

Educating with Extension



By Brynn Morey, Extension Coordinator, and in collaboration with Alicia Betancourt, Liah Continentino, and Shelly Krueger

Volume 25 Issue 7

University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), Monroe County

July 2025

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
Coral Collab Seminar	4
Contact us!	4

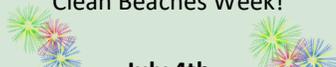
JULY HAPPENINGS



National Blueberry Month!



July 1– 7th
Clean Beaches Week!

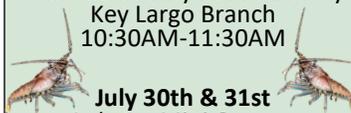


July 4th
Happy 4th of July! County Offices closed in Observance.



July 6th
Locals Day at the KW Tropical Forest & Botanical Garden 10AM-4PM

July 15th Story Time!
Monroe County Public Library
Key Largo Branch
10:30AM-11:30AM



July 30th & 31st
Lobster Mini-Season
myfwc.com/fishing/saltwater/recreational/lobster/



July 31st
National Avocado Day!!



Florida Boater Safety

By Shelly Krueger,
Sea Grant Agent

In 2022, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) announced Florida reached the threshold of 1 million registered boats by recreational users. If you add in the number of commercial boats for charters, flats guides, trap fishers, and pleasure cruises, that equals a ton of boats out on the water! Everyone needs a driver's license to drive a car legally, but unbelievably, there is very little required to operate a boat – or even rent one! Unfortunately, Florida also leads the nation in boating fatalities and boating accidents. There were 81 boating fatalities in Florida in 2024 and FWC found that 65% of the boat operators involved in fatal accidents did not have any formal boater training. In 2024, Monroe County ranked #1 for boating accidents, followed by Miami-Dade. Of course, we have a lot of coastline and we can boat year around; however, knowing how to safely operate a boat and having the necessary safety equipment can prevent accidents and save lives.

Anyone born 1988 or after is required to take a boater safety course and have a boat safety ID card when operating a powerboat over 10 horsepower. Luckily, there are many free online courses and the FWC has links to all of the

Plant Clinics

Plant Clinic

Cancelled, will resume in October.

Key Deer Refuge Nature Cntr.

30587 o/s Hwy.
Big Pine Key

Wednesday, July 2nd

Plant Clinic

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Key Largo Library

101485 O/S Hwy.
Key Largo

Plant Clinic

Cancelled, will resume in September.

Garden Club of Upper Keys

94040 O/S Hwy.
Tavernier

Thursday, July 17th

Plant Clinic

9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Gib Reese Park

81031 O/S Hwy,
Islamorada

Saturday, July 19th

Plant Clinic

9 a.m. to Noon

Marathon Home Depot

4555 O/S Hwy,
Marathon

Saturday, July 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 identified in a national University of Florida press release as a scientist with expertise in Sargassum and its potential impacts on Florida <https://news.ufl.edu/2025/06/sargassum-advisory/>.
- Shelly wrote a Keys Weekly article about Sargassum in the Florida Keys, boater safety, and on Morning Magazine sea turtle nesting and beach lights.



- Shelly leads Florida's Coral Reef Resilience Program communication team and they are working on the 2025 Bleaching Event Information Sheet to disseminate with 700 members of the Disturbance Advisory Committee.



- Shelly is vice-chair of the Water Quality Protection Program communications subcommittee and we are working with the EPA to finalize the Congressional report to highlight water quality successes in Monroe County including the conversion to advanced wastewater treatment.



- Shelly is reviewing abstracts for the Florida Keys Marine Science Conference and Workshop for corals and sponges for presentations and posters. Shelly is working with Florida Atlantic University and Shedd Aquarium on a potential program to promote queen conch conservation using citizen science in the Florida Keys.

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 offered one-on-one consultations via plant clinics, individual client communications, and the Virtual Help Desk. These consultations provide residents with personalized information on horticultural practices, pest management, and Florida Friendly Landscaping. Liah reached 26 adults and distributed 35 educational publications. Group learning activities covered Florida Friendly Landscaping and pollinator ecology/conservation. 36 adults and 13 youth participated in these activities.



- Master Gardener Volunteers logged 178.76 hours of service during the month of June! Master Gardeners are vital to extension; their hard work and dedication make much of our work possible. Thank you, Master Gardeners!
- Liah authored four Master Gardener Newsletters.

- Liah provided media outreach by speaking on US-1 Radio about pollinators. Specifically, about their importance, the anthropological practices driving their decline, and how to support them through landscaping.



- Liah strengthened her abilities to serve the public and develop robust extension programs by attending pest management and biodiversity conservation training at the Orange County Extension Office.

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

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 taught two workshops on sustainable living in collaboration with Michigan State University Extension and Purdue University Extension. We are planning a fall program, and we would like to invite you and your networks to participate in our **Choices for Sustainable Living Book Club Series** this fall!

This engaging, interactive **eight-week online series** creates space for meaningful conversations about sustainability, community, and everyday actions that support a healthier planet.

Register here: <https://events.anr.msu.edu/ChoicesforSustainableLiving/>

Continued from page 1

approved boating courses <https://myfwc.com/boating/safety-education/courses/>. The local US Coast Guard Auxiliary and Key West Power Squadron offer online and in-person classes regularly. Boat USA has free online courses. Some insurance companies offer discounts for completing boating courses. The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary has a free online boater education course that is very useful to learn specific regulations that exist in waters of the Florida Keys, with course topics on zones and special protection areas, protecting our resources, and the consequences of careless boating.

When you own a boat, you know there is a lot of required safety equipment, and it is a good idea to make sure it is all up to date and in working order. On a friend's boat, ask if they have the required safety equipment since safety is a priority. Flares expire every 42 months (~3.5 years). Three unexpired flares are required on boats 16 feet and over in length. You can keep the older expired flares onboard, but they do not count toward the required 3 unexpired flares! Monroe County Sheriffs' office will accept expired flares. Do

What to Expect:

Each 90-minute session is built around *Choices for Sustainable Living*, a book developed by Ecochallenge.org. The series runs on **Thursday evenings, 6:00–7:30 p.m. ET, from September 11 to October 30, 2025**, and features facilitated discussions led by Extension professionals.

Weekly Topics Include:

Sept 11 – A Call to Sustainability

Sept 18 – Systems Thinking and Sustainability

Sept 25 – Food

Oct 2 – Water

Oct 9 – Community

Oct 16 – Transportation

Oct 23 – Consumption and Economy

Oct 30 – Visions of Sustainability

Alicia led a nationwide virtual climate convening series focused on the draft Climate Action Community Development Toolkit. During this workshop, we shared the new toolkit and gave participants time to review and share insights. The toolkit will be completed in the fall.

Alicia spoke on the radio about how to recognize scams. Some of the things to consider are:

- Pressure to act immediately.
- Pressure to keep information secret.
- Use of scare tactics.
- Requests for sensitive or personal information.
- Demands for money, typically in a form that is difficult to recover, such as cash, wire transfer, gift card, pay app or cryptocurrency.
- Specific instructions on how to make the financial transaction.
- An offer that sounds too good to be true.



not dispose of in household waste since they are a fire hazard. One life jacket per person is required in addition to at least one throwable floatation device. Boats over 26 feet need to have a fire extinguisher. Boaters must maintain a distance of at least 300 feet from divers-down flags on open waters --- that is the distance of a football field (not including the endzones) and at least 100 feet from diver flags on rivers, inlets or navigation channels. Boaters must slow down their speed around snorkelers, divers and swimmers. A diver down flag is required from a vessel when there are snorkelers or divers in the water.

Kayakers and stand-up paddle boarders (SUPs) – there are also requirements for you. While on the water, you need to have a lifejacket and a noisemaking device on-board. Keep a whistle on your personal floatation device and that will suffice. Between dusk and dawn, a flashlight or headlamp must be on to alert other boaters of your location. Avoid loitering in navigation channels. Boats need time to stop and navigation channels in the Florida Keys are very narrow, typically with seagrasses and shallow water on both sides.

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

UF | IFAS Extension

UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA



UF/IFAS/MONROE COUNTY EXTENSION

1100 Simonton Street, Suite 2-260, Key West, FL 33040
 88800 Overseas Hwy., Suite 6, Plantation Key, FL 33070

KW Phone: 305-292-4501 PKS Phone: 305-797-1086
 KW Fax: 305-292-4415

General e-mail: monroe@ifas.ufl.edu
 County Extension Director: Alicia Betancourt
 Newsletter Editor: Brynn Morey, Extension Coordinator

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>

Scan this code to go directly to our UF/IFAS Website for more information!



An Equal Opportunity Institution. UF/IFAS Extension, University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, Andra Johnson, Dean and Director. Single copies of UF/IFAS Extension publications (excluding 4-H and youth publications) are available free to Florida residents from county UF/IFAS Extension offices. <https://ics.ifas.ufl.edu/ufifas-diversity-and-legalee-statements/>



UF/IFAS Extension is Putting Florida First

UF/IFAS/MCES QUARTERLY CONTACTS

	April	May	June	Totals
Phone calls	39	68	36	143
Office visitors	113	78	40	231
Email Consultations	82	110	128	320
Learning events	33	31	31	95
Participants	562	594	545	1,701
Media submissions	8	8	8	24
Publications distributed	218	293	265	776
TOTAL contacts	1,055	1,182	1,053	3,290



Coral Collab Seminar

Thursday July 10th at 4 PM EST– Bleaching –resilient, marginal inshore patch reefs of the Florida Keys: Ecological, reproductive and molecular patterns of coral heat tolerance, presented by Derek Manzello (NOAA Coral Reef Watch)

Google Meet Video call link:
<https://meet.google.com/pgn-asvi-kgp>
 Or dial: (US) +1 402-921-2224 PIN: 488 546 477#

CPR Training

for Adults, Children & Infants

Tuesday July 22nd CPR & First Aid 10AM
 Location: Harvey Government Center
 (BOCC Conference Room)
 1200 Truman Ave. Key West

Wednesday July 30th CPR & First Aid 10AM
 Location: Marathon Government Center
 (BOCC Conference Room,)
 2798 Overseas Hwy. Marathon

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