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### UF/IFAS Extension Duval County

#### Sept/Oct 2023

### Extension Update by Larry Figart

"Love the trees until their leaves fall off, then encourage them to try again next year." Chad Sugg (singer/songwriter)

As the days become shorter, hopefully the daytime temperatures will start cooling down. Also our lawns should need mowing less frequently. Along with less mowing, take note that we should not be fertilizing our lawns beyond September. Since they are not growing as much, they are not needing as much fertilizer.

It is also a great time to be gardening. It's time to plant our cool-season vegetables like collards, broccoli, lettuce, cabbage and chard. Fall is also the best time to plant trees. Planting trees now gives them some time to get established before the spring dry season.

**Do you want to continue getting the New Leaf?** You will receive a separate email from us with a link to a Qualtrics survey. The information gathered in the survey helps us improve our newsletter and maintain funding. Please respond promptly so we can determine if this newsletter was helpful. Additionally, it helps us to update our mailing list to ensure that you continue to receive our newsletter.

### What's That (answers on page 8)

Note the yellow legs and the yellow abdominal segment



All images credit: University of Georgia



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Note the narrow waist

Narrow

waist

### Around the Yard by Tonya Ashworth

### **Compost Contamination and Your Vegetable Garden**

Recently, someone emailed me photos of vegetable plants with cupped and deformed leaves. Strange, deformed new growth on plants is a common symptom of herbicide damage, but she had not sprayed any herbicides near her garden. The most likely culprit? Her compost was contaminated with long-lasting herbicide residue. There are four persistent herbicides that can cause compost contamination. They are clopyralid, aminopyralid, aminocyclopyrachlor, and picloram. These active ingredient names are found in several herbicides that control broadleaf weeds. They are used on hayfields, horse pastures, golf courses, roadways, and grain crops. When horses or cows eat hay (or graze in pastures) that has been treated with the herbicide, the herbicides pass through their digestive tracts and is present in their manure. When this manure is turned into compost, the herbicides are still there. Then, when the compost is applied to your garden, it inhibits the growth of certain plants.

The plants most affected by the persistent herbicides are peas, beans, tomatoes, potatoes, eggplants, peppers, sunflowers, lettuce, cucumbers, squash, pumpkins, and watermelons. These plants will show symptoms such as stunted growth, reduced fruit set, cupped leaves, failure of secondary leaf growth after seeds germinate, and compound leaves that stay single; such as with peas. If you suspect that you have contaminated compost, there is no need to worry if you ate the food. The food is safe and the herbicides have passed out of your body safely just as it did for the horses and cows that consumed it before you.

To prevent contamination in your garden, make sure you know where your compost comes from. Not all composting facilities perform the lab tests to ensure that there are no persistent herbicides. If you are in doubt about your compost, you can perform a bioassay yourself. You will need 6-8 pots with drainage holes, bagged potting soil, your compost, and some seeds. Fill 3 or 4 grow pots with the compost in question and fill 3 or 4 grow pots with bagged potting mix that does not contain compost. Plant 2 to 4 pea or tomato seeds per container and care for them exactly the same. Compare the growth of the plants in the compost to the control group after 3 weeks has passed.



Close-up of pyridine carboxylic acid herbicide damage on tomato foliage. Photo credit: Univ. of Georgia



Persistent herbicide damage to eggplant. Photo credit: Cary Oshins, US Composting Council

### Out on a Limb by Larry Figart

#### Oh the Gall!!

A common question we get at the extension office has to do with little round balls falling out of trees. Sometimes they are fuzzy, and sometimes they are smooth. The fuzzy balls falling to the ground are called woolly oak leaf galls. They are usually attached to the lower surface of an oak leaf and fall off the leaf. The smooth BB-like gall is called the live oak pea gall. When I first encountered these galls, I wondered what made them. After a little research, I found out there are many of types of galls on trees and they can be caused by insects, fungi and even bacteria. Most are harmless and are more interesting than they are detrimental. The galls we will be learning about in this article are all formed by insects.



Gall wasp. Photo credit: Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org The most prolific insect that causes galls is called a gall wasp. Most gall wasps are in the Cynipidae family and are called cynipid wasps. These wasps are very small and all, but a few species are less than 1/4 inch in length. Their color varies greatly. Some species are black, others are red, yellow, or amber. The larvae are legless and both larvae and pupae are white in color. The female gall wasp will lay her eggs in actively growing plant tissue. The plant tissue then starts growing around the egg, protecting and providing food for the gall-maker until it matures.

Most oak wasp galls are harmless to the tree. In some cases, the galls can cause superficial damage and only on occasion, can they cause dieback in heavy infestations. Chemical control is usually not very effective. However, if a tree is continuously being infested, target the adult gall-makers before they lay eggs in the spring with a contact insecticide. Correct timing is very important.

One of the most noticeable galls on oaks looks like a sandspur attached to the twig. It is called the leafy oak gall. If you carefully cut the gall in half, you often see the developing larvae inside. Another common gall is called the oak apple gall. They are round, green galls that are filled with a spongy mass. There is one larva encased in the center of the gall. I once convinced a co-worker that it was the fruit of an oak tree.

Lately, we have been seeing a very severe infestation of roughbullet galls on live oaks in commercial plantings. It appears that in the most severe cases, the tips of heavily infested branches die back. Some researchers are looking into whether or not there are any live oak cultivars that are more or less resistant to roughbullet galls.



Leafy Oak Gall. Photo credit: Jim Baker, N.C.S.U, Bugwood.org

Pruning and destroying infested plant parts is an effective, but labor-intensive, way to minimize gall problems. Without pruning, leaf galls will either drop off with the leaves or "jump" off by themselves. However, those on the branches, roots, and stems of trees may persist harmlessly for several years.

Host plant selection is important, but more work is needed to identify resistant plant varieties and species to certain gall-makers. Gall susceptibility is likely linked to a plant's genetics and age. In general, galls are more likely to form on actively growing plant parts. Maintain normal fertilization, irrigation, and other approved practices to keep plants healthy. For more information on insect galls go to: <u>https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/galls-outgrowths/</u>

## Growing in the Garden by Beth Marlowe

#### **Time to Plant Strawberries**

We all know Florida is a bit different than the rest of the U.S., and that difference extends to our gardeing. More temperate regions plant strawberries in spring, but here, we plant them in September and October. Read on to find out why!

Strawberry plants prefer temperatures between 50°-80°F. They need daylengths less than about 14 hours per day



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to flower and set fruit. When do we have those conditions? You guessed it - fall and winter. We plant bare-root strawberries in October, and by the time Valentine's Day approaches, we may get our first berries. They keep producing until temperatures get too hot. Once production declines, we usually pull them up and plant spring crops. So, unlike northern gardeners, we usually grow strawberries as annuals, rather than perennials.

We can grow strawberries in all kinds of containers, pots, beds and hydroponic systems. However you do it, try to keep the berries off the soil to minimize fungal problems. Crowns and leaves are frost and light freeze tolerant, but flowers and fruit can be damaged. Covering the

plants that have flowers and fruit when freeze conditions are predicted will help maximize early production.

You can sometimes find transplants at local garden centers, and you can buy bare-root plants online. If you'd like to learn more about growing your own strawberries, join our strawberry class on October 25. Tickets are \$15 and include 10 bare-root plants to take home. You can read more in the UF IFAS publication Growing Strawberries in the Florida Home Garden.

## Growing in the Garden by Beth Marlowe

### Green Is My Favorite Fall Color

Don't get me wrong... I enjoy northern states' fiery maples, sweet birches and dogwoods in the fall but my favorite colors in the fall are greens. I love the life-affirming green colors, and the myriad shapes and textures that our cool season leafy vegetable crops show us as the rest of the plant world is going dormant.



Red Giant Mustard. This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND

If you're not a fan of greens (yet!) you may want to reconsider. Many of them, such as kale or mustard are beautiful plants that you can add to your ornamental beds for pops of color and texture. Lettuces can make an edible border. Radicchio is an underappreciated crop that shows stunning reds and greens around other larger crops or shrubs. Besides their looks, greens offer us great sources of vitamins A, C, E and K, as well as calcium, potassium, iron, folate and fiber. If you're looking for a way to improve your health, adding a daily serving of leafy greens is a great place to start.

You may already be familiar with collards, mustard, and turnip greens, and they are wonderful. But there are many more greens to try that may not be as well known here in northeast Florida, and are equally

tasty and nutritious. Two examples are Tat Soi and Stem Lettuce, or Celtuce. Both have been grown in China for centuries and are beautiful greens to try.

Regardless of which greens you prefer, they all grow well in our fall and winter gardens. Many can be started from seed indoors in September, and then planted out into the garden in October after the weather cools. They

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## Growing in the Garden by Beth Marlowe

#### **Garden Chores**

September and October may be next to each other on the calendar, but they are quite different months for gardening here in northeast Florida. September is a very transitional month. It usually starts off too hot, and often brings us tropical rains in sudden large quantities. But by the end of the month, we often start to feel those cooler nighttime temperatures. By October, we are firmly in the cool season. Days are often sunny and much less humid. Nights are refreshingly cool. How does this impact our edible gardening?



In early September we prepare for a new gardening season! We start seeds indoors for transplanting to the garden. Many of our cool-season crops germinate well at average indoor temperatures. We grow them under fluorescent or LED tube lights for 4-6 weeks until they are ready to transition to the outside. While they are growing happily indoors, we refill any beds that need soil or organic matter, repair beds, set up irrigation for the crops we will be growing and weed, weed, weed! We don't want to start off a new season with old weeds.

By October our beds and our seedlings are usually ready for planting. We harden the seedlings off for a week or two by

gradually exposing them to the conditions they will face in their new outdoor beds. We expose them to sun for a short time each day; we expose them to light wind with an oscillating fan; and we gradually reduce watering. When a cloudy day is forecasted, we put them in their new locations. We also sow some of our seeds directly where they will grow in the garden.

For more information about which crops to plant now and how to do it, refer to the <u>Florida Vegetable Gar-</u> <u>dening Guide</u>. If you'd like to see what we're growing, join us for an <u>Urban Demonstration Garden Open</u> <u>House</u> on Saturday, Oct. 21. Pre-register in Eventbrite. Tickets are only \$5. We look forward to sharing our garden and experiences with you!

### Growing in the Garden by Beth Marlowe (continued from page 4)



Tat Soi. This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA

tend to be relatively pest and disease free, need only healthy soil, a little supplemental watering and fertilizing.

Some can be harvested a few leaves at a time, so they continue producing throughout the cool season. And when the browns of winter are bringing you down, those beautiful greens can perk you right back up.

If you'd like to learn more about growing greens in your home garden, join our class <u>It's Easy Growing Greens</u> on Wednesday, September 27. Pre-register in Eventbrite. Tickets are only \$5. Read more from UF/IFAS at <u>Gardening Solutions: Greens</u>.

### Friendly Landscapes by Stephanie Means

### **Dispelling 3 Common Myths of Florida-Friendly Landscaping**

When you hear "Florida-Friendly Landscape" what do you picture? Is it a well-kept design that fits in with the rest of the neighborhood or a wild and untamed eye-sore? Do you see an abundance of flowers and wildlife or a lot of weeds and vines? Lately I've heard a lot of buzz from people who have the wrong impression about Florida-Friendly Landscaping<sup>TM</sup> so here I'm going to dispel the top 3 myths.

**Myth 1: You must use all native plants.** While it's true that native plants play a vital role in every landscape ecosystem, a Florida-Friendly Landscape (FFL) isn't limited to just native plants. Incorporating natives in your landscape is important, especially in areas along the water such as retention ponds, lakes, creeks, rivers and the ocean. Equally as important is



Florida Friendly Landscape Image Credit: UF/IFAS FFL™ Program

avoiding prohibited and invasive plants, matching the right plant with the right growing conditions, and knowing the mature sizes and characteristics of the plants used. <u>The Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Guide to Plant</u> <u>Selection and Landscape Design</u> takes the guesswork out of choosing plants. It provides plenty of options of native and non-invasive plants that are adapted to north FL, and it's even available as an app so you can check plants on the go right from the store! Find it here <u>https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/resources/apps/plant-guide/</u>

**Myth 2: They look overgrown.** Some people believe the best way to be Florida-Friendly is to let what grows grow, mow infrequently (if at all), and just let nature take care of itself. While that sounds like an environmentally responsible decision, there is more to it than that. A FFL must contain defined planting beds that are maintained to remain aesthetically pleasing as well as to monitor and control invasive and prohibited plants. Additionally, working towards a FFL isn't a ticket to bypass your HOA and do what you want. Most HOA's and municipalities have covenants and ordinances which apply to all residents, regardless of whether they are following FFL principles or not. Allowing weeds and wildflowers to take over your yard and calling it Florida -Friendly or replacing all the plants in the yard without first consulting your HOA architectural review board could potentially result in penalties or enforcement actions.



Florida Friendly Landscape Image Credit: UF/IFAS FFL™ Program

**Myth 3: You can't or shouldn't use any fertilizer or pesticide.** It isn't an all or nothing thing. Some circumstances may require fertilizer or pesticides to maintain good plant health. FFL principles encourage homeowners to fertilize appropriately, and to identify any pests and use the least toxic method of pest control first. Some plants such as palms need fertilizer to grow optimally and without nutrient deficiencies. If a soil test indicates a nutrient deficiency in a yard, lightly applying slow-release fertilizer (NOT a weed 'n feed product) to turfgrass during its growing season is acceptable. Handling fertilizer and pesticides responsibly are important principles. Knowing exactly what, whe, and how much to apply is crucial to avoid damaging plants, encouraging pests, and polluting the environment with excess When in doubt, reach out to our <u>Master Gardener Volunteers</u> for help with all things fertilizer and pesticide related.

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### Friendly Landscapes by Stephanie Means (continued from page 6)

Simply put, Florida-Friendly Landscapes are attractive landscapes that protect our natural resources by conserving water, reducing pollution, and creating wildlife habitat. Achieving a FFL is something everyone is capable of whether they live in a suburban HOA, a cottage the beach, or out in the country. It's especially easy to achieve when planning a landscape in new construction. The slightly higher cost up front will save a homeowner a lot of time and money in the long term. To learn more about the Florida-Friendly Landscaping<sup>™</sup> Program and how you can help protect and conserve our most precious natural resources please visit our <u>Duval County website</u> or <u>www.floridafriendlylandscaping.com</u>



Florida Friendly Landscape Image Credit: UF/IFAS FFL™ Program

### Around the Garden by Tonya Ashworth (continued from page 2)

If you believe your garden soil is contaminated, what can you do? Well, there are a few options.

You could wait for it to go away in a few months to a few years, depending on microbial degradation. It is also dependent on weather conditions and the amount of active ingredient you have in your soil. To speed up the degradation, you can till the soil, add water, add organic matter, and a bit of fertilizer to get the microbes going.

You could also plant a grass cover crop, which will absorb the herbicide. Then, harvest the grass and dispose of it in the trash or spread the clippings over an area where only grasses need to grow.

The third option, and most laborious, is to remove all the soil and spread it out over an area such as a pasture or a fencerow. If you go with a remediation option, just perform your soil bioassays again until you get normal growth in all your test pots before replanting in the garden.



Low-dose aminopyralid damage on tomato, the damage is in the newest tissues. Credit: J. A. Ferrell, UF/IFAS

#### What to Plant in Sept and Oct

Annuals: Dianthus, Lobelia, Petunia, Phlox, Shasta daisy, Snapdragon, Flowering Kale and Cabbage

Bulbs: Amaryllis, Aztec lily, Calla, Grape hyacinth, Iris, Lachenalia (leopard lily), Narcissus, Snowflake, Watsonia, and Zephyr lily (rain lily). In October you can add Daffodil, Gladiolus, Kaffir lily, Marica (walking iris), Moraea, Society garlic, Spider lily, Anemone, Hyacinth, and Pineapple lily

Vegetables: Beets, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Collards, Kale, Kohlrabi, Leeks, Lettuce, Mustard, Onions, Parsley, Radish, and Turnips

Herbs: Dill, Fennel, Oregano, and Sage

#### **Upcoming Classes** Scan Code for current list of

**ALL Duval Extension Classes** 



Date, Time, Cost	Event & Registration	Location
<b>September 18</b> 2:00 pm Free	Fertilize your yard the Florida FriendlyWaySeptember is the last application of the yearfor lawn fertilizers! Learn how to choose afertilizer and how much to apply for youryard.	Extension Office 1010 N McDuff Ave.
September 25 2-3:30 pm \$10.00	September Backyard Hen Training This informational course is on caring for backyard hens and is a prerequisite to receive a Backyard Hen Permit from Duval County.	Extension Office 1010 N McDuff Ave.
September 27 10:00-11:30 am \$5.00	Its Easy Growing Greens Learn about all the greens you can grow in fall and winter, and how easy it is! Class participants will receive a leafy, green seedling to take home.	Extension Office 1010 N McDuff Ave.
October 10 1:00 pm \$70.00	Make and Take Rain Barrel Workshop Save some \$\$\$ on your water bill. Learn about Florida-Friendly Landscaping <sup>™</sup> and save the rain to water your garden!	Extension Office 1010 N McDuff Ave.
<b>October 21</b> 9:00 am \$5.00	Urban Demonstration Garden Open House Come see what edibles we are growing in October at the Urban Garden and take home a veggie or herb seedling!	Urban Demonstration Garden 1032 Superior St

# What's That? Answer!

The Georgia Department of Agriculture (GDA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the University of Georgia (UGA) have confirmed the discovery of a yellowlegged hornet in Georgia for the first time. This is the first detection of live yellow-legged hornets in the open United States. There are many domestic lookalikes to the yellowlegged hornet that are native to the U.S.

USDA has a hornet identification tool with specific information to help differentiate the yellow-legged hornet from other species.



(Sphecius speciosus)

**IFAS** Extension UNIVERSITY of FLORID

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