



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

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Inside this issue:

Sea Grant News from Shelly Krueger	2
Horticultural News from Michelle Leonard-Mularz	2
Plant Clinic Dates	2
Extension Director News from Alicia Betancourt	3
Page 1 story continued	3
Page 1 story continued	4
Contact us!	4

SAVE-THE-DATE



Florida Friendly Landscaping Training

Wednesday, November 6th
1:00 PM to 3:30 PM
Marathon Garden Club
5270 Overseas Highway
MM 50, Bayside
Marathon

**Please Register at
(305) 292-4501**

Marathon Garden Club Holiday Bazaar

Saturday, November 30th
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Garden Clubhouse
5270 Overseas Highway
MM 50, Bayside
Marathon

**County Offices will be closed
November 28th and 29th
for Thanksgiving!**
Have a wonderful holiday!



By Susie Reutling, Monroe County Master Gardener Volunteer

As gardeners, we are aware of skin irritations due to contact from plants such as, Poisonwood (*Metopium toxiferum*), and Manchineel (*Hippomane mancinella*), found right in our Florida Keys backyards. But, the eyes, the eyes! Corneal Endothelial Toxicity, a toxicity that affects the inner most layer of the cornea and can cause symptoms such as light sensitivity, blurred vision, and extreme pain, is possible when working with some of our well-known, favorite plants, such as Milkweed, *Asclepias sp.* A common trait of these plants, is a milky sap which contains latex.



(above) Monarch butterfly sipping nectar from Milkweed plant.

Milkweed, *Asclepias sp.*, is very popular in the landscape, since it's the larval host plant for Monarch and Queen butterflies. Additionally, it serves as a nectar source for many pollinators. However, care must be taken when handling and propagating Milkweed.

...Continued on page 3

Monthly Events

Monday, November 4th
Plant Clinic
9 a.m. to Noon
Suite 2-260
1100 Simonton Street,
Key West

Wednesday, November 6th
Plant Clinic
9 a.m. to Noon
Suite 244 (2nd Floor)
102050 Overseas Hwy,
Key Largo

Saturday, November 16th
Plant Clinic
9 a.m. to Noon
Marathon Home Depot
Garden Center

Monday, November 18th
Plant Clinic
9 a.m. to Noon
Suite 2-260
1100 Simonton Street,
Key West

**Climate Change
Advisory
Committee Meeting**
Cancelled this Month

Wednesday, November 20th
Plant Clinic
9 a.m. to Noon
Suite 244 (2nd Floor)
102050 Overseas Hwy,
Key Largo

Thursday, November 21st
Plant Clinic
9 a.m. to Noon
Island Home Nursery
88720 Overseas Hwy
Tavernier

Sea Grant News

Shelly Krueger
UF/IFAS Florida Sea Grant Agent

Shelly recently accomplished the following activities:

- Shelly is a member of the Outreach and Education Technical Committee and was invited to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Barotrauma Symposium to discuss recreational fishing discard mortality policies for catch and release fishing in the Gulf of Mexico.
- Shelly trained the new FDEP Aquatic Preserves manager in Florida Keys Water Watch for Lignum Vitae and Coupon Bight aquatic preserves monthly water quality monitoring.



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!

- The new Florida Master Naturalist course Marine Habitat Restoration is being finalized with instructor training scheduled in January at Mote on Summerland Key. Shelly wrote the Sponge Restoration Module and edited the modules on corals, seagrasses, and artificial reefs.
- Shelly is co-lead of the Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease Communications and Outreach Team. This is one of 8 teams focused on the Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease in the Florida Reef Tract and Caribbean with lead agencies FDEP, FWC, NOAA, and NPS.

Plant Clinics

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

KEY WEST	MARATHON	ISLAMORADA	KEY LARGO
Gato Building Extension Office 1100 Simonton Street, #2-260 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon	Marathon Home Depot 4555 Overseas Highway (at the Garden Center) 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon	Island Home Nursery 88720 Overseas Highway (Mile Marker 88) 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon	Murray E. Nelson Government & Cultural Center 102050 Overseas Hwy., #244 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon
November 4th and 18th December 2nd and 16th January 6th and 20th	November 16th December 21st January 18th	November 21st December 19th January 23rd	November 6th and 20th December 4th and 18th January 15th

Horticulture News

Michelle Leonard-Mularz
UF/IFAS Environmental Horticulture Agent

Michelle recently accomplished the following activities:

- Congratulations to Crane Point Hammock Museum and Nature Center for their beautification award, awarded by the City of Marathon Chamber of Commerce. This was a roadside beautification award that included a wildflower garden to attract butterflies and was designed and installed, in part, by one of our Master Gardener volunteers, Suzy Curry. Congratulations to everyone involved.

- 6 Monroe County Master gardener volunteers attended the bi-annual Master Gardener State Conference held in Kissimmee, Florida. Three of our local Master Gardeners were recognized for their years of service to their community. Susan Matthews, 10 years of volunteer service; Kitty Somerville, 10 years of volunteer service; and Kathy Hulbert, 15 years of volunteer service. We are extraordinarily grateful for their continued support of our program.



- Did you know October 24-31st is International Bat Awareness Week, which is designed to raise awareness about the need for bat conservation? In Florida, we have 13 bats that are native to the State and all are insectivorous, meaning they feed on insects, though only the Velvety Free-Tail bat is common in the Keys. We also have some occasional visitors that are nectarivorous, meaning they are also important pollinators!

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 provided volunteer service to 2 schools, collecting admission funds for athletic events (8.5 hours).
- Alicia worked with agents to develop two trainings for UF-IFAS Extension county directors on community development programming and time management strategies, which will be held in November.
- Alicia hosted the University of Florida Southeast Extension

District meeting for 62 Extension professionals including a training in Microsoft Teams.

- Alicia received an invitation to be a keynote speaker at the bi-annual Association of Natural Resource Extension Professional (ANREP) Conference in 2020.
- Alicia worked with the Climate Change Advisory Committee to discuss reorganization of the committee as directed by the Board of County Commissioners.
- Alicia worked with county staff to assist in the planning of the

Climate Leadership Summit, including organizing volunteers, poster abstracts and vendor booths.

- Alicia co-chaired the National Network for Sustainable Living Education meeting where they learned about community energy programming and energy equity tools.



Continued from page 1



(above) Milky sap from *Asclepias sp.*

Milkweed Toxicity

The milky sap of *Asclepias sp.* contains a mix of cardenolides, pregnane glycosides, and other cardiac glycosides. The damage, which is relatively short-lived, consists of corneal abrasions, edema, loss of corneal transparency and folds in the cornea. Exposure to even small amounts of Milk-

weed sap, such as a swipe across a sweaty brow, can affect the eyes; however, symptoms aren't instant, often not appearing till hours later, further confusing diagnosis. Symptoms will often decrease in severity within 24 to 48 hours, though ophthalmologist care and steroidal eye drops will advance the healing process and help avoid infection. Some other common plants that contain cardiac glycosides are Oleander (*Nerium Oleander*) and Avocado (*Persea americana*).

Many plants with a milky sap are capable of causing toxicity. Plants in the genus *Euphorbia*, also have a poisonous milky sap with varying levels of different terpenes. Symptoms and damage are much the same as those exhibited with Milkweed, though the abrasions are more dot like than linear stripes. Common plants found here in the Keys are, Pencil Cactus, (*Euphorbia tirucalli*) and Crown-of-Thorns (*Euphorbia milii*). Members of the Araceae family, which includes favored plants such as *Anturium*, *Caladium*, *Philodendron* and *Dieffenbachia sp.*, can also cause eye issues, due to the calcium oxalate found in the sap.

Handling Milkweed

When handling Milkweed and other plants with milky sap, it's important to avoid contact with your eyes. Wearing eye protection and gloves will reduce your exposure.

...Continued on page 4

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UF/IFAS/MONROE COUNTY EXTENSION

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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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Continued from page 3

Wash hands immediately following any contact with the sap. If you are experiencing symptoms described above after working with Milkweed, wash your eyes out thoroughly with water or a saline solution. Contact your eye doctor and inform him/her of your exposure.

For more information about Milkweed and seed collection, please check out this fact-sheet:

<https://xerces.org/milkweed-faq>

To learn more, contact the Monroe County Extension Service at monroe@ifas.ufl.edu!

Master Gardener Volunteers represent Monroe County at this year's Master Gardener State Conference in Orlando! (from left to right, Bridget Dawson, Susan Matthews, Bunny Portner, Karen Sunderland, Donna Hanson, and Lisa Merritt)



UF/IFAS/MCES QUARTERLY CONTACTS

	Aug	Sept	Oct	Totals
Phone calls	44	46	49	139
Office visitors	9	7	11	27
Visits to clients	14	15	15	44
Learning events	30	25	39	94
Participants	343	332	404	1,079
Media submissions	10	8	5	23
Publications distributed	103	162	200	465
TOTAL contacts	553	595	723	1,871

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