



# The Baker Bulletin

A  
Baker County  
Extension  
Service Monthly  
Newsletter

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

Horticulture	2
Family & Consumer Sciences	3
Calendar	4
Upcoming Events	5
4-H	6
Agriculture	7
Notices	8

Dear Extension Friends,

For our last newsletter of 2011, I would like to thank everyone associated with the Baker County Extension Service for a productive and eventful year. We had plenty of programs this year and are planning even more activities for 2012. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our new 4-H Agent for Baker County, Ms. Shaina Bennett. Shaina will begin her career with Baker County on December 9. Please help us to give her a warm Baker County welcome. As always, if we can be of assistance to you or your family, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Davis  
County Extension Director / Ag Agent  
Baker County Extension Service



## Contact Information—Baker County Extension Service

1025 W. Macclenny Ave., Macclenny, FL 32063

Phone: (904) 259-3520, FAX: (904) 259-9034

Email: baker@ifas.ufl.edu Hours: M—F 8:30am to 5:00pm (Closed Noon to 1:00pm for Lunch)

**Michael Davis, Ph.D.**

Agriculture Agent



**Alicia Lamborn**

Horticulture Agent



**Melanie Thomas**

Family & Consumer Sciences Agent



**Shaina Bennett**

4-H Agent



# Highlights in Horticulture

By:

2

*Alicia Lamborn,  
Horticulture Agent*



## **Species Spotlight: Poinsettias**



A native to Mexico, the poinsettia plant was originally used by the Aztecs during fall celebrations and to produce a red dye. In their native habitat, poinsettias are flowering perennial shrubs that grow up to ten feet tall. When grown in greenhouses however, their size and flowering time can be manipulated, making them perfect for decorating our homes during the holiday season.

In contrary to popular belief, poinsettias are not poisonous, although some people are allergic to the white, milky sap the plant produces. The showy colored parts of poinsettias that many people refer to as flowers, are actually colored modified leaves called bracts. The actual flowers of the plant, called cyathia, are located in the center of the colored bracts. When selecting a poinsettia choose a plant that looks full, has dark green foliage, and fully colored bracts. Then check the true flowers—the plant will last longer if the flowers are green or red-tipped and fresh looking. If you see yellow pollen or that some of the flowers are missing (fallen off) then choose a different plant. When caring for your potted poinsettias inside, keep them in a brightly lit area, away from drying or chilly drafts. They prefer daytime temperatures of about 75 to 80°F and a night temperature of 65°F. Water only when the surface of the soil is dry to the touch, removing excess water from the saucer or pot sleeve. Do not apply fertilizer. They will tolerate full sun on a porch or patio but must be protected from frost and freezes.

The best poinsettias for establishing in the landscape are ones that have been given good lighting and remained green and healthy. Plant your potted poinsettia as soon as danger of frost is past, being sure to choose a bright location that will not receive any artificial light at night. Also, cut off the fading bracts, leaving 4-6 inches of the stem on each branch. Keep the plant mulched and well watered until established. Fertilize monthly from May to September. Discontinue any pruning after September 10th since flower buds will begin to develop in October if conditions (temperature and day length) are optimal. Some say that the traditional red varieties establish better than other colors. This is because when breeders focus on creating new and exciting colors, patterns, and unique features, any cold hardiness of the plant is usually lost. Purchasing plants that are blooming in mid-Nov. may increase your chances of having them bloom outside before the freezes come the following year. But because growers manipulate the blooming time of plants, one can never be sure unless the plant is labeled with the bloom time.

Due to intensive breeding, poinsettias are now available in a large variety of colors and color combinations, including pink, peach, burgundy, white, yellow, orange, and marbled colors as well. You can also find plants with varying leaf shapes and bract sizes, making them more unique. If you'd like to see first hand the hundreds of varieties created, be sure to visit the Poinsettia Show in Gainesville on December 8th (visit [www.gatorpoinsettia.com](http://www.gatorpoinsettia.com) for more details).

## **Master Gardeners...at your service!**

Do you have questions about your lawn, trees, flowers, vegetables, or how to manage landscape pests?

### **Let The Master Gardeners Help You!**

They can identify your plants and insects, answer your questions, or offer you suggestions.

### **New Master Gardeners Office Hours:**

**Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9am to Noon**

If you would like their assistance, just give them a call or schedule an appointment.

And if they don't know the answer, they will research it for you!

## House & Home: Holiday Decorating Safety

It's that time of year again to dress your home from top to bottom in festive holiday colors. Before you crawl up on the roof to string the Christmas lights, you need to know that every year hospital emergency rooms treat about 12,500 people for injuries related to holiday lights, decorations and Christmas trees according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

Statistics show that Christmas trees alone are responsible for hundreds of fires, resulting in an average 17 deaths and \$13 million in property damage annually. In addition, holiday candles have been linked to an annual average of 150 deaths and \$385 million in property damage and loss. The flickering lights can be beautiful to look at if done safely. The CPSC has compiled the following list of tips to help keep your holiday season safe and beautiful.



### Trees:

- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant." Although this label does not mean the tree won't catch fire, it does indicate the tree is more resistant to burning.
- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and do not break when bent between your fingers. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.
- When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces and radiators. Because heated rooms dry live trees out rapidly, be sure to keep the stand filled with water.
- Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways.










### Lights:

- Indoors or outside, use only lights that have been tested for safety by a nationally-recognized testing laboratory, such as UL or ETL. This indicates conformance with safety standards.
- Check each set of lights, new and old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Throw away damaged sets.
- If using an extension cord, make sure it is rated for the intended use.
- Do not use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.
- Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use.
- Outdoor electric lights and decorations should be plugged into circuits protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to protect against electric shock. Portable outdoor GFCIs can be purchased where electrical supplies are sold. GFCIs can also be installed permanently to household circuits by a qualified electrician.
- Turn off all holiday lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.
- Use caution when removing outdoor holiday lights. Never pull or tug on lights – this could cause stress on the connections that could create a fire hazard.

### Candles and Other Decorations:

- Keep burning candles within sight.
- Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens. Always use non-flammable holders, and place candles out of reach of children and pets.
- In homes with small children, take special care to avoid sharp or breakable decorations, keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children who could swallow or inhale small pieces, and avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a child to eat them.
- To avoid eye and skin irritation, wear gloves when decorating with spun glass "angel hair."
- To avoid lung irritation, follow container directions carefully while decorating with artificial snow sprays.

# December 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 	2	3 
4	5	6  	7	8 	9	10
11	12 	13 	14 	15 	16	17
18	19	20 	21	22	23 Extension Office Closed	24
25	26 Extension Office Closed	27	28	29	30	31

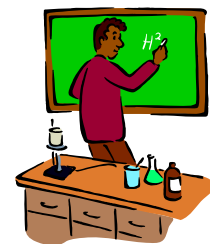
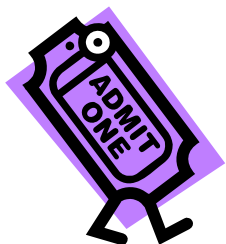
Upcoming Programs are marked with a Program Area Symbol. Please match these symbols with the list on the following page for more information about the program.



# Upcoming Programs & Events

Programs will be held at the Baker County Extension Office (Agricultural Center) unless otherwise noted.

- Dec. 1** **Tri-County Beef Update**, 6pm—8pm, Baker County Extension Service, 1025W. Macclenny Ave, Macclenny, FL 32063. This workshop is designed for beef producers in Baker, Bradford and Union Counties. Topics will include marketing and reproduction. Registration is \$5 per person and will include dinner.
- Dec. 3** **Growing Farm Profits**, 8:30am—2:30pm, Duval County Extension Office, 1010N McDuff Ave., Jacksonville, FL. This program is designed for individuals who are interested in small scale or urban agricultural production. Topics include developing a business plan for your operation, marketing, financial considerations and regulations for selling products in Florida. For more information contact The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at the University of North Florida Phone: 904-620-2476, [info@floridasmallfarms.org](mailto:info@floridasmallfarms.org).
- Dec. 6** **Private Pesticide Applicator School & Examinations**, 8:30am—5:00pm, North Florida Research and Education Center-Suwannee Valley CR 136. This school will provide instruction and examinations for persons interested in obtaining a private applicator restricted use pesticides license. CEUs will be available for those who already have the license. There will be 7 CEUs offers (3 CORE and 4 Private Applicator). Registration is \$40 per individual for the exam (includes books) or \$10 per person for CEUs only. Please contact the Suwannee County Extension Office at 386-362-2771 to register or for additional details.
- Dec. 14** **Forest Stewardship PolyCom Workshop: Plan for the Future of Your Land**, 1pm—4pm, broadcast via PolyCom to Extension Facilities across Florida. This workshop will provide guidance on effective succession planting, an estate tax update and important estate planning tips and guidance on conservation planning options and associated tax benefits. **CFEs pending**. Additional details can be found online at <http://fsp-videoconference121411.eventbrite.com>. This event will be offered at the Baker County Extension Office. Please RSVP to 904-259-3520 by 5:00pm on Monday Dec. 12 to attend.



## 4-H Events & Club Meetings for December

- December 6—Hoof-N-Around—6:30pm, Classroom  
 December 8—HorsePower—6:30pm, Classroom  
 December 12—Livestock—6:00pm, Auditorium  
 December 13—Cloverleaf Cloggers—7:00pm, Keller Intermediate Cafeteria  
 December 15—Forestry—6:00pm, Classroom  
 December 20—Jr. Master Gardeners—6:00pm, Classroom

# The Clover Chronicle

By:

*Michael Davis,  
Extension Director*

6

December Club Meeting dates are as follows: Hoof-N-Around will be on December 6th @ 6:30, Horsepower will be on the 8th at 6:30, Livestock Christmas Party/meeting will be on the 12th @ 6pm in the Auditorium, Cloverleaf Cloggers will be on the 13th @ 7pm @ Keller Intermediate Cafeteria and there will be no Club meeting for the Cloggers on December 27th due to the Christmas Holidays, Forestry will be on the 15th @ 6pm and Junior Master Gardeners will be on the 20th @ 6pm. All meetings will be held here at the Extension Office Classroom/ Auditorium unless otherwise specified. Note that a few Club dates have been changed or canceled due to the Christmas Holidays. If you have children that are still interested in signing up and joining any of the 4-H Clubs, visit our web site at <http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu> or you may call the Extension Office @ 904-259-3520 and speak to Michael Davis or Carlena Tyson. Just a reminder: Our new 4-H Agent Shaina Bennett will be starting here with us on December 9th. She brings a great deal of knowledge and we all look forward to her coming and making her feel welcome.



is AMAZING!



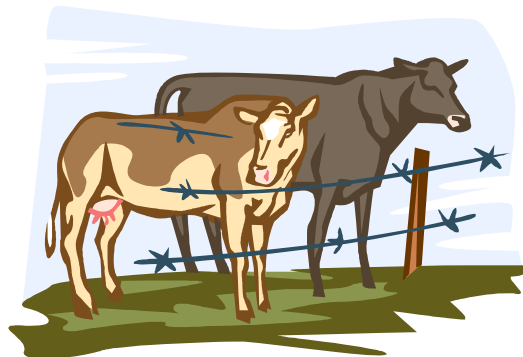
## **A Well Planned 4-H Club Meeting Provides an Opportunity to:**

- ⇒ Make new friends
- ⇒ Share Ideas
- ⇒ Gain new knowledge and skills
- ⇒ Enjoy planned recreation
- ⇒ Develop self-confidence and leadership
- ⇒ Help make decisions
- ⇒ Gain a sense of pride
- ⇒ Learn to work as part of a team



## Tips for Saving Money in Cattle Operations

There is not a lot of relief for the cattle farmer when it comes to feeding, especially during the winter months. Approximately 60% of the yearly cost of cow ownership is taken up by the cost of feed. The following tips may allow you to keep a little more green in your back pocket, rather than paying for feed.



- **Weigh your hay**—hay bales can lose dry matter during storage, especially if they are not protected. A representative sample can help you gauge use. Buy by the weight, not by the bale.
- **Test hay for nutrient content and nitrate level**—this will help you to determine which class of cattle the hay is best suited for. Tests typically run about \$18 per sample for protein, energy, moisture and nitrate levels.
- **Use body condition score (BCS) on your cattle**—cattle with a BCS score of 4 or lower will need to be supplemented before the next calving. Cattle with a BCS of 7 or higher should be put on a diet unless that have just calved.
- **Sort cattle according to BCS and calving schedule**—this will help keep cows that are generally in the same weight class together.
- **Cull deliberately**—make sure to cull those animals that do not fit with your production outlook for the next year.
- **Stockpile forage for winter.**
- **Use strip-grazing, if possible.**

## Winter Weed Control Options

There are many herbicide options for winter weed control. Choosing the right one for the types of weeds that you have and your production schedule will help to save you money and potentially increase the yield of your pasture.

**Glyphosate**—this herbicide can be used in areas where bermudagrass goes completely dormant during the winter. Provides control over winter grasses (except ryegrass) and broadleaf weeds. Do not use glyphosate if there is any green tissue present in the bermudagrass.

**2,4-D**—this herbicide is one of the most inexpensive to use in controlling broadleaf weeds. It is effective on wild radish, cutleaf evening primrose and small thistles, but may need to be used in higher quantities if the radish is blooming or if thistles are larger than 1 foot in diameter.

**Metsulfuron**—this herbicide was formerly sold under the trade name Cimarron, but is now available under other trade names. It is inexpensive and controls a variety of broadleaf weeds including wild radish, red sorrel and chickweed. Advantages of metsulfuron include no injury to bermudagrass and no grazing or haying restrictions.



**Baker County Extension Service**

1025 West Macclenny Avenue  
Macclenny, FL 32063

Phone: (904) 259-3520

FAX: (904) 259-9034

Email: michael.davis@ufl.edu

Website: http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu

Non-Profit Org.  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 17  
Macclenny FL 32063

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Extension programs are open to all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, handicap, or national origin. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person needing a special accommodation to participate in any activity, should contact the Baker County Cooperative Extension Service at 1025 West Macclenny Avenue, Macclenny, FL 32063 or telephone (904) 259-3520 no later than five (5) days prior to the event. Hearing impaired persons can access the foregoing telephone by contacting the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8770 (voice) or 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).



## 2012 Master Gardener Training Starts Soon!

**Applications accepted until January 31st.**



The Master Gardener program is a national program of volunteers who help the Extension Service by extending unbiased, research-based horticultural information to people in our community who need that information. This is a great opportunity for anyone who enjoys helping others and wants to volunteer for our community.

In Baker County, Master Gardener volunteers work in the Extension office answering homeowner questions, creating educational materials, and work with the Horticulture Extension Agent to plan educational programs. Volunteers also help plant and maintain demonstration gardens at the office and conduct gardening programs for adults and youth.

The training will take place at the Baker County Extension Office on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00am to 1:00pm starting February 14th through March 29th. The cost for all training materials is \$60 (\$65 for couples).

For more detailed information on the Master Gardener Program, please visit our website ([baker.ifas.ufl.edu](http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu)) or stop by the Extension office for an application packet.

If you are interested in the training, but do not wish to volunteer for the Extension Service then consider taking our Florida Gardener Crash Course planned for Spring of 2012.