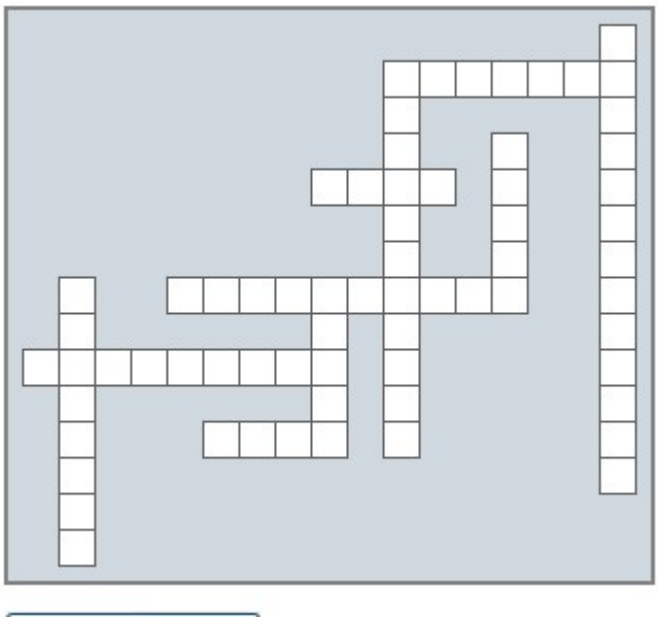
UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
IFAS Extension

SOLUTIONS for your LIFE

Crossword puzzles as teaching tools



Crossword puzzles can be effective teaching tools. They encourage logical thinking and correct spelling. Some of you may use a program that creates crosswords based on word lists and clues you create. I found a similar program online (& free!) that not only has several printing options but allows you to save your crossword as a web page. You can create web page designed to be printed, or you can choose from different types of interactive pages that your visitors can use right over the Internet!

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EclipseCrossword is the name of the program and it can be found, and downloaded, at www.greeneclipsesoftware.com/eclipsecrossword/. It's a quick download and easy to install. EclipseCrossword works on Windows 95, 98, ME, 2000, and XP. It will not run on Macintosh computers. According to the website, this program contains no advertisements, spyware, or viruses. It is not a trial version.

EclipseCrossword guides you through the process step-by-step, explaining each part. If you want more information, the comprehensive help system is only a click away. Advanced users can fine-tune the settings to the way they like them, everything from the positioning of the first few words to how important it is for the puzzle to be as compact as possible. If you need total control over the way the crossword is printed, you can even export the crossword grid (with or without answers) and the clues to files, and open them in your favorite word processor or desktop publishing program.

As a test, I put together a short crossword on pesticides and put it up on the Tech Training page of the District web site. It's the link at the top of the page called "Interactive Crossword Example" and can be found at http://district4.extension.ifas.ufl.edu/technology.htm Give it a try!
I found EclipseCrossword quite easy to use. If you try the program, let me know what you think of it and how you used it.

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Dave Palmer
South Central Extension District
Instructional Media Agent
813-744-5519x107
dkp205@ufl.edu