Bridging the Gap between Local Government and 4-H Youth

Know Your County Government is a Collier County University Extension 4-H Program in partnership with Collier County League of Women Voters and Collier County Public Schools Social Studies Departments. The 30th Annual Know Your County Government Teen Citizenship Program began on March 2nd and ran through March 23rd, culminating with lunch with the county commissioners. This program teaches high school students the purpose and function of county government, how it operates, and what career opportunities it offers.

This year thirty-four students from six high schools participated in the program. The group met all of the constitutional officers and many county officials as they visited a sampling of county departments and facilities. In two full days of field trips and four evenings the group had the opportunity to learn from various county government leaders including Marla Ramsey, Sherriff Rambosk and the County Commissioners.

Coming Soon

4-H Tropicana Public Speaking is a program offered to 4th 5th and 6th grade students, designed to give them experience in the preparation and delivery of a speech. The county competition will be held on May 14th! We have 1740 students signed up to participate with the expectation of more enrolling in the next few weeks.
Urban Farm and Garden Course On Tap

The Agriculture program will be presenting a series of Urban Farm and Produce Garden Workshops to be held on consecutive Tuesdays in April and May.

Series 1 Urban Enterprise farming-(April 13- 27) will feature entrepreneurial business topics for the small acreage landowner interested in small scale production. These sessions will teach farm management skills for entering the local market with their products. Topics include the business of farming, funding sources for the small farm, marketing, fruit and vegetable basics and livestock and equine basics

Series 2-Urban Crop Production- (May 4-18) will feature fruit and vegetable production principles and general garden techniques for the home gardener and urban farmer. Topics include growing herbs, compost and amendments, backyard specialty and vegetable crops, growing organic, harvesting and processing and pests, pesticides and pollinators

For more information please call 239-353-4244.

2010 Ag Tour

The 2010 Collier County Agricultural Tour was held on March 10. This year's event featured traditional sites such as America Farms nursery and the Citrus groves of Silver Strand II., however in our efforts to illustrate the diversity of Collier Agriculture, several non-traditional sites were visited. Roy Batty’s pineapple farm and Nick Batty’s Inyoni Organic vegetable farm illustrated the growing small farm sector. BHN Tomato Research facility provided insights into a massive global tomato variety research facility located outside of Immokalee. The newly acquired Pepper Ranch provided a window’s view into this nature and wildlife habitat which also features a beef ranching enterprise just outside of Lake Trafford area. Sandoval Produce, a family owned packing facility at the Immokalee State Farmer’s Market was illustrative of the struggles of small businesses dealing with extreme weather conditions and resulting production risks. As has been tradition near the end of the tour, the participants got to visit the Immokalee produce market to purchase local produce.
Marine Fisheries Regulations Workshop

In December, the Collier County Sea Grant Agent partnered with the Lee County Sea Grant Agent and FWC law enforcement to host a Marine Fisheries Regulations Workshop. The workshop was intended for park rangers, resource managers, and informal educators who commonly interact with fishermen. The objectives of the workshop were to educate staff about marine fisheries regulations to:

1) Improve audience’s knowledge and understanding of current regulations and to help increase their ability to communicate with anglers about these rules,
2) Increase the local network of agency staff capable of identifying and reporting marine fisheries violations.

Workshop topics included an overview of marine fisheries management, reef gear regulations, fishing license requirements, derelict crab traps, net gear regulations, and tips for identifying and reporting fisheries violations. Fifty participants representing local, county and state agencies as well as non-profits and private industries attended the workshop. Forty-one participants completed workshop evaluations and 100% agreed that the workshop improved their knowledge and understanding of Florida’s marine fisheries regulations, their confidence to educate anglers about these regulations and their ability to recognize and report violations.

For more information, contact Bryan Fluech at Fluech@ufl.edu

Commercial Landscape Horticulture Activities
from the Desk of Doug Caldwell:

- Seven Dr. Dougbug plant diagnosis trouble shooting clinics were held at Home Depot, Landscaper’s Choice Nursery, Naples Farmers’ Market and Driftwood Gardens.
- Two fertilizer calibration clinics (Landscape Best Management Practices) were held with a total of 242 participants.
- Two Horticulture Tailgate Sessions were held with Collier County Parks and Recreation maintenance staff. A UF/IFAS polycom session on plant growth regulator use to reduce the number of bahiagrass mowings was sponsored for County staff. They plan to try this new chemical approach on a limited basis.
- A Diagnosing Palms class taught by myself and Dr. Monica Elliott was held at the Extension office and at the Naples Botanical Gardens on the same day.
- A Fruit Tree Workshop with Dr. Bob Rouse and Billy Hopkins was held on March 27 (46 participants bought 100 trees!). We will do a summer version of this on July 24.
- A pesticide training class was offered in Spanish, taught by Cesar Asuaje and myself (27 participants; 15 took exam).

Watch this entertaining & educational video to help diagnose & treat the Ficus Whitefly:

Just Google: youtube ficus whitefly sw florida
Introducing the Collier County Family Nutrition Program

Collier County Extension Service is home to a new program for our county. The Family Nutrition Program is funded by USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), from a grant received at the University of Florida - IFAS. FNP provides educational programs in food and nutrition to food stamp recipients and food stamp eligible individuals and families. The Family Nutrition Program (FNP) at the University of Florida Extension is offered in collaboration with the Florida Department of Children and Families – Economic Self-Sufficiency program.

Family Nutrition Program Goals:
- To increase the nutrition security of Florida families.
- To provide practical programs about general nutrition, food selection, food safety and sanitation.
- To assist clients in gaining meal planning and preparation skills and to manage food resources effectively.

Suzanne Fundingsland, is the FNP Agent. Program Assistants are being hired to help carry out programming with children and families in economic need.

Urban Horticulture/ Master Gardeners

Our annual Workshop Series, presented by the Master Gardeners ended in March and was a great success, with over 175 people attending each week for the ten week program.

The Master Gardeners are now concentrating on the Spring Spruce-Up of the gardens, and are also keeping busy assisting with the current Master Gardener Training Class, as well as assisting the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods program as yard advisors.

A new satellite Plant Clinic opened at the Naples Botanical Garden on April 1st and we are looking forward to meeting the residents in the southern part of town.

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Please make this newsletter a two way communication tool by keeping us informed of your educational programming needs and other comments. Enjoy!