Although we live in sunny Florida, we will have our fair share of cold weather in the winter. This cold weather can damage our tropical, subtropical, and even some temperate plants that may be sensitive to the drop in temperature. This is especially true for tropical plants and summer annuals that can be injured by temperatures just below 50°F.

Injury caused by cold temperatures can affect the entire plant or parts of the plant, such as the fruits, flowers, buds, leaves, trunks, stems, or roots. The ability of plants to withstand cold temperatures depends on how great the temperature fluctuations are that occur. If the temperature gradually decreases over a period of time, the plants are more likely to withstand the cold. This is because the plants are able to acclimate to the cold weather over that time. Plants, however, can be greatly damaged if the temperature drops suddenly. They had no time to acclimate to the freezing temperatures.

The plants are damaged when ice crystals form within the plant cells and in the spaces between the cells. The crystals expand, rupturing the cell walls and preventing the plants from maintaining any shape. If severe, this can kill tender plants. On hardier plants, damaged foliage will appear wilted and curl down. In a few hours or days, it will darken and turn black. On some plants the leaves will turn a purplish color when damaged by cold. Flowers and buds may die, blacken, and drop to the ground if exposed to cold temperatures. Damaged flowers will not develop into fruit. Young branches and new growth on plants may also blacken and die.

You can easily protect plants from severe freezes that may occur later this winter. Do this by moving potted plants indoors and covering tender landscape plants with a protective covering, such as sheets or cardboard. Be careful not to let the protective cover touch the plant or the cold will generate through and damage it. It is also important to remove the cover the next day when temperatures rise, so the plants don’t “bake”. Plants placed near the house, lights, or other structures, which shelter them from wind, will be more protected than those fully exposed to the cold air.

Tropical and subtropical plants can be used in the landscapes in Central Florida, but they must be protected during freezes or replaced (Continued on page 2)
after cold weather has ceased. A combination of tender and cold hardy plants should be used in order to prevent total destruction of the landscape by cold temperatures. For a list of cold tolerant plants or for answers to other plant questions, contact our office and ask for the Master Gardeners.

Meet “Ask Karen”: Your Virtual Food Safety Specialist
By Joy Borgman

Questions regarding the use of new equipment such as a turkey roaster, or cooking large quantities of food for a party invariable arise on a holiday or weekend when no one is available at the 1-800 numbers listed on products.

Did you know that this problem has actually been solved by the government? “Ask Karen” is an automated information source on the Food Safety and Inspection Service’s Web site. “Ask Karen” was listed as one of the Government’s “Best Practices” and is used by other government agencies as a model of how to assist the public with finding answers to questions and to help identify the public’s needs for food safety information.

While food safety specialists at the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline personally answer customers’ questions weekdays on the toll-free line, they also provide their virtual representative, “Ask Karen”, who is available 24/7 worldwide. Because “Ask Karen” never sleeps, she’s ready with an answer whenever you have a question.

How can this innovative Web tool help you? Say you forgot to put your dinner leftovers in the refrigerator. Now, you’re ready for a late night snack. Dare you eat the leftovers? Is there anybody awake that you can ask? “Ask Karen”, she will know!

Karen doesn’t care what time it is, day or night. “Ask Karen” has been available since April 2004, and has an up-to-date answer to your question!

“More than 20 years of research and experience from the food safety hotline went into creating the database” said Diane VanLonkhuyzen, the hotline’s manager. “Hotline staff knew what people might ask”. This knowledge has grown into an extensive database of more than 9,300 food safety questions now at Karen’s virtual fingertips.

You can be confident that the answers you receive from “Ask Karen” are based on up-to-the-minute information. The hotline’s food safety experts continue to research new science-based answers.

In addition to responding instantaneously with answers, this tool provides links to other Web pages with additional information. Not sure what to ask? Choose questions by category. By clicking the “help” button, you’ll find more than 100 categories from which to choose. Questions in the database relate to meat, poultry and egg products, safe food handling, food storage, food preparation, food inspection, food recalls and many other topics.

You can visit ASK KAREN at www.fsis.usda.gov. Click on “I Want To...Ask a Food Safety Question. You may also call the USDA Meat & Poultry Hotline 1-888-MPHOTLINE (1-888-674-6854)

And, as always, you may contact the University of Florida, IFAS Extension Office located at 1921 Kissimmee Valley Lane in Kissimmee, phone 321-697-3000 for questions related to food safety and a variety of other topics.

When I talk about what I do; working with the 4-H program, it conjures up many images for people: county fairs, animals, farm land, cooking and sewing. While these are elements that help to enhance the 4-H program or are portions of...
the 4-H program, 4-H is all about youth development. And the goal of youth development programs is to help youth transition into adulthood and be competent, caring and contributing members of society.

In order for youth to be able to be fully prepared to transition into adulthood, they must have certain needs met. Youth development research tells us that youth must have:

- Safety and structure
- A sense of belonging and membership
- Closeness and several good relationships
- Independence and control over some aspects of their lives
- Self-awareness and the ability and opportunity to act on that understanding
- A sense of self-worth and the ability and opportunities to contribute.

The 4-H Youth Development program addresses these needs through four essential elements: belonging, mastery, independence and generosity.

Youth in the 4-H program experience belonging by having positive relationships with caring adults and by the fellowship aspect of 4-H clubs, where youth meet and make friends. A safe and inclusive environment also creates a sense of belonging for 4-H youth.

Youth experience mastery by engaging in hands-on learning through 4-H projects. Over time youth build knowledge, skills and attitudes and are able to demonstrate what they learn through illustrated talks and 4-H project reports.

When youth learn independence, they realize an opportunity for self-determination, as well as an opportunity to see themselves as active participants in the future. When youth are able to select which 4-H project to enroll in and are able to make decisions about what they would like to do in their 4-H club, at 4-H camp or at a 4-H County Council meeting, they are able to practice independence. Also, as youth set goals they would like to accomplish in their 4-H projects and with regard to leadership and citizenship, they are able to practice independence.

Generosity is another essential element for 4-H, as youth actively value and practice service to others. Youth do community service with their 4-H clubs, determining and planning projects and making a difference in their communities.

It is important to remember that the purpose of 4-H is youth development. That youth development is accomplished through the essential elements of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity.


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Start 2009 off Right and Avoid Common Mistakes Made with Money
Laura Royer, Housing and Finance Agent

Everybody makes mistakes with their money. The important thing is to keep them to a minimum. One of the best ways to accomplish that is to learn from the mistakes of others. Here is a list of the top mistakes made with money and how to avoid them.

**Buying items you don't need and paying extra for them in interest.** Every time you have an urge to do a little "impulse buying" and you use your credit card remember you could be paying interest on that purchase for months or years to come. Spending money for something you really don't need can be a waste of your money. Ask yourself if you really need the item. Even better, wait a day just a few hours to think it over rather than making a quick and costly decision you may come to regret.
Getting too deep in debt. Being able to borrow allows us to buy clothes or computers, take a vacation or purchase a home or a car. But taking on too much debt can be a problem. Recognize the warning signs of a serious debt problem. These may include borrowing money to make payments on loans you already have, deliberately paying bills late, and putting off doctor visits or other important activities because you think you don't have enough money.

If you believe you're experiencing debt overload, take corrective measures. For example, try to pay off your highest interest-rate loans (usually your credit cards) as soon as possible, even if you have higher balances on other loans. For new purchases, instead of using your credit card, try paying with cash, a check or a debit card.

Paying bills late or otherwise tarnishing your reputation. While one late payment on your loan or a credit card over a long period may not seriously damage your credit record, making a habit of it will count against you. You could be charged higher interest rates on a loan that you really need, be turned down for a job or loan, or it could cost you extra when you apply for auto insurance. Your credit record will also be damaged by a bankruptcy filing or a court order to pay money as a result of a lawsuit.

So, pay your monthly bills on time. Also, review your credit reports at least annually from the nation's three major credit bureaus -- Equifax, Experian and TransUnion -- to make sure their information accurately reflects the accounts you have and your payment history. To receive a free copy of your reports call (877) 322-8228 or go to www.annualcreditreport.com

Having too many credit cards. Two to four cards (including any from department stores, oil companies and other retailers) is the right number for most adults. The more credit cards you carry, the more inclined you may be to use them for costly impulse buying. In addition, each card you own -- even the ones you don't use -- represents money that you could borrow up to the card's spending limit. If you apply for new credit you will be seen as someone who, in theory, could get much deeper in debt and you may only qualify for a smaller or costlier loan.

Not watching your expenses. It's very easy to overspend in some areas and take away from other priorities, including your long-term savings. Our suggestion is to try any system -- ranging from a computer-based budget program to hand-written notes -- that will help you keep track of your spending each month and enable you to set and stick to limits you consider appropriate.

Not saving for your future. I know it can be tough to scrape together enough money to pay for a place to live, a car and other expenses each month. But it's also important to save money for long-term goals, too. Start by "paying yourself first." That means even before you pay your bills each month you should put money into savings for your future.

Often the simplest way is to arrange with your bank or employer to automatically transfer a certain amount each month to a savings account. Then give yourself a raise and increase your savings by $10 every three months or when you get a raise. This is a easy way to grow your savings.

Paying too much in fees. Whenever possible, use your own financial institution's automated teller machines or the ATMs owned by financial institutions that don't charge fees to non-customers. You can pay $1 to $4 in fees if you get cash from an ATM that isn't owned by your financial institution or isn't part of an ATM "network" that your bank belongs to.

Try not to "bounce" checks -- that is, writing checks for more money than you have in your account, which can trigger fees from your financial institution (about $15 to $30 for each check) and from merchants. The best precaution is to keep your checkbook up to date and closely monitor your balance.
Pay off your credit card balance each month, if possible, so you can avoid or minimize interest charges. Send in your payment on time to avoid additional fees. If you don’t expect to pay your credit card bill in full most months, consider using a card with a low interest rate and a generous "grace period" (the number of days before the card company starts charging you interest on new purchases).

Final Thoughts
It’s easy to become overwhelmed or frustrated. And everyone makes mistakes. The important thing is to take action. Start small if you need to. Stretch to pay an extra $50 a month on your credit card bill or other debts. Find two or three ways to cut your spending. Put an extra $50 a month into a savings account. Even little changes can add up to big savings over time.

Source: FDIC Consumer News Spring 2005

Building a Rain Barrel
By Jeff Richards, Master Gardener (2007)

This is the second of two articles on Harvesting Rainwater. The first appeared in the October 2008 Roots&Shoots and is available online at http://osceola.ifas.ufl.edu/pdfs/Master Gardener/Archives/archives_2008/R&SOct08color.pdf and this section will be in the January 2009 edition.)

The easiest method for collecting the water is connecting directly to the downspout. Another method is to screen an open top drum and place it under an opening in the gutter to catch free flowing water. It is important to place a screen over any open top container to prevent leaves and debris from collecting in the drum and to keep small animals from getting trapped in the open top drum.

Any rain barrel with an open top or large gaps/holes or openings in the lid/top can become a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Mosquitoes can be controlled by minimizing any gaps in the top of the drum and around the gutter work to prevent access to the water. In situations where this is not possible, a biological larvicide can be added to the water to prevent mosquito breeding.

Moving the harvested water to your plants can be accomplished in many ways, from simply dipping the water from the open drum into your watering can to sophisticated pumps and timers. One popular method is to attach a soaker hose to the drum outlet made from a hose bib (see below). The University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service reports that it will take 8 to 10 hours to empty a full rain barrel with a soaker hose attached to the barrel. The City of Superior Michigan reports on its web site that it takes 3 days to drain a full rain barrel with a soaker hose. When attaching a soaker hose, be sure to remove the pressure reducing washer in the hose before installation.

Rain barrels are simple to make and provide harvested water for a long time. Once installed, a rain barrel can become a permanent fixture in the garden with minimal maintenance and no ongoing costs.

But let’s not forget, it’s not about the barrel. Go ahead, put that bucket out in the rain and start harvesting water today. Every spoonful you “harvest” is a spoonful saved. Get started today.

HOW TO MAKE A RAIN BARREL
Tools: Drill with 15/16 inch spade bit
Materials: Food grade plastic drum
¾ inch male threaded hose bib
PVC Cement or silicon caulking

Method:
1. Using the 15/16 inch spade bit, drill a hole on the side of the barrel a few inches from the bottom.
2. Screw the hose bib halfway into the hole. Apply PVC cement to the exposed threads and screw the spigot all the way into the plastic. The PVC cement will create a water tight seal.
3. Depending on the setup, you may want to attach an overflow downspout or drill a hole near the top of the barrel to provide an overflow during heavy rains.
4. If attaching to a downspout, use the saw to cut a hole in the lid so that the downspout fits snugly in the top of the barrel.
5. Elevate the barrel on 2 or 3 sets of concrete block. This will provide more gravity/water pressure as well as allow easier access to the spigot.

It is important to note that only food grade barrels should be used. Suppliers are listed in the yellow pages under “Barrels and Drums.”
Registration for any class is required so adequate materials are available and if classes are rescheduled we will be able to notify you. Please call 321-697-3000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JANUARY</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 6th</td>
<td>2 - 5 p.m.</td>
<td>6th</td>
<td>Become Captain of Your Financial Ship @ Council on Aging - 700 Generation Point, Kissimmee</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, 7th</td>
<td>10 -11 a.m.</td>
<td>7th</td>
<td>Improve Your Credit Score @ Road &amp; Bridge -3850 Old Canoe Creek Road - St. Cloud</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, 12th</td>
<td>10 -11 a.m.</td>
<td>12th</td>
<td>Portion Control @ Animal Control - 3910 Old Canoe Creek Road - St. Cloud</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, 14th</td>
<td>2 - 3 p.m.</td>
<td>14th</td>
<td>Diets: What’s Hot &amp; What’s Not @ Sheriff’s Office - 2601 E. Irlo Bronson Hiway - Kissimmee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, 15th</td>
<td>8 - 4 p.m.</td>
<td>15th</td>
<td>Florida Cattleman’s Institute and Allied Trade Show @ Osceola Heritage Park, KVLS Arena 1911 Kissimmee Valley Lane - Kissimmee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, 17th</td>
<td>9 a.m. -</td>
<td>17th</td>
<td>Trees in the Landscape @ Extension Services - 1921 Kissimmee Valley Lane - Kissimmee. Register at 407-518-2578 or <a href="http://www.tohowater.com">www.tohowater.com</a></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 20th</td>
<td>9 - noon</td>
<td>20th</td>
<td>Trees in the Landscape @ Poinciana Community Center 395 Marigold Ave. - Poinciana. Register at 407-518-2578 or <a href="http://www.tohowater.com">www.tohowater.com</a></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 20th</td>
<td>6:30 - 8:30 p.m.</td>
<td>20th</td>
<td>Spring Vegetable Gardening @ Extension Services Osceola Heritage Park - 1921 Kissimmee Valley Lane - Kissimmee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, 21st</td>
<td>10 - 11 a.m.</td>
<td>21st</td>
<td>Managing in Tough Times @ Human Services - 108 Park Place Blvd. - Building C - Kissimmee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, 24th</td>
<td>9 a.m. -</td>
<td>24th</td>
<td>Homeowner Irrigation Workshop @ Extension Services Osceola Heritage Park - 1921 Kissimmee Valley Lane - Kissimmee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 27th</td>
<td>5:30 - 8:30 p.m.</td>
<td>27th</td>
<td>Become Captain of Your Financial Ship @ Council On Aging - 700 Generation Point, Kissimmee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, 29th</td>
<td>10 - 11 a.m.</td>
<td>29th</td>
<td>Wise Food Selections While Eating Out - Human Services - 108 Park Place Blvd. - Building C - Kissimmee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, 30th</td>
<td>2 - 4 p.m.</td>
<td>30th</td>
<td>Spring Vegetable Gardening @ Extension Services Osceola Heritage Park - 1921 Kissimmee Valley Lane - Kissimmee</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEBRUARY</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 3rd</td>
<td>9 - 11 a.m.</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Homeowner Irrigation Workshop @ Extension Services Osceola Heritage Park - 1921 Kissimmee Valley Lane. Register @ 407-957-7344</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 3rd</td>
<td>6:30 - 8:30 p.m.</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Home Citrus Care @ Extension Services Osceola Heritage Park - 1921 Kissimmee Valley Lane - Kissimmee.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 3rd</td>
<td>2 - 5 p.m.</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Become Captain of Your Financial Ship @ Council on Aging - 700 Generation Point - Kissimmee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, 4th</td>
<td>10 - 11 a.m.</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Improving Your Credit Rating @ Human Services @ 108 Park Place Blvd. - Building C - Kissimmee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, 5th</td>
<td>2 - 3 p.m.</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Water For Life @ Animal Control - 3910 Old Canoe Creek Road St. Cloud</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, 6th</td>
<td>7:30 - 8:30 a.m.</td>
<td>6th</td>
<td>Crock-pot Cooking @ Extension Services - 1921 Kissimmee Valley Lane - Kissimmee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, 11th</td>
<td>6 - 8 p.m.</td>
<td>11th</td>
<td>Homeowner Irrigation Workshop @ Extension Services - 1921 Kissimmee Valley Lane. Register at 407-518-2578 or <a href="http://www.tohowater.com">www.tohowater.com</a></td>
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**FEBRUARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 17th</td>
<td>5:30 - 8:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Become Captain of Your Financial Ship - Council On Aging - 700 Generation Point, Kissimmee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, 23rd</td>
<td>10 - 11 a.m.</td>
<td>Getting Out of Debt With Power Pay @ Beaumont Complex - 330 N. Beaumont, Kissimmee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 24th</td>
<td>10 - 11 a.m.</td>
<td>Time Management for Busy People @ Road &amp; Bridge 3850 Old Canoe Creek Road - St. Cloud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, 25th</td>
<td>2 - 3 p.m.</td>
<td>Finding Money to Save @ Sheriff’s Office - 2601 E. Irlo Bronson Hwy - Kissimmee.</td>
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**MARCH**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 3rd</td>
<td>2 - 5 p.m.</td>
<td>Become Captain of Your Financial Ship @ 700 Generation Point - Kissimmee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, 7th</td>
<td>9 - 11 a.m.</td>
<td>Irrigation Maintenance Workshop @ Poinciana Community Ctr. - 395 Marigold Ave. - Poinciana Register at 407-518-2578 or ww.tohowater.com.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 10th</td>
<td>3 - 4 p.m.</td>
<td>Refinancing Your Home @ Jury Room - 1 Courthouse Square - Kissimmee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, 11th</td>
<td>10 -11 a.m.</td>
<td>Antioxidants @ Extension Services - 1921 Kissimmee Valley Lane - Kissimmee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 17th</td>
<td>5:30 - 8:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Become Captain of Your Financial Ship @ Council on Aging- 700 Generation Point - Kissimmee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, 18th</td>
<td>10 - noon</td>
<td>Save Your Home: Prevent Home Foreclosure @ Human Services -108 Park Place Blvd. - Building C - Kissimmee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, 19th</td>
<td>10 - 11 a.m.</td>
<td>Dietary Supplements @ Sheriff’s Office - 2601 E. Irlo Bronson Hiway - Kissimmee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, 19th</td>
<td>10 - noon</td>
<td>Basic Landscape Design @ Poinciana Library - 33 Doverplum Rd. - Poinciana. Register at 407-518-2578 or <a href="http://www.tohowater.com">www.tohowater.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, 20th</td>
<td>10 - 11 a.m.</td>
<td>Coping With Living Alone @ Human Services - 108 Park Place Blvd. - Building C - Kissimmee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 24th</td>
<td>10 - 11 a.m.</td>
<td>Reduce Stress by Decluttering Your Home @ Road &amp; Bridge - 3850 Old Canoe Creek Rd - St. Cloud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, 28th</td>
<td>9 a.m. - 11 a.m.</td>
<td>Homeowner Irrigation Workshop @ St. Cloud Civic Center - 3001 17th Street. Register @ 407-957-7344.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 31st</td>
<td>10 - 11 a.m.</td>
<td>Meal Planning @ Animal Control - 3910 Old Canoe Creek Road -St. Cloud</td>
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</table>

**Osceola County Kissimmee Valley Livestock Show and Fair**

**February 13 - 22, 2009**
Parts list to construct a stand:

4 each  2 X 4 X 11 inches
2 each  5/4 deck board X 17 inches
3 each  5/4 deck board X 19 ¼ inches
16 each  2 ½ inch galvanized lag bolts
Or
6 to 9  Standard concrete blocks

Sources:
How to Make a Rain Barrel, Monroe County Extension Service Handout

Why the Concern?
Mass media today is filled with information about nutrition, fitness and health. Much of the information is inconsistent and people may be confused about their nutritional needs.

A healthful eating plan for an active person provides enough protein, fat, carbohydrate, vitamins, minerals, and water to enable the body to work at its optimal level. Except for energy (calories) and water, nutritional needs are basically the same for people who exercise for fun and health, for athletes, and for those who are less active.

In the quest to be winners, some people fall for diet schemes and supplement claims. There are many popular myths about what active people should eat and drink to get the winning edge. Take this quiz to check your food and fitness IQ.

Food and Fitness Quiz
Do you think these are "myths" or “truths”
1. Athletes and other active people need protein or amino acid supplement.
2. A high-carbohydrate diet is best for top performance.
3. Physically active people who eat a balanced diet need vitamin supplements.
4. Chromium Picolinate is a safe supplement that boosts performance.
5. Drinking water or other fluids during exercise impairs performance.
6. A sports drink is a better fluid replacement than water during intense exercise lasting more than one hour.
7. Before heavy exercise, you should eat a meal high in carbohydrates.

How did you do?
1. Myth - Even if you are an active person, you don’t need protein or amino acid supplements. These supplements are unnecessary and can be dangerous! Not only is excess dietary protein not needed, it requires extra work for the body to process. Protein or amino acid supplements may be harmful if taken in excess.
2. Truth - The simple carbohydrate glucose is a primary energy source during activity. Even when the body burns fat for energy, we need glucose. By eating a high-carbohydrate diet each day, you will have a ready supply of glucose when you need it. We get carbohydrates in our diets from grains, fruits, vegetables, legumes, and milk.
3. Myth - Vitamins are nutrients that we need in our diets in very small amounts. They help regulate chemical reactions in our bodies. Vitamins are not a direct source of energy, but they help our bodies obtain energy from foods we eat. Eating foods from all of the food groups ensures that we will have an adequate supply of all nutrients in our diets, including vitamins, needed for fitness and health.
4. Myth - Reports in the media about chromium often overstate its benefits for performance and weight loss. The truth is that research results are conflicting. Before you take any supplement, there should be clear scientific evidence that it is both
effective and safe. Until the safety of Chromium Picolinate is proven, it's best to avoid this supplement.

5. **Myth** - Drinking water **before, during,** and **after** exercise is essential to prevent dehydration! Dehydration decreases performance and can cause serious harm to the body. Staying well hydrated allows athletes and casual exercisers to perform at their best. Thirst in **not** a good indicator of fluid needs! You may not feel thirsty until you have lost 1-2% of your body water. During strenuous exercise, drink one-half to one cup of cool water every 15 - 20 minutes **whether or not you feel thirsty.** Cool water is quickly absorbed and used by your body.

6. **Truth** - Water is the best drink for replacing fluid losses during exercise lasting **less than two hours.** However, during intense exercise lasting longer than one hour, you need to replace the sodium lost in sweat and the carbohydrates you burn for energy. Commercial sports drinks supply water, sugar, and electrolytes, including sodium. They promote fluid retention and tend to increase voluntary drinking because of their taste. On the other hand, beverages higher in sugar, including fruit juice, can cause nausea and dehydration.

7. **Truth** - What you eat before exercising can affect your workout. Most people do best if their stomachs are empty when they start to exercise. It takes about three hours for your stomach to empty, so the pre-exercise meal should be one that's easily digested. Have a small meal high in carbohydrate, moderate in protein, and low in fat. Be sure to include fluids!

**Final Food Facts for Fitness**

- **✓** Active people do not require special foods or diet supplements. A generic multivitamin supplement will provide folic acid needed by women of child-bearing age, and other nutrients often consumed in inadequate amounts by young people.
- **✓** Active and inactive people need the same basic nutrients. These include vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, fats, proteins, and water.
- **✓** Active people need more water and calories than in active people.
- **✓** It’s important to drink fluids before, during, and after physical activity. Cool fluids are recommended because they are absorbed quickly. Drinking fluids replaces water lost from the body during exercise.
- **✓** Sports drinks promote fluid consumptions and replace carbohydrates and sodium lost during intense exercise.
- **✓** Soft drinks and fruit juices contain enough sugar to cause an unwanted feeling of fullness. They may cause diarrhea if consumed before exercising.
- **✓** Eat a small, easily digested meal, rich in carbohydrates, several hours before exercising vigorously.

Source: Food and Fitness: Myths and Truths

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**Florida’s Idle Reduction Regulations for Heavy-Duty Diesel Vehicles**

By: Randy Bateman

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection had adopted the **Idle Rule**, effective December 15, 2008 to conserve fuel and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**What is the requirement?**

Owners or operators of heavy-duty diesel engine powered motor vehicles are prohibited from idling for more than five consecutive minutes. Idling is the continuous operation of a vehicle’s main drive engine while the vehicle is stopped.

**Does this rule apply to me?**

This rule applies to you, if you are the owner or operator of:
- An on-road heavy-duty diesel engine powered motor vehicle
- With a gross vehicle weight rating equal to or greater than 8,500 pounds;
- Used on roads for the transportation of
passengers or freight; and
- Serving a commercial, governmental or public purpose.

**Are there situations where idling is allowed?**

Yes, idling under the following situations is acceptable:

- You are stopped for traffic conditions.
- If you operate a bus, 10 minutes prior to passenger loading and when passengers are on board.
- When your vehicle is being inspected or serviced.
- If you operate an armored vehicle and remain inside or operate an emergency vehicle being used in an emergency or training capacity.
- To accomplish work for which the vehicle is designed other than propulsion (e.g., collecting solid or recyclable material, controlling cargo temperature, or operating hoist, drill, etc.)
- To operate equipment to prevent a safety or health emergency.
- Idling while sleeping or resting in a sleeper berth. This exemption expires at midnight on September 30, 2013.

For a complete list of exemptions please visit
http://www.dep.state.fl.us/air/rules/fac/62-285pdf

Where can I get more information?
http://www.dep.state.fl.us/air/msc/mobile_sources.htm
Or contact the Florida Department of Environmental Protection at 1-850-488-1344

Ironically, consumers currently have difficulty finding local produce to buy, and farmers or backyard growers have difficulty finding ways to sell produce nearby. Community gardens are few because many neighborhoods lack a sense of community at all and there’s a lack of available land for gardens, among other reasons. I call this disconnect in supply and demand as “The Green Gap”. We at Extension realize we have some educational opportunities ahead in 2009, and will be devoting more programming towards promoting local, sustainable food.

**Grow more, know more**

If you are currently involved in, or would like to be involved in community gardening, small farming, or other sustainable food efforts, please contact Jessica Sullivan (jsul@osceola.org; 321-697-3000) at UF/IFAS Osceola County Extension.

**Local farms**

Osceola County farms where you can purchase fresh products directly from farmers:

- Located east of St. Cloud, Osceola County now has its first community supported agricultural operation where you can buy “shares” and receive weekly boxes of fresh, naturally grown produce. You can even help grow the produce if you wish. Call Nancy Pratt at 407-744-7282 for more information.


UF/IFAS Extension has received more calls in recent months from people who want to buy or sell local produce, start farmer’s markets, participate in community gardening, or farm a few acres. Clients in general are saying they want to be more involved in their communities, know where their food comes from, and live more sustainably. Growing and buying local helps support our local economy and environment, and provides fresh, uncommon produce otherwise unavailable at groceries. And even if you only have a little time, gardening is a terrific hobby that reduces stress and offers social time for families and friends.
Woods are Wonderful
By Eleanor Foerste

North Florida is known for its commercial pine plantations in neatly planted rows. Central Florida is known for its rapid growth rate, with houses in neatly planted rows. Osceola County has seen a rapid increase in housing development since the many attractions settled here, but forestry and agriculture are still very important to our economy. New developments are working with county staff to preserve large connected tracts to protect natural areas for wildlife corridors.

Our forests differ from the commercial or industrial forests in other parts of the state because they tend to be in a natural state instead of planted. Eighty five percent of our forested rural landscapes are composed of a mosaic or mixture of natural pine flatwoods, sand pine scrub, oak hammocks and bay and cypress swamps. Forests and ranch land provide important wildlife habitat for our endangered Florida panther and black bear which have a huge home range, the space they need to hunt and survive. Other species such as the Sherman's fox squirrel, red cockaded woodpecker (RCW), gopher tortoise, crested caracara and bald eagle thrive in the woods and pasture mix. Private landowners use the land for natural range for cattle grazing, but are also stewards of the lands that provide homes for white-tailed deer, turkey, quail, and ducks. Though hunting has declined in recent years, it is a strong family tradition in our area and an important method of managing game populations.

Hunters, hikers, horsemen and birdwatchers all benefit from woodlands that are now managed. We have many acres of land in the county that are protected and managed for wildlife and the environment. Osceola County has several tracts near urban areas such as Shingle Creek Preserve in Kissimmee and Lake Runnymede in St. Cloud. Lake Lizzie Preserve is on the outskirts of St. Cloud to the east. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission manages Bull Creek, Three Lakes, Prairie Lakes and Triple N Ranch with access for a variety of uses. For more information, go to http://myflorida.com or pick up maps and regulations at the local tax collectors offices.

Private land owners as well as state land managers use a variety of techniques to manipulate the land and improve wildlife habitat for select species. Some species benefit when trees are cut or burned and new plant growth is encouraged. Some animals such as turkeys, need mature trees to rest and roost, but need low open shrubs which produce lots of mast or fruits for food as well as insects. When the woods get too dense, turkey production declines.

Learn more about our local forest ecosystems through a series of Woods Walks offered by UF/IFAS Extension. Join Eleanor Foerste for a leisurely walk at one of our local natural areas and learn about outdoor safety, use of map and compass, ecology, common ecosystems and related plants and animals. Walks are scheduled on weekdays and weekends. Walking is good for your health so get outside, get healthy and get wild about our woods and wildlife. Call for an updated schedule or email crut@osceola.org.

Spring Greens with Blueberries, Walnuts and Feta Cheese

1 tbsp. canola oil
1 tbsp. white wine vinegar or sherry vinegar
2 tsp. Dijon mustard
½ tsp. salt
½ tsp. black pepper
5 cups mixed spring greens (5 ounces)
1 cup fresh blueberries
½ cup reduced-fat crumbled feta cheese
¼ cup chopped walnuts or pecans, toasted

Serves 4 (1½- cup) servings

Combine oil, vinegar, mustard, salt, if desired, and pepper in large bowl; whisk well. Add greens and blueberries; toss well. Divide evenly among serving plates. Top evenly with cheese and walnuts.

Tip: To toast nuts, place in nonstick skillet. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until nuts begin to brown, about 5 minutes. Remove immediately to cool.

Calories 146, total fat 11g., saturated fat 2g., protein 5g., carbohydrate 8g., cholesterol 5mg., dietary fiber 3g., sodium 300mg.
On midnight, February 19, 2009, all television broadcasts in the U.S. will transmit their programs in a new digital format. The new programming will have much higher picture resolution, allow for more user options, and free up emergency responder frequencies. People without digital television sets, or who do not have a paid television service such as cable or satellite services, cannot receive these new television broadcasts. However, the federal government is providing coupons worth $40 for a digital conversion box that will allow non-digital sets to receive the new signal. More information about the conversion process and ordering the coupons can be found at https://www.dtv2009.gov/.

Mary Beth R. Salisbury
County Extension Director