

Fair fun, 4-H & learning

In addition to the fun, food, rides and entertainment this year's Northwest Florida Tri-County Fair will provide, there will be opportunities to learn about local bugs, weeds, lawns, landscapes, poultry, rabbits, goats, cattle and more.

Extension Agents, Master Gardeners and 4-H youth from Okaloosa County's University of Florida Extension Office will provide informative seminars, livestock shows and clinics during this year's fair in Fort Walton Beach.

I will provide a seminar titled Fall: Florida's Best Gardening Season from 6 to 7 p.m. on Friday, October 28. This topic will include information on annuals, perennials, bulbs, vegetables and herbs to plant during fall. Fall lawn care and the reasons why trees and shrubs are best planted during fall and early winter will be addressed. Learn why fall should be our busiest gardening season in North Florida.

Growing a lawn in Florida can be frustrating. To help make it less frustrating, you can enjoy an informative presentation by Okaloosa County Master Gardener Robert Fultyn, which I will title "Everything You wanted to know about lawns but were afraid to ask." Fultyn is a local lawn expert. His presentation will be driven by your local lawn questions. Robert's presentation will begin at 3 p.m. on Saturday, October 29.

Sheila Dunning, Commercial Horticulture Agent with the University of Florida Extension Office in Okaloosa County, will present a seminar titled The Good, The Bad and The Ugly from 1 to 2 p.m. on Sunday, October 30. Sheila's presentation will encourage you to pay closer attention to the insects in your lawn, landscape and garden. Less than 1% of all insect species in Florida are plant pests. That means that the vast majority of insects in Florida are either beneficial or are of no consequence to our plants. You'd be wise to take time to learn how to recognize some of these beneficial insects.

Under the direction of UF/IFAS Okaloosa County 4-H Agent Jennifer Bearden, 4-Hers will provide the following as part of the fair.

Tuesday, October 25 – 6:00 p.m. poultry and rabbit showmanship

Thursday, October 27 – 5:30 p.m. goat show

Saturday, October 29 – 3:30 p.m. cattle showmanship clinic

There will be a youth pumpkin decoration contest. Contact Jennifer Bearden at 689-5850 for details about 4-H events.

Each evening, the Okaloosa County Farm Bureau will provide activities for youth to enjoy and learn about local agriculture.

The 2011 fair at the Northwest Florida Fairgrounds opens at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, October 25 and closes at 6 p.m. on Sunday, October 30. Visit the fair's website at <http://www.nwffair.com/fair/fair.htm> for details on admission costs, hours of operation, events and schedule.

Larry Williams, UF/IFAS Extension Agent, Okaloosa County, October 20, 2011