



The Baker Bulletin

A
Baker County
Extension
Service Monthly
Newsletter

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Dear Extension Friends,

Thank you all for another wonderful year serving the people of Baker County. I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. We would also like to welcome our newest employee, Matthew Butcher as part-time Program Assistant. Matthew is a student at Baker County High and joined the office in November. Thank you to all of our supporters and clientele. As always, if we can help you in any way, 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

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Position Vacant

Family & Consumer
Sciences Agent



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4-H Agent



Highlights in Horticulture

By:

Alicia Lamborn,
Horticulture Agent

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Growing Blueberries

The best time to plant blueberries is from mid-December to mid-February.



Blueberries are a great choice for edible landscapes, but a little planning and preparation is required for success. Blueberries require highly acidic (pH 4.0 to 5.5), well-drained soils high in organic matter, and a place in full sun (4-5 hours of full sun per day) with plenty of room to grow (away from tree roots, except pines, and at least 20 feet away from building foundations). A soil test from the Extension Office can determine your current soil pH and adding sphagnum peat moss before planting will help lower the pH for your blueberries. Blueberries should be planted in winter, set a few inches above soil level and mulched with pine bark to improve soil condition and acidity.

In North Florida, select Rabbiteye varieties which are better suited for our climate than the Southern Highbush varieties grown in Central and South Florida. Rabbiteyes require cross-pollination and growing different varieties will result in higher yields of fruit. Planting a mix of early-season varieties and mid- to late-season varieties will also extend the harvest season from May to July. Early-season cultivars include 'Austin', 'Beckyblue', 'Bonita', and 'Climax', and for best pollination, plant 'Climax' with any of the others. Mid- to late-season cultivars include 'Brightwell', 'Powderblue', 'Tifblue', and 'Woodard', all of which are generally more productive because they are far less susceptible to late winter freezes.

Blueberries should be pruned at the time of planting. Select the tallest, strongest cane and leave it unpruned. Remove the weak, "twiggy" growth at the base of the plant. If the plant has a large top compared with the root system, remove about one-third of the top by selectively pruning the least vigorous growth and cutting back the tops of vigorous canes by several inches.

While extremely difficult for some people, it is important to remove the flowers before fruit set occurs during the first growing season. This will prevent fruiting during the first year, but will promote strong vegetative growth and good plant establishment which will ultimately be better for your plant in the long run.

For more information on blueberries, their care, plus pests and diseases, visit:

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/files/MG/MG35900.pdf>

Did You Know?

Blueberries were first cultivated in Florida in 1886 when native blueberries, called wild rabbiteyes, were dug from areas of the St. Mary's River and Suwannee River and planted in rows. But it wasn't until 1951 that Ralph Sharpe with the University of Florida crossed New Jersey highbush varieties with a Florida scrub blueberry, creating a new variety. Twenty-five years later, his blueberry breeding program paid off, and the University of Florida released its first cultivar named 'Sharpblue' in Ralph's honor.



Holiday Plants

Christmas Cactus

Written by Roberta Koniuchowsky,
Baker County Master Gardener Volunteer

Known as a popular gift during the holiday season, Christmas Cactus is a great gift choice for friends and family members who enjoy container gardening because it is a cactus with no thorns! A native of the Brazilian rainforest, this plant is naturally found growing off of tree trunks and branches, in a similar manner to orchids. The wide, flat, green segmented stems look like small paddles with blooms that hang from the tip of each branch. It blooms in a variety of different colors.

In north Florida, the Christmas Cactus will easily adapt to growing on a shady patio for most of the year, enjoying temperatures anywhere between the 70's to 80's in summer and 50's in winter. During winter months the plant will do best if brought indoors and kept away from either freezing temperatures or direct heat from fireplaces or heat vents.

In order for Christmas Cactus to bloom, it needs long periods of darkness (around 12 hours) and cool temperatures. Long night/short day treatment is important for this cactus if it is growing indoors, in order to stimulate the plant to form buds. If treatment starts in October, the plant will bloom in mid to late December. During the day it is best kept in a well-lit spot but out of direct sunlight. Water it just enough to keep it from drying out as overwatering can cause the roots to rot. Once the plant begins to bud, watering should be reduced somewhat. Drastic changes in amount of light, jumps in temperature and too much water can cause the buds to drop, so the plant needs to be treated somewhat gently.

Once the flowering period is ended, dead flowers should be removed along with the attached segment. This will cause the plant to branch during the coming growing period and then produce more blooms next winter!

Christmas Trees

Written by Mary Ann Ray,
Baker County Master Gardener Volunteer

Whether you call it a Christmas tree or holiday bush, the use of evergreen trees dates back centuries. However, Christmas trees have only been sold in the U.S. since about 1850.

An average of 35 million trees are produced each year and 95% are shipped or sold from tree farms. They are grown in every state of the U.S., taking 7 to 10 years to mature. In Florida, the main species of trees grown for this purpose are Red Cedars, Virginia Pines, Sand Pines, Spruce Pines, and Leyland Cypress.

When shopping for a tree, shake the tree to see if any green needles fall. Then break a few needles to check for fragrance. This will help you select a fresh tree that has been cut for only a short period of time. Just remember to also choose a tree that will fit in your stand.










If you aren't hand picking your tree directly from the field at the tree farm, then likely your tree has been cut for more than 1 hour, requiring a fresh cut to the base, made 1 to 3 inches from the original cut. Placing your tree immediately in the tree stand that holds 1 to 2 gallons of water will help it stay fresh through the holiday season. And don't forget to check your tree stand everyday and refill that water since a fresh tree may use more than a gallon a day.

Keeping your tree away from fireplaces, space heaters and heat vents will also help keep your tree fresh and avoid fire dangers.

After the holidays are over, recycle your tree if possible. Branches can be cut up and used as mulch in plant beds or added to a compost pile for further decomposition.



December 2013

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	24	25  Extension Office Closed	26	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.



4-H



Horticulture

Family &
Consumer Sciences

Agriculture

Upcoming Programs & Events

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

- Dec. 3** **Small Projects for Small Farms: Small Engine Repair, Bushnell, FL.** For additional information and to register, please call Cami E. McAvoy at 352-793-2728, ext. 234 or Jonael Bosques-Mendez at 352-671-8400. Additional information can be found online by visiting the Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises calendar at http://smallfarms.ifas.ufl.edu/events_calendar.html.
- Dec. 4** **Building Your Own Farm's Food Safety Manual, Bartow, FL.** To register online please visit <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/2013-building-your-farms-food-safety-manual-tickets-8426444723>. For additional information about this program, please contact Mary Beth Henry at 863-519-1049.
- Dec. 7** **Landowner Field Tour, Archer, FL.** For additional information about this program, please contact Joe Vaughn at Joseph.Vaughn@MyFWC.com or call 352-955-2241.
- Dec. 11** **Forest Certification Workshop, DeFuniak Springs, FL.** This one day workshop will focus on 1) the current status of the major certification systems in North America along with the group certification process for each of the systems and 2) chain of custody and certified forest product labeling. For additional information, please contact Rose Godfrey at rosa23@ufl.edu or call 352-219-8717.
- Dec. 15-16** **Starting a Successful Hydroponic Business, Hobe Sound, FL.** For additional information on this program, please contact Sarah White at 386-362-1725, ext. 102 or email sewhite@ufl.edu.
- Jan. 24** **Small Scale Mushroom Production, Live Oak, FL.** For additional information on this program, please contact Sarah White at 386-362-1725, ext. 102 or email sewhite@ufl.edu.



4-H Club Meetings & Events:

All County 4-H Club—December 17,
6:30pm, Auditorium

Livestock Club—December 17,
6:30pm, Auditorium

Cloverleaf Cloggers— Tuesdays, 7:00pm,
Fabulous Foot Works

Important Information Regarding 4-H Enrollment

Enrollment and re-enrollment for 4-H is now 100% digital. You can go to <http://bit.ly/IVY456> to enroll for the new 4-H year. However, you will not be approved and cannot participate without paying your \$1 insurance fee. Please do this as soon as you register for the new 4-H year at the Extension Office.



Lucky Clover Chronicle

By:

*Shaina Bennett,
4-H Extension Agent*



Christmas Time is Here!

We will be having the County 4-H Christmas Party on Tuesday, December 17th from 6:30-7:30 pm in the Auditorium. EVERYONE is welcome. Please bring a non-perishable food item or the item for the sponsored family. **Please bring a finger**

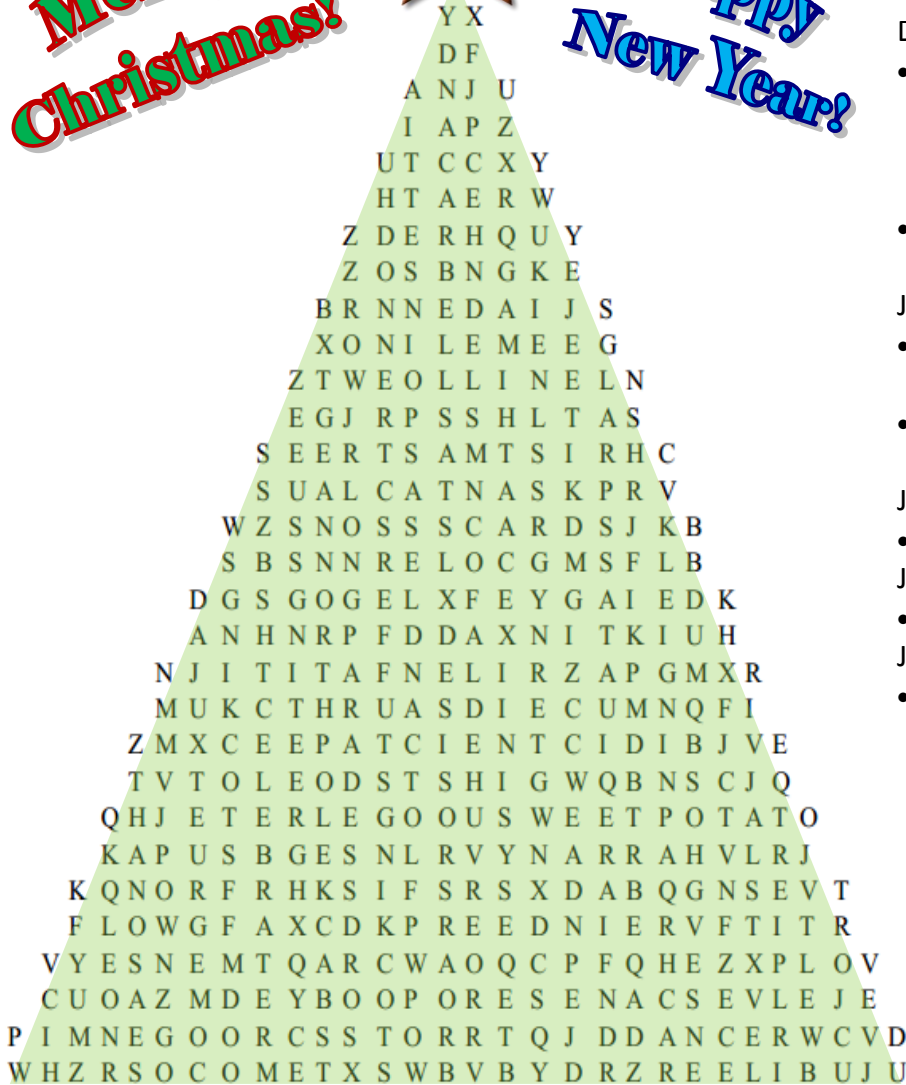
food, appetizer or dessert. I hope that everyone has a safe and happy Christmas and New Year holiday!

Shaina L. Bennett

Merry Christmas!



Happy New Year!



- | | | | |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|------------------|
| BELLS | CANDY | SANTA CLAUS | STOCKINGSTUFFERS |
| CANDLES | CANES | BLITZEN | STOCKINGS |
| CARDS | FRUITCAKE | COMET | TIDINGS |
| CELEBRATE | HAM | CUPID | REINDEER |
| GREETINGS | SWEETPOTATO | DANCER | SLED |
| HOLIDAY | MISTLETOE | DONNER | SLEIGH |
| JUBILEE | POINSETTIA | PRANCER | PARTY |
| NOEL | WREATH | VIXEN | SCROOGE |
| PARADES | CHRISTMASTREE | FAIRIES | SEASON |
| | ELVES | NORTHPOLE | |

Important Dates to Remember:

December 6-8-

- 2nd Executive Board, Camp Ocala

December 31-

- **Deadline for RE-ENROLLMENT. If you are not enrolled for the 4-H year by the deadline you will NOT be eligible to show in the 2014 Baker County Fair.** \$1 must be paid as well!
- Thank you notes and Livestock Contracts are due to the 4-H Office by 5pm.

January 2-

- Livestock Evaluation & Meats Judging Clinic Deadline to Register
- Leadership Adventure Weekend Registration Deadline

January 10-11-

- Livestock Evaluation & Meats Judging Clinic

January 15-

- Hog-n-Ham Registration Deadline

January 20-

- Hog-n-Ham Workshop

Birthdays for December:

Wishing all of you a very **happy birthday** from the Baker County Extension Office!

Dec. 09- Alex Stokes

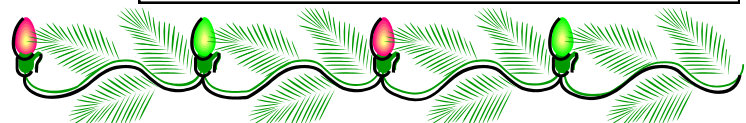
Dec. 14- Mr. Randal Hodges

Dec. 15- Emily Hilliard

Dec. 17- Kash Addy



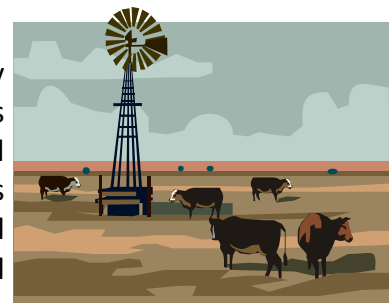
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New Florida Cattle Identification Rule Effective in January

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) is continuously working with the cattle industry in Florida to prevent, diagnose and control serious disease. To this end, FDACS has proposed a new Cattle Identification Rule that will become effective in January 2014. The purpose of the rule is to improve the state's ability to trace livestock, including cattle and bison, in the event of a serious animal disease outbreak. Below are a few common questions about the new rule. Additional information can be found on the FDACS Division of Animal Industry website:

(<http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Animal-Industry/Florida-Cattle-Identification>)



What animals are included?

All adult cattle and bison, unless specifically exempt, moving within the state of Florida must have official, individual identification.

What animals are exempt?

The following animals are exempt from the identification rule:

- Animals moving directly to recognized slaughter establishments
- Animals moving to approved tagging sites to be tagged
- Animals moving to another premises, within the same ownership, as part of normal management practices

What about cattle less than 18 months of age?

- Cattle under 18 months of age are exempt from the Florida Rule.
- Cattle under 18 months of age are exempt from the Federal Rule, unless they are moved interstate for shows, exhibitions, rodeos or recreational events.
- All dairy animals that are sexually intact must be identified to move interstate. Steers and spayed heifers born prior to March 11, 2013 are exempt from this. All dairy animals born after March 11, 2013 must be officially identified to move interstate.

Can I move my adult cattle from one pasture to another without official identification?

Yes. Cattle that remain under common ownership that are moved from one premises to another as part of normal farming or ranching operations are exempt from the identification requirements of the rule.

What tags can be used?

Only tags that are considered 'Official Identification Devices' by the USDA can be used as official ID. These tags have unique numbers that are tracked by their manufacturers and are imprinted with the USDA Official Eartag Shield. These tags may be purchased from approved tag manufacturers or metal tags may be provided at no cost by the USDA. The USDA website, <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/traceability/>.

Where can cattle be tagged and who applies the tags?

Official identification tags can be applied by the cattle owner, veterinarian or other person employed or contracted by the owner. The tags can be applied at the owner's premises or at approved tagging site by the approved tagging manager or person employed by the tagging site manager. Approved tagging sites (those 'for hire') must complete an application and agreement pertaining to individual identification devices and record-keeping.

Baker County Extension Service
1025 West Macclenny Avenue
Macclenny, FL 32063

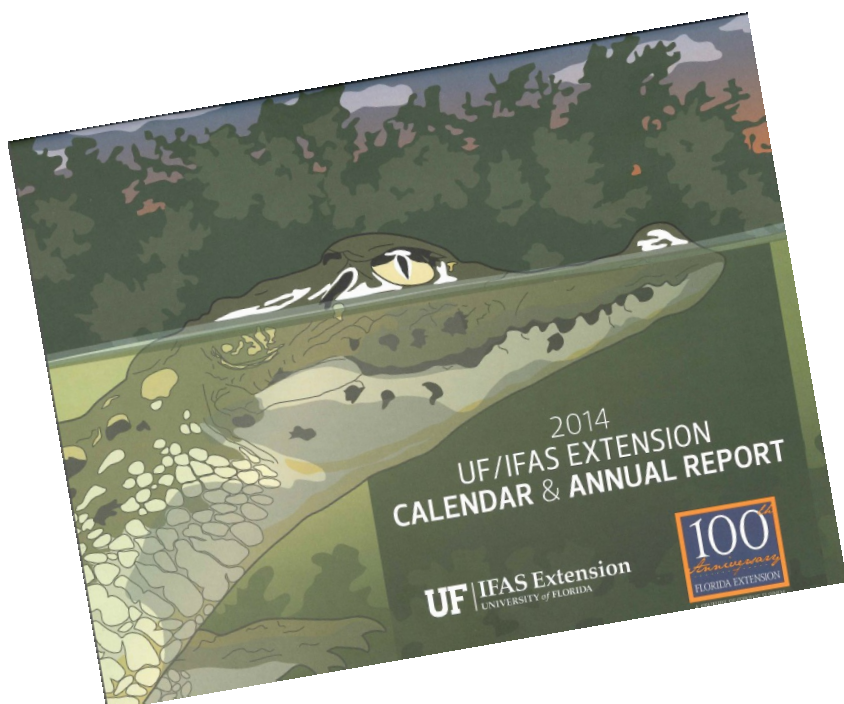
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Extension programs are open to all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, handicap, or national origin. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person needing a special accommodation to participate in any activity, should contact 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).

2014 UF/IFAS Extension Calendars Now Available!



Stop by the Baker County Extension Office to pick up a free 2014 calendar filled with colorful photos, interesting facts from the past 150 years, and practical solutions for your life!

Available while supplies last.