

Educating with Extension



By Liz Yongue, Extension Coordinator, and in collaboration with Alicia Betancourt, Shelly Krueger, and Michelle Leonard-Mularz

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SAVE-THE-DATE

Talks at the Key West Garden Club
West Martello Tower
1100 Atlantic Boulevard
Key West

Propagation of Pea Shoots
Monday, December 2nd
10:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Planting for Survivability in the Landscape
Thursday, December 5th
1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Natural Products for Managing Garden Pests
Monday, December 16th
10:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

GI-BMP Training
Wednesday, December 11th
8:15 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Marathon Government Center
Cost: \$25
Please Register at (305) 292-4501

County Offices will be closed December 24th & 25th for Christmas!
Have a wonderful holiday!



What's Growing in My Garden

By Michelle Leonard-Mularz, Environmental Horticulture Agent

The tropical environment of the Florida Keys, provides year-round growing opportunities for edible plants and vegetables. However, there are some things that should be taken into consideration for successful gardening in the tropical south.

First, our summers are too hot and humid for many of our traditional vegetables. This can seem counterintuitive since many of us come from other areas of the Country where the bulk of the gardening is done in the spring and summer; in addition, that is when many retail stores offer such items for sale. But do not despair, while the majority of these vegetables prefer cooler temperatures, there are also some heat-loving exceptions such as eggplant, okra, sweet potatoes, and hot peppers.

Second, growing vegetables in the ground might not yield the best results since much of our soil consists of limestone rock. Not only does it make it difficult to dig, but there are also nematodes and soil-borne plant diseases to contend with. Raised-bed gardens or container gardening are great alternatives and more versatile for our small spaces. Raised beds can be constructed very easily and most herbs and vegetables only need about 8" of soil depth (which is the same height as cement blocks). The size can vary depending on your individual needs. What is important is to never walk on the raised-bed soil and make sure you can access from all sides (Tip: gardening with young kids: 3' wide beds; older kids: 4' wide; Adults: up to 5' wide).



(above) Harvested pea shoots. Great in salads. Photo credit Kitty Somerville

Monthly Events

Monday, December 2nd
Plant Clinic
9 a.m. to Noon
Suite 2-260
1100 Simonton Street,
Key West

Wednesday, December 4th
Plant Clinic
9 a.m. to Noon
Suite 244 (2nd Floor)
102050 Overseas Hwy,
Key Largo

Monday, December 16th
Plant Clinic
9 a.m. to Noon
Suite 2-260
1100 Simonton Street,
Key West

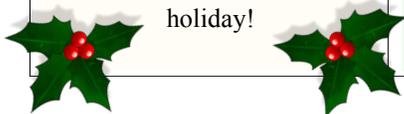
Climate Change Advisory Committee Meeting
Cancelled this Month

Wednesday, December 18th
Plant Clinic
9 a.m. to Noon
Suite 244 (2nd Floor)
102050 Overseas Hwy,
Key Largo

Thursday, December 19th
Plant Clinic
9 a.m. to Noon
Island Home Nursery
88720 Overseas Hwy
Tavernier

Saturday, December 21st
Plant Clinic
9 a.m. to Noon
Marathon Home Depot
Garden Center

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Sea Grant News

Shelly Krueger
UF/IFAS Florida Sea Grant Agent

Shelly recently accomplished the following activities:

- Shelly was invited by Puerto Rico Sea Grant to present to natural resource managers, dive shop owners, and operators in San Juan to teach about the Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease, which was documented in Puerto Rico just last week. Current countries with SCTLD are U.S., Jamaica, Mexico, St. Martin, Turks and Caicos, Dominican Republic, Belize, St. Eustacis, and US Virgin Islands.



FLORIDA FRIENDLY FISHING GUIDE

Are you interested in becoming a Florida Friendly Fishing Guide? Check out [THIS VIDEO](#) to see what it's all about!

- Shelly was invited to present 3 times at the Florida Sea Grant 4-Year site review for the NOAA National Sea Grant program in Gainesville, Florida on sponge restoration and commercial spiny lobster industry.
- Shelly is appointed to the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Water Quality Protection Program steering committee and presented on the sargassum influx.

Plant Clinics

The Monroe County Master Gardener Volunteers will help you with plant problems or insect identification at the following locations throughout the Winter:

KEY WEST
Gato Building
Extension Office
1100 Simonton Street, #2-260
9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

December 2nd and 16th
January 6th and 20th
February 3rd and 17th

MARATHON
Marathon Home Depot
4555 Overseas Highway
(at the Garden Center)
9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

December 21st
January 18th
February 15th

ISLAMORADA
Island Home Nursery
88720 Overseas Highway
(Mile Marker 88)
9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

December 19th
January 23rd
February 27th

KEY LARGO
Murray E. Nelson Government
& Cultural Center
102050 Overseas Hwy., #244
9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

December 4th and 18th
January 15th
February 5th and 19th

Horticulture News

Michelle Leonard-Mularz
UF/IFAS Environmental Horticulture Agent

Michelle recently accomplished the following activities:

- 25 Master Gardeners volunteered 185 hours educating the Keys community on plant and insect identification and sustainable gardening practices in each County District.
- Michelle presented to the City of Key West Sustainability Board to help them understand glyphosate and the controversies surrounding its use.
- 65 Monroe County residents attended free workshops on Florida Friendly landscaping and learned sustainable ways to reduce pesticide use, water consumption and appropriate fertilizer practices. The goal of these workshops is to help reduce non-point source pollution in our waterways through best management practices.



(above) Mulberry. Photo credit Michelle Mularz

Extension Director's News

Alicia Betancourt

UF/IFAS Family and Community Development Agent and
Monroe County Extension Director

Alicia recently accomplished the following activities:

- Alicia co-taught 30 Extension professionals “Time Management Strategies” and Community Development for Leadership” at the Joint Extension District Leadership Retreat.
- Alicia completed the Association of Climate Change Officers training and is now a nationally Certified Climate Change Profession.
- Alicia joined the board of the national Joint Council of Extension Professionals. This organization represents the collective voice of over 10,000 professionals connecting Extension.
- Alicia worked with county staff to assist in the planning of the Climate Leadership Summit including organizing volunteers, poster abstracts and vendor booths.
- Alicia is working on a paper to present at the World Sustainable Built Environment Conference in 2020. This conference will highlight the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The paper will explore educational tools for local government climate adaptation policies.



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(above) Genovese basil and Thai basil growing in containers. Photo credit Christa Varacalli

Gardening in containers. Most all herbs, vegetables, and edible plants can be grown in containers. The crop being grown will dictate the size of container needed. For instance, tomato plants will do best in a minimum container size of 4 to 5 gallons per plant. Alternatively, peppers and strawberries can thrive in a smaller container size of 1 to 3 gallons.

However, fruit trees will need adequate rooting space for support, so you will need to increase the size of the container as the tree grows. Drainage is important for container vegetable gardening, so consider putting a layer of gravel or good-draining material in the bottom. Most container plants need to be watered daily for best results.

Landscape-wide approach. Edible landscaping is a concept that replaces ornamental plants in the landscape with plants that produce food. Not only are you able to pick these fruits and vegetables during their peak freshness, increasing the nutritional value; but it also reduces food costs and increases sustainability in the landscape by reducing energy inputs. Some good candidates are tropical fruit trees like Avocado, Mango, Figs, Carambola, Mulberry, loquat, Soursop and more. Other crops to consider incorporating into the landscape or for year-round planting: eggplant, okra, turmeric, ginger, lemon grass, pineapples, bananas, papaya, scallions, rosemary and other herbs.

Fruiting vegetables need 6-8 hours of sunlight. Due to our extreme heat, early morning and afternoon sunlight is best. Herbs and leafy greens can handle more shade and should avoid the intense heat of the afternoon. The source of potting mix and/or soil is important, avoid the use of top soil in the garden. This material is often very heavy, poor quality, and can harbor plant diseases. The more compost you can incorporate, the healthier the plants will be.

So, we posed this question to our Master Gardener volunteers. What's growing in your gardens? With their responses, we composed this very brief list.

Edible flowers: nasturtiums, hibiscus, gingers, monstera, Mexican tarragon, and sage

Herbs: Basil (Genovese, thai, sweet, purple ruffles), chives (garlic, lemon), cilantro, dill, marjoram,

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This newsletter can be accessed online at:
<http://monroe.ifas.ufl.edu/newsletter.shtml>

We're on the Web at: <http://monroe.ifas.ufl.edu>



University of Florida (UF)
<http://SolutionsForYourLife.ufl.edu>
<http://ufl.edu>
 Electronic Data Information Source (EDIS)
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>



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peppermint, oregano, rosemary, sage, spearmint, tarragon, and thyme

Leafy greens: bok choy, swiss chard, collard greens, leaf lettuce, pea shoots, and arugula

Vegetables: cucumbers, eggplant, tomatoes (sun sugar, carmelo, black krim, everglades, cherry), katuk, sweet potatoes, peppers (banana, sweet bell, hot, shishito, Bangkok thai), radishes, green beans, and scallions

Fruit trees: Mango (hayden, nam doc mai), avocado (brogdan, simmonds, hass), miracle fruit, Surinam cherry, Barbados cherry, sour sop, lemon, lime (Kaffer, Key), carambola, lychee, and mulberry

Specialty crops: pineapple, dragon fruit, bananas (ice cream, saba), papaya, aloe vera, fig (brown turkey), moringa, roselle, turmeric, and ginger.

Thank you to all the Master Gardener Volunteers who contributed to this list!



(cover image)
 Harvested tomatoes.
 Photo credit Kitty Somerville

(left)
 Tomato plants, container grown.
 Photo credit Kitty Somerville

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UF/IFAS/MCES QUARTERLY CONTACTS

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Totals
Phone calls	46	49	42	137
Office visitors	7	11	6	24
Visits to clients	15	15	13	43
Learning events	25	39	34	98
Participants	332	404	736	1,472
Media submissions	8	5	8	21
Publications distributed	162	200	697	1,059
TOTAL contacts	595	723	1,536	2,854