

Garden Scoop



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Fall Veggies

By Karen Kennen, MGV

October is national vegetarian month. The entire month celebration evolved from World Vegetarian Day, which was begun by North American Vegetarian Society on October 1st, 1977. For Floridians this is a great month to have the celebration since unlike most other state, we can grow so many vegetables in the fall.

Central Florida gardeners can now start such root vegetables as beets, carrots, and turnips. This is also the time to start a variety of greens such as cabbage, collards, kale, mustard, romaine, and spinach. Don't forget to try broccoli or English peas. Be sure to not plant the same vegetable family in the same location, rather change to different area in your planting bed.

PLANT	PLANT FAMILY	SEED DEPTH	TRANSPLANT	DAYS TO HARVEST SEED	DAYS TO HARVEST TRANSPLANT
Beets	Goosefoot	½ – 1 inch	Yes	50-65	50-65
Broccoli	Mustard	½ – 1 inch	Yes	75-90	55-70
Cabbage	Mustard	½ -1 inch	Yes	90-110	70-90
Carrots	Apiaceae	½ – 1 inch		65-80	
Collards	Mustard	½ – inch	Yes	70-80	40-60
Kale	Mustard	½ – 1 inch		80-95	
Lettuce: Crisp, Butterhead, Leaf, Romaine	Aster	¼ inch	yes	50-90	40-70
Peas, English	Bean/Legume	1-2 inches		50-70	
Spinach	Goosefoot	¼ inch		45-60	
Turnips	Mustard	½ - 1		40-60	

Be sure to ready your plot by removing all dead or diseased plant matter including the roots. You may want to check your soil pH level at the county extension office. Most vegetables prefer a pH between 6 and 7. Till your soil a few weeks before planting and add compost or cow manure. Happy harvesting.

More info: [FL Veg. Gardening](#) | [Veg Gardening](#) | [Gardening Solutions](#) | [Cool Season Veggies](#) | [Veg Gardening Series](#)



Lake County MGV Mission Statement

The mission of UF/IFAS Lake County Master Gardener Volunteers is to assist extension agents by providing horticultural education programs and current research-based information to the public through plant clinics, community outreach and Discovery Gardens.

For more information contact: UF/IFAS Extension, Lake County Office lakemg.ifas@ufl.edu ▪ (352) 343-4101 ▪ FAX (352) 343-2767

Nasturtium

By Karen Kennen, MGV

Nasturtiums are a bright, flowering edible that will add color to your vegetable garden. This easy to grow annual can be planted from seeds year round but will die if there is a freeze. The funnel-shaped yellow, red, orange flowers along with the leaves and seed pods can be eaten and adds a flavor that is similar to watercress. The seed pods can be pickled and used in place of capers.

[Nasturtium](#)s are easy to grow. Sow seeds ½ to 1 inch deep, After sprouting, the plants will need to be staked unless you have planted the dwarf variety. There are few pests to bother the plants. Seed pods develop after four months. Interestingly, this plant does not need to be fertilized because it prefers poor soil and fertile soil results in fewer blooms and more foliage.

If you want to try pickling the pods the first thing to do is be sure you harvest the young, green, pods and not the red tinged, hard pods. For one cup of pods, bring a 1/3 cup of vinegar and water with 1 tablespoon of salt and ½ teaspoon of sugar added to a boil. Pour over the pods that have been placed in an 8 ounce pickling jar. Let set for two weeks in a cool, dark place then store in a refrigerator.

More info: [Gardening Solutions](#) | EDIS [FPS-590](#)



Growing Strawberries in Florida

Information taken from Juanita Popenoe Zoom presentation

- ◇ Grow as annuals.
- ◇ Plant Sept-Oct., 12-16" apart in well-drained slightly acidic soil.
- ◇ Harvest through April while fruit production is 2-3 cycles per plant.
- ◇ Outdoor freezing temperatures can interrupt harvest.
- ◇ Bare-root, June-bearer varieties grow better in Central Florida (eg '[Festival](#)' 'Camarosa' and '[Sweet Charlie](#)')
- ◇ Prefers full sun, not shade
- ◇ Each seed needs to be pollinated by wind or insect for fruit to develop properly
- ◇ Irrigate a lot the first 1-2 weeks, then stop and move to less frequent drip irrigation when leaves don't look wilted anymore.
- ◇ Can't support flowers if there are less than 5-6 leaves. Remove early buds in these instances.
- ◇ Can grow in raised beds, tower system, containers or directly in your garden.



More info: EDIS [topic](#), [HS1154](#), [HS912](#) | [Gardening Solutions](#) | [Growing](#)

Figure 1. 'Sweet Charlie' strawberry plant. Credits: C.K. Chandler 2000

Coontie (*Zamia floridana*)

By Cathy Leavers, MGV

The coontie with its three foot, frond-like leaves is a distinctive plant resembling a trunkless palm or fern. It is a type of cycad and is a Florida native. The coontie actually is the only [cycad](#) native to Florida where its natural habitat is dominated by pines and well-drained sandy or loamy soils. Historically, it was commonly found in hammocks and pinelands, but because of harvesting for starch production from its stems and for landscaping, it is not often seen in the wild. Now the collection of coontie from the wild is prohibited.

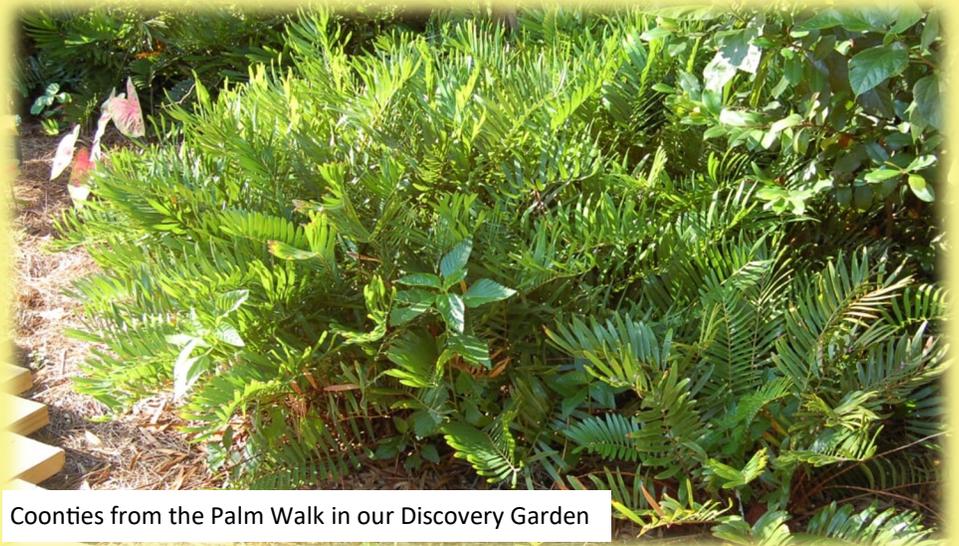
The native Calusa and Timucuan people removed the toxic chemical cycasin from the coontie stems by maceration. They used the resulting starchy residue to make a bread which was a very important food source for them. The Seminole Indians used the same technique and referred to the plant as "conti hateka" which means white root or white bread. In the 19th century, white settlers in south Florida established mills to produce the starch, which became known as "Florida Arrowroot." During World War I the product of these mills was sold to the military.

Coonties, which are easy to grow, have become very popular as landscape plants or for use in containers. They can vary in height from 1 to 4 feet. and can be as wide or wider than their height depending on form, age and growing conditions. The soil should be well drained, but can be any pH or texture. The plant has a high salt and drought tolerance but does not like wet conditions. It can grow in full sun to deep shade. A small amount of organic matter can enhance growth. In the landscape, coontie may be used as a specimen, foundation planting, or massed planting as ground cover. When used as a ground cover, space them 12 to 20 inches apart and do not place where there will be foot traffic.

Coonties are susceptible to scale and sooty mold. A heavy infestation of scale can be dealt with by cutting the plant to the ground so that new, scale-free leaves are produced. Mealy bugs can also be a problem. Use insecticidal soaps or other contact insecticides to control infestation but make sure you identify the pest correctly because mealybug destroyers look similar but are larger and are more active than the mealy bug. The coontie is also the larval food for the [Atala hairstreak](#) butterfly. The toxins in the coontie make the caterpillars and butterflies unpalatable to predators. The atala was once thought to be extinct because of the decimation of the coontie. However, because of its increasing use as a landscape plant perhaps this butterfly will be seen more often.

So give the coontie a try- I think you will be pleased with the results.

Resources: EDIS [ENH117](#), [FPS-617](#) | [Gardening Solutions](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Plant ID](#) |



Coonties from the Palm Walk in our Discovery Garden

Garden Foes: Aphids

By Karen Kennen, MGV

University of Florida



[Aphids](#) are piercing and sucking insects that can do damage to both ornamentals and crops in the garden. This insect can be brown green, yellow, pink, or black. This tiny bug, 1/32 inch to 1/8 inch, can cause leaves to curl from sucking plant juice and will sometimes spread viruses from one plant to another. As [aphids](#) suck the plant sap, they release a honeydew as they feed. This attracts ants that feed on the honeydew. I used to think the ants were enemies of the aphids but instead they are partners and will eat the honeydew and even move the aphids to another plant so the aphid can make more honeydew.

There are three ways, other than insecticides, that [aphids](#) can be [controlled](#). First, consider biological and allow the natural enemies of aphids to control them. Predaceous mites, minute pirate bugs and lacewings all feed on the aphid or use it as a larvae host. Next, you might consider cultural control by removing weeds since they can be possible hosts. Or, you can even water plants with an overhead sprinkling to help remove the aphids. Finally, monitor your plants closely and look for feeding scars and at the underside of leaves near the stems for aphids. If you see three be assured there are three times as many that are on the plant. Wash them off with a stream of water or apply natural neem oil.

Plants & Our Florida Winter

By Ashlee Roberts, MGV

Lake County exists in weather zone nine and doesn't always have horrible winter weather but can have an occasional cold front. When that does happen, it is important to be prepared and know your plants. Some Florida plants are better than others at acclimating to fluctuating weather. Tropical plants and summer annuals can even have a difficult time surviving without damage at temperatures below 50 degrees. Established subtropical plants can survive if they have become used to the winter weather temperature fluctuating.

Preparing for winter starts the day you bring home a plant. Knowing whether or not it is sensitive to the cold can determine where you should plant (or place, if growing in a pot) your plant. Take into consideration the micro-climates in your own yard. For example, tree coverage, distance to a structure and lower areas of your yard. Low areas, for example, can be cooler due to colder air settling and warmer air rising. Take these spots into consideration when choosing a place for your plants. Another thing to note when prepping for the winter season is to make sure your plants are healthy (nutritionally and from diseases or insect damage) prior to the season. Healthy plants are known to be hardier and are more able to bounce back if they do receive some damage. For curb appeal, it's suggested to plant tender and hardy plants together throughout the landscape so that if the tender plants don't withstand a freeze, your entire landscape isn't totally devastated.



Croton, philodendron, and penta are all tropicals that grow in zone 9 that can get damaged but may grow back

Plant Clinic Chatter



By R.Doherty, MGV

Dear Master Gardener,

I have three poinsettia bushes in the ground in front of my house that were planted three years ago and have had nice red bracts at Christmas. They now look almost dead. Do you know anything that would cause their decline? All but a few leaves are withered or gone. The remaining leaves are tiny.

I have two in the original pots about six feet away from this past Christmas that I have been meaning to plant. They look ok except they may be root bound. Their leaves look normal. Any ideas? Should I cut back the almost dead ones?

Dear Homeowner,

Yes, unfortunately a LOT of foliage blooming plants have been killed by all the rain we've gotten this season. The white you are seeing and leaves dying are from fungus or bacteria. My poinsettia died too as did ALL my coleus. I think Mother Nature wants us to get more plants. I would remove the three completely and put the two that look okay into larger pots and keep them inside until our rainy season ends. I found planted poinsettias have a better chance of survival. They do like the sun, but this summer has been brutal. Also make sure they're not planted too close together—they like their space.

Further info: EDIS [ENH1083](#)



Photo: K.S. Kennen, MGV

Dear Master Gardener,

There is this puffy, white stuff on my plant. Is it a fungus or something else? When I scrape them, it looks like tiny insects are inside.



Photo: R.Doherty, MGV

Dear Homeowner,

This looks like woolly scales – a piercing -sucking insect that lives under its cottony armor. It also lays its eggs under there, which is what you are seeing when you scrape them. They are difficult to get rid of, so prune off the infested branches and leaves (do not put them into your compost). DO not spray during the summer, as that will kill the plant. However, you can spray the plant with a dormant rate of horticultural oil during the dormant season to control overwintering scales.

Further info: [Natural pest control](#) | [Using oils](#)

Tremendous

Decorating lawn trees during the holidays

By Jamie Daugherty, RHA

As the Holiday season begins, so does the excitement of decorating! Halloween often brings artificial spider webs and ghosts hanging from trees. Moving into the December holidays, we see more lights around trees. So, is decorating harmful for your landscape? The main things to consider are what are you putting up and how long it will be up? Wider ties are better than fishing line for attaching things to trees. This is to protect the tree, and to protect wildlife. Thinner lines can damage the bark on some trees. Wider ties protect the trees while being more visible to wildlife. Artificial webbing can also cause issues, though not to the trees directly. This decoration tend to have more of an impact on migratory birds. We have a large amount of birds that migrate to Florida as they flee the ever-chilling North. Birds of all sizes can get caught in the webs. Consider skipping that this year in favor of lawn decorations.



What about lights in trees? Some places have white lights up all year, so they must be OK? For a short time yes; they are a fun way highlight your trees and provide some interesting outdoor lighting. They should always be taken off during the main growing season because leaving the lights strung on the tree can lead to girdling. This is when something is wrapped so tightly around the tree that it causes damage to the growing layer of cells as the tree grows outward. This can slowly kill your tree. Enjoy it for the season, but please take it down once the season it is over.

There is no reason not to decorate your yard and trees during the coming holidays. Just remember to consider the living creatures you are decorating on and around.



Mums

By: Karen Kennen , MGV

The fall season began on September 22nd and we do not have all that many trees changing colors but one thing we do have that signals the arrival of fall is the availability of [chrysanthemums](#). You will not only see them in plant nurseries and big box stores but even in grocery stores. The plants sold in grocery stores most likely are what is known as florist [chrysanthemums](#) and are annuals. The plants bought in nurseries and other places that sell garden plants, are probably garden chrysanthemums and are perennials. The [difference between](#) a garden and a florist chrysanthemum is in its root system. The garden mum produces shoots and stolons (roots) and will allow the plant to survive year after year. Florist mums produce few or no stolons and are easily killed in the winter.

With the shorter days of fall, [mums](#) will naturally set blooms that come in an array of colors and flower forms from single to pom pom. Mum colors include white, yellow, pink, orange, red, burgundy, cream, salmon, and bi-color. Plant flowers in full sun with well-drained, organically enriched soil. Be sure to dead-head the blooms to allow for continual blooming. As the years pass, be sure to divide your plant to keep healthy and cut back to about six inches at end of the season. Mums can be propagated by division or with cuttings. Enjoy your fall colors.



Photo: Garden mums - R.Doherty, MGV

Calendar of Events

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, all events are virtual or postponed. To see our online opportunities, please visit

<https://lakegardeningprograms.eventbrite.com>.

- ◆ The UF/IFAS Ext., Lake County Office presents the online: [Growing Your Garden Series](#). Register for the virtual class and receive free plants!
- ◆ **10/6: Natives:** [Register](#) for \$20 cost includes the class and 2-3gallon native plants!

Be sure to catch our monthly *From the Extension* articles in the *Daily Commercial Lifestyle Home & Garden* section



“A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift; above all it teaches entire trust.”

Gertrude Jekyll