

The Backyard Gardener

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Coordinator's Corner



Pomegranate bloom, Photo courtesy of John Dombrosky

Happy Holidays! As the year winds down to a close, the cooler weather is beckoning us back to the garden again.

This issue is a potpourri of gardening news. It features the latest information from the University of Florida and from other areas around the state. I hope you enjoy it.

Once again, for all you who are not familiar with the upcoming events at the Ag Cen-

ter, go to our website at <http://www.volusia.org/extension/reshortevents.pdf>

Have a wonderful holiday season.

Karen Stauderman
Master Gardener Coordinator
Residential/Urban
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Sugar Mill Country Club is Audubon Certified

Just a quick note on some exciting news! On August 25th, 2011, Sugar Mill Country Club's golf course achieved designation as a **Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary**.

The golf course started the process of certification in

September 2010 with the hopes of reaching its goal within a year. They accomplished it in 11 months and would like to thank all of those people who were helpful to this mission! We are proud to count Sugar Mill Country Club as the 104th

course in Florida and the 934th in the world to be designated as such. Also, Audubon International has been a very supportive organization to work with throughout these past months. Stop by and see their accomplishment!

Congratulations to the Following Master Gardeners for Dedication & Service

Five Years: Linda Anderson, Margaret Gillen, Howard Jeffries, Robin Mayers, Myrna Moore, Steven Provost, Rebecca Turner, and Pat LeClaire

Ten Years: Penny Bragg and Evelyn Shapiro

Fifteen Years: Norma Adamczyk



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Gardening Q & A

Q: What is the difference between a light frost and a hard frost?

A: A light frost is just that, when temperatures are between 28° and 32° F, just below freezing. A hard frost is when temperatures go below 28 °F.

THE BACKYARD

GARDENER

Cemetery Horticulture

Have you ever noticed the trees and shrubs in the cemeteries? Of course, some cemeteries stand out more than others. This is known as 'Cemetery Horticulture'. Let's take a look at some of the plants you will find in cemeteries around the world. You will be surprised that many of them have special meanings.

Acacia: Symbolizes rebirth and everlasting life.

Bamboo: Chinese cultures view this plant as hope against scaring off evil spirits and demons when on fire. It also is an amulet for good luck.

Cedar & Yew: These both symbolize eternal life.

Chrysanthemum: Japanese cultures see this plant as the sun. It brings immortality, and the eternal life of the Imperial Family. Europeans associate this flower with harvest.

Holly: In historic times, people believed that it served to ward off tombstones from lightning strikes.



Ivy: Many early Americans planted ivy to represent friendship and immortality.

Myrtle: This tree represents achievement and indicates eternal life.

Oak: The leaves of this tree represent power, victory, or authority which is why you will see many in military cemeteries.

Pine: The seed in the cones are said to bring perpetuity of life and renewal. It also represents immortality.

Rose: These shrubs are to signify completion and the

achievement of perfection and beauty.

Thistle: In Scotland, men carved this in their headstones, representing their nationality and their international dispersal of the weed.

Willow: Sadness or mourning. In Native American cultures, a willow tree represents an Iroquois grave.

Century Plant: Represents immortality; everlasting life.

Dogwood: Symbolizes resurrection, sacrifice, and eternal life.

Palm Tree: Victory over death.

The next time you find yourself in a cemetery, glance around at the diversity of plant selections between regions. Be mindful of their meaning and their historic significance. For further information: <http://connections.smsd.org>.

UF Breeders Develop Tastier Tomatoes



A decade in the making, a more flavorful breed has emerged to help Florida growers shed their reputation for rock-hard, tasteless tomatoes.

Say hello to the Tasti-Lee, a tomato cooked up in a University of Florida research lab in rural Hillsborough County that debuted in August at Publix Super Markets.

It's a crossbreed designed to give Florida growers, who sell three-quarters of their crop to fast-food restaurants or to be chopped into products like salsa or sauce, a way to get into the premium tomato business they ceded

long ago.

"Too many premium tomatoes today have a sour, acidic taste, so I balanced Tasti-Lee with a sweetness that tested very well" with aficionados, said Jay Scott, the 62-year-old horticulturist who wed two strains of tomatoes never sold commercially to create the new hybrid. "Plus it's naturally crimson."

Mark Albright, St. Petersburg Times (Sept.13)

Great Apps to Have

App: Turfgrass Management

Description: Weed identification, diseases, insects, and turfgrasses. Provides easy access to information for identifying and diagnosing pests while in the field. Full version has pesticide database, recommendations, management information, research, presentations, or publications.

Price: Lite version is free. Full version is \$19.99/yr

2. App: Tree ID

Description: Identify trees in Northern America based on: common name, scientific name, physical

attributes (bark, leaf, and fruit), and geographic location.

Price: \$2.99

3. App: MyCast Weather

Description: Delivers weather information. Display animated radar, clouds, and StormWatch severe weather alerts.

Price: \$3.99

4. App: Hurricane by Kitty Code

Description: Track hurricanes, animated satellite images, and interactive forecast and maps help track where monster storms are heading. Text bulletins give the detailed information.

Price: \$3.99

5. App: iSpeak Spanish

Description: Translates English to Spanish. Simply enter the text to translate, press the translate button, and then press "Speak It" button to hear the translation.

Price: \$1.99

For more information:

<http://louisianariceinsects.wordpress.com/2011/01/06/iphone-apps-for-use-in-agriculture/>

Disclaimer: this is not an endorsement for any of the apps which require a fee.

Florida Has Worst Invasive Species Problem

According to United Press International (Sept. 15), Florida has the world's worst invasive amphibian and reptile problem; the pet trade is the number one cause of species' introduction, a report says.

A University of Florida researcher says from 1863 through 2010, 137 non-native amphibian and reptile species were brought into the southern U.S. state, with about 25 percent of them traced to a single animal importer.

"Most people in Florida don't realize, when they see an animal, if it's native or non-native; and unfortunately, quite a few of them don't belong here and can cause harm," researcher Kenneth Krysko, herpetology collection manager at the Florida Museum of Natural History on the UF campus, said.

"No other area in the world has a problem like we do, and today's laws simply cannot be enforced to stop current trends."

While Florida law prohibits the release of non-native species without a state permit, offenders cannot be prosecuted unless they are caught in the act.

No one in Florida has ever been prosecuted for the introduction of an invasive animal, Krysko said.

The study found Florida had 56 established invasive species: 43 lizards, five snakes, four turtles, three frogs, and a caiman, a close relative of the American alligator.

"It's like some mad scientist has thrown these species together from all around the world and said, 'hey let's put them all together and see what happens,'" Krysko said. "It

could take decades before we actually know the long-term effects these species will have."

Read more about Florida's Invasives: http://www.upi.com/Science_News/2011/09/15/UPI-NewsTrack-Health-and-Science-News/UPI-32621316126208/#ixzz1Y7T8nOsx



A strip of sand, cup of sunflower seed, and boom! Photo courtesy of Eleanore Osborne, Ponce Inlet

Listen to This!

High-tech acoustic equipment is making it possible for researchers to listen in as insects gnaw on grapevine roots; making it much easier for vineyard owners to know where to focus their efforts against the pest called the **grape root borer**.

Will Sanders, a former UF entomology graduate student, conducted research using sound to target the pest which could one day save vineyard owners money. The pay off for consumers is lower costs for grapes and wine. Grapes are a \$20 million annual industry for Florida.

The grape root borer, a moth that looks similar to a wasp, is a major pest in grapes in the Southeast. In its caterpillar stage, it feeds inside the plant's roots and damages the plant. There is a pesticide called chlorpyrifos that

works well against the insect, but it is toxic to birds, fish and bees, making many growers reluctant to use it.

Sanders said he was trying to think of ways to attack the underground borers before they emerged from the soil. "It seemed like a great idea — if they can find dinosaur bones with sound, and they can find beetles with sound, maybe I'll be able to find my caterpillars with sound," he said.

Sanders said it wasn't hard to tell the difference between underground insects and other noises, but it was difficult to distinguish grape root borer sounds from other insects. After listening in on over 30 root systems in commercial vineyards in Florahome and Lithia, Florida, they only captured one live grape root borer, as well as many other insects.



Adult female grape root borer

Credits: University of Florida image

But the acoustic testing works, he said, because if growers were to count even ambiguous insect sounds as a positive, they could reduce the number of potential sites by 75 percent. This is the main pest of concern to grape growers in Florida.

For more information: PhysOrg.com

Locals Learn How to Quickly Build an Inexpensive Greenhouse



**Photo Courtesy of
self-reliance-works.com**

Everyone from gardening grannies to weather-worn farmers attended the Jackson County Master Gardener's workshop on building a backyard greenhouse. The idea for the workshop stemmed from Master Gardener Stan Whitehurst's own learning experience. Along with other Master Gardeners, Whitehurst traveled to Santa Rosa County to attend a workshop on building greenhouses. "I realized when making that trip that I made a lot of assumptions about

building greenhouses," Whitehurst said.

Inspired, he decided to create this workshop, inviting Trevor Hylton, the Extension Agent for Leon and Wakulla counties and Florida A&M University Cooperative Extension, to lead the workshop. Hylton created a method for building backyard greenhouses.

More than 25 attendees received a list of supplies, which amounted to about \$180 at any local hardware store. Using a PowerPoint presentation, Hylton showed how he built his greenhouse using PVC pipe, plastic, and other materials. Hylton also gave advice to his fellow gardeners for keeping the inside temperature regulated throughout the year, how much water to use, and even shared his own mishaps and victories with his greenhouse.

Later, Hylton quickly put together a greenhouse outside. The entire operation took about 20 minutes. For Virginia Zeigler, the greenhouse will keep some of her outdoor plants safe this winter. She already has a greenhouse, but it's deteriorating to the point that building a new one would be better than fixing the old one. Other gardeners plan to use the greenhouse to garden all winter long.

The Jackson County Master Gardeners plan to continue holding workshops for the community on a number of subjects. Because of the turnout, there may even be some spinoff workshops including what to plant in a greenhouse and more in-depth lectures on plant care in a greenhouse. "We've had a good public response," Whitehurst said.

Lauren Delgado, Jacksonville County Floridian (jcfloridian.com)