THANKS FOR THE SEASON

The weather has changed, the decorations are up, and the traffic has increased. The fridge is full of leftovers and football games are on continuous play on television. You can tell it is the holiday season.

Get a cup of tea or a glass of lemonade and take time out to sit back and reflect on some of the many reasons to say thank you and be grateful this year.

The season is for thanks, well wishing and sharing good cheer. Unfortunately, g is for gratitude often gets squeezed out of the alphabet by f is for frantic and h is for hurry.

I am grateful the lawn mower died. It gives me a good excuse not to mow the yard. My dog loves rolling around in high grass.

I am happy for caterpillars eating my plants. Many of them turn into colorful butterflies which float through my landscape and I won’t have so many leaves to rake.

I am thankful for the eagles flying overhead. They are our national bird and a symbol of freedom. They remind me of the many men and women in our military who protect us so we can feel safe at home.

I think of my sister in Atlanta and the dry weather to come. I am happy to have well water to drink. My plants will never have an iron deficiency or suffer from lack of lime. I am thankful that I have a mostly natural landscape that does not need water other than rainfall.

I am happy for dry spells which concentrate food in shallow water pools to feed our wading birds. I also welcome the inevitable floods which maintain the balance of desirable plants around our lakes.

I am blessed to still have some beautiful oak trees in my yard. The shade is pleasant relief on hot summer days. They provide a place to hang my hammock when I take time to slow down and I am enjoying the sound of the acorns dropping on my metal roof.

I am grateful for a sunny spot where I can grow vegetables. Fresh food is always the best. It is so much fun checking the garden to see what has sprouted and what is ready for harvest.

I am thankful for spiders building webs near my doorway. They keep solicitors away and many burglars are afraid of spiders.

I am blessed to have a job. I am surrounded by cheerful and encouraging co-workers. They make work more fun. I am fortunate to have a job where I can help others learn about our natural world. I enjoy teaching others how to save money and reduce their impact on the environment as our communities grow.
I am grateful for my health so I can carry my tote bag, computer, purse and projects.

I am glad we have beneficial organisms that help to keep the problem insects and diseases under control. I am glad to see the beneficial tropical soda apple beetles eating the leaves of that pesky weed.

Happy are those who use slow release fertilizer, for they shall not have to labor so often or pollute our water supply.

Joyful are those who plant landscapes for food and shelter for birds and wildlife. They shall be surrounded by free entertainment for hours.

I enjoy the sounds of cardinals and loud mouth wrens and hawks that land in the trees nearby. They are a pleasant change from highway noise and airplanes.

I am so lucky to have a family who loves me. They support me and help me with projects when I seem to be overwhelmed.

These are just a few of the many things I have to be grateful for. I bet you have a long list also.

Times are tough for many in our community this year. As you think about thanking and giving and sharing and caring this season, consider donations of time or money to one of the many organizations which benefit our community. Think of some way to help a friend or neighbor or church family in need. Your generous gift or help with chores could be just the inspiration or hope for someone in need. It may even be a matter of survival for some of our neighbors.

Best wishes to you and your family this holiday season.

Eleanor C. Foerste
Osceola County Extension
1921 Kissimmee Valley Lane
Kissimmee, FL 34744
321-697-3000
407-908-4379 cell
efoe@osceola.org,
osceola.ifas.ufl.edu
November 25, 2007