Downtown matters. It says a lot about the health of our community. Unfortunately, in small communities across the country, merchants in the downtown business districts are shutting their doors. School enrollment is declining. It sneaks up on us...empty storefronts, crumbling buildings and a dismal view of the future. We CANNOT let Live Oak fall off the map. I think everyone would agree they would want Live Oak to be the type of town in which they would like their children or grandchildren to grow and flourish. A place that is safe enough to ride a bike to school or to walk to the park. We want a place to which people just like to go. We cannot allow our town to die. We do, however, need to make people feel safe about investing and locating their businesses here in Suwannee County.

The good news is there IS hope! The City of Live Oak had a vision in 1997 when they established a Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) to help reenergize the downtown. Since 2010, 45 businesses have taken advantage of the building façade matching grant of up to $8,500 per business for qualified improvement of at least $10,000 or up to 85% of improvements. (Some of the businesses taking advantage of the program include DownTown Café, Faye’s Flowers, and B.W. Helveston Insurance)

Here’s MORE good news! We are close to hiring a full-time CRA Director! The condemned buildings downtown have been removed. The Lake City Board of Realtors, with guidance from Dan Gherna, have submitted a proposal for $15,000 “Smart Growth” grant through the National Association of Realtors investing in Live Oak. The Realtors in the area believe in the potential of Live Oak so much that they were willing to submit the project for funding!

Live Oak is also the recipient of a National Award from the Citizens’ Institute on Rural Design through the Ntl. Endowment of the Arts in partnership with the Orton Foundation and the Partnership for Public Spaces. They will be bringing in experts Nov. 14-16, 2013 who have experience and can help us look at how other small towns have been successful in the past.

Help guide the city as it grows and changes. Let’s make sure it is a place where we all want to live, work and play.
## Extension Calendar

### October 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>North Florida Fair 4-H Judging Registration Deadline</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>4-H Early Release Workshop</strong>, Club Officer training, Extension Office, 2pm-5pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>HCE Council</strong>, Extension Office 9am-12pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Mayo 4-H Farm Judging Registration Deadline</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>Florida Native Plant Society</strong>, Sparkleberry Chapter, Hatch Park, Branford, 6:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>4-H Hay Bales Judged</strong>, in the afternoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>Certified Pile Burner Program</strong>, Suwannee Valley Agricultural Extension Center (off CR 417), 8:30am-5pm. $50 registration fee. You must pre-register and class is limited to the first 40 people who pay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>Happy Homemakers</strong>, Extension Office 9am-12pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Master Gardener Workday</strong>, Extension Office, 9am-12pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Master Gardener Alumni</strong>, Judy Townsend’s home, 1pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><strong>Mayo 4-H Farm Judging Contest</strong>, Mayo Community Center, Reg. @ 9:30am, contest @10:30am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td><strong>4-H County Council</strong>, Extension Office, 6:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td><strong>Sunbelt Ag Expo</strong>, Moultrie, GA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td><strong>Small Ruminant Workshop (Sheep and Goats)</strong>, Shepherd’s Hill Farm, Lake City 4pm-7:30pm. $5.00 registration fee. Contact Columbia County Extension office for details 386-752-5384.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td><strong>NE Green Team Meeting</strong>, Extension Office 9am-4pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td><strong>Suwannee River Partnership Breakfast</strong>, Dixie Grill, 7:45am</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Florida State Beekeepers Association 2013 Conference is October 31-November 2, 2013 and will be held in Chipley, FL. For all information, go to [http://floridabeekeepers.org/#conv2013](http://floridabeekeepers.org/#conv2013).

---

### 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 three health screenings, nine 2-hour educational sessions, two follow-up sessions, and a 60-minute individual nutrition consultation with a registered dietitian. Participants are encouraged to bring a support person to the educational 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 soon.**

**Pre-registration required.** Call Cathy Rogers at 386-362-2771
### November 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>4-H Club Enrollment Deadline</strong>, must be enrolled by this date to show an animal at Suwannee Valley Youth Livestock Show and Sale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>4-H Early Release Workshop</strong>, Fall Harvest Experience/Pumpkin Patch, Suwannee Valley Agricultural Extension Center (off CR 417), 2pm-5pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>HCE Council</strong>, Extension Office 9am-12pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-17</td>
<td><strong>North Florida Fair</strong>, Tallahassee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><strong>Veterans Day</strong>, Office Closed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td><strong>Florida Native Plant Society</strong>, Sparkleberry Chapter, Hatch Park, Branford, 6:30pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td><strong>4-H County Council</strong>, Extension Office, 6:30pm <em><strong>note: new date</strong></em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td><strong>Happy Homemakers</strong>, Extension Office 9am-12pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td><strong>Master Gardener Workday</strong>, Heritage Park, 9am-12pm, <strong>Brown Bag Lunch</strong> 12-1pm, <strong>Alumni Meeting</strong>, 1-3pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-15</td>
<td><strong>Citizens’ Institute on Rural Design</strong>, sponsored by the National Endowment of the Arts, workshop held at the Passenger Railroad Depot, 9am-5pm (see details on page 5) call Katherine 386-362-2771, for more information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td><strong>Citizens’ Institute on Rural Design</strong>, sponsored by the National Endowment of the Arts, unveiling held at Heritage Park and Gardens, 9am-12pm (see details on page 5) OPEN TO THE PUBLIC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td><strong>North Florida Fair 4-H Judging Contests</strong>, Tallahassee, 10am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td><strong>4-H Hay Bale Contest Removal</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td><strong>National Restaurant Association’s ServSafe Food Manager Certification</strong>; class, exam &amp; book $165, must register 3 business days prior call toll-free 1-888-232-8723 or via web <a href="http://foodsafety.ifas.ufl.edu">http://foodsafety.ifas.ufl.edu</a> no walk-ins. Bring lunch and photo ID. Certification is good for 5 yrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td><strong>Suwannee River Partnership Breakfast</strong>, Dixie Grill, 7:45am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-29</td>
<td><strong>Thanksgiving Holiday</strong>, Office Closed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## December 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>4-H Early Release Workshop</strong>, Holiday Crafts, Extension Office, 2pm-5pm—Cost to be determined, please pre-register.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>HCE Council</strong>, Extension Office 9am-12pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Christmas on the Square</strong>, Live Oak (look for our booth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>4-H County Council</strong>, Extension Office, 6:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Florida Native Plant Society</strong>, Sparkleberry Chapter, Hatch Park, Branford, 6:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><strong>Happy Homemakers</strong>, Extension Office 9am-12pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td><strong>Master Gardener Alumni</strong>, Cindy Hett’s home, 1pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td><strong>Adult Pillow Case Clinic</strong>, Extension Office, 5:30pm-8pm, $10 pre-registration by December 5th, contact Cathy Rogers for more information. 386-362-2771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td><strong>Suwannee Valley Youth Livestock Show and Sale Mandatory Steer Weigh-In</strong>, Suwannee County Fairgrounds, 8am, <em><strong>must be in line by 10am</strong></em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td><strong>4-H Holiday Bake-off</strong>, Exhibition II, Entry drop off 8:30am-11:00am, Awards 6:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-25</td>
<td><strong>Christmas Holiday</strong>, Office Closed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## January 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><strong>Suwannee Valley Youth Livestock Show and Sale Mandatory hog tagging/ownership</strong>, Suwannee County Fairgrounds, 8am, <em><strong>must be in line by 10am</strong></em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Question:** What is a native plant?  
**Answer:** A plant species that occurs naturally in a geographic region.
Branding...Not Just for Cattle Anymore

Katherine Allen
Family and Consumer Sciences Agent/CED

In the early days, cattle ranchers would use a hot piece of iron to mark their animal in order to identify ownership. The mark was easily identifiable so that nobody would be able to swipe someone else’s property and pass it off as their own.

Today, we use brands to help consumers distinguish between products. If someone asked you to identify the company associated with the slogan “Just Do It”, would you be able to identify Nike? The golden arches of McDonalds are among the most recognizable symbols around the world.

Brands include the name, design, logo, slogan or other feature that marks one product as distinct from others. A brand includes the entire emotional and intellectual experiences that one has had with an organization, product or service. As we look at the redevelopment and revitalization of downtown Live Oak and the recruitment of businesses to Suwannee County, we need to make sure our “brand” of Live Oak and Suwannee County are recognizable, identifiable, unified and have a selling point that is memorable to our visitors and residents.

There is an opportunity to expand on what has already been done: Basic visioning, bus tour, charrettes. So, PHASE TWO will be when the Citizens’ Institute on Rural Design, a national program sponsored by the National Endowment of the Arts, will be holding a workshop November 14 and 15 from 9-5 at the railroad depot, while the unveiling will be from 9am-noon at Heritage Park and Gardens on Saturday, November 16, 2013. One of the focus areas will be on branding. This meeting is being coordinated by the UF/IFAS Suwannee County Extension office and the Community Redevelopment Agency (as well as partnership with the Suwannee Democrat, Heritage Parks and Gardens, Live Oak Partnership and the Chamber of Commerce.)

Branding doesn’t happen overnight, it takes time. Folks need to be introduced and then have consistent, repetitive messages so the brand creates a memory. Consistency of the message is important because the brand needs to have a unified look and voice, which in turn is more apt to create a lasting impression. Various different messages create uncertainty, confusion and misunderstanding. But, the branding goes beyond a consistent, identifiable logo. Each of us in the community needs to become a brand ambassador, someone who not only promotes our community, but also who represents our city and county’s ideals, appearance and qualities. Here is where we need to consider is what we promise what we deliver? If not, visitors to our lovely community will believe their experience here, not what we advertise. On the Live Oak City Hall website, it lists Live Oak as “A caring community.” On its website, Branford considers itself a “small, friendly town nestled on the banks of the Suwannee River, where pride in family, community and patriotism create a wonderful quality of life. It is a peaceful, rural area of natural beauty balancing the old with the new. The river offers opportunity for the boating enthusiast, the canoer, and divers. Many enjoy simply floating along the river banks fishing for red-bellies, brim, mullet and catfish. Divers come from all over the country to dive in the many springs that spawn off of the river. It is a small town setting, yet you can participate in the events and activities of larger cities.”

Think about the story we want to tell about our community. Please support the efforts to help give one voice and identity to market to others.
Let’s Make Some Traditions Healthier

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

Holiday traditions are set by families and communities. Some were started long, long ago while others begin as a need or desire dictates. Think about changing some of your own holiday traditions into healthier alternatives this fall and winter. Below are some suggestions:

Help the children in your community have a healthier Halloween this year by giving nutritious treats that still taste delicious! Although chocolate is always a favorite, add low-fat and sugar-free treats to the mix this year. Just like for most things, moderation is key. Pick snack-sized portions for your ghosts and goblins.

Here are some healthy suggestions from the American Cancer Society for Halloween treats:

- Cheese Sticks
- Low-fat cereal or granola bars
- Juice boxes (100% juice)
- Popcorn
- Roasted peanuts
- Sugar-free gum
- Sugar-free suckers
- Trail mix
- Raisins
- Dried cranberries

Non-food treats like stickers, temporary tattoos, marbles, puzzle books, and games are also healthier than candy.

The other piece to the health puzzle is activity. Encourage kids to get 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity every day. Walking around your neighborhood, whether you are in costume or not, is a good way to get physical activity. Just watch out for ghosts and goblins!

If you are an adult with diabetes, it is important to consider the safety of fasting during Ramadan, Yom Kippur, and other times of the year. Fasting can cause a low blood sugar (hypoglycemia), high blood sugar (hyperglycemia), diabetic ketoacidosis, dehydration, or blood clots (thrombosis). Having good glycemic control prior to the fast can minimize the risks. Adjusting your medication by consulting your physician weeks before the religious event is also a good way to minimize the risks.

Create a new Thanksgiving Day tradition: Cut leaf shapes out of construction paper and crinkle them up to make them look like falling leaves. Flatten them out and have each dinner guest write what they are grateful for on a few. String them together to create a garland of gratitude.
This season a number of farmers in Suwannee County are growing sesame for the first time. Sesame has traditionally been grown in Texas, Oklahoma, Southern Kansas and more recently, in Alabama and the Florida Panhandle. The primary use for sesame in the U.S. is whole seed condiments, to be placed on top of buns and in snack foods. Sesame production is quite interesting considering it is one of the oldest crops known to humans. There are archeological remnants of sesame dating to 5,500 BC in the Harappa Valley in the Indian sub-continent. Most people remember the words “Open Sesame” from Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves to open a cave full of riches. It is similar to the sesame capsules because their opening produced great riches. Sesame was a major oilseed in the ancient world because of its ease of extraction, great stability, and drought resistance. In India today, almost as in the olden days, a farmer can take his crop to an expeller that consists of grinding mortars and pestle stones driven by a bullock. He can place the oil in a vessel, take it back to his home and have cooking oil for a year, without the oil going rancid. Sesame oil is used as a salad or cooking oil and in shortening, margarine and soap. It is often considered the “queen” of vegetable oils. The outstanding characteristic of sesame oil is its stability and keeping quality, as well as resistance to rancidity. Also, sesame oil is used in paints, soaps, cosmetics, perfumes and insecticides.

Sesame was introduced to the U.S. from Africa and was called beni/benne/benni Betts (1999) quotes letters from Thomas Jefferson that document his trials with sesame between 1808 and 1824. Jefferson stated that sesame “….is among the most valuable acquisitions our country has ever made. … I do not believe before that there existed so perfect a substitute for olive oil.” He talks about the rule of thumb that still exists today – that sesame will do well where cotton does well. Sesame was produced in Texas on a limited scale during the 1950’s and early 1960’s, first in northeast Texas and later shifting to the High Plains, where consistent yield increases resulted from irrigation and more favorable climate conditions. The sesame was cut with a binder, hand shocked, and manually fed into a combine when dry. Due to a change in guest worker laws in the mid 1960’s, the hand labor from Mexico became unavailable, and the sesame crop disappeared. Sesame returned to Texas in 1987 with varieties that did not require binding and shocking. The sesame could be swathed into a windrow, allowed to dry, and picked up with a pick-up attachment on a combine. Since that time new varieties have been developed that can be left standing in the field to dry down, and then combined directly. According to Dr. James Grichar from Texas A&M University, the United State is the only country where sesame is completely mechanized.

Sesame is an erect annual plant that can reach 4-7 feet in height when planted early under high moisture conditions. In West Texas, it is generally 3-6 feet. Flowers appear about 38-45 days after planting, with 2 flowers per stem per day for about 35-40. Some varieties have 6 flowers per stem per day for 25-40 days. Most capsules split open at maturity, but the indehiscent capsule will not. Indehiscent, seamless, and shatter-resistant lines will not have the seed drop out when the plant is inverted. There are approximately 50 to 80 seeds per capsule, with the first capsule located 1 to 2.5 feet from ground, depending on moisture, fertility, variety and temperatures.

Sesame should be ready to be harvested around 120 days after planting. This year we have had plenty of rainfall and the crop looks good. We are anxious to see what yields farmers get at harvest time. In order to help farmers, Dr. Diane Rowland, Professor at the UF Agronomy Department, and I have established a trial at the Suwannee Valley Agricultural Extension Center to look at different varieties and help answer questions from farmers. Dr. Rowland has been researching this crop for the past three years as she believes it is a great fit for our crop rotations in the area.
Dates Found on Milk and Meat

If you buy fresh strawberries, you are on your own determining how long you can keep and use them after purchase, like many other fruits and vegetables. However, products which need continued low temperatures to insure safety, freshness, and longevity, like milk and meat, are required to be labeled with often confusing dates.

Milk is sold with a prominent “sell-by” date stamped on it. Generally milk will remain drinkable for about a week after that date provided that:

- The milk had been stored at 40°F or below both prior to and after purchase.
- The container was well sealed after each use.

Milk should always be discarded if it develops an off odor, flavor or appearance.

Sell-by dates are also labeled on meats which ideally should be stored at just above freezing temperatures: 33°F. Sell-by dates are intended to give retailers an easy date to know when a product must be removed from their shelf and disposed of instead of being sold.

Generally, consumers have between one and three days after the “sell-by” date to use the meat before there are any safety concerns. Many retailers will mark down the price of meat if the “sell-by” date is near. Consumers purchasing this meat should beware that they should use it or freeze it very soon after purchase.

Use by / Freeze by dates are more helpful for consumers. Fresh products should either be cooked on or before the “use by” date on the package or frozen if added storage time is needed.

Different species (chicken, turkey, pork, lamb, beef) and cuts of meat will keep from one to 12 months with high quality in the freezer – provided they are wrapped in moisture- and vapor-proof wraps or containers. Freezer burn may result if packaging is torn or develops holes.

The “packaged on” date is often printed on fresh meat. If meat is wrapped in a typical meat trap or butcher paper wrap, most fresh meat can be stored in the refrigerator for up to three days. If the product is vacuum packaged with a good seal and air removed from the package, meat can be safely kept up to seven days from the “packaged on” date.

Expiration dates are the easiest for consumers to use. The product needs to be used on or before an expiration date to be safely consumed. Fresh meat products seldom have expiration dates, but they are found on many processed meat products.

Once a processed meat product (like hot dogs or luncheon meats) is opened, it should be consumed within seven days for safety or thrown away after seven days.

All of these dates are for consumer safety and to reduce food waste. But the old maxim still holds: “When in doubt, throw it out.”
You might think that the sole beneficiaries of youth program volunteering would be youth. But you would be mistaken -- the value extends to the community and to the volunteers themselves.

A recent study of 4-H volunteers in the North Central United States documents the types and levels of contributions made by volunteers that benefit youth, their communities, and the volunteers themselves.

More than half a million adults across the US give their time to the 4-H program and Extension. This is a lot of "people power". To put it in context, the YMCA and the American Red Cross -- two of the largest nonprofit organizations in the country -- are each supported by similar-sized corps of volunteers.

The Extension 4-H Youth Development program, a public organization, is a key factor in the landscape of programs that recruit volunteers to promote the positive development of youth in communities. We can quantify this by turning volunteer hours into dollar signs at the rate of just under $20 per hour. But there is more to it than that.

Another research study of 4-H volunteers in Minnesota found that 4-H volunteers:

- Tend to be college-educated and to stick around for several years of service, particularly when they themselves were 4-H members in their youth.
- Tend to spend as much time planning for and communicating plans with youth as they spend actually working with them.
- Give more than time -- they donate money, supplies, and mileage on their cars to the 4-H program.
- Need training and development as much as they do a well-run volunteer system.

They also learned that volunteers benefit from the relationship, and that their communities do too. Volunteers surveyed directly benefitted from:

- Opportunities to be involved with youth learning; in other words, the privilege to partner with young people in community settings.
- Opportunities for personal growth, becoming better at public speaking or a specific skill.
- Opportunities for contributing to the 4-H mission and giving back to the organization, being part of something "big."
- Becoming better connected and valued as member of their communities.

According to the researcher, “The benefit they most often mentioned was that the 4-H volunteer experience contributed to their own pathway toward becoming a better person. This is both humbling and startling in a "we are all connected" sort of way. It is also incredibly difficult to quantify. This finding sheds new light on youth and adults as partners in youth programs, and their interdependence on one another in the community. Extension and 4-H are strong threads in the fabric of communities, and if we listen closely to 3,000-plus volunteers, one of those brightly-colored, extremely resilient threads is woven by volunteers in partnership with youth. Think about this.”

Volunteering with Suwannee County 4-H will benefit many youth as they develop life skills to become productive adults. It is also a great way to gain the intrinsic benefits of personal growth, pride in youth success, and being a part of something bigger than yourself. As the new 4-H year starts, consider being a 4-H volunteer today!

(Excerpts taken with permission from Dr. Pamela Larson Nippot, Evaluation and Research Specialist, University of Minnesota)
What is Considered a Small Farm?

Robert C. Hochmuth - Multi-county Extension Agent

Small farms in Florida have traditionally represented a quiet, little-known, part of the agriculture industry. Recent changes, led by new consumer demands, have triggered many diverse opportunities to direct market specialty products throughout the state. Because the small farm industry in Florida has not been highly visible, the small farmers themselves are not well described.

According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, there are 41,407 farms in Florida that operate less than 179 acres each. This represents 87% of the 47,463 farms in the state. While the number of farms in Florida has increased by 8% since the 2002 Census, the average size of farms has decreased by 18% from 236 acres in 2002 to 195 acres in 2007. The USDA defines a small farm as one having gross sales less than $250,000. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, 93% of farms in Florida fall into that category.

The small farm debate traditionally has been over the value of sales versus the land area of the farm. The value of sales basis is probably more appropriate, especially for Florida. This is because very high value enterprises or products such as greenhouse ornamentals or vegetables, cut flowers, or culinary herbs can easily have a value of more than $250,000 on less than 5 or 10 acres. Because Florida has so many opportunities for producing high value products, the classification based on gross sales value is much more appropriate. According to the 2007 US Ag Census, 89% of the Florida farms report less than $100,000 in product sales. The other common characteristic of these operations is they are family oriented farms dependent upon the family for management and labor. The USDA further classifies small farms based on the primary motivation of the family for farming. These categories include: primary income, retirement, lifestyle, or limited resources.

The dominant organizational structure of agriculture in Florida is individual family farms. Just over 69% of Florida agricultural operations are less than 50 acres in size. In terms of farm typology in Florida, the two dominant categories are retirement (23.5%) and residential/lifestyle (34.9%). Together, these two categories account for almost six of every ten agricultural operations in Florida.

New consumer demands for the development of community-based food systems and specialty products such as organic, heirloom, hydroponic, grass-fed beef, pastured poultry, ethnic meats and vegetables, all provide new opportunities for small farmers to sustain a profitable enterprise. These types of diverse enterprises and the abundance of large population centers provide opportunities for direct marketing in Florida, unlike most other states. In fact, Florida reported an 8% increase in farm numbers from 2002 to 2007, essentially all in the small farm category.

Small farmers in Florida have a variety of issues and challenges they face and with fewer resources available to them than larger farms, being a small farmer is a tough job. That's why UF/IFAS and FAMU have created a website (http://smallfarms.ifas.ufl.edu/) that specifically addresses the needs of small farmers. The website provides links and other resources for small farmers including, how to get started, enterprise budgeting, business planning, financing grants, and much more. Farmers using this site can select topics on enterprises of special interest to them, including aquaculture, cut flowers, livestock, and organic enterprises. Each topic includes information on production, marketing, and economics as well as other appropriate links. While small farms represent over 90% of all farms in Florida, these farms represent about 15% of all farm product sales in Florida. Input from citizens throughout Florida to UF/IFAS Extension administration has identified the need for small farm educational programs to be developed. Small farmers and allied organizations have identified critical issues facing small farms, which include: access to profitable markets, business skills development, accessible technical information, and alternative crops and enterprises. The future success of small and mid-sized farmers will depend on finding appropriate solutions to these challenges.
A collection of Extension professionals from Suwannee Valley Counties and South Georgia Counties collaborated to bring a production meeting to interested growers, held in Valdosta, GA. With the citrus industry of South and Central Florida in peril, entrepreneurial growers of North Florida and South Georgia see an opportunity for growth in an industry of cold hardy citrus. Jake Price, Agricultural Extension Agent with the University of Georgia, organized the meeting at the Lowndes County Extension office on August 22nd. Sean McCoy, a regional Extension agent based in Live Oak at the Suwannee Valley Agricultural Extension Center presented on Marketing and Pricing for this specialty crop. Dr. Pete Andersen, a professor of horticultural sciences from North Florida Research and Education Center in Quincy, FL spoke focusing on production practices. Dan Fenneman, Agricultural Extension agent from Madison County helped organize the meeting.

Satsuma citrus and other cold hardy varieties were once common across the gulf coast of Florida, Alabama, Louisiana and Texas. A series of severe freezes in the 1930s devastated the existing commercial industry and citrus production dominated the warmer climes of South and Central Florida. As demonstrated in Dr. Andersen’s presentation freezes severe enough to damage a crop in the Suwannee Valley as far north as South Georgia have been much rarer in recent decades, which is very encouraging to those growers interested in reestablishing an industry in this region.

If you are interested in learning more about cold hardy citrus feel free to contact Sean McCoy at (386) 362-1725, ext. 105.

**Question:** How many oranges does it take to produce an 8-ounce glass of orange juice?

**Answer:** Juicing four medium-sized oranges can fill an 8-ounce glass.
Yikes, what is that creature on my tree? For most homeowners, the sight of the Hickory Horned Devil caterpillar Citheronia regalis evokes a “squash and ask questions later” response. A caterpillar the size of a large hot dog or cigar can seem daunting and add the spiny looking projections (scoli-tubercles in the form of spinose projections of the body wall) and they look downright menacing! The good news is that they are harmless to people and animals and turn into a regal or royal walnut moth. These moths are one of our largest and most spectacular native moths and should not be killed since they are an integral part of the food web.

The caterpillar can be a beautiful blue green or turquoise color with orange spikes that have black tips. If the Gator football team had an official caterpillar, they might choose this critter. The adult moth has a wingspan of about six inches and the females are larger than the males. The forewings are gray to gray-green with orange veins and a row of seven to nine yellow spots near the distal margin. There also are single yellow basal spots. The hind wing is mostly orange with a basal yellow spot and yellow patches (or spots) on the costal and anal margins. The hind wing may also have one to two rows of gray-green spots. The body is orange with narrow yellow banding. Adults have vestigial mouthparts.

The regal moth typically has only a single generation per year, although a few late collection records suggest the possibility of a small second brood in the Deep South. In Florida, we may see the adult in May, but we are more likely to see them during the summer months. Adults mate during the second evening after emergence and begin oviposition at dusk of the third evening. Eggs hatch in six to 10 days, and the duration of the larval stage is about 35 days. The larval stage is when we notice this unusual critter the most since it is the most conspicuous.

So where do these critters hang out? They can be found in pecan, walnut, various hickories, sweet gum, persimmon trees and sumac shrubs from Texas to Massachusetts. Occasionally you may see them in your lawn grass as they are seeking a place to burrow into the soil to pupate.

There are natural enemies that help keep these insects in check. The caterpillars may be parasitized by at least six species of tachinid flies and one species of braconid wasp or consumed by birds or other animals. So be on the lookout for this interesting critter and avoid the temptation to kill it so that it can carry out its role in nature.

*check out our newsletter http://suwannee.ifas.ufl.edu/ for color photos.
The Oaks, which are in the genus Quercus, are the dominant hardwood tree in the forests throughout the eastern United States. They have provided quality lumber for centuries in this country for ship building, construction, flooring, furniture, and more. Native Americans even used a variety of Oak species as a source of food, medicines and dyes. Most of us are familiar with the stately and beautiful Live Oak (Quercus virginiana), but did you know that there are literally dozens of species of Oaks that are native to Florida. Most of our native species are in the northern part of our state with only a few that are more suited to conditions further south.

One of the less well-known of the Oaks is the Shumard Oak (Quercus shumardii) which is found occurring naturally in North Florida’s woodlands and south to about Citrus County. The Shumard is a strong tree that grows tall and straight becoming, as wide as the tree is tall. Unlike the Live Oak that has branches swooping to the ground, the Shumard’s branches are more laterally spreading and non-drooping. Being a deciduous tree makes it a good candidate for planting on the south side of your home for cooling shade in the hot summer months and warm sunshine during the winter.

Shumard Oak is a strong, erect, tap-rooted tree with bark that is gray/brown, rough and shallowly furrowed. It’s spreading branches are symmetrical, creating an open crown and an overall oval shape to the tree. The foliage during the summer is a dense, shiny green that turns deep red in the fall. The the large acorns have a shallow cap, are lightly striped and remain on the tree for years. It easily grows in any sunny location, as it will tolerate a wide range of soil and moisture conditions. The good form, non-drooping branches, deep taproot, moderate growth rate, drought tolerance and attractive foliage in summer and fall makes the Shumard Oak an excellent choice for the home landscape.

**Common name:** Shumard Oak  
**Scientific name:** Quercus shumardii  
**Description:** Erect, deciduous tree with a strong straight trunk, gray/brown bark with shallow furrows and spreading branches, forms an open oval crown when mature.  
**Height/Spread:** Moderately grows to 80’ x 80’, but typically attains about 35 feet of height in 20 years of growth.  
**Leaves:** Large, alternate leaves to 8” long, medium green, shiny upper surface, each with 7-9 deep symmetrical lobes with several secondary lobes, having distinct points at tips. Dark red fall color.  
**Fruit:** 1” diameter acorns occur singly or in pairs with light striping and thick cap over 1/4th of nut, mature in second season.  
**Growing conditions:** Prefers medium moisture, acidic, well-drained soils in full sun. Adapts to a broad range of soil and moisture conditions, including dry or clay soils. Slightly tolerant of flooding, highly drought and stress tolerant.  
**Drought tolerant:** Yes  
**Propagation:** Best by seed.  
**Wildlife:** Attracts pollinators, birds, small wildlife for food, cover and nesting sites. Numerous species of songbirds, wild turkeys, waterfowl, white-tailed deer, squirrels, and other mammals eat the acorns. Host plant for some Hairstreaks, Skippers and other butterflies.  
**Other features:** Excellent shade or specimen tree, good form, interesting foliage, good fall color, drought tolerance.  
**Note:** As with all native plants, the best results are attained by selecting plants that are grown from local stock.
Did you know?

Below are a few things you can do to reduce water use:

⇒ Fix water leaks
⇒ Turn off running water
⇒ Take shorter showers
⇒ Landscape with plants that need less water
⇒ Water plants early in the morning

Why are invasive plants harmful to Florida?

♦ They reduce light and oxygen for native species.
♦ Limit boating, fishing, swimming and other recreation.
♦ Reduce biodiversity and threaten endangered species.
♦ Disrupt water and electrical supplies.

"An Equal Opportunity Institution

*For persons with disabilities requiring special accommodations, please contact our office at least five working days prior to the program so that proper consideration may be given to the request. For the hearing impaired, please contact the Florida Relay Center Service at 1-800-955-8771.

Use of trade names in this publication is solely for the purpose of providing specific information. It is not a guarantee or warranty of product named and does not signify approval to the exclusion of others of suitable composition.