



The Green Gazette

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A Hoe Lot of Growing Going on!

By Master Gardener Mary Jane Cary

Ask the students of Avalon Elementary about their rich history of fruit, vegetable and sustainable gardening, and their reply will begin with "back in 1998." In reality, the students of this Collier County school are carrying on a Southwest Florida tradition begun in the 1880s by the Allen and Storter families near Everglades City: growing edible and ornamental plants during our year-round growing season. Since then, Collier County's fruit, vegetable and ornamental horticultural production has grown into a [sustainable agricultural industry](#).



Click on the Avalon Global Garden above to follow their 2015-2016 renovation

Yet in 1998, Avalon students were trend-setters in community gardening. After winning top honors twice in [UF/IFAS School garden](#) competitions, this year Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Adam H Putnam presented a 2015 Golden Shovel Award to the [Avalon Global Garden](#) for the longest sustained garden at an elementary school in Florida.



Click on the image for more Sanders Pines Community Garden photos

While school gardens were among the first SWFL community gardens, they now represent just one variation on this growing garden theme. From urban locations like Lee County's [Lakes Park Community Garden](#) to more rural settings, like Immokalee's Sanders Pines community garden, organizers of all sorts and interests are cropping up. Our [SWFL Gulf and Garden Organizations Directory](#) identifies 10 different groups that host or advise community gardeners, yet the number of gardens *Continued on next page*

Inside this Issue

- 2 *Planting with Purpose: Ladybugs*
- 3 *Native Plant Garden Renovation Project*
- 4 *The Frugal Gardener*
- 5 *Wait a Cotton Pickin' Minute FFL™ Principle #6*
- 6 *Now Playing in SWFL Gardens In Our Nature*
- 7 *Events Calendar and Announcements*
- 8 *What's on Your Plate? Plant Clinic Locations*

Cover Photo by Master Gardener Tatiana Burkhart



SW Florida News from the Master Gardeners



Gulf Currents

By Mary Jane Cary, on behalf of Master Gardener Coordinator Isabel Way

Community gardeners and commercial growers alike can "head for the hills" when planting fall tomato crops, thanks to the research of Dr. Sanjay Shukla's team at [Immokalee's UF/IFAS SW Florida Research and Education Center](#). Dr. Shukla's team discovered that planting tomatoes on hills up to 1' high produced the same harvest yields with 50% less water, fertilizer and pesticide use! *(Click on his photo at right to learn more)*. Such demonstrations of leadership and teamwork inspire our new Green Gazette team as they produce their first issue, while Master Gardener Coordinator Isabel Way celebrates the arrival of daughter Annalicia Sol. Although our lives are ever-changing, team [UF/IFAS Extension](#) continues to bring us innovative science-based solutions for our lives.



A Hoe Lot of Growing Going on!

Continued from Page 1

is much higher, and continues to rise. For example, school gardens are tended by students and teachers, with advisors from [UF/IFAS Extension 4-H Staff](#), [Collier Fruit Growers Council](#) and [Naples Botanical Garden's Collier Greens](#), with the resulting produce offered during school lunches.



Click on [Cornerstone Edibles Meal in the Field](#) image to learn more

Community gardens are invaluable in food deserts, where people live a mile or more from fresh fruit and vegetable sources. Two gardens which serve Collier County's food deserts are Immokalee's Sanders Pines Community Garden, which enables neighborhood families to grow fruit trees and vegetable gardens on community common grounds, and the [Collier County Community Garden Initiative](#) (CCCGI), which hosts gardens on public lands, with their first community garden at the Golden Gate Community Center.

While organizations like [ECHO](#) and [FGCU's Food Forest](#) focus on different objectives from those of [Cornerstone Edibles](#), CCCGI's second garden located on North Naples church property, all community gardens follow similar best practices in operations and edibles production. UF/IFAS Collier and [Lee County Extensions](#) share best practices through publications, like [ENH966 Starting a Community Garden](#) and [WEC139 Developing Urban Community Gardens](#), guides such as [SP103 Vegetable Growing Guide](#) and the [SWFL Seed Planting Calendar](#), plus edibles factsheets from A to Z. From fruit and [vegetable workshops](#) to edible plant sales during this year's [SWFL Yard & Garden Show](#), the opportunity to grow your community is here.



Click on the new gazebo above for more about the Collier County Community Garden
Credits: Florida Weekly, Rainer Olbrich



Click on the [FGCU Food Forest](#) image above for further information

Planting with Purpose

By Master Gardener Tatiana Burkhart



Ladybird beetles, or Ladybugs, are one of the most beneficial insects for your garden. The adults, their eggs and larvae are all tremendous predators of garden pests, like scale, aphids, and mites.



Larva

Ladybug larvae and pupae look very different from the adults. It is somewhat easy to find them in your own garden, although you'll find them on the underside of leaves, devouring pests that are dining there. Gardeners sometimes mistake ladybug larvae and pupae for pests, and kill them. So always make sure you correctly identify all of the insects present before applying any treatment method.



Ladybugs can be purchased for consumer use, but keep in mind that released ladybugs may not stay in your garden. If they do not like the conditions, they will simply fly away. Therefore, it's best to purchase ladybird beetle larvae from a trustworthy seller. To learn more about these beetles and how to invite them to stay in your yard, request UF / IFAS article [EENY170 Ladybird Beetles](#).



Native Plant Garden Renovation Project

By Master Gardener Barbara Pace

As part of the UF / IFAS Collier Extension Horticultural Gardens, the Native Plant Garden showcases the many attractive, low-maintenance, wildlife-friendly trees, shrubs and flowers that are native to South Florida. These plants are great choices for Florida-Friendly landscaping.

The Collier County Master Gardeners are now in the [process of renovating the garden](#) to include exciting new concepts that will help educate the public on the value and uses of native plants.

Over the years, the Native Plant Garden has matured. Trees have grown and shaded many areas that originally were sunny. Some of the original shrubs have become too large, and there are areas that need to be replanted.



New planting bed under construction

As we plan the new landscape beds and educational signs, the first step is to decide what function this garden should serve. We are proposing to focus on plantings that will show Collier County residents how to use native plants effectively in their own landscapes. Some of our ideas include: shrubs that make effective hedges and screens; drought-tolerant plantings; easy wildflowers; native ground covers; native trees and palms for small spaces; and plants that attract wildlife.

Because the garden is quite large, we'll be proceeding in phases. First, we are clearing out the center of the garden to create a new planting bed to display colorful, easy care native perennials and small shrubs. These will likely include favorites such as [Coreopsis](#) and [Blanket Flower](#), plus less familiar perennials such as [Pineland Lantana](#) and [Blazing Star](#), and perhaps some others that are rarely seen. There are many beautiful native wildflowers and shrubs that are seldom planted but have garden merit and should be more widely used. Sometimes the only way to know how a plant will perform in your landscape is to plant it and see what happens!



With a little trimming, these existing shrubs will provide examples of good hedges and screens. We'll power wash the bench, and add some perennials and ground covers here...

While working on the first phase, we are evaluating the rest of the garden to see which areas can be upgraded to showcase other types of plantings such as hedges and screens and compact native trees. We are developing educational signs and deciding on which plants to remove and what to add.

You're invited to view our progress during the [South-west Florida Yard & Garden Show](#) on October 24 and 25, when Master Gardeners will be conducting garden tours. We plan to survey Native Garden visitors, asking what you would like to know about growing native plants in your landscapes. This information will help us decide what to include in our new garden plantings in the coming year.

**Browse our library of Green Gazette issues at <http://collier.ifas.ufl.edu/HomeGarden/Newsletters.shtml>
FREE OFFER! Subscribe to the Green Gazette today by emailing us at CollierMG@ifas.ufl.edu**

The Frugal Gardener

By Leah Ray, Master Gardener

Test your soil



A simple soil test will pinpoint what your soil lacks. Plus, many soil tests also recommend the best plant choices for your soil type.

Request UF Publication [SL281 Soil Testing for Home Gardens](#) for details, and pick up your soil sampling kit from the Collier Extension office.

Read any good mulch lately?

Instead of pulling weeds, smother them and improve the soil with recycled newspaper.



Add layers of shredded newspaper and paper, then cover with compost or organic mulch. [Click](#) the photo at left for more

Florida-Friendly weed-preventing mulch tips.

Buy in bulk

Bulk compost from local suppliers costs about \$30 a cubic yard, which is about



enough to fill the bed of a compact pickup truck. That same quantity bought in retail bags will cost over \$100. Even better, create your own compost. Request UF / IFAS Publication [ENH Compost Tips for Home Gardeners](#) to learn how.

Regrow vegetables in water



It'll trim your grocery budget. It makes organics more affordable. It's fun and easy. You'll be practicing a 500-year old Aztec tradition called hydroponic gardening!

Green Onion- Keep the white part of the onion with any roots that are in still intact. Place in a glass with water and you'll have a



never-ending supply of fresh chives!

Lettuce- Cut off the bottom of the head of lettuce and place it in a small bowl of water. New growth begins from the center of the in as little as 3 days and you'll have a new half-head of lettuce in about 2 weeks. Romaine re-grows best. Want to grow more? Request UF publication [HS943 Building a Floating Hydroponic Garden](#) to learn how.



Support your local trellis

Recycled Bike Wheel or old crutches make a great Garden Trellis.

[Visit UF's Vertical Gardening Site](#) for ideas on how to create a vertical garden, and ideas for edibles that grow up!



Wait a Cotton Pickin' Minute!

Courtesy of Florida Friendly Landscaping Principle # 6

By Master Gardener Christal Beheler

What if a Collier County resident wants to grow cotton in their yard? In reality, it is illegal for a homeowner to grow cotton on their property unless one obtains a [Florida Department of Agriculture cotton growers permit](#). Blame it on the Boll Weevil. This serious pest feeds on cotton buds, and its rapid reproductive life cycle can quickly inflict secondary and subsequent damage to future crops.



Clemson University - USDA Cooperative Extension Slide Series, [Bugwood.org](#)

So where in Florida is cotton grown? The majority of cotton grown today is centered in the northwest Panhandle region of the sunshine state. Jackson and Santa Rosa counties are the two top producers of cotton while six other counties to the north of us provide the rest. The price of cotton fluctuates during the year between 70 and 87 cents per pound.

What are some ways the cotton industry addresses pests and diseases? Florida is one of ten states that have eliminated the Boll Weevil and reduced pesticide use since growers adopted the best practices of [Integrated Pest Management \(IPM\)](#) with the [Boll Weevil eradication program](#).

First, cultural IPM practices like crop rotation are key to eliminating the build up of pests and diseases while protecting and enriching the soil. Cotton is planted for two years, followed by a cover crop of peanuts, corn, or soy, typically whichever will fetch the best price that year. Incorporating crop residue, and adding compost and farm animal manures enrich the soil too, while harrowing and appropriate herbicide spraying, a selective use of chemical IPM, manage most weeds.

[Growers practice biological IPM by planting buffers of refuge plants](#) that attract the birds and beneficial insects which are natural predators of cotton pests. Trap crops that attract cotton pests away from cotton fields are also planted. Growers perform regular field scouting to monitor for pests. When pest population damage exceeds the crop's economic injury level, growers can release additional natural predators to reduce pest populations and/or use chemical IPM as needed to manage their economic losses.



USDA Boll Weevil poster, circa 1914
Source: Wikimedia Commons

The Nine Florida Friendly Landscaping (FFL) Principles

1. [Right Plant, Right Place](#)
2. [Water Efficiently](#)
3. [Fertilize Appropriately](#)
4. [Mulch](#)
5. [Attract Wildlife](#)
6. [Manage Yard Pests Responsibly](#)
7. [Recycle](#)
8. [Reduce Storm Water Runoff](#)
9. [Protect the Waterfront](#)

View UF's narrated slideshow of The Nine FFL Principles

According to [UF / IFAS article P1220 Florida Cotton](#), more than 90% of Florida cotton is now grown without irrigation, and growers can select conventional, organic and/or biotech seed varieties to match their production methods and intended crop markets. While consumer demand for organic cotton is rising, the [2015 USDA Cotton Fact Sheet](#) reports that 96% of cotton acreage are biotech varieties. Such [genetic IPM methods](#) also contribute to reductions in pesticide quantity and frequency of use.



Cotton balls grown in North Florida. Credits: Sally Lanigan, UF/IFAS.

All of these IPM practices contribute to sustainable cotton production, which is something to consider as we use [75% cotton dollar bills](#) to buy our cotton shirts that keep us cool in the summer heat.

Now Playing in SWFL Gardens

By Leah Ray, Master Gardener

Gardeners are correct when they tell you that their landscape is their “happy place,” with the act of gardening reducing stress and lifting moods. After all, [University of Bristol researchers have found a common soil bacteria named *Mycobacterium vaccae* that has antidepressant properties!](#) Now being investigated for improving cognitive function, Crohn’s disease and rheumatoid arthritis outcomes, the bacteria also stimulates serotonin production, making us relaxed and happier. So playing in the soil really *does* make us happy!

Soil Aeration: Compacted soils, usually the result of heavy foot or vehicle traffic, aren't ideal for plant growth or water absorption. Soil particles get packed together, making it difficult for plant roots to grow and to absorb water and nutrients, and leading to stormwater runoff. Consider adding organic matter before planting. In high foot or vehicle traffic areas, install permeable pavers or stepping stones as pathways to distribute the weight of the traffic and still enable water filtration. Find more soil aeration methods in UF / IFAS article SL317.



A neighbor's discarded clumps of *Liriope* are thriving in my yard.

Compost: Composting is all about supplying the microorganisms that fuel decomposition using life's essentials: food, water and oxygen. Keep seed-laden weeds, diseased plants and nematode-infested roots out of the compost pile, since it is difficult for most home compost units to reach the 130-140°F needed to destroy these pests. Plus, straw or hay mixed with stable manures may have been treated with an herbicide, rendering compost that's toxic to plants. See UF/IFAS [article ENH1065 Compost tips](#) for more.

Divide and Conquer: Many perennials, such as grasses, can be divided into segments. Each will root. Don't be afraid to divide the mature perennials already in your garden. A machete is an excellent tool for the job.

In Our Nature

By Master Gardener and Master Naturalist Bette Nebel, with Master Gardener Mary Jane Cary

Perhaps new neighbors have moved into your neighborhood this summer. Whether in your yard, near your school, or along one of the paths featured in our [Hiking In Our Nature](#) guide, watch for these natural creatures. You'll find even more seasonal sightings in our [Year In Our Nature Calendar](#).



Have you seen a new mound of sand in your yard during July or August? It may be a new nest of the female [Cicada Killer wasp *Sphecius speciosus*](#), shown at right tranquilizing a cicada before taking it home to feed her larvae during the winter. Several female wasps may lay eggs together in these 6"-deep burrows. These beneficial insects rarely sting, unlike other ground-dwelling wasps and hornets, like [yellow jackets](#).



Collier Extension Administrative Assistant Paula Springs spotted this female [Eastern Chicken Turtle *Deirochelys reticularia*](#) examining a suitable nesting site in the Extension's front courtyard. These reptiles are active during the day and throughout the year in South Florida, commonly seen swimming in ponds to dine on insects, crustaceans, tadpoles, and aquatic plants. They nest nearly continuously from September through March, with the average clutch of 9 flexible, oblong eggs hatching after 78-89 days. Watch for these social creatures basking in groups at waters' edge during their 24-year lifespan.



Pest Alert: A New Exotic Scale

[Crypticerya Genistae Hempel](#)

This new exotic scale looks similar to Cottony cushion scale with its light orange body, black legs and a white fluted ovisac. But this pest has a longer ovisac which it holds either parallel to the host plant or erect.



Crypticerya Genistae Hempel. Credit: Lyle Buss, University of Florida.

Collier officials are awaiting positive identification confirmation from samples collected



Cottony cushion scale Icerya purchasi. Credit: FDACS-DPI

in late July discovered on Perennial peanut and Mimosa strigillosa ground covers in Collier county. Previous confirmations were limited to Broward and Miami-Dade counties. Very little is known about this species, and no natural enemies have been reported. Click on the species name above for details, including the latest list of known affected plant species.

Florida and Tick-Borne Diseases

While [tick populations and the inherent risk of tick-borne diseases are increasing nationwide](#), the risk to South Florida residents remains low. UF/IFAS Veterinary Entomologist Dr. Phil Kaufman recently noted [three tick-borne diseases that occur in Florida](#), with most cases contracted out-of-state or in North and Central Florida. You can [protect your family, pets and livestock](#) by avoiding tick bites, recognizing potential disease symptoms, and seeking medical attention if these symptoms appear.



Master Gardeners in Action



Master Gardener Jeanne Estes places a Japanese-inspired garden ornament in the Extension's front entrance garden as part of a re-design planned by Master Gardeners.

SWFL Gulf & Garden Calendar

See [Collier Extension Calendar](#) for more details. Unless noted, events are held at Collier Extension, 14700 Immokalee Road, with registration at <http://ufifascollierextension.eventbrite.com>

August

- Aug** [Aug SFL Garden Calendar](#)
Aug [Fertilizer Ordinances in effect:](#) City of Naples Ordinance through Sept 30; Collier County Ordinance is year-round.
- Aug 25** [Green Industries Best Management Practices Workshop in Spanish](#), (GI-BMP) [Rookery Bay](#), 300 Tower Rd., Naples. 9am - 4:30pm. \$ 30/person. [Register at Rookery Bay.](#)

September

- Sep** [Sep SFL Garden Calendar](#)
Sep 22 [GI-BMP Fertilizer Calibration Workshop in Spanish](#), [Rookery Bay](#), 300 Tower Rd., Naples. 9am - 1pm. \$ 15/person. [Register at Rookery Bay.](#)
- Sep 24** [Orchid Basics](#), with Master Gardener Kris Morton, [Collier County South Regional Library](#), 8065 Lely Cultural Pkwy, Naples 34113. 2 - 3pm, Free, Registration required. [Register online](#) or call South Regional at 239 252 7542.
- Sep 26** [National Estuary Day Celebration](#), [Rookery Bay](#), 10am - 3pm. Free.

October

- Oct** [Oct SFL Garden Calendar](#)
Next Green Gazette

Save these Dates!

- Oct 6** [GI-BMP Proper Pruning Practices Workshop](#)
- Oct 14** [Florida-Friendly Landscaping for Associations workshop](#)
- Oct 24-25** [Yard and Garden Show](#)
- Oct 28** [GI-BMP Best Management Practices Training](#)

What's on Your Plate?

By Family Nutrition Program Agent Suzanne Fundingsland and Master Gardener Mary Jane Cary

The pace of life seems to quicken as summer turns to fall, students head to class, parents juggle schedules, and residents prepare for the coming fall and winter seasons. Such changes can fill up our plates, both figuratively and literally! But these time-saving tools for finding tasty, easy-to-prepare meals, and enjoying fun physical activities with friends and family, can fill your plate with a healthy lifestyle.

While the [School Lunch by Nutrislice app](#) enables Collier County School District parents and students to



view their school's breakfast, lunch and snack menus, the US Department of Agriculture's [Super-Tracker app](#) enables anyone to create custom menus and physical activity plans to match their tastes, waists and time. Users can view a general plan, look up nutrition details on over 8,000 foods, save favorite recipes, track nutrition and activity progress, even receive tips from a virtual coach. Then fill your plate with cool, quick dining options like these



[Florida Fresh Recipes](#), using [local seasonal produce](#), since mangoes, limes, and oranges are in season.

Mango and Black Bean Wraps

Serves 4 - 6

- 1 15-oz can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 mango, peeled, diced and core juiced (1 tablespoon of juice)
- 1/2 small red onion, diced
- 1 medium jalapeño, seeded and minced
- 1 large red bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 packet Splenda® sweetener
- 10 leaves of butter lettuce OR 20 Belgian endive lettuce



Combine all ingredients in a medium sized bowl except lettuce. Refrigerate for at least one hour, or up to two days for optimum flavor. To serve, if using butter lettuce leaves, arrange them on a large plate, filling each with 1/4 cup of salad mixture. If using the Belgian Endive lettuce leaves, arrange them on a large plate and fill each one with 1/8 cup (2 tablespoons) of salad mixture.



Orange Popsicles

- Orange segments
- Orange juice
- Low-fat vanilla yogurt
- Popsicle molds or small cups and sticks
- Create your own popsicles by layering or blending your favorite ingredients into molds and freezing for 4 hours or more.

Citrus and Mint Ice Cubes

Serves 6 - 12

A glass of water or sparkling water is even more inviting with these ice cubes! Tear 1/4 cup mint leaves into small pieces, and grate a lime and an orange. Place a pinch of mint, lime zest and orange zest into each slot in an ice cube tray. Fill each slot 1/2 full with water, placing tray in freezer until frozen solid. Remove tray, top with another pinch of mint, lime and orange zests, fill slots with water and freeze. Serve.



Visit a [Master Gardener Plant Clinic](#) Today!

Call [239 252 4815](tel:2392524815) or email CollierMG@ifas.ufl.edu anytime

"Bring us your tired, your poor, your pest-infested plants, yearning to be healed..."

Mondays and Wednesdays - Full Service Clinic

9 am - Noon and 1 - 4 pm Collier Extension 14700 Immokalee Rd.

Thursdays - Satellite Walk-In Clinic

10 am - 1 pm

Naples Botanical Garden 4820 Bayshore Dr.

Note: Naples Botanical Gardens will be closed the last 2 weeks of September.

Saturdays - Satellite Walk-In Clinic

10 am - Noon

Home Depot 1651 Airport-Pulling Rd S.

