

The Florida-Friendly Landscaping Program

Manage yard pests responsibly

A few weeks ago, I was walking through my garden — morning coffee in hand, listening to the mockingbird sing — when I noticed shot hole damage on my tomato leaves. The edges were chewed into delicate lace. A few steps closer, I



Taylor Clem

spotted the culprits: tiny tomato hornworm caterpillars munching with purpose. I was excited to see them but worried about the damage. A handful of hornworms can destroy a tomato plant. What would I do? Grab insecticide? Absolutely not. I plucked the leaves they were munching on and tossed them into the yard. Mischief managed. Coffee continued.

It's easy to think of insects or weeds as pests, but in a Florida-friendly landscape, not all damage is bad — and not every bug or weed is the enemy. That's the heart of Principle #6 of the Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program: Manage Yard Pests Responsibly.

"Pest control" often conjures images of big spray tanks and labels we can't pronounce. But responsible pest management shifts the mindset from total eradication to one of balance. It's less about eliminating every bug and more about supporting a healthy landscape — where nature does much of the work for us.

Let's start with a simple rule: identify the pest first. You don't want to accidentally remove something helpful.

Most insects in our yards are beneficial or neutral. Ladybugs, lacewings, and even wasps help control aphids, caterpillars, and mealybugs. Over 99% of insects are either helpful or harmless. Spraying indiscriminately wipes out good bugs, too. And when they're gone, pests often rebound even stronger.

That's where Integrated Pest Management (IPM) comes in — a core concept of the FFL Program. IPM is a holistic approach that emphasizes prevention, monitoring, and targeted responses. It means solving problems with the least toxic method first — like pruning a damaged leaf, attracting beneficial insects, or adjusting watering.

Watering affects pests more than we realize. Overwatering creates soggy soil and stressed plants, which invite root rot and fungus. Stressed plants are also more vulnerable to pests. Healthy plants can better tolerate some chewing or scraping. Sometimes, the best pest control is simply good cultural practices.

Another strategy? Plant diversity. A variety of Florida-Friendly plants creates a complex habitat that discourages pests and attracts predators. Reflecting on Principle #5 — Attract Wildlife, see that diverse plantings offer natural controls that reduce our need to manage pests. A more diverse yard supports a more balanced ecosystem.

Still, damage will happen. Chewed leaves, webbing, or brown spots can be alarming. But before reaching for a pesticide, ask: is this really a problem? A few holes might mean your yard is feeding wildlife and supporting the food web. Sometimes, the best option is to wait. For example, milkweed being eaten by monarch caterpillars is a good thing. The plants recover — and your yard gains butterflies.

If action is necessary, always read the label, follow instructions, and choose the least toxic option. Spot treat the problem areas, don't blanket spray. Avoid spraying in the heat or when pollinators are active and remember to store chemicals safely.

The goal isn't to eliminate pests — it's to create a thriving environment for plants and animals. With observation, patience, and intention, we can reduce chemical use and support natural balance. Healthy plants (Principle #1 —

PESTS continued on page 6c

Make Music Day Nassau County



Full Moon Folk — Amanda Moore, left, rhythm and vocals; and Jarrod Franco, lead guitar — perform Saturday at Make Music Day Nassau County. PHOTOS BY SAGE BOAZ/NEWS-LEADER

Event features Amelia Island's music diversity

BY ASHLEY CHANDLER
News-Leader

Downtown Fernandina Beach was alive with music Saturday. Richard Restiano, president of Nassau Council of Arts and Culture said it was a day of feeling good and happy and connecting with music and the community.

Restiano said it's hard to know exactly how many people attended. He said a lot of people came down after the Farmers Market — held downtown on Saturdays — or after shopping nearby.

Venues ran through Downtown Fernandina Beach: At the Marina, the Visitor's Train Depot, Pocket Park, Island Art Courtyard, the Fountain at Historic Courthouse, The Butterfly Wall at the Train Depot and Violet Bloom Boutique.

Depending on the location, visitors of Make Music Day could have had very different experiences.

Musicians played bluegrass, jazz, country, classical, rock, pop and more.

"You can never understand or appreciate who likes what," Restiano said.

Musicians of all levels and abilities were invited to sign up and participate in Nassau County's inaugural event.

MUSIC continued on pages 2-4c



A Make Music Day sign pictured at the Downtown Courthouse on Saturday. SUBMITTED PHOTO



Musicians of the Amelia Island Chamber perform Saturday at Make Music Day Nassau County. From left, Victoria Stjerna on the violin and Brittany Maroney on the cello.



Amelia Music Studio performs Saturday at Make Music Day. From left, Brandon Hester, Juliette 'JP' Peterson and Rose Wynn

Make Music Day Nassau County

MUSIC continued from page 1c

“Most of these people, I never heard of, but they’re all really good,” Restiano said. “I thought they were great.”

He also said there were a lot of kids.

“We had like 2-, 3-year-old kids pick up the little drum sticks that were left there,” Restiano said. Les DeMerle led a drum group at Pocket Park, where the Nassau Council of Arts and Culture set up its booth.

Restiano said Lowe’s buckets, drum sticks and boom sticks were provided to attendees who wanted to participate.

Crowd participation is the name of the game. Restiano told the News-Leader prior to the event that he wanted as many people as possible to join in — sing, dance or play along.

“I’d be talking to someone and they’d say, ‘this is such a wonderful thing and we really appreciate this because we’re so sick and tired of all the madness that goes on lately, and all the conversations. We just love to be able to walk downtown and just hang out and enjoy something that we can relate to and feel good about,’” Restiano said.

Restiano said the events showed off the local community’s true character.

“Everybody felt good, even the closet musician who dared to come out onto the sidewalk — got a standing ovation, they gave him money — I mean, the community is totally great,” Restiano said.

Make Music Day is a worldwide musical holiday that started in France and has made its way to thousands of cities across the world. The holiday is held annually on the Summer Solstice, June 21. Some cities also host a Winter Solstice Make Music Day.

Stay posted for next year’s event at makemusicday.org/nassaucounty/.

achandler@fbnewsleader.com



ABOVE: Amelia Music Studio performs Saturday at Make Music Day. Top, Brandon Hester, Above right, Juliette “JP” Peterson on drums and above, left, Rose Wynn.

LEFT: Full Moon Folk — Amanda Moore, left, rhythm and vocals; and Jarrod Franco, lead guitar — perform Saturday at Make Music Day Nassau County.

PHOTOS BY SAGE BOAZ/NEWS-LEADER

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

The Nassau County Sheriff’s Office gives notice of intent to bid the following Surplus Property beginning, July 7, 2025 on www.govdeals.com, pursuant to Section 274.06, Florida Statutes. Referenced site explains details of bidding and payment process. Brief descriptions of items are listed below but more **detailed listing with photos, serial #'s, etc. will be available on the Govdeals website once auction begins.**

All equipment sold “As Is” with no guarantees.

- Sony 49” LED Smart TV**
- (8) ASP Batons**
- (4) TLR-1 Streamlights**

**All above items are currently non-functioning
These items will list in one auction.**

For questions, contact, Paula DeLuca @ 904-548-4057 or Dell Hodges, @ (904) 548-4037.

Bill Leeper, Sheriff
Nassau County Sheriff’s Office



Musicians of the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival perform Saturday at Make Music Day Nassau County. From left, Victoria Stjerna on the violin and Brittany Maroney on the cello.

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF NASSAU COUNTY, FLORIDA

NOTICE OF INTENT TO REVISE

- 2.55 Safe School Officer
- 2.59 School Safety Requirements and Progressive Discipline Policy
- 3.14 School Volunteers
- 7.41 - School Food Service Procurement Policies and Procedures

In compliance with the Administrative Procedure Act, Chapter 120, Florida Statute, a public hearing may be held if requested within twenty-one (21) days of this notice at the place, time, and date indicated below:

Place: Nassau County School Board
1201 Atlantic Ave.
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034

Time: 6:00 P.M.

Date: July 10, 2025

No significant economic impact is anticipated.

Copies of the Administrative Rules and amended policies are located in all schools, and the School Board office.

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Make Music Day Nassau County



PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY RICHARD RESTIANO/NASSAU ALLIED ARTS COUNCIL
Attendees play and dance during San Jose jam's performance at the Train Depot on Saturday at Make Music Day Nassau County.



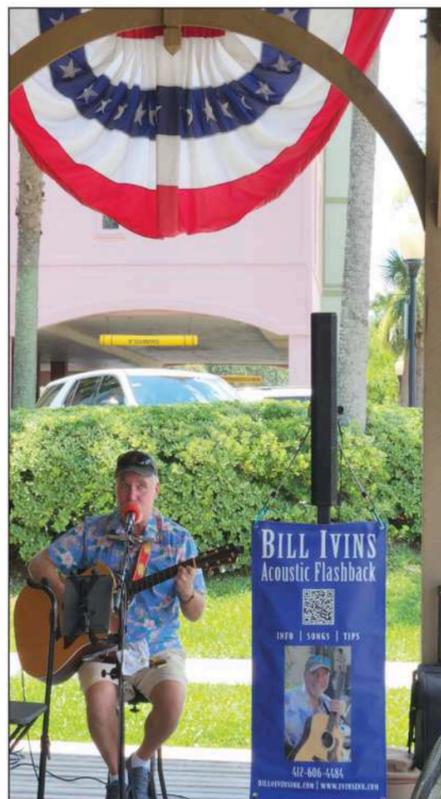
Jett Paxton performs at Pocket Park on Saturday at Make Music Day Nassau County.



Robyn lamp at Island Art indoor studio on Saturday for Make Music Day Nassau County.



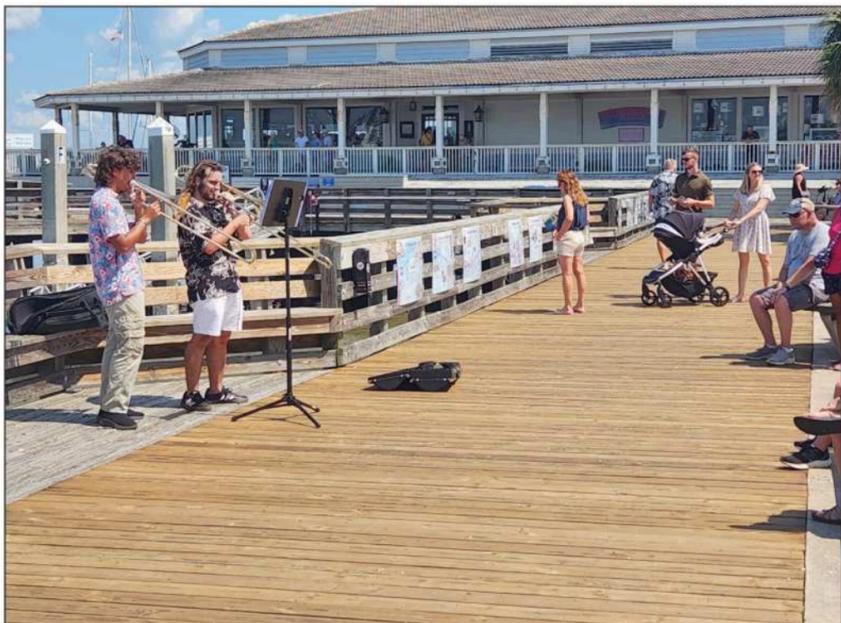
Joyce Whorton performs at Butterfly park on Saturday for Make Music Day Nassau County.



Bill Ivins at the Train depot on Saturday for Make Music Day Nassau County.



A musician not on the schedule showed up Downtown Saturday to play on Make Music Day.



A musician not on the schedule showed up Downtown Saturday to play on Make Music Day.

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Make Music Day Nassau County



Les DeMerle at Pocket Park on Saturday for Make Music Day Nassau County.



PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY RICHARD RESTIANO/NASSAU ALLIED ARTS COUNCIL
A family participates in Make Music Day on Saturday at Pocket park.



Chuck Hall, who goes by Banjo Man performs at the Train Depot on Saturday for Make Music Day Nassau County.



Laid Back performs at the Downtown Courthouse on Saturday for Make Music Day Nassau County, pictured above and right.



Heather DeBellis Violet Bloom Boutique on South 3rd St.



Above, The Ukulele Network performs Saturday on Make Music Day. Right, a young pianist performs Saturday at Pocket Park. Below, Make Music Day volunteers Lauren Templeton, Becky Grimes NCAC Board Chair, Hadyn Bray



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COUNTY CORNER

COUNTY SEEKING VOLUNTEERS FOR TWO BOARDS/COMMITTEES

The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) is currently seeking volunteers to fill vacancies on two boards/committees.

The Nassau County-Amelia Island Tree Commission was established in 2021 via Ordinance No. 2021-12 for the purpose of protecting and improving the urban forest on the unincorporated portion of Amelia Island. The Commission consists of five members appointed by the BOCC, including two members from unincorporated Amelia Island and three members involved in the following: County Planning & Zoning Board member, a Florida licensed landscape architect, and an International Society of Arboriculture certified arborist (county employee or contractor). Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 5:00 p.m. in the County Commission Chambers located at 96135 Nassau Place, Yulee, FL. At this time, the BOCC is seeking one volunteer to serve as a representative from unincorporated Amelia Island.

The St. Marys River Management Committee is a quasi-judicial advisory panel established by an inter-local agreement between Baker and Nassau counties in Florida and Camden and Charlton counties in Georgia to facilitate the conservation and wise use of the St. Marys River. The Committee is comprised of five voting representatives from each County: one County Commissioner and four appointed members. The Committee seeks a volunteer from own property along the St. Marys Watershed. This includes any riverfront landowners, as well as individuals residing in Wildlight, west of I-95, north of County Road 108, on either side of County Road 121 (within the St Marys Watershed). Also, anyone who works for a company owning property along the St. Marys River would be considered eligible to serve.

All applications will be provided to the BOCC for review, consideration and final approval at an upcoming BOCC Meeting. The deadline to apply for both vacancies is the close of business on Monday, July 14, 2025.