



Inside this issue:

Sea Grant News from Shelly Krueger	2
Horticultural News from Liah Continentino	2
Master Gardener Volunteers can Help!	2
Extension Director News from Alicia Betancourt	3
Page 1 story continued	3
Keys for Sustainability	4
Contact us!	4



APRIL HAPPENINGS

National Volunteer Month Water Conservation Month

April 12th

Mote Marine's OceanFest
10AM-3PM
Turman Waterfront Key West



April 13th

Sheriff's Animal Farm Open House 10AM-3PM
5501 College Rd. Stock Island

April 15th

Tax Day! Deadline for Federal Income Tax Returns



April 22d
Happy Earth Day!



April 24th-27th

REEF Lionfish Derby
98300 o/s Hwy. Key Largo



Celebrating National Volunteer Month The Power of Giving Back

By Brynn Morey,
Extension Coordinator &
Program Specialist II

April is National Volunteer Month, a time to recognize and honor the amazing contributions of volunteers who dedicate their time, skills, and resources to making a positive impact in their communities. Whether it is helping a neighbor, supporting a local charity, or contributing to a local beach clean-up, volunteers play a vital role in building stronger, more compassionate communities.

Volunteering is not just about offering your time, it is about making a difference. Choosing to help at a local food bank, tutoring children, or caring for animals at the local shelter, every small act of kindness adds up to create significant change. There are many reasons why volunteering is important, especially in a small community like the Florida Keys.

Volunteers help to fill gaps in local services, allowing non-profits to expand their reach and impact. Volunteers foster a sense of belonging and connection. It brings individuals together from diverse backgrounds to work toward common goals. Volunteering is also an excellent way to develop new skills, expand your knowledge, and even boost your resume. Many volunteers gain leadership, teamwork, or event planning skills that can help them both personally and professionally. If you are struggling with stress or depression, research has shown that volunteering can reduce stress, improve mood, and even lead to a longer life. Volunteers get a sense of fulfillment from helping others, which can have profound mental health benefits. You can also make some great friends volunteering!



Monroe County Extension Master Gardener Volunteers assisting participants at the plant clinic and microgreen workshop.

Plant Clinics

Wednesday, April 2nd

Plant Clinic

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Key Largo Library
101485 O/S Hwy.
Key Largo

Saturday, April 5th

Plant Clinic

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Key Deer Refuge Nature Cntr.
30587 o/s Hwy.
Big Pine Key

Tuesday, April 15th

Plant Clinic

9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Garden Club of Upper Keys
94040 O/S Hwy.
Tavernier

Thursday, April 17th

Plant Clinic

9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Gib Reese Park
81031 O/S Hwy,
Islamorada

Saturday, April 19th

Plant Clinic

9 a.m. to Noon
Marathon Home Depot
4555 O/S Hwy,
Marathon

Saturday, April 19th

Plant Clinic

9 a.m. to Noon
KW Botanical Garden Nursery
5210 College Rd.
Stock Island

Sea Grant News



Shelly Krueger
UF/IFAS Florida Sea Grant Agent

Shelly recently accomplished the following activities:

- Shelly was asked by Florida Sea Grant leadership to review finalists' packets and interview graduate students for the Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship.



- Shelly was invited to present at Florida Sea Grant Coral Days about Florida's Coral Reef Resilience Program for leadership and staff at NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Protection Program and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Shelly is the Florida Keys member of the NOAA Aquatic Invasive Species quarterly coral catchup and contributed local updates to educate natural resource managers about controlling new invasive species in Puerto Rico and proactive surveillance in the Keys and USVI. Shelly is vice-chair of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Water Quality Protection Program communications subcommittee and presented at the March steering committee meeting.



- Shelly presented about sponge restoration aquaculture in the Florida Keys at the World Aquaculture Conference in New Orleans during the restoration-focused session "Getting it Right."



The Environmental Horticulture Program and Master Gardener Volunteers remain dedicated to helping you with your plant related questions.



CALL OUR OFFICE:
(305)292-4501

We have many different ways we can assist!

VISIT OUR OFFICE:

Email Monroe@ifas.ufl.edu or
Call (305)292-4501 to schedule an appointment

EMAIL YOUR QUESTIONS TO:
mastergardener@monroecounty-fl.gov

Please include a detailed description of the problem and photos if available

FACEBOOK PAGE:

Visit our Facebook page for updates, requests, information and so much more!

<https://www.facebook.com/MonroeCountyExtension>

Horticulture News



Liah Continentino
UF/IFAS Environmental Horticulture Agent

- Liah conducted one-on-one consultations via plant clinics, individual client communications, and an informational booth at the Key West Orchid Festival. These consultations provided residents with information on ecologically friendly horticultural practices and a better understanding of their county extension services. Through these consultations, Master Gardener Volunteers (MGVs) assisted their community, shared expertise, and learned from each other as they worked to find solutions.
- Liah provided media outreach by speaking on US-1 Radio about how extension services function, what public services are offered through her role, and what events would occur in March. She also posted on extension social media and authored weekly Master Gardener newsletters providing updates, upcoming CEUs, upcoming volunteer opportunities, feedback polls, a fun bonus, and helpful links to MGVs.
- Liah engaged in the Lunch and Learn and the DIY Microgreens Workshop; both were valuable group activities developed by MGVs Barbara Martinkosky and Nia Huber, respectively. The Lunch and Learn provided an excellent CEU opportunity for MGVs and focused on teaching how to educate Monroe County residents on FFL principles (13 participants). The Microgreens Workshop taught participants about microgreens and how to grow them (6 participants).



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Extension Director's News

Alicia Betancourt

UF/IFAS Family and Community Development Agent and
Monroe County Extension Director

Alicia recently accomplished the following activities:

- Alicia held two workshops focused on consumer financial issues, including tax refund scams and what to watch for to keep your personal information safe. It is important to recognize demands or threats - Impersonators want you to pay "now or else." They may threaten arrest or deportation. They won't let you question or appeal the amount of tax you owe. Be careful with website links that can take you to harmful sites instead of IRS.gov.



- Alicia was invited to present the grant-funded Climate Navigator program in Vienna, Austria. She shared the program highlights from year one and the development of year two priorities.

- Alicia spoke on the radio about termite awareness week. Termites damage homes, trees, and other wooden structures across America. In Florida, termite infestations are a year-round risk for properties and trees. While they are not swarming year-round, they consistently forage and develop new colonies, leaving signs of their presence. The University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) has developed ways to show your risk with an [online interactive termite distribution map](#). This tool helps residents, property owners, and pest control operators know the risks of infestations and how to limit that risk through proactive science-based approaches.

Continued from page 1

National Volunteer Month is the perfect time to explore new ways to give back to your community. Whether you are a seasoned volunteer or looking to try something new, here are just a few local volunteer opportunities you can try out:

Local Clean-Up Organizations

- Conch Republic Marine Army (CRMA) conchrepublicmarinearmy.org/volunteer
- Keep Key West Beautiful (Plogging in the Keys) (305) 809-3868
- Ocean Blue Project- Key Largo (541) 286-7015

Wildlife and Animal Shelters

- Florida Keys Wild Bird Rehabilitation Center- Tavernier keepthemflying.org/volunteer
- Florida Keys SPCA- Key West & Marathon fksPCA.org
- Critter Litters Inc.- Big Pine Key critterlittersbpk@gmail.com
- Upper Keys Humane Society ukhsociety.org

Food Pantries

- S.O.S Foundation- Stock Island & Key Largo sosfoundation.org/food-pantries
- St. Peter's Catholic Church- Big Pine Key (305) 872-2537
- Burton Memorial Methodist Church- Tavernier (305) 852-2581

Volunteering with People

- Florida Keys Outreach Coalition- throughout the Keys (305)293-4370
- Monroe County Education Foundation- throughout the Keys (305) 293-1546

- Boys & Girls Clubs of the Keys- throughout they Keys bgckeywest.org/contact-us

Environmental

- Plant a Million Corals Foundation- Summerland Key plantamillioncorals.org
- Coral Restoration Foundation- throughout the Keys coralrestoration.org
- Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary- throughout the Keys floridakeys.noaa.gov/volunteer_opportunities/
- Horseshoe Crab Watch- Monroe County Extension (305) 393-4063
- Monroe County Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program (305) 292-4502
- Mote Marine Laboratory- throughout the Keys mote.org/support/volunteer/

Volunteer Seach Network

- The Community Foundation of the Florida Keys keys.voly.org/

National Volunteer Month serves as a reminder of the incredible power of giving back. Each act of service, no matter how small, plays an essential role in strengthening communities and fostering kindness. This month, take some time to reflect on how you can make a positive impact in the lives of others. By volunteering your time and talents, you can create lasting change one good deed at a time.

If you are considering volunteering, find a cause that speaks to your heart; the opportunities are endless. Get involved and be a part of something bigger than yourself!



Be sure to "Like" us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)!



UF/IFAS/MONROE COUNTY EXTENSION

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This newsletter can be accessed online at:
<http://monroe.ifas.ufl.edu/newsletter.shtml>

We're on the Web at: <http://monroe.ifas.ufl.edu>



University of Florida (UF)
<http://SolutionsForYourLife.ufl.edu>
<http://ufl.edu>
 Electronic Data Information Source (EDIS)
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>

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<https://ics.ifas.ufl.edu/ufifas-diversity-and-legalee-statements/>



UF/IFAS/MCES QUARTERLY CONTACTS

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Totals
Phone calls	30	27	44	101
Office visitors	11	9	92	112
Email Consultations	72	78	94	244
Learning events	22	11	33	66
Participants	467	493	899	1,859
Media submissions	7	5	9	21
Publications distributed	125	225	188	538
TOTAL contacts	734	848	1,359	2,941

Earth Day
FOOD WASTE Prevention Week
 APRIL 7-13, 2025

Compost workshop! **Plant a flower!**
 Eco-costume Parade
 Games and prizes!

KEYS FOR SUSTAINABILITY
 Embracing Earth Day and Food Waste Prevention Week

Saturday, April 12th
11am- 2pm
Bernstein Park

STORY TIME every half hour Hosted by Monroe County Public Library
 REFILL your REUSABLE water bottle at FKA Hydration Station

Healthy snacks with Monroe County Health Department
 Florida HEALTH Monroe County
 S.O.S. Foundation
 FERTILE EARTH WORM FARM FEED ANIMALS. NOT LANDFILLS
 Meal planning, food storage and recipes cooking with leftovers

Organized by Monroe County Solid Waste and Recycling
tuschel-melody@monroecounty-fl.gov

CPR Training for Adults, Children & Infants

Monday April 14th CPR & First Aid 10AM
 Location: Marathon Government Center (BOCC Conference Room.)
 2798 Overseas Hwy. Marathon

Tuesday April 29th CPR & First Aid 10AM
 Location: Harvey Government Center (BOCC Conference Room)
 1200 Truman Ave. Key West

Availability is limited. CPR class is \$35 & First Aid/CPR is \$50
 Please contact our office if you have questions or if you would like to register for this course (305) 292-4501