

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- **Sunshine
Spotlight:
Backyard
Photography**
- **Eco-paddle**
- **What birds
are nesting?**



The New Leaf Newsletter: Florida-Friendly Landscaping

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WINTER 2017

Little Things That Run The World

Have you noticed fewer bugs on your windshield? And has that made you feel sad? Wait –*sad* –about spending less time with a squeegee? Cleaning off bug guts may not be a pleasant activity, but we do have cause for alarm that insects are on the decline. It's hard to measure how much insect populations have dropped recently. America has not conducted much research, but worldwide we suspect a 45% decrease. Yikes! But who cares? Who would miss bugs? Well... everyone eventually. E.O. Wilson, renowned ecologist, said insects are "the little things that run the world." Insects can pollinate plants, aerate soil, and decompose matter. Insects are also a huge chunk of the food web. Do you like birds? Because 96% of birds rely on insects as food. The hawk ate the frog who ate the fly. The bobcat ate the mole who ate the grub. If we appreciate wildlife, we

have to appreciate insects. So how do we help them? We go lower on the food web. Insects sometimes eat other insects –and those insects eat native plants. Insects have specialized relationships with the plants they feed on, which has taken hundreds of years to perfect. Plants have their own defenses to keep from being gobbled up. Each plant species has its own leaf chemistry that an insect has had to overcome. Humans can eat relatively few leaves in nature and the same goes with insects. That's why preserving the native plants that insects have adapted to is so important for the entire food web. That's it! Include some extra native plants into your landscape, and don't kill all the bugs on these plants. Better yet, remove exotic, invasive plants and replace them with native plants. These little things that run the world de-

serve some small acts of kindness from us.

Top Native Plants and the Number of Butterfly/Moth Species They Support:

• Oak	534
• Black Cherry	456
• Willow	455
• Birch	413
• Golden Rod	115
• Aster	112

Want to see the entire list and why it is essential for backyard gardeners to take action? Visit www.bringingnaturehome.net/ by entomologist, Dr. Doug Tallamy.



Learn all the latest UF research at
Edis.ifas.ufl.edu

The Newest EDIS Articles

Keeping Bees in Florida

Florida is a unique state to raise bees. What are the opportunities and challenges? Read on!

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/aa264>

Fertilization of Field-Grown and Landscape Palms in Florida

If you have a palm, this is a must read! Most palms suffer from nutrient deficiencies that you can correct! <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep261>

Thrips Management Program for Horticultural Crops

This publication is for growers but you can still learn how to identify and treat this tiny but destructive insect. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in1145>

Sunshine Spotlight: Sarafaith Snaps To It!

Camera in hand, Sarafaith has endless inspiration right outside her door. Any given day, she'll snap a dozen pictures of the plant and wildlife interactions happening in her garden. She says, "Sharing these images on social media, on my HOA website and in blogs has also taught me that when people see beauty and feel empathy, they are more likely to change their behavior when it comes to environmental impact."



How did you get started with backyard photography?



As an avid wildlife photographer, I was very excited when I first moved to a 40-year old house on a beautiful spring-fed waterway. Convinced that when I went out there with my camera, there would be a jolly parade of animals in the back yard lining up to pose for me every day, I was deeply surprised and disappointed when it didn't happen. When I went out in my kayak, I would see an abundance of wildlife on the water, in the trees and in other people's yards. I had to ask myself, what was so different about my yard? Was my vast open expanse of emerald green turf grass not a good enough welcome mat? (Bingo!) I took my questions to the internet and happily found much valuable information on the websites of University of Florida/IFAS and the Florida Friendly Landscaping Program. And so the transformation of a 90% turf grass waterfront property into a Florida Friendly oasis for wildlife photography had begun!

What makes your yard so photogenic?

First, I helped coordinate the rehabilitation of the waterline of our 3 connected community lakes. We removed invasive vegetation and replanted each home site with native and Florida Friendly aquatics. In my own yard, I began replacing areas of turf grass with attractive arrangements of both native and Florida Friendly plants. I used varying heights to create ingress and egress opportunities, food sources, sheltering space and nesting opportunities. I made brush piles and stick sculptures and leaf piles with my yard waste, and installed innumerable bird feeders, toad homes and bee houses. Within a year of replacing just 25% of the turf grass with native and Florida Friendly plants, my yard became a bustling, animated, fun-filled oasis, alive with a stunning array of wildlife. In the past 4 years that replacement has reached about 40% and it really is little slice of photographic heaven.



Why do you believe in Florida-Friendly Landscaping?

Replanting our aquatics along the waterline and sharing FFL information with our community through the HOA and our community website has made extraordinary changes in our shared ecosystem. Fish, amphibian, insect, pollinator, reptile and mammal populations all increased over a period of years. Neighbors who have lived in our community 30 or more years remark that they are seeing more birds and butterflies in their yards, including species they have never seen before. I've been able to create a beautiful, artistic, useful garden using the 9 FFL principles. Each year I work less, use fewer chemicals and reduce to amount of water I use. Less work, less pollution, and more time for photography is my gardening creed!

What's the most important thing a homeowner can do?

The most important thing I feel a homeowner can do is LEARN. Second most important is SHARE what we learn!

Your Yard Calendar

What sights in your yard do you get to look forward to? Flowering trees and frolicking critters will make their debut at different times of year. Yard maintenance can also be most effective when paired with the seasons. Much of our wildlife action takes place in the water so check out nearby springs and seashores!

January

Flowering: Camellia, Red maple, Trumpet Tree
Wildlife: Ospreys, sandhill cranes, hawks and owls are nesting. Sight overwintering ducks and geese! Catch concentrations of manatees in the springs.
To Do: Be prepared to protect plants from freezes. Prune non-flowering shrubs to improve form.



February

Flowering: Chickasaw Plum, Eastern Dogwood, Fringe Tree, Japanese magnolia, Taiwan Cherry, Azalea
Wildlife: Pileated woodpeckers start mating season and

drum on objects including houses and telephone poles. Little blue and tri-colored herons, wood ducks and snail kites are also nesting now. Striped skunks are breeding!
To Do: Fertilize shrubs with general fertilizer. Apply pre-emergent weed killer to lawns. Replace declining winter annuals with spring and summer annuals.

March

Wildlife: Male frogs and toads move to ponds to breed on rainy nights. Snakes are more active.
To Do: Prune azaleas when plants have finished blooming.



Learn more at:
 Central Florida Gardening Calendar:
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep450>
 Florida Wildlife Extension, Wildlife Happenings:
http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife_info/happenings/

Upcoming Events

Landscape Design

Are you thinking of redoing your landscape? This class will cover which plants will work best in your yard and how they can be arranged.
 Date: Wednesday, January 25, 2017 6:30-8:30 pm
 Location: Extension Auditorium Cost: \$10.00
 Register: <https://landscapedesign-seminole.eventbrite.com>

Landscaping for Shade

Where's all the sunshine? If it's not in your yard, this class will help you select and care for plants best-adapted for shady conditions.
 Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2017 6:30-8:30 pm
 Location: Extension Auditorium Cost: \$5.00
 Register: <https://landscaping-for-shade.eventbrite.com>

Eco-Paddle the Wild and Scenic Wekiva River

Learn how to benefit our waterways and see the Wekiva first hand on a canoe tour.
 Date: Saturday, Feb 11, 2017 9:00 – 11:30 am
 Location: Wekiva Island, 1014 Miami Springs Drive, Longwood. Cost: Free! Space is limited. Please pre-register by calling 407-665-5560.



Getting to Know Invasive Critters

In honor of National Invasive Species Awareness Week we'll talk about all the different species that might be lurking in your yard... and how to deal with them!
 Date: Wednesday, March 1, 2017 6:30 – 7:30 pm
 Location: Extension Auditorium Cost: FREE
 Register: <https://know-invasive-species.eventbrite.com>

Landscaping with Potted Plants

Arranging plants in a container can be great gardening on a small scale. We'll discuss how to design and maintain container gardens in this class then create one for you to take home!
 Date: Saturday, March 11, 2017 10:00 AM – Noon
 Location: Extension Auditorium, Cost: \$25.00
 Register: <https://landscape-potted-plants.eventbrite.com>

Let's Make a Rain Barrel

Learn about water savings and build a rain barrel to take home.
 Date: Monday, March 20, 2:00—4:00 or 6:30—8:30 pm
 Location: Extension Auditorium Cost: \$20.00.
 Register online at: <https://lets-build-a-rain-barrel.eventbrite.com>

***Registration is required at least two days before the event. Call 407-665-5560 or email fyn@seminolecountyfl.gov**

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ PROGRAM



FLORIDA YARDS & NEIGHBORHOODS



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Florida-Friendly Landscapes protect Florida's unique natural resources by conserving water, reducing waste and pollution, creating wildlife habitat, and preventing erosion. Any landscape can be Florida-Friendly if it is designed and cared for according to the nine Florida-Friendly Landscaping principles. Seminole County's program is a partnership between the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service, the Public Works department's Watershed Management division, and local government, including the cities below.



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