

# The Baker Bulletin



The UF/IFAS Extension Office is available to help you with your farming, gardening, landscaping, and 4-H youth development needs by providing educational programming, free consultations and information. Contact us at:

## UF/IFAS Extension Baker County

1025 W. Macclenny Ave. Macclenny, FL 32063

Phone: (904) 259-3520

Email: [baker@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto: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



[sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/baker](http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/baker)



[blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/bakerco/](http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/bakerco/)



[Agriculture in North Florida](#)

[Baker County Garden Spot](#)

[Baker County 4-H](#)

## FEBRUARY 2024



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## Programs & Events

FREE personal finance webinars (approved for 1 AFC® CEU). All webinars are 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. EST.

- Feb 1 Federal Income Tax Updates - Important tax law changes for this tax filing season. [Register here.](#)
- Feb 6 Birds in Your Backyard-Maxville Library Life Lit : Tuesday, February 6. 6:00p.m. -7:00 p.m. Multipurpose Room. Brush up on your bird identification skills and learn what find of birds you can expect to see around your home and garden. [Register here.](#)
- Feb 8 Federal Income Tax Deductions and Credits - We will discuss tax deductions and credits. [Register here.](#)
- Feb 15 What's Your Tax Rate? - Participants will learn how to calculate their personal income tax rates. Topics include tax brackets, effective tax rates, and capital gains rates. [Register here.](#)

# Florida's Native Flora & Fauna

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By Alicia Lamborn, Environmental Horticulture Agent



Greater Siren

Two-toed Amphiuma

This month we feature two of Florida's native giant salamanders! Learn how to identify these fascinating creatures, where to find them, what to do if you accidentally hook one while fishing, and what makes them so fascinating!

## Giant Salamanders of Florida

Have you ever been fishing and caught what looked like a giant eel covered in slime? If so, you may have encountered one of Florida's native giant salamanders. These salamanders are plentiful in Florida but are rarely seen because of their secretive nature. If you do encounter one, have no fear. They are harmless to humans and are quite fascinating!

There are two species of large, aquatic salamanders in Florida. Both are basically salamanders that are stuck in the larval stage of development. Unlike eels which are a type of fish with obvious fins, these amphibians have limbs and no fins.

The Greater Siren (*Siren lacertina*) averages 1-2 feet in length, has robust front limbs with four toes, and has no hind limbs. Bushy, external gills and lungs allow them to breathe. Usually black or dark grey in color, the Greater sirens sometimes also have black or gold flecking on their backs.

The Two-toed Amphiuma (*Amphiuma* means) can grow to lengths of 3 feet or more and is one of the largest salamander species in the world. Tiny, nearly useless front and hind legs each have two toes. Instead of external gills, this creature has a single gill slit on each side of the head.

Because they are primarily nocturnal, using a flashlight at night may allow you to observe them surfacing to breathe or foraging for aquatic insects, worms, crayfish, mollusks, and small fish. They use a wide array of habitats including lowland swamps, lakes, rivers, ditches, etc. and seem to prefer mucky and/or heavily vegetated areas.

If you catch one on a fishing hook, use a cloth rag or gloves to grab it behind the head and remove the hook. Because they are extremely slimy, this will prevent them from easily slipping through your hands.

Did I mention these were fascinating creatures? These salamanders spend much of their time buried in muck or in underground burrows near water. They are able to survive long periods of drought by building a cocoon out of dead cells and aestivating. Aestivation is a behavior in which an animal goes dormant for an extended length of time (similar to a bear hibernating). During aestivation, these salamanders slow down their metabolism and live off of large fat reserves located in their tails. This adaptation allows them to live in both permanent and temporary bodies of water. Larvae (less than an inch long at hatching) can survive months like this, while adults can weather drought for years.



# HIGHLIGHTS IN HORTICULTURE

By Alicia Lamborn, Environmental Horticulture Agent

## Tips for Pruning Roses



North and Central Florida gardeners prune roses in late February for blooms 8 to 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.

2024  
*Master Gardener*

# PLANT SALE

FEATURING

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Trees &amp; Shrubs</li> <li> Flowering Perennials</li> <li> Fruits, Veggies, Herbs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Houseplants &amp; Foliage</li> <li> Grasses &amp; Groundcovers</li> <li> Vines, Succulents, &amp; More!</li> </ul>
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# APRIL 6

## 8AM - NOON

**A fundraiser for the Baker County Arboretum & Horticulture Program**

Free entry & activities for the kids! Bring your wagon and shop for a cause!

## BARNYARD BULLETIN

By Alicia Halbritter, Agriculture Agent



# Pasture Renovation

On a livestock operation, one of the most valuable resources you have is your pasture. Pastures are a method of feeding livestock with grazing. All livestock species can utilize a pasture, even poultry. But what do you do if you accidentally ruined your pasture through years of poor maintenance and overgrazing?

First, don't sweat it because pastures are fixable. Although it will take some work to repair a pasture, and you will want to maintain it afterwards as it can be quite the financial investment.

Typically, total renovation is the most effective way to quickly fix unproductive pastures and restore graze-ability for your animals.

Expect pasture renovation to cost between \$250 and \$450 (or more) an acre, depending on what species and variety of grass you choose to plant.

My go-to suggestion for grass species is Bahiagrass. It is the most hardy and able to withstand minimal maintenance + some overgrazing.



The most cost effective pasture renovation will be done by someone who has the equipment, as having to rent equipment or hire someone will significantly increase costs. Renovation comes down to just a few steps:

1. Prepare the seed bed. You are completely removing the existing plant species and replacing with desirable forages. To do this you must till the soil. Herbicide applications can be done in the fall to burn down pastures intending to be replanted next year, but cool season forages will need to be planted in this situation.
2. Choose & plant the seed. Choose a variety of Bahiagrass to plant, decide on your preferred seeding rate (normal or heavy), purchase the seed, and plant it! Typically this will be done in spring or late summer when rains are reliable. If there is no rain, you will lose your seed unless you can drag a hose around to irrigate.
3. Wait. This is the easiest, yet hardest part. Now all you can do is wait for your seeds to grow! If you want to help them along, it's best to apply fertilizer according to soil test recommendations 7-10 days after seedling emergence and again 40-50 days later. Well fertilized plants will form a dense stand and can be lightly grazed 60-90 days later.

If you are going to through the effort of renovating a pasture, it's important you learn to maintain it. Verify you have enough land to feed the animals you currently have, rotate pastures, fertilize according to soil test recommendations, and try your best not to overgraze.

# LUCKY CLOVER CHRONICLE

By Shaina Spann, 4-H Youth Development Agent



## Employers are choosing older workers as opposed to recent college graduates, here's why...

### Importance of public speaking in youth

According to "Intelligent" a student life magazine, 53% of 789 surveyed employers said recent college graduates struggle with eye contact & communication skills and 47% said that candidates showed up for interviews dressed inappropriately. Twenty-one percent of employers have had interviewees refuse to turn their cameras on during an interview. Why is this significant? With the pandemic, youth and college students had not been interacting in person nor had they been participating in clubs, jobs, or internships. Essential skills like public speaking that teach how one should dress, look at an audience, and speak professionally were missed. It's imperative that 4-H youth learn these skills while they can receive constructive criticism and not lose out on a job opportunity.

From: <https://www.intelligent.com/nearly-4-in-10-employers-avoid-hiring-recent-college-grads-in-favor-of-older-workers/>

### How can youth participate in public speaking events in 4-H?

At the club level, 4-H members can do a special activity or talk with club members. On the competitive side, members can do a demonstration, illustrated talk, a speech, or a talent for county-wide events. Public speaking is something that makes many people uncomfortable, but without practice it won't get any easier. Getting out of your comfort zone is important for personal growth.



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

### 4-H Club Meetings & Events

- February 5-Cloverbuddies, 4pm, Classroom
- February 27-Livestock Club, 6pm Ag Center Auditorium
- March 4- Cloverbuddies, 4pm, Classroom
- March 26- Livestock Club, 6pm Ag Center Auditorium
- March 18-22- Coop to Plate Chicks delivered

### REMIND APP

text @bakerco4h to 81010 to be added to the 4-H Remind text group.



We need volunteers! Please reach out if you or someone you know would be interested in volunteering. The following areas currently have a need for volunteers:

- Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, & Mathematics (STEAM)
- Healthy Living
- Sports
- Livestock Animals
- Horses



Did you know that 4-H has an online course platform? It's called [CLOVER](#). There are activities and courses 4-Hers can take! When signing up, enter the code 831101 to join Baker County!

# EXTENSION TIDBITS

## Florida Sweet Corn Pudding

### Ingredients

2 cups Florida sweet corn, peeled and kernels removed from cob  
1 tablespoon Florida honey  
1 tablespoon Florida sugar  
2 cups milk  
3/4 cup unbleached all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon sea salt plus more to taste  
Freshly cracked black pepper to taste  
2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped fine  
2 eggs, beaten  
1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted



### Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Combine the eggs, flour, salt, pepper, sugar, milk and honey in a medium-sized mixing bowl. Whisk ingredients until smooth and add the corn and parsley. Stir ingredients and add in the melted butter. After giving everything one last, good stir, pour into a 9 X 13-inch baking dish and bake for an hour, or until golden brown and set in the middle.

<https://www.followfreshfromflorida.com/recipes/florida-sweet-corn-puddingflorida-sweet-corn-pudding>

# TAKE A CLASS

## Online Courses

from UF/IFAS Extension Baker County

### Butterfly Gardening

Learn the basic garden design elements for a successful butterfly garden.

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Free

### Growing Strawberry Plants

Includes variety selection, planting, and care through the strawberry growing season.

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Free

### Growing Backyard Blueberries & Blackberries

Variety selection, planting, and maintenance, plus a section on raspberries.

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Free

### Backyard Poultry Basics

A beginner's guide to raising chickens.

[REGISTER HERE](#)



\$15

### Selling Backyard Poultry Products

Learn how to start a business selling chickens, other poultry, or poultry products.

[REGISTER HERE](#)



\$20