



Newsletter

March 2023

Dates and Events (events are free unless noted)

Tues. Mar. 14, 7 pm, Wild Amelia Wild Nite — *“Cherokee Tribal Presentation”*, Peck Center, 516 S. 10th St., Fernandina.

Sat. March 18, 10am-4pm - Jazz ‘n Art, Woodbine Riverwalk. Music, Plant Sale (10am-2pm). Bring bug spray.

Sat. April 1, 9am-1pm – Spring Native Plant Sale, Ashantilly, 15591 Hwy 99, Darien. Coastal Wildscapes.

Thurs. April 6, 12-1pm – Lunch and Learn online. *“The Amazing Octopus”* Register on Camden County Extension website.

Nassau County Extension events – Register at UFAS/IFAS Extension Nassau County Events – Eventbrite site.

Weds. Mar. 8, 10am-11am. *“Florida Rain Gardens”*. Online or in person, 85831 Miner Rd., Yulee. Free.

Sat. Mar. 18, 9am-noon. *New Homeowner series, Irrigation”*. \$25. 85831 Miner Rd.

Sat. April 1, 9am-noon. *New Homeowner Shrubs and Trees”*. \$25. 85831 Miner Rd.

Weds. April 5, 3:30-5pm. *“Florida Friendly Myths”*. Online.

Garden to-dos for March

Frost date is March 15. After that day, clean up dead vegetation and prune and cut back to your heart’s content. (Except for things that will be blooming in spring or early summer). Fertilize citrus and loquats with citrus fertilizer. Fertilize tea olive with acid loving plant fertilizer. Prune and fertilize azaleas after blooming. You can prune azaleas until the middle of July. Plant tomatoes and most anything else you can find. Fertilize with wild abandon! Don’t yank out things that look dead, cut back but give them a chance. St. Fiacre is the patron saint of gardeners, if your garden still looks like only prayer will help it.

Announcements

Plant Sale April 22 at Orange Hall -- Start growing your plants for the plant sale. When cleaning up your yard, clip 4- 6 inch tips from the newly sprouting branches and stick in a pot with dirt in it. Keep in the shade where it will get watered. Don’t give up if they drop their leaves. Sometimes they do this before sprouting new growth. They may not be big enough to sell in spring, but they will be by fall.

The Garden Maven’s Advice to the “Floralorn”

Well, in the absence of questions this month, I’m just going to do some wool gathering..... first off, I have a bonafide miracle, and I didn’t even have to pray to St. Fiacre! Remember the Franklinia trees that Betty started from seed last year? Well, I didn’t feel worthy to grow one (since I was sure I would kill it) but they made me take one. I put it on top of another pot next to the hose so I wouldn’t forget to water it. In the fall it lost its little leaf and I was sure I’d killed it. Wonder of wonders, last week I noticed a very tiny green speck on Frankie’s toothpick sized trunk. Now getting bigger. Hope I can keep it alive for another season! How are others faring with their baby trees?

If you have any bare patches in your yard and notice little mounds of sandy dirt with a hole in the middle, you may have ground bees. These are harmless gentle little super pollinators. Only the queens have stingers and they hardly ever use them. They dig nests, lay eggs, stock them up with pollen, and leave. When the babies are born, they fly away. The bees that are flying around near the ground are lovesick males (no stingers) looking for Miss Right. If you don’t like the way they look in your yard, please do not use pesticides. When they are gone you can plant some grass to cover the bare spots and they won’t come back.

The other two bees that live in the ground are Cicada killers, which are 1 ½ inches long and have been mistaken for the long-awaited murder hornets, and yellow jackets. Only female Cicada killers have stingers, and they only use them on cicadas. The males act tough, but are unarmed. If you disturb a yellowjacket nest, they will let you know. These bad hombres will pursue you when you run away, and their stings hurt. Their nests are usually not apparent until you step on the hole or pull a weed next to it.

The Maven

Plant Hero of the Month: Orange Hall Azaleas are blooming. Thanks to all who helped clean them up back in January. (Contact Judy Molnar at ejmolnar@tds.net or 882-8887 with newsletter items or questions for the Maven.)