Most of us do not think of caterpillars as spectacular, but this one really is! The Hickory Horned Devil, *Citheronia regalis*, will develop into the Royal Walnut Moth, also known as the Regal Moth.

The larva is not one for a timid person to suddenly discover. It has a scary, frightful appearance resembling a small dragon with up to five pairs of long, curving hornlike structures over the back of its thorax with the rest of the body covered with shorter spikes. The body color ranges from deep blue-green to tan with orange spikes tipped with black. Shorter spikes are black. Though very ferocious appearing, it is quite harmless to handle.

In Florida, adults have been collected in May, but are more common during the summer.

These caterpillars are enormous in size, being five to six inches long and nearly 3/4-inch in diameter. They live for a period of 37 to 42 days, feeding on the leaves of hickory, walnut, butternut, pecan, ash, lilac, persimmon, sycamore, sumac and sweet gum. Larvae mature in late summer, wandering around searching for a place to burrow underground to pupate. They spend the winter in the pupal stage.

Although the caterpillar appears to be fierce and dangerous, it is harmless. It is most often observed when it is full grown and comes down from the trees in search of a place to burrow for pupation. If a larva is found crawling on pavement or in an area of thick turf grass where it would have difficulty burrowing, it should be moved to an area of soft soil or a mulched area where it can burrow for pupation. Again, it is harmless and should not be killed.

When the moth emerges from the pupa in midsummer, it has a wingspan of 5-6 inches. The females are usually larger than the males. The adult moth typically has only a single generation per year, usually in the summer. The females lay as many as 250 eggs at one time. The eggs will hatch in 6-10 days. And the cycle of life begins again.

This moth has a short lifespan—just long enough to mate and to lay eggs. The regal moth is nocturnal, which means it is active at night. It usually lives in forest areas. Regal moths mate during the second evening after emergence larger than males. The adult moth usually lives in forest areas. Regal moths mate during the second evening after emergence larger than males. This moth has a short lifespan—just long enough to mate and to lay eggs. The regal moth is nocturnal, which means it is active at night. It usually lives in forest areas. Regal moths mate during the second evening after emergence larger than males. This moth has a short lifespan—just long enough to mate and to lay eggs. The regal moth is nocturnal, which means it is active at night. It usually lives in forest areas. Regal moths mate during the second evening after emergence larger than males.
**Program Announcements**

**Troubleshooting and Neighborhood Stormwater/Landscape Program**
Solve landscape problems and provide your neighborhood with information about proper landscape and pond maintenance practices that will protect Florida’s natural waterways. St. John’s River Water Management/WAVE Representative Paula Staples and Rebecca L. Jordi, University of Florida/IFAS Horticulture Extension Agent will come for a free consultation. Fifteen participants are required.

**Landscape Matters**
There will be no programs in July and August.

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**Spotlight on Nassau Gardens**

**June Winner - Pearl & Bill Hazlip**
Bill and Pearl Hazlip have lived on a wonderful 5 acre “spread” beyond Callahan for 20 years. Every inch is manicured; they grow squash (pictured), tomatoes, corn, peas, peppers, new potatoes, beans, zinnias and roses, all for the pure enjoyment of friends, family and neighbors.

View more photos online at http://nassau.ifas.ufl.edu/horticulture/spotlight/spotlight.html. To be considered for Spotlight on Nassau Gardens, send a digital photo, with a description of your garden, along with your name, address and phone number to atwoodca@bellsouth.net For more information contact Rebecca Jordi at 548-1116.

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**Invasives - Skunkvine**

Sometimes before 1897, *Paederia foetida*, or skunkvine, was introduced from Asia to Florida as a potential fiber crop. It became a troublesome weed very shortly thereafter, escaping into native areas throughout Florida. In 1993, skunkvine was labeled a Category 1 species on the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council’s List of Invasive Species. In 1999, it was placed on the Florida Noxious Weed List. Currently skunkvine is found in at least 17 counties in central and north central Florida.

This invasive plant did not receive its common name “skunkvine” for smelling like a rose. In fact the species name, *foetida*, is Latin for “stinky” or “foul smelling”. When the leaves or stems of skunkvine are crushed or broken, a displeasing, foul odor is released. The foul odor of skunkvine is derived from the sulfur compounds in its leaves.

Skunkvine is a woody vine that does not have thorns. Its vines are able to grow 30 feet in length, climbing up into tree canopies or crawling along the ground. For some unknown reason, the vines constantly twine to the right. Skunkvine is able to survive in a variety of Florida habitats including hardwood, mixed, and pine forests, sandhill, and floodplain forest and marsh. A serious invasive weed, skunkvine is able to displace native vegetation. The dense layer of vegetation created by skunkvine can both damage and kill native vegetation.

Climbing vines can engulf and cover trees and shrubs. The weight of the vine mass climbing over vegetation can cause branches or entire trees to break or collapse. Crawling vines can form a dense layer of vegetation, smothering many shrubs and other plants growing in the understory.

Chemical control is one of the most effective means of control for skunkvine, but single applications will generally not provide complete control. If skunkvine is growing up into trees or other desirable species, vines should be cut or pulled down to minimize damage to the desirable vegetation. The best time to apply an herbicide is in the spring and summer when skunkvine is actively growing.
**July Checklist**

**Bulbs:** Separate bulbs. Transplant bulbs if the area is receiving too much water.

**Roses:** Continue spray program. Water, water, water. Cut and remove spent blooms. Check for spider mites

**Lawns:** Keep mower blades sharp, never cut grass blades short. Add iron sulfate to green up lawn but avoid nitrogen fertilization this month. : “Take-all-root-rot” will be in full force during the summer - be sure to avoid over watering and over fertilizing.

**Perennials:** Cut off old flower heads, prune off dead or insect infested areas, and pinch off tips of stems to encourage denser growth.

**Trees:** Remove crape myrtle seed heads to encourage blooming through September. Remove old flower and seed stalks. Fertilize palm and fruit trees if it was not done in June.

**Vegetables:** It’s too hot to plant anything now. This is a good month to solarize your fall garden. Till your plot, moisten the soil, cover the ground with clear plastic. Place heavy objects around the edges to keep the plastic from blowing away. Let the sun bake your soil. It will help control fungi and nematodes. After 30 days till soil, replace the plastic and bake another few weeks. Plant your August or September garden.

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**August Checklist**

**Flowers:** Plant asters, balsam, begonias, black-eyed Susan, blue daze, cats whiskers, coleus, cosmos, cockscombs, dianthus, forget-me-not, gaillardia, golden globe impatiens, marigolds, melampodium, moon vine, pentas, periwinkles, petunias, phlox, porterweed, portulaca, purslane, salvia, scabiosa, strawflowers, sunflowers, tithonias, torenia, verbena, and zinnias.

**Roses:** Repeat July procedures. Water, water, water.

**Bulbs:** Plant African Iris, agapanthus, amaryllis, cannas, crinums, daylilies, gladioli, gloriosa lilies, society garlic, and rain lilies (Zephyranthes).

**Lawns:** There is still time for lawns to become established if seeded in the summer. Select good quality seed such as Argentine Bahia, common bermudagrass or centipede. Initially the seeds need stay moistened but once they have germinated irrigation can be reduced. These grasses do well without heavy irrigation and high nitrogen fertilizers. They turn brown earlier than St. Augustine grass in the winter.

**Perennials:** Start salvia, violets, ruellia, lion’s ear, gerbera daisy, butterfly weed, and blanket flower from saved seeds,. Let seeds dry on the plants. When pods open, dry seeds inside on screen or cheesecloth. Put into a plastic bag or a jar and label. Keep the seeds in the vegetable section of the refrigerator. Use within one year. Do not store in the freezer!

**Trees:** Cut back unwanted limbs to a branch angle or the trunk. Remove only palm fronds that are totally brown. Seed stalks can be removed prior to formation of fruit. Do not apply paints or coverings to wounds. Remove old seedheads from crape myrtle trees to encourage additional blooms.

**Vegetables:** August plantings are especially important for corn, eggplant, pumpkins, peppers, tomatoes, and watermelons. Beware of cutworms.

Selected from Florida Vegetable Guide by JM Stephens, RA Dunn, G Kidder, D Short, & GW Simone, University of Florida and Month-by-Month Gardening in Florida by Tom MacCubbin
The annual Agriculture Extravaganza took place on Friday May 14. Master Gardener volunteers led presentations to elementary students from Hilliard, Callahan, Bryceville and Yulee in three topics: The Tomato Industry (Howard North and Mary Chudzynski), The Butterfly Life Cycle (Ginny Grupe, Carol Ann Atwood, Joanne Roach, Jane Brown and Candace Bridgewater) and Soil: The Importance of Soil to Humans and Animals (Jim "Joe Dirt" McKay, and Horticulture Agent Becky Jordi). Approximately 120 students experienced these presentations.

Butterfly Life Cycle: the students learned the life cycle of butterflies - from larva to chrysalis to adult stages and were able to see actual larva and chrysalis at the presentation.
Tomato Industry: students saw samples of the various food products of the tomato including ketchup, tomato sauce, BBQ sauce, and canned tomatoes - both commercial and home-prepared canned tomatoes! They also received a tomato seed on a damp cotton ball enclosed in a plastic bag to prepare for their own tomato-growing experience!

Soil: The students learned the importance of soil to humans, that we need it to generate most of our food products, and its importance to animals who use soil to live (worms!) and for other purposes.
Yes indeed, this small woodpecker (Sphyrapicus varius) lives up to its humorous name! The bird’s underside is usually a pale yellow and it makes two kinds of holes in trees to extract sap.

The sapsucker inserts its bill into small round holes extending deep into the tree to probe for sap. Rectangular holes are shallow, and must be maintained in order for the bird to lick the sap from it. Usually the holes are in horizontal rows.

Researchers do not know how these birds get tree sap to flow so copiously, because sap is vitally important to trees and they have developed defense mechanisms to stop sap flow when wounded. It is thought that the sapsucker’s saliva may contain an anticoagulant substance.

Because of its ability to maintain sap flow, the sapsucker is considered to be a “keystone species” vital to the maintenance of a community. Bats, squirrels, porcupines, and other birds including warblers, hummingbirds, nuthatches, and other woodpeckers enjoy the sap made available by these birds. Other animals feast off the insects attracted to the sap as well. Despite its funny name, the yellow-bellied sapsucker is a very good neighbor, and makes quite a difference to others in the animal world.