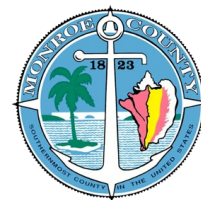


Educating with Extension



By Brynn Morey, Extension Coordinator, and in collaboration with
Alicia Betancourt, Shelly Krueger, and Maria Quirico

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University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), Monroe County

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SEPTEMBER HAPPENINGS



National Honey Month
National Papaya Month
Microplastics Awareness Month

September 4th
Labor Day! All County office closed for observation.



September 4th
National Wildlife Day!

September 7th-10th
Keys Lionfish Derby & Festival
Post Card Inn Islamorada
more info call (305)852-0030



September 16th
World Cleanup Day!
Www.worldcleanupday.org



September 16th
Native Plant Sale

Key West Tropical Forest & Botanical Garden 5210 College Rd.
9:00AM-12:00PM

September 24th

Sherriff's Animal Farm
Open House! 1PM-3PM
5525 College Rd.

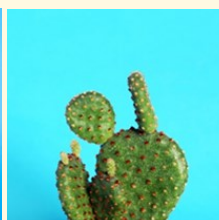


Exploring the Price of Using Non-Native Ornamentals in our Gardens

By Maria Quirico
Environmental Horticulture Agent

Source: Based on the book *Bringing Nature Home*. Douglas W. Tallamy

Who can resist the charm of exotic plants? Their vibrant colors, unusual shapes, and intriguing origins captivate us, transporting our imagination to far-off lands. From tropical palms moved by a gentle breeze to spikey cactus adorning arid landscapes, these non-native ornamentals mesmerize us all. However, beneath their enchanting appearance lies a hidden price that begs us to look closer.



Exotic plants. Exotic plants are non-native species introduced to new environments.

While a non-native plant escaping from our garden may not seem like a big deal initially, it can lead to significant issues when they displace our native species and become invasive. Invasive plants can fight native species for resources, disrupt the ecological balance, and negatively impact local biodiversity. Therefore, we must be mindful of the plants we introduce into our environment and opt for native species.

More than 5,000 non-native plants have indeed invaded natural areas of North America. As people plant these non-native species for their aesthetic appeal and animals are attracted to their shapes and colors, some have become invasive, outcompeting native plants.

Other consequences are pests and diseases. It's essential to acknowledge that we may unintentionally invite unwanted

Plant Clinics

Saturday September 2nd
Plant Clinic

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Grimal Grove

258 Cunningham Lane
Big Pine Key

Wednesday, September 6th
Plant Clinic

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Key Largo Library

1014850 O/S Hwy.
Key Largo

Thursday, September 7th
Plant Clinic

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Key West Garden Club
1100 Atlantic Blvd.
Key West

Saturday, September 16th
Plant Clinic

9 a.m. to Noon

Marathon Home Depot
4555 O/S Hwy,
Marathon

Plant Clinic

9 a.m. to Noon

KW Botanical Garden Nursery

Cancelled, will resume in November

Tuesday, September 19th
Plant Clinic

9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Garden Club of Upper Keys
94040 O/S Hwy.
Tavernier

Thursday, September 28th
Plant Clinic

9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Island Home Nursery
88720 O/S Hwy,
Islamorada

Sea Grant News



Shelly Krueger
UF/IFAS Florida Sea Grant Agent

Shelly recently accomplished the following activities:

- Shelly's blog was featured in the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's South Atlantic Bite newsletter (<https://safmc.net/posts/the-south-atlantic-bite-8-17-2023/>). Shelly gave a coral bleaching update to the Key West Sustainability Advisory Board.



- Shelly is the co-lead of the Florida's Coral Reef Resilience Program (FCRRP) Disturbance Response Communications Team. When our Team recently expanded to respond to marine disturbances beyond disease, we expected how important having the collaborative network we created in response to stony coral tissue loss disease to continue. We did not anticipate our Team would have to spring into action almost immediately due to this summer's unprecedented marine heatwave. Florida's Coral Reef is experiencing record breaking bleaching-level heat stress and extremely high-water temperatures since mid-July. Our core Team already includes representatives from FWC, FDEP, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program, FL Keys National Marine Sanctuary, Coral Restoration Foundation, Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Miami-Dade Co, National Park Service, and Fish and Wildlife Foundation of Florida. We knew we had to mobilize, and we reached out to all of the coral reef restoration organizations and Mission Iconic Reefs.



- On August 2nd, the Team was able to release the Florida's Coral Reef Resilience Program Bleaching Event 2023 Information Sheet, an internal communications document that we have shared with dozens of researchers, communicators, and organizations. We also met with our local Key West National Weather Service, and they have been instrumental in contributing to another collaborative document we have shared with the entire Disturbance Response Network called the Thermal Stress, Bleaching and/or Mortality Report, that also includes qualitative information from scientists in the field with real-time information on paling/bleaching/mortality at the reefs. It is vital when researchers and communicators are called upon by reporters that they have source material. In addition, we have been holding weekly meetings and expanded our Team to include Keys Marine Lab, University of Miami, University of South Florida, Reef Institute, Mission Iconic Reefs, The Nature Conservancy et al. to share resources with this rapidly moving thermal event. We have been a primary resource and many of us have been working nights and weekends to have a weekly report of water temperatures and reef conditions ready by 10 am every Monday morning. The positive feedback has been tremendous, and the media reporting has been national and international.

The Environmental Horticulture Program and Master Gardener Volunteers remain

CALL OUR OFFICE:
(305)292-4501

We have many different ways we can assist!

EMAIL YOUR QUESTIONS TO:
mastergardener@monroecounty-fl.gov

Please include a detailed description of the problem and photos if available

VISIT OUR OFFICE:

Email Monroe@ifas.ufl.edu or
Call (305)292-4501 to schedule an appointment

FACEBOOK PAGE:

Visit our Facebook page for updates, requests, information and so much more!

<https://www.facebook.com/MonroeCountyExtension>



Horticulture News



Maria Quirico

UF/IFAS Environmental Horticulture

Maria recently accomplished the following activities:

- Maria Quirico authored an article for the Florida Keys Weekly and our program's newsletter, delving into the implications of non-native ornamental use. In addition, she wrote the script for the Honeybee National Day segment on the US 1 Radio Morning Magazine, contributing to broader awareness. Maria elaborated on an informative presentation about invasive plant pests for the Key West Tropical Forest & Botanical Garden's plant health workshop, sharing vital insights with the community.



- Maria Quirico prepared for upcoming events, such as the Green Industries Best Management Practices (GI-BMP) training scheduled for September 13th in Key Largo. This training, led by our Environmental Horticulture program, Cesar Peralta, and Master Gardener Laurie Brooks, promises to provide valuable insights to participants. There are 21 participants already signed up for this event.

- Maria Quirico focused on enhancing environmentally sustainable horticulture practices for Monroe County through our successful plant clinics. These clinics saw participation from 4 to 10 people at each location, providing valuable advice to the community about their plant-related questions.



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 has been invited to join the leadership of the National Extension Climate Initiative as a committee member in professional credentialing. As part of this effort we examined ongoing training and recommended EcoActUS for independent study on climate change. We put together a climate boot camp, running Sept 12-23 online. Anyone can register for free at <https://www.ecoactus.org/neci2>
- Alicia drafted the Climate Choices for Coastal Communities discussion guide for the Community Voices, Informed Choices (CIVIC) program. This will be used in several Florida communities this fall.



- Alicia will co-teach the Climate Smart Floridians program starting Oct. 6th – Nov. 9th to provide citizens with research-based information about climate change and engage them as volunteers to help reduce household expenses and personal greenhouse gas emissions. Registration is \$40 <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/climate-smart-floridians-virtual-course-tickets-689370414467> The program covers climate change and how it will impact Florida. It addresses how climate change relates to topics such as landscaping, water resources, transportation, home energy, food, and waste.

- Alicia updated two learning modules in the Sustainable Living and Leadership Series, module topics on climate change and energy. This class will be exploring topics such as energy, water, and food and learning how these work together as a system. Participants will delve into the U.S. economy and understand how our consumption of goods impacts our world. They will discover ways to take action in their home and community to reduce their footprint and increase their handprint. Participants will earn a digital badge when they complete the course. The class starts Sept. 3, 2023, but you can [sign up now for \\$125 here](#).



Continued from page 1

pests that could disrupt our garden's ecological balance alongside the introduction of non-native ornamentals. Moreover, it's hard to anticipate whether a plant might become invasive. Some ornamentals may exhibit aggressive growth patterns, spreading beyond our control.

One example of this is the introduction of the Lobate Lac Scale (*Paratachardina lobata*) through ornamental plants. The Lobate Lac Scale is a tiny insect that feeds on the sap of plants. It was originally native to India but was introduced to Florida in the early 2000s through the ornamental plant trade. This scale insect often hides on the undersides of leaves and produces a waxy, protective covering that resembles a small, raised bump. The Lobate Lac Scale (*Paratachardina lobata*) is present in various parts of Florida, including the Miami-Dade County area and the Florida Keys.

Other diseases brought to America by the non-native plant trade are the chestnut blight, the southern oak death, blister rust, beech scale, and anthracnose. Non-native ornamentals have brought many non-native insects into the United States. Some examples include the Japanese beetle, cottony cushion scale, viburnum leaf beetle, citrus



Photo above: **The Japanese beetle** (*Popillia japonica*) was introduced from Japan to North America in the early 20th century and has become a significant pest in many parts of the country.

longhorn beetle, hemlock woolly adelgid, bronze birch borer, and the case of Asian psyllids that are significantly affecting the citrus industry in Florida.



The American chestnut. The American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) tree, native to eastern North America, was devastated by a fungal blight in the early 20th century.

Another significant threat is that non-natives can hybridize with native species, losing unique genetic pools of native plants and harming the biodiversity and ecological integrity of the affected areas.

Considering these negative consequences of using non-natives in our landscapes, the most effective recommendation is to minimize or avoid using non-native plants altogether. Opting for native plant species whenever possible is vital for preserving the ecological balance and safeguarding the biodiversity of our natural habitats. As a collective, we should strive to make thoughtful and mindful decisions to ensure the health and integrity of our ecosystems, benefiting not only our generation but also those to come.



Examples of beautiful native plants for your landscape.

For a full list of native plants and photos visit <https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/monroe/flowers-in-the-garden/>

Be sure to “Like” us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)!

UF IFAS Extension

UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA



UF/IFAS/MONROE COUNTY EXTENSION

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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>



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<http://ufl.edu>

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

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



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Putting Florida First



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UF/IFAS/MCES QUARTERLY CONTACTS

	June	July	Aug	Totals
Phone calls	42	88	91	221
Office visitors	38	41	35	114
Email Consultations	57	195	189	441
Learning events	18	23	33	74
Participants	314	281	491	1,086
Media submissions	3	6	8	17
Publications distributed	155	237	192	584
TOTAL contacts	627	871	1,039	2,537

CLIMATE SMART FLORIDIANS

VIRTUAL COURSE

October 5 - November 9, 2023 | 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

The Climate Smart Floridians program provides community members with research-based information about climate change and resiliency in Florida

Join us to learn about the principles of sustainability in water, waste, food, transportation, and more across the state. Climate Smart Floridians is a six-week interactive and discussion-based course that will be held on Thursday evenings from 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM ET starting on October 5th and ending on November 9th. The cost of this course is \$40 and will be offered via Zoom.

To register and view the agenda,
scan the QR code or visit:

<https://tinyurl.com/375kx7j4>



*Congratulations to Monroe County Extension Director,
Alicia Betancourt!*

Alicia has been invited to join the Association of Climate Change Officers (ACCO) Board of Directors, and will serve to guide the national credentialing body for climate change professionals on the 3rd Saturday of every month.

<https://climateofficers.org/ccp-board>