



Table of Contents:



Vertical Vines

Timely Gardening Tips

“What’s Bugging You?”

Interested in Becoming a Master Gardener?

UF/IFAS Marion County Master Gardeners to hold Summer Plant Sale

May Calendar

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University of Florida IFAS  
Marion County Horticulture Agent

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

There is a movement in Florida to encourage greater use of native plants. A paper written by Douglas Tallamy, PhD included the following information that supports the need to add more native plants to landscapes. Dr. Tallamy states that non-native plantings are reducing the abundance of birds in landscaped areas. Following are some changes that occur when an all native plant site is developed. They are:

4 times more caterpillars which are food for birds

54% more birds stay in area

66% more bird species are seen

77% more pairs of breeding birds build nests, and

117% more native birds become residents

Monthly Newsletter

May 2011

## VERTICAL VINES

by Anne Lambrecht, UF/IFAS Marion County Master Gardener

People who have been bit by the gardening bug often feel the need for more space in the garden. We always need more room for more plants, more flowers. We can't help it, it's a sickness. I've got the solution: vertical plants. After all, there's tons of room in the air! I'm talking about vining plants.

There are all kinds of vines to choose from: flowering vines, native vines, vegetable vines, even bad vines. Vines in the landscape have many uses: they can be used as living walls to provide privacy or to screen unsightly views (maybe nasty neighbors). Vines' flowers and seeds attract wildlife. On an arbor or a patio they provide shade in the summer and cover and nesting areas for birds and other creatures. When grown on an arbor they can provide a "doorway" to an outside room, hide or mask unsightly posts, poles and dead trees. Vines add interest to walls, fences and other hard spaces.

There are three types of vines: clinging, twining and sprawling. Clinging vines attach themselves using adhesive roots or tendrils. They can be difficult to remove and their roots can loosen mortar between bricks and concrete blocks in masonry walls so be careful of what you choose. Examples of clinging vines are English ivy, trumpet creeper and creeping fig. Twining vines actually encircle the support they're on. These vines will spiral in only one direction. If you force them to spiral in the opposite direction, most will not cooperate and the vine may be damaged. Twining vines include mandevilla, confederate jasmine and allamanda. Passion vine and cross vine climb by means of tendrils that curl around supports when provided. Sprawling or clambering vines are basically shrubs that produce long runners but need you to attach them to a support. Examples of sprawling vines are bougainvillea and clematis.

Let's take vines in a different direction with a whole world of variety: vegetables. Vining crops can produce huge quantities in a surprisingly small area. Getting vines off the ground has health benefits for the plants, too. Fruits that don't lie on the ground are less likely to get soil borne diseases. And because there's better air circulation around plants on a support, there's less chance of fungal disease. Vertical gardens are easier to prune, maintain and harvest than a large garden. The fruits are easier to find and harvesting is not a pain in the back.

Vertical success depends on your support system. You need something strong enough to support the weight of the vine and easy for you to access. You can pay quite a bit for elaborate decorative wooden or plastic trellises, arbors, tuteurs. But vertical supports need not be expensive or complicated—a few wooden posts or bamboo poles tied together with garden twine or netting are all you need.

Keep in mind that vertical supports, when full of foliage and fruits, will cast shade on the surrounding garden. Try to keep your tallest structures on the north side of the garden plot.

Some veggies are better suited to train as vines than others. Consider these favorites:

- Pole beans - climb as high as your support and produce higher yields over a longer period.
- Cucumbers - natural climbers, fruits are straighter. Select indeterminate types.
- Melons - select small or medium size fruits and keep in mind that they get heavy.
- Peas - too hot here right now for peas but when cool, select taller varieties, to 6' tall.
- Pumpkins and squash - select small or medium sizes as they require lots of room.
- Sweet potatoes - tubers are underground and vines natural climbers.
- Tomatoes - choose indeterminate varieties, need to attach them to the support.



### Timely Gardening Tips for MARION COUNTY

by Master Gardener, Jo Leyte-Vidal  
(continued from page 1)

Use caution when buying plants to be sure that you are not bringing pests or diseases into your garden. Check the plant carefully along the stem, at the soil line and the underside of leaves. A second step is to isolate the plant for a few days before planting.

Why? If there are undetected pest eggs present they may hatch and be visible to you.

**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 20 acres of land? What is the difference between type 1 and type 2 diabetes?



uf/ifas marion county  
**EXTENSION SERVICE**

**We Have Answers**



## VERTICAL VINES

by Anne Lambrecht, UF/IFAS Marion County Master Gardener  
(continued from Page 1)

Native vines benefit your landscape in many ways: they look really cool, they grow fast, have showy blooms, colorful fruits, interesting leaves, bark and seedpods. Most are disease resistant and can be trained vertically or even as a ground cover. They are a little tricky, but not impossible, to find (think mail order). Examples are coral honeysuckle, Dutchman's pipe, cross vine, passion flower vine, yellow jessamine, trumpet honeysuckle, American wisteria.

Some wonderful flowering vines are bougainvillea, red or white bleeding heart (not your "northern" bleeding heart), butterfly pea, hyacinth bean, gloriosa lily, mandevilla, scarlet runner bean, Mexican flame vine, morning glories, clematis, rangoon creeper, climbing roses, thunbergia (blue sky vine), confederate jasmine, cardinal climber, black eyed susan vine.

Bad vines are ecological invaders. Yes, they are beautiful, the flowers and foliage are lovely and that's why they're here. Some have been planted on purpose for animal fodder. There have been instances whereby over-zealous gardeners who take clippings or seeds sneak them in their pockets over the border past the noses of those cute agriculture beagles. They don't realize the dire consequences of these plants becoming invasive. Because they are non-native, they don't have many natural predators or diseases and can take over, many aggressively, predisposing native habitats and communities. Some examples of these vines that are already here and on whom we are waging war: Chinese and Japanese honeysuckle and wisteria, English ivy, air potato, creeping fig, and the infamous kudzu. There are many more invaders in south Florida.

I've got a great thunbergia – blue sky vine – which has large blue flowers with yellow throats. It is so pretty and really adds the right amount of shade on our pergola. But this vine can be, well, a tad "aggressive" with shoots going off in all directions. To keep it in check I asked the husband to help me trim it back. Well, he certainly did. He whacked that vine so far back, I thought he killed it. Then he kept right on going with his saw, trimming all the passion vines, trumpet creepers, and all the other vines on our pergola. Now there's no shade at all until they grow back. But I know they will.

Cited: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mg097> Flowering Vines for Florida

To reach Anne Lambrecht, [annegarden@embarqmail.com](mailto:annegarden@embarqmail.com)

We are now on Facebook, see us at:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Marion-County-Master-Gardeners/156017997788791>

Once on the page, click on the "Like" button to follow our postings.



## What's Bugging You?

by Urban Horticulture Agent, Norma Samuel

Find out what local residents are calling in about



Lovebugs are here, what can I do about them?

Lovebugs are here indeed. Before I answer your question let me first dispel the myth that the University of Florida brought them here. That's not the case. They were first seen in Louisiana in the 1920's and by 1947 they were sighted in Escambia County in Florida and arrived in Central Florida in 1965.

Lovebugs, *Plecia nearctica*, are small black flies with a red thorax with the male about ¼ inch and the female about 1/3 inch long. There are two flights per year, one in April / May and the other in August / September each lasting about 4 – 5 weeks. They are often seen stuck together because they begin to mate soon after the eggs hatch; hence the name love bugs. The females live for 2 – 3 days.

The adults lay their eggs in the soil beneath decaying vegetation and as the larvae emerges it feeds on the decaying plant matter which adds to the organic material in the soil. The pupal stage of the life cycle lasts approximately 7 – 10 days. The other good news is that adults are harmless; they do not sting or bite. They are active during the day and stay on low vegetation at night. The adults can often be found feeding on nectar plants like sweet clover and golden rod.

In spite of all the good, lovebugs can be a nuisance to motorists. They get smashed on windshields and vehicle grates and their fatty remains can obscure your vision and even clog radiator fins. The latter can result in a fire. The fatty remains can damage the finish on your car. Wash the car regularly and apply baby oil to make it easier to remove the fatty remains.

## INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MASTER GARDENER?

by Norma Samuel, UF/IFAS Urban Horticulture Agent

Well, now is the time for you to seriously consider becoming a part of an excellent team of volunteers. We're now recruiting individuals who are interested in gardening that will enjoy sharing what they learn with others.

Master Gardeners have been making their presence known in Marion County since 1981. That's right, 30 years now. They assist the Urban Horticulture Agent by providing solutions to garden questions from several thousand Marion County residents each year. They also provide the latest research-based information to residents through garden seminars, regular columns in local papers or magazines, monthly garden clinics at the Marion County Public Libraries, demonstration gardens, the Annual Marion County Master Gardener Spring Festival, youth projects and many more activities.

A new Master Gardener Orientation Session is scheduled for June 1 from 10 am to noon in the Extension Auditorium, 2232 N.E. Jacksonville Road. You will be provided with an application packet at the end of the orientation session that you will need to complete and return by June 7 in order to be considered for an interview. Interviews will be conducted June 13 - 14. Classes are offered during the day, because that is the time when we receive the most calls from homeowners seeking our assistance. They will run for thirteen Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. starting August 17, 2011.

The deadline to register for the new Master Gardener Orientation Session is Friday, May 27 at 5pm. Call Donna at 671-8400 if you would like to get your name on the list. Don't let the opportunity to learn tips to improve your personal garden and to educate residents on ways to keep our community beautiful while at the same time protecting our environmental resources pass you by. Sign up today to become a Master Gardener Volunteer!

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

### MICRO-IRRIGATION:

- Eco-friendly
- Plants love it
- Saves time & money



**UPCOMING LECTURES/EVENTS:**

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

**MAY**

**Bed Bugs: Not Just in Your Bed!**

May 11, 2011

8:00 am to Noon

Marion County Extension Auditorium

**MASTER GARDENERS TO HOLD SUMMER PLANT SALE**

**WHO:** UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service Master Gardener

**WHAT:** Master Gardener Summer Plant Sale

**WHEN:** May 14 • 8am - 12pm

**WHERE:** UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service  
2232 NE Jacksonville Road, Ocala

**WHY:** All season long, Marion County Extension Service Master Gardener volunteers have braved both sun and rain to grow everything from sweet blueberries and brilliant flowers to shade trees. This month they will offer county residents the fruits of their labor at their annual Summer Plant Sale. Every plant purchased at the sale benefits Extension Service’s educational programs, demonstration gardens, plant clinics and other services offered to Marion County citizens.

Garden goodies available for purchase will include:

- Native and Florida-Friendly vegetation
- Shrubs and perennials
- Butterfly-attracting plants
- Blueberry bushes and Muscadine grape vines

Visitors may also attend “Planting for Butterflies” demonstrations held at 8:15am and 10am.

Master Gardeners are a group of volunteers who serve under the direction of the UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service to educate residents on how to design, plant and maintain their gardens and landscapes using Florida-Friendly techniques.



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