

Homestead & Farm Notes

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For a listing of more programs visit: <http://union.ifas.ufl.edu>



May 4th: District Events 8:30AM; Union County High School.

May 4th: Master Gardener Plant Sale from 9:00AM to Noon at the Columbia County Extension Office.

May 8th, 9th & 10th: Florida Beef Cattle Short Course at the Straughn IFAS Extension Development Center, Gainesville. Please visit <http://union.ifas.ufl.edu> for more information and Agenda.

May 20th: Sustainable, Organic Gardening Methods from 6:30PM to 8:00PM at the Columbia County Extension Office.

May 22nd: Blueberries free class at the Alachua County Extension Office from 6:30PM to 7:30PM. Call (352) 955-2402 for more information and to pre-register via voicemail call (352) 337-6209.



May 30th: Camp Cherry Lake registration forms due, Max of 30 youth. \$90 for members, \$182 non-members. Taken on a first come---first served basis.

Pond Corner

Fish Pond Owners need to pay attention to Water Quality and Related Factors

As water temperatures rise during spring, all of the following factors will come into play very soon:

- ❖ Fish pond water quality
- ❖ Water depth & water temperatures
- ❖ Pond stocking & fish size
- ❖ Aeration that you provide
- ❖ How many pounds of feed you give your fish & how often you feed your fish

You will soon know how well you are managing your pond by how healthy your fish are. Warm water stresses fish from a water quality standpoint. Warm water holds less dissolved oxygen, increases the toxicity of ammonia thereby makes fish metabolism run faster aggravating stresses even further. Fish then can't deal with normal stressors when there are other fish in the pond, normal numbers of fish parasites, normal numbers of pathogenic micro-organisms, sounds, dissolved gases, normal pH, fluctuations in the pond water during the day. Healthy fish can take quite a bit of naturally occurring stresses during the day if pond water quality is high. We can manage our ponds to maintain high water quality by:

- ❖ Not over stocking
- ❖ Not over feeding
- ❖ Harvesting fish on a regular basis
- ❖ Installing a timed aeration system
- ❖ Adding water to keep pond depths constant and dilute ammonia
- ❖ Adding a dye to keep submerged weeds from growing

We often feed fish too much. Over-feeding leads to higher ammonia levels and lower water quality. Ponds are productive enough for fish to forage from the pond food chain. We need to catch fish on a regular basis just to weigh them and adjust feeding. If we stock with 200 catfish fingerlings per acre, each fingerling weighing 0.06 pound then we should start off feeding once a day with no more than four (4) ounces per day (or even less, if they clean all the feed up in less than a minute).

- $(0.06 \text{ pounds per fingerling body weight}) \times (200 \text{ fingerlings/surface acre of water}) \times 2\% \text{ of body weight } (0.02) = 0.24 \text{ pound (4 ounces) of fish food to give fish every day.}$
- If we are feeding catfish that have now grown to a weight of half a pound each then we need to feed (2) pounds of floating feed per day.
- $(0.5 \text{ pounds body weight per catfish}) \times (200 \text{ catfish/surface acre of water}) \times 2\% \text{ of body weight } (0.02) = 2 \text{ pounds of fish food every day.}$

Livestock & Wildlife

Beef Calendar for May:

- ✓ Spring is stressful to cows with calves, be sure that you keep mineral and salt feeders filled.
- ✓ Check dust bags or apply ear tags to control biting flies.
- ✓ Check for external parasites and treat if necessary.
- ✓ Check for Spittlebugs and treat hayfields if necessary. Cattle market information and trends are changing, now is time to "fine tune" how you're going to market weaned calves.

Wildlife Happenings

- ❖ Courtship ritual of adult alligators begins, noted by the loud and resounding bellows and water slapping continues through June.
- ❖ Loggerhead and green sea turtles begin night time nesting on sandy beaches.
- ❖ Soft-shell and alligator snapping turtles complete egg-laying.
- ❖ Gray bats congregate at maternity caves now through mid-July.
- ❖ Bluegill begins to bed during full moon.

Horticulture Hints

Bulbs to Plant: Achimenes, aztec lily, begonia, blood lily, caladium, gladiolus, kaffir lily, moraea (African lily), spider lily, tiger flower, walking iris and watsonia.

Annual Flowers to Sow: Plant tough, heat-tolerant plants like: Coreopsis, celosia, coleus, crossandra, exacum gaillardia, gazania, hollyhock, impatiens, kalanchoe, marigold, nicotiana, ornamental pepper, pentas, periwinkle, portulaca, salvia, vinca and zinnia.

Vegetables to Plant: heat loving crops such as lima beans, eggplant, okra, southern peas, green beans, squash and sweet potatoes can be planted now.

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For meetings sponsored by Union County Extension Office: Individuals with disabilities requiring special accommodations, please call 386-496-2321 at least five (5) working days before the meeting, so proper consideration can be given the request. Products or plant varieties mentioned in this newsletter are for information purposes only, and should not be construed as an endorsement, or guarantee, or to exclude similarly labeled, or appropriate products, or adapted plant varieties. Cooperative Extension Services, University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, Nick Place, Director, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture, Publishes this information to further the purpose of the May 8 and June 30, 1914 Acts of Congress; and is authorized to provide research, educational information, and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information and veteran status as protected under the Vietnam Era Vet Veteran's readjustment Assistance Act. Single copies of extension publications (excluding 4-H and youth publications) are available free to Florida residents from county extension offices.