Lake Reflections is back!
After a two year absence, Lake County Cooperative Extension Service is happy to announce that our quarterly newsletter, Lake Reflections is back. Lake County Extension provides a wide variety of services to Lake County residents. We provide programs and information in family and consumer sciences, citrus, urban and commercial horticulture and livestock. We also have a very active 4H program for children 8 to 18. Our agents will be happy to answer your questions. Master Gardeners are available daily in our office to answer your home gardening questions. Call or stop by with your plant and landscape problems.

Meet Your Agents
Deborah Boulware – County Extension Director and Family and Consumer Sciences
Julie England – Family and Consumer Sciences
Sarah Thomas Hensley – 4H
Charles Fedunak – Urban Horticulture
John Jackson – Citrus
Bill Price – Livestock and Natural Resources
Juanita Popenoe – Commercial Horticulture
Teresa Watkins – Florida Yards & Neighborhoods

Tax Free Hurricane Supplies
Need some help in buying your Hurricane supplies? You can save the sales tax on some supplies purchased from June 1 to June 12. The list includes flashlights, batteries, tarps, and radios. Non-electric coolers and portable generators up to $750 are also exempt. Other supplies, such as plywood, are not included.

Julie B. England, Extension Agent I
Deborah R. Boulware, Extension Agent IV, County Extension Dir.
Prepare Now!

It’s almost hurricane season again. Hurricane season is from June 1 to November 30. The key to your family’s safety is preparation. Many people were caught off guard last year. Let’s all be better prepared this year.

You probably have some supplies left from last year. Now is the time to take an inventory of what you have, restock and improve your supplies and plan of action. Make plans for both staying in your home and evacuating.

The University of Florida’s website offers a wide range of articles on all kinds of disaster preparedness and recovery. Topics range from what to do before, during and after a disaster as well as coping with the resulting stress. For a complete list and access to the articles, go to http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic.htm.

What to Do Before a Hurricane Threatens

Check your Supplies

- Have a battery-operated radio or television with enough fresh batteries for a week. They will be your best source of information if you lose your electricity.
- Flashlights, lamps and lanterns should be checked. Store matches in a waterproof container. Candles aren’t recommended due to potential fire hazard.
- Fill your vehicles’ gas tanks. Check gasoline and oil supplies for generators and chainsaws. Only store gasoline in approved containers.
- Restock your first aid kit. Make sure you have plenty of your prescription medicines on hand.
- Stock up on canned and non-perishable food. Make sure you have a non-electric can opener.
- Fill containers with water. Have at least two quarts a day of drinking water per person. Store water for sanitary uses such as flushing toilets. Fill plastic containers or bags with water and freeze. These will do double duty as ice and fresh water.
- Have cut plywood or shutters ready to install on windows and doors.
- Collect materials for repairs—tarps or plastic, shingles, nails, caulk, etc.

Get Your Financial Information Organized

- Make a written, photo or videotaped home inventory.
- Make sure you are adequately insured. Insurance companies will not let you change your policy when bad weather is approaching.
- Make sure you have enough cash on hand. If power is lost, banks and ATMs may not be open.
- Keep your important financial information in weatherproof containers. Be prepared to take them with you if you evacuate. Important documents include insurance policies, marriage and birth certificates, automobile titles, citizenship or naturalization certificates, and property deeds.

Other Preparations

- If you are a mobile home, make sure it is properly anchored.
- Keep trees and shrubs properly trimmed.
- Have name tags, up-to-date immunization records for your pets. Decide what you will do with pets if you must evacuate.
- Locate shelters. If needed, find out which ones accept people with special needs or are pet-friendly.
When A Warning Is Issued

- Listen to radio or TV for weather updates. Stay aware of hurricane position, intensity and expected landfall.
- If you live in a mobile home, check tie-downs and leave immediately for a safer place.
- Prepare for high winds. Lower antennas and brace your garage door. Anchor outside objects or move the indoors.
- Board up or shutter large windows.
- Move boats on trailers close to house. Weigh down boats by filling with water. Securely lash to trailer and anchor the trailer to the house.
- Store valuables and personal papers in a waterproof container and store in the highest possible spot.
- Review your evacuation plan. Prepare for storm surge, tornadoes and flood. During a tornado, seek shelter inside, below ground level if possible, in an interior hallway, closet or bathroom on ground level. If outside, move away at right angles from the tornado. If escape is impossible, lie flat in a ditch or low spot.

If You Stay At Home

- Stay indoors. Seek shelter in an inside room away from doors and windows. Don’t go outside in the brief calm as the eye of the storm passes.
- Protect your property. If you can safety repair any damage as it occurs, do so. Do not expose yourself to unnecessary risk.
- Stay tuned to your radio or television. Hurricanes can have unexpected movement that call for last minute changes in plans.

If You Must Evacuate

- Know where you are going. Try to leave in daylight if possible. Be sure to evacuate soon enough to safely make it to your destination.
- Take your important papers and irreplaceable items. Those you can’t take, store in waterproof containers in high places in your home.
- Lock up your home. Turn off gas, electricity and water. Double check to see that you have done all you can to protect your home.

Evacuation Supplies

- Canned and non-perishable food, bottled water, can opener, spoons, etc.
- First-aid kits, flashlights, medications, spare glasses and hearing aids. Take any needed medical equipment or information.
- Take blankets, sleeping bags and folding chairs for use in shelter. Take clothing including raingear. Remember additional infant needs.
- Keep important papers and identification with you at all times.
- Take reading materials, games and hobbies that will keep you and your children occupied.

After the Hurricane

- If you have been evacuated, only return to your home when allowed by authorities.
- Beware of outdoor and road hazards. Power lines and trees may be down. Roads may be damaged or washed out. Watch out for poisonous snakes.
- If you are without power, follow safety procedures when using generators, lanterns, grills and other appliances.
- Guard against spoiled food. Refrigerated food may spoil in a couple of hours if there is no power. Frozen food will keep for several days if doors are not opened. Do not refreeze food once it begins to thaw.
- Do not use untreated tap or well water until it is safe. Use emergency supplies, chemically purify or boil according to safety officials recommendations.

Adapted from the Hurricane Preparedness section, IFAS Disaster Handbook, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida.
Meal Preparation and Food Safety During A Power Failure

A failure will force you to adapt your cooking and eating habits. There will be no refrigeration, electric stoves and limited water. Health risks from contaminated or spoiled food may increase. When preparing food follow these guidelines.

Conserve Fuel and Water

- If you have limited heat for cooking, choose foods that cook quickly. Do not cook frozen foods. They take longer and use more fuel than thawed or canned food. Prepare casseroles and one-dish meals or serve no-cook foods.
- Use alternative cooking methods such as your fireplace, candle warmers, camp stoves and grills. If gas is cut off but you have electricity, use a hot plate or electric skillet.
- Save liquids from canned vegetables and fruits. Use them in cooking and food prep.

Safety of Refrigerated Foods

- You can extend your food supply by cooking all unspoiled meats immediately. Cooked food meat needs to be kept above 140°F if it cannot be cooled below 40°F within two hours.
- Ground meat, pork, poultry and fish spoil quickly. Dispose of them if they have been in a refrigerator without power for 12 hours or more. Do not trust your sense of smell.
- Hard cheeses usually keep well at room temperatures. Other cheeses, such as cream and cottage cheese, spoil quickly. Throw them out when an off flavor develops.
- Milk spoils quickly. Throw out and switch to powdered milk.

This article adapted from IFAS publication DH 410.

Purifying Water

You can purify water by boiling, distilling, or using a chemical treatment such as a dilute bleach solution. Consult your county health department for recommendations. We recommend boiling water 3 to 5 minutes. However, if this recommendation differs from that of the local Health Department, use their recommendation.

A general guideline for purifying water is 8 drops of household bleach (5.25% sodium hypochlorite without fragrance or detergent) per gallon of water. Use an eyedropper to measure the bleach. Use 16 drops if the water is cloudy. Mix and let stand for 30 minutes. The water will have a slight chlorine odor. If it doesn’t, repeat the dose and let stand another 15 minutes.

Important Phone Numbers

Remember to have a non-electric telephone to use in case of loss of power!

- Lake Co. Emer. Management 343-9420
- Lake Co. Sheriff (business) 343-2101
- Lake Co. Health Dept. 589-6424
- Lake Co. Citizen’s Information Line (only activated during emergencies) 343-9732
- Progress Energy 1-800-228-8485
- SECO Electric 1-800-SECO-141
- Sprint 1-800-788-3600
- FEMA Disaster Hotline 1-800-621-FEMA
- Salvation Army 365-0079
- Red Cross 787-3857 or 6018
- Elder Info Helpline 1-800-262-2242
Watch or Warning?

A hurricane watch is issued when there is a possibility that your area could experience hurricane conditions within 36 hours. A hurricane warning is issued when sustained winds of at least 74 mph are expected within 24 hours.

A tornado watch indicates that weather conditions are favorable for tornado development in the watch area. When a tornado is spotted, either visually or on radar, a tornado warning is issued. The warning tells where the tornado has been spotted and its projected path.

Using A Portable Generator

- Before purchasing a generator, determine your family’s power needs. Average households need 3000 to 5000 watts to provide enough energy for basic needs (lighting, cooking, refrigeration, pumping water). Appliances usually list the watts needed but many with motors such as refrigerators and pumps require extra watts to start. Most manufacturers’ websites and owner’s manuals have charts to help you calculate wattage used by your appliances.

- Read the owner’s manual before starting the generator for the first time. Don’t wait until you need the generator before using it the first time.

- Never refuel your generator when it is running. Allow it to cool down before adding fuel. Don’t store fuel inside the living area of your home and only store in approved containers. Estimate in advance your fuel and oil needs in case of an emergency. Most generators will use about one-half to three-quarters of a gallon of gasoline per hour (12 to 18 gallons a day).

- Start your generator without appliances plugged in. Consult your owner’s manual to make sure it is properly grounded. You can plug your appliances directly into the generator or use an outdoor-rated extension cord rated for the watts carried. Plug in and turn on your appliances one at a time starting with the most necessary and highest wattage. Let the engine stabilize and make sure your appliance is operating correctly before plugging in another.

- Never plug your generator into a household outlet. This is called back feeding. Power that surges through the lines can injure or kill power workers or your neighbors.

- Find a safe, secure, well-ventilated place to operate your generator. Generators give off dangerous carbon monoxide (CO) gas and should never be used inside of your home or attached garage. CO gas cannot be seen or smelled so it is undetectable. Consider purchasing battery-operated CO detectors to place inside your home. Do not place a generator near doors, windows, ventilation intakes or any other place that lets the gas come into your home. Generators should be at least 5 feet from buildings or anything that might catch fire. Protect it from rain by placing under a roof or canopy. Prevent theft by placing out of view.

- Managing usage will help keep your family provided with power during loss of public service. Using only what you need, when you need it will keep your costs down and provide longer total use. Use the power you need but don’t waste it.

By: Julie B. England, Lake Co. Extension, 2005
Power Tool Safety

Many people use tools that they don’t normally operate during hurricane preparation and cleanup. These include electric drills, power saws and chainsaws. Be sure to read and follow all directions before use.

Chainsaws can be extremely dangerous. Always wear safety clothing—leather gloves, protective chaps, hard hat and safety goggles. Only use the chainsaw to cut through wood and never operate the saw over your head. When cutting, watch out for power lines and for overhead tree limbs that could fall on you when loosened by the saw vibration. Be careful of saw kickback. Kickback is when the spinning chain meets resistance and kicks back toward the operator.

Carefully read owner’s manual for more detailed safety tips.

Finally…

Hurricane season can be dangerous and stressful. Planning ahead can help minimize both.

Remember that children may become anxious and fearful.

- Reassure preschoolers that they are safe. Provide extra comfort and contact. Encourage them to draw pictures of the disaster and discuss them. This can help relieve some of their fears.
- Grade-school age children will ask more questions about the hurricane. Answer in a clear, simple way. False reassurances do not help in this age group. Monitor their TV or radio use. Images of the hurricanes and their damage can be very frightening. Be open and honest. Assure children that you will work hard to keep them safe and secure.
- Encourage older children to share their concerns. Teenagers may sometimes hide their concerns. It may help to have them participate in preparation and repairs.

Remember your neighbors, especially the elderly, those with special needs or living alone. They may need your help and support before, during and after the hurricane.

Hurricane season can be difficult, especially for those still recovering from last year. Being a thoughtful caring person and a good neighbor will help us all cope with potential dangers and the resulting recovery.

Adapted from “Strategies to Help Children Manage Stress”, The Disaster Handbook, IFAS, University of Florida.