UF/IFAS offers solutions for your landscape problems

Perhaps we spend too much time concerned with what’s wrong in our landscapes. Though, we can learn from our mistakes. It’s helpful to identify why a plant failed or gain correct identification for a weed in order to better control it, etc. But, maybe we should spend more time leaning why other plants performed so well.

This can provide valuable information, too. Could it be because we finally planted the right variety of tomato for Florida? Maybe we lucked out and planted the right plant in the right place? Or perhaps, out of chance, we chose the correct fertilizer. Maybe our lawn improved because we raised the mowing height. Or, maybe we started irrigating on an as needed basis instead of drowning our landscape.

Sometimes we can learn from others. Pay attention to plants that do well over the long haul in your neighborhood. You may notice a flowering annual that really stood out in someone’s landscape. Or maybe, you observed a tree or shrub that performed unusually well over the years. You might see a groundcover growing under a shade tree that appears to be a much better choice as compared to the thinning lawnggrass under your shade tree. Take time to find out the name of these plants. But make sure, if you plan to use them in your landscape, to also find out what they like and where they like to grow. Many times we fail with plants simply by placing a perfectly good plant in the wrong place.

We do not have to “reinvent the wheel” when choosing the right plants for Florida or guess about the cause of brown areas in our lawns or be at the mercy of the self appointed horticulture guru of the neighborhood, etc. You do not have to use your lawn, landscape and garden areas as an experiment. The research has already been done for you. As a Floridian, you have a wealth of information available through the University of Florida’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS).

Next time you have a lawn, landscape or garden question, contact your local UF/IFAS County Extension Office or access the new UF/IFAS Solutions for Your Life Website at http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu.

Or you may bring a sample of the problem to our next Plant Clinic, Tuesday, October 24th from 9 a.m. to noon in Fort Walton Beach at the Okaloosa County Extension building, 127 W. Hollywood Blvd. Bring a fresh sample that represents what is seen in the landscape. This may include a plant stem with several leaves, a 4-inch square of grass with roots attached, a weed sample, etc.

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