



The Baker Bulletin

A
Baker County
Extension
Service Monthly
Newsletter

Baker County Extension Service

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Hours: M—F 8:30 am to 5:00 pm
(Closed Noon to 1:00 pm for Lunch)

County Agents

Alicia Lamborn
Horticulture Agent

Shaina Spann
4-H Youth Development Agent

Alicia Halbritter
Agriculture & Natural Resources Agent

Dear Extension Friends,

A huge THANK YOU to everyone that came out to support us at the Master Gardener Plant Sale! The money raised will help us complete phase two of our arboretum sidewalk project. If you missed the event, we will have some leftover plants available inside the Extension office lobby on Friday, April 8th — just look for the pink signs!

Sincerely,

Alicia Lamborn, County Director
UF/IFAS Extension Baker County



Programs & Events

- April 8 **Master Gardener Plant Sale**, 9:00 am - noon & 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm, Baker Co. Extension Office Lobby. We have a small variety of herbs, wildflowers, perennials, and houseplants left over from our fundraiser. Cash only. Look for the pink signs.
- April 8 **Intro to Growing Crops in Protective Structures** NFREC-SV, Live Oak [Register here](#)
- April 26 **Livestock 4-H Club** Meeting @ 6pm, Ag Center Auditorium (new members welcome)
- Online **Growing Blueberries & Blackberries** (Self-Paced Course — Free!) Topics include variety selection, care and maintenance, pest management, and even a section on raspberries! [Register here](#)
- Online **Selling Backyard Poultry Products** (Self-Paced, Online Course) Learn how to start a business (or improve an existing business) selling eggs, meat, or live poultry in the state of Florida. Topics include licensing/registration, record keep-



Highlights in Horticulture

By:
Alicia Lamborn,
Horticulture Agent



2

Starting a Food Forest with Florida's Edible Native Plants

A food forest is a diverse planting of mostly edible plants (some are also pollinator attractors, pest preventers, etc.) planted in layers (overstory and understory trees, shrubs, vines, herbs, groundcovers) to mimic a forest ecosystem. But whether you're creating a food forest or simply wishing to increase the number of edible plants in your landscape, Florida's edible native plants are worth your consideration.

Toxicity: It's very important to understand that **some edible natives are also toxic**. Many edible native plants have only one edible portion, with other parts of the plant being extremely toxic. Others plant parts are toxic unless prepared correctly. Worse still, the plant kingdom hosts many look-alikes. Some deadly plants are easily mistaken for edibles. As always, we urge gardeners to be certain of their plant identification before tasting any foraged foods. For help identifying a plant, [please contact the experts at your county Extension office](#). And since some people are highly allergic to edible plant parts commonly found in the grocery store, it may be best to proceed with caution by sampling new foods (once properly identified) rather than feasting on them.

Some of the more common edible native plants grown in landscapes include:

Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*) – [Beautyberry](#) is a low-maintenance, understory shrub. The purple fruits can be harvested to make jams and jellies (although they need a lot of sugar).

Blueberry (*Vaccinium spp.*) – Several blueberry species are native to Florida. Rabbiteye (*Vaccinium virgatum*) and southern high-bush (hybrids of *V. darrowii*, *V. virgatum*, and *V. corymbosum*) blueberries are the best choices for our hot and humid climate.

Cabbage palm (*Sabal palmetto*) – The [cabbage palm, or sabal palm](#), is Florida's state tree. The bud of the tree—sometimes called the "heart"—is edible and has a cabbage-like flavor. But since removing the bud kills the palm, save your dish of swamp cabbage for when you have a cabbage palm growing of place.

Chickasaw and Flatwoods Plum (*Prunus angustifolia* and *P. umbellata*) – [Chickasaw and flatwoods plum trees](#) flower in early spring and then produce small red, yellow, or purple plums. The fruits range from very tart to sweet. This fruit is eaten fresh or turned into tasty jelly, but they're also a favorite of local wildlife.

Florida Betony (*Stachys floridana*) – [Florida betony](#) is considered a landscape weed. We think it's one worth pulling, but for another reason: the tubers are edible. The long, lobed shape reminded settlers of a rattlesnake's tail. This is where betony picked up its older common name, "rattlesnake weed." Tubers are eaten fresh and add a crisp texture to a Florida-native salad.

Maypop (*Passiflora incarnata*) – [Wild passionflower](#) (maypop) fruit and its skin are edible, though less tasty than cultivated passionflower. They can be eaten raw or cooked. It also makes a good jam, syrup, and flavoring for beverages.

Muscadine Grape (*Vitis rotundifolia*) – Sometimes called scuppernongs, [muscadine grape](#) vines can be either male or female. If you don't have room for multiple vines, opt for a self-fertile variety.

Pecan (*Carya illinoensis*) – Although native to Florida, [pecans](#) grown in the south offer lower yields and often struggle with diseases. Plant disease resistant varieties for the best results.

Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*) – If you've never had a [native persimmon](#) the ripe flesh is thick and jelly-like, best eaten with a spoon. Under-ripe fruit are hard and bitter. Be sure to purchase a female tree — the males don't produce fruit.

Red Mulberry (*Morus rubra*) – Peoples of North America have enjoyed [native red mulberry](#) for centuries. Today we appreciate mulberry trees in the landscape because they require very little maintenance, irrigation, or fertilizing.

Smilax (*Smilax spp.*) – [Smilax](#) is also called "wild asparagus," greenbriar, and bamboo vine. Gardeners battle with it in their yards but these aggressive vines are native to the entire state. The young vine tips are edible and resemble asparagus in flavor and form.

Yaupon Holly (*Ilex vomitoria*) – [Yaupon holly](#) makes an excellent tea. It is also an extremely hardy native shrub. True, it is not technically edible, but this plant boasts the highest caffeine level in North America.

For more information on edible plants, edibles to consume with caution, and species we do not recommend.... please visit the following website which this article was adapted and excerpted from:

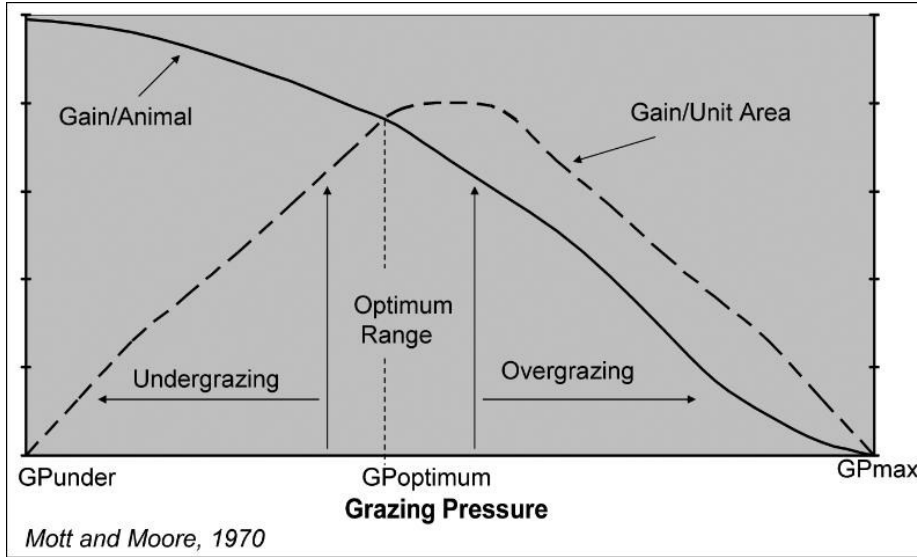
<https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/edibles/florida-edible-native-plants.html>

Barnyard Bulletin

By:
Alicia Halbritter,
Agriculture Agent



Stocking Rates Crucial to Pasture Management



Pastures in Florida vary wildly based on their geographic location, management strategies, history, and current use. As livestock owners we should try to maximize the efficiency of our pasture in order to reduce expenses associated with improper weight gain of calves, supplemental feeding to maintain weights, and risk of pasture deterioration.

Forage Species

The type of forage, including species and variety, planted in your pasture will have an impact on how many animals it can support. Some species, like bahiagrass are more tolerant of heavy grazing and are generally more hardy. Other species like bermudagrass, limpograss, or cool-season species may need lower stocking rates for proper management. Each species has a desirable grazing height and management strategy so make sure to utilize the specifics according to your pasture.

Soil Fertility

Soil fertility will have a large impact on the forage growth, total yield, and ultimately the stocking density. If you are not conducting annual soil tests and liming or fertilizing accordingly then you may not be getting all that you can from your pasture grass. Managing your grass more effectively will make it easier to manage your livestock.

Factors Affecting Stocking Density

Agronomic	Animal	Management
Forage Species	Herd Size	Supplementation Amount
Fertilization	Bodyweight	Supplementation Type
Precipitation	Dry Matter Intake	Pasture Management
Pasture Size	Nutrient Requirements	Forage Allowance
Season		Future Forage Needs
Forage Chemical Composition		
Forage Seasonal Growth		
Forage Mass		





Livestock Club News

At February's meeting we went over our options for project animals to show at the fair. We also discussed what we should be looking for when picking our project animals. This year's fair will be September 9th thru September 17th. More important dates for the fair will be announced soon. We also elected this year's livestock club officers. Your new officers are as follows:

President- Matthew Turner Vice President- Lucas Turner Secretary- Scarlett Rhoden Treasurer- Jessa Hilson
Reporter- Schaelynn Dugard

In other news, myself and a few other 4-H members attended Capital Day on February 23rd. We met with one of our legislators, Representative Brannan, took a tour of the old Capital building, went to the 22nd floor of the Capital building for amazing views and met with a former 4-H member who now is the Vice President of Government Relations for Space Florida. It was a fun and educational trip.

Respectfully submitted,
Schaelynn Dugard, Reporter



Pictured Left to Right: Mathew Turner, Lucas Turner, Scarlett Rhoden, Jessa Hilson, and Schaelynn Dugard.

Florida 4-H Day at the Capital



2022 4-H Summer Day Camps

Serve Week: June 13-17 High School Age Cost: Free

Giving back to the community and gaining 30 hours for scholarships? This day camp will take youth around the county to help out. Youth must attend all 5 days to receive total hours. Some transportation is available, youth may drive themselves.

Florida Outdoors: June 20-23 Ages 9-13 Cost:: \$60 Bring Lunch Each Day

Explore Florida! Learn about freshwater, saltwater, and forest ecosystems while experiencing them. Transportation will be provided.

Sweet Treats: July 11-14 Ages 8-13 Cost:: \$60 Bring Lunch Mon-Wed

Participants will learn where our food comes from! Seeing sugar in the field to eating it in desserts, it plays an important part of the many foods we eat. Come learn about, and eat, some sweet treats!

Wood Working: July 25-27 Ages 10+ Cost:: \$60 Bring Lunch Each Day

Learn how to use tools and create with wood! This camp will teach participants wood working skills and let them build their own creations!

Transportation will be provided. Registration and payment is due two weeks prior to camp. All ages are as of 09/01/2021. Payment is required to secure registration. Payment plans available upon request. Registration opens on [4-H Online](#) April 11th!

4-H Club Meetings & Events

- **Baker's Busy Bees**— No meeting this month!
- [COUNTY EVENTS ENTRIES DUE APRIL 11TH](#) by midnight
- **Livestock Club**— April 26th at 6pm Ag Center Auditorium.



Florida's Native Flora & Fauna

By: Alicia Lamborn, Environmental Horticulture Agent

Featuring some of Florida's native flora (plant life) and fauna (animal life) so you can learn to recognize, appreciate, and protect native species. We'll also aim to dispel myths and provide tips for managing conflicts with wildlife.

Pocket Gophers



The Southeastern pocket gopher (*Geomys pinetis*) is a burrowing rodent native to the southeastern United States. Their range is mostly restricted to dry, deep sandy soils of Florida, Georgia, and Alabama where they are most abundant in pine flatwoods, pine-oak woodlands, and grassy fields.

Their name comes from their fur-lined cheek pouches or pockets that they use to store and transport food to their

underground burrows. Strictly herbivores, pocket gophers feed on a variety of plants including roots, forbs, shrubs, and grasses.

Adults can grow up to nearly 12 inches in length and are said to weigh up to two-thirds of pound. They rarely leave their burrow systems which can stretch to nearly 500 feet in length!



Pocket gophers are historically known as pests in agricultural fields where they are attracted to crops such as sweet potato, peanut, and sugar cane. Homeowners may also find their giant sandy mounds a nuisance. But these creatures are also considered [important ecological engineers](#) because their tunnels are a source of shelter for wildlife, and they till, aerate, and cycle soil nutrients leading to enhanced plant productivity and greater diversity!



Photo credits: Alicia Lamborn, UF/IFAS

Lyre-leaf Sage

Lyre-leaf sage (*Salvia lyrata*) is an attractive native perennial plant found growing in open woodlands, meadows, roadsides, and landscapes.

The plant blooms in late winter through late spring, producing spikes of bluish lavender flowers that are tubular shaped. Like other members of the mint family, it has square stems and the flowers are two-lipped. The exposed lower lip provides an excellent landing platform for bees.



Credit: Mary Salinas, UF/IFAS

The leaves are lyre-shaped and deeply lobed, forming basal rosettes. Purplish-red to brownish patches appear along the leaf midribs. In winter, the leaves are purple in color. These distinct characteristics make the plant easy to identify, even when it is not flowering.



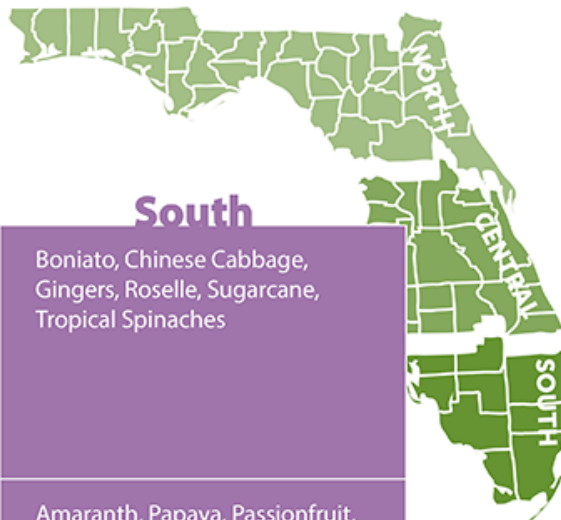
A local yard of lyre-leaf sage wildflowers.
Credit: Stephanie Thomas

Lyre-leaf sage spreads easily by seed. Collect the seeds as the capsules begin to dry out to spread to new areas of the yard or plant in garden beds. Alternatively, let the plants seed out on their own before mowing resumes in spring.

Extension Tidbits

EDIBLES TO PLANT IN

April



	North	Central	South
 Easily Survives Transplanting	Boniato, Gingers, Roselle, Tomatillo, Tomatoes	Boniato, Chinese Cabbage, Gingers, Roselle, Sugarcane, Swiss Chard, Tropical Spinaches	Boniato, Chinese Cabbage, Gingers, Roselle, Sugarcane, Tropical Spinaches
 Transplant Carefully	Amaranth, Calabaza, Long Squash, Luffa, Papaya, Passionfruit, Seminole Pumpkin, Sweet Potatoes	Amaranth, Calabaza, Long Squash, Luffa, Papaya, Passionfruit, Pigeon Pea, Pineapple, Seminole Pumpkin, Sweet Potatoes, Yucca	Amaranth, Papaya, Passionfruit, Pineapple, Sweet Potatoes, Yucca
 Use Seeds	Beans (bush, lima, pole), Cantaloupes, Chayote, Corn, Cucumbers, Okra, Peanuts, Peas (southern), Squashes, Watermelon	Beans (bush, pole), Chayote, Corn, Okra, Peanuts, Peas (southern), Squash	Beans (bush, lima, pole), Chayote, Peas (southern)



UF IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA



Gardening
SOLUTIONS

For more information, please visit
[GardeningSolutions.ifas.ufl.edu](https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu)

Florida Zucchini Squash Fritters

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Florida zucchini, shredded
- 1 Florida squash, shredded
- ½ cup carrots, shredded
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 tablespoons fresh herbs (thyme or parsley), finely chopped
- ½ cup parmesan, shredded
- 2 eggs
- Salt to taste

PREPARATION

Combine all ingredients. *You may want to squeeze liquid out of the squash and zucchini after shredding. Preheat a large sauté pan and add butter. Dollop spoonfuls of fritter mix into hot pan and fry 3 to 4 minutes on both sides until golden brown. Serve with applesauce and sour cream. Add salt after they are cooked. Adding initially will result in additional water in squash and zucchini. [From: https://www.followfreshfromflorida.com/recipes/florida-zucchini-fritters](https://www.followfreshfromflorida.com/recipes/florida-zucchini-fritters)

