



# GARDEN BENCH

UF IFAS Extension  
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

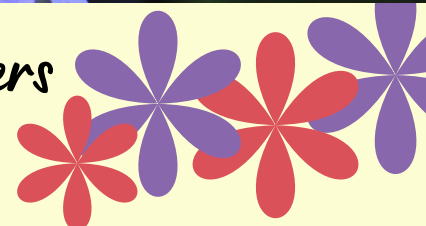
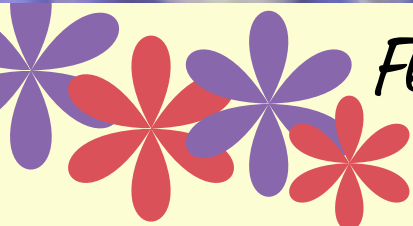


*The Manatee County Master Gardener E-Newsletter*

*May 2022 - Volume 21 - Issue 5*

## Florida Gardening for Newcomers

By Maureen Hirthler, Master Gardener Volunteer



Welcome to Florida! Are you ready to landscape or garden? The good news is that so many beautiful plants grow here, but the bad news is that those plants are very different than those grown up North. For example, did you know poinsettias are perennials here?

Florida has three general climate zones – North, Central, and South – with different temperature ranges. Here in Manatee County, we are in the Central area, Zones 9B to 10A, although as you move farther east, you may find 9A.

In general, we have very poor soil. Here at the Extension, we perform soil testing which can tell you both the pH and soluble salts. With that information, we will be able to advise you on how to improve your soil for the type of plants you would like to grow or how to select the type of plant suited to your soil.

The soluble salt measurement detects saltwater intrusion that is often seen in wells near the coast or in reclaimed water. There are some plants that can tolerate salts; at Extension we can advise you.

We have heavy rains, tropical storms, and hurricanes that may cause drainage issues. Standing water will rot the roots of most plants, so seek out moisture-loving wetland plants for poorly drained areas.

Florida is very sunny – that's why we're here! Many northern plants simply can't tolerate the heat and humidity of our summers. Our direct sun in summer can burn plants, too. Site selection, plant selection, and awareness of daily changes in sunlight patterns can help you manage these factors.

New plants need special care, and UF/IFAS Extension has many publications that will help you with successful establishment. We also can advise you on appropriate fertilization for your trees, shrubs, and ornamentals in compliance with the Manatee County fertilizer ordinance.

Many plants are invasive in Florida and should be avoided. Before you purchase any plant, check out <https://assessment.ifas.ufl.edu/>. Any listing assessed with a red colored "bar" should be avoided.

Many pests enjoy Florida as well. Total eradication is impossible, so we work to manage these problems. Thrips and aphids, sucking insects that take the moisture out of buds, are very common. Palm trees are affected by many disease and insect issues. Citrus is plagued by citrus greening which is eventually fatal. The wet summer encourages fungi, some of which can be harmful. Integrated Pest Management is a great way to monitor and prevent pest infestation. <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/IN109>

If you belong to an HOA, be certain to check with them regarding any landscaping rules or requirements.

Most people want a landscape that is as carefree as possible. We can advise you on drought-tolerant plants that don't mind our rainy summers and assist you with micro irrigation for our dry season.

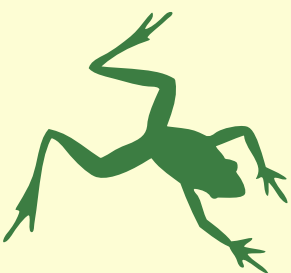
All gardeners need to protect themselves from the sun and heat even in winter. Don't forget our mosquitoes and no-see-ums! Stay hydrated! A sturdy wide-brimmed hat, sunscreen, and insect repellent are essential.

Need more advice? The University of Florida has an invaluable publication "The Florida-Friendly Landscaping Guide to Plant Selection and Landscape Design" that features color photos of hundreds of trees, shrubs, and plants, with detailed information on their culture.

[https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/media/fflifasufledu/docs/FYN\\_Plant\\_Selection\\_Guide\\_2015.pdf](https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/media/fflifasufledu/docs/FYN_Plant_Selection_Guide_2015.pdf)

Would you like more help? Manatee County Extension offers a Landscape Assistance Program that will help you design the best landscape for your home. Fill out our online form:

[https://ufl.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3g62clk9Q2OxcXj](https://ufl.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3g62clk9Q2OxcXj) or call Susan Griffith at (941) 722-4524 ext. 1825 if interested.



# A New Host for Rat Lungworm Parasite: Cuban Treefrogs

By Norma Kisida, Master Gardener Volunteer

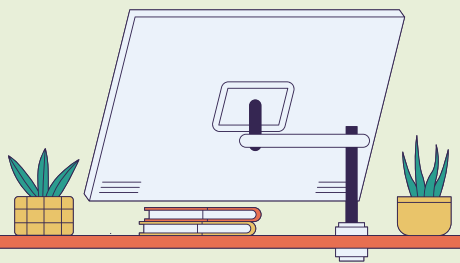


Cuban Treefrog

The invasive, non-native Cuban treefrog (*Osteopilus septentrionalis*) is disruptive to our ecosystem by eating and displacing native species such as the green treefrog. Because Cuban treefrogs also consume other food sources such as snails and slugs which are intermediate hosts for the rat lungworm (*Angiostrogylus cantonensis*), they are doubly dangerous. This parasitic nematode, named for the role rats play as definitive hosts, can cause serious neurological disease in humans such as meningitis, brain damage, and death. As Cuban treefrogs are so abundant in residential areas, they could cause disease in animals, such as dogs, if consumed. In dogs, the lungworm can cause rear limb weakness and paralysis.

When possible, it is recommended that Cuban treefrogs be caught and humanely euthanized after being positively identified. For more information and how to identify and euthanize see: [https://ufwildlife.ifas.ufl.edu/cuban\\_treefrog\\_inFL.shtml](https://ufwildlife.ifas.ufl.edu/cuban_treefrog_inFL.shtml). For more information on rat lungworm disease see: <https://www.vetmed.ufl.edu/2022/02/07/uf-study-rat-lungworm-parasite-has-spread-to-cuban-treefrogs-in-florida/>

**Don't panic:** the transmission of this disease must travel from worms to rats and through their feces to snails or slugs and from there into unwashed vegetables or raw molluscs which we might consume. No human cases have been documented so far in Florida.



# Ask a Master Gardener

By Karen Holleran, Master Gardener Volunteer

Hello MGV.

I have something no one has been able to identify on all palms in my yard for about 5 years. The picture below actually shows a worm or critter of some sort. I have a magnificent "Pineapple" palm tree that I have been taking care of for 20 years and would like to save. Do you have any idea what this is and how to eliminate it? On the pineapple palm it eats at the "bone" of the palm frond and it can actually break off. I appreciate any help/knowledge you can offer!

Thank you, S.B. . Anna Maria



Infested palm tree



Dear S.B. .

This is *Homaledra sabalella*, the palm leaf skeletonizer caterpillar. This Florida native moth lays her eggs on palm fronds. The caterpillar stage is the most damaging. The caterpillar covers itself in silken threads and frass (excrement) as it eats away the green plant tissue leaving a leaf skeleton. Although the frond looks bad, healthy palms can withstand the damage. There isn't a good way to eliminate this pest. It has some natural predators, but if you want to take things into your own hands, start with a hard stream of water from your hose to knock down the tunnels and caterpillars. Pruning can eliminate the bad-looking fronds, however, pruning any fronds from palms that are not dead takes away the apparatus the palm uses to feed itself. In slow-growing palms like *Phoenix canariensis* ("pineapple palm"), excessive pruning can be detrimental to its health.

I'm including two links for your reference. The first is about the skeletonizer and the second has a table on the last page with chemical controls you can try. UF recommends you start with the least toxic method (the strong stream of water) before moving on to chemicals.

<https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/resources/ffl-minute-radio/2021-archive/june-2021/palm-leaf-skeletonizer/>

<http://ufdcimages.uflib.ufl.edu/IR/00/00/28/44/00001/IN62800.pdf>

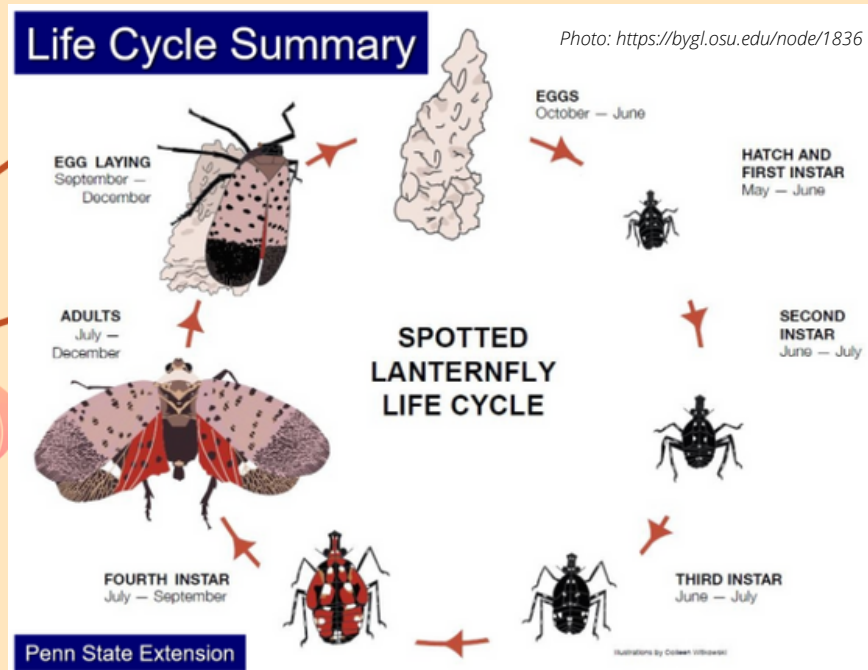
Master Gardener Karen Holleran answers your email questions at [manateemg@gmail.com](mailto:manateemg@gmail.com)

Or visit (1303 17th St. NW, Palmetto) or phone (941-722-4524) the Manatee County Master Gardener Plant Clinic every weekday except Wednesday.



# What's This? Spotted Lanternfly – Beautiful but Harmful

By Norma Kisida, Master Gardener Volunteer



Spotted Lanternfly Life Cycle

This pretty insect with bright-red, spotted wings, the spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*), has not yet been documented in Florida but early detection is important as it can have devastating effects on many important crops as well as ornamental plants. This invasive planthopper was first detected in Pennsylvania in 2014 and has since spread widely to several other eastern states including Virginia and Ohio. It feeds primarily on the tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), an invasive tree from China, which is present in northern parts of Florida. However, this insect has a very wide host range, high reproductive capacity, targets a large variety of plants, and is spreading rapidly.

The insect consumes large quantities of sugary sap from plants and then secretes it as honeydew which results in sooty mold. This mold forms thick black mats, creating an unsightly mess on plants, outdoor equipment, cars, and houses and interfering with plant photosynthesis,

The female only lays once a year in the Fall. Its multiple egg masses are covered with a waxy secretion which protects them over the winter. The egg masses are usually laid on the lower portion of trees but can be on any smooth surface, including on objects being transported to another location. There are some natural biological controls in China, but these are not approved for use here due to unknown consequences. There has been some predation of the insect observed in Pennsylvania and some management strategies have been developed.

There are several insects in all the various stages that could be mistaken for the spotted lanternfly. It is very important to verify the identification. You may call the Master Gardener plant clinic for guidance in verifying, reporting, and management strategies.

For more detailed information see: Spotted Lanternfly *Lycorma Delicatula* (White) (Hemiptera: Fulgoridae) - <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/IN1220>

Spotted Lanternfly Management Guide - <https://extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly-management-guide>



# DROUGHT TO DELUGE

By Jennifer Tonge-Martin, Master Gardener Volunteer



Florida weather is confusing: no snow in winter, no daffodils in spring, no summer tomatoes and very little fall "color." But we DO have seasons, divided by temperature: from warm to "OMGHOT!", and moisture: from parched to flood! With an occasional cold snap or hurricane, the weather keeps us gardeners on our toes. The best thing about Florida weather is that all our seasons are gardening seasons. If we stop fighting the unique nature of our weather cycles and start following smart Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ principles, gardening becomes easy and fun!

Know the truth about gardening "zones." The number on those charts refers to cold hardiness only. Manatee County is zone 9B (or 10A due to climate change) which means we can expect a few days of 30-degree temperatures in winter, but not enough cold weather for many northern plants that require "chill time" to grow properly. On the other hand, experienced Manatee gardeners always have enough old sheets to cover tropical plants on cold winter nights!

Cold tolerance zones do not take into account our summer heat or rainfall pattern. Plants recommended for xeriscaping or described as "drought tolerant" may not tolerate our summer deluges. A Southern California or Arizona landscape does not translate well to Florida. Even traditional "southern" garden plants can be all wrong for our yards. We may have to develop special "rain gardens" for areas that flood in the summer or add organic matter to excessively clay or sandy soils to moderate the moisture content of a planting bed.



Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ yard sign

Fortunately, there is an incredible variety of Florida-friendly plants that thrive here, ones that actually like "wet feet" but survive bone dry periods, and vice-versa. The UF/IFAS Extension Manatee County has lots of resources to help you pick the RIGHT plant for the RIGHT place. We know the frustration of trying to transpose gardening skills from other parts of the country to our new homes here. We are here to help take the guesswork out of your landscape. Our classes, landscape planning assistance, and irrigation evaluation programs will help take the annoying "trial-and-error" out of your Florida gardening experience.

Embrace the Florida-Friendly way of gardening and get ready to brag to your friends up north about your delicious tomatoes at Christmas! To get started, visit <https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/>

# What a Bee Sees

By Jim Haupt, Master Gardener Volunteer

Bees are truly amazing insects. One species, the domesticated honeybee or European honeybee (*Apis mellifera*), is likely Florida's most important agricultural pollinator. Although a non-native, this un**BEE**lievable flier has been in our state for quite a while. Spanish explorers were the first to introduce them, and English settlers brought them to Virginia.

The honeybee's amazing sense of sight is used to evade predators, fly and crawl around objects, and even predict seasonal changes! But its real gift is pollination. To find just the right flowering plant for nectar and pollen, bees use their incredible eyes to seek out specific petal patterns and colors invisible to humans.

Each human eye consists of a single lens. Muscles allow movement in the eye socket, giving us the ability to see objects in crisp detail. With help from the brain, we can focus on one or more objects, and tune out or ignore everything else - like gazing at a beautiful flower while tuning out or ignoring the weeds growing near it!

Bees, butterflies, dragonflies, and other insects have compound eyes. Each eye of the European honeybee contains 6,900 tiny eyes, clustered together in the shape of a dome, that point in different directions. What is seen through a bee's eye is like looking through a bunch of soda straws or a food strainer. In addition, they have three extra simple eyes, called ocelli, arranged triangularly on the forehead. Each tiny ocelli gathers ultraviolet light from the sun to help orient them in space, detect movement, and find their way back to the hive. In fact, bees can even predict the arrival of winter due to decreasing amount of daylight hours.

The more light emitted from the sun, the better bees can see. Without enough light, they lose interest in foraging and return to the hive. Honeybees see colors differently human; they cannot see all the colors we can. The spectrum of colors that bees can see is in the ultraviolet range. They cannot see red, and barely see orange, but white, blue, and purple found in flowers glow like a neon sign. UV light casts a brilliant glow that guides honeybees to flower petals like illuminated runways.

No insect, other than honeybees, produce food for human consumption. They pollinate Florida's important food crops - cucumbers, onions, grapefruit, oranges, and pumpkins and make it possible for us to grow beautiful flowers in our home gardens. **Sight is truly their secret weapon!**



Photo: University of Florida

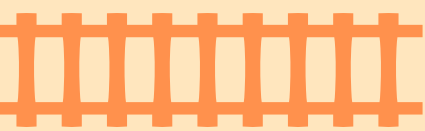
Close up of a bee



Photo: University of Colorado

Close up of a bee

To learn more about the types of plants pollinators love, go to [gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/design/gardening-with-wildlife-bee-plants.html](https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/design/gardening-with-wildlife-bee-plants.html)  
For more information on how a bee sees and other fun facts, go to:  
[entnemdept.ufl.edu/cretrures/MISC/BEES/euro\\_honey\\_bee.htm](https://entnemdept.ufl.edu/cretrures/MISC/BEES/euro_honey_bee.htm)  
<https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/sarasotaco/2021/04/21/edible-gardening-series-question-of-the-week-insect-vision-and-colors/>  
[Blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/lakeco/2020/04/16/landscaping-for-honey-bees/](https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/lakeco/2020/04/16/landscaping-for-honey-bees/)



# The Juice Train

By Amy L. Stripe, Master Gardener Volunteer

Ever since I moved to the Palmetto / Bradenton area twenty years ago, I have been intrigued by Tropicana's "Juice Train" featuring signature orange -and-white boxcars and the nostalgic sound of its whistle.

Founded in Bradenton in 1947, Tropicana operated a ship and insulated trains to transport chilled orange juice to distribution centers on both coasts. At one time Tropicana ran two exclusive 60-car trains per week. Today juice is transported to only one city on the East Coast, and the Juice Train sometimes teams up with other cargo on the rails five days a week. Juice is kept at a chilly 34 degrees throughout the shipping process.



Tropicana Train



Florida is the nation's largest producer of 100% orange juice. Tropicana juice is the product of over 400,000 acres of citrus production in the state. Sadly, disease issues have cut severely into production; the USDA is predicting 2022's crop to be the worst in 75 years. Researchers around the world are working diligently on a solution to citrus greening (the main disease culprit). Let's hope we can keep the Juice Train rolling!

<https://www.vre.org/about/blog/the-juice-train/>

## Manatee County Master Gardener Volunteer Plant Clinics

Have a gardening question? Consult one of our Plant Clinics!

Location	Address	Day(s)	Time
Crowder Bros.	5409 Manatee Ave W., Bradenton	Third Saturdays	9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.
Central Library	1301 1st St. W., Bradenton	Third Saturdays	11:30 A.M. – 2:30 P.M.
Lakewood Ranch Farmers Market	Waterside Place, 7500 Island Cove Terrace, Sarasota	First Sundays	10:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.
Robinson Preserve	840 99th St. N.W., Bradenton (South entrance, near pavilions)	Fourth Sundays	9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.
Rocky Bluff Library	6750 US Hwy 301 N., Ellenton	Second and Fourth Saturdays	10:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.
St. George's Episcopal Church	912 63rd Ave. W., Bradenton	First and Third Thursdays	9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.
UF/IFAS Extension Manatee County Tel. 941-722-4524 <a href="mailto:manateemg@gmail.com">manateemg@gmail.com</a>	1303 17th St. W., Palmetto	Every weekday except Wednesdays	9:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

For residents of Del Webb Lakewood Ranch (6805 Del Webb Blvd.), Plant Clinics are the 4th Wednesday from 10:00 A.M.- 12:00 P.M. at the Clubhouse in conjunction with the Butterfly Garden Club.



## May Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Event
Friday 5/6/22	10:00AM	<b>Gardening 101: Good Bug, Bad Bug?</b> Join UF/IFAS Extension Manatee County to meet the bugs you need to know for success in your landscape. New to gardening in Florida? We have the info you need to be successful. This class will cover common beneficial insects and pests of Florida gardens. Be prepared to get up close and personal with live insects. <a href="https://www.eventbrite.com/e/gardening-101-good-bug-bad-bug-tickets-297048729747">https://www.eventbrite.com/e/gardening-101-good-bug-bad-bug-tickets-297048729747</a>
Friday 5/13/22	10:00AM	<b>Gardening 101: 5 Easy Herbs</b> Join UF/IFAS Extension Manatee County to learn about five easy herbs for beginners to propagate and grow. Florida's climate and soils can be challenging, but these herbs will set you up for gardening and culinary success. <a href="https://www.eventbrite.com/e/gardening-101-5-easy-herbs-tickets-319062072247">https://www.eventbrite.com/e/gardening-101-5-easy-herbs-tickets-319062072247</a>
Saturday 5/14/22	9:00AM	<b>Desoto/Riverview Pointe Preserve Tour</b> Casually stroll through to enjoy the beautiful Riverview Pointe Preserve and learn about Florida's native plants and inhabitants of a coastal environment. Suitable for all ages. Tour begins in the parking area of DeSoto National Memorial Park and enters into Riverview Pointe Preserve. <a href="https://www.eventbrite.com/e/desotoriverview-pointe-preserve-tour-tickets-167373712279">https://www.eventbrite.com/e/desotoriverview-pointe-preserve-tour-tickets-167373712279</a>
Saturday 5/21/22	9:00AM	<b>Rye Preserve Tour</b> Take a hike through upland habitats along the beautiful Rye Branch and learn about Florida's native plants, natural history, and early settlement of the area. <a href="https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rye-preserve-tour-tickets-167452445773">https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rye-preserve-tour-tickets-167452445773</a>
<b>University of Florida IFAS Extension - Manatee County</b> 1303 17th St. W., Palmetto, FL 34221 <b>Telephone:</b> (941) 722-4524 <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/manatee/">http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/manatee/</a> <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:ManateeMG@gmail.com">ManateeMG@gmail.com</a>		

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Fill out this survey for a chance to win prizes including a compost bin, plants, books, and more!  
<https://bit.ly/3vTxQM3>

