

IFAS Matters



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IFAS Matters - December 2012

Posted on December 1, 2012 by Jack Payne

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Happy Holidays in Legal Terms

Please accept without obligation, express or implied, these best wishes for an environmentally safe, socially responsible, low stress, non addictive, and gender neutral celebration of the winter solstice holiday as practiced within the most enjoyable traditions of the religious persuasion of your choice (but with respect for the religious or secular persuasions and/or traditions of others, or for their choice not to practice religious or secular traditions at all) and further for a fiscally successful, personally fulfilling, and medically uncomplicated onset of the generally accepted calendar year (including, but not limited to, the Christian calendar, but not without due respect for the calendars of choice of other cultures). The preceding wishes are extended without regard to the race, creed, color, age, physical ability, religious faith, choice of computer platform, or sexual preference of the wishee(s).

Dec. 21, 2012, 7:11 a.m. EST Marks the Solstice – The Beginning of Winter in the Northern Hemisphere and Summer in the Southern Hemisphere

Evidence of the winter solstice in north central Florida comes very subtly. The crepe myrtles and sycamores, usually showy and robust during the summer, put on a little rouge and discreetly drop their leaves. The pine trees quietly swap out their needles for new ones, leaving a blanket of russet quills on the ground. Azaleas and camellias, after patiently waiting out the hot summer days, seem to appear all at once, seizing their ephemeral glory before a hard frost defeats them.

It's completely understandable why the ancients considered the winter solstice a very important day. They reckoned that if the sun kept sinking lower and lower, with the amount of sunlight decreasing each day, soon everything would be black, and life



150th Anniversary

Find out how the University of Florida is celebrating...

Multimedia

Sustainable Nurseries



Many plant nurseries in Florida have adopted sustainable practices, and UF is looking to help even more do so with a new video series. [Read Article>>](#)

Polk County Water School



Polk County's water school is helping policymakers make informed decisions. [View Video>>](#)

[UF/IFAS student elected to president of national FFA](#)

[UF/IFAS students awarded at recent agronomy, soil science meeting](#)

[PIE Center move will increase its prominence in UF/IFAS](#)

would cease. On the solstice, the sun stopped (solstice means "sun standing still") and started to climb in the sky. Clearly, it was a time of great festivity, as the increasing hours of sunlight meant that life would continue.

There are many murky superstitions that enshroud the winter solstice, but the silliest is that it's possible to stand an egg upright on its end just as the solstice begins. It's also doable to stand an egg on its end at any other time of the year with enough practice and skill. To the best of my knowledge, the only connection between success in standing eggs upright and the solstice is that because of the superstition, many more people (no one that I know, though), try this on the solstice than on any other date.

My friends and I can think of much better ways to celebrate winter, though. We have our eggs over easy and then go fishing in Chokaluskee or Cedar Key or fishing almost anywhere in Florida!

Have a merry one!

-Jack

Features



Crazy Ant Control

Crazy ants do not have a painful bite or sting but where heavy infestations occur they can be a nuisance due to their sheer numbers.

[Read more...](#)



Tomato Enzyme Discovery

Klee and colleagues at UF/IFAS published a paper in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences identifying an enzyme responsible for improving the taste of tomatoes as they ripen.

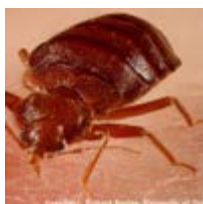
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Targeted Lionfish Control

Invasive lionfish may never be eradicated from Florida's coastal waters, but it's possible to keep them under control.

[Read more...](#)



Bedbug Blood Loss

UF/IFAS study finds it takes only about 11 weeks for one pair of bedbugs to spawn enough offspring to cause harmful blood loss in a baby.

[Read more...](#)

Dinner of Distinction 2012



UF/IFAS honored individuals who have made important contributions to the organization.

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Articles

Remote Ecosystems



For scientists, making field observations of organisms and ecosystems can be a daunting challenge.

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Carbon Content In FL Soil



Florida is home to many types of soil and some of them lack carbon, meaning they could be used for carbon sequestration.

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Sustainable Seafood



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UF/IFAS Solutions



EDIS – Florida Cooperative Extension
Publications



UF College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

Sustainability is a growing concern for many U.S. seafood consumers.
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