



The Baker Bulletin

A
Baker County
Extension
Service Monthly
Newsletter

Baker County Extension Service

1025 W. Macclenny Ave.
Macclenny, FL 32063

Phone: (904) 259-3520

Email: baker@ifas.ufl.edu

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,

With the return of truly cold weather, many of us are looking forward to spring. But it wasn't that long ago that Baker County experienced regular hard freezes and temps that dropped to 17 degrees at least one night each winter! I can even remember having frost several days into April one year! All of which is a good reminder to plant cold hardy species and avoid getting too early of a start on the spring vegetable garden unless you have a [greenhouse](#) or [high tunnel](#). Stay warm this month!

Sincerely,

Alicia Lamborn, County Director
UF/IFAS Extension Baker County

<http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu>

<http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/bakerco>

[Baker County Garden Spot](#)
[Baker County 4-H](#)

Check out our Livestock
[Google Site!](#)

Programs & Events

- Feb 11 **Transplant Production 101** Suwannee Valley Agricultural Extension Center, 8202 County Road 417, Live Oak, FL 32060. Space is limited. [Register here](#)
- Feb 15 **Baker's Busy Bees 4-H Club Meeting @ 6pm**, Extension Office Classroom (new members welcome)
- Feb 22 **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 **Strawberry Gardening Class** (Self-Paced Course — Free!) Class topics include how to select, plant, and grow strawberries in the home garden. [Register here](#)
- Online **Selling Backyard Poultry Products** (Self-Paced, Online Course) [Register here.](#)
- Mar 26 **Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale** Baker County Extension Arboretum — see page 8.

Highlights in Horticulture

By:
Alicia Lamborn,
Horticulture Agent



TIPS FOR PRUNING ROSES

NORTH & CENTRAL FLORIDA GARDENERS
PRUNE ROSES IN LATE FEBRUARY
FOR BLOOMS 8-12 WEEKS LATER

Climbers:

Train the main canes to grow horizontally on the trellis using loose zip ties. These canes grow vertical shoots that produce flowers. Once trained, the vertical shoots pointing upward are cut back to 2-3 buds each year, while the shoots growing downward or away (horizontally) from the trellis are completely removed. If the main canes have been trained onto an arbor, reduce the side branches so they are no more than 4-6 inches in length after pruning. Always remove main canes that are dead, diseased, or injured due to crossing/rubbing. As needed, retrain main canes to grow horizontally or remove older canes to reduce crowding of canes.

Non-Climbers:

Major yearly pruning consists of shortening main canes and lateral branches, and removing twigs and canes that are dead, diseased, injured, or spindly. Leave at least half the length of each main cane that is 1-3 years old. Shrub-type roses can be cut back by 1/3 to 1/2 their original size each year to remove old spindly growth and promote flowering, as needed.

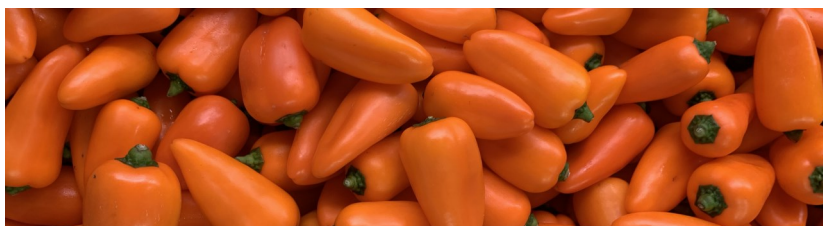
Sanitation

After the winter pruning, remove all leaves from the plants, and rake the area beneath the bush to remove dead and diseased leaves that have fallen during the year. Re-mulch immediately to create a barrier between the plant and the fungal spores on the ground to prevent re-infection.

Heirloom Vegetable Varieties vs. Hybrids

Heirlooms are old cultivars generated by handing down seeds from generation to generation. In order to be considered an heirloom, the variety must be true-to-type, open-pollinated, and it must be in use for at least 50 years. This means that pollination occurs by insects, birds, wind, or any other natural means, and the plants produced will be identical to the parent plant (assuming they haven't been accidentally exposed to cross-pollination from being planted too close to another variety). Although heirlooms are not selected for traits such as disease resistance, they are usually selected for superior flavor, color, and texture. Because heirlooms are true-to-type, they will have consistent traits from one generation to the next; therefore, the seeds can be saved and regrown the following year.

Hybrids are modern-day cultivars, bred from two genetically different purebred varieties to produce fruit with desirable characteristics. These characteristics typically include plant vigor, adaptability to environmental stress, disease resistance, and growth uniformity from plant to plant. Because these hybrids are not true-to-type, the seeds can not be saved and regrown the following year. Hybrids are not the same as genetically engineered crops or GMOs, and both hybrid and heirloom seed can be organically produced.



Some Popular Heirloom Vegetable Varieties for Florida

Tomatoes: Arkansas Traveler, Brandywine, Cherokee Purple, Mortgage Lifter, Yellow Pear ([and more](#))

Peppers: California Wonder, Sweet Banana, Cubanelle, Aji Dulce, Serrano, Early Jalapeno, Caribbean Red Habanero, Datil, Hungarian Hot Wax ([and many more](#))

Eggplants: Black Beauty, Fengyuan Purple, Listada De Gandia, Long Purple, Ping Tung Long, Rosa Bianca, Rosita ([and more](#))

Barnyard Bulletin

By:
Alicia Halbritter,
Agriculture Agent



Introduction to Beekeeping

Are you interested in keeping bees for honey or to pollinate your garden plants? Check out these introductory steps & supplies needed to get started!

Equipment

You'll need to get the necessary equipment for beekeeping before setting up your hive. Three essential tools are the hive tools, smoker, and a bee suit. Hive tools are used to pry apart hive parts, like frames that have been 'glued' together by the bees combs. Smokers are utilized to 'calm' the bees with small puffs of smoke. Lastly, a bee suit helps protect the beekeeper from being stung, this is especially important for new keepers who may accidentally disturb a hive. Get more specific equipment & hive parts here: <https://canr.udel.edu/maarec/beekeeping-equipment/>



Pests & Diseases

Honey bees can be susceptible to a number of pests, predators, and diseases. From small pests like ants and mites to bigger problems like bears, it's important to utilize preventative measures and constant detection to determine if there is a problem in the hive. Utilize a bee management calendar to help remind you when to check for specific diseases or signs of pests. Colonies can be quickly decimated and therefore it's important to maintain regular checks. See the Florida Beekeeping Management Calendar here: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/IN848>



Important Nectar-Producing Plants

There are over 20,000 species of bees on the planet, only 9 of which produce honey. Nectar is a crucial part of a honey-bee colony and for that we need nectar producing plants. Baker county will typically offer North Florida flatwoods habitats which have a number of native nectar-producing plants. In addition to wild plants, you can plant specific species for your bees to feed on or offer supplemental feed in times of food scarcity.



Regulations

Florida is a state which requires each beekeeper to register their hives. Beekeepers are required by law to report hives to the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (FDACS) and to mark their unique firm number on each hive body. Registration must be renewed annually and routine inspections for diseases will be conducted. Certain regulations also apply if you plan to sell honey products, these are covered under Florida's cottage food laws.





Building Confidence for Valentine's Day

Youth's confidence drops as they hit adolescence. How can you as a parent help to build their confidence? By utilizing Valentine's Day as a chance to share with them all of the things you think are wonderful about them! Cut out hearts (14, one for each day leading up to Valentine's Day) and write special messages on each one. Then give one to them every day. You can put it on their bathroom mirror, their bedroom door, in their lunch, or any number of locations. I think that this activity can help you get closer to your kids and help them know how much you notice about them when we spend so much time at work or in front of a screen.

Kids! You can also do this for you parents to thank them and let them know that they are appreciated for everything that they do for you. Most times the job of being a parent is automatic and a thank you every once in a while is a nice while!. Below are some examples to help you figure out what to say.



From: <https://mrswebersneighborhood.com/2021/01/29/valentines-day-confidence-countdown-for-kids/>

- You are so brave.
- I love how cuddly you are when we read together.
- Thank you for always making me laugh.
- I love it when you open up and share your heart with me.
- You have the best laugh!
- You have a beautiful smile that lights up the room.
- I love listening to you read and hearing you sound out words
- Your heart for others inspires me.
- Your soul is beautiful.
- I love spending time with you.
- We are so blessed to call you our son/daughter.
- You are such a responsible kid — we appreciate you.
- Thank you for always being helpful with _____.
- It makes me proud to see what a good friend you are.
- I love our one-on-one time together.
- You spread joy wherever you go.
- Thank you for always having a good attitude when we go new places.
- You are a great listener.
- I love your heart for _____.
- I love how unique your soul is.
- Always stay true to yourself — you're awesome!
- I love that you set goals and then achieve them.
- I can always count on you to help me out.
- Your imagination is great for writing amazing stories.
- It makes me proud to hear you set a good example for others at school.
- I love your confidence!
- You are a great example to your siblings {cousins, friends, etc.}.
- I adore your passion for learning.
- I love when you voice your opinion.
- You are so fast and strong.
- I love how respectful you are to yourself and others.
- Thank you for always encouraging those around you.
- You inspire me to have a positive outlook.
- I love your stories at dinnertime!
- Your drawings always make me smile.
- Thank you for always being so flexible when plans change.
- You are fun to be around.
- I appreciate the enthusiasm you bring every time

4-H Club Meetings & Events

- **Baker's Busy Bees**— February 15th at 6pm 4-H Classroom; Extension Office
 - **Livestock Club**— February 22nd at 6pm location TBD.
 - **Hog and Ham ORIENTATION**—February 21st 4-8pm Register [HERE](#)

Florida's Native Flora & Fauna

By: Alicia Lamborn, Environmental Horticulture Agent

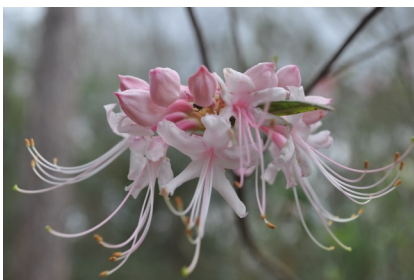
Featuring some of Florida's native flora (plant life) and fauna (animal life) so you can learn to recognize, appreciate, and protect native species. We'll also aim to dispel myths and provide tips for managing conflicts with wildlife.

Native Azaleas

The evergreen azaleas most commonly scattered through Florida home landscapes are hybrids originating from Asia. There are, however, species of Florida native azaleas which have smaller, more delicate-looking flowers with a very pleasant fragrance (non-natives have no fragrance).

These native azaleas bloom in spring around the same time as other azaleas, with colors ranging from pink to orange to yellow. Cultivars of these natives also exist. Like all azaleas, they prefer well-drained, acidic soil and filtered sunlight.

The two native species most commonly planted in landscapes include the Pinxter azalea (*Rhododendron canescens*) and the Florida flame azalea (*R. austrinum*). Both are deciduous, drought tolerant shrubs which can become quite large (6-15 feet).



The Pinxter azalea (above) and the Florida flame azalea (below) are both native, deciduous shrubs with fragrant flowers.

Photo credits: Alicia Lamborn, UF/IFAS



The Pinxter azalea (also called Piedmont azalea and bush honeysuckle), has showy pink flowers that appear in early spring, typically as the leaves begin to emerge.

The Florida flame azalea produces flowers that range in color from pale yellow to orange-red. Rarely, you may find a variegated specimen sold in nurseries.

A third native species, Chapman's azalea (*R. chapmanii*), is listed as one of Florida's rare and endangered plants. This species is also the only native evergreen rhododendron in the state of Florida. Growing to a height and width of 3 to 6 feet, it has tiny dark green leaves and pink flowers that appear before the new shoot growth commences in spring.

Adapted and excerpted from: Azaleas. University of Florida. <https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/trees-and-shrubs/shrubs/azalea.html>

Fence Lizard



Photo credit: Alicia Lamborn, UF/IFAS



Photo credit: Rebekah D. Wallace, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org



Photo credit: Rebekah D. Wallace, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org

The Fence Lizard (*Sceloporus undulatus*) is a spiny lizard with rough, pointed scales on its back. Adults usually reach 4 to 7.5 inches in length. Their prey includes invertebrates like beetles, ants, spiders, grasshoppers, stink bugs, and moths.

Their bodies can be gray, brown, or nearly black in color, and males and females can be distinguished by certain color variations. Females often have black horizontal stripes or black patterning on their back, while males have patches of bright blue scales on their chin and underside (particularly during mating season).

To claim their territory, male fence lizards will flash their blue scales, do push-ups, and bob their head to deter other males.

While relatively common, fence lizards are not observed as often as other lizards like anoles and skinks, perhaps due to their camouflaging capability.

They prefer dry, open forests with fallen logs, stumps, and rocks for hiding. In landscapes, they can also be found basking on fence posts and trees, but may circle up the tree trunk when approached to remain out of harms way.

Extension Tidbits

2021 Tax Filing Tips: **Child Tax Credit**

UF IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

Authors: Casey Vandyke, Halie Corbitt, Jill Breslawski

Based on certain conditions, you may be able to claim the rest of your Child Tax Credit, or you may have to repay some of the money already received. The advanced payments were originally based on 2019 or 2020 information. However, reconciliation will be based on 2021 information, and conditions are as follows:

Filing your 2021 tax return and claiming the Child Tax Credit will be a little different this year.

Review the infographic at <http://go.ufl.edu/enhancedchildtaxcredit> for the basics of the Child Tax Credit. If you received advanced payments for the Child Tax Credit, below are the things to consider as you prepare for filing your taxes:

- The total amount of Advance Child Tax Credit payments you received during 2021
- The amount of the Child Tax Credit you can properly claim when filing your 2021 tax return



IF:

- Taxpayer's main home was in the US for more than half of 2021, and
- Taxpayer's modified adjusted gross income for 2021 is at or below:
 - ≤ \$60,000 if married and filing a joint return or filing as a qualifying widow or widower
 - ≤ \$50,000 if you are filing as head of household
 - ≤ \$40,000 if you are filing single or married and filing separate returns

THEN:

You have repayment protection. If you have not received the Child Tax Credit available to you, you can claim the rest on your tax return.



IF:

- Taxpayer's modified adjusted gross income is at or above:
 - ≥ \$120,000 if married and filing a joint return or filing as a qualifying widow or widower
 - ≥ \$100,000 if you are filing head of household
 - ≥ \$80,000 if you are filing single or married and filing separate returns

THEN:

You do not have repayment protection. If excess Child Tax Credit was received, you may have to repay part of your Child Tax Credit.

<https://tinyurl.com/2021-child-tax-credit>

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Click on each graphic for easier viewing!

2021 Tax Filing Tips: **Income Reporting Documents Checklist**

UF IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

Authors: Casey Vandyke, Halie Corbitt, Jill Breslawski, and Heidi Copeland



The documents on this checklist are a general guideline. Individual taxpayers may receive other documents that report taxable income based on their unique situation.

W-2 Used to report wages and salary; most common form. You may receive multiple W-2s if you worked multiple jobs or changed jobs throughout the year.

1099-INT Reports interest from bank accounts or other investments.

1099-DIV Reports dividends earned from investments.

1099-B Reports income from the sale of investments such as stocks or bonds.

The 1099-B, 1099-DIV, and 1099-INT may be combined into one report issued by a financial institution.

1099-R Reports distributions from retirement accounts (401K, IRAs, pension plans). May report disability income for some individuals.

1098-T Issued by qualified educational institutions to report scholarship/grant income and tuition paid.

1099-G Reports unemployment compensation received throughout the year.

1099-MISC/1099-NEC Used to report self-employment income. Must create schedule C to report this income. Rideshare or food delivery drivers commonly receive this form.

1099-K If you have a gig type job you may receive a Form 1099-K representing total dollar amount of total reportable payment transactions.

SSA-1099 Used to report social security benefits received throughout the year.

W-2G Used to report any gambling winnings received in the past year.

<https://www.irs.gov/forms-instructions>

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INCOME TAX SEASON: WILL ITEMIZING SAVE YOU MONEY?

When you file your federal income taxes, you have the choice between taking the standard deduction or itemizing deductions.

Standard Deduction is Based on Filing Status:

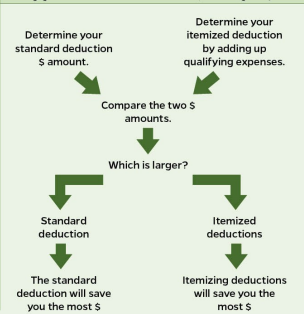
- Single or Married Filing Separately (MFS)* \$12,400
- Married Filing Jointly (MFJ) \$24,800
- Head of Household (HOH) \$18,650
- If 65+ or blind Add \$1,300 if filing status is MFS or MFJ Add \$1,650 if filing status is Single or HOH

Itemized Deductions are Expenses that can be subtracted from adjusted gross income to reduce your tax bill.

- Medical and dental expenses Must exceed 7.5% of your adjusted gross income
- Mortgage interest If larger than your standard deduction, it's to your advantage to itemize
- Charitable contributions For 2020, the CARES Act added an above-the-line deduction, not to exceed \$300 for qualified charitable contributions NOT JUST FOR people who ITEMIZE
- Home Equity Line of Credit interest If used to buy, build or improve home
- Local or state taxes paid Deductible up to a total of \$10K

Use this chart to find out which will save you more money.

Planning to itemize? Keep track of medical expenses, home mortgage interest and charitable contributions, etc. through the year.



For more information, visit [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov)

*When a married couple files separate returns (MFS), each spouse must use the same kind of deduction as the other, either standard or itemized.

Valentine's Day Topiary Project

Looking for a new Valentine's Day project? Try creating a living, growing work of art that can be enjoyed through all seasons! Your Valentine is sure to love it!

Topiary:

A topiary is a plant clipped or trimmed into a clearly defined shape. While gardeners typically practice the art of topiary with trees and shrubs, we'll show you an easier method that anyone can be successful with, involving a preformed shape and a small climbing vine.

Materials You'll Need:

- A decorative flower pot (doesn't have to be fancy—look for inexpensive ones in your local dollar store or floral section and drill holes as needed)
- Gravel or decorative river rocks (often found in a store's craft section)
- Potting soil
- A wire coat hanger
- Pliers
- Sphagnum moss (available in craft stores and garden centers)
- Fishing line (clear)
- A small climbing plant (such as Ivy or Creeping Fig)

Directions: You may find that working with a partner is much easier and takes less time.

- Fill the bottom of your container (approximately 1/4 full) with gravel or rocks. This will help anchor the wire coat hanger used to create the topiary.
- Next, straighten the coat hanger hook. For smaller containers, you may want to bend the hook so that it forms an 'L' instead of a 'U'. Then bend the coat hanger into any form or shape you like, using pliers as needed. A heart shape isn't too difficult and is perfect for a Valentine's Day gift.
- Wet the sphagnum moss and bunch it (wrap it) around the wire. Do a little at a time and as the moss is being attached, begin looping the fishing line around the moss to secure it. (This is where a little help goes a long way.) As you continue to attach the moss, make sure you wrap enough fishing line to hold it all in place so that the coat hanger wire doesn't show through. Cover the entire coat hanger with moss except for the straightened hook (or 'L') at the bottom and insert this portion into the gravel.
- Next, insert your plant, fill the container with soil and water thoroughly. Now you can begin wrapping stems around your heart frame. If needed, you can use paper clips to attach the plant to the moss by cutting them in half to make small 'U' shaped pins. As the plant continues to grow, continue to wrap the stems around the frame and before you know it, you'll have a beautiful living sculpture!



Finish this project? Share photos of your creations with us! Email photos to: baker@ifas.ufl.edu



Master Gardener

PLANT SALE



A fundraiser for the Baker County Arboretum

Free entry!

Shop for a cause!

Stroll through the gardens!

Enjoy free activities for the kids!

Don't forget your wagon!

FEATURING

-  Trees & Shrubs
-  Flowering Perennials
-  Vegetables & Herbs
-  Houseplants & Foliage
-  Grasses & Groundcovers
-  Vines, Succulents, & More!

MARCH 26

8AM - NOON

Agricultural Center
1025 W. Macclenny Ave.
Macclenny, FL 32063

UF/IFAS Extension Baker County

 904-259-3520

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