

# Educating with Extension



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

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

April 2023

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## APRIL HAPPENINGS



**National Garden Month**  
**Water Conservation Month**

**April 9th** Happy Easter!



**April 18th** Tax Day  
Today is the deadline to file your taxes.



**April 22nd** Happy Earth Day!



**April 22nd** Coral Fragging Party & Earth Day Nursery Dive  
Captain Hooks Big Pine Key  
MM29.5 (305) 872-9863



**April 22nd** History of Diving Museum & NASA Experience e  
Marathon International Airport  
11AM-1PM 9850 O/s Hwy.

**April 29th**  
REEF Arts & Science Festival  
98300 o/s Hwy. Key Largo



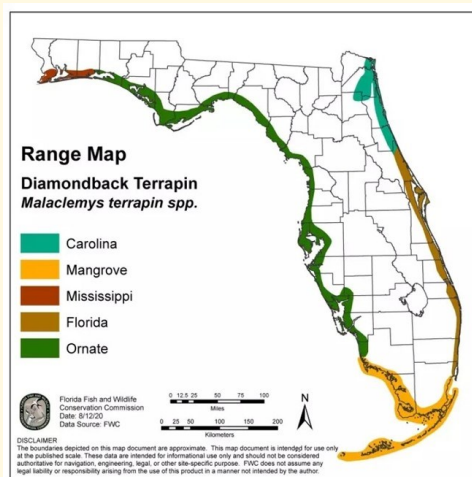
## Mangrove Diamondback Terrapin

By Shelly Krueger,  
Sea Grant Agent

*Photo Above: Diamondback Terrapin, Molly O'Connor*

Diamondback Terrapins are small turtles that live in the mangroves and brackish waters of estuaries from Massachusetts to Texas. Throughout their range, they are a species of special concern, endangered, or threatened. Out of the seven subspecies of diamondback terrapins, five live in Florida, and three of the seven sub-populations only live in Florida (mangrove, Florida, and ornate). The Mangrove Diamondback Terrapin only lives in South Florida, including the brackish waters of the Florida Keys and Everglades. Like all diamondback terrapins, the Mangrove Diamondback Terrapin is a pretty secretive reptile that forages on mussels, clams, snails, and crabs.

Unfortunately, these turtles are known to enter blue crab traps in search of an easy blue crab meal. Since turtles are air breathers, they frequently drown in blue crab traps, and this is a major cause of their decline.



## Plant Clinics

Every Saturday

**Plant Clinic**

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Grimal Grove

258 Cunningham Lane  
Big Pine Key

Wednesday, April 5th

**Plant Clinic**

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Murray Nelson Govt.  
Center

102050 O/S Hwy. #244  
Key Largo

Thursday, April 6th

**Plant Clinic**

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Key West Garden Club  
1100 Atlantic Blvd.  
Key West

Saturday, April 15th

**Plant Clinic**

9 a.m. to Noon

Marathon Home Depot  
4555 O/S Hwy,  
Marathon

Saturday, April 15th

**Plant Clinic**

9 a.m. to Noon

KW Botanical Garden Nursery

5210 College Rd.  
Stock Island

Tuesday, April 18th

**Plant Clinic**

9 a.m. to Noon

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

Thursday, April 27th

**Plant Clinic**

10 a.m. to 1 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 spoke on US1 radio 104.1 Morning Magazine about barracuda and mangrove diamondback terrapins. Effective March 1<sup>st</sup> all recreational blue crab traps will require a 6 inch by 2 inch bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) attached to the funnel(s) to prevent diamondback terrapins entering and drowning in traps. The Monroe County Extension has FREE BRDs, first come, first served. Call 305-292-4501 or email [shellykrueger@ufl.edu](mailto:shellykrueger@ufl.edu) to get up to 20 free BRDs per family.



- Shelly was on the NPR WUFT News *The Point* podcast on March 22, 2023. Shelly was asked to speak about the floating brown macroalgae *Sargassum* and the potential for economic and ecological impacts for Florida.

[Click Here to Listen](#)



- Shelly led one of three breakout groups at the 2-day Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Water Quality Protection Program Steering Committee. She worked with steering committee members and staff to capture content for the upcoming Report to Congress, which will highlight 10 years of programmatic activities and EPA-funded projects.

- Shelly has been assisting University of Rhode Island marine affairs researcher Ken Hamel on a NOAA-funded project that is expected to contribute new knowledge about the social, cultural, and economic impacts of Sargassum bloom events, the economic cost estimates of HAB events, and improved preparation and response to Sargassum bloom events. In addition, the project will help to identify strategies for reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience of communities affected by Sargassum blooms. Shelly has been helping him collect a list of 40+ stakeholders for one-on-one interviews with residents and local agencies in Upper, Middle, and Lower Keys when he visits this spring.

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!

**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

**VISIT OUR OFFICE:**

Email [Monroe@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto: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

**UF** IFAS Extension  
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

### SOIL TESTING MADE EASY

Finally! Results you can understand!

University of Florida, IFAS, Turfgrass Science soil test results are now available using the enhanced features of SoilKit's user-friendly technology.

#### This test includes:

- Soil sample bag
- Collection and registration instructions
- Customer care card
- Online registration
- QR scanning
- Address geolocation
- Satellite-guided square footage calculator
- Pre-addressed, postage-paid mailer
- Pre-paid lab processing fee
- Email report notification
- Online dashboard access
- Digital report with lab results
- Customized product recommendations
- Using the Mehlich III extraction method, SoilKit tests for: pH, Buffer pH, Phosphorus, Potassium, Magnesium, Calcium, Manganese, Iron, Copper, Boron, CEC, base saturation and organic matter.

Contact Christina McInnis  
[info@soilkit.com](mailto:info@soilkit.com) or 251.923.6345



POWERED BY  
**SOILKIT**

Scan code for more information or purchase online at [soilkit.com/florida](http://soilkit.com/florida)

Call Monroe County Extension to pick up your soil testing kit today!

(305)292-4501

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:

- Alicia continues to work with Solar United Neighbors of Florida and has helped to launch the Florida Keys 2023 Solar Coop. Find out more at [SolarUnitedNeighbors.org/Keys](https://SolarUnitedNeighbors.org/Keys)



- Alicia was invited to teach two 5<sup>th</sup>-grade classes about agriculture in Florida and the Florida Keys. We examined exports for Florida and where they go around the world. Then we discussed how fisheries is included in agriculture. The youth were shown the amount and types of seafood commercially caught in the Keys. We looked at how the main eight species are caught, and what types of permits and restrictions are on each species. They learned about traps, long lines, and trawlers. We finished up with a fish identification game.



Alicia taught a workshop about how to identify and stay safe from online scams. Participants learned different types of phishing including text, email, and phone calls. We looked at data and research about who gets scammed and popular scams by age range. Participants learned about two-factor authentication and properly identifies potential scams in emails and text messages.

Continued from page 1

**Mangrove Diamondback Terrapins** live around 25 years, and it takes the females 5 years to become reproductive, when they start having 2-3 clutches of 5-10 eggs per year. In addition to negative encounters with blue crab traps, they are collected for the pet trade and Asian live food markets. Since March 2021, zero terrapins may be collected in Florida for pets or food. People who already have terrapins may keep their pets, but they need to register them with a no-cost Personal Possession permit from the FWC.

Effective March 1, 2023 all recreational blue crab traps in the state of Florida will be required to have a bycatch reduction device (also called a BRD, for short) that is rectangular and no larger than 6 inches by 2 inches. These BRDs are wired or zip-tied onto the trap openings to reduce the likelihood of catching Diamondback Terrapins.



(photo above) Blue crab trap with new required 6" by 2" diamondback terrapin bycatch reduction device (BRD).  
Photo credit: Rick O'Connor

Research has shown the 6"x2" plastic devices are successful at keeping diamondback terrapins out of the traps, yet large enough to allow the blue crabs to enter the traps for capture. It is important to note, that these new BRD regulations are for blue crab traps only -- this does not apply to the black plastic recreational stone crab traps. The Monroe County Extension office has free BRDs (bycatch reduction devices) for your blue crab traps. Please call 305-292-4501 for more information.

Florida Master Naturalist Course: Habitat Restoration

### Monroe County

May 9-25, 2022

(Course Code: MR23-01)

#### Instructors Information

**Lead and Point of Contact:** Shelly Krueger, Executive Director

**Organization:** UF/IFAS Monroe County Extension

**Phone:** 305-393-4063

**Email:** [shellykrueger@ufl.edu](mailto:shellykrueger@ufl.edu)

**Additional Leads:** Ana Zangroniz



Follow the link below to Register:

<https://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/fmnp/mr23-01hybrid.html>

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

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>



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University of Florida (UF)

<http://SolutionsForYourLife.ufl.edu>

<http://ufl.edu>

Electronic Data Information Source (EDIS)

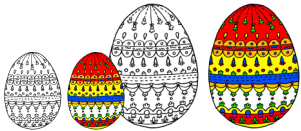
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>

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



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<https://ics.ifas.ufl.edu/ufifas-diversity-and-legaleeo-statements/>



UF/IFAS Extension is  
Putting Florida First

**DEP Announces****2023 Florida's Coral Reef Webinar Series****Introducing Florida's Coral Reef + SEAFAN**

Tuesday, April 4, 2023  
6 to 7 p.m. EDT

**Stony Coral Identification**

Thursday, April 6, 2023  
6 to 7 p.m. EDT

**Marine Invertebrate Identification (Part One of Two)**

Tuesday, April 11, 2023  
6 to 7 p.m. EDT

**Reef Fish Identification (Part One of Two)**

Thursday, April 13, 2023  
6 to 7 p.m. EDT

**Marine Invertebrate Identification (Part Two of Two)**

Tuesday, April 18, 2023  
6 to 7 p.m. EDT

**Reef Fish Identification (Part Two of Two)**

Thursday, April 20, 2023  
6 to 7 p.m. EDT

**BleachWatch Observer Training**

Tuesday, April 25, 2023  
6 to 8 p.m. EDT

**Stony Coral Identification**

Thursday, April 27, 2023  
6 to 7 p.m. EDT

For More Information visit: [FloridasCoralReef.org](http://FloridasCoralReef.org).

**UF/IFAS/MCES QUARTERLY CONTACTS**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Totals
Phone calls	20	27	34	81
Office visitors	3	4	5	12
Email Consultations	51	52	59	162
Learning events	17	18	15	50
Participants	332	328	314	974
Media submissions	6	3	4	13
Publications distributed	161	181	128	470
<b>TOTAL contacts</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>559</b>	<b>1762</b>

**Report horseshoe crab sightings to FWC for science**

It's almost spring and that means it's peak mating season for horseshoe crabs. Help biologists with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) gather valuable information about these ancient creatures by reporting sightings on the [online survey](#).

Reporting horseshoe crab sightings provides valuable information to the FWC about habitat use, population distribution and environmental conditions for nesting. Although horseshoe crabs have existed for more than 450 million years, scientists are still learning about Florida populations. Public sighting information helps FWC researchers target nesting beaches for the [Florida Horseshoe Crab Watch Program](#), a citizen-science based initiative to collect data throughout the state.

The FWC asks the public to [report sightings](#) by visiting [MyFWC.com/research](http://MyFWC.com/research), clicking on "Crustaceans," then "Horseshoe Crabs" and selecting "Report Your Nesting Horseshoe Crab Sighting" to complete the survey.

