



Monthly Newsletter

August 2011

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University of Florida IFAS
Marion County Horticulture Agent

**Timely Gardening Tips
for MARION COUNTY**
by Master Gardener, Jo Leyte-Vidal

August 15th is the suggested date for the planting of cool season vegetables; broccoli, kale, collards, Swiss chard, mustard, turnips, beets, carrots, cabbage, potatoes, and winter squash. It is still early enough to put in another planting of tomatoes that will ripen before frost.

Now that most perennials have finished blooming colorful annuals are needed to give the garden some color besides green. Dead head the plants to keep them blooming and bushy. A cover of mulch will keep the roots cool and keep down weed growth.

Now that we are getting some rain be aware of overwatering your lawn. Run your sprinkler system only when needed. How do you know?

Ornamental Grasses

by Anne Lambrecht, UF/IFAS Marion County Master Gardener

Easy to grow, beautiful and stately, ornamental grasses are a wonderful addition to our southern landscapes. And luckily for us, there are so many cultivars to choose from. Grasses are easy to grow because they can tolerate, and are easily adaptable to, a broad range of environmental conditions such as what we have: dry and wet.

Grasses are a part of large group of flowering plants called monocotyledons – or monocots for short. The largest family in this group are the orchids. True grasses come next and include grains like wheat, corn, and rice, pasture grasses, sugar cane and bamboos. Other groups in this family are palms, bananas, ginger and onions. But instead of getting too technical (and boring) we will call anything that looks like a grass, an ornamental grass. True grasses have evolved to become highly specialized for wind pollination.

The first most important thing to consider when choosing a grass for your garden is the size it will be when it grows up. For instance, many people like the look of Pampas grass--those tall and regal white fluffy plumes look so pretty. But it grows to 8' high and when the seeds in the plumes disburse, they stick to everything. The leaves are sharp as razors and it makes a great hiding place for rodents. And it's just too big for a small garden area. Pampas grass does look handsome, however, in the landscape where there's lots of room.

Other characteristics to look for are color, if the grass is winter hardy, and time of flowering (plumes). The foliage of grasses can come in such wonderful colors from greens, gray, blues and browns to yellows and creams. Ornamental grasses can provide contrasts of color, create an accent or focal point or they can provide subtle contrast colors as background plantings.

Grasses are ever changing and will not keep their original shape or structure during the season. In the spring they appear upright and narrow and may become a vase-shaped plant by summer while flowers in the fall may make the plant appear more rounded. Each October, I'm sure you've noticed the fluffy pink grass (called Muhly grass) along our roadsides and golf courses. Muhlys are not much to look at in the spring, summer and winter, but that glorious pink fluff is worth having them around.



Many grasses retain their seed heads for many weeks and even months. The seed heads are where the “flowers” were. Pruning seed heads right after “flowering” is not recommended. Pruning grasses should be done right after winter or early spring, just prior to new growth. Most grasses really do not need pruning at all but sometimes you can see grasses that have been pruned to look like bullet-shaped domes which is the correct way of pruning.



Timely Gardening Tips for MARION COUNTY

by Master Gardener, Jo Leyte-Vidal
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St. Augustine grass will attain a blue cast to its leaves and they will begin to fold in half. Bahia and Centipede grasses will begin to lose their color. Not overwatering will help prevent fungus and bacteria problems in the lawn.

Remember this when you are pulling weeds in this heat: Thomas Jefferson said, "No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, and no culture comparable to that of a garden".

Ornamental Grasses

by Anne Lambrecht, UF/IFAS Marion County Master Gardener
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Consider also their texture and feel (fluffy, soft, stiff or curly), movement, sound they make in the wind, and how they look with light shimmering in and out.

In small gardens or space challenged areas, grasses can look sharp in containers with other plants.

Here are some wonderful grasses for our area:

- Sand cordgrass – *Spartina bakeri*
- Elliot's Love grass – *Eragrostis elliottii*
- Fakahatchee grass – *Tripsacum dactyloides*
- Muhly grass – *Muhlenbergia capillaries*
- Fountain grass – *Pennisetum setaceum*
- Lopsided Indiangrass – *Sorghastrum secundum*
- Narrowleaf Blue-eyed grass – *Sisyrinchium angustifolium*
- Chalky Bluestem – *Andropogon capillipes*
- Wire grass – *Aristida stricta*
- Northern Seoats – *Chasmanthium latifolium*

You can reach Anne Lambrecht at annegarden@embarqmail.com

What's Bugging You?

by Urban Horticulture Agent, Norma Samuel

Find out what local residents are calling in about

What is the problem with my Ligustrum? It has yellow spots and the leaves are falling.

The problem is a disease called Cercospora Leaf Spot, a very common problem on ligustrum in this area. I usually do not recommend for clients to spray as it is more of an aesthetic problem.

Rake and remove fallen leaves to prevent build up of the pathogen. Avoid overhead irrigation and excessive pruning. If it is in a shaded area you may need to let in more light. Listed on this website link are options of chemicals that can be used. http://www.clemson.edu/public/regulatory/plant_industry/plant_prob_clinic/fact_sheet_folder/cercospora_leaf.html.

Best results will be achieved in combination with the cultural practices listed above. Treat both the upper and lower surface of the leaves. Multiple applications may be required. Be sure to read and follow instructions on the pesticide label.



Photo by Bertrand Lacombe

Got Questions?

What does 4-H have to offer my child? When is the best time to prune crepe myrtles? How can I make money off 10 acres of land? What is the difference between type 1 and type 2 diabetes?

uf/ifas marion county
EXTENSION SERVICE

We Have Answers

Blooms for a Buck, More or less...

Kathleen Patterson, FYN Program Coordinator

It began as a plot of grass no more than one hundred twenty five (125) square feet. This piece of land sits in front of the fence that surrounds my front yard, just inside the road easement. Boring green grass, in poor shape; which the mail person kept well traveled and sandy. I decided to quit fighting the lack of grass and create something that would enhance this area near the mailbox.

Out came the Round Up to kill off the remaining grass and weeds. Once this was completed I then turned the soil several times and leveled out the area. I also should mention that this area had also become infested with Bermuda grass that I believe the cable workers reseeded with after running new fiber optic lines. The removal of this grass required many intensive hours of hand pulling, digging and more pulling to reach this deeply rooted plant (or as I call it-a weed).

Now what should I plant in this sunny area that is near a heavily traveled blacktop road? Nothing that couldn't withstand nasty exhaust fumes, heat from the blacktop, school buses that line up in front of the house every morning and afternoon; and don't forget, how could I protect it from the evils of the mail delivery person? As I looked at it from several angles I decided the best approach would be a cheap approach. I wasn't too sure how well anything would survive the environmental hazards on a day-to-day basis but I was willing to give it a go.

I began with several plants that needed to be relocated from other bedded areas. Native Stokes' Aster, several day lilies and a few canna lilies were moved to this area to test their fate. Nothing ventured, nothing gained and so far no cost involved. Just about right for my pocketbook. These plants looked nice, but I wanted for more. Keeping within my budget was a challenge until I started shopping around. Visiting several box stores I came upon the "seed stands". Some of my favorite flowers could be grown easily from seed and I splurged.



Several varieties of zinnias, sunflowers and cosmos. Packages of seeds that were sold 10/\$1.00 and a few packages that were \$1.79 each. Loaded up with a large amount of seed I headed home. Liberally sowing the many seeds throughout the area; I watered them, and waited. As a side to this story I should mention that the remaining seeds I didn't use disappeared and couldn't be found. Another trip for 10 for a buck and I was in business once again.

Items below are available for purchase at the UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service. Please come to see these environmentally-friendly products.



UPCOMING LECTURES/EVENTS:

Educational seminars and events are presented by UF/IFAS Extension Agents and or Master Gardeners.

2011 Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars for our upcoming events:

Fall Vegetable Garden Expo

September 10, 2011
9:00am-1:00pm

Plant ID Class

September 15, 2011
10:00 am—Noon

September 22, 2011
10:00 am—Noon

September 29, 2011
10:00 am—Noon

October 6, 2011
10:00 am—Noon

October 20, 2011
10:00 am—Noon

Gardening for Dummies

September 19-23, 2011
6:00pm-8:30pm

Fall Gathering

October 8, 2011
8:00am-12:00pm



Blooms for a Buck, More or less...

Kathleen Patterson, FYN Program Coordinator

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What seemed like weeks were just about 10 days and tiny seedlings began to appear. I knew I had succeeded; it was to be a bumper crop of blooming beauties. First came a few cosmos in shades of orange, next the zinnias began to bloom. Shades of nearly every color of the rainbow including pink, white, purple, and red, orange and yellow.

Before long I could enjoy this beautiful bounty of blooms as I left my home and returned home each day. Not only could I enjoy it, so could the bus drivers, the mail person and everyone who drives by.

If truth be told, the actual cost of this bed was under \$5.00. A bargain is a bargain, and I got an amazing bargain when I found those seeds 10 for a buck. It wasn't long after I bought my second round of seeds that I found the others that had been misplaced. I took advantage of those and scattered them in other bedded areas to create bold color and plenty of nectar for the butterflies that visit my yard. And occasionally I do gather a few flowers and place them on my kitchen table where they brighten up the room and make me smile.



Upcoming Gardening Events

by Urban Horticulture Agent, Norma Samuel

The weather is hot, so I can imagine the times you spend in your garden these days are minimal. Remember to garden in the cooler part of the day, wear light colored clothing and drink a lot of water to stay hydrated and avoid heat stress. While indoors surf the web, read garden books and magazines to get some ideas for your garden. Most importantly, mark your calendar and plan to participate in the following upcoming gardening events at the Extension office at 2232 NE Jacksonville Road in Ocala. These are excellent opportunities to increase your gardening knowledge.



Upcoming Gardening Events

by Urban Horticulture Agent, Norma Samuel
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Vegetable Garden Expo: Saturday, September 10 from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. FREE! There will be several educational sessions to provide you with the information you need to have a bountiful harvest.

Vendors will be on site with vegetable seedlings, seeds and related items. The indoor seminar topics are:

9:00 am	Growing Herbs	Dennis Gretton, D&D Growers
10:30 am	Edible Landscaping	Joe Seward, UF/IFAS
11:30 pm	Vegetable Varieties for Marion County	Lesroy Samuel, Vegetable Expert

In-Garden Talks

9:00 am	Composting	Linda Krausnick, Master Gardener
10:00 am	Fertilizing your Garden	Carol Ann Baldwin, Master Gardener
11:00 am	Micro-Irrigation	Kathleen Patterson, FYN Coordinator
12:00 pm	Demonstration stations: Staking & Mulching, Starting Plants from Seeds, and Making Grow Boxes	Master Gardeners

“Gardening for Dummies” Seminar Series: This program is designed for gardeners who want to gain an understanding of basic horticultural principles in order to have a beautiful landscape or a prolific vegetable garden, but do not want the depth of the Master Gardener Course. The sessions will be taught by County Extension Agents and Master Gardeners and promises to be practical and informative. Participants are encouraged to bring specimens of plants, weeds, insects, and diseases for identification, and those puzzling gardening questions to which they had no answers.

Classroom sessions will run from September 19 to September 22, 6:00 pm – 8:30 pm. We will cover two topics per night. *Building your Soil* – Tips to begin the transformation of your soil from sand to soil that is rich in nutrients and hold moisture to grow beautiful plants. *Gardening Basics* – Basic information to lay a solid foundation for a successful garden. *Plant Propagation* – Learn to propagate plants from seeds, cuttings and other techniques. *Vegetable Gardening* – Practical information on growing vegetables. *Lawns* – Tips to achieve a beautiful lawn. *Florida-Friendly Landscapes* – Nine principles for creating and maintaining a Florida-Friendly landscape. *Plants for the not so Green Thumb Gardener* – Learn which plants thrive in Marion County with minimal care. *Pests in the Home Landscape* – Tips to get the Upper Hand on common insects, diseases and weeds.

The final “Gardening for Dummies” session will be a garden tour on Saturday, September 24 from 9:00 am to noon – Tour of Extension Demonstration Gardens and landscapes of Master Gardeners that live in close vicinity of the Extension office.

The cost is Cost \$25.00 non-refundable, to cover supplies and snacks. Registration deadline is September 2nd.

Plant Identification: Each year we hold Plant Identification classes for the Master Gardeners and for the first time we are opening these sessions to the general public. The sessions will be held from 10 am to noon on September 15, 22 and 29; and October 6 and 20. Plants will be from the Florida Master Gardener Plant Identification List, but will also include additional plants that thrive in Marion County. The sessions are FREE! Space is limited to the first 15 residents to register.

Please contact Donna at 352-671-8400 to register, or if you need additional information on these and other Master Gardener events.

