



# The Baker Bulletin

A  
Baker County  
Extension  
Service Monthly  
Newsletter

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Dear Extension Friends,

Thank you for allowing us to serve you in 2013. Even though we've had a mild winter so far, we have included some information for cold weather and your plants. This is also the time of year that many folks perform a soil test for spring planting. You can drop by our office to pick up a soil test kit. We are also conducting our annual renewal campaign for the newsletter. If you wish to continue to receive our newsletter, please see the back page. As always, if we can be of assistance to you, 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:  
*Alicia Lamborn,*  
*Horticulture Agent*

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## Catalpa “The Fish Bait Tree”

*There are two native species of Catalpa in North America - Northern Catalpa (Catalpa speciosa) and Southern Catalpa (Catalpa bignonioides). Both attract catalpa “worms” that are highly prized by fisherman as bait.*

As the name implies, the Southern Catalpa tree is better suited for areas of the South, but is somewhat of an uncommon site here in Baker County. While the Northern species is a large tree (50-90 feet tall), the Southern Catalpa is smaller (30-40 feet tall) having a loose oval shape.

Catalpas are easily recognized by their large green, heart-shaped leaves, showy panicles of white flowers (with yellow and purple markings) produced in spring and early summer, and distinctive long dangling fruits which resemble a slender bean pod. Sometimes called the Indian bean tree, the long pods can grow up to two feet long and are quite interesting, making for a unique ornamental tree. The only downside is that leaves may scorch and drop from the tree in very dry summers.

A sunny exposure and a well-drained, moist, rich soil are preferred for best growth of Catalpa but this moderately-long lived tree (60 years or so) is very adaptable and tough, tolerating drought and a range of soils from acid to calcareous. The tree is useful in areas where quick growth is desired, growing rapidly at first but slowing down with age as the crown begins to round out and tree increases in spread.

Although used in the past for a variety of wood-based products, today catalpa is used for shade trees and for attracting a special caterpillar, referred to as the catalpa worm. This worm is the larva of the catalpa sphinx moth, which lays its eggs on the tree. The caterpillars then help themselves to a feast of leaves (often defoliating the tree) and although unsightly, there appears to be no adverse consequences to the tree.

The large caterpillar is yellow with black lines and markings, and is prized for fish bait because the skin is very tough and the caterpillar is juicy. The caterpillar can even be frozen or preserved for use as a fish bait at a later time.



Image: Chris Evans, Illinois Wildlife Action Plan, Bugwood.org



Image: Charles T. Bryson, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Bugwood.org



*Catalpa worms vary in coloration and markings; full grown caterpillars have prominent horns. Adult moths are gray-brown.*

Images by: Lacy L. Hyche, Auburn University, Bugwood.org



Image: Franklin Bonner, USFS (ret.), Bugwood.org

### **Where have all the catalpa worms gone?**

This question has arisen several times in the past few years and quite frankly, I don't have a definitive answer. Perhaps the worms were over-harvested in our area and not enough lived to turn into moths and begin the cycle once again? We do know that populations of insects fluctuate, so perhaps we are in a natural population lull? Perhaps many of the older trees in the area have died off and not enough were replaced to build the population back up to what it once was in Baker County? Regardless of the true reason for their disappearance here, these questions are all things to consider. For now, maybe we can all do our part and plant a tree in preparation for their return.

## Clean It Green—For the Environment and Your Wallet! Homemade Laundry Soap

Are you looking to save money AND save the environment? Many of you may have already started saving money by making your own laundry soap. If you haven't yet, you may want to look into trying this money saving, earth-friendly recipe! I know, I know, you don't have time to waste playing around with "experimental" things that don't work, but I promise this process is simple, easy, EXTREMELY cost effective, and it really does clean your clothes!

The making of the laundry soap takes approximately 30 minutes and each batch yields 66 loads of laundry. A cost analysis shows that each batch costs 73¢ cents—that equals ONE cent per load! Have you done the cost analysis on your store bought laundry detergent? I'm guessing your cost is anywhere between 10¢ and 25¢ per load. Now, doesn't ONE cent sound better?

I personally have been using this homemade laundry soap since October 2010 after attending a conference with one of my fellow FCS agents. Cathy Rogers, FCS Agent in the Suwannee County Extension office, introduced me to the homemade laundry soap idea and I can assure you, I will never go back to buying laundry detergent.

Cathy and I both have given samples out to MANY individuals and families. I asked everyone to please give me their honest opinion on how they like it and so far I've only heard positive statements. I even had one lady tell me that she has been using this recipe for years due to the cleaning abilities alone. She was a wife of a construction worker and the mother to five very active boys who love to get dirty and play ball. Her testimony alone sold me!

**Directions:** Grate the bar-soap into a cooking pot with 6 cups of hot water. Heat and stir until the soap melts. Add the washing soda and borax and stir until dissolved. Remove from heat. Pour 4 cups hot water into a clean bucket. Add the soap mixture from the pot. Stir. Add the remaining water and stir. Let the mixture sit for about 24 hours. It will gel slightly. This is a low-sudsing soap which removes dirt & odor. Great for front-loading washers. Shake before using. Use 1/2 cup or less per load.

Check out this instructional video by our friends in the Suwannee County Extension Office:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUe8J8i1i5M>

### Cost Analysis— Homemade Laundry Soap

#### Wal-Mart, Macclenny Prices (January, 2013)

20 Mule Team Borax® \$3.38. 1/2 C = 36 batches @ .09 each

Arm & Hammer® Washing Soda \$3.24. 1/2 C = 12 batches @ .27 each

Ivory® Soap \$1.29/3 bars or Fels Naptha® \$.97/bar (use 1 full bar of Ivory® or 1/3 bar of FN)  
= 3 batches @ .43 Ivory® or .32 Fels Naptha®

.09

.27

+.43











.79/batch

One batch = 66 loads

#### Initial Cost

Borax	\$3.38
Washing Soda	\$3.24
Ivory® or FN	<u>\$1.29</u>
Subtotal	\$7.91
7% tax	<u>\$ .55</u>
Total	\$8.46

# February 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	26 	27	28 	MAR 23 	

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.

- Feb. 5**  **Tri-County Pesticide Update**, 5:00pm to 9:15pm, Lake Butler Community Center, Lake Butler, FL. This program is for current Restricted Pesticide License Holders to gain CEUs for renewal. A total of 4 CEUs have approved for this program (2 CORE and 2 Private App./Ag. Row). Registration is required and there is a \$10 fee by February 1. Registrations after February 1 will be charged \$15. Registration includes a meal during the program. Contact the Baker, Bradford or Union Extension Offices to register (Baker—904-259-3520, Bradford—904-966-6299, Union—386-496-2321).
- Feb. 6**  **North Florida-South Georgia Peach Meeting**, 9:25am to 1:00pm, Brook County Extension, 400 East Courtland Ave., Quitman, GA 31643. Come learn about the newest production techniques and changes in disease and pest management for peaches. Topics include: 1) Insect Update, 2) Disease Update, 3) Peach Nutrition and 4) Breeding, among others. Please contact the Brooks County Extension Office at 229-263-4103 for additional details and to register.
- Feb. 7**  **Forest Stewardship Workshop: Timberland Security for Landowners**, 9:00am to 2:00pm, Columbia County Extension Office, 164 SW Mary Ethel Lane, Lake City, FL 32025. Some landowners, especially those who do not reside on their land, may be at risk of losses or costs resulting from trespass, timber theft, dumping, drug farming, wildfire, arson or other property violations. This workshop will help landowners be more aware of security risks and take steps to minimize them. A \$10 registration fee is required and covers lunch and materials. Register online at <http://fsp-workshop020713.eventbrite.com> or contact the Columbia County Extension Office at 386-752-5384. Space is limited.
- Feb 15**  **Food Preservation: Can It Safely**, 9:30am to 2:00pm, Clay County Extension Office, 2463 State Road 16 West, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043. Learn the newest rules and techniques for keeping your family safe while preserving foods.
- Mar. 23**  **Beginning Beekeeping Short Course**, 8:30am to 3:15 pm, Clay County Extension Office, 2463 SR 16 West, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043. This is an interactive short course, where participants will be involved with working with an active hive on Extension Center Property. The course will allow participants to receive a complete perspective on the process/expense involved with keeping honeybees. Because this activity involves direct contact with a stinging insect, youth under 18 years will not be permitted to interact with the 'open hive' portion of the course. There is a \$12.00 registration fee (\$20.00 per couple). To register, please visit [http://clay.ifas.ufl.edu/Agriculture/2013\\_BeginningBeeSC\\_Registration.pdf](http://clay.ifas.ufl.edu/Agriculture/2013_BeginningBeeSC_Registration.pdf). You may also contact the Clay County Extension Office at 904-284-6355 or 904-269-6355.

## 4-H Events & Club Meetings for February:

**Cloverleaf Cloggers**—February 12 & 26, 7:00pm—Keller Intermediate

**Cookin' Cats**—February 21, 6:00pm—Classroom

**Livestock Club**—February 28, 6:00pm—Classroom

**Horse Club**—February 14, 6:30pm—Small Meeting Room, Extension Office



# Lucky Clover Chronicle

By:

Shaina Bennett,  
4-H Extension Agent

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**County Events** is approaching! Every year at County Events 4-H members come together to participate and compete with one another.

## **4-H WANTS YOU** *The purpose of County and District Events*

County and district level presentations provide a valuable teaching and learning situation. They give Junior, Intermediate, and Senior participants an opportunity to:

- Practice making oral and visual presentations.
- Learn presentation techniques from observing others.
- Receive constructive suggestions for improvement.
- Receive recognition for efforts.

The County 4-H program receives additional recognition and visibility through these activities. All 4-H events should foster a strong educational 4-H program by providing physical, mental, social, and emotional growth experiences for individual 4-H members. Events should give 4-H members positive, meaningful experiences in leadership and citizenship development. Competitive events are a planned part of the 4-H curriculum, designed to allow youth to:

- Gain experience and develop skills in gathering, preparing, and presenting educational information.
- Enhance decision making capabilities.
- Make public presentations.
- Learn standards by which comparisons are drawn.
- Develop good sportsmanship.

Competitive events are just one of the many teaching methods used by 4-H leaders and Extension Agents.

Adapted from: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/files/4H/4H24900.pdf>  
And [http://florida4h.org/staff/Project%20Resources/Events/files/planning\\_events.pdf](http://florida4h.org/staff/Project%20Resources/Events/files/planning_events.pdf)

County Events are a very important part of participation in 4-H beyond the club level. At county events you can compete in the following activities:

- Demonstrations
- Illustrated talks
- Fashion Revue (fashion show/sewing)
- Horse Public Speaking
- Photography
- Posters
- Share-The-Fun (talent show)

You can do all of these and more at County Events. If you do well you can move on to District Events, May 4, 2013 in Lake Butler. Following District Events is State Congress in Gainesville, FL.

**County Events** is scheduled for March 16th at 9 am at the Extension Office. The deadline to register is March 8. Please contact Ms. Shaina for registration information.  
**ALL 4-H MEMBERS SHOULD PARTICIPATE.**

### Events:

- Feb 7-18**— Florida State Fair, Tampa. Reg. Deadline: March 1  
**March 6**—Early Out Activity, All About Horses, 2:30 to 4:30, 4-H Classroom. \$5. Registration Deadline: March 1.  
**March 14**— 4-H Day At the Capitol, Tallahassee, fee varies  
**March 16**— County Events, Extension Office, 9am. Registration Deadline: March 8  
**March 20**—Early Out Activity, The Goods on Gardening. 2:30 to 4:30, Classroom. \$5. Reg Deadline: March 15.

### Birthdays for February:

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

- Feb 10— Keelie Turk  
Feb 13— Ms. BJ Wilkerson  
Feb 14— Ms. Shaina Bennett  
Feb 27— Grayland Stalnaker  
Feb 28— Alex Oakes



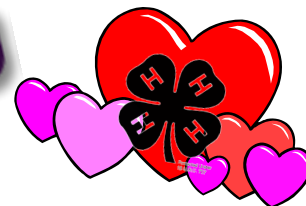
Us! [www.facebook.com/bakerco4h](http://www.facebook.com/bakerco4h)



**Did You Know:** Approximately 1 billion Valentine's Day cards are sent each year.



**Happy Valentine's Day**



**Looking for community service?** Youth ages 13-18 that would like to earn service hours please contact Ms. Shaina, at 259-3520.



## Soil Testing



**Consider having your soil tested before liming, fertilizing or installing new plants this spring.**

- ◆ Soil testing is available through the Baker County Extension Office and the University of Florida's Soil Testing Laboratory.
- ◆ A simple pH test will determine the pH of your soil and the amount of lime needed (if any) to adjust the soil's pH. The pH and lime requirement test is \$3.00.
- ◆ A soil fertility test will determine the pH and lime requirement of the soil, but will also tell you the amount of nutrients currently available to your plants. Based on the results, you will be given specific recommendations on how to fertilize for optimum plant growth. The soil fertility test is \$7.00.
- ◆ Of course, all recommendations are specific to your lawn, garden, or crop.
- ◆ You will also have the option of discussing your results with your county agent.

Stop by the Baker County Extension office today to pick up your free soil testing kit!



## Weathering the Winter



*So far, North Florida has been experiencing a fairly mild winter. But since it isn't likely to last till spring, here are some tips for weathering your plants through winter:*

- If a freeze is predicted, water plants 24-48 hours before a freeze (unless it rains). Keep in mind however, that prolonged periods of saturated soil can cause root rot problems.
- Overhead irrigation should not be used for freeze protection. This method is tricky and is best left to professional growers since many people end up doing more damage than good. Instead, cover your cold sensitive landscape plants with blankets or plastic to trap heat inside. If you decide to use this method, make sure your cover is long enough to reach the ground and use a stake (cut bamboo sticks work well) to keep your cover from touching your plant. Some contact is unavoidable, but too much can transfer heat resulting in burnt foliage. When using plastic, remove as soon as the freeze has ended to avoid cooking your plants.
- Citrus fruit is damaged when temperatures stay at 28 degrees or less for 4 hours so be sure to harvest ripe fruit (fruit won't ripen once picked) prior to a hard freeze. You will want to protect the graft union during a hard freeze to prevent damage, especially if you have young citrus. To do this, you can bank clean sand around the base of the tree, use a special tree wrap product, or use foam pipe insulators. Young trees prone to bark splitting also benefit from the tree wrap products (available in garden centers).
- If you're growing strawberries in the ground, these plants can take the freezing temperatures but will likely lose any flowers and fruit unless covered. If growing them in containers, consider moving them to a protected location to prevent cold damage to the roots, flowers and developing fruit.
- Most perennials can handle freezing temperatures but if a hard freeze is predicted, pile fallen leaves and pine straw on top to provide extra protection to the crown and roots without smothering your plant.

**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>

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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).

## FIRST REQUEST

If you would like to remain on the **Baker Bulletin** mailing list in 2013, please complete the form below and mail it or bring it to our office. Individual program newsletters, such as Horticulture and FCS will continue to be produced individually on an electronic basis. You can renew any newsletter subscription by visiting our website at <http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu>.

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**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **STATE** \_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **RACE** \_\_\_\_\_ **GENDER** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check this box if you prefer to receive the newsletter by email.**

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1025 W. Macclenny Ave.  
Macclenny, FL 32063