



Table of Contents:



**Pruning Bushes Could Cut Back on Crime**

**Timely Gardening Tips**

**A Secret Garden**

**What's Bugging You**

**The Magnificent Magnolia**

**Upcoming Events**

Published by Norma Samuel  
UF/IFAS Marion County Extension  
Service Horticulture Agent

**Timely Gardening Tips for MARION COUNTY**

*by David Y. Goodman,  
UF/IFAS Marion County  
Master Gardener, In-Training*

The madness is back. Can you feel it?

Clutch your wallets and purses, gardening friends – alluring trays of veggie seedlings are everywhere. And don't forget the pots of flowers... brimming seed racks... birdhouses... shiny new lawnmowers... whimsical yard art... kink-free hoses... flower-printed gloves and all the other paraphernalia of green fever.

Yep. It's time to get started on your spring garden. Hurry! It's almost too late!

Fortunately, it's not that difficult or expensive to get a plot started. Seeds are the cheapest route and often do better than transplants. Why? Because they root in place and acclimate right where they are, rather than being under or over-watered in a garden center, getting bound up in their own roots and dealing with random light conditions in the process. When you plant a seed in place, it can find its own pace and never has to deal with the considerable

February 2013

## Pruning Bushes Could Cut Back on Crime

by Peggy Greer, Master Gardener

Did you realize that landscaping has a distinct impact on crime?

Tonight go out on your street, turn around and look at your house. Take a long look and be objective. What do you see? Is it dark? Are large bushes blocking the view of your front door? Do you see hiding places? Can you see your house numbers?

Burglars are not like moths; they are not attracted to light. Instead, they seek out places which are not easily seen from the street or from your neighbors. You want people from the street and your neighbors to be able to see what is going on around your house; that is called 'natural surveillance'.

Even with the front porch light on, large bushes create large shadows which are perfect places for burglars to hide. Allow your landscaping to lessen your chances of becoming a victim of a crime. Shrubs should be trimmed back to a height of no more than three feet. An option would be to trim shrubs up from the bottom. Either way it would make that bush less likely to be a hiding place.

Some homeowners who have had problems in the past with peeping Toms or even strangers just walking through their yard have had success with planting thorny plants. Bougainvilleas are fast growing and have some pretty wicked thorns. Cactus or even rose bushes have been successful with keeping unwanted people away from windows.

Cut back any foliage which blocks your porch light and house numbers. If you were to call 9-1-1, you wouldn't want the responding law enforcement to have difficulties finding you. In an emergency situation, every second counts.

Overgrown bushes up against your house are not good for the house either. The house needs breathing room and airspace. An overgrown yard may give an appearance that no one lives there. You want your home to look like there is someone there who cares what is going on in the area and just might be watching out for the neighborhood.

When you cut those bushes back, consider raking the mulch away from against the house, as leaving it there could encourage ants, termites, roaches and other insects to enter your home. You still want at least 2 inches of mulch around plants to hold moisture in the soil and help control weeds, though you should allow a two inch space away from your plants as well.

It would be nice if everyone used plants that are native to Florida and or drought tolerant plants, and by their very nature require less water, but you can still be 'green' and not change all your landscaping. All of us have heard about water shortages and you will be happy to hear that by simply cutting back large overgrown shrubs, they will require less water. It only makes sense that smaller bushes needs are less than huge overgrown ones.

By cutting back your overgrown shrubs, you will become a part of the solution, with the following payoffs: less water used, less chance of providing a hiding place for criminals, giving your home room to breathe, keeping bugs away, and making your house look well groomed. If you want information to assist you with proper pruning techniques, contact the Marion County Master Gardeners at the Extension Office at 2232 NE Jacksonville Road or phone (352) 671-8400.

## Timely Gardening Tips for MARION COUNTY

by David Y. Goodman,  
UF/IFAS Marion County  
Master Gardener, In-Training  
(continued from Page 1)

shock of transplanting or “hardening off.” You can plant a garden for a few bucks if you start with seeds. And if you’ve got access to homemade compost or rotted horse or cow manure, you certainly don’t need to buy dirt. Even trenching in your kitchen wastes can make a big difference. Or you can take a cue from the Indians and dig holes, toss in some kitchen waste and or manure... then cover with soil and plant on top of that. From personal experience, I can tell you that’s a great way to grow squash and other vining crops.

As for tilling, consider double-digging instead. It certainly takes a lot longer, but the results are incredible. My double-dug beds significantly outperform areas where I’ve used tilling alone. Also, if you turn up an area of decent soil and don’t keep it damp, or mulched, or seeded immediately, it rapidly turns into a patch of sandy desert. Don’t do it! Topsoil is hard enough to maintain around here.

Vegetable gardening aside, this is also the time of year to bust out the pruning shears and attack your trees and shrubs. Make sure you sterilize the shears in between similar species so you don’t inadvertently spread disease. Alcohol is a great way to do this.

As the weather warms up, keep water needs in mind. This is usually a dry time of year and plants really feel the lack of water in warmer temperatures. Water well and top off beds with mulch to keep moisture in. Just make sure to water good and deep every week or so, rather than shallowly and often.

Enjoy a wonderful new year of gardening – and if you see a two-for-one sale on flower-printed gloves, pick up an extra pair for me. They’re... uh... for my wife.

# A Secret Garden

by Linda Krausnick, Master Gardener

Secret gardens are sanctuaries. They convey a sense of balance and order often missing in our everyday lives. They invite, embrace, and refresh us. They are a source of discovery and wonder. They engage the senses. Secret gardens plant seeds of hope in our hearts and minds. They are magic places.

Creating one’s own secret garden requires a solid plan that integrates several key elements. These include: selecting the location, the garden wall, the water feature, the focal point, determining spatial relationships, and last but not least, the selection of foliage and flowering plants.

Consider locating your garden in an area where you are naturally drawn. Find a quiet place, off the beaten path but still located near a convenient source of water and electricity. Remember, the amount of sunlight or shade, soil, and moisture conditions in the location you select will determine the kinds of shrubs and flowers that you will be able to grow successfully.

Secret gardens convey a sense of enclosure. A lattice fence is but one choice among many. Its open design works well for climbing vines and makes an excellent background for tall grasses, flowers, and shrubs. Yet, it’s open enough to let the breezes pass through. Hedges make a wonderful garden wall. Containers planted with trellised vines or small trees can convey a sense of enclosure in a patio garden.

Whether a gate, an ivy-covered arbor, or a narrow opening in the hedge, the entrance to the garden should create the experience of passing from one world into another. It must be inviting without revealing too much of the sanctuary that lies within.

Water brings life to a garden space. There are a number of options. Fountains come in a myriad of shapes and sizes. They can stand free, hang on a garden wall or grace a tabletop. Small ponds offer a more natural look and can be installed in-ground or above. Ponds will draw birds, bees and butterflies, and can be home to fish, frogs and plants.

The main focal point will be the first element to be noticed upon entering the garden and the point from which the rest of the design will radiate. A large specimen plant, a small tree, the water feature, a stately urn, or a small arbor may serve this purpose well.

It’s finally time to establish the shape and size of the planted areas as well as the open areas that will encourage movement about the garden space. Try to keep it simple. Limit the number of plant varieties. Plant choices are endless, but it’s wise to select varieties that are well suited to our Florida yards. Florida-Friendly Landscape™ plants are well adapted to our unique climates because they can thrive with less water, less fertilizer and fewer pesticides than their more exotic and unthrifty cousins require.

Let foliage plants dominate the landscape and use seasonal bloomers for color and accent. Several small beds, each planted with a single variety or varieties within the same color palette create a greater sense of order and stability than one large bed loaded with a myriad of foliage and color characteristics. Finally, don’t forget to include a few herbs for the table.

## A Secret Garden

by Linda Krausnick, Master Gardener  
(continued from page 2)

Secret gardens engage all of our senses. From outside the garden wall we hear the sound of trickling water. Once inside, the colors, textures, and the placement of our foliage and blooming plants become our visual feast. The scent of fragrant blooms and aromatic herbs invite us to relax and breathe deeply. Gravel and mulch crunch underfoot. We feel the coolness of the water as we stop to rest beside the pond where a small school of fish swim lazily just beneath the surface. For a few brief moments we feel at peace.

So, even when we reluctantly answer the call to return to the outside world, we leave this little sanctuary refreshed, secure in the knowledge that this magical place inside the garden wall will wait to be discovered another day.



## What's Bugging You?

by Urban Horticulture Agent Norma Samuel

**Find out what local residents are calling in about.**

*I planted a citrus from seed. How long will it take before it produces fruit?*

I hope you are very patient, because it can sometimes take up to 8 – 10 years for a fruit tree that is grown from seed produces fruit. There is no guarantee that fruit trees planted from seed will produce fruit that resembles the one you planted. In order to get similar fruits in a shorter time, with trees that are more resistant to insect and diseases purchase grafted or budded trees from a reputable source. For more information visit: [http://solutionsforyourlife.com/hot\\_topics/lawn\\_and\\_garden/propagating\\_fruits.html](http://solutionsforyourlife.com/hot_topics/lawn_and_garden/propagating_fruits.html)



## 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.Redner@marioncountyfl.org](mailto:Donna.Redner@marioncountyfl.org)

## FEBRUARY

### Bellevue Public Library Master Gardener Series

*Weeds—The Unwanted Plant*  
February 7  
10:30 a.m.—Noon  
Bellevue Public Library

### Marion County Public Library System Headquarters—Ocala Location Master Gardener Series

*Pests in the Florida Landscape*  
February 9, 2013  
2:00 p.m.—3:00 p.m.  
Marion County Public Library  
System Headquarters-Ocala  
Location

### Tuesday Gardening Series

*Fertilizing Your Florida Lawn*  
Learn how to read a fertilizer label, amount and timing of applications and spreader calibration.  
Tuesday, February 12, 2013  
10:00 a.m.—Noon  
UF/IFAS Marion County  
Extension Service Auditorium

**UPCOMING LECTURES/  
EVENTS:**

*(continued from Page 3)*

**Dunnellon Public Library  
Master Gardener Series**

*Vegetable Gardening*  
February 19, 2013  
2:00 p.m.—3:00 p.m.  
Dunnellon Public Library

**Marion Oaks Public  
Library Master Gardener  
Series**

*Weeds: The Unwanted Plant*  
February 21, 2013  
10:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m.  
Marion Oaks Public Library

**Items below are  
available for  
purchase at the  
UFIFAS Marion County  
Extension Service. Please  
come to see these**



**The Magnificent Magnolia**

by Anne Lambrecht Master Gardener

The Magnolia is a stately, broad leaf evergreen tree with large, shiny leaves and huge, creamy, fragrant flowers.

The Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) and Sweet Bay Magnolia (*Magnolia Virginiana*) are the trees most grown here in central Florida although many of the other species do just fine here, too. They are native to southeastern United States down to the Caribbean and parts of South America and also native to Southeast Asia. There are 210 species belonging to the family Magnolia. When the early botanist dudes were categorizing plants, they named it for a French botanist, Pierre Magnol, but one of its other names was “talauma”.

Magnolia is an ancient genus. (A clue would be the hard leaves and weird-looking seed pods). They were here before the bees and so the flowers evolved to encourage pollination by beetles. To avoid damage from pollinating beetles, the carpels (reproductive parts) of Magnolia flowers are extremely tough. Some fossils of the Magnolia family have been found dating to 95 million years ago.

The leaves, sometimes as much as 12” long, have dark green, highly glossy upper surfaces and an equally attractive lower surface covered by a dense, velvet layer of rich cinnamon brown hairs. The huge white flowers are richly aromatic and combined with the foliage make this one of our most beautiful native flowering trees. The Magnolia flower is the state flower of both Mississippi and Louisiana.

Magnolias can grow up to 65 feet high. The foliage is attractive all year. The huge, fragrant flowers bloom from late spring into autumn. Flower colors range from white to pink, red, purple or yellow. There are both evergreen and deciduous kinds of Magnolias. The “fruit” (what comes after the flower is finished) is a prominent cone with red fleshy seeds inside. The bark is smooth and grayish.

The Sweet Bay Magnolia is a small to medium sized tree, 20-30 feet high. They like moist to wet, acidic sites in partial shade to full sun. Zones 8-10. Sweet Bay can withstand “wet feet” and is good for areas near ponds. They are also good in the home garden as long as the soil is acidic or the leaves might become yellow and chlorotic. The undersides of the leaves are a silvery-green and the flowers have a crisp lemon scent. Since Sweet Bay has a large distribution throughout Florida, it is important to obtain locally adapted strains for your garden. There are many “improved” cultivars that are propagated by way of grafting or specially treated seed cuttings. It is so important to buy your trees from a reputable nursery that stands by their stock.

Magnolias like rich, moist sites in full sun to light shade. They are not attractive to deer. Most nurseries only carry a few varieties so in order to get a prized specimen; you’ll probably need to hunt through mail-order catalogs.

There are just a few drawbacks to Magnolias: some will take up to ten years to flower. Their dense shade and shallow roots make it impossible for grass to grow beneath the canopy. The roots often crack or uplift pavement if planted between sidewalk and curb. Leaves drop 365 days a year. Fallen leaves and cones decompose slowly. They grow to 40 feet wide so they take up a large amount of garden space. All are hard to move once established. We needed a fork lift to move ours to the backyard.



## The Magnificent Magnolia

by Anne Lambrecht Master Gardener  
(continued from page 4)

What Magnolias need:

**Careful Siting**--pick a location where the shallow, fleshy roots won't be damaged by digging or by soil compaction from constant foot traffic.

**Soil**--fairly rich, well drained neutral to slightly acid soil amended with plenty of organic matter at planting time.

**Mulching**--at least in the early years, keep a cooling mulch over the root area.  
**Watering**--irrigate deeply and thoroughly, but don't waterlog the soil or the tree will drown. Only Sweet Bay can take lots of water.

**Fertilizing**--feed trees if new growth is scanty or weak, or if you see significant die back despite adequate watering and drainage. Use a controlled release product; magnolias are very susceptible to salt damage from over fertilizing, resulting in burned leaf edges.

**Pruning**--for deciduous magnolias, the best time is after bloom; for evergreen kinds, do the job before the spring growth flush (January or February). The best method is to remove the entire twig or limb right to its base.

Magnolias seldom have serious pest or disease problems. Scale and mealy bugs are known pests.

There has been some cancer research done on magnolia seeds. The research, funded by the National Institute of Health, yielded an encouraging discovery: the cones have substances that inhibit the growth of new blood vessels, critical in stopping the growth of tumors. In fact, the substances cut tumor growth by half in lab mice.

### Sources:

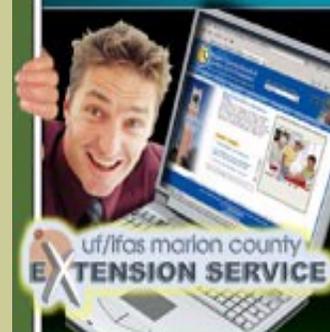
[A Gardener's Guide to Florida's Native Plants by Rufino Osorio](#)  
[The Southern Living Garden Book](#)



Foundation for the Gator Nation  
An Equal Opportunity Institution

### 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?



We Have Answers