



# Know, Sow, Grow Flagler County

UF/IFAS Extension Flagler County

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## What's Wrong With My St Augustine Grass?

Mimi Vreeland  
Residential Horticulture Agent,  
UF/IFAS Extension Flagler County

As we find ourselves nearing the end of summer, we may also find ourselves amidst a lawn in less than ideal condition. In fact, the peak temperatures and humidity of a typical Florida summer, combined with frequent, tropical downpours, are the perfect ingredients for attracting certain lawn pests and diseases.

The most notorious of St. Augustine Grass Summer pests and diseases include, but are not limited to, Chinch Bug, Gray Leaf Spot, and Take-All-Root-Rot. At the very beginning of a lawn's decline, the cause may be difficult to identify. The signs and symptoms of these three lawn problems can be distinguished by identifying the subtle differences between them as described below:

### Chinch Bug

Like most insects, Southern Chinch Bug (*Blissus insularis* Barber) develop more rapidly when temperatures are higher and are most active in Zone 9a from mid-March to mid-October. They commonly produce 3-4 generations during that 7-month period and can cause widespread damage to susceptible lawns. Heightened Chinch Bug damage typically emerges in large sunny areas of lawn



Chinch Bug Damage

that have thick layers of thatch where the insects can feed and hide from natural predators. Signs of Chinch Bug damage appear as circular patches in hot, full-sun areas of the lawn that expand in an outward direction as the insects move toward healthier undamaged grass. Chinch bugs are detected by removing a section of grass with its thatch near the edge of a dying

area and then thrashing the grass section against a smooth, white surface. If there is an infestation, the adult Chinch Bugs, which are just under 1/4 inch in length can be observed with the naked eye.



Chinch Bug

### Gray Leaf Spot

Warm, humid, and rainy periods in Florida provide optimal conditions for the Gray Leaf Spot fungal disease (*Pyricularia grisea*). An easy way to identify this fungus is to look for areas of the lawn that are thinning and appear pale and weakened. At closer inspection, grass blades will possess leaf spots that resemble greasy, water streaks with olive-colored borders. This disease occurs more readily on new, lush growth associated with excessive nitrogen fertilization and environmental stress associated with improper summer applications of herbicide, fertilizer, and/or irrigation water.



Gray Leaf Spot Damage



Gray Leaf Spot

associated with improper summer applications of herbicide, fertilizer, and/or irrigation water.

### Take-All-Root-Rot

In Zone 9a, the fungal disease Take-All-Root-Rot (*Gaeumannomyces graminis* var. *graminis*) is quite common during the Summer and early Fall months at the peak of rainy season.

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For current and past issues of this newsletter go to:

<http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/flagler/lawn-and-garden/horticulture-newsletters/>





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Similar to the majority of fungal diseases, environmental stressors will increase a lawn's susceptibility to disease development. Unlike Gray Leaf Spot, which attacks the leaf blades, Take-All-Root-Rot attacks the root system. Under high levels of environmental stress, St. Augustine Grass will begin to appear yellow and chlorotic as the roots decay and can no longer provide the lawn with energy to photosynthesize properly. The disease is detectable in chlorotic patches of lawn where leaf blades separate easily from their rotting root system. The remaining stolons and rhizomes at the ground surface will reveal black lesions and patches of rot.

**Pest & Disease Prevention and Control**

The most effective way to prevent pest and disease development in St. Augustine Grass is by consistently following Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ practices for lawn care. These practices include proper application and management of fertilizer, water, and annual aeration to minimize thatch build-up and poor air-circulation. The best time to aerate your St. Augustine lawn is late Spring or early Summer at the height of the growing season when your lawn has the best chance of recovery. De-thatching is not recommended for St. Augustine Grass, because it is too damaging to the turf's stolons. For more information about lawn care as well as disease prevention and control, please see the following link: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/LH010> or contact our Master Gardeners at [mgardener@flaglercounty.org](mailto:mgardener@flaglercounty.org).

\*Photos Courtesy of UF/IFAS Extension

**Potter Wasp**

Mary Ellen Setting, Volunteer Master Gardener

Beneficial insects are not always easy to recognize, especially if they look like they pack a painful sting when disturbed. Potter wasps, *Eumenes fraternus*, provide natural control of many types of caterpillars and some beetle larvae. Potter wasps are one of several predatory insects that build mud nests on the sides of buildings, on window sills, screens and shrubs. The mud nest, or brood cell, of the Potter wasp is very distinctive in that it looks like a miniature pot or jug about the size of a marble.



Credit: Lyle J. Buss, UF

Adult Potter wasps are 3/8" – 3/4" long, black with ivory markings on the abdomen and thorax and feed on flower nectar. To build the nest, the adult female collects water then mixes it with soil. Mud pellets are transported in the wasp's mandibles with the aid of its forelegs. It takes one to two hours to build the entire nest. The female then inserts her abdomen into the nest and lays an egg that is suspended by a filament on the upper surface of the mud cell. Next, she gathers from one to 12 caterpillars that she injected with venom to paralyze and preserve as the food supply for her young, and places them in the pot.



Credit: M.E. Setting

The pot is then plugged. The new adult wasp emerges from the brood cell by chewing a hole through the thin side of the pot.

Since Potter wasps are rarely aggressive and not prone to stinging, leave them alone and let them control destructive caterpillars in your garden. Once the nest is empty, you can scrape it off with a blade.

For more information, visit: [IN726-Dr2529408z.pdf \(ufl.edu\)](https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/IN726-Dr2529408z.pdf); [Potter's Wasp Pot on the Wall - UF/IFAS Extension Orange County \(ufl.edu\)](#); and

[All-natural preservative; no refrigeration required. - UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County \(ufl.edu\)](#)

**Florida Friendly Landscaping Principle #3 – Fertilize Appropriately**

Lori Powell, Master Gardener Volunteer

Fertilizing appropriately following this landscape principle involves fertilizing your plants and lawn when they need it but also preventing pollution. Run-off from over fertilizing can seep through soil into the groundwater and storm drains and flow into ponds and streams harming the environment. In addition, never apply fertilizer when the weather forecast calls for heavy rain and do not fertilize within 10 feet of any body of water. Also clean up any fertilizer that spills

First determine if fertilization is actually needed by looking for visual signs of nutrient deficiencies in your plants or lawn. A soil test can determine what nutrients are lacking in your soil. Our office can perform an analysis of your soil sample at no charge.

Once you have determined that fertilizer is needed, select a fertilizer that is a slow release. These are fertilizers that provide nutrients over an extended period of time. It is important to apply fertilizer at the right time. Fertilizer should be applied when the plant or grass is actively growing. A plant or lawn that is dormant will not absorb any nutrients.

Once the fertilizer has been applied, most types of fertilizers will need to be watered in so that the nutrients reach the root system of the plant or lawn. This usually amounts to a 1/4 inch or less of water.

Always read the instructions! Do not exceed the recommendations on the label. Over-fertilizing can cause more harm than good. For more information go to: <https://solutions.ifas.ufl.edu/care/fertilizer/right-fertilizer-right-place.html> and <https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/care/fertilizer/fertilizing-the-lawn.html>.





## Tropical Sod Webworm

Mary Ellen Setting, Master Gardener Volunteer

Have you noticed small tan moths flying close to the ground that scatter when you walk across your lawn? Does the turf in this area look like it has been cropped short, and the grass blades are notched or ragged on the edges? You may have an infestation of tropical sod webworm. The tropical sod webworm, *Herpetogramma phaeopteralis*, is a small moth with a wingspan of ¾ to 1 inch. The adult moth does not cause damage, but their presence indicates that you may



Credit: James Kerrigan, UF

have caterpillars that are the culprits.

Tropical sod webworms are usually active in our area in late summer to fall. They feed on St. Augustinegrass, bermudagrass, zoysiagrass and bahiagrass.

Moths rest in shrubs during the day and lay their eggs on grass blades at night. Eggs hatch into larvae (caterpillars) that are ¾



Credit: Steven Arthurs, UF

to 1 inch long, gray green in color with brown spots on each segment and a light brown head. Caterpillars feed at night and rest during the day beneath the blades. An early sign of damage is called “window feeding” when the surface of leaf tissue is eaten and what is left looks like a clear window. Piles of bright green droppings (frass) may also be seen. Later damage includes ragged blades shorter than other areas of the grass, thinning of the lawn and brown patchy areas.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a comprehensive approach to managing plant pests. Many different methods are used to reduce pests and maintain plant health while protecting human health and the environment. Prevention is key to an IPM program. A healthy lawn will be less susceptible to tropical sod webworm damage and treatment unnecessary. Mowing grass at higher heights, using correct irrigation, and applying slow release fertilizer at appropriate times will keep lawns healthy. Beneficial insects like predatory ground beetles can help control sod webworms. Encourage beneficials by limiting pesticide use and planting a diverse landscape.



Credit: Steven Arthurs, UF

However, lawns that are cut too short, are heavily fertilized and are under stress will suffer the most damage, especially under drought conditions. Before conducting any treatment, positively identify the pest. Find larvae with soap flushes and spot treat infested areas. Biological insecticides such as *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) and Spinosad may help control sod webworms but not impact beneficials. Contact the Flagler County Extension Office for identification help and additional insecti-

cide recommendations. For more information, visit:

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/IN/IN96800.pdf>; [Tropical Sod Webworms Active in Local Lawns - UF/IFAS Extension Okaloosa County \(ufl.edu\)](#); [Tropical Sod Webworm - Gardening Solutions - University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences \(ufl.edu\)](#); and [ENY-300/IG001: Insect Pest Management on Turfgrass \(ufl.edu\)](#).

## Master Gardener Volunteers: “Jack of All Horticulture Needs and Master of Many Related Environmental Needs

Jeanne E. Florio, Master Gardener Volunteer

Like Postmen, who through snow and sleet, deliver the mail, we Master Gardeners, through snow and sleet (on rare occasions), hail, hurricanes, tornados, rain, and excessive heat, complete our mission and goals. Most people think of us as experts in the identification of general landscape needs and issues, as grass, trees, bushes, flowers and “good” and “bad” pests, however, our role encompasses a great deal more related to environmental needs. In the past, for example, some of us have participated in the research undertaken by the University of Florida in the Peach Tree and Blueberry Bush Research that was being undertaken at the University of Florida research site in Hastings. We also have spent time assisting with Potato research. Our latest endeavor was over this past Labor Day Weekend. We collected surface water samples for an oncoming scientific study of water quality being undertaken by the University of Florida. Samples were collected in both Volusia and Flagler Counties - at Briggs Fishing Dock, Highbridge Park, Gamble Rogers State Park, the Flagler Fishing Pier, Moody Boat Launch, and the canal at Belle Terre Parkway and Royal Palms Parkway in Palm Coast. (In the near future the findings will be available on a UF website.) This was a most interesting and daunting task. During the water collection process we stood on slippery shore rocks, rocks with barnacles, descended down steep slopes, were under the pier on a red flag day and got wet up to our knees, held onto pilings and bridge supports or each other for balance, and go down a steep slope overgrown with brush, watching our step as well as looking out for snakes and alligators. We worked as a team, were careful, and had fun. It was a new experience for the three of us that participated but a learning experience on many levels especially the commitment that the scientists have, including their willingness to endure these environmental conditions, who undertake these assignments ever day for the benefit of mankind.



Sharon Smith, Jeanne Florio and Gulsin (Jill) Erel



## How I Spent My Summer Garden – Southern Peas

Connie Balliet, Master Gardener Volunteer



Credit: C. Balliet

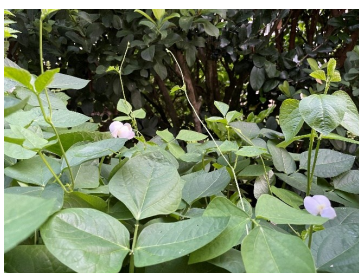
Planning for my summer garden got away from me and I did not order my seeds in time. In the heat of a Florida summer, you must choose plants that are heat tolerant. I tried to buy Southern Peas seeds but by early June I was already too late; everyone was sold out. So, I looked to my kitchen cabinet and found these black-eyed peas and thought why not. At first, I was not sure they would sprout (not all food products will-these were organic) but a couple of days in my sprout jars and they were ready to go in the ground.



Credit: C. Balliet

Southern Peas are a group of vegetables that are actually part of the bean family. They were first cultivated in India and Africa and were a staple of ancient Greek and Roman diets. There are three types of Southern peas: crowder, cream, and black-eyed. Crowders have a robust flavor, cream peas are milder, and the flavor of black-eyed peas is somewhere in between. Like all legumes, Southern peas have the ability to fix atmospheric nitrogen, meaning they produce their own nitrogen, but they still require some fertilizer. Southern peas can survive drought but adding mulch will help the soil retain moisture (<https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/edibles/vegetables/southern-peas.html>).

A disadvantage of planting seeds without a package or instructions was I did not know if they were the bush or vine type but it was not too long before they made it known they were climbers.



Credit: C. Balliet

It was kind of fun watching them and trying to figure out what was going to happen next.



Credit: C. Balliet

After I knew they needed support, a trip to the garden store for poles and twine and they were ready to go. The blossoms were quite beautiful and the plants thrived in our Florida heat, sustaining themselves on only the summer afternoon rains. I picked off a couple of aphids but in general there was no worry about pests. By late August the vines began to slow down and the leaves and pods began to turn yellow. They were ready to harvest.



Credit: C. Balliet

Have fun in your garden and don't be afraid to experiment, you never know what might happen! Here is a recipe you might like to try: <https://vanillaandbean.com/slow-cooked-black-eyed-peas/>.

For additional information go to: <https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/Plants/edibles/vegetables/heat-tolerant-vegetables.html> and <https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/orangeco/2020/07/15/are-my-black-eyed-peas-ripe/>.

## Changes to Watering Restrictions

Lori Powell, Master Gardener Volunteer

Daylight savings time ends November 7. This means irrigation restrictions change. Residential irrigation is only permitted one per week until March 13, 2022 when Daylight Savings time starts.

Homes with <b>ODD</b> numbered or no address	Homes with <b>EVEN</b> numbered address
Saturday	Sunday

- An odd numbered address is one that ends in 1, 3, 5, 7 or 9.
- An even numbered address is one that ends in 0, 2, 4, 6 or 8.
- Water only when needed and not between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Water for no more than one hour per zone.
- Restrictions apply to private wells and pumps, ground or surface water and water from public and private utilities.
- Some exceptions apply.

For more information go to: <https://www.sjrwmd.com/wateringrestrictions/#restrictions-summary>

**No Watering  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**



Credit: livinggreen.ifas.ufl.edu



## LANDSCAPING AT A GLANCE: FALL

*Jeanne E. Florio, Master Gardener Volunteer*

As I mentioned last quarter, for many of us gardening is fun. In addition, it can be relaxing and a stress reducer. For those of us however, that migrated to Florida, no matter how good any of us were on the gardening scale, the weather, the soil composition and content, the need for moisture, and the temperature can be very different here in Florida. Therefore, times of the year for planting, and in some instances, what we plant is/has to be, different, so to keep that stress and frustration reduced, listed below are some general highlights for success.

- Check that your irrigation system is working properly and providing good coverage. Adjust irrigation system for the change in watering restrictions.
- Fertilize the lawn with a 15-0-15 slow release fertilizer. Don't fertilize after early October. Check for insect damage.
- Fertilize palms with a palm tree fertilizer with micronutrients.
- Fertilize azaleas, bougainvillea, and poinsettias with a slow release fertilizer. Inspect roses weekly for black spot fungus. Apply a fungicide labeled for black spot fungus.
- If summer flower beds need refreshing, add color, texture, and pattern to your garden with annuals and bulbs. Divide and replant perennials and bulbs that have grown too large or that need rejuvenation; doing now helps to assure they are established before cold weather arrives.
- Fertilize with a balanced fertilizer in September or in early October; be sure it includes at least 2 percent magnesium.
- Mulch planting beds and around trees.
- Plant your fall vegetable garden. This is a great time of year to transplant shrubs and to plant trees.

## FALL PLANTING GUIDE

### *Vegetables*

Beets	Kale
Broccoli	Kohlrabi
Brussel Sprouts	Lettuce
Cabbage	Spinach
Carrots	Strawberries
Cauliflower	Turnips
Collards	Winter Squash

### *Annuals/Perennials*

Aster	Pansy
Chrysanthemum	Pentas
Coleus	Shasta Daisy
Croton	Snapdragon
Dianthus	Violas
Geranium	Zinnia

### *Herbs*

Basil	Parsley
Chives	Rosemary
Cilantro	Sage
Mint	Thyme
Oregano	



UF/IFAS Extension provides a printable garden calendar. Planting dates and other vegetable gardening information are also available as a free mobile app called 'Florida Fresh.' Access an app provider for your mobile phone or download it from <http://m.ifas.ufl.edu>.



## UF/IFAS Extension Flagler County Master Gardener Volunteers

Flagler County Extension Office  
150 Sawgrass Rd  
Bunnell, FL 32110



Phone: 386-437-7464  
Fax: 386-586-2102  
Email: [mgardener@flaglercounty.org](mailto:mgardener@flaglercounty.org)

### Our Mission

To assist Extension Agents in providing research-based horticultural education to Florida residents.

### Our Vision

To be the most trusted resource for horticultural education in Florida.

## Up Coming Events

The following short courses will be held at the Flagler County Public Library, 2500 Palm Coast Pkwy. N.W., Palm Coast, FL 32137, Phone: 386-446-6763

### Florida Friendly Landscape Orientation and Florida Water Conservation Initiatives

September 25 from 11 am to 12 pm

### Florida Friendly Landscape Principle #1: Right Plant, Right Place and Invasive Wetland/Coastal Species

October 30 from 11 am to 12 pm

### Florida Friendly Landscape Principle #2: Watering Efficiently and Our Local Water Supply

November 20 from 1-2 pm

### Florida Friendly Landscape Principle #3: Fertilizing Appropriately and Protecting Our Water Resources

December 4 from 10-11 am

## On Going Events

Master Gardeners are at the Flagler County Public Library the last Saturday of every month from 9 am to 11 am to answer you're your gardening and landscape questions.

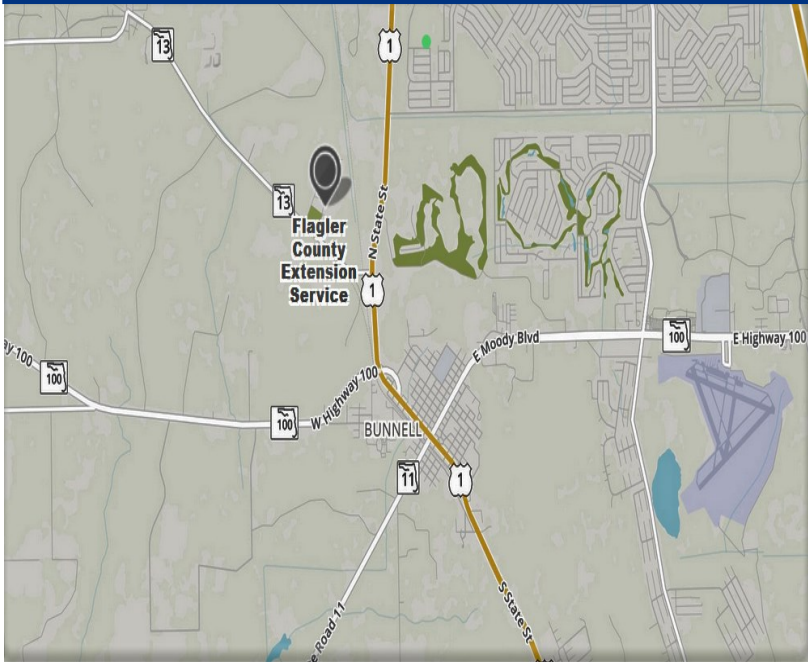
## Florida Friendly Homeowner Recognition Program

If you have implemented the nine principles of the Florida Friendly Landscaping program in your yard it could be formally recognized as a Florida Friendly yard.

A Florida Friendly Landscape (FLL) is a landscape that is designed, installed and maintained according to the nine Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ principles.

Contact our office and a site visit will be scheduled for your home to evaluate how you have incorporated the nine Florida Friendly principles in your landscape.

If you want to learn more about the FFL program or need assistance in how to implement the principles into your landscape contact our office or visit: <https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/about-ffl/landscape-recognition/> for more information.



## Stay Connected!

Flagler County Extension: <http://flagler.ifas.ufl.edu>

University of Florida Solutions for Your Life: <http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu>

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™: <http://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu>

UF/IFAS Gardening Solutions: <http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/>

University of Florida Master Gardener: <http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener>

The Flagler County Master Gardener and Horticulture program is open to all regardless of gender, race, color, nationality, creed, or disability.