



Educating with Extension

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UF/IFAS/Monroe County Extension Services

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April is Water Conservation Month

By Dawn Thomas, Extension Coordinator

Water is important to every household for drinking, cooking, bathing, cleaning, and landscaping. Water use has increased steadily over time, and conserving our water supply has become more necessary than ever. Water conservation as a way of life can help to lessen the likelihood of future water shortages.

10 Tips to Save Water - Indoors & Out

INDOORS

- ◆ Only run your washing machine and dishwasher when they are full.
- ◆ Use the shortest clothes washing cycle for lightly soiled loads; normal and permanent press wash cycles use more water.
- ◆ Thaw frozen food in the refrigerator or microwave, not under running water.
- ◆ Scrape, don't rinse, your dishes before loading in the dishwasher.
- ◆ Install high-efficiency showerheads, faucets, and toilets.

Showerheads: The older the showerhead, the more water it uses. New showerheads deliver 2.5 gallons of water per minute while older fixtures can deliver as much as eight gallons per minute. Pressures have been adjusted to the low-flow fixtures to deliver as good a shower as the higher flow showerheads. Check your showerhead; if you find it is leaking or the flow rate is more than three gallons per minute, you should replace it with a low-flow version (2.5 gallons per minute maximum).

Faucet Leaks: Water losses caused by dripping faucets can range from several gallons to hundreds of gallons of water per day. Check faucets regularly for leaks at the faucet head and seepage at the base and its connections. You can also save water by replacing current, older faucets with low-flow faucets.

Toilet Leaks: The average leaky toilet can waste about 200 gallons of water per day. Some toilets may produce a running water sound that is easy to hear and some leaks are visible as a small trickle running from the rim to the water in the bowl. To detect silent leaks, remove the lid from the toilet tank, remove any colored cleaning agents, flush to clear water in the bowl, then add dye tablets, leak detector fluid, or a few drops of food coloring to the tank. If the tank is leaking, color will appear in the bowl within 30 minutes.



Leaks are the biggest water waster, both inside and outside of your home. You can use your water meter to check for leaks. Turn off all faucets and water-using appliances and make sure no one uses water during the testing period. Remember to wait for the hot water heater and ice cube makers to refill and for regeneration of water softeners. Go to your water meter and record the current reading. Wait 30 minutes. (Remember: no water should be used during this period.) Read the meter again. If the reading has changed, you have a leak.

OUTDOORS

- ◇ Check your home's irrigation system for leaks to save up to 6,300 gallons of water per month.
- ◇ Turn off your home's irrigation system and only water as needed; save up to 2,000 gallons each time a water day is skipped.
- ◇ Don't leave sprinklers unattended. Use a kitchen timer to remind yourself to turn sprinklers off.
- ◇ Use a hose with a shutoff nozzle when washing the car to save around 40 gallons per wash.
- ◇ Consider installing a rain barrel with a drip irrigation system for watering your landscape. Rainwater is free and better for your plants because it doesn't contain hard minerals.

Rain barrels come in many sizes, shapes, and colors. White ones seem to disintegrate more quickly in the sun, so pick a color and decorate it with paintings of flowers, butterflies, fish, or whatever your heart desires.

A 55-gallon barrel that is hooked up to a gutter can fill up with a half inch rainfall, depending on the size of your roof.

Barrels either have removable lids or are "sealed" with two small openings. It is easier to clean out debris with removable lid barrels. The "sealed" barrels have a flat bottom and may be more stable.

- Visit our website where you will find:
- ⇒ A rain barrel booklet
 - ⇒ An instruction sheet on how to make your own rain barrel (from a barrel or heavy duty trash can)
 - ⇒ A You Tube video: How to Make a Rain barrel
 - ⇒ Rain barrel resources and websites.

All this, and a lot more at http://monroe.ifas.ufl.edu/lawn/lawn_links.shtml and scroll down to Rain barrels.



Regional Plant Clinics

Kim Gabel and the Monroe County Master Gardeners are ready to help you with your plant and/or insect problems at the following locations:

KEY WEST

Gato Building / Extension Office

1100 Simonton Street, #2-260

1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

First & Third Mondays
(excluding holidays)

April 4 & 18

BIG PINE KEY

Grimal Grove

258 Cunningham Lane

9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Third Saturdays

April 16

MARATHON

The Home Depot

4555 Overseas Highway

9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

Third Saturdays

April 16

KEY LARGO

Murray E. Nelson Government & Cultural Center / Extension Office

102050 Overseas Hwy., #244

9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

First & Third Wednesdays

April 6 & 20

SUMMER PLANT CLINICS

Starting in May, the Summer Plant Clinics will take place in Key West, Marathon, and Key Largo.

For full schedules, brochures, and flyers, visit our Lawn & Garden webpage at <http://monroe.ifas.ufl.edu/lawn/lawn.shtml>.



Waterwise Landscaping

Plant drought-tolerant or Florida-friendly grasses, groundcovers, shrubs, and trees. Once established, they do not need to be watered as frequently, and they will usually survive a dry period with little or no watering. To establish and maintain a healthy landscape that conserves water, consider using the following landscaping principles:

- **Plan your landscape** - Evaluate the conditions in your yard, such as sunny and shady areas, how you will use sections of the yard, and how large you want mature plants to be.
- **Choose the proper plants** - Determine each plant's need for sun, shade, soil and water, and its tolerance for cold or salt. Match the plant's needs to the appropriate spot in your landscape.
- **Use turf grass wisely** - Grass is often your yard's biggest water user. Save grass for areas where children or pets will play. In other areas, consider mulch or groundcovers.
- **Irrigate effectively** - Group plants that have similar moisture needs together in areas separate from grass. Use sprinklers that are the most water-efficient for each use. Zones of in-ground irrigation systems should be separate for turf and non-turf areas. Use appropriate matching spray heads throughout the zone.
- **Mulch** - Using mulch helps retain soil moisture and moderates temperature. Mulching also helps to control weeds that compete with plants for water. Spread several inches of mulch, such as wood chips, pine straw, or leaves around shrubs, trees, and flower beds.
- **Maintain your yard** - Mow, weed, prune, and irrigate as needed.

For much more information, visit our water conservation webpage at

<http://monroe.ifas.ufl.edu/waterconservation.shtml>



April Happenings

Monroe County Climate Change Advisory Committee Meeting

Monday, April 4

12:30 - 4:00 p.m.

Marathon Government Center

2798 Overseas Highway

2nd Floor, EOC meeting room

"The Dao of Beekeeping"

by Dr. Bill Irwin

Thursday, April 7 at 1:30 p.m.

Key West Garden Club

Atlantic Blvd. & White Street

Native Plant Day: An Earth Day Event

Saturday, April 9

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

J. Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park

MM 102.5, Overseas Hwy, Key Largo

Canal Restoration Workshop

Monday, April 11

10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Marathon Government Center

2798 Overseas Highway

Membership Meeting, Potluck Luncheon, and Garden Walk

Friday, April 15 from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Marathon Garden Club

5270 Overseas Highway

Happy Earth Day!

Friday, April 22

www.earthday.org

KEYS Tree Giveaway

Saturday, April 23

8:30 - 11:00 a.m.

1001 James Street, Key West and

Cudjoe Substation, MM 22, oceanside

keysenergy.com/giveaway.php

21st Annual Bahia Honda State Park Earth Day Celebration

Saturday, April 23

9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

36850 Overseas Highway

MM 36.5, Big Pine Key

305-872-9807

 <p>Family and Community Development News Alicia Betancourt</p>	 <p>Marine News Shelly Krueger</p>	 <p>Horticulture News Kim Gabel</p>
<p>Alicia recently accomplished the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead a new initiative with the City of Key West Sustainability Coordinator Alison Higgins and the South Florida Climate Compact Municipal Working Group to develop a toolkit of policies and ordinances that local communities can adopt to become more climate resilient called “Borrow, Adapt, Adopt.” The first workshop will be held on June 16. • Attended the National eXtension Conference 2016 in San Antonio, Texas, to work on technical issues and design of the “Borrow, Adapt, Adopt” program, which is one of only 68 programs chosen for national assistance through Extension. Met with leaders to work on innovation, content, and outreach components. Presented the program to conference participants and received feedback of impact and outcomes.  <p>A Part of the Cooperative Extension System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked with staff from Monroe County’s Sustainability Office to develop the final draft of the five-year Sustainability Implementation Guide. Projects in the guide will be reflected in the County’s Strategic Plan, Budget, and Extension Plan of Work product.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spoke on US 1 Radio’s “Morning Magazine” and on WFFG 1300 AM about “Borrow, Adapt, Adopt.” 	<p>Shelly recently accomplished the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management public workshop regarding king mackerel. • Attended the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Water Quality Protection Program meeting to present data from the annual Florida Keys Water Watch (FKWW) survey evaluation for knowledge gain and behavior change.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Met with Dr. Matt Semcheski to discuss volunteer opportunities for Florida Keys Community College students. • Trained two new FKWW volunteers and recertified the existing volunteers at Long Key State Park. • Held the first meeting of the Key West Educators Club, along with Dee Dee Green, Solid Waste Coordinator for the City of Key West. Nine people attended the meeting followed by a field trip to the Key West Landfill and Transfer Station on Stock Island. • Attended the NOAA Southeast Science Center Annual Ecosystem Services Science Review as chair of the Gulf Council Coral Advisory Panel. • Gave a presentation about FKWW to Marathon Garden Club members. • Gave a presentation about water quality to the Flamingo Island Homeowner’s Association. • Attends bi-weekly conference calls for the 10th Annual National Volunteer Monitoring Conference to be held in Tampa in May of this year. • Spoke on US 1 Radio’s “Morning Magazine” twice, about manatees, yellowtail snapper, and recycling hazardous household waste and electronics. 	<p>Kim recently accomplished the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Along with Susan Sprunt, Islamorada Environmental Resources Manager, held four workshops, “Landscaping on the Rock,” that lasted for three hours each session. Fifteen local residents attended sessions covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Week five - mulch and invasive plants & pests; ⇒ Week six - attracting wildlife; ⇒ Week seven - managing yard pests responsibly; and ⇒ Week eight - field trip. • Spoke to 40 attendees at the Upper Keys Garden Club about “Bees: European, Africanized, and native solitary bees.” • Attended a meeting with the City of Marathon Sustainability Coordinator and project grant writer Deanna Lloyd to discuss the STAR program (Sustainable Tools for Assessing and Rating Communities). The topic was to develop Invasive Exotics Plants and Animals programming for Marathon to obtain STAR certification. • Spoke at the Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge to a group of 15 people about water conservation and rain barrel construction, followed by a raffle for three rain barrels with one being constructed on site. • Set up a horticulture education booth at the Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge event which featured information about the Key Largo Plant Clinics, butterfly gardening, and “Bees: European, Africanized, and native bees.” Two Master Gardeners ran the booth and answered 50 clientele questions. • Met with six Master Gardeners and Grimal Grove Director Patrick Garvey to discuss schedule of events, speakers and topics, improving fruit auction, raffle, and youth programming for the June 25th Tropical Fruit Fiesta. • Spoke on US 1 Radio’s “Morning Magazine” about attracting wildlife.

UF/IFAS/MONROE COUNTY EXTENSION

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<http://monroe.ifas.ufl.edu/newsletter.shtml>

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We're on the Web at <http://monroe.ifas.ufl.edu>



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for *your* LIFE

<http://SolutionsForYourLife.ufl.edu>

Extension programs and activities are open to all persons and do not discriminate with regard to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations.

EARTH DAY - APRIL 22, 2016

This Earth Day, let's get really big things done for our planet.

What are we waiting for? The time is now.

We are entering the 46th year of a movement that continues to inspire, challenge ideas, ignite passion, and motivate people to action.

In 1970, the year of our first Earth Day, the movement gave voice to an emerging consciousness, channeling human energy toward environmental issues. Forty-six years later, we continue to lead with groundbreaking ideas and by the power of our example.

And so it begins. Today. Right here and right now. Earth Day is more than just a single day. It's bigger than attending a rally and taking a stand. This Earth Day and beyond, let's make big things happen. Let's plant 7.8 billion trees for the Earth. Let's divest from fossil fuels and make cities 100% renewable. Let's take the momentum from the Paris Climate Summit and build on it. Let's start now. And let's not stop.

Printed from www.earthday.org.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Butterflies are but flowers that blew away one sunny day when Nature was feeling at her most inventive and fertile."



George Sand, author (1804-1876)

edis Publications

Florida Gardening Calendars

Not sure what to plant and when? Confused about how to care for your lawn differently during the winter or summer? Consult the Florida Gardening Calendar for your region (North, South, and Central). The calendars give instructions for planting ornamentals, fruits, and vegetables; lawn care and management; and irrigation and pest control for each month of the year. Split into sections about "What to Plant" and "What to Do," these calendars are handy for any type of home garden.

South Florida Gardening Calendar

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep452>

Central Florida Gardening Calendar

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep450>

North Florida Gardening Calendar

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep451>



Susan Matthews, Monroe County Master Gardener, is featured on the UF/IFAS Master Gardener website for attending six MG conferences since she became a Master Gardener in 2009. Log on to see what she had to say!
<http://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/features/conference-favorites.html>

UF/IFAS/MCES QUARTERLY CONTACTS

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Phone calls	132	122	140	394
Office visitors	21	27	24	72
Visits to clients	10	20	17	47
Learning events	27	26	25	78
Participants	629	609	894	2132
Media submissions	5	4	5	14
Publications distributed	499	531	557	1587
TOTAL contacts	1323	1339	1662	4324