



August 2013

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Timely Gardening Tips

by Aneesh Tiwari, UF/IFAS
Extension Marion County Master
Gardener

We are having a typical Florida summer; lots of heat and lots of rain. This time of year gardeners are forced to work before sunrise and/or in the evening in order to beat the heat. Here are some things to note:

- Plants can become stressed with these conditions. Palms may show stress with yellowing of their older leaves. Adding one pound of magnesium sulphate, commonly known as Epsom salts, under the tree and watered in thoroughly will stop the problem from spreading further.
- Remember to turn off your sprinklers. Overwatering your turf will encourage fungus and bacteria problems, which could prove deadly if not treated. The brown patch disease shows itself as a brown circle with a darker outer ring.

It's Time to Plant Fall and Winter Vegetables

by Pat Greenfield, Master Gardener

The calendar tells us that fall is almost here even though the temperatures and humidity deny it, but this is what makes living in north-central Florida so special. We can grow two crops of warm season vegetables each year and now is the time to plant them.

Often fall vegetables grow and produce better than those planted in the spring because the soil is already warm, which speeds seed germination, and the days and nights are gradually getting cooler instead of hotter. Fall plants don't require as much sun protection as their summer cousins did as they thrive in 70 – 80 degree days and 60 degree nights. However, they might need to be protected from light frosts later in the season. Insects are also less of a problem due to the cooler temperatures.

Prepare your planting beds by removing weeds, rocks and other debris leftover from spring and summer. Till or rake in lots of organics like composted manures and plant matter. Raised beds work well for most row vegetables, and vining plants like pole beans, cucumbers, and squashes can be grown on trellises or fences. Vegetables like a soil pH of 5.8 – 6.3. Soil samples can be taken to the County Extension office for complimentary testing. Place your beds where the plants will receive a minimum of six hours of sunlight, and provide regular deep watering if the weather is dry.

Now that your beds are ready, plant seeds or seedlings with shorter maturation dates to ensure a good harvest before cold weather sets in. Some choices include, beans, corn, cucumbers, peppers, squash and tomatoes.

Want to extend your vegetable growing? September through November are the main months to plant most cool season crops such as beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, Chinese cabbage, collards, lettuce, mustard, onions, garden peas, spinach and strawberry plants. Many of these can be set out as seedlings which then speeds the time to harvest.

There's nothing like the taste and satisfaction of growing your own vegetables. If space is a problem, think vertical or tuck a few in among your flowering plants. Bon appetite!

For more detailed planting information, dates and additional varieties for your area, visit the local County Extension office and pick up a printed brochure.



Timely Gardening Tips for MARION COUNTY

by Aneesh Tiwari, UF/IFAS
Extension Marion County Master Gardener

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- Apply the appropriate fungicide on the area plus a foot or two outside the ring. Grey leaf spot may appear as ash colored lesions on St. Augustine grass blades. A fungicide is also needed to control this problem. Be sure to read the label and follow directions carefully. CAUTION - be sure the chemical you are adding is not harmful to your grass type.
- Citrus trees are ready for their summer feeding which should last through February. Remember that citrus trees like the area under their branches to be clear of weeds and debris. While cleaning under the tree inspect the underside of the leaves for the presence of aphids or scale insects. Spray the under sides of the leaves, if necessary, with insecticidal soap. Do not use any oil in the heat of the summer as it will damage the tree.
- Check your poinsettias again. They need to be pruned no later than the end of August so that you may enjoy their beautiful red bracts during the holiday season.
- August is the month for planting cool season vegetables. August 15th is usually the target date. Use the two weeks before to prepare the soil by lightly tilling in organic compost and/or well aged manure, slow release pelletized fertilizer, and cover crops. Be sure to eliminate any new weeds popping up in the clean beds. Weeds are competitors for your plant's

There's Fungus Among Us

by Anne Lambrecht, Master Gardener

All the rain we've had brings fungi, mushrooms, and what is known as fairy rings. Many of these mushrooms are highly toxic and a good number are edible. As a Master Gardener, it is my duty NEVER to tell you that a mushroom is edible. Never, ever, EVER eat a mushroom without knowing for certain that it is edible. And there is only one-maybe two-people in the entire state I would trust to tell me which are poisonous and which are edible (see Note). Remember those hippies who would run out into a cow pasture, right after the rain, and gather up "shrooms" that have been growing right out of the MANURE. Can you imagine how many got insanely sick?

In Florida, mushrooms usually grow in warm weather, after a rain. Florida has several thousand types of fungi. Mushrooms, toadstools and the yeast that is used to make bread are all different kinds of fungi. Toadstools are usually referred to as mushrooms that are poisonous, and therefore toads and fairies and other creatures use them for seats.

Mushrooms and toadstools are the fruiting bodies of various forms of fungi. The fungi are always in the soil. They grow in damp fields, your lawns and dark woods and they do not need sunlight to grow. Although some fungi grow in the ground, they are not plants because they cannot make their own food. Fungi play a very important function in nature. They break down dead plant and animal matter so that the base chemicals of which the dead plants and animals were made of can be used again. Fungus spores are everywhere. If they land where there is warmth and nutrients, the fungi will develop and grow. Because fungi can survive in difficult situations, they are full of nutritious minerals and trace elements not always found in "regular" food sources.

So what do you call a mushroom who buys everybody in the bar a drink? A FUNGI. There are many interesting mushrooms growing here and there in my potted plants as well as in the mulch in the flower beds. I enjoy their colors and shapes for a while, and then I get rid of them. Ever dig down under the mulch and see a bunch of white cottony "threads?" This is called mycelium and is actually the body of the mushroom.

There are many myths and tales about what mushrooms are safe to eat. However, there is NO easy, clear way to tell if a wild mushroom is safe or poisonous. There are thousands of types of mushrooms and about 100 that are known to be poisonous. Many poisonous mushrooms look like mushrooms that are safe to eat. Poisonous mushrooms may grow beside good mushrooms. The best way to tell if a mushroom is safe to eat is to have it identified by an expert (mycologist) or to buy it from a store or restaurant. Poisonous mushrooms cannot be made safe to eat by cooking, freezing, washing, or canning. The only way to prevent mushroom poisoning is to avoid eating toxic mushrooms.



There's Fungus Among Us

by Anne Lambrecht, Master Gardener
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I am sure you've got mushrooms growing in your lawn. They rarely cause landscape problems but may be a problem if you've got pets and visiting children. Most are fungi that feed on decomposing grass clippings. Sometimes they will pop up in your mulch that is wet. There is no need to use expensive fungicides on them: they will disappear when it becomes drier outside. In the meantime, you can mow them or hand pick them.

Another common lawn mushroom is the Parasol or Fairy Ring Mushroom. These are large, whitish mushrooms (four or five inches across the cap) with reddish tan scales on the cap. The stem is three to five inches long, with a ring (annulus) around it near the top. The ring is easy to move up and down the stalk and the cap breaks easily from the stem. Fairy rings grow in a circular pattern as a result of an ever widening ring of the soil-based fungi. I'm sure you've seen them around the common lawn areas of The Villages.

There is some really cool folklore associated with Fairy Rings. It is said that fairies, elves, and witches make the fairy rings by dancing in them. These fairies do not like it if you step inside their fairy ring, especially during the full moon. There are dire consequences: you may be lost forever down in the fairy world or you could become invisible. The fairies may force you to dance until exhausted, dead or in the throes of madness.

If I ever am lucky enough to get a fairy ring in my back yard, I will invite the Husband to make a merry dance at midnight, under the full moon on a hot and humid summer's night. Once he steps in, I will then decide if I shall jump in after him or go back into the house.

Fairy Rings <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/LH046> by M. L. Elliott and G. W. Simone

Note: A trusted mycologist in Florida is Dr. James Kimbrough, a retired UF/IFAS Mycologist who has written a book, Common Florida Mushrooms.



Timely Gardening Tips for MARION COUNTY

by Aneesh Tiwari, UF/IFAS
Extension Marion County Master Gardener

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nutrients and water. Plant: cucumber, beans, broccoli, cauliflower, collards, corn, bunching onions, turnips, spinach, beets, and potatoes. If you have time earlier in the month, tomatoes may be planted. A few annuals can still be planted such as; begonia, coleus, cosmos, gaillardia, impatiens, and salvia.

- Be careful when buying and storing fertilizers and fungicides and other chemicals for the garden. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection has asked that we: SHOP WISELY. Buy products labeled *biodegradable*, *non-toxic*, *non-phosphorus*, or *not water soluble*. WHY? They readily decompose and will not pollute surface or ground waters.

STORE PRODUCTS SAFELY. Keep toxic products in original containers, closed and clearly marked in safe storage places. WHY? To prevent spillage which could reach ground or surface waters, and to prevent accidents with children or pets.



UPCOMING LECTURES/EVENTS:

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

Unless otherwise indicated, to pre-register, please call 671-8400 or e-mail Donna.Dibble@marioncountyfl.org

August

Tuesday Gardening Series:

Common Insect Pests and their control
August 13, 2013
10 a.m.—Noon
UF/IFAS Extension Marion County Auditorium

September

Demonstration Garden Tour

September 4, 2013
10—11 a.m.
UF/IFAS Extension Marion County Master Gardeners Demonstration Gardens

**Vegetable Garden Expo—
CANCELLED**

Tuesday Gardening Series:

Beneficial Insects in the Garden
September 10, 2013
10 a.m.—Noon
UF/IFAS Extension Marion County Auditorium

Florida Gardening 101

September 23—27
6—8:30 p.m.
UF/IFAS Extension Marion County
5-part series designed to help novice gardeners and newcomers to Marion County learn to garden Successfully.
Cost: \$25 per person/\$40 per couple
Pre-register by Sept. 11

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 29, 2013

Contact: Gianna Devoto
(415) 338-6745, gbdevoto@sfsu.edu

Media Advisory: The Great Bee Count set for Aug. 17

WHAT:



San Francisco State University’s Great Sunflower Project is celebrating its annual Great Bee Count on Saturday, Aug. 17. Volunteers nationwide are asked to count bees and upload their findings to www.greatsunflower.org.

SF State biologist Gretchen LeBuhn founded the Great Sunflower Project in 2008 to investigate the decline of bee populations. With the help of more than 100,000 volunteers the Great Sunflower Project has created the single largest database on pollinator populations in North America.

This year the project has expanded the criteria for collecting data so that participants can record bee sightings from a range of locations -- from a single backyard plant to an entire park or hiking trail.

In preparation for the Great Bee Count volunteers can practice uploading pollinator sightings by registering at <http://www.greatsunflower.org/user/register>.

WHO:

Anyone interested in helping to count bees.

WHERE:

In backyards, gardens, local parks and hiking trails throughout the country, and at the project’s website: www.greatsunflower.org.

WHEN:

Saturday Aug. 17, 2013

INFO:

Contact Gianna Devoto at (415) 338-6745 or visit www.greatsunflower.org.



But remember....Please "Bee" careful!

Florida Gardening 101

September 23—27

6—8:30 PM

UF/IFAS Extension, Marion County

Monday, Sept. 23

Building Your Soil: Tips to transform your sand into nutrient-rich soil.
Florida-Friendly Landscaping™: Learn to garden the Florida-Friendly way.

Tuesday, Sept. 24

Lawn Basics: Learn tips to achieve a beautiful lawn.
Growing Annuals and Perennials: Learn how to grow these tropical beauties.

Wednesday, Sept. 25

Plant Propagation: Learn to propagate new plants from seeds, cuttings and other techniques.
Must-Have Trees and Shrubs: Plants that thrive in Marion County.

Thursday, Sept. 26

Vegetable Gardening in Small and Large Spaces: Practical information on growing vegetables.
Fruit Trees for the Home Landscape: Fruit trees that produce well in Marion County

Friday, Sept. 27

Conserving Water in the Home Landscape: Learn how to use little water and still have a beautiful garden.
Pests in the Home Landscape: Learn how to identify and control common garden pests.



Items below are available for purchase at the UF/IFAS Extension, Marion County. We also have many other items available in our recently opened Shop Extension store. The store is open Monday—Friday from 8 a.m.—5 p.m. Please come to see these environmentally-friendly products, as well as many other Agricultural related items.



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