

# Lake Reflections

## Family & Consumer Sciences Newsletter

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### Lake County Extension Agents

**Dr. Juanita Popenoe** – County Extension Director, and Commercial Ornamental Horticulture

**Julie England** – Family and Consumer Sciences

**Laura Valencia** – 4-H Youth Development

**Brooke Moffis** – Urban Horticulture

**Gary England** – Multi-County Fruit Crops

**Megan Brew** – Livestock & Natural Resources

Visit us on-line at <http://lake.ifas.ufl.edu>  
or our Facebook at  
**UF/IFAS Lake County Extension**

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### Lake County Extension News

There is a lot happening at UF/IFAS Lake County Extension this winter.

Our new Urban Horticulture agent, Brooke Moffis, is getting settled in and scheduling programs. Brooke was previously an agent in Sumter County and replaces Charles Fedunak who retired in 2012. The Discovery Gardens has be updated in the past few months with the latest project being the butterfly house. Stop in weekdays to tour the gardens and get ideas for your home landscape.

There are lots of scheduled programs in all areas. To learn more about upcoming programs visit: <http://lake.ifas.ufl.edu/calendar.shtml>

Programs in money management, health and nutrition are now offered through on-line seminars as well as in-person. The on-line programs are recorded and can be viewed at a later date if you are not able to participate live session. Archived programs are available at: [http://lake.ifas.ufl.edu/family\\_and\\_consumer/FCSWEBLINKS.shtml](http://lake.ifas.ufl.edu/family_and_consumer/FCSWEBLINKS.shtml)

UF/IFAS Lake County Extension is your direct access to research-based information from the University of Florida. Contact us to find solutions for home, landscape or business.

  
Julie B. England, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent II

# Upcoming Family & Consumer Sciences Programs

Programs at the Lake County Agriculture Center, 1951 Woodlea Road, Tavares



## Small Steps Big Rewards Diabetes Prevention – 3 part series

Tuesdays – March 19, March 26 and April 2 Register by March 18

1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Please plan to attend all classes in the series

Increase your knowledge on diabetes and take steps to prevent or delay the disease.

Cost: \$7.00 <http://prevent2013.eventbrite.com>

## Cooking with Florida Fruit - Hands on Food Preparation Class

April 9 - 5:30 - 7:30 pm <http://flfruit2013.eventbrite.com> Register by April 7

Florida fruits are full of flavor and nutrients. Learn about the health benefits of seasonal fruit; then prepare and sample a variety of dishes that are tasty and easy to make.

Register soon – only a few spots left!



## Programs at Your Local Library



### Lake BookFest Programs

#### Florida Flavors: 500 Years of Eating Locally

Learn about historical foods of Florida from Native Americans to current times.

Includes demonstration and tasting of healthy local foods. Free, no registration needed.

March 11 – 2:00 p.m. Location: Cooper Memorial Library, 2525 Oakley Seaver Drive, Clermont

March 12 – 5:30 p.m. Location: Fruitland Park Library, 205 W. Berckman St., Fruitland Park

March 13 – 6:30 p.m. Location: Cagan Crossings Community Library, 16729 Cagan Oaks, Clermont

### Family Meals on a Budget

April 16 – 11:00 a.m. Paisley County Library, 24954 County Road 42, Paisley

Reduce your spending and improve the nutrition in your meals. Free, no registration required.

### Create a Spending Plan You Can Live With

April 23 - 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. Cooper Memorial Library 2525 Oakley Seaver Drive, Clermont.

Learn how your personality affects your spending and take steps to create a plan to meet your financial goals  
Free, no registration required.

## Free On-Line Financial and Nutrition Seminars

March 8 – 12:10 to 12:50 p.m.

### Add Fresh Flavor with Herbs

Whether homegrown or purchased, fresh herbs increase flavor and can improve nutrition of meals.

Learn how to use herbs in your cooking and growing

tips. <http://bit.ly/herbweb>

March 21 - 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

### Build a Strong Credit History

Learn the difference between credit reports and scores. Learn steps to build a strong credit history and improve their report and scores.

<http://bit.ly/StrongCred>

Previous Webinars available at: [http://lake.ifas.ufl.edu/family\\_and\\_consumer/FCSWEBLINKS.shtml](http://lake.ifas.ufl.edu/family_and_consumer/FCSWEBLINKS.shtml)

## Ten Tips to Help You Choose a Tax Preparer

Many people look for help from professionals when it is time to file their tax return. If you use a paid tax preparer to file your federal income tax return this year, the IRS urges you to choose that preparer carefully. Even if someone else prepares your return, you are legally responsible for what is on it.

Here are ten tips to keep in mind when choosing a tax return preparer:

- 1. Check the preparer's qualifications.** All paid tax return preparers are required to have a Preparer Tax Identification Number. In addition to making sure they have a PTIN, ask if the preparer belongs to a professional organization and attends continuing education classes.
- 2. Check on the preparer's history.** Check with the Better Business Bureau to see if the preparer has a questionable history. Also check for any disciplinary actions and for the status of their licenses. For certified public accountants, check with the state boards of accountancy. For attorneys, check with the state bar associations. For enrolled agents, check with the IRS Office of Enrollment.
- 3. Ask about service fees.** Avoid preparers who base their fee on a percentage of your refund or those who claim they can obtain larger refunds than other preparers can. Also, always make sure any refund due is sent to you or deposited into an account in your name. Taxpayers should not deposit their refund into a preparer's bank account.
- 4. Ask to e-file your return.** Make sure your preparer offers IRS e-file. Any paid preparer who prepares and files more than 10 returns for clients must file the returns electronically, unless the client opts to file a paper return.
- 5. Make sure the preparer is accessible.** Make sure you will be able to contact the tax preparer after you file your return, even after the April 15 due date. This may be helpful in the event questions arise about your tax return.
- 6. Provide records and receipts.** Reputable preparers will request to see your records and receipts. They will ask you questions to determine your total income and your qualifications for deductions, credits and other items. Do not use a preparer who is willing to e-file your return by using your last pay stub before you receive your Form W-2. This is against IRS e-file rules.
- 7. Never sign a blank return.** Avoid tax preparers that ask you to sign a blank tax form.
- 8. Review the entire return before signing.** Before you sign your tax return, review it and ask questions. Make sure you understand everything and are comfortable with the accuracy of the return before you sign it.
- 9. Make sure the preparer signs and includes their PTIN.** A paid preparer must sign the return and include their PTIN as required by law. The preparer must also give you a copy of the return.
- 10. Report abusive tax preparers to the IRS.** You can report abusive tax preparers and suspected tax fraud to the IRS on Form 14157, Complaint: Tax Return Preparer. If you suspect a return preparer filed or altered a return without your consent, you should also file Form 14157-A, Return Preparer Fraud or Misconduct Affidavit. Download the forms on the IRS.gov website or order them by mail at 800-TAX-FORM (800-829-3676).

Source: IRS Tax Tip 2013-07

## Recipes for a Healthy Home



Homemade cleaners are usually naturally milder than chemicals and many work as well or better. They may require a little more “elbow grease” but are kinder to the environment and safer around children

If you are looking for ways to save money while using environmentally friendly cleaning products, try these ideas.

### All-Purpose Cleaner

3 tbsp. white vinegar

½ tsp. washing soda

½ tsp. vegetable oil based liquid soap

2 cups hot water

Mix ingredients in spray bottle or bucket. Apply and wipe clean.

### Non-Abrasive Soft Scrubber

¼ cup borax

vegetable oil based liquid soap

½ tsp. lemon essential oil

In a bowl, mix the borax with enough soap to form a creamy paste. Add lemon oil and blend well.

Scoop a small amount of the mixture onto a sponge, wash the surface, then rinse well.

### Plumbing Fixture Cleaner

Use to clean stainless steel, chrome, fiberglass, ceramic, porcelain or enamel fixtures.

2 tbsp. baking soda

1 quart water

Dissolve the baking soda in the water. Wipe on fixtures then rinse.

### Toilet Bowl Cleaner

1 cup borax

½ cup white vinegar

Flush to wet the sides of the bowl. Sprinkle the borax around the toilet bowl, then spray with vinegar. Leave for several hours or overnight before scrubbing with a toilet brush.

### No-Streak Glass Cleaner

¼ cup white vinegar

1 tbsp. cornstarch

1 quart warm water

Mix the ingredients and apply with a sponge or pour into spray bottle and spray on. For lint-free results, wipe dry with crumpled newspaper, buff to a shine.

### Glass Cleaner #2

Mix in a sprayer bottle:

1 cup rubbing isopropyl alcohol

1 cup water

1 tablespoon white vinegar

### Tub & Tile Cleaner

white vinegar

baking soda or non-iodized salt

To remove film buildup on bathtubs, apply vinegar full-strength to a sponge and wipe. Next, use baking soda or salt as you would scouring powder. Rub with a damp sponge and rinse thoroughly with clean water.

### Drain Cleaner

For slow drains, use this drain cleaner once a week to keep drains fresh and clog-free.

½ cup baking soda

1 cup white vinegar

1 gallon boiling water

Pour baking soda down drain/disposal, followed by vinegar. Allow the mixture to foam for several minutes before flushing the drain with boiling water.

### Burnt Pans

Add water to the pan to cover the bottom and sprinkle in a few tablespoons of baking soda. Bring it to a boil and turn off the heat. Wait until the pan is cool and the burnt material will easily come off.



## March is National Nutrition Month



The National Nutrition Month theme for 2013 is “Eat Right, Your Way, Every Day.” The goal is to encourage personalized healthy eating styles and recognize that food

preferences, lifestyle, cultural and ethnic traditions and health concerns all impact individual food choices.

National Nutrition Month is sponsored by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to focus attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits.

Many of us just don’t have healthy diets and this month is a great time for focus on ways to get back to a healthy lifestyle.

Here are simple tips to create a great plate for you and your family. Begin with these basic steps to create healthy meals.

- 1. Balance calories.** Find out how many calories you need for a day is a first step in managing your weight. Go to [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov) to find your calorie level. Being physically active also helps you balance calories.
- 2. Enjoy your food, but eat less.** Take the time to fully enjoy your food as you eat it. Eating too fast may lead to eating too many calories. Pay attention to hunger and fullness cues before, during, and after meals.
- 3. Avoid oversized portions.** If your dinner plates are large, consider using a smaller size. When eating out, choose a child size portion or request a take home box at the beginning of your meal to reduce the amount you eat.

- 4. Foods to eat more often.** Eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and fat-free or 1% milk and dairy products. These foods have the nutrients you need for health – including potassium, calcium, vitamin D, and fiber. Make them the basis for your meals and snacks.
- 5. Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.** Choose red, orange, and dark-green vegetables like tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli along with other vegetables for your meals. Add fruit as part of main or side dishes or dessert.
- 6. Make half your grains whole grains.** To eat more whole grains, substitute a whole-grain product for a refined product- such as eating whole wheat bread instead of white bread or brown rice instead of white rice.
- 7. Foods to eat less often.** Cut back on foods high in solid fats, added sugars, and salt. These include cakes, cookies, ice cream, candies, sweetened drinks, pizza, and fatty meats like ribs, sausages, bacon, and hot dogs.
- 8. Compare sodium in foods.** Use the Nutrition Facts label to choose lower sodium versions of foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals. Select canned foods labeled “low sodium,” “reduced sodium,” or “no salt added.”
- 9. Drink water instead of sugary drinks.** Soda, sweet tea, energy drinks, and sports drinks are also a major source of added sugar and calories.



## Fresh Herbs - Rosemary



Rosemary is easy to grow in Florida and is a great addition to any garden or windowsill. It has narrow, leathery evergreen leaves that are dark green above and gray

underneath. To use, strip the leaves off of the stem and chop to desired size or use the older, woody stems as skewers for meats or vegetables.

### Roasted Brussels Sprouts

1 to 1½ pounds fresh Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved lengthwise  
3 tablespoons good olive oil  
1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary  
½ teaspoon kosher salt  
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 425° F. Cut off the brown ends of the Brussels sprouts and pull off any yellow outer leaves. Mix them in a bowl with the olive oil, rosemary, salt and pepper. Pour them on a sheet pan and roast for 25 to 30 minutes, until crisp on the outside and tender on the inside. Shake the pan from time to time to brown the sprouts evenly.

### Rosemary Roasted Potatoes

2 pounds red-skinned new potatoes  
1 tablespoon garlic, minced  
3 tablespoons olive oil  
1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, chopped  
1 teaspoon paprika  
salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Cut potatoes in half. Combine remaining ingredients and toss with potatoes until evenly coated. Spread potatoes on a baking sheet and roast at 425° F for 25 minutes or until potatoes are soft to the touch and golden brown.

For more information from University of Florida Extension on cooking with herbs, go to:  
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fy1209>

## Florida Produce - What's in Season?

Whether you buy your produce from a farm stand, grocery store or farmers market; purchase Florida produce most often. You will get fresher products and support the local economy. Ask the seller or look for a label or sign stating where the produce was grown.

It is getting towards the end of the season for strawberries but they are still available. Citrus is in season and blueberries will be available in April. If you don't see Florida produce in your local stores, ask for it!

### Florida Produce Available Commercially in March

Avocado	Eggplant
Bell Pepper	Grapefruit
Broccoli	Guava
Cabbage	Lettuce
Cantaloupe	Lime
Carambola	Mushroom
Carrot	Onion
Cauliflower	Orange
Celery	Papaya
Cucumber	Passion Fruit

**Are you buying expensive flavored water? Try this simple and delicious recipe!**

### Florida Water

1 cucumber, cut into ¼ -inch slices  
2 lemons, cut into ¼-inch slices  
1 orange, cut into ¼ -inch slices  
1 gallon water

Mix all ingredients.  
Refrigerate overnight.  
Serve in tall glasses with ice, if desired.

Yield 8 servings

