

# Educating with Extension



By Brynn Morey, Extension Coordinator, and in collaboration with Alicia Betancourt, Shelly Krueger, and Michelle Leonard-Mularz

Volume 22 Issue 12

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

December 2022

## Inside this issue:

Sea Grant News from Shelly Krueger	2
Horticultural News from	2
Master Gardener Volunteers can Help!	2
Extension Director News	3
Page 1 story continued	3
THANK YOU!!!!	4
Contact us!	4

## DECEMBER HAPPENINGS

**December 6th**  
Pets Photos with the Grinch  
Marathon SPCA 5PM-7PM

**December 9th 6pm**  
Tropical Holiday Fun Fest  
Marathon Community Park

**December 10th**  
Schooner Warf Annual Lighted Boat Parade @ Key West Historic Seaport 6pm

**December 17th**  
Key West Botanical Garden Society Native Plant Sale  
9AM-12PM 5210 College Rd. KW

**December 18th**  
Key West Artisan Market Holiday/Shop Local 10AM-2PM  
1801 White St. Key West

**December 26th & 30th**  
County Offices closed to observe Holidays.



## Planting Tips for the Educated Gardener

By Michelle Leonard-Mularz  
Environmental Horticulture Agent

Issues related to planting container trees and shrubs can be the starting point for many stressors and overall decline to woody plants in the landscape. Lack of growth and vigor; leaf drop and discoloration; heightened disease persistence and insect pest activity are all attributed to poor planting and establishment of woody plants.

The first principle of Florida Friendly Landscapes is Right Plant, Right Place. At first it sounds simple, but it is a broad concept with some complex considerations. Light requirements: does the plant need full sun or partial shade? Are there nearby structures or other plants that will limit the amount of sunlight the plant receives? What temperature ranges does the plant thrive in and is it suited to our USDA Hardiness Zone? What are the soil characteristics and does this match the plants we want to include in our yard? Soil pH, salinity, organic content, and water holding potential are all very important when making these decisions, especially here in the Keys with our environmental extremes and limited resources.

Now we can “dig-in” and finally put those plants in the ground we have been babying since our purchase, right? Container nursery production is both an art and a science. Predicting buyer interest, how much stock to produce, and timing of production is challenging to say the least in these economic times. Plants typically start out at a small liner size

## Plant Clinics

Every Saturday

### Plant Clinic

9 a.m. to Noon

Grimal Grove

258 Cunningham Lane  
Big Pine Key

Thursday, December 1st

### Plant Clinic

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Key West Garden Club  
1100 Atlantic Blvd.  
Key West

Wednesday, December 7th

### Plant Clinic

9 a.m. to Noon

Murray Nelson Govt. Center  
102050 O/S Hwy. #244  
Key Largo

Wednesday, December 21st

### Plant Clinic

9 a.m. to Noon

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

Saturday, December 17th

### Plant Clinic

9 a.m. to Noon

KW Botanical Garden Nursery  
5210 College Rd.  
Stock Island

Saturday, December 17th

### Plant Clinic

9 a.m. to Noon

Marathon Home Depot  
4555 O/S Hwy,  
Marathon

Thursday, December 22nd

### Plant Clinic

9a.m. to Noon

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 was elected the chair of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Coral Advisory Panel. Shelly led the group discussion for recommendations to the Council regarding the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Restoration Blueprint and approved 6 motions for consideration at the Council's next meeting.
- Shelly and the amazing planning team from the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program, Coral Restoration Foundation, Association of Zoos and Aquariums, FDEP, and FWC taught 31 registrants from the United States, Caribbean, and Europe during the virtual *Reef Futures Coral Communication Session: Building a Community of Practice*. This is the first step to create an international Coral Restoration Consortium communication working group to promote collaboration and best practices to support the dissemination of science-based information focused on coral reef conservation worldwide. The second workshop will be held on December 14 in the evening to accommodate our Pacific Ocean partners.
- Shelly spoke on *US1 Radio Morning Magazine* about king tides. The final king tides for 2022 will be during the new moon from November 22-26, 2022. The average difference between high tides and low tides in the Florida Keys, especially oceanside, is around 1.5 feet. During these extreme high tides that occur in the Fall around the full and new moons, the water level difference between low tides and high tides can be almost 3 feet twice a day, at approximately 6 hour intervals. Shelly spoke to Joe Moore about checking tide apps and being aware of less clearance for boaters under bridges and avoiding seagrass meadows that may be exposed at low tide and much shallower than expected.



## The Environmental Horticulture Program and Master Gardener Volunteers remain dedicated to helping you with your plant related questions.

**CALL OUR OFFICE:**  
(305)292-4501

*We have many different ways we can assist!*

**VISIT OUR OFFICE:**

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

**EMAIL YOUR QUESTIONS TO:**  
[mastergardener@monroecounty-fl.gov](mailto:mastergardener@monroecounty-fl.gov)

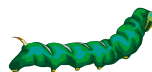
Please include a detailed description of the problem and photos if available

**FACEBOOK PAGE:**

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

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

## Horticulture News



Michelle Leonard-Mularz  
UF/IFAS Environmental Horticulture Agent

Michelle recently accomplished the following activities:

- Michelle partnered with SOS Foundations nutrition program and spoke to two fifth grade classes at Poinciana Elementary School on the history of agriculture in the Keys and breadfruit production at Grimal Grove. Breadfruit trees are being planted worldwide as a way to combat food insecurity and climate change. 38 students participated.

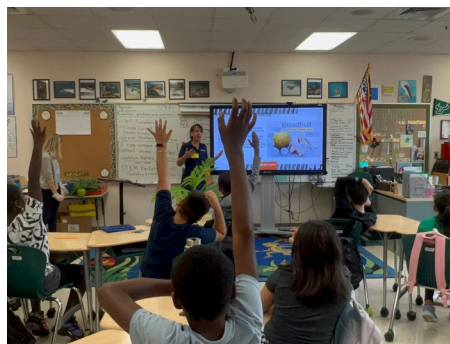


Photo Above:  
Environmental Horticulture Agent, Michelle Mularz, presents at the students at Poinciana Elementary School

- The Environmental Horticulture Program and The Islamorada Foundation hosted a butterfly gardening program and unveiled the new demonstration garden located at a J. Gilbert Reese Park in Islamorada. The park features many Florida Keys native plants. The garden was planted and is maintained by Master Gardener Volunteers.



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:

- Over three months, Alicia taught non-profit development programs for regional non-profit boards in collaboration with United Way. Topics included fundraising and inflation, whom the board serves, grants management, emergent community needs, and coalition building.

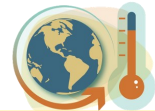


- Alicia worked to provide public comment to the US Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) regarding the 5th National Climate Assessment (NCA5). She attended an informational webinar to learn more about the NCA5. The call for public comments and review of the draft will be open for 12 weeks. Registration is required to comment and it can be found at this [link](#) or you can read the draft report here <https://www.globalchange.gov/nca5>

- The Upper Keys Extension office is moving in December from the Murray Nelson to the Ellis Building (upstairs) on Plantation Key, stay tuned for the new phone and office number.



- Alicia participated in two climate and resiliency planning groups to further regional adoption of climate goals.



Continued from page 1

and then are stepped up to different sized containers throughout its life at the nursery. When we ultimately bring that plant home to become a permanent resident in our landscape, we have little to no knowledge of the resources and time it has taken to grow that plant. So, often with little thought, we plop our new friend in the ground and will it to be happy in its new home. But there is a better way! Understanding the constraints of plant production, we can have a better appreciation of the process, become educated gardeners, and ultimately give our plants a better chance of survival.

First, is the plant too deep in the pot? This is easy to check and remedy by removing soil from the top of the rootball (or soil surface) to the point where the roots that are connected to the trunk (top-most roots) are visible. Next, are there circling or girdling roots? As the plants grow, the roots are elongating. However, once they hit the edge of the container, they can no longer grow away from the trunk. Instead, they circle around the edge of the container and become a tangled network, like old cables one would find in an electronics drawer. Both serve little purpose. Similarly, girdling roots typically happen when plants have been in a particular container size for too long and were not corrected when they

were stepped up. So, girdling roots may be harder to see and can be deep within the rootball, closer to the trunk, slowly strangling the trunk as they expand in girth. They can also be more difficult to correct. To make matters even more fun, there can be roots that plunge downward, start to grow up to the surface in search of air, and any other combination of weird, kinked growth.

They may all have different names, but one fact remains. If these defects or issues are not corrected at the time of planting, that woody tree or shrub will not be happy for long. Additionally, trees in our tropical landscapes need to be resilient and withstand ever-increasing hurricane-force winds. These root defects make trees vulnerable and reduce their wind resistance. The goal is to have healthy roots that grow away from the trunk, in all directions, to securely anchor that plant in the surrounding soil. Circling, girdling, plunging, or kinked roots cannot do this. So, as educated gardeners, we can look for some of these defects before purchasing our plants and/or correcting them by cutting or removing these issues at the time of planting, when the relative diameter of the roots is small. Our plants will be happy, and our landscapes will become more resilient over time.





Please recycle this newsletter!

**UF/IFAS/MONROE COUNTY EXTENSION**
 1100 Simonton Street, Suite 2-260, Key West, FL 33040  
 102050 Overseas Hwy., Suite 244, Key Largo, FL 33037

 KW Phone: 305-292-4501    KL Phone: 305-453-8747  
 KW Fax: 305-292-4415    KL Fax: 305-453-8749
General e-mail: [monroe@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:monroe@ifas.ufl.edu)

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-legeleo-statements/>


 UF/IFAS Extension is  
 Putting Florida First
**UF/IFAS/MCES QUARTERLY CONTACTS**

Sept    Oct    Nov    Totals

Phone calls	60	64	75	199
Office visitors	66	60	57	183
Email Consultations	131	126	104	361
Learning events	26	22	25	73
Participants	319	368	445	1,132
Media submissions	8	6	5	19
Publications distributed	284	200	230	714
<b>TOTAL contacts</b>	<b>894</b>	<b>846</b>	<b>941</b>	<b>2,681</b>

*In Loving*  
**MEMORY**
**NANCY MILLER**

It is with great sadness that we share Nancy Miller, Master Gardener and longtime Extension Volunteer, passed away. Nancy had been a Master Gardener since 2008 and she and her husband were heavily involved in the Marathon Garden Club. She served as their President for several years and as editor for their newsletter, in addition to many other leadership roles for the organization. She also was a volunteer with our Sea Grant Agent through the Florida Keys Water Watch program since 2015 and sampled water weekly for 243 weeks straight.

 TO EVERYONE THAT  
 PARTICIPATED IN THE PEANUT  
 BUTTER CHALLENGE,

**THANK  
 YOU!!!!**

 Because of your generosity  
 we were able to donate over  
 200 lbs of Peanut Butter to  
 our local food pantries!

 THE FLORIDA PEANUT PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION  
 AND FLORIDA PEANUT FEDERATION MATCHED  
 OUR DONATIONS AND DISTRIBUTED THE PEANUT  
 BUTTER TO FOOD PANTRIES AFFECTED BY THE  
 RECENT HURRICANE.

**UF** | **IFAS Extension**  
 UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
