

Columbia Green

June 2011

UF/IFAS
Columbia County Extension
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COGONGRASS—A Grass you Don't Want to Grow!!!

Cogon grass (*Imperata cylindrica*) is an invasive, non-native grass which occurs in Florida and several other southeastern states. A pest in 73 countries, and considered to be one of the "Top 10 Worst Weeds in the World", cogon grass affects pine productivity and survival, wildlife habitat, recreation, native plants, fire behavior, site management costs and more.

During the 1930s and 1940s, the plant was introduced into Florida as a forage and soil stabilizer. Cogongrass was found to have no forage value and became a serious pest. It was then placed on the noxious weed list, which prohibits new plantings. Unfortunately, cogongrass spread by illegal plantings and unintentional transport in soil. It is now found throughout the state, from the Panhandle well into south Florida.

In Florida, this grass infests ditch banks, pastures, roadsides and right-of-ways, golf courses, and forests. It thrives in a variety of soils from fine sand to heavy clay, and grows well in low fertility soils. A few monocultures have become established on hundreds of acres of reclaimed phosphate mining areas. Cogongrass is a perennial grass that varies greatly in appearance. Young leaves appear light green, while older leaves turn orange-brown. In areas with killing frosts, the leaves will turn light brown during winter months and present a substantial fire hazard.

Leaves. Cogongrass grows in loose-to-compact bunches. Each bunch contains several leaves arising from a central area along a rhizome (an underground, horizontal stem). The leaves originate directly from ground level and range from one to four feet in length. Each leaf is ½ to ¾ of an inch wide with a prominent, off

-center, white mid-rib. Finely serrated leaf margins make cogongrass undesirable forage.

Rhizomes. The rhizomes of cogongrass are responsible for its survival and short-distance spread. Established stands may produce more than three tons of rhizomes per acre. It can penetrate up to four feet of soil, although most rhizomes remain in the top six inches. Rhizomes may also release substances that inhibit the growth of other plants. As cogongrass density increases, other vegetation is excluded, preventing the normal succession of species.

Integrated Management. To eliminate cogongrass and prevent regrowth, the rhizomes must be destroyed. It has been shown that an integrated approach that combines burning, tillage (mechanical disturbance), and chemical applications provide the best solution for cogongrass management. After achieving good control of the cogongrass, desirable vegetation should be planted as quickly as possible. Species that colonize rapidly and tolerate the residual affects of any applied herbicide should be used.

To learn more about cogongrass and other invasives go to http://livinggreen.ifas.ufl.edu/landscaping/invasive_exotic_plants.html

Once invasive plants take over our native plants:

- *Florida's natural biodiversity is destroyed.
- *Native plants can become permanently eliminated.
- *Animals that use those native plants for food and habitat cannot make use of the non-native ones.
- *Aquatic invasive plants can harm fish habitats.
- *Boating, swimming, hiking, and other activities can be limited when overtaken with invasive plants.
- *It costs billions of dollars to control invasive plants, and it is difficult to eradicate them completely.



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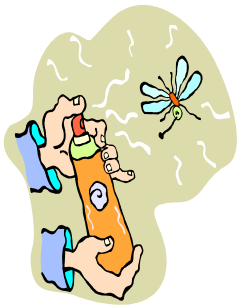
Bee prepared
as Bees move
North

Bees on Your Property?

Because of the still expanding presence of Africanized honey bees in Florida, it is now state recommendation that all bee colonies in and around homes be eradicated by a certified Pest Control Operator (PCO). Recent inspections in South Florida revealed that 70 - 90% of wild bee colonies are now Africanized. Approximately 50% of bee attacks are from a known wild colony that owners thought was "tame." Because eradication is now state recommendation, we cannot recommend beekeepers for nest removal and relocation, and we cannot remove the bees for you. We can provide you with certified pest control operators and provide as much information as we can about Africanized bees around the home. We love bees as much as anyone, but we always need to put safety first!

County by county list:

http://www.freshfromflorida.com/pi/plantinsp/apiary/PCO_removal_list.xls



ScienceDaily (May 10, 2011) — Imagine an insect repellent that not only is thousands of times more effective than DEET -- the active ingredient in most commercial mosquito repellents -- but also works against all types of insects, including flies, moths and ants. That possibility has been created by the discovery of a new class of insect repellent made in the laboratory of Vanderbilt Professor of Biological Sciences and Pharmacology Laurence Zwiebel. They didn't set out to find it, but something

different cropped up in one of their research studies on the mosquito's sense of smell. a mosquito's sense of smell "It's too soon to determine whether this specific compound can act as the basis of a commercial product," Zwiebel cautioned. "But it is the first of its kind and, as such, can be used to develop other similar compounds that have characteristics appropriate for commercialization."

The discovery of this new class of repellent is based on insights that scientists have gained

about the basic nature of the insect's sense of smell in the last few years. Although the mosquito's olfactory system is housed in its antennae, 10 years ago biologists thought that it worked in the same way at the molecular level as it does in mammals. A family of special proteins called odorant receptors, or ORs, sits on the surface of nerve cells in the nose of mammals and in the antennae of mosquitoes. When these receptors come into contact with smelly molecules, they trigger the nerves signaling the detection of specific odors.



A new exotic invasive fly, *Atherigona reversura*, also known as bermudagrass stem maggot was discovered in Georgia pastures and hay fields. Extension Agents in southern Georgia reported extensive damage to pastures in July of 2010. This damaging pest may be the newest serious pest of bermudagrass crops and turf in North America. In the southeastern U.S., bermudagrass is widely grown as a grass for forage, pasture and hay. It is also widely used as a turfgrass in the southern U.S. and around the world.

A. reversura represents a new exotic invasive species. Reports in August and September indicated that the pest was found throughout southern Georgia, and in northern Florida, parts of Alabama, and in South Carolina. Several on-farm trials with registered insecticides found that a single application worked only for a short time to reduce infestations. Research studies continue in an effort to find a control for this new bermudagrass pest. Sources: W. Hudson, G. Buntin, C. Smith.

Tallahassee, FL - The Division of Forestry at the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services announced that the Southern Pine Beetle (SPB) Assistance and Prevention Program will accept applications from non-industrial, private forest landowners beginning Monday, May 23, through Monday, June 27.

<http://www.freshfromflorida.com/press/2011/05/192011.html>

BACK TO BASICS WORKSHOPS



Butterfly Plants and Propagation

When: Thurs, June 23, 6:30 to 8:00 pm

Where: UF/IFAS Columbia County Extension
(in Lake City on the Columbia County Fairgrounds)

Learn how to attract Butterflies to your garden. Find out which plants keep them happy and healthy.

Learn plant propagation techniques to increase the number of plants in your garden.

Start your own cuttings of butterfly plants to take home and grow.

Please call to register – **752-5384**

\$2 fee at the door covers class materials and your 'take home' plants



Rain Barrel

'Make and Take' Workshop

Tues, June 28th 6:30-8:00pm
Columbia County Extension Office

Learn the benefits of harvesting and using rainwater.

We'll help you construct your own rain barrel to take home and use.

Registration required – 752-5384.

\$45 fee covers class materials and your completed 55 gallon rain barrel.



Master Gardener Plant Clinic

The UF/IFAS Columbia County Master Gardeners are available to help you with your home gardening problems on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings from 9am to noon at the UF Extension Office located on the fairgrounds in Lake City.

Fort White Plant Clinic

Master Gardeners are now available on Wednesdays from 1:00 - 4:00 pm to help with gardening questions.
Columbia County Public Library
Fort White Branch

Free pH testing for home gardens. Just bring a soil sample to the Extension Office in Lake City or to the Public Library in Fort White

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Back to Basics

Growing Food for the Family

A series of 8 classes on Vegetable Gardening
(choice of class locations and times)

Lake City, Extension Office, Tues evenings 6:30-8 pm
Or

Fort White Public Library, Tuesdays 2:30-4:00 pm

July 26 Aug. 2, 9, 16, 23 Sept. 13, 20, 27

Be ready to grow a fabulous fall garden this year.

Learn - pest ID and control, fertilizers, irrigation, site prep, soil amendments, compost, N.Florida plant selection, more

Registration for "Growing Food for the Family"

Please complete and return with Course fee

Name _____

Email _____ Phone _____

\$15 **Back to Basics** Course fee covers program materials and snacks for all 8 sessions. For couples sharing materials - \$20 total.

Please make checks payable to Columbia County Extension 4-H

Return to;
Columbia County Extension
164 Mary Ethel Lane
Lake City, Florida 32025

For information, contact
Nichelle Demorest or
Linda Brown at 752-5384

Circle Location **Lake City** or **Fort White**

Invasive Plants Workshop

Program Date: July 28th, 2011

Program Time: 4:30 to 7:30 PM

Location: Columbia County Extension Office

Located on the Fairground in Lake City

A total of 2 CEUs available in Private Applicator/Ag, Ag Row Crop, Forestry, Natural Areas Weed Mgmt, Ornamental & Turf, Right-of-Way, Limited Lawn & Ornamental and Commercial Lawn & Ornamental categories.

Free Program Agenda

4:30 Registration

5:00 Introductions (10 min)

5:10 Identification and control options (50 min)

- *Invasive Plants Definition
- *Why they are important
- *Significant invasive plants in Columbia County



Plants covered: Cogongrass, Tropical Soda Apple, Japanese Climbing Fern, Chinese Tallow, Air Potato, Camphor, Chinaberry, Privets, Japanese Honey Suckle, Wild Taro, Wisteria

6:00 Control Options (50 min)

Herbicides, application methods, Mechanical and cultural techniques
Mapping a critical tool in invasive plant control
Using a GPS
Using EDDMAPS.org to track and map invasive species

6:50 Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) (30 min)

What is a CISMA?
What role can a CISMA play in invasive species control?
How do we form a CISMA?

This workshop is supported by a grant awarded to the Bradford Soil and Water Conservation District by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation as a Pulling Together Initiative program.

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**Space is limited for this Special Event.
Please call the Extension Office to Pre-register at 752-5384.**

An Important Free Workshop for Everyone