

FALL 2007



OUR MISSION

Our mission is to respond to Lee County issues and needs through customized education and training in agriculture/natural resources, horticulture, youth development, marine education, Florida yards & neighborhoods, and family and consumer sciences.



HORTICULTURE

The horticulture program provides information on what to grow and how to grow it. Advice for nurseries, landscapers and homeowners. The program offers frequent and topical classes, seminars and short courses on all aspects of plant care. Basic Research provides answers to local questions. A horticulture specialist and Master Gardeners are available for daily consultation on local gardening problems. The horticulture web page will keep you current on activities and alert you to special local problems and solutions.



FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

To keep up with today's busy lifestyles, Family and Consumer Sciences offers programs in parenting, food safety, money management, and nutrition. Education for families on parenting, preparation for marriage and divorce which includes mentoring.



YOUTH DEVELOPMENT/4-H

More than 200 "learn by doing" project areas are offered for young people, including marine science, science, computers, aerospace, family oriented activities, citizenship, livestock and horses, public speaking skills, and other life skills.



AGRICULTURE/ NATURAL RESOURCES

The latest in natural resource education, pesticide use and certification information is offered to assist interested citizens, developers and government agencies. Farmers and ranchers are provided with rapid response to problems occurring with their crops and lands, and updates on pesticide technology.



MARINE EDUCATION

Environmental Education and fisheries enhancement projects are just a few of the programs offered.



FLORIDA YARDS & NEIGHBORHOODS

Creating and maintaining attractive landscapes to enhance our community and to protect Florida's natural environment.

It's All About the 4-H Kids

By: Cathy Suggs, 4-H Agent

Summertime is all about the 4-H youth in Lee County attending camps to learn new life skills, assume teen leadership roles, and become better citizens. Over 175 youth in our county participated in various 4-H camps and activities during June and July. Youth learned how to sew an outfit, construct a quilt, shoot a gun, care for a horse, and paddle a canoe at the five 4-H specialty camps taught during summer vacation. Many young 4-H youth experienced their first overnight camping adventure.

Encouraging youth to become good citizens is one of the goals of the 4-H program. During the first week of summer vacation, twenty eight youth from Florida attended a civics class called Citizenship Washington Focus. They met Senator Nelson and House Representative Mahoney while learning about federal government on Capital Hill. Senator Nelson was involved in 4-H as a youth and shared that his first public speech was given at a 4-H speech competition. He inspired the youth to set high goals and take advantage of all the opportunities that 4-H offers.



youth decide to pursue a college education after attending Legislature and major in political science and law.

Another camping opportunity for the Lee County 4-H youth was a day camp called Discover Lee. Discover Lee Environmental Day Camp taught youth to make connections between the actions of man and how these actions affect our natural resources. Thirty youth learned about horticulture, how to be water wise, hurricane survival, Marine Biology, Florida wildlife habitats, and the benefits of recycling. The youth had a wonderful time learning how to be environmentally conscious in Lee County.



Summers in Lee County 4-H are all about youth learning life skills, becoming good citizens, and practicing leadership. If you would like to make a difference in a young person's life, please consider sponsoring a youth at one of our camps next year or becoming a 4-H volunteer. You can contact Cathy Suggs, 4-H Youth Development Agent, at 239-461-7516.

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DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

“IT’S all about the kids” is frequently heard in our office, thanks to our new 4-H agent Cathy Suggs. Although we educate people of all ages in Lee County, each agent has a responsibility to contribute 10% of their program work to youth development.

In this issue each agent is focusing on a youth education program. It may be how you can interest your child in gardening and the environment, how youth often respond to trauma, or the variety of activities your child can experience through 4-H.



Cathy Suggs joined our staff on May 4th and has already made tremendous impacts on our youth development program. We had 11 new 4-H clubs for a

total of 31 when the 4-H year started September 1st.

Some of the new subject matter clubs include: marine biology, shooting sports, teen leadership, and alpacas. The Boys & Girls club has started a 4-H club at the Shady Oaks site.

Our new Marine Sea Grant agent Joy Hazell came to us on June 1st from Rookery Bay in Naples. She has found there is a real need for classes on responsible boating focusing on the marine environment. Joy will also be actively involved in recreational fisheries, monofilament recycling, marine education of adults and 4-H youth involved in a marine science club.

Enjoy this issue of our newsletter as you read how each of our agent’s specialties applies to youth development.

Extension Agents win awards at annual meeting!

Tom Becker received the Florida Association of Natural Resources Extension Professionals (FANREP) Communicator award for his newsletter *FYN Community News*.

Celia Hill was a member of the team that won the Florida Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (FEAFCS) Public Relations award. The award was for the *Simply Florida* cookbook marketing package.

**Interested In Volunteer Opportunities?
Call Kathy Cahill
239-432-2159**

4-H Sea Cadets and Lee County Sea Grant Team Up To Learn About Our Wetland and Marine Environment

By: Joy Hazell, Sea Grant Extension Agent

Sea Grant seeks to increase marine literacy among people of all ages and offers a variety of programs and resources in marine and environmental sciences. Agents provide marine education programs to formal educators who teach pre K to college students and to non-formal educators in aquaria, environmental education centers, and museums. They also work closely with 4-H clubs to help deliver and develop marine education curriculum.

During the 2007/2008 4-H year Lee County Sea Grant will work with the “Sea” Cadets 4-H club on a Marine Biology project. Expanding on this summer’s Discover Lee Marine Day the 31 Sea Cadet youth will follow a rain drop’s journey from a wetland to an estuary and finally to the Gulf of Mexico. The goals of the project will be to experience what happens to a drop of water as it moves through our ecosystems; to investigate what animal and plant life the water supports; to discover the importance of natural areas to our quality of life and to learn how each individual can protect and nurture our environments.

The Sea Cadets will learn about wetlands at Six Mile Cypress Slough, get to know the critters that live in seagrass and mudflats at Bunch Beach and explore dunes and identify birds at Lovers Key State Park while experiencing different ways we protect our watery environments. They will also work on stewardship projects at each location, collecting trash and observing human impacts on our natural lands. Our final day will take it down to critter level by dissecting a squid, observing different adaptations for living in its environment and talking about squid’s importance to humans as food.



Each participant will learn more about the local environment, gain ways they can protect and care for it and most importantly have fun.

Kids Learn Lessons of Mother Nature

By: Stephen Brown, Horticulture Agent

Our surrounding environment is changing as we become more urban. Kids are not inclined to experience what others in past generations took for granted, largely the feel, smell, and wonder of plants bursting from the soil to become food, material, or a thing that outlives many human generations.

All across the country, universities are reporting that the numbers of students entering agronomy and horticulture programs have decreased significantly. In fact, there are not enough “green industry” students to fill the needs of this dynamic country. The horticulture program is doing its part to bring kids a little bit closer to the marvel of plants by getting their hands dirty. Our hope is to interest the mind of young people such that they will have a greater appreciation of the natural environment and perhaps chose a career in horticulture.

Recently, through the 4-H program, we’ve planted a rose garden consisting entirely of Florida adapted roses. This was an opportunity to learn about plant selection, planting, watering, fertilizing, pruning, and pest control. The rose garden is in the

Fragrance Garden, in Lakes Park, and serves as an educational tool for the public.

More recently, two 4-H clubs planted sunflower seeds that will form the walls of a child’s maze. They first sowed the seeds in small plastic containers at the City of Fort Myers Nursery. The seedlings were transplanted weeks later by the 4-H’ers. The maze is at the Calusa Nature Center on Ortiz Blvd. Unfortunately, this project was not a rounding success. Many plants did not reach their expected height. Nevertheless, this is a valuable lesson in dealing with unexpected failures and learning how to correct them. There will be another maze next year.



The horticulture program has numerous other kids programs including Junior Master Gardeners. We will continue to get kids excited about plants and raise the next generation of plant lovers.

City Kids Learn to Grow Their Own Veggies

By: Roy Beckford, Agriculture/Natural Resources

Inner-city kids throughout the United States are often oblivious to the beauty of farming. Ask the average city kid in Florida where vegetables come from, and they will readily answer that they come from the supermarket. In 2005 the Agriculture/ Natural Resources Extension joined forces with the Fort Myers Police Department's 'Weed and Seed' Program to educate children about basic agricultural science, while using the logic of growing seeds and weeding out weeds to inculcate better value judgment. The Weed and Seed Program provides mentors and other resources such as funding for materials; while the Extension Office provides the expertise to build raised beds for vegetable production, teach the skills needed for seed germination, pest and disease identification, harvesting and food preparation.

By the end of winter 2007, seven different sites across Fort Myers and approximately 130 kids had

participated in the program, and the Extension Service began to publish a bi-monthly newsletter – The Weeder and Seeder – to share information among participants, and provide an important learning tool for mentors and other volunteers working with kids.

The program recommenced at the end of September 2007 and once again, kids in the 'Weed and Seed' area of Lee county have built their grow boxes and are growing vegetables and herbs. The major difference this time around is that the program has received 'graduated' status from the New York program directors, partly as a result of the contributions being made by the Lee County Extension Office to an eager group of inner-city kids in Fort Myers.



Five Kid-Friendly Things to DO!

By: Tom Becker, Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Agent

Make your yard Florida-friendly! Protect the environment in your neighborhood. Start by going on a scavenger hunt in the neighborhood! Be the first person to see this sign. Yards containing this sign have owners who have discovered eco-friendly ways of gardening. Some took special actions like planting native and Florida-Friendly plants or mulching with pine needles, grass and shrub chippings.



Build a rain barrel! Create environmental learning zones in your yard. One zone might be a scrubby natural looking place with slash pine trees or one created from scratch with native Florida plants that attract butterflies. Find ways to keep a 'free' source of rain water for wildlife. Attend a rain barrel construction class at Rutenberg Park. Call 239-461-7515 for 2008 class dates.

Count birds visiting your yard! Find a good bird-watching spot in your yard, borrow binoculars, grab a bottle of water and sit under a tree for shade. To get started, watch what plants are visited frequently by birds. Many plants produce seeds that attract many type of birds. If your landscape doesn't seem to attract birds, visit a county park that does. Ask a park ranger the best places to see migrating birds. Good places include: Lakes Park, Manatee Park, Bunche Beach and Rotary Park. Once you get good at spotting birds, start keeping a log sheet counting and identifying the birds you see.

Recycle Stuff! Recycle old newspapers by layering them over new garden beds to control weeds. Ask a garden center if they have alternative, recycled wood waste mulch. Do not use cypress mulch because harvesting cypress trees from the wild depletes wetlands. Even collecting rain water off the roof is using recycled or 'reclaimed' water. Be imaginative. Use an old wheel barrel that doesn't have any other use for a rolling garden. Fill it with dirt. Cover with mulch and plant it with vegetables or flowers.

Visit Kid-Friendly Garden Places! Manatee Park has an activity for kids called 'Eye on Nature'. Or see clay pot critters made by the Wildcat 4-H Club at the Florida-Friendly landscape at Rutenberg Park. You can 'Walk the Plank' on the boardwalk at the Six Mile Slough Preserve. Most beaches are kid friendly too! People with yards on the beach are often protected by dunes covered with sea oats, dune sunflowers or railroad vine. A critter often living just beyond the beach dunes is a gopher tortoise, a protected species in Florida.

The University of Florida program called Florida Yards and Neighborhoods teaches homeowners how to create landscapes that are water-efficient, low-maintenance and beneficial to native wildlife. It emphasizes nine principles: Planting the right plant in the right place, using water efficiently, fertilizing appropriately, utilizing mulch, attracting wildlife, controlling pests responsibly, recycling, reducing storm water runoff and protecting the waterfront.

VIEW OUR LATEST IFAS University of FL Publications

We are listing publications which have undergone major revisions in addition to new publications released between 08/31/07 and 10/18/07

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE :

FCS7175/HE900: Retirement Years: How Much Money will I need?

FCS8847/FY998: Healthy Living: Are You at Risk for Dehydration?

FSHN0708/FS144: What's in Your Tropical Fruit?

FCS2276/FY999: Asperger's Disorder

FCS2152/HE367: Toilet Training

MARINE SCIENCE:

SGEF121/SG047: Release Techniques for Marine Fisheries.

SGEF108/SG042: Circle Hooks.

AGRICULTURE:

EENY410/IN746: European Fire Ant, Red Ant.

FLORID YARDS AND NEIGHBORHOODS:

ENH1065/EP323: Compost Tips for the Home Gardener.

HORTICULTURE:

SL135/SS186: Producer Soil Test Information Sheet.

ENH100/WG071: Responses of Turfgrass and Turfgrass weeds to herbicides



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Home & Community Educators

Understanding Traumatic Stress in Children

By: Karen S. Headlee, Family & Consumer Science Agent

The unexpected loss of a loved one, a car accident, or exposure to a violent experience is familiar to many of us.

Everyone reacts to such events differently, varying from shock and numbness, to withdrawal and depression or anger and agitation. There is no "right" reaction to devastating events. Over time, some people are able to get their life back on track, process their feelings and begin to heal, but for others their responses to trauma are prolonged, intense and interfere with day-to-day functioning.

As children grow and mature, they are faced with age-specific challenges they must master before moving on to the next stage. At each developmental stage, a child is faced with different tasks that build upon one another: toddlers learn to explore their world; school-aged children are interested in making friends and adolescents try to separate from parents and become more independent. When faced with traumatic stress a child's energy is diverted into coping and he or she has fewer resources to master developmental challenges. Most children are very resilient and can rebound from traumatic experiences if they have support from caregivers to make them feel safe, and protected. The level of support a

child receives from a caregiver is the most significant factor in how well a child recovers after a traumatic event.

When caring for a child who has recently experienced an acute (one time) traumatic event, it is important to recognize the child's need for safety, stability and support. Caregiver/parents can help children cope with trauma by being a "safe person" to talk to and providing a safe place, by keeping a routine and engaging them in positive distracting activities, and by ensuring children have a healthy diet and plenty of exercise.

Love and unconditional acceptance can begin the healing process for hurting children.

Bassuk, E. L., Konnath, K., & Volk, K. T. (2007). Understanding Traumatic Stress in Children. The National Center on Family Homelessness.



150 YEARS OF KNOWLEDGE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

<http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu>

Lee County Extension Office

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>

University of Florida's Electronic Data Information Source (EDIS)

<http://ifas.ufl.edu>

University of Florida's Institute of Food & Agricultural Sciences with links to other land grant universities throughout the U.S.

<http://impact.ifas.ufl.edu>

University of Florida's Impact Magazine

<http://ifas.ufl.edu/research>

Links to University of Florida's 17 research centers

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