UF | IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
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SOLUTIONS

Educating with Extension

By Brynn Morey, 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	2
Plant Clinic Dates	2
Extension Director News from Alicia Betancourt	3
Page 1 story continued	3
FWC Volunteer Opportunity!	4
Contact us!	4

MARCH HAPPENINGS

March 8th:
Daylights Saving Time
Spring Forward 1 hour!

March 12th:
National Plant a Flower Day!

March 14th-15th:

March 17th:
St. Patrick's Day

March 28th:
Mote's Ocean Fest
Community Celebration

Improving Water Quality

By Shelly Krueger, UF/IFAS Extension Sea Grant Agent

We all know water is the most important ingredient for life, and second only to the air we need to breathe! It is also important for marine life and wildlife, especially in our Florida Keys economy that is dominated by the natural environment for our jobs and resources. Usually when we refer to water quality, we are talking about having water that is safe for swimming, fishing, and other types of recreation. Sometimes when we talk about water quality we are referring to having water that is safe to drink. Whether for swimming or drinking, fishing or kayaking, we can all make choices that can improve the water quality in our local watershed and beyond.

One thing that residents can have an effect on improving water quality is by not introducing chemicals into our local waterways. Chemicals are everything from the products we use to clean our boats, wash our cars to the products we use to clean our kitchens and bathrooms. These chemicals also come from the fertilizers we use on plants and yards. Even though almost

…Continued on page 3

Monthly Events

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

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

Saturday, March 14th
Plant Clinic
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Grimal Grove
Big Pine Key
New!

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

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

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

Thursday, March 26th
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 co-hosted the renamed Shorelines, Estuaries, and Aquatic Systems (SEA WAG) in-service training and inaugural meeting of the Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB WAG) at Mote Marine Lab on Summerland. 15 Florida Sea Grant agents and specialists participated to formulate joint initiatives.
- The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary was selected to be a Hot Spot 2020 by the Leave No Trace organization. Shelly was invited by the Sanctuary to be on the planning committee, and co-hosted the events in Marathon and Key West. Three communications workshops and 2 marine debris service projects were delivered to 62 attendees and 12 tons of marine debris was removed.
- Shelly was recognized by College of the Florida Keys (CFK) during the unveiling of their new Bachelor of Science in Marine Resource Management program at the Tennessee Williams Theater. Shelly is appointed to the CFK Marine Science Advisory Committee and assisted with curriculum development. The Bachelor of Science in Marine Resource Management program will be offered starting Fall semester 2020.

Florida Friendly Fishing Guide Certification
https://www.flseagrant.org/news/2019/12/fishing-guides-can-now-be-certified-as-environmentally-friendly/

For more information: https://www.fkcc.edu/academics/mrm

Plant Clinics

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

KEY WEST	BIG PINE KEY	MARATHON	ISLAMORADA	KEY LARGO
Gato Building **Extension Office #2-260** **1100 Simonton Street** 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon	**Grimal Grove** **MM30.5** **258 Cunningham Ln.** 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.	**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 Center #244** **102050 Overseas Hwy** 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon
March 2nd and 16th April 6th and 20th May 4th and 18th	April 11th May 9th	March 21st April 18th May 16th	March 26th April 23rd May 28th	February 5th and 19th March 4th and 18th April 1st and 15th

Horticulture News

Michelle Leonard-Mularz
UF/IFAS Environmental Horticulture Agent

Michelle recently accomplished the following activities:

- After giving a presentation on invasive plants to Tamarac Park Homeowners Association, the association has committed to removing invasive species from their common areas and individual landscapes.
- USDA researchers, along with Monroe County Extension, will be releasing Brazilian Pepper Thrips at several locations in Key West to help slow the spread of this invasive, federally listed noxious weed.
- Installation of our wildflower garden will begin Saturday, March 7th in Key West. These signs will be posted at the garden site, directing anyone that has questions or wants further information.

- Keys Energy tree giveaway will be Saturday, April 18th beginning at 8:30 a.m. Residents will have their choice of two free plants while supplies last. Master gardener volunteers will be available to help with questions and plant selection. Visit their website for a list of plants available. https://www.keysenergy.com/tree-giveaway/

Be sure to "Like" us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter and Instagram!

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 worked with a University of Florida team to produce an Extension training on the Climate Smart Floridians Program to be held in March and April. This effort included producing a 28-page trainers guide. And nine learning modules and decreasing individual emissions.
- Alicia held a meeting for the Nation Network of Sustainable Living Education which is an initiative with over 120 national Extension members working in sustainable education.

- Alicia worked with the Joint Council of Extension Professionals as an incoming board member. JCEP represents over Extension 10,000 professionals connecting. The board worked to provide professional development opportunities, chair Extension conferences and to develop a National Extension framework.
- Alicia produced a program plan for a shared Extension intern who will be helping with the Handbook for Municipal Action on Climate Change.
- Alicia participated in the Southeast Florida Climate Compacts annual leadership planning meeting to plan 2020 work products and outreach event topics.

Continued from page 1

90% of Monroe County is now connected to advanced wastewater treatment (AWT), these systems do not remove everything. Pharmaceuticals, personal care products, and chemical residues from nonstick pots and pans may not be removed during AWT and can be passed into the environment.

Consider phasing out some of the chemicals you use in your house. This is most easily begun in the kitchen. If you look under your kitchen sink, you may be shocked to know how hazardous some of those chemicals are to human health!! To safely dispose of hazardous household waste, Monroe County has drop-off sites that vary depending upon your location in the Upper, Middle, and Lower Keys and Key West, https://www.monroecounty-fl.gov/239/Household-Hazardous-Waste.

You may also be surprised to learn that white vinegar and baking soda can be used to clean virtually every surface in your kitchen and bathroom. A spray bottle filled with a 1:1 ratio of white vinegar and water can be used to clean kitchen surfaces. While this formulation will not kill *Staphylococcus* bacteria, it is quite effective at killing most germs.

- Phase out hazardous household chemicals and replace with cheaper alternatives like vinegar and baking soda
- Consider phasing out nonstick pots and pans with ceramic or copper coatings
- Bring your household hazardous waste and used batteries to the FREE monthly drop-offs offered by the county and municipalities
- Do not wash your car near storm drains
- Do not fertilize where the fertilizer can run-off into the water
- Do not spray pesticides or fungicides near the water
- Avoid doing boat maintenance where the chemicals can enter the water

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Newsletter Editor: Liz Yongue, Extension Coordinator

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

Facebook **Twitter** **Instagram**

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

UF/IFAS Extension is Putting Florida First

Scan this code to go directly to our UF/IFAS Website for more information!

FWC needs volunteers to assist with sponge community restoration efforts in the Florida Keys and Florida Bay.

- This is a multi-year effort to enhance the natural recovery of degraded areas in the Florida Keys and Florida Bay.
- Volunteers are needed to snorkel to retrieve and distribute sponges or stay onboard a vessel to receive sponges for transport to degraded areas.
- Multiple opportunities to volunteer between 3/16/20 and 3/27/20 (specific dates are weather dependent)

For more information visit https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/FLFFWCC/bulletins/27df41f?reqfrom=share

UF/IFAS/MCES QUARTERLY CONTACTS

	Dec	Jan	Feb	Totals
Phone calls	30	49	80	159
Office visitors	8	28	15	51
Visits to clients	11	4	8	23
Learning events	13	24	31	68
Participants	820	640	888	2348
Media submissions	5	5	7	17
Publications distributed	422	306	351	1079
TOTAL contacts	1,309	1,056	1380	3745

An Equal Opportunity Institution. UF/IFAS Extension, University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, Nick T. Place, dean for UF/IFAS Extension. Single copies of UF/IFAS Extension publications (excluding 4-H and youth publications) are available free to Florida residents from county UF/IFAS Extension offices.