

Upcoming seminars on how to grow tomatoes & lawns

Before making costly mistakes in your garden and lawn this spring, consider attending seminars on How to Grow a Florida Lawn and How to Grow Tomatoes in Florida

On Thursday, March 31 from 9 am – 12 noon, I will provide a seminar titled **How to Grow Tomatoes in Florida** at the Okaloosa County Extension Office, 5479 Old Bethel Road in Crestview.

At this year's tomato seminar, we'll share the basics of how to grow tomatoes in Florida's challenging environment. We'll cover what varieties are best for Florida, including disease resistant varieties. And we'll spend some time looking at tomato pests and their control, including non-chemical choices of combating the scores of tomato insect and disease problems. Dr. Steve Olson, UF/IFAS Extension Vegetable Crops Specialist, will be a guest speaker at this year's tomato seminar. Olson will discuss some of the challenges in growing tomatoes in Florida as well as how disease resistant tomato varieties are developed.

We hope to have some tomato plants which are resistant to Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus for participants to take home and try.

Because space is limited, please preregister for the tomato seminar by calling the Okaloosa County Extension Office at 689-5850 or 729-1400, Ext. 5850. There is a \$5 cost to attend, payable at the door.

On Saturday, April 2 from 2 – 3 pm, I'll provide a seminar titled **How to Grow a Florida Lawn** at this year's Home Show.

Florida lawns can be frustrating. Our climate, sandy soils and pest problems are unique. Many Floridians follow lawn care practices that waste money, water and fertilizer, ultimately resulting in a declining lawn in the process. This seminar will focus on best management practices to help make growing a Florida lawn less frustrating.

The Home Show, sponsored by the Building Industry Association of Okaloosa & Walton Counties, will be held at the Emerald Coast Convention Center on Okaloosa Island. Home Show Hours are Saturday 9 am – 5 pm and Sunday 11am – 4 pm.

Master Gardeners will be available both days of the Home show to answer your gardening questions. And, on Sunday from 2:30 – 3:30 pm, Master Gardeners will provide a fun, interactive activity for children to learn about bees titled Busy Little Bees.

The show features around 100 exhibits of products and services for the home and the homeowner. Tickets for the event are on sale at all Eglin Federal Credit Union Branch Locations. Visit the BIA website at www.biaow.org for details.

Larry Williams, UF/IFAS Extension Agent, Okaloosa County, March 21, 2011