healthful diet. Keeping seafood safe reduces the risk of food poisoning, so everyone will be able to eat more seafood!

Note: Drawings included in this article were crafted by some of the kids at our recent Seafood Day Camp at the Extension office.
You Make the Choice!

Cathy Rogers
Family and Consumer Sciences & 4-H and Youth Development Agent

Each of us wants to be able to make our own choices in life, whether the decisions are about food, clothing, money or friends. Sometimes we have all the facts we need to make those choices and sometimes we don’t. If we have the information, it is up to us to choose wisely. If we don’t choose wisely it may be out of habit (practice makes perfect!) or simply not equating good health with the kind of food we put into our bodies. Sometimes we choose to “splurge”, and that’s okay if it isn’t too often.

If we lack facts, we don’t have the chance to choose wisely. That is one reason for sharing the examples below.

For each of the following product pairs or groupings, the amount of fat is equal.

Which would you rather have?

- One ounce of **potato chips** = ten ounces of **pretzels** (10 grams of fat)
- One **corn chip** = forty **baby carrots** (1 gram of fat)
- One nut, caramel, and nougat **candy bar** = 28 red **licorice twists** (14 grams of fat)
- Two **nacho chips** = almost three cups of air-popped **popcorn** (less than one gram of fat)
- Two fast food **French fries** = two whole **baked potatoes** with chives (.5 grams of fat)
- One chocolate **donut** = 133 oranges (21 grams of fat)
- One half teaspoon real cream = two coffee half & half **creamers** = about one third cup **whole milk** = about one cup **1% milk** = **one gallon non-fat milk** (2.73 grams of fat)
- One eighth of a **bagel** with one half teaspoon **cream cheese** = one whole **bagel** with **fruit preserves** (1 gram of fat)

If you can’t picture the differences here, come by office to see the poster produced by Learning Zone Express that depicts these examples. It is pretty convincing! ….
Lactose is the primary sugar found in milk (human breast milk, cow’s milk, goat’s milk, any mammal’s milk). It is a disaccharide - composed of two simple 6-carbon sugars (glucose and galactose) which are combined by a glycoside bond. This means when the two simple sugars were banded together, a water (H₂O) molecule was formed and an oxygen molecule seemingly connects the sugars. (See diagram)

Lactose, along with casein (milk protein), whey, milk fat and other components of milk are all either synthesized (chemically formed) in the milk secreting (mammary) tissue of mammals, or snatched directly from the bloodstream (like minerals calcium, phosphorus and potassium) and added to the milk being created and ultimately secreted for consumption.

In the small intestines, an enzyme (protein designed to speed up a reaction), lactase, is present in almost all babies which is capable of breaking the bond between the glucose and galactose molecules. Glucose is the primary sugar used for energy in the human body. Galactose requires minor chemical reconfiguration to become glucose also. So these simple sugars are absorbed by the intestinal wall and utilized by the body for energy.

But, what happens if lactase is not present in the intestines to break down lactose? Generally, lactose is not absorbed through the wall of the small intestines, so it continues to pass to the large intestines. There hungry microbes feast on the lactose, fermenting it which gives off gases and causes major abdominal discomfort, cramps, bloating, diarrhea and nausea – the symptoms generally called lactose intolerance.

There are three reasons why someone might be lactose intolerant:

- The most common reason is called primary lactase deficiency. Beginning about age 2, lactase production decreases which persists into adulthood. Some people inherit this.
- An infection, potentially chemo or radiation therapy, or disease (such as celiac disease) which destroys the lining of the small intestine resulting in diminished or no lactase production.
- In very rare cases, congenital lactase deficiency occurs when no lactase is produced by the small intestines from birth.

If you are lactose intolerant and simply avoid all dairy products, you are also avoiding a major source of essential nutrients, including: Protein, Calcium, Potassium, Zinc, Magnesium, Vitamin B₁₂, Riboflavin, Vitamin A and Vitamin D (in fortified milk).

Registered dietician, Cheryl Mussatto states, “Including dairy foods in your diet leads to better health outcomes of adequate nutrient intake and diet quality, better weight management and reduced risk of osteoporosis, hypertension, colon cancer, metabolic syndrome and diabetes.”
Using Social Media for 4-H

Brian Estevez - 4-H and Youth Development Agent

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest can all seem like overwhelming terms, especially when 4-H leaders wonder if they have time for one more thing. In actuality, using social media tools can provide an easy way to keep leaders, youth and parents connected on what is happening in the club and to help plan upcoming activities.

In the Pew Research Center, Social Media Update 2014 it was found that 71 percent of online adults are utilizing Facebook, making this a great place for volunteer programs to start. This is a free website that these programs can use to establish a social media presence. On Facebook, this can be done through the creation of a page, group or even an event page to promote a specific activity your organization may be hosting. Developing a presence on social media will help your organization reach out to a new audience or further engage those already involved. The average Facebook user is connected to over 80 pages, groups and events.

If your organization is just starting to use social media as one of its marketing tools, make it simple with these three tips.

- Establish a routine. First, approach social media like your email account. If you spent all day just answering emails, you probably wouldn’t get much actual work done! The same is true for social media. It’s easy for social media to consume huge amounts of time if you let it. If you set a small amount of time during the day to update content on your social networking site and then respond to followers at set times throughout the day, you won’t be feeling like you spend all day on your social media site.

- Share posts from others on to your page. In 4-H, one can share the post from another county program or state event page. This can save time of writing the content.

- Schedule your posts. Know what is coming up in your organization, create posts around those topics and schedule them show up in your newsfeed at specific times.

Many of our 4-H clubs have Facebook pages already. You can use the search function on Facebook to see if your club has an account. Suwannee County 4-H has a Facebook page where we deliver news, celebrate our 4-H members, and have a lot of fun. If you are on Facebook, make sure that you check out our page at facebook.com/groups/Suwannee4H, to become a member to keep up with all of the latest happening in Suwannee County 4-H. If you want to find out more information on the Family and Consumer Sciences program, check out their page at www.facebook.com/extensionsuwanneefcs.

Excerpts used with permission from “Using social media in your volunteer program” by Christine Heverly, Michigan State University
In 2005, Scott and Billie Rooney bought the first 53 acres of their now 80-acre farm in Suwannee County, east of Live Oak. Ten years later, the Rooney farm is divided into six acres of four varieties of “Rabbiteye” U-pick blueberries, a quarter of an acre of one variety of U-pick blackberries, 25 acres of fenced-in, pasture land for their sheep and a few cattle, and five acres of long leaf pine trees which are beneficial to the natural habitat. The Rooney's have partnered with the agricultural portion of the IFAS/Extension team in Suwannee County to gain assistance in implementing the most up-to-date, cost efficient and ecologically sound methods of farming.

From the beginning, the Rooney's have found ways to be the most environmentally friendly farm they can be. They started by planting their first cover crop of Bahia grass two years before they even began to plant their blueberries. The Rooney's chose native southeastern “Rabbiteye” blueberries which are more suitable to the local growing conditions. Upon planting, the Rooney's made the decision to use a rather uncommon cultivation method. Rather than using pine bark, they chose to plant their blueberries in beds covered by a weed cloth. Using weed cloths helps to better control weeds, reduces labor costs as well as reduces need for chemical applications. They also decided to use a drip irrigation method under the plant bedding rather than having an aerial form of irrigation. The decision to use beds with drip irrigation was extremely beneficial to the Rooney's, both from a cost standpoint as well as a water conservation standpoint. It also has proven to be very instrumental in limiting their fertilization.

Over the past two years the Rooney's have been assisted by the National Resource Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the United States Department of Agriculture Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program. They have used these two programs to help implement and monitor plant protection by attracting native pollinators, planting beneficial cover crops, and even installing “trap crops.” The “trap crops,” which include triticale, sunflowers and buckwheat are expected to become very important to the Rooney's pest management strategy. Triticale is predicted to have a very positive impact for the longer term vitality of the Rooney's plants because blueberries and blackberries are prone to early season damage.

When discussing how they see their Front Porch Farm fitting into agriculture in the Suwannee Valley area, the Rooney's talked about the pleasure they gain from seeing non-farm families having the opportunity to come and enjoy the “farm experience” and noted they especially treasure seeing families, with children, have the opportunity to pick their own healthy, locally grown produce. The Rooney's hope to continue to have the opportunity to positively impact the community and give folks some familiarity with agriculture and a unique experience that is “down on the farm”. You can find the Rooney's and their Front Porch Farm on the web at http://www.rooneyfarm.com.

This article highlights the remarkable work of local farmers practicing sustainable and environmental best management practices. These stories are brought to you from the partnership of the Suwannee River Water Management District (District), the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/ IFAS) the Suwannee River Partnership and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Office of Agriculture Water Policy. For information about this story contact Bob Hochmuth, Regional Specialized Extension Agent- Vegetables, Center Director Suwannee Valley Agricultural Extension Center at 386-362-1725 x103 or bobhoch@ufl.edu.
Woohoo, it’s time for summer activities. For some people it may mean out of town vacations, swimming in the river or springs and even “staycations” to get caught up around the house and yard. Summer is also an active time for wildlife, so here are some tips to keep in mind:

1. When traveling with your dog, be sure that you don’t leave them in the hot car with the windows rolled up. Plan ahead and make sure your pal is welcome at the hotels and the places you plan to visit. Bring along a water dish and plenty of fresh, cool water. Avoid giving your dog ice cold water as it may cause diarrhea in some animals which would not be a good thing in the car.

2. Springs provide a nice place to swim and cool off when the temperatures outside are unbearable. There are many snakes who also like to hang out at the local swimming hole. Keep in mind that not all of them are poisonous water moccasins (cottonmouths). There are several nonpoisonous snakes that help keep the rodent populations in check. These include brown water snakes, redbelly water snakes, banded water snakes and Eastern mud snakes. So just because you see a snake near the water, it may not be a poisonous one. Cottonmouths can easily be distinguished from water snakes. If the head is viewed from above, the eyes of cottonmouths cannot be seen while the eyes of water snakes are visible; cottonmouths have elliptical pupils and water snakes have round pupils; cottonmouths have a facial pit between the nostril and the eye, and water snakes have none. If you are unsure, give the snake its space and leave it be.

3. Our Florida state reptile, the alligator, is also busy in the summer raising their young and digging gator holes. Alligators provide this ecosystem service to fish and wading birds by digging deep holes in water bodies to hold water. Shallow ponds may dry up during the spring so these deep holes provide a water source for many other animals. Most alligators don’t want to deal with us anymore than we want to deal with them so give them their space. Aggressiveness from alligators happens when people encroach on alligator nests and baby gators are threatened, or if they have been fed by people and have lost their fear of humans. It is illegal to feed alligators so avoid providing them with free meals.

4. For those of you who are catching up on chores around the house, keep in mind that spiders are busy spinning webs and catching the numerous insects that abound in the summer. In the last 3 days, I have almost walked through at least seven webs just working around my yard. In Florida, only two main types of venomous spiders occur: widow spiders and recluse spiders.

Three species of widow spiders are native to Florida, and a fourth species has been introduced. No species of recluse spiders are native to Florida, but three species have been intercepted and occasionally have established populations in single buildings at scattered locations. Both types of spiders tend to be found in similar places, which is in or under objects where their presence is not necessarily obvious. It is recommended that people engaged in activities where they cannot see where their hands are being placed (such as lifting boards or firewood, or reaching into storage boxes) should wear gloves to prevent being bitten. Also, stored clothing should be checked before wearing, as a spider may have taken up residence within it. In nature, most species are found under rocks and logs, but they readily adapt to human-altered environments where they are most commonly found in outbuildings (sheds, barns, privies), water meter holes, nursery cans, and under any item or structure (e.g., barbeque grill, slide, sand box) that has been undisturbed for a lengthy period.

Widow spiders are generally very timid and only bite in self-defense when they accidentally contact humans. There are four species found in Florida; the southern black widow, northern black widow, red widow and brown widow.

The recluse spiders are also known as violin or fiddle back spiders because many species have a characteristic darkened violin-shaped pattern that occurs on the front half of the head region. Recluse spiders usually bite only when they become trapped next to the victim's skin. Bites occur either when sleeping humans roll onto the spider or put on clothes into which the spider has crawled. Keep an eye out for the brown recluse, Mediterranean recluse or Chilean recluse spiders that may have invaded themselves into your home.

Most of us have many happy summertime memories and with a little common sense and awareness, we can have another safe, fun summer. For more in-depth information, here are the resources I used for this article: Florida Museum of Natural History, https://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/herpetology/fl-snakes/list/, Department of Agriculture, http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Plant-Industry/Plant-Industry-Publications/Pest-Alerts/Pest-Alert-Venomous-Spiders-In-Florida, and the Florida Wildlife commission, http://myfwc.com/media/1321792/Guide_to_venomous_snakes_in_FL.pdf. Happy trails!
Florida is home to many beautiful blooming plants, but the Scarlet Hibiscus (*Hibiscus coccineus*) has them all beat! It is one of the most outstanding and beautiful of all our native plants. After its winter dormancy, thick green stems pop up and quickly fill out with a dense cover of large medium green foliage. The leaves, which are soft, have three to five deep lobes, serrated edges and each leaf is highlighted with reddish veins and stems. In the spring buds will appear on each stem. Even the buds are interesting as they have several very thin green leaves surrounding the bud, almost like a small wire cage. It is an unusual and attractive shrub even before it blooms. In late spring to early summer when the flowers begin to appear, this Florida native really shows off. Brilliant red blooms, which are five to six inches in diameter, sit at the tips of the stems. Each flower has five vivid red pointed petals that are slightly separated at the base to reveal the green sepals on the inside of the bud. Each flower will last only one day, but many new buds will form along the stems in the leaf axils and open for a continuous display of its beautiful blooms all through the heat of summer.

Scarlet Hibiscus is a wetland species that naturally occurs along the edges of swamps and other wet areas from the coast of South Carolina down to central Florida and over to Texas. It requires moisture, sun and plenty of organic matter for maximum performance, making it ideal for the edge of a pond, a rain garden, water feature or any place where the landscape is moist. Perhaps there is an air conditioner condensation discharge or an underground layer of clay in your yard. Scarlet Hibiscus also adapts very well to being container grown. A large enough pot with no drainage holes is easy to water and provides the option to move the plant from your patio or front entrance to a less visible spot during it's winter dormancy.

Florida's natural landscape supports its diverse native wildlife. Planting even a few natives in your yard adds to the preservation of our unique state. Why not add Scarlet Hibiscus for a touch of the tropics? Everybody loves its beautiful red flowers - hummingbirds, butterflies and people!

Common name: Scarlet Hibiscus  
Scientific name (Genus and species): *Hibiscus coccineus*  
Family: Malvaceae  
Description: Perennial shrub, multi-stemmed, erect and vase shaped, sturdy and fast growing. Winter dormant.  
Height/Spread: 6' x 3'  
Leaves: Alternate, palmate, 3-5 lobed, smooth medium green. Stems, petioles and veins mostly reddish.  
Flowers: Large bright red 6" flowers, late spring-summer.  
Growing conditions: Wet to moist fertile soil, full to part sun.  
Drought tolerance: Prefers to be kept moist. Can withstand flooding.  
Propagation: Seed, cuttings or division of roots.  
Wildlife attractor: Hummingbirds love it, butterflies and other pollinators come for nectar and pollen.  
Best features: Tolerates summer heat and humidity when kept moist throughout the growing season. Old stems can be cut to the ground when dormant. Fast growing new shoots will come from base in spring. Diseases not usually a problem, but grasshoppers sometimes find them tasty. Long and showy bloom season.

References:  
[www.fnps.org](http://www.fnps.org) - Florida Native Plant Society, Native Plants For Your Area  
[www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu](http://www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu) - Institute of Systemic Botany, Atlas of the Vascular Plants of Florida
Randall Dasher is a row crop farmer in Suwannee County. He is one of three recipients of the 2015 Commissioner’s Agricultural Environmental Leadership Award given for being at the forefront of developing and adopting environmentally innovative farming practices. I was happy to nominate Randall for this award.

Randall lives on the same land that his father bought and farmed when he moved to Suwannee County in 1948. In 1971, Randall started farming over 200 acres of the family farm where he has raised cattle, grown peanuts, seed crops, operates a seed processing facility and since the late 80s has grown hydroponic crops in greenhouses. Randall Dasher stands out as a producer who has adopted a farming system that makes the most efficient use of the land, water and agricultural technology to maintain an economically viable operation that carefully follows best management practices in the Suwannee Valley.

One of the most remarkable efforts by Randall Dasher over the last ten years has to do with his transition to adopting conservation tillage practices, the use of cover crops and selecting crops that can be grown without irrigation. With the changes in Federal Farm Bill programs in 2002, farmers like Randall Dasher found themselves growing peanuts without crop rotation. Many area farmers in this situation have been unsuccessful growing peanuts without installing irrigation systems to help their crops through short, intermittent periods of dry weather in the summer. In continuous peanut systems, irrigation is used to mitigate stresses which are magnified in the absence of crop rotation. Randall has kept rainfall records at his farm dating back decades and after analyzing those records, he came to the conclusion that the region receives ample rainfall to produce winter and summer crops. However, he had to fine tune his system to cope with the dry periods during the growing season.

Over the years, Randall Dasher has attended many UF/IFAS Extension programs offered in conjunction with the FDACS (Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services) Office of Agricultural Water Policy where the topics included: conservation tillage practices to conserve soil moisture and build organic matter; using conservation tillage in the context of a systems approach which includes crop rotation; cover crops; cool season small grains and forages; and livestock. This “systems approach” allows a farmer to grow peanuts and other crops long-term without the installation of irrigation systems. If the alternative option was to install irrigation on his 200 acres, he would apply an estimated 8 inches of water per year through irrigation. He has potentially conserved more than 40 million gallons of water annually for the past five years through the adoption of these practices.

He is also the main supplier of fresh produce to the Farm to School program in Suwannee County. Finally, he plays an active role as a speaker at field days, serves on the Suwannee County Agriculture Advisory Committee, is a CARES (County Alliance of Responsible Environmental Stewardship) recipient and the president of the Suwannee County Farm Bureau.

Randall Dasher will receive this recognition at the Florida Farm Bureau Annual Convention in Ponte Vedra, FL in late October.
**aging.gov Website**

More than 10,000 people turn 65 every day in the USA. Sometimes older Americans, their families and other caregivers need help navigating the array of federal, state and local supports that are available. As a result of the White House Conference on Aging, the website Aging.gov was launched.

**Questions:**
1. Why is it illegal in Switzerland to own just one ginea pig?
2. Who was the first non-athlete to collaborate with Nike on a celebrity sneaker design?
3. When it comes to designer dogs, what is a daug? How about a gollie or a chug?
4. In the world of commercial motor oil additives, what does the corporate acronym STP represent?
5. Which Ivy League college was the last to admit women?
6. What mammal has the densest fur?

See answers below

**Answer:**
1. According to the nation's animal-welfare law, the guinea pig is a social animal and would be lonely without a companion cavy.
2. Rapper Kanye West, in 2009. The Nike Air Yeezy combines the name of the company's signature sneaker line with West's last name.
3. A daug is a dachshund-pug mix; a gollie is a golden retriever-collie mix; and a chug is a chihuahua-pug mix.
4. Scientifically Treated Petroleum.
6. The sea otter. On some parts of the body - notably the rear, legs and flanks - it has a million or more hairs per square inch.

**Taking Responsibility**

In 2013, 300 teens broke into the New York home of former football great Brian Holloway and vandalized it. They painted graffiti on the walls, urinated on the floor, and stole property. The teens tweeted out pictures of their criminal activity as it happened. So the owner watched it in real time on social media. Six of the teens were immediately arrested on charges. Brian Holloway offered to drop all charges if the kids would simply apologize and clean up the mess. Not only did that NOT happen, but when he invited parents to come and discuss the evidence of illegal drugs and alcohol at the party, only one parent showed up. Some parents even contacted their lawyers to see what legal action they can take against the former Patriots offensive lineman, local affiliate ABC News 10 reported.

This is an example of why 4-H is such an important program. We teach about decision-making, critical thinking, healthy living, self-responsibility, self-discipline, concern for others, etc.
If you are lactose intolerant (not to be confused with a milk allergy from milk protein where milk and milk products must be avoided), Cheryl Mussatto recommends:

“Start off with small portions of dairy foods to see what you can tolerate without getting symptoms. The amount and type of dairy food that’s tolerable can vary among individuals.

Consume lactose-containing foods like milk with other foods which give the body more time to digest it.

Add milk to soups, pour it on cereal, blend it with other foods in a smoothie and it can be more tolerable. Purchase lactose-free milk in which the lactose is predigested. This milk is the same thing as regular milk, with the same nutrient content and can be used in cooking.

There are over-the-counter lactase enzyme tablets that help digest the lactose in dairy after you’ve consumed it.

Most yogurts should be well-tolerated as they contain live, active cultures that already have broken down lactose.

Natural cheeses, such as Swiss, Cheddar, Colby, Monterey Jack and Mozzarella, are already lower in lactose with less than 1 gram of lactose in a 1.5 oz. serving.

Chocolate milk may be better tolerated than unflavored milk.”

Bottom line: Dairy products play a key role in overall nutrition and health. If you are lactose intolerant, try some of the methods above to eat dairy products without suffering lactose intolerance symptoms.


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**USED POTS DONATIONS NEEDED!**

The Master Gardener volunteers at the Extension office are in need of 4” and 6” used plastic pots for a project.

If you have any donations, please drop them off at the Extension office or give us a call at (386) 362-2771 and we will gladly come pick them up! If you have any questions, please contact Carolyn Saft or Kasey Bass.
Welcome Patrick Troy!

Patrick Troy is in our brand new Regional Specialized Extension Agent position for Agronomic Row Crops, serving the 6 Northern Florida counties of Gilchrist, Lafayette, Hamilton, Columbia, Madison and Suwannee.

Studying at the University of California at Davis, his experience includes production, water/fertility management, and variety improvement with corn, sesame, sorghum, dry beans, and ornamentals.

Please welcome him to the area and invite him to visit your farm. He will be located at the SVAEC. His phone number is 386-362-1725 X112. Find out how he can help!

Welcome Dr. Kevin Athearn!

Dr. Kevin Athearn serves as a Regional Specialized Agent in Rural and Agribusiness Development for Florida’s Northeast Extension District. Based at the Suwannee Valley Agricultural Extension Center (Ph. 386-362-1725 x 116), his work focuses on small farm marketing, agritourism and ecotourism, farm enterprise budgets, and the economics of conservation practices and alternative farming systems.

Kevin earned his Ph.D. in Food and Resource Economics from the University of Florida. He then spent 11 years in Maine, where he taught university classes; did applied research and outreach for the seafood, tourism, and blueberry industries; and founded the Downeast Youth Soccer Association. In 2015 he put down his snow shovel and returned to Florida with his family.

Kevin enjoys learning about the needs, challenges, and successes of North Florida agriculture. He collaborates with others on extension programs helping new and experienced farmers achieve their goals, while supporting resource conservation and rural development in the region.