

# Santa Rosa County HortSense



UNIVERSITY OF  
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## Front Page by Dan Mullins

There are several changes here at the Santa Rosa County Extension office.

Following are some updates:

- I will now be working mostly in the area of commercial horticulture. Theresa Friday is now the residential Extension Horticulture Agent and will be programming in the area of homeowner horticulture. In March my new job description and plan of work will be written. With this change I look forward to concentrating in the areas of:

Fruit and Nut Production  
Vegetable Production  
Nursery Production  
Landscape Maintenance

Other responsibilities will include training and testing users of restricted pesticides, developing marketing opportunities for alternative crop producers and 4-H



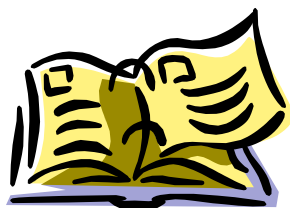
Youth work.

- Santa Rosa County Extension has received a grant for implementing a "Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Program." A program assistant has been hired, and you will be hearing more about this new program over the next few weeks.

- Our new Milton location, as of February 2003, is 6263 Dogwood Drive. We are enjoying better facilities and more room to work in this 10,200 square foot building. Features include a 150 seat meeting room, two smaller meeting rooms and a plant diagnostic laboratory.

Daniel E. Mullins  
Extension Agent-Horticulture/Vegetables

## Upcoming Events



- ◆ February 12, 8:00 am-4:00 pm: **Farm Day 2004**. Langley Bell 4-H Camp, Pensacola.
- ◆ February 19: **Ornamental Plant Nutritional Disorder Workshop**, University of Florida-Milton Campus (PJC-Milton). For more information call (850) 983-5216. Website: <http://wfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/WFREC/events.htm>.

## ***New Chemical Data Management System Being Tested***

One of the Agricultural Extension Agent's biggest challenges has been keeping up with constant changes in agri-chemical labels. Specific requests from commercial producers and homeowners concerning pest control for example, often requires an extensive search for the most current labels of potential products.

The University of Florida, in response to Agents' concern, is investigating a computer program that might simplify this process. It is

now being tested in five locations around the state. Santa Rosa County is the test site in West Florida and I have been asked to use this program, known as the Chemical Data Management System, for two months and then provide a report. If it proves to be user friendly and enables participating agents to quickly find the most current pesticide label information, it could be permanently installed in all Florida Extension offices.

## ***The Milton Riverwalk Market Expanding***

Sellers of bedding plants, shrubs, trees and other "green" products should consider participating in the Riverwalk Market this season. The market was successfully moved to its new location at the corner of Willing and Berryhill Streets last April.

The market will be opening again in late April or May and there are plans to expand the outdoor sales area, with the addition of an indoor sales area which will allow sale of a broader range of products.

Anyone interested in becoming a vendor at the Market can contact the Santa Rosa County Extension office at 850-623-3868 or 934-5278.



## ***Around the County***

One of the most enjoyable aspects of my work is seeing the horticultural industry grow in Santa Rosa County. Though we can't be compared to Palm Beach, Orange or some of the other big vegetable and nursery production areas, we have a healthy, diverse industry with room to grow. Did you know that right here in our county, we have:

- More Class 1 farmland than any other county in Florida.
- A 200 acre tree farm that markets throughout the Southeast.
- A butterfly house that receives over 12,000 visitors each year (May – Sept.).
- A plug grower who supplies plant liners and

vegetable transplants for commercial producers.

- A supplier of bulk mushroom compost.
- A 130 acre pecan orchard.
- A new producer of butterflies for shipping.
- A hydroponic onion producer.
- Several native plant nurseries.
- Approximately 20 watermelon growers who produce the best melons anywhere!
- Over 200 landscape maintenance firms.
- Specialty production which also includes strawberries, blueberries, bedding plants, blackberries, pumpkins and sweet corn.

## If You Receive a Nursery Survey...

The United States Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistical Service is beginning to send out surveys to document agricultural use in the ornamental industry. These surveys are crucial in documenting the success of research and extension programs. The data will also reflect what materials are essential to growers. Please cooperate with the NASS regarding these surveys.



## Pesticide Actions

- On December 5, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) conditionally registered the fungicide Insignia® (pyraclostrobin) for control of diseases on golf course turfgrass.
- On December 22, the FDACS registered the miticide Zeal® (etoxazole) for control of spider mites on pome fruits, cotton and strawberry. The EPA registration number for the Valent U.

S.A. Corporation product is 59639-123.

- On December 22, the FDACS registered the miticide Tetrasan® (etoxazole) for control of spider mites on outdoor ornamentals. The EPA registration number for the Valent U.S.A. Corporation product is 59639-108.

*From: University of Florida  
Chemically Speaking Newsletter  
January, 2004*

## Results of a Cold Winter Expected

It has been a cold winter. Even though extremely low temperatures have not been reported, we have accumulated more than normal chill units. As of January 31, the weather station at the West Florida Research Center in Allentown reported 741 hours below 45 degrees F. Since accumulated chill hours are kept through February 15, we can expect the total to be 800 or more.

Coastal areas of the county receive an annual average of 400 chill units, while the northern areas receive 600 to 650. According to this information, most of our Gulf Coast plants have had their dormancy requirements met and

many species will probably begin flowering and growing with the first warm spell.

Nurseries are advised to be prepared to protect plants. A few warm days in February or early March could result in premature growth which would be susceptible to spring freezes.

It's been cold all over our area. Auburn's Peach IPM, Fruit and Pest News, Volume 7 reports chill units from several selected locations. Following are some of these locations and the number of chill units as of February 1, 2004. Semmes: 637, Brewton: 826, Fairhope: 630, Union Springs: 936 and Sand Mountain: 1259

## *Pest Watch*

White grubs and billbug larvae have become more serious pests of turfgrass over the past several years. Due to their relatively long life cycle and the fact that they are underground feeding upon grass roots, they are easily overlooked when diagnosing turf disorders.

Check several areas by cutting three sides of a one foot square, pull and peel back the turf, exposing roots and soil. Examine carefully by sifting through the roots and soil. The threshold for treatment is 2 or more grubs or billbug larvae per square foot of turf.

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