The Florida Keys Tropical Fruit Fiesta heads back to Big Pine Key. Come out Saturday, June 18th, from 10am to 2 pm, to Big Pine Key Community Park, 31009 Atlantis Drive. This is a free, family friendly, educational event.

The Florida Keys Tropical Fruit Fiesta originally began in 1999 and was started by Monroe County Extension Services and then Extension Program Assistant, Jeff Stotts. There was a desire to tell the story of fruit industry in the Keys, introduce residents to tropical varieties not normally found in supermarkets, showcase UF/IFAS Extension's work in developing new cultivars, and inform about successful growing practices for maintaining tropical fruit trees. The foundation of the event has always been education and increasing awareness of the abundance of fruit that can be grown in the Keys. This year we are expanding that to include tropical vegetables.

You will find the speaker topics, times, and information about all the activities happening during this year’s event on page 3. Check out our Facebook page for more up-to-date information [link]. Educational session participants will be entered into a drawing for free Winn Dixie gift cards. Drawings will take place after each session and the winner must be present to receive the gift card. Thanks to Winn Dixie for the generous donation.

…Continued on page 3
Shelly recently accomplished the following activities:

- Shelly presented to the Key West Sustainability Advisory Board at city hall about sponges in the Florida Keys. Shelly taught a group of 11 students at Sea Camp on Big Pine Key about sponge restoration. Along with Sea Camp staff, they led a snorkel to identify sponges and set up a sponge garden inside their onsite canal. Shelly taught 33 members of the USA Dive Club about sponges and sponge restoration in South Florida.
- Shelly began collecting sponge histology samples for the EPA funded project to find out what time of year sheepswool and loggerhead sponges are reproducing. It is unknown whether or not loggerhead sponges are gonochoristic; this means whether or not individual sponges are male, female, or hermaphroditic. In partnership with Florida Atlantic University and the Dr. Shirley Pomponi Lab, we will be the first to determine the seasonality of reproduction for these two species and also the type of reproduction for loggerhead sponges. This is very important for sponge restoration management. Loggerhead sponges are the dominant sponges in the Florida Keys nearshore hardbottom habitats.
- Shelly was contacted by two international researchers in British Virgin Islands about sargassum composting and in Panama for identification of a sponge species that is likely a tunicate species.
- Shelly taught and trained the Boy Scouts of America Sea Base STEM Team on Summerland Key. This is the 7th year Shelly has trained the STEM Team staff that reaches hundreds of Scouts every summer. They learned how to identify stony corals and report stony coral tissue loss disease to the FDEP SEAFAN.net reporting too. These reports, especially of new lesions, are incredibly important as they direct scientists where new outbreaks are occurring at Looe Key and Newfound Harbor.

Michelle recently accomplished the following activities:

- Master Gardener Volunteers led students from the Big Pine Key Library children’s program in a propagation lesson using pea shoots and read the book “Oh Say You Can Seed?” A Cat in the Hat Learning Book. Pea shoots are quick growing greens that are high in vitamins and minerals. Additionally, volunteers led 4th and 5th grade students from May Sands Montessori on a guided tour of the Key West Garden Club. 30 students participated in the programs.

Michelle Leonard-Mularz
UF/IFAS Environmental Horticulture Agent
Alicia recently accomplished the following activities:

- Alicia presented community development indicators and how to use them in annual reporting to 31 Extension professionals at the Southeast Extension District Leadership meeting.

- Alicia sent the Handbook for Municipal Action on Climate Change to 127 of Florida’s sustainability/resilience directors. Five have reached out to get more input on climate action planning.

- Alicia worked with the Southeast Florida Climate Compact on a grant proposal to help under-resourced communities develop climate action plans.

- Alicia is working on a diversity, equity, inclusion, and access initiative under the Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals.

- Alicia taught two senior group classes on financial literacy, and money matters topics.

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

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**Speakers and Demonstrations**

- **11:00AM - Why Won't My Tree Fruit**
  Jeff Wasielewski, Commercial Tropical Fruit Extension Agent

- **11:30AM - Summer Veggies & Bucket Gardens**
  *Pre-registration is required for a free bucket garden. Through Eventbrite*
  Master Gardener Volunteers

- **12:00PM - How to Prune Fruit Trees**
  Jeff Wasielewski, Commercial Tropical Fruit Extension Agent

- **12:30PM - Cooking Demonstrations**
  Using Thai Veggies by Yupa Kuhn
  Cooking with breadfruit by Jen DeMaria

Additionally, many beautiful local varieties of tropical fruit will be on display and available to sample provided by the University of Florida Tropical Research and Education Center. Looking for plants and fruit trees to purchase? Grimal Grove will have an assortment of mango, avocado, banana, papaya, carambola, sugar apple, bilimbi, and breadfruit trees available, in addition to some exotic tropical fruit to taste from the Grove. Marc House, Key West Botanical Garden Nursery, and Soron Orchids will have native and ornamental plants, orchids, and vegetable seedlings available.

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**Kids Activities (happening all day)**

**Plant-A-Piney**

Learn how to plant pineapples and take home your very own

**Fruit Painting & Coloring**

Learn about seeds, roots, & shoots through color

**Booth Bingo**

Visit the educational booths throughout the park, check them off, and get a prize

Our kid’s area will have lots to offer young attendees. In addition to the activities above, Farmer Jeanne and her fun-loving animals will be on hand from Monroe County Sheriff’s Office Animal Farm. Educational and non-profit organizations will be sharing the important conservation work being done in the Keys. There is also a beautiful playground and covered pavilions at the park for participants to enjoy.

There will be additional local vendors selling tropical vibes and products. Centennial Bank’s Weenie Wagon will be slinging burgers and hot dogs and other snacks and refreshments will be available for purchase.

Thank you to our sponsors University of Florida, IFAS, Monroe County, Winn Dixie, and Centennial Bank. There is still a limited number of vendor spaces available and those that are interested in participating or attending the educational sessions can contact our office at 305-292-4501.

Be sure to “Like” us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter and Instagram!
UF/IFAS/MONROE COUNTY EXTENSION
1100 Simonton Street, Suite 2-260, Key West, FL 33040
102050 Overseas Hwy., Suite 244, Key Largo, FL 33037

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County Extension Director: Alicia Betancourt
Newsletter Editor: Brynn Morey, 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

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

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.
https://ics.ifas.ufl.edu/ufifas-diversity-and-legal-eo-statements/

UF/IFAS/MCES QUARTERLY CONTACTS

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Florida Friendly Angler course is now live!

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), UF/IFAS Extension and Florida Sea Grant have teamed up to develop the Florida Friendly Angler course. This free online course is for both new and experienced anglers looking to educate themselves on fisheries management and up their fishing game by learning skills and practices that help ensure fishing opportunities for the future.

https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/FLFFWCC/bulletins/3196246